
ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Written and compiled by Trudy Huskamp Peterson

Commentary.

The tents stretch away as far as the eye can see: blue roofs, white roofs, tan roofs blending into the earthen paths between tents. Al-Hol: refugee camp, humanitarian center, internment camp, detention facility, prison?

Located in northeast Syria, as of November 2022 this place known as the Al-Hol camp houses more than 53,000 people of 60 nationalities. During the complex war in Syria in the mid-2010s, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance between Kurdish and Arab militias, captured Al-Hol town from ISIS, and in April 2016 the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) opened Al-Hol camp for refugees. As more territory was seized from ISIS, families of suspected ISIS fighters were taken to Al-Hol, and the population of the camp soared to about 73,000 people. It is now around 57,000, of whom 11,000 are foreign nationals housed separately from the Syrian population. Children are an estimated 64% of the camp's population.

Al-Hol is administered jointly by AANES and SDF. In a lacerating report in November, Doctors without Borders (MSF) drew on the experiences and testimonials of its patients, staff, and the general Al-Hol population and concluded that Al-Hol is “a detention camp, more than a humanitarian camp setting, where movement in and out of the camp is restricted, rights and entitlements are stripped from people. They lack access to livelihoods, and continue to be held in prison-like conditions with very limited access to basic services and no way out.” <https://www.msf.org/danger-and-desperation-syria%E2%80%99s-al-hol-camp-report-msf>

In the future, if a researcher wants to find records relating to this inhumane camp, where would they be? First, of course, there would be records of camp administration maintained by the two operating powers, AANES and SDF. Do they, as required by the 1949 Geneva Conventions, record the personal details of persons deprived of their liberty? Do they register a baby after birth with a name and nationality, as required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child? The camp administration should have records of applications by people seeking to leave Al-Hol, a process that requires the person to be in possession of civil documents, an impossibility for many residents.

Researchers would also find information in the records of the neighboring city of Deir Ezzor, its Civil Council and civil society organizations, all of which have dealt with the impact of a large camp in the area. <https://impactres.org/al-hol-camp/> The provincial and perhaps the national government would also have records.

Turning to the United Nations, at least ten of its constituent parts work in Syria, many in Al-Hol, and the United Nations-administered Syrian Humanitarian Fund allocates money for work in Syria to 21 international NGOs and 21 national NGOs, at least some of whom undoubtedly work in the camp, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Syrian Arab Red Crescent and Kurdish Red Crescent, and large international NGOs like MSF, Mercy Corps and the International Rescue Committee (on the dangers to aid workers at Al-Hol camp see <https://syrianobserver.com/news/75252/ngos-withdraw-from-syrias-al-hol-camp-following-unidentified-attack.html>). All would have relevant records.

And there are records in national governments around the globe. First, of course, are the nations that were part of the U.S.-led Global Coalition against ISIS, all of whom would have records of the camp and its occupants. Other nations are or were donors to the NGOs working in the camps as well as sponsoring their own aid agencies, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, to work there. Nations whose citizens are among the foreign detainees in Al-Hol will have records of the decision-making on whether to repatriate them and, in some cases, the decision to strip of interned persons of citizenship (see, for example, the U.K. case <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jan/26/uk-unlawfully-stripped-woman-of-citizenship-without-telling-her-court>).

Syrian organizations outside the country, such as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the Syrian Network for Human Rights and the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, have records, as do university centers for the study of the Middle East. News media that cover Al-Hol and other camps in Syria have both published and unpublished material, as do journalists who were on the story. And, of course, individuals, including Al-Hol detainees, their families and their lawyers (if they have such), and aid workers have personal documentation.

In sum, we have no shortage of resources to tell the Al-Hol story. Do we also have the resources to pressure governments to put an end to the detention of people in the hole known as Al-Hol? <https://syrianobserver.com/resources/80009/us-encourages-countries-to-repatriate-nationals-from-ne-syria.html>

International news.

European Court of Human Rights. The cause of the 1987 death of the prime minister of the German province of Schleswig-Holstein remains controversial. In the case of *Saure v. Germany*, a 4-3 judge majority of the Court ruled that the German government's refusal, on national security grounds, of a journalist's request for physical access to Foreign Intelligence Service files on the case did not violate freedom-of-expression rights of the journalist. The Court said "it was not well-equipped to challenge the national authorities' judgment concerning the existence of national security considerations." A robust dissent by the judges in the minority said, "The majority's strictly procedural approach means that the Court itself has also missed an opportunity to enrich our jurisprudence on questions of historical memory in a national security context." Thanks to Antoon De Baets for the link. <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng/?i=001-220570#%7B%22itemid%22%3A%5B%5C%22001-220570%22%5D%7D>

European Parliament. "A European Parliament report looking into the use of Pegasus and other similar spying software across Europe concluded that the technology was an 'integral part' of a system to control citizens," *BIRN* reported. It said Poland, Hungary, Greece and Spain are using such spyware, and that the "results of both national and European Parliament elections could have been impacted by the use of the spyware." <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/11/09/ep-report-poland-hungary-used-pegasus-to-control-citizens/>

International Court of Justice (ICJ)/United Nations. The United Nations' decolonization committee "adopted a draft Palestinian resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice" on Israel's "prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory," *Reuters* reported. The ICJ had ruled in 2004 "that the Israeli separation barrier was illegal." <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-votes-ask-icj-opinion-israels-occupation-2022-11-11/>

United Nations. The High Court in Johannesburg ruled that "a group of UN Special Rapporteurs [SRs] and Working Groups can intervene in a dispute over the authorization of a class action against Anglo American South Africa on behalf of victims of lead poisoning around the Kabwe mine in Zambia." Lawyers for the group representing a class of victims estimated that "140,000 Zambian children and women of childbearing age" were affected. The SRs authorized are those on human rights around toxics, extreme poverty and persons with disability; the UN working groups are those on discrimination against women and girls and business and human rights. <https://www.leighday.co.uk/latest-updates/news/2022-news/court-rules-united-nations-agencies-can-intervene-in-kabwe-lead-poisoning-class-action/>; <https://www.macaubusiness.com/un-experts-to-contribute-in-zambian-lead-poisoning-case/>

Three UN Special Rapporteurs sent a letter "expressing concerns over water contamination from the Veladero gold mine in northwest Argentina" to the governments of Argentina, Canada and China and

the two mining companies operating the site, Barrick Gold and Shandong Gold. The SRs said repeated spills of toxic chemicals used in gold processing “have been exposed and systematically documented by the Jachal No Se Toca Assembly, a group of concerned citizens downstream from the mine that formed after the first spill in December 2015.” The letter said the Argentine government and Barrick Gold “should provide access to information, including transparency surrounding the spills, the steps taken to ensure the company is compliant with the law, the measures that have been implemented to address environmental harm and human rights violations, and any steps taken to prevent future spills.”

<https://mailchi.mp/reformbcmining/press-release-barrick-in-charge-abuses-north-mara-595937?e=595ab1dc2c>

A report by UN Women and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime said, “The majority of female homicides are gender-related killings—and estimates may understate the problem because in four of ten cases there is insufficient information recorded.” They pointed out that “as of 2021, out of all 192 UN Member States, 173 have reported data on the total number of homicide victims or offences for at least one year since 2010. However, while data on the total number of homicides are relatively widely available—albeit not always timely—sex disaggregated data on homicide victims are recorded much less frequently. As of 2021, only 133 UN Member States have reported data that distinguish between male and female homicide victims.” The UN Statistical Commission in March 2022 endorsed a “Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls

(femicide/feminicide).” https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-improving-data-to-improve-responses-to-femicide-feminicide-en.pdf?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=9e69dfc00-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-9e69dfc00-55008469

At a General Assembly emergency special session on Russia’s war with Ukraine, the members adopted a resolution “creating a register of damages suffered by Ukrainians,” *PassBlue* reported. The resolution says the General Assembly “recommends the creation by Member States, in cooperation with Ukraine, of an international Register of Damage to serve as a record, in documentary form, of evidence and claims information on damage, loss or injury to all natural and legal persons concerned, as well as the state of Ukraine, caused by Russian Federation’s internationally wrongful acts in or against Ukraine, as well as to promote and coordinate evidence gathering.” Details remain to be announced, including who would manage the Register.

https://www.passblue.com/2022/11/18/trending-un-news-week-ending-nov-18/?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=d60fc123a2-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-d60fc123a2-55008469

“The United Nations manipulated its own accountability mechanisms to thwart justice for Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptian refugees who were poisoned while living in UN-operated camps in Kosovo that were situated on land contaminated by lead from a nearby mine, said a report . . . by the Harvard Law School’s International Human Rights Clinic and Opre Roma Kosovo,” *BIRN* reported. Although the UN’s Human Rights Advisory Panel (HRAP) in 2016 recommended that the UN pay “adequate compensation” to the victims; the UN has not followed the HRAP recommendation. For background, see *HRWG News* 2016-07.

<https://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/HLS-IHRC-ORK-Toxic-Injustice-Final-English.pdf>; <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/11/09/un-denied-justice-to-lead-poisoned-kosovo-roma-refugees-report/>

World Health Organization (WHO). WHO issued a report on *Global Oral Health Status*, offering “data on 194 countries’ oral disease caseload and mortality rates, highlighting differences in the prevalence of oral health problems across different regions,” *STAT* reported. Surprisingly, the data show that “among high-, medium-, and low-income countries, the prevalence of major oral diseases, excluding oral cancers, didn’t differ much.”

https://www.statnews.com/2022/11/21/oral-health-who-report/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=4a971b44c5-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-4a971b44c5-149736437

World/general news.

Business. The UN High-level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities issued its initial report. (Net zero means achieving a balance between the greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere and those taken out.) One of the Group’s ten recommendations was to require non-state actors (mainly businesses) to increase the transparency and accountability of their operations as they progress to net zero. Among the recommendations in this category were: “Non-state actors must annually disclose their greenhouse gas data, net zero targets and the plans for, and progress towards,

meeting those targets, and other relevant information against their baseline along with comparable data to enable effective tracking of progress toward their net zero targets. Non-state actors must report in a standardized, open format and via public platforms that feed into the UNFCCC Global Climate Action Portal to address data gaps, inconsistencies and inaccessibility that slow climate action.”

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/high-level_expert_group_n7b.pdf?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=e4915614e7-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-e4915614e7-55008469

Volker Turk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, sent an open letter to Elon Musk, the new owner of Twitter. He listed “six fundamental principles from a human rights perspective,” then wrote, “Twitter’s responsibilities to respect human rights, and to address the adverse human rights impacts relating to its operations, are set out in more detail in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and through my Office’s B-Tech project that works to apply those principles in practice within the technology sector.” https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/press/2022-11-05/22-11-05_Letter_HC_to_Mr_Elon_Musk.pdf?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=e4915614e7-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-e4915614e7-55008469 NP

The four Nigerian widows who had sued Shell for damages after their husbands were executed by the Nigerian government in 1995 have dropped their lawsuit, *Reuters* reported. In March a court in the Netherlands ruled “there was not enough evidence to support the widows’ assertion that Shell had bribed witnesses to give false testimony in the trial that led to the men’s executions.” A lawyer for the widows said, “Rather than focusing on the appeal, initiatives are now being developed aimed at providing these women with some basic financial assistance.” In March the court had rejected the widows’ disclosure requests for more Shell records. For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-03. <https://www.reuters.com/world/nigerian-widows-end-their-case-netherlands-against-shell-2022-11-07/>

Twenty-one Tanzanian nationals filed a case in Canada’s Ontario Superior Court of Justice against Canadian mining company Barrick Gold “for grave human rights violations at the company’s North Mara gold mine in Tanzania,” RAID, a U.K. NGO, reported. RAID’s latest research, conducted between April and October 2022, documented two people killed and 18 injured since the start of 2022 alone, bringing the total since Barrick acquired the mine in 2006 to “at least 77 people killed and 304 injured, many on multiple occasions, by police responsible for mine security.” RAID said during its nine research missions to the area it conducted over 178 interviews, including with a whistleblower from the mine’s internal security team. <https://www.raid-uk.org/blog/tanzanian-human-rights-victims-file-first-ever-legal-case-canada-against-barrick-gold>

NGOs Friends of the Earth France and Sherpa filed a lawsuit in the Paris Civil Court against French oil company Perenco S.A. over the company’s activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. “Illegal gas flaring, old pipelines crossing rivers, poor maintenance of oil installations resulting in frequent spills of crude oil into the environment, incineration and landfill of oil waste without prior treatment: numerous reports denounce practices that are particularly dangerous for the environment and the health of local communities. Several scientific studies, as well as investigations from Congolese and international CSOs [civil society organizations] . . . and even a report from the Congolese Senate inquiry committee reveal chronic water, air and soil pollution.” The suit asked the Court “to order the company to take measures to end the environmental harms and to prevent any future damages to the environment.” In March the Court of Cassation had ruled that the two NGOs were permitted under French law to have access to internal documents held by Perenco France “to determine its role in activities denounced as harmful to the environment in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” For background see *SAHR News* 2022-03. <https://www.asso-sherpa.org/perenco-environmental-damage-drc>

“The world’s biggest meat company, JBS, has admitted to buying almost 9,000 cattle” from a farmer that prosecutors have described as “one of the biggest deforesters in Brazil.” The admission came after the reporting team of *Reporter Brasil* and NGO Greenpeace’s *Unearthed* showed JBS satellite images of the cattle being raised and the purchase records. “JBS said it was the victim of a cattle laundering fraud and understood that the cows had been reared on a ‘clean’ farm.” Brazil’s NGO Imazon “estimates that 90% of deforested Amazon land is occupied by cattle pastures.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-01. <https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/2022/11/11/jbs-cattle-brazils-biggest-deforester-amazon/>

Sweden's Supreme Court ruled that Sweden can prosecute Lundin Energy's former chief executive Alex Schneider for "aiding and abetting war crimes in South Sudan in November 2021" and in Sudan in Lundin's oil concession area during 1997-2003, NGO PAX reported. The Court said, "The connection to Sweden is considered sufficient for there to be a legitimate Swedish interest in the administration of justice." Schneider "was Lundin's head of production during the company's operations in Sudan" from February 1997 to May 2003; the company's activities in that period "form the focus" of the indictment. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-01. <https://unpaiddebt.org/supreme-court-sweden-has-jurisdiction-over-lundins-alex-schneider/>

Fifteen members of El Salvador's *El Faro* filed suit in the U.S. against the Israel-based surveillance company NSO Group "for allegedly designing and deploying the spyware Pegasus to infiltrate the phones of 22 members of the news organization," *El Faro* wrote. "The plaintiffs are asking that the federal court require NSO Group to identify, return, and delete all information obtained through these attacks, prohibit the firm from using Pegasus on the plaintiffs, and order them to reveal their client behind the spying in El Salvador." For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-03. https://elfaro.net/en/202211/el_salvador/26559/15-Members-of-El-Faro-Sue-NSO-in-US-Federal-Court-for-Pegasus-Hacks.htm?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Climate change. "The Africa Climate Mobility Initiative aims to provide research, data, and projections that inform policy and foster cooperation in support of locally anchored solutions for climate adaptation in communities across Africa." It issued an "Africa Climate Mobility Model to forecast possible scenarios for future climate displacement and migration as far as 2050." The Initiative proposed eight actions for the next eight years, one of which is to take steps to inform people of climate risks, including "Increase the availability of African-owned, localised, and timely weather and climate data through improved data collection, analysis, and forecasting capabilities" and "Ensure climate information is child-friendly, available in languages that minorities and migrant and displaced populations understand and shared through communication channels that are accessible." <https://africa.climate-mobility.org/overview>

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (commonly referred to as COP27) concluded with a promise from wealthy countries to establish a dedicated "loss and damage" fund for vulnerable countries harmed by climate change. A professor from Boston University writing in *The Conversation* said the agreement may be a "placebo fund." Important operational questions are undecided; for example, what documentation will be needed to determine, first, that a disaster is the type that will be covered by the fund and, second, what level of compensation will be provided. https://theconversation.com/cop27s-loss-and-damage-fund-for-developing-countries-could-be-a-breakthrough-or-another-empty-climate-promise-194992?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Science%20Editors%20Picks%20%20November%2023%202022%20-%202473024763&utm_content=Science%20Editors%20Picks%20%20November%2023%202022%20-%202473024763+CID_a6a1e19186dd40902cc1c94f6df1da&utm_source=campaign_monitor_us&utm_term=COP27s%20loss%20and%20damage%20fund%20for%20developing%20countries%20could%20be%20a%20breakthrough%20or%20another%20empty%20climate%20promise

Genocide. "Germany's parliament has declared the famine in Ukraine in the 1930s under Soviet leader Joseph Stalin a genocide," *DW* reported. "Among other things, Wednesday's resolution calls on the German government to work against 'any attempts to spread a one-sided Russian historical narrative' and to keep supporting Ukraine as a victim of the current war." Ukraine's national archives holds records documenting the genocide. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-declares-stalin-era-holodomor-famine-in-ukraine-a-genocide/a-63944665>

Human rights defenders. NGOs Business and Human Rights Resource Center and Indigenous Peoples Rights International published a report on the "rights violations and criminalization of Indigenous Peoples in climate actions." They pointed out that although "Indigenous peoples comprise approximately one in 17 (6%) of the world's population, nearly one in five (20%) [of the] attacks globally since 2015 have been against Indigenous human rights defenders." Between January 2015 and August 2022 the NGOS "tracked 883 attacks on Indigenous human rights defenders, including killings, threats, arbitrary detention, and strategic lawsuits against public participations (SLAPPs)." Nearly all (95%) of the attacks were on climate, land, and environmental defenders, and 75% of the attacks were in Latin America. https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/Protector_not_prisoner_briefing_Final.pdf

Internally displaced persons. Writing in *The Conversation*, a researcher at the University of Cape Town said his “study of internally displaced and refugee populations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and South Sudan showed that those who were displaced within their nations’ borders faced peculiar risks.” He found that “where governments are responsible for internal displacement, the sensitivity of the matter often leads to attempts to keep the displacements secret. This affects the collection of precise data. Without reliable data, it is hard for aid and development partners to implement the UNHCR guidelines for national responsibility towards preventing displacement and finding durable solutions.” https://theconversation.com/why-its-important-to-understand-the-unique-plight-of-internally-displaced-people-in-africa-150891?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=bylinetwitterbutton

Medical records. Civil society activists and the All India Drug Action Network managed to persuade India’s government to “release the minutes of expert committee meetings in which Covid-19 vaccines were reviewed.” A *STAT* review of documents “detailing the steps” taken toward the approval by the government of India of the Covid vaccine developed by India’s government and the pharmaceutical company Bharat Biotech found that “regulators endorsed the vaccine, called Covaxin, despite discrepancies in the number of clinical trial participants. Moreover, questionable changes were made to the trial protocols—which are established procedures for testing a vaccine or medicine—to expedite the approval process.” https://www.statnews.com/2022/11/15/vaccine-covid19-india-bharat-covaxin-transparency-protocols/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=c254d3304f-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-c254d3304f-149736437

“Digital health’s carbon footprint stretches from electronic health records and e-prescriptions to online referrals and robotic surgery,” *STAT* reported. “There are upstream and downstream environmental costs associated with expanding digital care systems, from increased computing infrastructure and data storage to the mining and disposal of materials for a growing ecosystem of devices used to support remote care. Zerina Lokmic-Tomkins of Monash University (Australia) said, “One of the major issues facing digital health technology is actually data—the generation of data, how much of it is being stored, and for how long it’s being stored.” https://www.statnews.com/2022/11/22/telehealth-hospitals-carbon-emissions-climate/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=74b54c055a-Weekend_Reads_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-74b54c055a-149736437

Migration. *BBC*’s “Africa Eye” produced a documentary about the events on the border between Morocco and Spain’s Melilla enclave on 24 June which left at least 24 migrants dead (*Info Migrants* says the UN put the death toll at 37) and more than 70 missing. The *BBC* report is replete with dozens of videos from both private and public sources which show migrants beaten and restrained. According to the vice-president of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights, the bodies of the dead were not returned to their families but were buried--“The authorities wanted to bury the bodies without making the necessary investigations and without identifying them”--but *BBC* sources said the bodies were in a morgue in Morocco. Both Morocco and Spain have investigations into the 24 June events. *BBC* said the Spanish Ministry of the Interior has been accused of “withholding crucial CCTV evidence from formal investigations.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-06. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/z8i55dsu8w/spain-morocco-border>; <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/44506/bbc-documentary-reveals-complicity-of-moroccan-spanish-authorities-in-melilla-tragedy>

Privacy. GSMA, “a mobile network and cell phone industry association, published its annual report which show that as of early 2021 157 countries “have implemented mandatory prepaid SIM card registration requirements,” *Coda* reported. Mandating registration means that the data customers provide for a mobile phone service goes to the government, and “linking a device to an individual is . . . helpful for regimes to be able to leverage hardware-based monitoring of citizens” and the data “can then be used to build giant databases.” The director of SAFEnet, an Indonesia-based NGO focused on safety of expression online and offline, called for “regulatory bodies in the UN, like the ITU [International Telecommunication Union] to introduce a new digital identity process that’s safer for everyone” because “protecting privacy means you’re protecting democracy itself.” <https://www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/sim-card-registration-philippines-prepaid-mobile-phone/>

European Data Protection Supervisor Wojciech Wiewiorowski, the EU’s data protection watchdog, said that the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, has been sending data of suspects of cross-border crimes to EU law enforcement agency Europol,” *BIRN* reported. “He warned that the privacy of

vulnerable individuals ‘is at risk of being profoundly impacted’.” <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/11/15/frontex-transmits-personal-data-of-migrants-to-europol/>

The Irish Data Protection Commission fined Meta (formerly Facebook) 265 million euros for a 2021 data breach of 533 million records. It argued that Meta “failed to comply with the General Data Protection’s obligation to ensure privacy ‘by design and default,’ meaning it had engineered its products in a way that personal data could leak,” *Politico* reported. Meta’s European headquarters is in Ireland. <https://www.politico.eu/article/data-protection-commission-is-fining-meta-e265-million/>

In July Google pledged to “delete entries for locations deemed ‘personal,’ including ‘medical facilities like counseling centers, domestic violence shelters, abortion clinics, fertility centers, addiction treatment facilities, weight loss clinics, cosmetic surgery clinics’,” but did not say how quickly the data would be deleted. The *Guardian* reported that the “tech advocacy group Accountable Tech” tested the Google promise in August and October and “found that searches for directions to abortion clinics on Google Maps, as well as the routes taken to visit two Planned Parenthood locations, were stored in their Google activity timeline for weeks after it occurred.” The information was still stored as of 29 November. The delay is particularly worrisome because “any information collected by Google is potentially subject to law enforcement requests,” and Google received nearly 47,000 law enforcement requests in a six-month period in 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/29/abortion-rights-us-google-roe-dobbs>

“Google agreed to pay \$391.5 million to 40 [U.S.] states to settle an investigation into its location tracking practices,” the *Washington Post* reported. The Oregon Attorney General who led the investigation said, “Consumers thought they had turned off their location tracking features on Google, but the company continued to secretly record their movements and use that information for advertisers.” The settlement requires Google to stop hiding “key information about location tracking” and to “give users detailed information about the types of location data” it collects and how it is used. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/11/15/google-privacy-settlement-location-data/>

TikTok, “the Chinese-owned social video app, is updating its privacy policy to confirm that staff in countries, including China, are allowed to access user data to ensure their experience of the platform is ‘consistent, enjoyable and safe’,” the *Guardian* reported. TikTok’s head of privacy in Europe said, “We allow certain employees within our corporate group located in Brazil, Canada, China, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States, remote access to TikTok European user data.” <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/02/tiktok-tells-european-users-its-staff-in-china-get-access-to-their-data>

The U.N. Information and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said “it had erroneously posted on its website data identifying 6,252 asylum seekers in ICE custody,” *Axios* reported. The document was available for about five hours; “immigrant advocacy group Human Rights First first flagged the data breach to ICE.” <https://www.axios.com/2022/11/30/ice-asylum-seekers-data-breach>

Repatriation. The *New York Times* published an article on the request by Indonesia that the Netherlands return to it the natural history materials taken from the islands during the period of Netherlands’ colonial rule, including the skullcap and femur of the prehistoric Java man. “In response to the claim, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is setting up a commission to weigh in on the matter.” A Ministry spokesman said, “What’s important to the Dutch government is: How did it get into our state collection,” adding that “if the committee determined that ‘we took it without buying it, and it wasn’t a gift, then we will return it’.” Museum archives will be crucial resources for the committee. <https://artdaily.com/news/151657/Dispute-over-Java-Man-raises-a-question--Who-owns-prehistory-#.Y5tSfp7MKUk>

Meanwhile, two petitions, one organized by the dean of Egypt’s Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport (4,200 signatures) and one organized by Zahi Hawass, Egypt’s former minister for antiquities affairs (more than 100,000 signatures), demand the U.K. return the famous Rosetta stone to Egypt. “After Napoleon Bonaparte’s military occupation of Egypt, French scientists uncovered the stone in 1799 in the northern town of Rashid, known by the French as Rosetta. When British forces defeated the French in Egypt, the stone and over a dozen other antiquities were handed over to the British under the terms of an 1801 surrender deal between the generals of the two sides,” *AP* explained. Hawass argues that Egypt had no say in the 1801 agreement; the Museum

disagrees, saying the 1801 treaty includes the signature of an Ottoman admiral who fought alongside the British against the French (the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul was nominally the ruler of Egypt at the time of Napoleon's invasion). https://apnews.com/article/travel-middle-east-africa-fb5af71b4a8b75d6f99f08fce9743cf3?user_email=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&utm_source=ailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Nov30_MorningWire&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers

And then there are the skulls. The Musee de l'Homme in Paris holds a collection of "18,000 skulls that include the remains of African tribal chiefs, Cambodian rebels and Indigenous people from Oceania," the *New York Times* wrote. Museum documents obtained by *The Times* included "a confidential memo [that] said that the collection included the bones of Mamadou Lamine, a 19th century West African Muslim leader who led a rebellion against French colonial troops; a family of Canadian Inuits exhibited in a Paris human zoo in 1881; and even five victims of the Armenian genocide in the mid-1910s." The museum has a database of the collection, but "the museum has published only a stripped-down online version of its skull database, sharing no names or biographical details, even though the list seen by *The Times* contains this information about hundreds of remains." <https://artdaily.com/news/152160/A-Paris-museum-has-18-000-skulls--It-s-reluctant-to-say-whose-#.Y5vJL57MKUK>

Technology. The International Committee of the Red Cross issued a report, "Digitalizing the Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Crystal emblems," proposing a digital emblem "to signal to anyone trying to enter or attack" Red Cross computer systems "that the systems and data they hold are protected from any harm under international humanitarian law in times of armed conflict." <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-proposes-digital-red-crosscrescent-emblem-signal-protection-cyberspace>

The Wikileaks website "is struggling to stay online," *Daily Dot* reported. "Although WikiLeaks long boasted that it released more than 10 million documents in 10 years, at current, less than 3,000 documents remain accessible, according to an analysis by the *Daily Dot* of the website's leaks archive." <https://www.dailydot.com/debug/wikileaks-website-assange-hacked-documents/>

World War II. An artificial intelligence tool built by Daniel Platt, a software engineer for Google, "could hold the key to putting names to some of the many faces, both victims and survivors, in hundreds of thousands of historic photographs" from the World War II era, *BBC* reported. Platt's "website, Numbers to Names, uses facial recognition technology to analyse a person's face. It then searches through [digitized] archive photos to find potential matches." The digital images posted by archives around the world are the key to making the matching work. <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-63483694>; <https://www.yahoo.com/now/stranger-called-had-photos-her-225759085.html>

"The New York-based Center for Jewish History is launching the DNA Reunion Project, offering DNA testing kits for free through an application on its website," *AP* reported. Persons who use the kits are also offered a chance to get some guidance on next steps from genealogists specializing in Jewish history. One of the genealogists said, "The advent of DNA technology has opened up a new world of possibilities in addition to the paper trails and archives that Holocaust survivors and their descendants have used to learn about family connections severed by genocide." <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/holocaust-survivors-offered-dna-tests-find-family-94192787>

Archivists at Czech Radio have discovered in their holdings "1,300 discs of recordings from the 1946 trial with Karl Hermann Frank, who was in charge of the Nazi security forces during the wartime occupation of Bohemia and Moravia," *Radio Prague International* reported. Frank "played an instrumental role in events such as the wiping out of the Lidice and Lezaky villages in 1942." The discs are being digitized; they hold an estimated 80 hours of material. "The discs feature many of the testimonies that were provided during the trial," including of students who were arrested and later sent to concentration camps and a man who "set up the SS squad that executed nine selected leaders of the student movement." Thanks to Perrine Canavaggio for the link. <https://english.radio.cz/recordings-trial-chief-symbol-nazi-occupation-k-h-frank-being-restored-8767613>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Afghanistan/Australia. The *Guardian Australia* published an article on Afghans in Australia who apply for a protection visa that will allow them to live in Australia permanently but find themselves "trapped

in [a] bureaucratic nightmare thanks to authorities' mistrust of Afghan identity documents." It follows an Afghan man who was told that when the government examined his citizenship claim "the Australian government said his Afghan identity document was 'bogus,' although he pointed out that the department had mistranscribed the number of the document when checking it, and the correct number had been verified by the Afghan embassy in Canberra." The administrative appeals tribunal handling his case also rejected the DNA tests that showed he was not the person the department erroneously thought he was. Thanks to Giulia Barrera for the link. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/nov/20/saved-fled-afghanistan-found-safety-in-australia-and-built-a-life-then-it-was-snatched-away?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other

Afghanistan/United Kingdom. The U.K. NGO Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) reported: "Between 2006-14, there were 64 confirmed child victims in Afghanistan where the British military paid compensation, although the number of children killed could be as high as 135. Even the lower number is four times more than previously thought, since prior documents released by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence (MOD) had only revealed 16 confirmed child fatalities. Subsequent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests by AOAV reveal the MOD had not included an additional 'Notes' column within the claims database. Access to this has provided far more information on hundreds of sparsely detailed fatality compensation cases." <https://aoav.org.uk/2022/between-64-and-135-children-killed-in-british-military-action-in-afghanistan-analysis-of-mod-compensation-payments-reveals/> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/9/uk-army-killed-64-children-in-afghanistan-between-2006-14-report>

Balkan wars. In 2008 Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a National War Crimes Processing Strategy, planning to deal with the most complex cases by 2015 and completing all work by 2023, *justiceinfo.net* reported. "A total of 1,781 cases involving 9,879 persons suspected of war crimes were identified . . . In addition, there were 2,692 cases where the perpetrators were unknown and 517 cases where it was not clear whether the case was a war crime." The strategy was revised in 2020. By the end of 2021 the prosecutors' offices "had resolved 59% of the backlog of 1,210 investigations as registered in 2014 by OSCE, and 495 investigations (for 4,284 potential suspects) were still pending." The number of indictments has been "decreasing constantly from 2014 to 2021," and the completion of the trials "has now become hostage to political tensions in Bosnia." https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/108796-time-running-out-war-crimes-prosecution-bosnia.html?mc_cid=4249d178d3&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb

Barbados/United Kingdom. The government of Barbados is "considering plans" to make an extremely wealthy Member of the U.K. Parliament "the first individual to pay reparations for his ancestor's pivotal role in slavery," the *Guardian* reported. Richard Drax, the MP, "came under the spotlight in December 2020, after the *Observer* revealed he had not declared his inheritance of the 250-hectare (617 acres) Drax Hall plantation. He did so only after official documents surfaced which named him as the owner." His ancestor, Sir James Drax, "was one of the first Englishmen to colonise Barbados in the early 17th century," owned at least two slave ships, and had 189 enslaved people when the British empire abolished slavery in 1833, receiving compensation for freeing them. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/26/barbados-tory-mp-pay-reparations-family-slave-richard-drax-caribbean-sugar-plantation?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Dominican Republic/Haiti. "The United Nations Children's Agency has received at least 1,800 unaccompanied children delivered by Dominican immigration authorities into Haiti since the year began," a spokesman told *CNN* on 21 November. "Many arrive without identity documents and are 'shipped' into the country amid adult deportees . . . raising the question of how Dominican authorities ascertained that they belonged in Haiti at all." In the month of October 14,801 people were sent to Haiti from the Dominican Republic, an average of 477 people each day, "according to records by Haitian aid organization Groupe d'Appui des Rapatriés et Réfugiés." A GARR spokesman said Dominican officials arrested people they believed to be Haitian, "destroyed people's documents and in some cases, people had no chance to show their papers." For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-09, *SAHR News* 2021-11. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/21/americas/dominican-republic-expels-haiti-children-intl-lam#:~:text=Allegations%20of%20degrading%20treatment%20and,of%20477%20people%20each%20day>

Dominican Republic/United States. "The United States will block shipments of raw sugar from a top Dominican producer with close ties to two wealthy Florida businessmen after finding indications of forced labor at its sprawling Caribbean plantation," *Reveal* reported. A two-year investigation by *Reveal* from the Center for Investigative Reporting and *Mother Jones* released in September 2021 used

documents obtained from the U.S. Labor Department and U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo; this and subsequent reporting from the *Washington Post* and *Jacobin* provided background for the decision. https://revealnews.org/article/us-bans-sugar-imports-dominican-republic-producer/?utm_source=reveal-twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=dr-sugar

France/Liberia. The Paris Cour d'assises rendered a guilty verdict against Kunti Kamara, a Liberian and Dutch dual national, "for complicity in crimes against humanity, and commission of simple and aggravated acts of torture and barbarism" in Liberia from 1989 to 2003, NGO Civitas Maxima reported. The trial is "the first ever conviction for crimes against humanity connected to the conflicts." "In light of the exceptional nature of this trial, the President of the Paris 'Cour d'assises' authorized its full recording for the purpose of constituting historical archives." <https://civitas-maxima.org/2022/11/02/kunti-kamara-former-ulimo-commander-sentenced-to-life-imprisonment-for-crimes-against-humanity-and-torture/>

Germany/Japan. "A set of documents on German prisoners of war detained during World War I at the Ninoshima Internment Center, in the city of Hiroshima [Japan], has recently been rediscovered," *Japan Times* reported. The documents had been made by an interpreter of German at the Center and were found by a professor at Hiroshima University of Economics "through a secondhand book store in Tokyo." The documents include a list of the names of 545 POWs, a notebook, and two photo albums. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/11/14/national/history/german-pow-hiroshima/>

Rwanda/United States. A U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation report obtained by the NGO Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) "confirms that U.S. law enforcement has long known of Rwandan intelligence operations against civilians on its soil, including the targeting of [Paul] Rusesabagina, a U.S. permanent resident, as early as 2011. The report also reveals the U.S. government knew as early as 2015 that agents of the Rwandan government had repeatedly attempted to mislead and co-opt U.S. law enforcement to target [Rwandan President Paul] Kagame's critics." Rusesabagina was the manager of Hotel Rwanda during Rwanda's 1994 genocide; he is credited with saving the lives of people who sought refuge in the hotel. The OCCRP also obtained "an internal Interpol document" showing that it "revoked an arrest warrant for Eugene Gasana, a former Kagame loyalist now critical of the Rwandan regime, after it found Rwanda's claims against him to be politically motivated." https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/rwanda-fed-false-intelligence-to-us-and-interpol-as-it-pursued-political-dissidents-abroad?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Ukraine war. In a speech, the head of the OHCHR's monitoring mission in Ukraine (Mission) said it has been "documenting the treatment of prisoners of war (POWs) and the conditions of their internment," having interviewed 159 POWs (139 men and 20 women) who had been held by Russian and affiliated armed groups and 175 POWs (all men) held by Ukraine. Ukraine provided OHCHR with access to POWs in place of internment but the Russian Federation did not. Based on the interviews, the Mission said it "has identified patterns of torture and ill-treatment of POWs held by the Russian Federation (including by affiliated armed groups), particularly during internment. OHCHR has also documented violations committed by Ukrainian state agents towards POWs, which revealed a pattern of ill-treatment at initial stages of capture and evacuation, and sporadic cases of torture and ill-treatment at later stages of internment." Protecting the records of the interviews is essential for future accountability. <https://ukraine.un.org/en/207332-more-8-months-russias-armed-attack-ukraine-and-ensuing-escalation-hostilities-un-reports>

National news.

Afghanistan. Judges at the International Criminal Court "ruled that prosecutor Karim Khan can resume his investigations into atrocities in Afghanistan, a probe that had been put on hold for more than two years," *Reuters* reported. The judges said the approval was given because the Afghan government "is not presently carrying out genuine investigations" into the alleged crimes. The judges stressed that "the present authorization relates to all alleged crimes and actors," including the Taliban, Afghan government forces and United States forces. It is not clear whether ISIS-K will be investigated, as the prosecutor's 2017 request to open the probe, on which the new authorization is based, did not mention that group. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/judges-give-green-light-icc-prosecutor-resume-afghanistan-probe-2022-10-31/>

Ten UN experts, including the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, said the treatment of women and girls by the current Taliban government may amount to "gender persecution" under the terms of the

statute of the International Criminal Court, *Reuters* reported. A spokesperson for OHCHR said “the office had documented numerous” public floggings in November “including a woman and a man lashed 39 times each for spending time alone together outside of marriage.” <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/talibans-treatment-women-may-be-crime-against-humanity-un-experts-2022-11-25/>

Brazil. Acting on behalf of rural land users, lawyers filed a 35-page dossier with the International Criminal Court requesting “an investigation into a colossal ‘network’ of politicians, business officials, industry lobbyists and criminal gangs for alleged crimes against humanity committed against Indigenous peoples and other traditional communities in Brazil’s portion of the Amazon,” *Inside Climate News* reported. The filing is based on “over a decade of research from human rights organizations and governmental institutions including the U.S. State Department and Brazil’s Attorney General’s Office” and cited an alleged “400 murders, 500 attempted murders, 2200 death threats, 2000 assaults, 80 instances of torture and 100,000 crimes against property like the razing of homes from 2011 to 2022.” A separate confidential filing named the alleged perpetrators. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/09112022/brazil-amazon-crimes-against-humanity/>

Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research said its monitoring systems show “the rainforest lost an area roughly the size of Qatar, some 11,600 square kilometers (4,500 square miles) in the 12 months from August 2021 to July 2022,” *AP* reported. https://apnews.com/article/jair-bolsonaro-forests-brazil-middle-east-deforestation-863224be226725da06db7768b305c3ea?emci=80d68673-8d71-ed11-819c-000d3a9eb474&emdi=75eb2585-8e71-ed11-819c-000d3a9eb474&ceid=4606001&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Burkina Faso. “On 26 September a civilian convoy accompanied by a military escort sought to resupply the besieged city of Djibo,” Bellingcat wrote, but the convoy “was ambushed and at least 27 soldiers and 10 civilians were killed.” The Al-Qaeda-linked militant group Jama’at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) “claimed responsibility for the attack and posted footage on social media that allegedly showed the incident and its aftermath.” A researcher for the Armed Conflict Locations & Event Data Project (ACLED) asked Bellingcat if it could use satellite images to show the remains of the convoy vehicles; it did and also was able to “verify the video posted by JNIM and confirm it was shot at the scene of the September 26 ambush.” <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/11/18/five-kilometres-of-destruction-satellite-imagery-reveals-extent-of-damage-to-civilian-convoy-in-burkina-faso/>

Chile. President Gabriel Boric announced the creation of a “special commission whose mandate will be to propose mechanisms to return to the Mapuche people the lands they have historically demanded,” *teleSUR* reported. He said “a land registry would be carried out that would consider all the lands that were usurped by the Chilean State from the 19th century onwards.” Land records, cartography and title deeds will be needed to develop the registry. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Chilean-President-Plan-to-Restitute-Lands-Claimed-by-Mapuche-20221111-0019.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

Egypt. “The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) shared documentation with Human Rights Watch on detentions of nearly 700 people across 18 governorates between October 1 and November 14, 2022,” as Egypt prepared to host the UN climate summit (COP 27). “The ECRF said that about 40 of those detained have not been brought before prosecution officials, and their whereabouts remain unknown days after their arrests.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/16/egypt-detentions-repression-follow-protest-calls>

Ethiopia. On 2 November the leaders of the Federal government and the Tigray forces signed a peace accord after more than two years of brutal warfare. Amnesty International said “The signing of a peace agreement on Wednesday is a step in the right direction, yet further strides must be taken to address the accountability deficit that has permeated the conflict since it began. All parties to the war have committed unspeakable abuses, including mass, extrajudicial executions and sexual violence against women and girls. These appalling crimes cannot simply be washed away. . . . To ensure justice for victims and survivors of atrocities, the Ethiopian authorities must allow unfettered access to human rights investigators, including the UN-mandated International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia.” <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/11/ethiopia-peace-agreement/>

The Provisional Military Administrative Council, known as the Derg, was the military junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1987. University researchers in Belgium and Ethiopia announced they had obtained photographs of a 1984 “communication document between Derg’s military command and the Ministry of Defense . . . where they lament that the population of [western Ethiopia’s regions] Welkait and Tsegede supports the TPLF [Tigray People’s Liberation Front], because the people are Tigrinya speakers.” The researchers believe the document is authentic but have withheld the name of the archives where it is because “displaying the name of the archive may lead to the report being destroyed.” An analyst said the document is “vital evidence that Western Tigray belongs to Tigray.”

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365768050_Top-secret_internal_communication_by_DERG_regarding_the_population_of_Welkait_and_Tsegede_Western_Tigray_Ethiopia_1984

Guatemala. The judge in the “Death Squad Dossier” (Diario Militar) case, Miguél Ángel Gálvez, resigned and fled the country, Jo-Marie Burt and Paulo Estrada reported in *El Faro*. For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-05. https://elfaro.net/en/202211/opinion/26471/Clandestine-Structures-in-Guatemala-Consummate-Witch-Hunt-against-Judge-of-%E2%80%9CDeath-Squad-Dossier%E2%80%9D-Case.htm?utm_source=DB+El+Faro_English&utm_campaign=6bdd130679-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_22_01_08_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ec9190c89-6bdd130679-363082696

Guinea. The trial of 11 men charged with crimes as they broke up an government-opposition rally on 28 September 2009, which left more than 150 people dead and some 100 women raped, has become a “media phenomenon,” *justiceinfo.net* reported. The state broadcaster has three cameras continuously filming, and three private TV stations are also on hand. Guineans are following the trial “whether they are at the café, in the office or walking on the street,” and the trial is jokingly said to “have caused a drop in economic activity.” Preserving the video and audio coverage will be an important contribution to the country’s history. https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/108916-september-28-trial-conakry-like-tv-series.html?mc_cid=4249d178d3&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb

Honduras. On 7 November the Honduras Police and Army “violently evicted the Garifuna community in Punta Gorda, Roatan, defying ancestral land rights promised by Honduran law since 1995,” *El Faro* wrote. The commune was founded in 1797, “making it the Carib-Arawak people’s oldest settlement in what is today Honduras.” The Norman Jones family “who claims to own the land since 1950” filed the removal request on 10 September. When Honduras ratified ILO Convention 169 in 1995, it “granted Garifuna and Indigenous peoples the right to ancestral land.” Honduran human rights attorney Joaquin Mejia said, “That the Garifuna have yet to obtain an ancestral land deed isn’t their fault. It’s that of the government, which has not upheld its obligation to issue the deeds.”

https://elfaro.net/en/202211/centroamerica/26468/Under-Xiomara-Castro-Honduran-Garifunas-Receive-JOH-Style-Military-Eviction.htm?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Iran. The UN Human Rights Council created a fact-finding mission related to the protests that began in Iran on 16 September. High Commissioner for Human Rights Turk said OHCHR had received “multiple communications” from Iran, including about domestic investigations into the events, but those “have failed to meet international standards of impartiality, independence and transparency.” According to the information received at OHCHR by 24 November, more than 300 people have been killed in protests, including at least 40 children, and at least 15,000 arrested. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1131022>

Japan. Japan began issuing partnership certificates to same-sex couples, “allowing them to be treated as married couples for certain public services for the first time, but falling short of marriage equality,” *BBC* reported. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63468752>

Mexico. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights’ Special Follow-up Mechanism to the Ayotzinapa Case published its third report. It said, “Mexico still has an international obligation to provide a satisfactory explanation about the fate or whereabouts of the 43 college students.” It accused the Army of withholding evidence, and said the government has failed to remove “persistent structures within the state apparatus that sought to cover up the crime,” *Reuters* reported. For background see *SAHR News* 2022-10. https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/gie/ayotzinapa/mesa/docs/Informe_MESA_2022.pdf; https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/americas-rights-body-turns-up-heat-mexico-over-missing-students-2022-11-15/?emci=422f57e0-ca65-ed11-ade6-14cb65342cd2&emdi=8d621ddb-cb65-ed11-ade6-14cb65342cd2&ceid=4606001&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Myanmar. The Institute for Strategy and Policy–Myanmar reported that as of 2 November “at least 1,650,661 people had been forced to escape conflict in regions . . . in the more than 21 months since the military took power in Myanmar,” *RFA Burmese* reported. “According to data collected by *RFA*, authorities in Myanmar have arrested at least 992 Rohingyas who tried to flee their homes between December 2021 and mid-October 2022. Among them, 223 have been sentenced to between two and five years in prison under Myanmar’s immigration laws.” <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/refugees-11162022182447.html>

Nicaragua. The Interior ministry shut down 100 NGOs on 4 November, another 100 on 10 November, and 100 more on 16 November, *CrisisWatch* reported, bringing the “total number banned since December 2018 to around 2,900.” <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch#overview>

Russia. On 11 September two Russian human rights organizations, the Moscow Helsinki Group and Kaliningrad Regional Ecozaschita!, and 18 Russian citizens (“most anonymous for security reasons”) filed the “first ever Russian climate case before the Supreme Court,” *justiceinfo.com* reported. “The scientific report annexed to the lawsuit supports the conclusion that premature deaths as well as an increase in respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, allergies, heat stroke, are all closely linked to the deterioration of the Russian natural environment.” Four Indigenous communities from the Arctic and Siberia are represented in the case. The case was dismissed in ten days, the appeal decision is due December 8. https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/108576-cop-27-russian-activists-dare-take-kremlin-court.html?mc_cid=8d82eb5955&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb

Somalia. “According to the latest UN figures, at least 613 civilians have been killed and 948 injured so far this year--the highest number since 2017 and more than a 30 percent rise from last year. Most of the casualties, 315 killed and 686 injured, have been due to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), at least 94 percent of which were attributed to Al-Shabaab,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk. In addition to the “deliberate targeting of civilians,” as of 14 November information gathered by OHCHR indicated that “in recent months Al-Shabaab has destroyed numerous wells and poisoned another in the Hiraan region, at a time when Somalis are facing extreme hardship due to drought in many parts of the country. Al-Shabaab also destroyed part of the riverbank of the Shabelle river, houses, a bridge, the disabling telecommunication antennas and 11 schools,” which Turk called “wanton destruction” and said constitutes war crimes under international law. <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2082042.html>

South Africa. The Western Cape High Court heard the reopened inquest into the death of Imam Abdullah Haron, an anti-apartheid activist and religious leader who died in police custody in 1969, an op-ed in the *Daily Maverick* reported. “The first inquest into Haron’s death, which took place in 1970, concluded that he died from myocardial ischaemia (narrowing of the arteries leading to the heart), contributed to by a fall down a set of stairs while he was in police custody. However, Haron’s family believed and continue to believe that he was tortured and killed by Security Branch officers.” South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission made a finding that in Imam Haron’s case a human rights violation had occurred and forwarded the matter to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for further investigation; however, on receipt of the file, as in another 300 cases, “the NPA sat on its hands.” Thanks to Graham Dominy for the link. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-11-21-reopened-inquest-into-death-of-imam-abdullah-haron-casts-major-doubt-over-first-inquest-findings/>

South Sudan. Yasmin Sooka, the chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, told a conference in London, “Nowhere in the world do you find so many women who experience conflict by being repeatedly gang raped, year after year since 2013, shunned and stigmatized, suffering in silence, while the men responsible are promoted and rewarded.” The Commission said it “has reasonable ground to believe that earlier this year a government-appointed County Commissioner in the oil-rich Unity State was present overseeing systematic gang rapes at a cantonment site.” The Commission has been, over the past six years, “meticulously interviewing more than a thousand witnesses and victims” to “collect and preserve evidence for use in a future Hybrid Court, the establishment of which has been delayed for many years.” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/un-experts-call-south-sudan-investigate-top-government-officials-their-role>

In a report entitled “*NO CHOICE BUT TO FLEE – Starvation and Displacement in Central Equatoria, South Sudan*,” law firm Global Rights Compliance (GRC) urged the international community to help end the crime of deliberate starvation being committed principally by South Sudan Government forces against the citizens in South Sudan. “The report finds that all parties to the conflict have committed widespread human rights abuses and violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including large-scale and systematic burning and destruction of homes and property, depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival . . . including through the destruction of food crops and markets, and impeding humanitarian access to the most vulnerable.” The report is supported by a forensic open-source intelligence investigation conducted by the Centre for Information Resilience. GRC urged the UN Security Council “to refer the situation in South Sudan to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to conduct a full investigation into alleged international crimes committed” or, alternatively, for the ICC to “immediately open a preliminary examination into the South Sudan situation.” <https://globalrightscpliance.com/2022/11/24/coming-soon-starvation-as-a-method-of-warfare-in-south-sudan-a-report/>

Syria. “The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has released its 11th annual report on violations against females in Syria. Published on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the report reveals that no fewer than 28,761 females have been killed in Syria since March 2011, including 94 due to torture, while 11,141 females are still arrested/detained. In addition, 11,526 incidents of sexual violence against females have been documented, noting that most of these violations were at the hands of the Syrian regime.” The report draws on SNHR’s archive that has been “built through the daily and ongoing monitoring of violations that include extrajudicial killing, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, recruitment, sexual violence, and attacks using the various types of weapons since March 2011.” <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/11/25/on-the-international-day-for-the-elimination-of-violence-against-women-snhrs-11th-annual-report-on-violations-against-females-in-syria/>

On World Children’s Day 20 November SNHR released its 11th annual report on violations against children in Syria. It said “no fewer than 29,894 children have been killed in Syria since March 2011, including 182 children who died due to torture, while 5,162 children are still detained and/or forcibly disappeared. SNHR said Syrian regime forces are responsible for nearly 23,000 of the children killed; Russian forces killed 2,046 children. <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/11/20/on-world-childrens-day-snhrs-11th-annual-report-on-violations-against-children-in-syria/>

SNHR also released “Breaking Down the Amnesty Decrees Issued by the Syrian Regime Between March 2011 and October 2022,” noting that “although a total of 7,531 detainees who were arbitrarily arrested have been released under the decrees issued by the Syrian regime, roughly 135,253 are still detained and/or forcibly disappeared.” The report “outlines the findings of the analysis carried out by the SNHR team of legislative amnesty decrees related to pardoning detainees previously held in the Syrian regime’s detention centers, with all this material carefully cross-checked with SNHR’s constantly maintained archive . . . The report is concerned solely with arrests we documented that coincided with amnesty decrees and the releases relating to these arrests as documented on SNHR’s database, and is not concerned with any other releases unrelated to amnesty decrees.” It “draws upon interviews we have conducted with former detainees who were released as a result of the amnesty decrees, and with detainees who are still incarcerated in civilian prisons across Syria . . . as well as with the families of the detainees and forcibly disappeared persons who fell prey to fraud operations related to the amnesty decrees. The report contains eight first-hand accounts from across Syria.” <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/11/16/breaking-down-the-amnesty-decrees-issued-by-the-syrian-regime-between-march-2011-and-october-2022/>

Türkiye. “A report by the Federation of Women’s Associations of Turkey (TKDF) says femicide and violence against women continue to be major problems in Turkey,” *Turkish Minute* reported. The report, based on newspaper reports and internet media, said at least 327 women have been killed by men from 1 January through 11 November, most by partners and most in big cities. <https://www.turkishminute.com/2022/11/26/femicide-remains-a-major-problem-in-turkey-report/>

United Arab Emirates. “The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (Mohre) has recorded 26,104 labour law violations as inspectors conducted 485,000 visits to private sector facilities across the UAE between January and October 2022,” *Khaleej Times* reported. About 22,000 cases were “non-compliance with the procedures for issuing work permit contract and facilities that do not practice their

licensed activities” and “about 30 cases involved workers signing fake documents of having received their wages and incorrect data entered in the Wage Protection System (WPS) to circumvent the provisions.” <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/jobs/uae-ministry-detects-nearly-3000-cases-of-salary-payment-violations-in-10-months>

United Kingdom. London’s Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), in the face of a legal challenge, “agreed to carry out a complete overhaul” of its controversial secretive gangs matrix database “and has already removed more than 1,100 people from the matrix, or 65% of all those listed,” *Computer Weekly* reported. “The MPS has now admitted that black people are disproportionately represented on the matrix, and that efforts to address this have not worked, with the latest review of the database showing that 80% of those named were black. Of those convicted of offences related to serious youth violence, just 27% are black.” https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252527243/Met-police-removes-nearly-two-thirds-of-people-from-Gangs-Matrix?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=context-dataveillance

United States. “Unequal airborne exposure to toxic metals [is] associated with race, ethnicity, and segregation in the USA,” a team of researchers reported in *Nature Communications*. On a positive note, they did “find evidence, however, that these disproportionate exposures may be abated through targeted regulatory action.” For the research they “acquired surface monitoring measurements from the Environmental Protection Agency’s Chemical Speciation Network (CSN) and Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) for several fine particulate metals,” and used the Federal Land Manager Environmental Database and data from the U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-022-33372-z>

After a whistleblower said a doctor contracted by the immigrant Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia “had performed gynecological procedures on detainees without their consent,” the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stopped using the facility. The Senate then ordered an investigation, and “Senate investigators reviewed hundreds of thousands of pages of medical records and related documents, and determined immigrants at the Irwin County center were subjected to unnecessary transvaginal ultrasounds, contraceptive injections, and dilation and curettage procedures,” a Senate official told *Bloomberg Law*. The Senate report “highlights repeated failures by detention officials to obtain informed consent from detainees and a failure by ICE to vet medical providers and ensure detainees’ basic human rights.” https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/detained-immigrants-faced-invasive-medical-care-probe-finds?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=221116

United States/New Jersey. The governor “signed an executive order that all name change orders filed with the state Department of Treasury after 1948 are exempt from the Open Public Records Act,” reported *NJ.com*. Linking the step to protection of transgender residents, he said the exemption will “help protect privacy and support New Jerseyans who wish to change their names without fear for their safety.” <https://www.nj.com/politics/2022/11/name-changes-in-nj-no-longer-open-to-the-public-under-murphy-order-to-benefit-transgender-residents.html>

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