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**ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**News from the Section on Archives and Human Rights**  
**Issue no. 120, November 2019**  
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**Commentary.**

It began this way: At the 2009 meeting of the International Council on Archives, national archivists were wary of the 6-year-old Human Rights Working Group. They seemed fear that if a body with the ICA's name pointed to human rights abuses by governments, it would make it difficult for them to continue supporting ICA. As the incoming chair of the HRWG, I took the stage at the annual business meeting and promised that the Group would look at human rights issues in all sectors of society, not just governments. The way I thought to keep my word was to send out regular reports about human rights in international news. I put out the first issue of *HRWG News* in December 2009 which, as you look at the issue number above, means this issue completes a 10-year run of monthly releases.

That first issue was only two pages in length, and it announced that the next issues of the newsletter would discuss the Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and highlight examples of records essential to exercise those rights; those became commentary topics through July 2012. The next set of commentaries focused on the *Principles of Access to Archives*, which the ICA adopted at its August 2012 annual meeting. Since that run was completed in June 2013, the commentary has simply focused on a topic in the news. To mark the 10-year anniversary, a list of commentary topics will be posted to the SAHR website. The compilation of the commentaries on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which I issued in 2018 for the 70th anniversary of the UDHR, can be found there also.

Early on I began to separate items into sections for international, general, bilateral/multilateral, and national news. Individual country and bilateral items form the most prominent part of the *News*; over 150 countries have been featured at least once in the 10 years. But increasingly human rights in business and in medical treatment and the related records have assumed greater importance in the coverage. I always include news from international organizations, as that information is often lacking or buried in national news media yet has broad impact.

Deciding how to characterize a news item is difficult. Do you, for example, think an item on how DNA is used in research on criminal cases should be listed under privacy, technology or medical news? Is an item on the war in Yemen part of the general wars in the Middle East or is it separate (right now it is separate)? Early issues had all news about UN Special Rapporteurs under the UN heading, but as I heard from people that they read only the news items on the countries in which they were interested, I started moving UN and other international news that applies only to one country to the country item. The yearly indexes for the *News*, which I began keeping in 2013, show how shockingly inconsistent I have been. Yearly indexes for 2016-2018 will be posted to the SAHR website.

After a reader told me that some of the summaries were too brief to allow him to decide whether to read the whole story, I started adding more text to some items, adding work for the translators. Coverage changes; for instance, a few years ago I dropped reporting on any but extraordinary data breaches—there were just too many. I try to avoid using links that lead to sites for paying subscribers only; often I can find an open site that carries the same story and I will cite that.

Over the years I have been asked how I put the issue together. I am always grateful for leads to articles, and I thank the tipsters. But mostly it comes from reading: a dozen daily newspapers in paper or on line and several dozen other electronic news sources, some daily, some weekly, some biweekly, some monthly. I always use and am enormously thankful for Peter Kurilecz's RAINbyte, *Documentary Heritage News* from Library and Archives Canada, and the monthly *Crisis Watch* from the International Crisis Group; without them this *News* would be poorer.

The *News* has many unseen helpers. Until her untimely death in 2017 Cristina Bianchi translated it into French. Since that time the major work of French translation has been done by Remi Dubuisson and Myriam Erwin. Before 2015 some of the *News* was translated into Spanish by Roman Lescano; since that time Paloma Beneito Arias, Valentina Rojas and Blanca Bazaco Palacios share that task. A number of people have served as webmaster, getting the *News* onto the ICA page, including Teresa Fallon, Kate Blalack and, currently, Roman Lescano. Thanks to all of them for this time-consuming, unrecognized but incredibly devoted work.

Distributing the *News* has been complicated. I post the *News* to the ICA listserv, but the ICA is unable to maintain a subscription list for non-members. Consequently, UNESCO, through the good offices of Jens Boel, made an important contribution by distributing the issues through 2017 to a mailing list it maintained. Since then, thanks to Giulia Barrera, the National Association of Italian Archives' online archival magazine *Il Mondo degli Archivi* has taken over, reformatting and distributing the *News* to a mailing list it maintains. Thanks to all these people and groups.

And, above all, my thanks to all readers everywhere. May the next ten years find more examples of archives affecting positively the human rights of each of us, anywhere we live and work and have our being.

### **International news.**

Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia. The Supreme Court Chamber decided that the Trial Chamber's 2018 conviction of Nuon Chea for genocide will stand; it was "not voided by the fact that his appeal was pending" when he died in August 2019, reported *VOD*. For background see *HRWG News* 2018-11. <https://vodenglish.news/nuon-cheas-genocide-conviction-stands-but-final-judgement-left-unsaid/>

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Commission expressed "concern over the migration policies that have recently been adopted by the United States, which affect the mobility of migrant persons and may derive in profiling practices." In particular, it expressed "concern over the risks that a DNA collection mechanism would pose to the rights to privacy and the use of personal data," as the Commission learned the U.S. is "developing a plan to authorize the collection of DNA samples from migrants entering U.S. territory to compile a national database of criminal profiles" and the "suspension and limitations on entry for persons who cannot demonstrate their capacity to cover approved health insurance within 30 days of entry into the United States, or the financial resources to pay for medical costs." [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2019/279.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/279.asp); see also <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/hrfordersfromabove.pdf>

Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The case of *Perrone y Preckel vs. Argentina* centered on whether Argentina needed to pay reparations to two government employees who were imprisoned and, in one case, exiled during the military dictatorship. The Court ruled that compensation must be paid for the time they were prevented from fulfilling their positions and stated the documentary proof it considered. This is an interesting precedent for future cases against states that incarcerate their own government employees. [http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec\\_385\\_esp.pdf](http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_385_esp.pdf)

Inter-American Development Bank. "In an historic decision, the Board of Executive Directors of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved an international investigation of the Bank's private lending arm, IDB Invest, for its investment in the Ituango hydroelectric project. Located in the department of Antioquia, the Ituango dam has had a devastating impact on thousands of people across four departments and 27 municipalities in Colombia," wrote the Center for International Environmental Law. The complaint, filed by 477 people affected by the dam project, said the project "lacked an adequate environmental impact assessment and that it did not allow for the participation of communities or provide access to information." The investigation will, among other charges, look at "the assessment of the risk of disasters and access to information about these risks." The Bank's records are key to this investigation. <https://www.ciel.org/news/inter-american-development-bank-to-investigate-ituango-hydroelectric-project/>

International Criminal Court (ICC). “International Criminal Court . . . judges handed down the highest penalty ever given by the court when they announced a 30-year prison sentence for former Congolese rebel commander Bosco Ntaganda,” reported *International Justice Monitor*. For background see *HRWG News* 2019-07. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2019/11/ntaganda-handed-30-year-prison-sentence-at-icc/>

The Prosecutor announced that the judges authorized an investigation “into the Situation in the People’s Republic of Bangladesh/Republic of the Union of Myanmar” in the period since 9 October 2016 “in relation to *any crimes* within the jurisdiction of the ICC” committed against the Rohingya population. This includes the “alleged deportation of civilians across the Myanmar-Bangladesh border” and “any future crimes, committed at least in part on the territory of Bangladesh, or on the territory of any other State Party or State which would accept the jurisdiction of this court” after 1 June 2010. See also items International Court of Justice and Argentina/Myanmar below. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=20191122-otp-statement-bangladesh-myanmar>

International Court of Justice. Acting “on behalf of the 57 Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation,” The Gambia filed a lawsuit “seeking to hold Myanmar accountable under international law for State-sponsored genocide against its minority Muslim population” the Rohingya. The suit said the “genocidal acts are documented extensively by independent investigative efforts undertaken by United Nations experts and bodies” and “have been corroborated by international human rights organizations and other credible sources,” *Business Wire* reported. The suit was brought under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to which both Myanmar and The Gambia are State parties. *Passblue* noted that this is “the first time that rape will be prosecuted as genocide at the court.” <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20191111005244/en/Foley-Hoag-Leads-Gambia%E2%80%99s-Legal-Team-Historic> ; <https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?e=974ec5d541&u=5d5693a8f1af2d4b6cb3160e8&id=a35517a554>

United Nations. Writing in *The Lancet*, a research team reported on the wide variety of monitoring reports on the UN Sustainable Development Goals that relate to health, produced by 100 countries and the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the Global Burden of Disease collaboration, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and Our World in Data. The team found that estimates of progress “vary widely,” highlighting “inconsistencies that emerge from using different . . . definitions, data sources, data processing, and data synthesis approaches.” They urged nations to strengthen data collection capabilities, develop standards for data processing, and enhance transparency guidelines on how data is compiled. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32523-1/fulltext?dgcid=raven\\_jbs\\_etoc\\_email](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32523-1/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email)

World Bank. *Global Insights on Access to Justice 2019: Findings from the World Justice Project General Population Poll in 101 Countries* “is the first-ever effort to capture comparable data on legal needs and access to civil justice on a global scale, representing the voices of more than 100,000 people in 101 countries.” The data “are derived from the access to justice module of the World Justice Project’s General Population Poll . . . administered in 101 countries and jurisdictions in 2017 and 2018 using a representative sample of 1,000 respondents in each country.” Four in ten people surveyed—statistically representing about 1.4 billion people worldwide—reported “experiencing a social, economic, or health-related hardship” because of justice-related barriers such as “low levels [of] legal capability, issues accessing appropriate sources of help, and the cost of the resolution process.” <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/global-insights-access-justice-2019>

### **World/general news.**

Business news. An Australia court ruled against Johnson & Johnson in a class action by 1,350 women who had “mesh and tape products implanted” which “eroded internally in many cases, . . . caused infections, multiple complications” and “a significant psychological toll.” The court had access to internal documents, meeting minutes, and internal emails of the company. The judge said the company “remained publicly coy about what they knew or did not know” about the complaints of users of the products and failed to investigate properly, the *Guardian* reported. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/nov/21/australian-women-win-landmark-vaginal-mesh-class-action-against-johnson-johnson>

An engineering professor at the University of Tennessee (U.S.) found a 1966 article written by the president of Bituminous Coal Research Inc. and published in the *Mining Congress Journal* that said, “There is evidence that the amount of carbon dioxide in the earth’s atmosphere is increasing rapidly as a result of the combustion of fossil fuels.” The *Huffington Post* reported the professor believes the article is “the first evidence that the coal industry was aware of the impending climate crisis more than half a century ago—a finding that could open mining companies to the type of litigation that the oil industry is now facing.” [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coal-industry-climate-change\\_n\\_5dd6bbebe4b0e29d7280984f?guccounter=1](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coal-industry-climate-change_n_5dd6bbebe4b0e29d7280984f?guccounter=1)

The World Benchmarking Alliance released the annual Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB). It looked at the human rights compliance of the 200 largest listed companies in 4 “high-risk” sectors: agricultural products, apparel, extractive industries, and information and communications technology manufacturing. Using “public information disclosed by companies on their websites, other platforms, or through [participation in] the CHRB Disclosure Platform,” the companies are measured against specified human rights benchmarks. The organization concluded, “The 200 companies are painting a distressing picture; most companies are scoring poorly and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights . . . are clearly not being implemented. That one quarter of companies score less than 10% and a full half of companies fail to meet any of the five basic criteria for human rights due diligence should alarm governments and investors.” <https://www.corporatebenchmark.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/CHRB2019KeyFindingsReport.pdf>

*STAT* and *ProPublica* collaborated on a report on how Purdue Pharma “aggressively countered criticism” that its painkiller, OxyContin, helped cause the opioid epidemic. *ProPublica* obtained emails and documents from the company, showing its contracts with public relations firms, lobbyists, and its “hidden relationships” with the American Enterprise Institute (a politically potent conservative think tank in Washington, D.C.) and its scholars. For background, see *HRWG News* 2019-02 and 08. [https://www.statnews.com/2019/11/19/how-purdue-pharma-planted-its-anti-story/?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=764d08c848-Weekend+Reads+COPY+02&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-764d08c848-149736437](https://www.statnews.com/2019/11/19/how-purdue-pharma-planted-its-anti-story/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=764d08c848-Weekend+Reads+COPY+02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-764d08c848-149736437)

A French court dismissed charges of “complicity in crimes against humanity” against French cement company Lafarge but maintained charges including “financing a terrorist enterprise, violation of an embargo and endangering others,” *AP* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-03 and 06. <https://kdown.com/2019/11/07/french-court-partially-quashed-charges-against-lafarge/>

Environment. Stunning new research from Climate Central, using a satellite imagery dataset derived from a NASA mission in 2000, LandScan population data, and artificial intelligence, developed sophisticated projections of the impact of rising seas due to climate change. Two key findings: “As a result of heat-trapping pollution from human activities, rising sea levels could within three decades push chronic floods higher than land currently home to 300 million people” and “by 2100, areas now home to 200 million people could fall permanently below the high tide line.” Archives of all kinds could disappear if action is not taken now to protect them from rising waters. <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/report-flooded-future-global-vulnerability-to-sea-level-rise-worse-than-previously-understood>

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation released a report on attacks against environmental protection defenders, based on responses to “an extensive questionnaire” completed by 25 environmental organizations, “reports, in-depth interviews, annual reports for the years 2017-2018” from 44 partner organizations, and statistical data bases from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Global Witness, and the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. Among the findings: 88 % say the situation for civil society has deteriorated in recent years, 68% believe decision-makers in their country see the environmental movements as a threat,” and 24% say “employees or individuals from the organization’s target groups have been killed as a result of their environmental work.” [https://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/sites/default/files/dokument-media/environmental\\_defenders\\_under\\_attack\\_eng.pdf](https://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/sites/default/files/dokument-media/environmental_defenders_under_attack_eng.pdf)

Medical records. A group of personnel from the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the World Health Organization urged *The Lancet* to “reconsider” its policy “on making individual level data openly accessible,” arguing that making even “pseudonymised individual data openly accessible, without careful attention to what is being shared, represents a potential threat to the privacy of the

individuals.” They also wrote that data sharing outside the European Economic Area is difficult, even though “adequate sample sizes” for disease such as cancer “can only be reached when researchers share individual level data with each other in large collaborative efforts.” They urged the EU Commission and governments to put in place agreements to facilitate research in “epidemiological and so-called big registry data linked to detailed cohort data.” [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)326030/fulltext?dgcid=raven\\_jbs\\_etoc\\_email](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)326030/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email)

A Swiss-U.S. research team found that “having access to mobile phone location data can prove crucial in understanding disease transmission dynamics—and, ultimately, in stopping an outbreak from evolving into an epidemic,” *Eurasia Review* reported. [https://www.eurasiareview.com/18112019-mapping-disease-outbreaks-in-urban-settings-using-mobile-phone-data/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](https://www.eurasiareview.com/18112019-mapping-disease-outbreaks-in-urban-settings-using-mobile-phone-data/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Migration. In the first nine months of 2019, Mexico “apprehended 5,849 African migrants,” nearly half of them from Cameroon, all trying to reach the U.S., *VICE News* reported. Mexico’s National Institute of Migration said it issued “more than 205 permanent resident visas to so-called ‘stateless’ migrants” between 7 and 27 November, nearly all to Africans. The migrants are in an impossible situation: without receiving a residency permit they are not permitted to travel across Mexico to the U.S. border, while U.S. asylum law says people who have been given permission to reside in another country can be barred from asylum in the U.S. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/gyz4x3/the-hidden-victims-of-trumps-war-on-the-border](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/gyz4x3/the-hidden-victims-of-trumps-war-on-the-border)

Privacy. “A Florida [U.S. State] detective announced at a police convention that he had obtained a warrant to penetrate GEDmatch and search its full database of nearly one million users. Legal experts said that this appeared to be the first time a judge had approved such a warrant, and that the development could have profound implications for genetic privacy,” the *New York Times* reported. [https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/business/dna-database-search-warrant.html?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=d26ed194d2-MR\\_COPY\\_02&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-d26ed194d2-149736437](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/business/dna-database-search-warrant.html?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=d26ed194d2-MR_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-d26ed194d2-149736437); <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2019/11/search-warrant-overrides-1m-users-choice-not-to-share-dna-with-cops/>

The American Bar Association’s *ABA Journal* published an article on benefits and privacy concerns raised by the use of genealogy sites such as 23andMe and Ancestry.com in criminal investigations. <http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/family-tree-genealogy-sites-arm-law-enforcement-with-a-new-branch-of-dna-sleuthing-but-the-battle-over-privacy-looms>

Using the Freedom of Information Act, *OneZero* obtained documents, including notes and presentations of the U.S. Defense Forensics and Biometrics Agency about its Automated Biometric Information System (ABIS) database. “ABIS is connected to the FBI’s [U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation] biometric database, which is in turn connected to databases used by state and local law enforcement. Ultimately, that means that the U.S. military can readily search against biometric data of U.S. citizens and cataloged non-citizens.” <https://onezero.medium.com/exclusive-this-is-how-the-u-s-militarys-massive-facial-recognition-system-works-bb764291b96d>

Amnesty International warned that Facebook and Google have a “surveillance-based business model” that is “inherently incompatible with the right to privacy and poses a systemic threat to a range of other rights, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of thought, and the right to equality and non-discrimination.” <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL3014042019ENGLISH.PDF>

*Forbes* published two articles, ironically related. The first one, on November 12, was an opinion piece on “data privacy as a basic human right.” Ten days later, it reported that a “data sleuth” found information from two companies stored on a single “unsecured Elasticsearch server” that exposed “detailed information on a staggering 1.2 billion individuals,” one of the largest breaches ever. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/leemathews/2019/11/22/one-of-the-biggest-leaks-ever-exposes-data-on-12-billion-people/#28b161f0977f>; <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2019/11/12/data-privacy-as-a-basic-human-right/#1d990a184cbf>

Thirty years ago the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which now is the “most widely ratified treaty in the world,” the Responsible Data blog reported. A joint project of UNICEF and New York University seeks to “build awareness regarding the need for special attention to

data issues affecting children” and issued a set of “Principles of Responsible Data for Children.” <https://rd4c.org/>

Slavery. As announced by President Emmanuel Macron in May, France created a Foundation for the Memory of Slavery and has now appointed Dominique Taffin, the director of the archives of Martinique, as its director. <https://www.madinin-art.net/la-fondation-pour-la-memoire-de-lesclavage-est-creee-2/>

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

Argentina/Myanmar. Under the principle of universal jurisdiction, the Burmese Rohingya Organization UK and other groups filed a lawsuit in Argentina against “top Myanmar officials over the military-led crackdown on Rohingya Muslims,” *Radio Free Asia* reported. It also reported that a Yangon-based Muslim committee used records from 13 Rakhine state townships where Muslims live to compile a list of mosques and Muslim religious schools that have been demolished or forced to shut down. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/argentina-lawsuit-11142019163937.html>

Argentina/United States. *The Nation* published an article on the declassified U.S. intelligence files on Argentina’s 1976-1983 “Dirty War” that were given to Argentina in April 2019. Argentina’s Office of the Public Prosecutor said the records are “already contributing to ongoing cases that are both in the investigative and trial phases” and have provided “new data on how institutions [of repression] functioned under the dictatorship” as well as “data on the responsibility of officials who participated in massive human rights violations.” <https://www.thenation.com/article/argentina-dirty-wars/>

Balkan wars. The Humanitarian Law Centre published a dossier on the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs which, between 1993 and 1995, forcibly sent around 10,000 refugees to do military service on the front lines in Bosnia and Croatia. It quotes the record of a Yugoslav Supreme Defence Council meeting in 1993 where then-Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic endorsed the policy. The dossier is based on more than 500 statements from refugees who were forcibly mobilized or their family members, documents from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and documents from Serbian courts on the “more than 120 cases of people who sued the Serbian state for compensation for forced mobilization.” [https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/13/serbia-sent-refugees-from-croatia-bosnia-to-frontlines-report/?utm\\_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=4351c462fa-BI\\_DAILY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4027db42dc-4351c462fa-319725265](https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/13/serbia-sent-refugees-from-croatia-bosnia-to-frontlines-report/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=4351c462fa-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-4351c462fa-319725265)

Iran/Iraq. *The Intercept* and the *New York Times* reported on “an archives of secret Iranian intelligence cables” obtained by *The Intercept* that “exposes Tehran’s vast influence in Iraq, detailing years of painstaking work by Iranian spies to co-opt the country’s leaders, pay Iraqi agents working for the Americans to switch sides, and infiltrate every aspect of Iraq’s political, economic and religious life.” [https://theintercept.com/2019/11/18/iran-iraq-spy-cables/?utm\\_source=The+Intercept+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=79064d9373-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_11\\_18&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e00a5122d3-79064d9373-134379393](https://theintercept.com/2019/11/18/iran-iraq-spy-cables/?utm_source=The+Intercept+Newsletter&utm_campaign=79064d9373-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e00a5122d3-79064d9373-134379393)

Mideast war. *The New Humanitarian* asked, “Who’s responsible for soaring civilian casualties in Afghanistan?” Its answer: “That depends on who’s counting.” The latest UN figures showed about a quarter of 8,239 civilian casualties from January through September 2019 were “caused by pro-government forces, including 15% blamed on Afghan security forces and 8% on international militaries.” NATO said 3% of 7,260 casualties were caused by Afghan security forces and 2% by international forces. Both reports said casualties were greater than in the same period in 2018: UN said up by 42% July to September while NATO said up by 39% June to September. [https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/maps-and-graphics/2019/11/05/Afghanistan-war-civilian-conflict-casualties?utm\\_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm\\_campaign=85bc4adb5a-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_11\\_08\\_WEEKLY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d842d98289-85bc4adb5a-75545741](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/maps-and-graphics/2019/11/05/Afghanistan-war-civilian-conflict-casualties?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=85bc4adb5a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_08_WEEKLY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-85bc4adb5a-75545741)

Following a *BBC Panorama* and *Sunday Times* joint investigation that disclosed that the U.K. Ministry of Defense closed down criminal investigations and failed to prosecute British troops for killing civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq, 7 human rights organizations sent an open letter to “whatever political party forms the next government” in the U.K., asking it to commit to reopening the investigations and holding those responsible to account. <https://www.hrw.org/print/335930>

*BBC* reported that days after Turkish military forces crossed the border into Syria on October 9, “numerous videos alleged to have been filmed by pro-Turkey rebels emerged on social media.” The footage appears to show war crimes and “acts of brutality.” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50250330>

On November 20, Universal Children’s Day, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issued a report on the number of children killed in Syria since March 2011. Basing its report on “daily ongoing monitoring and verification of incidents and news and the collection of evidence and data, as well as analysis of videos and photos posted online” and supplemented by eyewitness accounts, SNHR said “at least” 29,017 children have died, of which 85% were killed by Syrian Regime forces and their allies. <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2019/11/20/54496/>

SNHR also released a report on what it termed “violent military escalation in northwest Syria” from April 26 to November 15, based on 7 first-hand accounts and videos and photographs posted online or submitted to SNHR. It said it retains “copies of all the videos and photographs included in this report in a confidential electronic database, as well as keeping hard disk backup copies.” [http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Violent\\_Military\\_Escalation\\_in\\_Northwest\\_Syria\\_Despite\\_the\\_Convening\\_of\\_the\\_Constitutional\\_Committee\\_Meetings\\_en.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/Violent_Military_Escalation_in_Northwest_Syria_Despite_the_Convening_of_the_Constitutional_Committee_Meetings_en.pdf)

The Syrian Justice and Accountability Centre issued a summary of how it is “using technology to transform the field of human rights documentation.” Its team analyzes “on average 8,500 videos per month” and to date has accumulated more than 180,000 videos and “preserved around 1.8 million pieces of online data on the Syrian conflict.” [https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2019/11/14/sjacs-database-how-sjac-is-using-technology-to-transform-the-field-of-human-rights-documentation/?utm\\_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm\\_campaign=4256648b95-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_01\\_10\\_02\\_56\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0a7405c641-4256648b95-96428969](https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2019/11/14/sjacs-database-how-sjac-is-using-technology-to-transform-the-field-of-human-rights-documentation/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=4256648b95-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-4256648b95-96428969)

Five Syrian torture survivors now in Norway “filed a statement on what they endured and witnessed in more than a dozen prisons” in Syria and provided the police with “a dossier of evidence linking the mistreatment to 17 named, high-ranking officials in the Syrian government,” *The Guardian* reported. The case is based on the principle of universal jurisdiction contained in the Norwegian penal code. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/13/syrian-refugees-ask-norway-police-to-investigate-war-crimes>

An article in the *New York Times* in October said that a private researcher had acquired Islamic State (IS) documents—receipts—that seemed to show that the IS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, paid members of a rival jihadist group to allow him to hide in its area of control. Another researcher, asked by the *Times* to review the items, first called them genuine but now believes they are forgeries. For background, see *SAHR News* 2019-10. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/14/world/middleeast/islamic-state-receipts-debate.html>

Republic of the Marshall Islands/United States. Reporters from the *Los Angeles Times* reviewed “thousands of documents” and conducted interviews with U.S. and Marshallese officials to write a major article on the ecological and environmental damage caused by U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshalls. It focused on the handling of nuclear waste, mostly from the 67 nuclear tests the U.S. conducted there but also 130 tons of contaminated soil from atomic testing grounds in the mainland U.S. state of Nevada that were buried with Marshalls material beneath a concrete dome on Enewetak Atoll. <https://www.latimes.com/projects/marshall-islands-nuclear-testing-sea-level-rise/>

Sri Lanka/Switzerland. A Sri Lankan employee of the Swiss Embassy was abducted “by unidentified men who forced her to unlock her cellphone data to them,” the *New York Times* reported. The phone “contained information about Sri Lankans who have recently sought asylum in Switzerland and the names of Sri Lankans who aided them as they fled the country because they feared for their safety after Gotabaya Rajapakska won the presidency in elections.” Police and “plainclothes officers” also “raided the offices of a news outlet, News Hub, known for its criticism of the Rajapaksa family” and journalists “were forced to unlock their computers for them to be examined.” <https://srilankabrief.org/2019/11/sri-lankan-critics-fear-a-crackdown-is-underway-and-some-flee/>

## National news.

Afghanistan. After the *New York Times* quoted an Afghan human rights activist, 4 boys, and local school officials saying 165 schoolboys had been raped by educators in 3 rural schools in Logar Province, the activist, Mohammad Musa, was arrested. After 5 days, the Afghan National Directorate of Security released a video that showed Musa “appearing to be speaking under duress” retracting his allegations, the *Times* reported. Last May “photos and videos posted anonymously to a Facebook page” showed some of the boys “in sexual positions with men.” President Ashraf Ghani ordered an investigation, as did the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The U.S. and German ambassadors called the coerced confession “appalling” and “just shameful and embarrassing.” <https://www.newsrust.com/2019/11/us-envoy-says-afghans-coerced.html>

Albania. The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) announced that it has identified the remains of two people who disappeared during Albania’s communist years, *BIRN* reported. ICMP said it was waiting for court orders to permit the excavation of burial sites, that locating and identifying the estimated 6,000 missing victims is “impeded” because of the need for “collaboration between various state bodies, from prosecutors who should issue excavation orders to the Interior Ministry, where archival information about possible grave sites can be found, and local authorities that should help ICMP experts with excavations.” Deputy Interior Minister Rovena Voda “was unable to answer whether or not the state knows where Communist-era graves are situated. ‘I do not have deep knowledge of the archives of the state,’ Voda said.” [https://balkaninsight.com/2019/10/31/search-of-victims-of-communism-in-albania-blocked-by-unwilling-prosecutors/?utm\\_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=82b3ce8a2f-BI\\_DAILY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4027db42dc-82b3ce8a2f-319725265](https://balkaninsight.com/2019/10/31/search-of-victims-of-communism-in-albania-blocked-by-unwilling-prosecutors/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=82b3ce8a2f-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-82b3ce8a2f-319725265)

Bolivia. On 5 November *teleSUR* reported that the Radio Education Network of Bolivia “leaked 16 audios involving opposition leaders who are calling for a coup d’etat against the government of President Evo Morales, a political action which would have been coordinated from the U.S. embassy.” On 10 November Morales stepped down from the presidency and the next day flew to Mexico where he has been given asylum. The authenticity of the videos is unknown; links to them are at <https://www.en24.news/news/2019/11/10/bolivia-audios-leaked-from-opposition-leaders-calling-for-a-coup-against-evo-morales.html>. [https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Bolivia-Audios-Linking-Civic-Ex-Military-and-US-in-Coup-Plans-20191105-0001.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=12](https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Bolivia-Audios-Linking-Civic-Ex-Military-and-US-in-Coup-Plans-20191105-0001.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12)

Bosnia. *BIRN* reported that the revised War Crimes Processing Strategy, which has not yet been adopted by Bosnia’s Council of Ministers, would transfer certain war crimes cases from state courts to lower jurisdictions. The Strategy “says that the state prosecution has more than 550 unresolved war crimes cases involving more than 4,500 identified perpetrators, and as many cases in which the perpetrators are unknown.” [https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/28/bosnian-prosecutors-struggle-to-tackle-backlog-of-war-cases/?utm\\_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=18c70946e9-BI\\_DAILY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4027db42dc-18c70946e9-319725265](https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/28/bosnian-prosecutors-struggle-to-tackle-backlog-of-war-cases/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=18c70946e9-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-18c70946e9-319725265)

Canada. The National Association of Japanese Canadians asked the British Columbia legislature “to fully account for its actions that led to their uprooting, dispossession and exile from the coast from 1941 to 1949,” the *Times Colonist* reported. The organization conducted research in archives across Canada for its report on the historical wrongs, although “full disclosure of B.C. government documents related to the uprooting remains elusive.” <https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/righting-a-historical-wrong-for-japanese-canadians-1.23996497>

Chile. Massive anti-government demonstrations began on 14 October and were met with what observers called an excessive use of force by the military police. According to *teleSUR*, “at least 270 Chileans have been wounded in the eyes as a result of Carabineros shooting directly in the face in anti-government protests.” The University of Chile studied the pellets used by the security forces and found they were only 20% rubber, with the rest made of other elements including lead. The police asked the “ammunition supplier to submit a report” on the composition of the pellets, which also will be “subjected to other tests requested from laboratories abroad.” [https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/carabineros-suspend-use-of-pellets-after-270-eye-injuries-20191119-0022.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=9](https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/carabineros-suspend-use-of-pellets-after-270-eye-injuries-20191119-0022.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=9)

Human Rights Watch reported that from the beginning of the demonstrations through 21 November, the National Human Rights Institute filed 442 criminal complaints “regarding injuries, cruel treatment, torture, rape, killings, and attempted killings allegedly committed by security forces.” The Institute said



there were more than 220 eye injuries, and the Health Ministry reported that the emergency services treated 11,564 people injured through 22 November, of whom 16 lost sight in one eye and 34 others had severe eye injuries. The Attorney General's Office opened preliminary investigations into alleged abuses against 2,278 people "in which 203 members of security forces are allegedly implicated, including 173 police officers." Among HRW's recommended reforms is to "install cameras in all areas within all police stations with safeguards to ensure detainee privacy and a system to retain recordings for use by judicial and other authorities." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/11/26/chile-police-reforms-needed-wake-protests>

China. November saw unprecedented leaks from government sources. First, the *New York Times* published a long report, based on 403 pages of leaked documents, on the development and management of the program of mass detention in the Xinjiang region. Subsequently, *VICE News* obtained an 8-page document, "apparently" written in 2017 by the internal Political and Legal Affairs Commission in a sub-region of Xinjiang, that "provides detailed directives" for "implementation of these re-education camps" that are to assimilate "long-marginalized religious and ethnic minorities into Han Chinese culture, language, and beliefs—including unquestioning support for The People's Party." *VICE News* noted that China's Foreign Ministry condemned the *New York Times* report "and accused the authors of misinterpreting the documents, but they did not deny that the papers were real." *VICE News* also said two sources told it that "government officials have been instructed to burn all paper documents linked to Xinjiang, and to restrict access to the remaining digital copies that should now only be held on one computer per locality." And a leak of 24 pages (which may include the 8 pages *VICE News* reviewed) was obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which published a detailed report saying the documents show "Chinese police are guided by a massive data collection and analysis system that uses artificial intelligence to select entire categories of Xinjiang residents for detention." [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/wjwmpb/prevent-escapes-leaked-documents-detail-brutal-reality-of-chinas-re-education-camps-for-muslims](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/wjwmpb/prevent-escapes-leaked-documents-detail-brutal-reality-of-chinas-re-education-camps-for-muslims); <https://www.icij.org/investigations/china-cables/exposed-chinas-operating-manuals-for-mass-interment-and-arrest-by-algorithm/>

In late October the nongovernmental Uyghur Human Rights Project and Uyghurism.com issued a report, "Demolishing Faith: The Destruction and Desecration of Uyghur Mosques and Shrines." Using "multiple satellite image programs," the research showed that in the Uyghur (Xinjiang) region "over 100 mosques have been fully destroyed or have had an architectural element removed." They also published a list of demolished mosques and other Islamic-related sites, with before and after images. [https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/UHRP\\_report\\_Demolishing\\_Faith.pdf](https://docs.uhrp.org/pdf/UHRP_report_Demolishing_Faith.pdf)

China/Hong Kong. Meanwhile, on the eastern edge of the country, police in Hong Kong continued to clash with demonstrators. *Al Jazeera* saw internal police documents that had been obtained by legislators showing that since September "the Hong Kong police force has lowered its threshold for the use of force." A pro-democracy legislator said the section of the police manual "outlining appropriate use of force" was revised, deleting the phrase "officers would be accountable for their own actions." <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/blunt-unplanned-police-tactics-fire-hk-protests-191101070008742.html>

A medical professional wrote to *The Lancet*, saying that he had been part of a medical team providing emergency care at Hong Kong Polytechnic University when, on the night of 17 November, the police announced that anyone in the university complex after 22:00 hours would be arrested for rioting (if convicted, the punishment can be up to 10 years in prison). His team left but others stayed to treat casualties, and a photograph "widely circulated online shows at least 16 individuals sitting on the ground with their hands bound behind their backs with zipcords; they are wearing high-visibility vests with descriptions of Doctor, Nurse, and EMT (emergency medical technician)." He concluded, "The actions of the Hong Kong Police Force have fallen far below accepted international norms for the handling of volunteer emergency medical providers." <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2819%2932909-5>

Colombia. Reports from *teleSUR* on 19, 21, and 22 November portray the violence settling over Colombia.

\*On 19 November the Attorney General's Office said "187 former FARC guerrilla members have been assassinated . . . since the signing of a peace deal in 2016."

\*On 20 November in Bogota police with "search warrants for investigations related to terrorism and explosives manufacture" raided "at least" 27 facilities including such nongovernmental

organizations as City in Movement, the Central Union of Workers, and the Antioquia Teachers' Union. The *Urban Cartel Magazine's* headquarters were raided, with the police telling reporters who were recording the raid, "If you publish that video, you will go deep." Homes of students and social leaders in Cali and Medellin were also raided. The media did not report what documentation was taken from the sites.

\*And on November 22 Colombia's Defense Minister said 3 people died and 122 civilians were injured during the nationwide strike on 21 November and the "details surrounding the deaths are . . . under investigation." Strikers uploaded videos and photographs, including "photographs in which the Mobile Riot Squadron (ESMAD) members hit a woman in her face" and a video showing "more than 5 policemen kicking and beating a couple in downtown Bogota." <https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/187-Ex-FARC-Members-Killed-Since-The-Signing-of-Peace-Deal-Govt-20191119-0020.html>; [https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Colombia-Workers-Denounce-Raids-on-Organizations-Before-Strike-20191120-0001.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=8](https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Colombia-Workers-Denounce-Raids-on-Organizations-Before-Strike-20191120-0001.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8); [https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Colombia-3-Dead-122-Civilians-Injured-At-Strike-Against-Duque-20191122-0002.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=8](https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Colombia-3-Dead-122-Civilians-Injured-At-Strike-Against-Duque-20191122-0002.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8)

Ecuador. At the invitation of the government, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a mission "to collect first-hand information and identify possible human rights violations and abuses" that occurred during the 3-13 October protests. The team reported at least 9 people died and 1,507 were injured (including 435 members of security forces) and 1,382 people were detained. Civil society organizations said there were more than 100 attacks on journalists "carried out both by security officers and by protesters" and one media outlet's headquarters was raided by police "indicating a deliberate effort to hinder the ability to both impart and receive information, which is a key aspect of the right to freedom of expression and opinion." The mission was told by the government that 80% of those detained were subsequently released; the High Commissioner said the government "should ensure that those released without charges are not left with an adverse record against them as a result" and those charged should get a fair trial. "People not only have the right to truth, but also to remedy, which includes guarantees of non-recurrence," the High Commissioner said. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25368&LangID=E>

Egypt. *Mada Masr* is an independent media organization. On 23 November government security agents raided the home of a *Mada Masr* editor, confiscated documents and his and his wife's laptops, arrested him and later released him. The next day agents raided the *Mada Masr* offices, confiscated laptops and cellphones, detained journalists, and briefly arrested three, the *Washington Post* reported. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/egyptian-security-forces-raid-offices-of-one-of-egypts-last-independent-publications/2019/11/24/6da5146e-0ebb-11ea-924c-b34d09bbc948\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egyptian-security-forces-raid-offices-of-one-of-egypts-last-independent-publications/2019/11/24/6da5146e-0ebb-11ea-924c-b34d09bbc948_story.html)

El Salvador. President Nayib Bukele said at a press conference that he "will deliver the military archives related to the case of the El Mozote massacre, which left 1,725 victims," to the judge handling the case. The President said, "If the judge wants files from A to F, we're going to declassify from A to Z," *La Prensa Grafica* reported. Thanks to Antonio Gonzalez Quintana for the reference. [https://www.laprensagrafica.com/amp/elsalvador/Gobierno-dice-que-abrira-archivos-militares-20191102-0676.html?\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://www.laprensagrafica.com/amp/elsalvador/Gobierno-dice-que-abrira-archivos-militares-20191102-0676.html?_twitter_impression=true)

Germany. The *Washington Post* published an article on the continuing efforts to piece together torn documents of the East German secret police (the Stasi). [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/thirty-years-after-the-berlin-wall-fell-no-end-in-sight-for-stasi-spy-puzzle/2019/11/01/160d8ae2-fb29-11e9-9e02-1d45cb3dfa8f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/thirty-years-after-the-berlin-wall-fell-no-end-in-sight-for-stasi-spy-puzzle/2019/11/01/160d8ae2-fb29-11e9-9e02-1d45cb3dfa8f_story.html)

Guatemala. The International and National Advisory Councils of the Historical Archive of the National Police (AHPN) made a public declaration of concern about the Police Archive's current situation and the politicized campaign against former national archivist Anna Carla Ericastilla and former AHPN head Gustavo Meoño. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/news/guatemala/2019-11-18/joint-declaration-guatemala-police-archive#english>

The indictment of three members of the military high command charged with genocide and crimes against humanity against the Maya Ixil population, 1978-1982, was approved by the court and the case will now proceed to trial, *International Justice Monitor* reported. The judge also ordered "the investigation of other officials who might bear criminal responsibility for the alleged crimes." In making the ruling, the judge "delivered a detailed statement" citing documents of the Ministry of Defense, the Commission for Historical Clarification, statements made by military officers, witness testimony, and other evidence. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2019/11/court-indicts-senior-military-officials-for-genocide/>

*Crisis Watch* reported, “Congress took further actions to delegitimise defunct anti-corruption body the International Commission against Impunity (CICIG).” The “Truth Commission created in October for people who consider themselves to be victims of CICIG . . . requested [a] list from [the] Public Prosecutor with names of all national and foreign personnel who have worked for body; as of 11 November, [the] Truth Commission had held 28 hearings with more than 20 pending. Congress . . . adopted [an] amendment to Criminal Code which provides for reduction of sentences up to 50% for those involved in certain criminal cases including corruption, illicit association, money laundering and electoral crimes, if they accept guilt.” Civil society groups denounced the changes as “strengthening impunity” and filed an appeal at the constitutional court. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>

India. India’s Central Bureau of Investigation raided Amnesty International’s offices in Bengaluru and New Delhi, based on a complaint from India’s Home Ministry which “alleged that the provision of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010 and Indian Penal Code were contravened,” *Reuters* reported. Records probably were seized. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-amnesty/indias-federal-police-raid-local-amnesty-international-offices-idUSKBN1XP1XT>

Iran. The government cut internet access for five days which, *VICE News* wrote, “experts say is the most comprehensive and large-scale internet black out ever recorded.” As connectivity was restored, videos posted by Iranians showed “the brutal nature of the government crackdown,” including “security forces indiscriminately opening fire on crowds of protesters, beating them with iron bars, and dragging their dead bodies off the streets.” Another video shows security forces shooting at protesters from the rooftops of state buildings.” [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/8xwy3p/grisly-footage-reveals-what-irans-regime-did-to-protesters-when-the-internet-was-shut-down;for\\_videos\\_https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4ckiBE\\_o7Y](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/8xwy3p/grisly-footage-reveals-what-irans-regime-did-to-protesters-when-the-internet-was-shut-down;for_videos_https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4ckiBE_o7Y)

Amnesty International said, “Verified video footage, eyewitness testimony from people on the ground and information gathered from human rights activists outside Iran reveal a harrowing pattern of unlawful killings by Iranian security forces.” Amnesty said it had “credible reports” that by 19 November at least 106 protesters in 21 cities had been killed; “state media reported that, as of 17 November, more than 1,000 protesters had been arrested since the protests began” on 15 November. By the end of November the death toll was raised to 208. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/11/iran-more-than-100-protesters-believed-to-be-killed-as-top-officials-give-green-light-to-crush-protests/>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/12/iran-death-toll-from-bloody-crackdown-on-protests-rises-to-208/>

As the unrest continued, the Interior Minister said that by 28 November 731 banks and 140 government sites had been “torched,” more than 50 security force bases attacked, and approximately 70 gas stations burned, reported *PanARMENIAN*. The Center for Human Rights in Iran, a U.S.-based organization, estimated that close to 4,000 people were arrested. [https://www.eurasiareview.com/28112019-iran-730-banks-140-govt-sites-were-torched-in-unrest/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](https://www.eurasiareview.com/28112019-iran-730-banks-140-govt-sites-were-torched-in-unrest/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Kenya. The Data Protection Act, 2019, was signed into law. It created the office of the Data Protection Commissioner, and “organizations that own, manage, and control data will have to register with the commissioner before being allowed to conduct any business with the information,” *The Star* reported. That is potentially a very large number of registrations to be handled and will require a robust recordkeeping system. The law also will give Kenyans “more powers to access, as well as ask for amendments to their data held by state, including requests for deletion of misleading or editing incorrect data.” How that will affect the archival record is not clear. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2019-11-09-data-law-sets-sh5m-fine-for-breach-of-privacy/>

Liberia. *Front Page Africa* profiled an attorney, Archie P. Williams, who since the late 1980s has been collecting “newspapers and archival documents for future reference” and now posts items from them on line. “When the war [1989-2003] subsided, he says he was opportune to come across thousands of newspapers and archival documents littered on the streets in Monrovia.” He bought “barrels full with newspapers and other archival materials” from a soldier, and he “went as far as collecting tons from dumpsites.” He has now opened the Archie P. Williams Center for Historical Information and Archives Research. <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/the-liberian-archivist-archie-williams-recycles-history-one-newspaper-at-a-time/>

Mexico. In a review of Mexico's justice system 11 years after it introduced reforms, the nongovernmental Washington Office on Latin America reported that "impunity remains the norm." The report included a host of troubling government statistics, such as "only 5% of homicide cases ever end in a conviction," and 75.6% of detained persons "reported being subjected to some type of psychological violence at the time of their arrest" including "being held incommunicado, threatened with false charges, undressed, tied up, blindfolded, pressured to incriminate someone, subjected to asphyxiation, and threats against their family." <https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WEB-JUSTICE-REFORMS-REPORT-ENG.pdf>

Pakistan. The *South Asia Intelligence Review* reported on violence against Ahmadi Muslims, both individuals and places of worship. "A place of worship for Ahmadi Muslims . . . cannot be called a mosque under Pakistani law" because the 1974 Second Amendment of the Constitution declared Ahmadi "non-Muslims." In March 2018 "Islamabad's High Court ruled that all citizens must declare their religion when applying for identity documents, a move human rights advocates say is another blow against the country's persecuted minority communities, particularly members of the Ahmadi sect." <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-18-No-21#assessment1>

The South Asia Terrorism Portal compiled "partial data" showing that "at least 110 journalists have been killed, while another 519 sustained injuries in attacks since March 6, 2000, when SATP started compiling data on conflict in Pakistan." Another 451 journalists have been arrested during the period. <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-18-No-22#assessment2>

Philippines. After raiding offices of activist organizations in Manila and Bacolod and arresting 3 members of progressive groups in Manila and 56 in Bacolod City, the Armed Forces of the Philippines "presented the list of 18 organizations that are alleged communist fronts," *Rappler* reported. These "red-tagged" organizations include the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Oxfam sa Pilipinas, and Farmers Development Center. The article did not report what was taken, but the raid probably targeted computers and cellphones. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/244252-red-tagged-oxfam-nccp-slam-military>

Romania. The trial of former president Ion Iliescu, the former deputy prime minister and the former air force head began; all are accused of inciting "the 1989 revolt and deliberately created an atmosphere of chaos in order to take power, resulting in hundreds of unnecessary deaths," *BIRN* reported. The indictment file "comprises 3300 volumes, 2030 of which include new evidence collected after June 2016 when the long, controversial investigation was reopened." [https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/29/romania-starts-long-awaited-trial-over-1989-revolution-deaths/?utm\\_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=9b443c2830-BI\\_DAILY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4027db42dc-9b443c2830-319725265](https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/29/romania-starts-long-awaited-trial-over-1989-revolution-deaths/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=9b443c2830-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-9b443c2830-319725265)

Russia. A court dismissed a case brought against the Moscow police and information technology department which claimed that they were "'indiscriminately' collecting people's personal data—including the biometric data used for facial recognition without individual permission," *DW* reported. <https://www.dw.com/en/russian-court-rejects-call-to-ban-facial-recognition-technology/a-51135814>

Sudan. Human Rights Watch issued a report documenting "Sudanese security forces' attacks on the protesters' sit-in camp in Khartoum on June 3, 2019, and in days following in other neighborhoods of the capital and neighboring Bahri and Omdurman." HRW also "documented attacks on protesters leading up to the June 3 crackdown and a subsequent attack on protesters on June 30 in Omdurman," with estimates of 120 people killed on June 3 alone. The report is based on interviews with more than 60 people in Sudan and analysis of "photographs, videos and social media posts." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/11/17/sudan-justice-needed-protester-killings>

Syria. In January 2018 The Association of Detainees and The Missing in Sednaya Prison (ADMSP) established a database of names of persons detained in Sednaya Prison from its establishment in 1987 to the present. Now ADMSP has issued its first report, based on "400 face-to-face interviews with former detainees." It said the Syrian regime "continues to use Sednaya Prison as a main centre for the detention and enforced disappearance of political detainees." The report also provides "information about the changes on the political detention file in Syria." <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HI63Bc6XoRt29QN-Jpb9hx-vEjByHvdJ/view?usp=sharing>

Turkey. “Turkish scientist Bülent Şık has been convicted after disclosing the results from a government study on environmental pollution and carcinogens,” *The Lancet* reported. Şık was one of the researchers on the study, and he told the court, “According to my research, water from 52 residential zones containing levels of arsenic, aluminium, and lead above the established limits are unhealthy to consume.” So far the government has taken “no preventive steps,” he said. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32672-8/fulltext?dgcid=raven\\_jbs\\_etoc\\_email](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32672-8/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email)

Uganda. According to the *Ugandan Daily Monitor* “only 2,000 (mostly foreign) NGOs managed to renew their licenses before the year-long exercise wound up in September,” *RFI* wrote. “What that meant is that up to 73 percent of the aid organizations failed to register;” and “critics denounced the re-registration scheme as a crackdown on civil society organizations” in the run-up to the next national elections. <http://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20191115-uganda-outlaws-thousands-ngos-operating-country>

United Kingdom. The South Yorkshire Police chief superintendent who was in charge of security at the football match at Hillsborough Stadium in 1989 when 95 Liverpool fans were crushed to death was found not guilty of “gross negligence manslaughter,” *BBC News* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2012-09. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-50592077>

United States. The *Associated Press* and *PBS Frontline* reported that new government data show “an unprecedented 69,550 migrant children held in U.S. government custody over the past [fiscal] year,” up 42% from fiscal year 2018. About 4,000 were still in custody as of November. By comparison, Canada detained 155 immigrant children in 2018 and the U.K. 42. <https://apnews.com/015702afdb4d4fbf85cf5070cd2c682469.000>

Syracuse University’s Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), which “has been regularly requesting snapshots of anonymized data” from the database maintained by the Executive Office for Immigration Review [EOIR], the agency that oversees the U.S. immigration court system, said it “discovered that some months ago the EOIR had begun silently deleting swaths of records in their entirety from the data releases that we and other members of the public received.” TRAC identified both intentional and unintentional data removal, “garbled data releases,” and “possible data deletion in master database.” It worried that “because EOIR’s data are relied upon as part of the official record of court filings and proceedings that have taken place, one should not expect official records to simply go missing without explanation.” <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2019/11/09/new-york-university-trac-missing-immigration-court-records/2506759001/>; <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/580/>

A study by Everytown Research, using data “from 30 million discharge records from 950 hospitals and emergency rooms over 3 years,” found that an “average of 100 people a day are killed from gun violence” and another “two people hit by gun violence are left injured, maimed, or incapacitated,” *VICE News* reported. One in six gun injuries involve children or teens, and 20-to-24-year-olds are the age group “most susceptible to gun violence.” [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/9ke7ga/exclusive-america-is-vastly-undercounting-the-number-of-people-being-injured-by-guns-report-finds;](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/9ke7ga/exclusive-america-is-vastly-undercounting-the-number-of-people-being-injured-by-guns-report-finds;) for the data [https://everytownresearch.org/everystat?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=806ad5ba2b-MR\\_COPY\\_02&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-806ad5ba2b-149736437](https://everytownresearch.org/everystat?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=806ad5ba2b-MR_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-806ad5ba2b-149736437)

Funded by the Department of Justice, the Violence Project, a “nonpartisan think tank,” published a study on mass shooters. The Project created a dataset on mass murders from 1 August 1966 to the present, using the FBI definition of mass murder as one in which 4 or more people were killed, excluding the perpetrator. It showed that nearly all mass shooters had 4 things in common: an experience with childhood trauma, a personal crisis or specific grievance, a “script” or examples that validate their feelings, and access to a firearm. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/a35mya/nearly-all-mass-shooters-since-1966-have-had-four-things-in-common](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/a35mya/nearly-all-mass-shooters-since-1966-have-had-four-things-in-common)

*Note:* Additional U.S. news is found in a supplement to this issue, in English only, at [www.trudypeterson.com](http://www.trudypeterson.com).

Yemen. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project recorded “over 100,000 total reported fatalities from 2015 to the present, with approximately 20,000 so far in 2019, making it the second most lethal year after 2018.” <https://www.acleddata.com/2019/10/31/press-release-over-100000-reported-killed-in-yemen-war/>

**Conferences, publications.** Swisspeace offers a course on Dealing with the Past (also referred to as transitional justice) 24-25 January 2020 in Basel, Switzerland. <https://www.swisspeace.ch/continuing-education/postgraduate-courses/dealing-with-the-past-course>

The Wits History Workshop, Historical Papers Research Archive, South African History Archive and the Public Affairs Research Institute launched “A People's Guide to Archives in South Africa.” <https://www.wits.ac.za/history-workshop/archives-guide/> or [https://issuu.com/hworkshop49/docs/people\\_s\\_guide\\_to\\_archives\\_ok?fr=sZDYwMjQ4NTg5Mg](https://issuu.com/hworkshop49/docs/people_s_guide_to_archives_ok?fr=sZDYwMjQ4NTg5Mg)

### Good reads.

*The Lancet*: “Some” research “has revealed ethically dubious fieldwork practices, inequities, and power dynamics in the funding, conduct, and dissemination of academic research across global North–South divides”: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32482-1/fulltext?dgcid=raven\\_jbs\\_etoc\\_email](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32482-1/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email)

*Justiceinfo.net*: Interview with Françoise Mathe, co-founder of Lawyers without Borders France, on “the traps of universal jurisdiction”: <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/justiceinfo-comment-and-debate/in-depth-interviews/42806-francoise-mathe-traps-universal-jurisdiction.html>

*Justiceinfo.net* : “Corporate responsibility in war crimes, a new legal battlefield”: <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/tribunals/national-tribunals/42906-corporate-responsibility-war-crimes-new-legal-battlefield.html>

*Journal of Applied Philosophy*: Internet access as a human right: [https://www.eurekaalert.org/pub\\_releases/2019-11/uob-fia110719.php](https://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2019-11/uob-fia110719.php)

Amnesty International: Using artificial intelligence for human rights monitoring: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/element-ai-website-bucket/ai-enabled-human-rights-monitoring-wp.pdf>

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