
ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

News from the Section on Archives and Human Rights

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Written and compiled by Trudy Huskamp Peterson

Commentary.

As we come to the end of the calendar year, many of us engage in stocktaking, reflecting on our lives and our community and our world and how peaceful or not we think they are. We are all involved, one way or another, in keeping peace.

Peace is a never-ending process, but there are distinct differences between the peace that is being built after a conflict, whether civil or international, and peace keeping, which is part of the vigilance we all need to exercise in our daily lives. Peace-building after societal conflict must both address the causes of the conflict and build a way to handle future disagreements without recourse to violence. At its heart, peace-building is a local matter. Many, many studies have been made of the efficacy of top-down peace-building institutions such as peace accords, truth commissions, special courts, and restitution processes, with the answers varying. What is assuredly true, however, is that issues that directly affect people's lives must be handled if peace is to prevail. Two of these issues are almost universal: resolving property disputes (housing and farm land, particularly) and locating missing persons. Archives—those valuable records of institutions and families and individuals--can play a role in clarifying both.

Land records have been a part of government record-keeping for millennia. While they may not be accurate, they are an essential first step to demonstrate title. But titles or claims to property can also be documented by copies of deeds kept by a person, a mortgage or a rental agreement or an insurance policy, records of water rights and maps of traditional grazing lands and sacred places, for example.

Not knowing what happened to a loved one is traumatic. Many different forms of documentation showing fate exist, from records of refugee-supporting organizations, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees or NGOs such Refugees International, to records of military units or paramilitaries detaining persons, records of hospitals, including police and military hospitals, death certificates and records of morgues and cemeteries.

The difficulty in all these cases, of property and persons, is gaining access to the relevant records. Governments and paramilitaries may deny records exist or deny access to them, even if a court orders access. Business records are hard to get. Corruption, too, is part of the problem: refusal to recognize land title unless a bribe is paid, for instance. And, of course, records may have been destroyed during conflict with no possibility of recovery, leaving oral testimony as the only recourse.

None of this is easy, not gaining access nor looking at an image of destruction or death. But records--of governments, businesses, religious bodies, non-governmental institutions, and individuals—can give us a foundation to use for peace-building and peace-keeping. Archivists are duty-bearers for human rights, protecting records for the promise of peace.

International news.

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Although Cambodia's National Assembly passed a law that would "effectively end the agreement between the government and the UN and close

the ECCC,” the final legislation as signed by Cambodia’s King has the court winding down “within the next three years.” Assembly member Chheang Vun told the *Phnom Penh Post*, “We still need to prepare an archive of all tribunal documents and set up a place for them to be stored and displayed for the benefit of the younger generations of Cambodians who will one day themselves take up the responsibility of preventing genocide’s return.” <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national-kr-tribunal/reports-ecccc-end-prove-premature-officials-confirm>; <https://www.ucanews.com/news/cambodian-king-promulgates-law-to-end-khmer-rouge-tribunal/94843#>

Organization of American States (OAS). Nicaragua announced that it is withdrawing from the OAS, calling it a “captive organization” of the United States. Under OAS rules, the withdrawal will not be complete until two years from the date the letter announcing withdrawal was received by the OAS. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Nicaragua-Leaves-the-Organization-of-American-States-20211119-0005.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8

United Nations. In late October, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published “OCHA Data Responsibility Guidelines” which will “apply to all operational data managed directly by OCHA (such as who-is-doing-what-where) or data managed by humanitarian actors within activities coordinated by OCHA (such as need assessments).” OCHA said, “Data responsibility in humanitarian action is the safe, ethical and effective management of personal and non-personal data for operational response. It is a critical issue for the humanitarian system to address.” <https://centre.humdata.org/the-ocha-data-responsibility-guidelines/>

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees issued the “2021 Mid-Year Trends” report, which estimated “that global forced displacement has likely exceeded 84 million by mid-2021, a sharp increase from the 82.4 million reported at end-2020.” The number of refugees “under UNHCR’s mandate . . . surpassed 20.8 million, which is 172,000 people more than at the end of 2020;” the number of asylum-seekers climbed to 4.4 million, compared to 4.1 million at the end of 2020; and nearly 50.9 persons were internally displaced. The data was “collected from governments and UNHCR offices worldwide and supplemented, where needed, with data from non-governmental organizations.” <https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends>

The Working Group on Business and Human Rights, now 10 years old, released a report of its “stocktaking’s analysis of achievements to date and existing challenges and opportunities,” It outlined eight “action areas” for states, international organizations and businesses. ICA had urged specific recognition of the role that business records play in undergirding human rights; that topic does not appear in the “roadmap,” but the UN draft treaty on business and human rights notes the importance of archives for “Mutual Legal Assistance and International Judicial Cooperation.” <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Business/WG/ungps10plusroadmap.pdf>; <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/WGTransCorp/Session6/LBI3rdDRAFT.pdf>

World/general news.

Business records. Issues surrounding certification and social auditing continued to make news. For background see *SAHR News* 2021-09.

*The Corporate Accountability Lab (CAL), a U.S.-based NGO, sued the candy company Hershey and the Rainforest Alliance “for false and deceptive marketing representations on certain Hershey chocolate products.” CAL said its “investigators have documented instances of hazardous child labor on Rainforest Alliance certified farms in different parts of Cote d’Ivoire.”

https://corpaccountabilitylab.org/calblog/2021/11/2/cal-files-suit-against-hershey-and-rainforest-alliance?ss_source=sscampaigns&ss_campaign_id=617959da6923b041185e5b62&ss_email_id=61816aae4c34c1402c42bbe3&ss_campaign_name=CAL+files+suit+against+Hershey+and+Rainforest+Alliance%21&ss_campaign_sent_date=2021-11-02T16%3A43%3A47Z

* An investigation by *Thomson Reuters Foundation* found that sugarcane workers in Brazil, who harvest a crop used to make the “green” biofuel ethanol, are at risk of severe health impairments or death from working in the heat of the fields. Bonsucro, “a London-based non-profit that aims to ensure the production of sugar and ethanol meet environmental, social and business standards,” has certified “dozens of Brazilian sugar companies,” but Brazilian authorities say the auditors “routinely failed to detect abuse.” In 2017 Brazil’s Labor Prosecutor sued Bonsucro, saying none of the audits “checked Brazil’s ‘dirty list’ of companies that have engaged in slave labor, a well-known public registry used worldwide by banks and commodities traders. To check for child labor, auditors looked at employee records in which a child would never appear.” Also in 2017 the Labor Prosecutor wrote to the European

Commission “asking it to withdraw its recognition of Bonsucro certification;” two years later the Commission “declined to do so,” saying issues of labor abuse should be “left to the national authorities.” <https://longreads.trust.org/item/ethanol-green-fuel-labor-abuse-Brazil-sugarcane>

The “global appetite for affordable leather” is driving the export of cattle hides from Brazil. Using “corporate and international trade data in several countries and thousands of cattle-transport certificates issued by the Brazilian government,” the *New York Times* reported that this leather trade is going through “identified loopholes” in the major companies’ monitoring systems “that allow hides from cattle kept on illegally deforested Amazon land to flow undetected through Brazil’s tanneries and on to buyers worldwide.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/17/climate/leather-seats-cars-rainforest.html>

“Testimonies, legal and police records obtained by [NGO] Global Witness demonstrate a campaign of intimidation against the traditional Capao de Modesto community and neighbouring . . . communities” in Brazil, “as powerful agricultural producers seek to forcibly evict them in order to continue growing environmentally damaging cash crop monocultures like soy and cotton.” Naming the “global grain-trading giants” ADM, Bunge and Cargill as purchasers of the crops of these producers, Global Witness said the “Brazilian government must provide traditional communities in Brazil with recognized land titles to allow them to live in peace.” A methodological note explains the use of several Brazilian government databases and map data from the NGO Pastoral Land Commission. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/global-commodity-traders-are-fuelling-land-conflicts-in-brazils-cerrado/>

Sweden indicted two executives of the Swedish oil company Lundin Energy for “complicity” in war crimes by Sudan’s military from 1999 to 2003, “including in its dealings with the country’s regime to secure the company’s oil operations” in Sudan, *AP* reported. A member of the NGO coalition whose 2010 report provided the background to the allegations said to *justiceinfo.net*, “I think there are no cases of multi-billion dollar companies actually indicted for war crimes since Nuremberg.” <https://apnews.com/article/business-middle-east-africa-sudan-stockholm-2d711419cb14f0c81aebf0da864613e9>; <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/84649-lundin-swedish-court-pipeline-war-crimes.html>; <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/39348-lundin-faces-prosecution-for-sudan-oil-war-abuses.html>

Vietnamese workers who “are helping build the first Chinese car tire factory in Europe” in northern Serbia are working in “inhumane conditions” and have had their passports and identification documents taken by their Chinese employers, the Shandong Linglong Tire Company, the Serbian NGO Zrenjanin Action told *AP*. The workers “are trying to get back to Vietnam but first need to get back their documents.” Serbia’s president said a labor inspector was sent to the construction site, but then asked, “What do they want? Do they want us to destroy a 900 million-dollar investment?” <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2021-11-20/vietnamese-workers-chinese-factory-serbia-3691166.html>

Amnesty International said J.C. Bamford Excavators Limited sold diggers and excavators to “an Israeli intermediary” who sold it to clients including Israel’s Defense Ministry. The equipment has “been used to demolish Palestinian homes and in the construction of Jewish settlements,” which, Amnesty said, shows “JCB’s failure to conduct proper human rights due diligence on the end use of its products” and “represents a failure to respect human rights.” The 92-page report is accompanied by an “interactive digital map showing dozens of specific incidents where JCB machinery was used . . . to demolish residential and farm buildings belonging to Palestinians, to destroy water pipes and uproot large numbers of olive trees and agricultural produce.” Amnesty’s Crisis Evidence Lab, with the help of its Digital Verification Corps based at the University of Essex, “verified more than 100 photos and videos from 56 separate incidents” that had been collected by civil society organizations in Israel. <https://apnews.com/article/europe-middle-east-jerusalem-israel-west-bank-8e2d9d6400083b267e72b184e754a102>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/MDE1549852021ENGLISH.pdf>

A committee of the U.S. House of Representatives began an investigation into the role of the global consulting giant McKinsey & Company, saying that by “advising opioid makers” McKinsey “may have had a significant negative impact on Americans’ health,” the *New York Times* reported. The Committee demanded that the company turn over records related to its “business practices, conflicts of interest and management standards” connected to its “work with opioid manufacturers, distributors and retailers” as well as documents “when consultants may have helped companies increase drug prices or ‘block

competition' from cheaper generic drugs.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/business/congress-mckinsey-opioid-crisis.html>

Apple Inc. filed suit against the Israeli cyber firm NSO Group and its parent company for its “Pegasus hacking tool that watchdog groups say targeted human rights workers and journalists.” *Reuters* reported that Apple “alleged that NSO Group created more than 100 fake Apple ID user credentials” to attack Apple customers and “surveille U.S. citizens.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-07, 09. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/apple-files-lawsuit-against-nso-group-2021-11-23/>

Climate. A research team is using logbooks of 18th and 19th century whaling voyages kept by the New Bedford, Massachusetts (U.S.), Whaling Museum to help “establish a long-term baseline for weather patterns,” *WBUR* reported. The team is focusing on wind and observations in the Indian and Southern Oceans because “observations data in this region is particularly sparse . . . most records only date back to the use of satellite imaging in the late 1970s and ‘80s.” <https://www.wbur.org/news/2021/11/29/new-england-whaling-logs-indian-southern-ocean>

Indigenous rights. A group of scientists analyzed more than 450 studies published between 1921 and 2021, most issued within the last 30 years, “to understand how geneticists and other scholars obtained, interpreted and shared” the DNA of Roma people, the *New York Times* reported. “They found that many studies did not adequately seek consent from the people they sampled, if they secured consent at all.” One example: a 2015 study “pointing to Indian origins of the Roma people uploaded their amassed DNA data set to two public databases that law enforcement agencies across the world use for genetic references to solve crimes, a purpose to which the original participants likely did not consent.” The authors recommended “forming an international oversight board to investigate the DNA information from oppressed groups that is currently held in public databases.” https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/17/science/genetics-ethics-roma.html?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=93a8deb1f0-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-93a8deb1f0-149736437

Medical records. Since the beginning of the 20th century scientists have known that adding a solution of chlorine to drinking water can reduce mortality. *VOX* reported on a new study in Kenya that “used data collected in 2018 on the deaths of all children” born after January 2008 in specific villages, and “compared death rates in villages that got . . . chlorine dispensers four to six years earlier to those in villages that didn’t get them.” In villages without chlorine in the water, “the baseline death rate for children under 5 . . . was a horrific 2.23 %--more than one in 50 children died before their fifth birthdays. Providing chlorine cut that rate to 0.82%, or less than one in 100.” <https://www.vox.com/22778286/child-mortality-kenya-chlorine-clean-water>

In October the U.K. government announced that “Genomics England, a government-owned company” will “run a research pilot” to “sequence the genomes of between 100,000 and 200,000 babies” to look for “actionable” genetic conditions, “meaning those for which there are existing treatments or interventions,” *WIRED* reported. “The babies’ genomes will also be de-identified and added to the UK’s National Genomic Research Library, where the data can be mined by researchers and commercial health companies . . . with the goal of developing new treatments and diagnostics.” Bioethicists warned that de-identification “is just a fiction” and the program raises complex issues, potentially “exacerbating existing inequalities” and creating anxiety if a genetic test shows a particular variant or an inconclusive result. https://www.wired.com/story/whole-genome-sequencing-newborn-screening/?bxid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&cndid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&hashc=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_Z&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=WIR_Daily_120121&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_120121&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=P7

Migration. Ten media organizations and NGOs in Europe “spent eight months gathering testimony, tracing chains of command, tracking social media and satellite imagery and following the money trails back to EU funds” to document “a previously deniable campaign of illegal, violent pushbacks in Croatia, Greece and Romania by masked men whose uniforms have been stripped of any identifying details.” The team captured 11 pushbacks on camera at five different locations along the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. They found that, “based on documents in the EU’s tender database,” the “costs for the jackets, accommodation and per diems for the officers are paid out of the EU’s Internal Security Fund.” <https://www.lighthousereports.nl/investigation/unmasking-europes-shadow-armies/>

“Arrested before payday, deported without papers and now stonewalled by their former bosses—hundreds of African migrants thrown out of Abu Dhabi are struggling to start over without key documents and crucial cash,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. <https://news.trust.org/item/20211020230404-caplk/>

In mid-October Mexico’s National Migration Institute announced “it had given 1,574 foreign nationals migration cards and ensured they could work in Mexico” instead of continuing on to the U.S.-Mexico border and attempting to cross into the U.S., *Al Jazeera* reported. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/17/mexico-allows-some-in-migrant-caravan-to-stay-other-push-to-us>

Privacy. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner ordered the U.S. facial recognition software company Clearview to “cease collecting facial images and biometric templates from individuals in Australia, and to destroy existing images and templates collection from Australia,” *Reuters* reported. Clearview “cross-references photos scraped from social media websites with a database of billions of images.” The commissioner said the company “collected Australians’ sensitive information without consent and without checking its matches were accurate” and “covert collection of this kind of sensitive information is unreasonably intrusive and unfair.” The U.K.’s Information Commissioner’s Office fined Clearview for the same practices. <https://news.trust.org/item/20211103035938-d6fkk/>; <https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/11/uk-privacy-commissioner-fines-clearview-ai-17m-for-breaching-data-protection-laws/>

Facebook/Meta announced that it was “shutting down the Face Recognition system” and that Automatic Alt Text image descriptions “will no longer include the names of people recognized in photos.” <https://about.fb.com/news/2021/11/update-on-use-of-face-recognition/>

Technology. An *MIT Technology Review* investigation, based on expert interviews, data analyses, and internal company documents, “found that Facebook and Google are paying millions of ad dollars to bankroll clickbait actors, fuelling the deterioration of information ecosystems around the world.” An internal Facebook document “shows that Facebook was aware of the problem as early as 2019.” The impacts are particularly severe in countries such as Myanmar and the Philippines. https://www.technologyreview.com/2021/11/20/1039076/facebook-google-disinformation-clickbait/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=211122

“Throughout 2021, websites associated with far-right extremist groups and extremist-friendly platforms and hosts have suffered from data leaks and breaches that have exposed the inner working of far-right groups, and the nature of the movement as a whole. The data has been exfiltrated in breaches engineered by so-called ‘ethical hackers’ . . . and by activists who have penetrated websites in search of data and information,” the *Guardian* reported. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/29/far-right-extremist-groups-data-breach-hackers?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=211129

The director of the Anticipatory Intelligence Lab at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (U.S.) published an essay in *PassBlue* arguing that the “United Nations Security Council needs to pay more attention to how ‘offensive cyberoperations’ in electoral and political electoral databases can threaten global security and national sovereignty.” She noted that because “elections are complex data-driven processes . . . protecting election security should be approached as an information security and integrity problem.” She argued that the cyber threat can lead to “trust decay” in the electoral process. <https://www.passblue.com/2021/11/11/how-data-poisoning-poses-new-challenges-for-the-uns-peace-and-security-agenda/>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Afghanistan/United Kingdom. In a U.K. special forces night raid in Helmand, southern Afghanistan, in February 2011, four male relatives of Saifullah Yar were killed. Yar is suing the U.K., claiming that the killings were never properly investigated, the *Guardian* reported. His lawyers asked the court to order the Ministry of Defense “to release further official documents.” The Department said it had released 1,800 pages of material so far, and a Defense representative said, “This is not a public inquiry and there is not a duty to provide any document that might look embarrassing.” <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/09/alleged-massacres-of-afghans-by-sas-not-properly-investigated-court-told>

Argentina/Myanmar. A Federal criminal court in Buenos Aires “confirmed that it would launch a case against senior Myanmar officials under the principle of universal jurisdiction, according to a statement by the Burmese Rohingya Organization UK,” *Albawaba* reported. The Ontario International Development Agency, a Canadian NGO, said that since 25 August 2017 “nearly 24,000 Rohingya Muslims have been killed while more than 34,000 were thrown into fires, over 114,000 beaten, as many as 18,000 Rohingya women and girls raped, over 115,000 Rohingya homes burned down and 113,000 others vandalized by Myanmar’s state forces.” <https://www.albawaba.com/news/argentine-makes-history-moving-forward-rohingya-genocide-case-1456810>

Belgium/former colonies. At the end of October Belgium’s Special Commission on the Colonial Past published a 3-part report it had commissioned from ten experts: the history of Belgian colonization in Congo, Rwanda and Burundi; remembrance and reparation; and the link between racism and colonialism. The experts noted that due to Covid their access to archives and libraries was “limited or impossible” and “severely restricted the possibilities to examine new sources.” They wrote, “Virtually all current initiatives recognize that the issue of restitution, whether of museum objects, human remains or archives, has a clear moral dimension that demands action.” <https://www.thebulletin.be/experts-deliver-report-special-committee-belgiums-colonial-past>; <https://histoirecoloniale.net/La-Belgique-se-confronte-a-son-histoire-coloniale.html>; <https://www.dekamer.be/FLWB/PDF/55/1462/55K1462002.pdf>; <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/83944-colonial-crimes-experts-recommend-that-belgium-compensate.html>

Canada/Vatican. *CBC News* reported, “Researchers in Ottawa have uncovered new evidence to suggest some archival records relating to residential schools in Canada are now only available in Rome,” although they were previously in Canada. Two historians who had used the records of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and asked to see them again were told that records of early residential school history in northern Saskatchewan were sent to the Vatican. One of the historians told the press, “If we don’t have the records, we can’t tell anything about actual truth.” https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/residential-school-records-now-in-rome-researchers-survivors-concerned-1.6241449?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=fd56715077-EMAIL_Newsletter_NOV_2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-fd56715077-225732189

Dominican Republic/Haiti. The Dominican Interior Ministry “is proposing to ‘audit’ the immigration status of some 220,000 foreigners--the vast majority of them Haitians--who were allowed to stay in the country under a 2013 program,” *Bloomberg* reported. For background on the documentation problems for Haitians in the Dominican Republic, see *HRWG News* 2016-11. <https://www.bloomberquint.com/onweb/dominican-republic-calls-haiti-a-threat-cracks-down-on-migrants>

Egypt/France. France’s Armed Forces minister called for an investigation after the *Disclose* website “published dozens of classified documents which it said showed the misuse of intelligence provided to Egypt” by France. The information, which was “intended to track jihadist militants, had been misused by Egypt to target smugglers on the Libyan border and kill civilians,” *Reuters* reported. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/paris-investigates-leak-purporting-show-egypt-misused-french-intelligence-2021-11-22/>

Germany/Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL). A regional court in Frankfurt, Germany, sentenced a former member of the Islamic State to life in prison, after convicting him of committing genocide against Iraq’s minority Yazidi community, *Al Jazeera* reported. “The case involved the death of a 5-year-old girl he bought as a slave and then chained up in the hot sun to die.” The judge said the “conviction was the first for a person’s role in the systematic persecution of the Yazid religious minority . . . carried out by ISIL.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2019-08. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/30/german-court-jails-isis-member-for-life-over-yazidi-genocide>

Lithuania/Russia. A 1984 document from the archives of the Lithuanian KGB titled, “A Plan for the Individual Training of a Young Officer of the State Security Service,” says there will be an “assessment” of the trainee’s “abilities to fill out and file all the necessary reports related to his daily activities.” The researcher who found the item translated it into English and published it at DigitalArchive.org. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/chekism-101-independent-study-plan-kgb-officer-1980s?utm_campaign=happ&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&emci=9422d798-5d54-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&emdi=453cb435-6b54-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&ceid=29308

Mexico/United States. The Mexico Violence Resource Project at the University of California, San Diego (U.S.), launched its database of the “more than 6,000 instances of U.S. military training for Mexican security forces spanning nearly two decades,” *The Intercept* reported. Using data “drawn from annual Pentagon [Defense Department] and State Department reports to Congress,” it shows that “tactical and lethal training for Mexican military units—especially the Mexican marines—by the U.S. military has increased substantially over the past decade while human rights instruction has sharply decreased.” The Mexican military has been “tied to many of the country’s worst state crimes, including the 2014 disappearance of 43 college students in the state of Guerrero.” <https://theintercept.com/2021/11/17/mexico-military-pentagon-support-human-rights/?emci=441a5140-7948-ec11-9820-c896653b26c8&emdi=4fe74369-7a48-ec11-9820-c896653b26c8&ceid=4606001>

Middle East war. On 18 March 2019 a U.S. drone strike killed 64 people near Baghuz, Syria, including women and children. The strike “was one of the largest civilian casualty incidents of the war against Islamic State, but it has never been publicly acknowledged by the U.S. military,” the *New York Times* wrote. The *Times* “pieced together” details “from confidential documents and descriptions of classified reports” and interviews. It found that “minutes after the strike” an Air Force lawyer “ordered the . . . squadron and the drone crew to preserve all video and other evidence.” After the *Times* sent its findings to the U.S. military, U.S. Central Command “acknowledged the strikes for the first time, saying 80 people were killed but the airstrikes were justified.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/13/us/us-airstrikes-civilian-deaths.html>

The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre urged the U.S. to establish an “amends program” in Northeast Syria. Among the proposals is “the U.S. should open an investigation and review of evidence of ISIS crimes collected by the U.S. and Kurdish forces.” These include “physical documents, computers, and hard drives” that “should be thoroughly searched for information regarding those kidnapped in Northeast Syria. Declassifying some of the information and sharing it with human rights organizations engaged in investigations could provide strong leads and help families in the search for their loved ones.” <https://syriaaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/Amends-Program-ENG.pdf>

Rwanda/United States. A Rwandan native has been “denaturalized by consent and deported from the United States under an order of removal following the filing of a complaint citing his suspected involvement in the Rwandan genocide in 1994,” said the U.S. Department of Justice. He used the name Peiree Kalimu when applying for permanent residence and U.S. citizenship, but his true name was Fidele Twizere and he also provided a different date of birth; those “misrepresentations about his identity precluded U.S. government officials from investigating him” at the time of application. The complaint alleged he “participated in two attacks on Tutsi families in his neighborhood during the genocide, and that he looted property from Tutsi families whose houses he then destroyed.” Kalimu denied the allegations. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/rwandan-genocide-suspect-permanently-leaves-united-states-after-denaturalization>

National news.

Afghanistan. In a bleak report to the UN Security Council, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan said “the Islamic State in Iraq and in Levant Khorasan Province (ISILKP) is targeting Shi’ite communities.” In 2020 there were 60 attacks, and by mid-November 2021 there have been “334 attacks attributed to ISILKP or, in fact, claimed by ISILKP.” <https://unama.unmissions.org/srsg-lyons-briefing-unscc-situation-afghanistan-3>

Albania. For an exhibit in Tirana “8,200 pages from dozens of security files that unravel the psychology of the [Enver Hoxha] regime and the oppression of the dictatorship have been declassified,” said the director of the archives at the Authority for Information on Former State Security Documents. She explained that the files from the Directorate of State Security, known as the Sigurimi, “contain surveillance reports on specific individuals but also on more general topics such as the clergy or trade,” *BIRN* reported. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/11/19/albania-exhibition-puts-communist-secret-police-files-on-display/>

Bangladesh. According to the Centre for Governance Studies, an NGO in Dhaka, between 1 January 2020 and 15 September 2021, prosecutors filed 1,542 cases under the Digital Security Act of 2018, a steady annual increase since the date of enactment, wrote *South Asia Intelligence Review*. The charges

included “making derogatory statements against the state,” “circulating indecent, defamatory, objectionable and fake information about some Ministers, lawmakers and [political] leaders on Facebook,” and “posting offensive photos of the Prime Minister,” among others. “Politicians are the largest numbers of accused, followed by journalists. The judicial process is extremely slow and only two cases have decided so far.” Reporters Sans Frontieres, in its most recent report, placed Bangladesh 152nd out of 180 countries for press freedom. <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-20-No-22#assessment2>

Brazil. After 30 years of work, a scholar has succeeded in deciphering letters written in 1645 in the Tupi language by members of the Potiguara, “a powerful indigenous nation” during a “bloody war . . . between Dutch settlers and the Portuguese empire over the sugar plantations in north-east Brazil,” the *Guardian* reported. The letters are in the Royal Library in The Hague, “but the texts were blotted and jumbled” and “many words were not in existing glossaries of Tupi.” The letters are now transcribed in Tipi and also translated into Portuguese. They show the “desperate efforts of the Potiguara chiefs to save their people from destruction” during the conflict. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/12/indigenous-letters-brazil-tupi-potiguara-17th-century>; <https://jornal.usp.br/cultura/pesquisa-revela-troca-de-cartas-em-tupi-entre-indigenas-do-seculo-17/>

The annual report of Brazil’s space research agency, INPE, said its PRODES satellite data show new deforestation in the Amazon rainforest “soared 22% in a year to the highest level since 2006,” *Reuters* reported. https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-deforestation-data-shows-22-annual-jump-clearing-amazon-2021-11-18/?utm_source=InsideClimate+News&utm_campaign=202594ab33-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_29c928ffb5-202594ab33-328765186

Canada. Statistics Canada said data from the “2020 Homicide Survey, which collects police-reported information on homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada,” showed a total of 743 homicides in 2020, the highest number since 1991, *CTV News* reported. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canada-s-homicides-at-highest-point-since-1991-statcan-1.5681347>

Central African Republic. A mid-October report to the UN Security Council by the Secretary-General addressed “the effect of the cycles of violence on children.” It makes grim reading: “Between July 2021 and June 2021, the country task force verified 1,663 grave violations against 1,280 children (727 boys and 553 girls), namely, recruitment and use (845), killing and maiming (155), rape and other forms of sexual violence (249), abduction (116), attacks against schools and hospitals (72) and denial of humanitarian access (226).” https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_882_E.pdf

China. A Chinese man posted a 20-minute video to YouTube “featuring more than a dozen detention facilities in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,” *DW* reported. He followed a map created by *BuzzFeed News* and filmed 18 detention facilities across eight cities. A researcher who helped create the map by using satellite images said the video corroborated the analysis of the images. <https://www.dw.com/en/xinjiang-footage-sheds-new-light-on-uyghur-detention-camps/a-59880898>; for the *BuzzFeed* maps see <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/meghara/china-new-internment-camps-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims>

Colombia. Three NGOs issued a report on the “eye trauma” caused by the violent actions of Colombian security forces during protests. “Amnesty International’s Digital Verification Corps analysed more than 300 pieces of audiovisual material on the disproportionate and repressive actions of ESMAD [Mobile Anti-Riot Squad] between 28 April and 20 October [2021], concluding that officials carried out widespread human rights violations against protesters by inflicting eye injuries through disproportionate use of less lethal weapons.” <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/5005/2021/en/>

Democratic Republic of Congo. A military court in Kasai province charged Tshimputu Mandefu, a member of a local militia, with war crimes in the village of Mayi Munene in 2017. The trial began on 27 October and ended 30 October with Mandefu sentenced to death. Asked about crimes committed by the military during the conflict in Kasai, the president of the bar of Kasai’s capitol city told *justiceinfo.net*, “The files are being prepared.” https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/84096-first-trial-kasai-crimes-kamuina-nsapu-rebellion.html?mc_cid=1f725c4210&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb

El Salvador. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) presented a report “The Human Rights Situation in El Salvador,” which it said is “based on vast quantities of information that

were received and systematized before, during, and after the on-site visit that the IACHR conducted between December 2 and 4, 2019.” Among its recommendations IACHR called “on the State to step up the fight against impunity for the crimes committed” during 1979-92 armed conflict, “also by guaranteeing access to archives containing relevant information for investigation into the facts.” For background on the struggle to gain access to archives, see *SAHR News* 2020-10, 11.

http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2021/289.asp

Prosecutors raided the offices of seven charities and groups, claiming this was “part of an inquiry into the embezzlement of public funds,” the *Guardian* reported. At Pro-Vida, an NGO which “monitors water quality in rural El Salvador, authorities seized five computers in a raid.” <https://www.theguardian.com/development/2021/nov/24/el-salvador-rights-groups-fear-repression-after-raids-on-seven-offices>

Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights conducted a joint investigation “into alleged human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed in the context of the conflict in Tigray Region from 3 November 2020 to 28 June 2021.” The team found “serious abuses and violations of human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law” committed by all parties to the conflict and “that a number of these violations may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, which require further investigations to ensure accountability.” The investigators conducted 269 interviews and held 64 meetings “with Government officials and representatives of United Nations (UN) agencies, funds and programmes, NGOs and medical personnel.” They also used “relevant reports and background materials,” saying these “provided important context and, in some instances, served to corroborate the interviews.” They noted the “series of obstacles to the effective documentation of cases of sexual violence,” with “medical records were often impossible to obtain.” <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/ET/OHCHR-EHRC-Tigray-Report.pdf>

A Tigrayan man living in Stockholm is compiling a list of Tigrayan victims of the on-going conflict, and over the past year he has “confirmed 3,080 names of the dead.” *AP* verified 30 of the names “chosen randomly.” The names on the list, experts agree, represent “just a fraction of the dead.”

https://apnews.com/article/Counting-Ethiopia-War-Dead-ee2b9ad16ce952a5543f0d767c109104?user_email=&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Nov.%2015%20AP%20Morning%20Wire&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers

Finland. Five members have been appointed to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission “to examine historical injustices suffered by Finland’s indigenous Sami people,” *YLE News* reported. Its report is due 30 November 2023. https://yle.fi/news/3-12167765?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=fd56715077-EMAIL+Newsletter+NOV+2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-fd56715077-225732189

[https://yle.fi/news/3-12167765?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=fd56715077-](https://yle.fi/news/3-12167765?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=fd56715077-EMAIL+Newsletter+NOV+2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-fd56715077-225732189)

[EMAIL+Newsletter+NOV+2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-fd56715077-225732189](https://yle.fi/news/3-12167765?utm_source=ICA+Members+and+contacts+Newsletter&utm_campaign=fd56715077-EMAIL+Newsletter+NOV+2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-fd56715077-225732189)

France. After the Council of State in July revoked the instruction that blocked access to classified public archives more than 50 years old, other barriers to access have been put in place, according to *L’Histoire*. In particular, records of “the French civilian or military nuclear industry” remain closed. The historian who heads a 15-person research team on the history of nuclear tests said, “There is a particular clause in the heritage code that states that everything related to nuclear power cannot be released. But this law is sometimes used to prevent us from seeing archives related to health consequences.”

<https://histoirecoloniale.net/L-acces-aux-archives-continue-a-etre-entrave-Les-images-de-la-rencontre-L-acces.html>

Digitized copies of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and of the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen have been fixed on DNA and deposited at the Archives Nationales. This is believed to be the first time an archives has used DNA for permanent storage. Thanks to Perrine Canavaggio for the link.

<https://www.franceculture.fr/sciences/stocker-pour-50-000-ans-des-textes-historiques-sur-ADN-entrent-aux-archives-nationales>

Gambia. The final report of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission was presented to the President on 25 November, but it was not made public, *justiceinfo.net* reported. The Act establishing the Commission requires the President to “submit copies of the report to [the] country’s National Assembly and to the office of the United Nations Secretary General within 30 days” and “the government has six months to issue a position paper on how it will implement” the Commission’s recommendations. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/84749-gambia-truth-commission-report-hangs-on-election-result.html>

Guyana. In August the National Assembly adopted the findings of a 2016 Commission of Inquiry on the 13 June 1980 killing of historian and activist Walter Rodney. The Commission said it was a “state organized assassination with the knowledge of Prime Minister [Forbes] Burnham.” The U.S. NGO National Security Archive published an updated briefing book on the case, adding a U.S. Embassy document from January 1980. The Rodney family is seeking to change the characterization of his killing on his death certificate from misadventure to assassination. Guyana’s National Archives has been renamed the Walter Rodney National Archives. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/human-rights/2020-06-13/the-walter-rodney-murder-mystery-in-guyana-40-years-later?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=be9a6a25-ce7a-41df-912d-b426fad989c>

Haiti. “Sometime in October, unknown individuals broke into the Court of First Instance of Port-au-Prince and carted away a heavy safe in the clerks’ vault, which contains, among other things, evidence-gathering documents in the killing of Port-au-Prince Bar Association chief Monferrier Dorval” on 28 August 2020, the *Miami Herald* reported. In addition, “some documents” from the ongoing investigation of the 7 July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse “were tampered with,” which a court official said meant “some pages could be missing.” The head of the National Association of Haitian Clerks said, “Every time there is a huge case that comes before the Palace of Justice of Port-au-Prince, whether it involves the use of arms or large sums of money, the files always disappear.” <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article255970912.html>

Israel. “The controversial spyware programme Pegasus, from Israeli company NSO, has been found on the phones of six Palestinian human rights activists working for established non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a report from Irish human rights organization Front Line Defenders (FLD) reveals.” None of the Palestinian NGOs “was designated a terrorist organization at the time of the forensic discoveries,” but three have now been so designated, *Irish Times* reported. According to *The Intercept*, those three plus three more also designated were discussed in a “secret document, a dossier containing the purported justifications,” obtained by *The Intercept* and the NGOs +972 and Local Call, “along with a raft of ancillary documents.” The designated groups “draw funding from several European governments,” to whom Israel sent copies of the dossier “in a bid to persuade the governments to cut funding;” however, “officials from at least five of the European countries said that the dossier did not contain any ‘concrete evidence’ and decided to continue their financial support.” <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/irish-ngo-finds-spyware-on-phones-of-palestinian-activists-1.4722500>; <https://theintercept.com/2021/11/04/secret-israel-dossier-palestinian-rights-terrorist/>

Middle East Eye reported that the Israeli army is using “Blue Wolf . . . a smartphone technology that captures images of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and then matches them with a database run by the Israeli military and intelligence.” Images from smart phones equipped with Blue Wolf can search a database that “has a color-coded system that indicates whether the person photographed should be arrested or allowed to pass.” The article did not discuss what records are kept of either the database or the matching. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-whats-blue-wolf-app-soldiers-use-photograph-palestinians>

In an article in the *Middle East Eye* the executive director of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel said that “despite 1,300 torture complaints in the past two decades, no Shin Bet [Israel Security Agency] interrogator has been indicted.” He called for all Shin Bet interrogations to be recorded on video: “While Israeli law requires audiovisual documentation of police interrogations for serious crimes, the Shin Bet is exempt from this rule.” <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-palestine-shin-bet-interrogations-why-filmed>

New Zealand. The Waitangi Tribunal ruled that the government has not sufficiently protected Maori traditional knowledge and data sovereignty in its negotiations on e-commerce in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, *Radio New Zealand* reported. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/456080/waitangi-tribunal-finds-crown-failed-to-meet-treaty-obligations-in-parts-of-cptpp>

Nigeria. The results of a judicial inquiry into “abuses by police forces and the killings at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos” in October 2020 was submitted to the Lagos state government. The *Guardian* obtained a copy, and reported that the inquiry found 11 unarmed people killed, 4 missing and presumed dead, and 48 casualties in total. It also said that after the killing the army and police cleaned up the scene “to remove evidence” and “incomplete CCTV footage of that night, provided by the Lekki Concession Company, was manipulated before being presented at the inquiry.” For background, see *SAHR News*

2020-11. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/16/nigerias-army-and-police-killed-unarmed-protesters-says-leaked-report>

The NGO Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) issued a statement saying it had received a letter from the International Criminal Court prosecutor announcing “the criteria for opening an investigation into a string of abductions and closure of schools in some parts of Nigeria have been met” and the prosecutor’s office will “prepare and submit a request to the Pre-Trial Chamber for authorization to open an investigation on Nigeria.” SERAP quoted the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) as saying “more than 1,000 students have been abducted from schools in northern Nigeria since December 2020,” *Sahara Reporters* wrote. <http://saharareporters.com/2021/10/24/international-criminal-court-moves-investigate-abduction-schoolchildren-nigeria>

Sahara Reporters also reported that the Islamic State “released a video showing a 12-year-old member of ISWAP (Islamic State’s West Africa Province) . . . executing two Nigerian soldiers.” The 17-minute video “also covered other attacks from ISWAP’s spring [2021] campaign in Borno and Yobe states.” <http://saharareporters.com/2021/10/31/isis-releases-video-12-year-old-terrorist-executing-two-nigerian-soldiers>

Pakistan. According to the Human Rights Council of Balochistan, in the first ten days of November 2021 Pakistani security forces “forcibly ‘disappeared’ 38 people from different areas of the province” and at least 27 persons were disappeared in October, *South Asia Intelligence Review* reported. That brings the total to at least 339 people “disappeared” since 1 January. “Moreover, at least 298 people have been confirmed to be extrajudicially killed” thus far in 2021. <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-20-No-23#assessment1>

Russia. The International Memorial Society is one of Russia’s most prominent human rights groups, founded in the late 1980s. State prosecutors have now brought a case against it, accusing it of violating Russia’s “foreign agent” laws and threatening closure. “Memorial has spent decades documenting Stalin’s repressions and helping people . . . navigate opaque bureaucracy to dig up information on Stalin’s victims,” *Reuters* wrote. An online petition in support of Memorial has gathered over 120,000 signatures as of this writing. <https://news.trust.org/item/20211124153712-t07j5/>; https://www.change.org/p/hands-off-memorial?recruiter=31245077&recruited_by_id=6da561c0-f64e-012f-2ac0-40401bfb750c&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard; http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content_files/file/ca/102.pdf

Spain. Spain’s government announced that starting 1 January it will “begin to count in its official statistics on gender violence the slayings of women or minors by men regardless of the relationship that existed between victim and killer.” Prior to this, killings of women were only counted as crimes of gender violence “when there was proof that the victim and the killer had been or were in a relationship.” Spain will also count underage victims “irrespective of their gender” in official gender-violence data. Statistics kept by the Equality Ministry said 37 women have been murdered this year (through mid-November) by partners or ex-partners and “at least 1,118 have been killed since 2003 when systematic record-keeping began in the country,” reported *AP*. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/spain-broadens-counting-victims-gender-violence-crimes-81281679>

Sudan. The UN Human Rights Council decided to appoint an independent expert to monitor and report on abuses in Sudan since the military takeover in late October. The High Commissioner is to give the Human Rights Council a comprehensive written report in June 2022, “focusing on the human rights situation since, and human rights violations and abuses committed during, the period of the military takeover.” The term of office for the designated Expert on Human Rights in the Sudan “should conclude upon the restoration of its civilian-led government.” The High Commissioner appointed Adama Dieng as Expert. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27777&LangID=E>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27808&LangID=E>

Syria. The Syrian Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) published an article on “perpetrators’ documentation as sources for casualty recording.” “When they can be obtained,” SJAC wrote, “the records and documents produced” by Syrian authorities and other parties to the conflict “are themselves a valuable source of information on casualties” and can also “provide vital corroborative evidence.” SJAC obtained documents produced by the Islamic State (ISIS) that “mimic the trappings of a

government, often copying Syrian government styles, and include headers, signatures and stamps.” The article reproduces an ISIS detainee list and an ISIS arrest record and judgment.

https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2021/11/04/perpetrators-documentation-as-sources-for-casualty-recording/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=248e2d40b4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-248e2d40b4-96428969

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) produced a tenth annual report on violations against children in Syria and a tenth annual report on violations against females in Syria, mostly at the hands of the Syrian regime. The reports are based on data in the SNHR archives documenting such violations as “extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, conscription, sexual violence, [and] attacks with various types of weapons.” https://sn4hr.org/wp-content/pdf/english/On_World_Childrens_Day_Tenth_Annual_Report_on_Violations_against_Children_in_Syria_en.pdf; <https://sn4hr.org/blog/2021/11/25/57072/>

Turkey. Statewatch, an NGO based in London, published “Algorithmic persecution in Turkey’s post-coup crackdown: the FETO-Meter system.” The FETO-Meter is an “excel-based algorithm . . . to profile all active and retired military officers.” Interviews with 10 former members of the Turkish armed forces “revealed three emerging themes: (1) the indiscriminate use of the FETO-Meter list in post-[July 2016] coup dismissals, (2) widespread torture and mistreatment; and (3) the lack of trust in the judiciary.” More than 13,000 Turkish military personnel have been dismissed since July 2016 on the basis of the algorithm, which has “97 main criteria and 290 sub-criteria, many of which violate individual privacy.” <https://www.statewatch.org/news/2021/november/press-release-turkey-algorithmic-persecution-based-on-massive-privacy-violations-used-to-justify-human-rights-abuses-says-new-report/>

United States. Using Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions data, weather modelling, facility specific information and “advanced information processing software,” *ProPublica* produced a detailed map of U.S. areas with high levels of cancer-causing air pollution. The two-year research project identified more than 1,000 hotspots with dangerous amounts of toxic chemicals in the air; of the 20 areas with the highest risk, nearly all were in the South. Mapping showed that in mostly Black census tracts, the risk of exposure to cancer-causing air pollution was more than twice as high as in predominantly White districts. *ProPublica* said EPA underestimates the harm to “people who live near multiple industrial facilities.” <https://www.propublica.org/article/how-we-created-the-most-detailed-map-ever-of-cancer-causing-industrial-air-pollution>

Using mortality statistics for 2019 from the National Center for Health Statistics, population estimates based on the 2010 census, 2018 and 2019 “linked birth/infant death data files,” and “a data set consisting of 2010 decennial census AIAN [American Indian/Alaska Native] records linked to mortality data,” researchers at the Center demonstrated that “the non-Hispanic AIAN population experienced substantially higher mortality than non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic populations in the United States.” The AIAN population “also had the lowest life expectancy at birth (71.8) compared with the non-Hispanic white (78.8), non-Hispanic black (74.8) and Hispanic (81.9) populations.” https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr70/NVSR70-12.pdf?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=d1bb4f1ba1-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-d1bb4f1ba1-149736437

Shortly after the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999, where 13 were killed and more than 20 injured, the NGO National Rifle Association held strategy phone calls. *NPR* obtained more than 2 ½ hours of recordings of those private meetings, showing the NRA leaders developing a position “very similar to the group’s position on mass shooting today: The national media is not to be trusted, and any conversation about guns and the NRA after mass shooting is an untoward politicization of the issue.” https://www.npr.org/2021/11/09/1049054141/a-secret-tape-made-after-columbine-shows-the-nras-evolution-on-school-shootings?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=211109

“Newly leaked aerial surveillance footage from the Dallas Police Department in Texas and what appears to be Georgia’s State Patrol underscore the breadth and sophistication of footage captured” by police helicopters, *WIRED* reported. The “transparency activist group Distributed Denial of Secrets . . . posted a 1.8 terabyte trove of police helicopter footage;” its source said the two departments “were storing the data in unsecured cloud infrastructure.” A spokesperson for the Dallas police “declined to comment about . . . data storage practices, including how long the department retains helicopter surveillance video.” Privacy advocates emphasized the risks of disclosing aerial police surveillance data, “given that

such footage could be valuable in a number of ways for stalkers, attackers seeking materials for blackmail, domestic or foreign terrorist groups, or those conducting espionage operations.”

https://www.wired.com/story/ddosecrets-police-helicopter-data-leak/?bxdid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&enddid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&hashc=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_Z&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=Final&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_110621&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=list1_p4

“Dozens of country jails and state prisons in seven U.S. states . . . have so far implemented the Verus [artificial intelligence scanning] system to monitor inmates’ calls,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. “Emails and contracts” obtained through public records requests “show the tool is used to scan a wide range of calls, for example conversations involving mention of the Spanish word for lawyer or accusations that detention facilities were covering up COVID-19 outbreaks.” The Foundation used public records requests to get a sense of the extent of the surveillance; in Suffolk County, New York, for example, the system monitored “more than 2.5 million phone calls between implementation in April 2019 and May 2020” of which only 96 produced “actionable intelligence” according to county documents. An attorney with the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University pointed out it is not clear whether 96 reports “justified sweeping up several million phone calls.”

<https://news.trust.org/item/20211115095808-kq7gx/>

A research team looked at the effects of body cameras on police accountability by studying “an eight-year period—2013 to 2020—of citizen complaint data from Chicago’s Civilian Office of Police Accountability.” During that period the Police Department assigned cameras to its officers “in a staggered fashion, district by district across a 17-month period from June 2016 to December 2017.” Reporting in *The Conversation*, the team said it found “a significant effect on police accountability following the implementation of body cameras.” Not only were police officers “64% more likely to be subject to a disciplinary action after a complaint investigation,” but use of the cameras “largely eliminated racial disparities” in the dismissal of citizen complaints.

https://theconversation.com/the-concrete-effects-of-body-cameras-on-police-accountability-171460?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Politics%20Weekly%20%20November%2018%202021%20-%202119920982&utm_content=Politics%20Weekly%20%20November%2018%202021%20-%202119920982+Version+B+CID_c332a4cd829f5c6973eb41a2b6db6283&utm_source=campaign_monitor_us&utm_term=The%20concrete%20effects%20of%20body%20cameras%20on%20police%20accountability

“Defense lawyers for the men accused of planning and carrying out the September 11 attacks say that journalists and other members of the public have gotten more information about the torture their clients experienced in CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] black sites than the attorneys representing them,” *The Intercept* reported. One of the defense attorneys is now “pursuing his own FOIA lawsuits to produce documents he has been denied in discovery.”

https://theintercept.com/2021/11/28/9-11-trial-guantanamo-cia-cables-foia/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter

Venezuela. The International Criminal Court prosecutor announced that he has opened an investigation into “crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the territory of Venezuela.” He also announced that his office concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Venezuela, committing the two parties “to working collaboratively, while also independently and impartially, but with full regard to the principle of complementarity, and to pursue cooperation and mutual assistance.”

<https://international-criminal-court.africa-newsroom.com/press/icc-prosecutor-mr-karim-aa-khan-qc-opens-an-investigation-into-the-situation-in-venezuela-and-concludes-memorandum-of-understanding-with-the-government?lang=en>

Publications. The new academic, peer-reviewed *International Journal of Missing Persons* calls for articles: <https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/ijmp/policies.html>

The World Bank Group Archives’ “Records Management Roadmap,” an eight-part toolkit for governments and public-sector organizations wishing to improve the management of their records, has been translated into French: <https://www.banquemondiale.org/fr/archive/aboutus/records-management-roadmap>

Panggah Ardiyansyah, “Object Repatriation and Knowledge Co-Production for Indonesia’s Cultural Artifacts,” LSE blog: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/seac/2021/11/04/object-repatriation-and-knowledge-co-production-for-indonesias-cultural-artefacts/?fbclid=IwAR3d9sXM0qcejf4tree69hhn5SIP9dmuvYWrP980VvBqmV0IQhesp2XnYU>

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