
ARCHIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Written and compiled by Trudy Huskamp Peterson

Commentary.

March's most frequent question from archivists and advocates and activists was: do you know what is happening to archives in Ukraine? And the answer always was, "Not really."

According to UKRINFORM on 25 March, "Russian invaders destroyed the archives of the Security Service in Chernihiv region, where documents had been stored on Soviet repression of Ukrainians. That's according to the Ministry of Justice, referring to the head of the State Archival Service, Anatoliy Khromov." <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/3439490-in-chernihiv-region-russians-destroy-archived-documents-on-soviet-repression-against-ukrainians.html>

Some archives buildings in Kharkiv are said to be damaged, but the extent of damage to the records is not reported. The *Guardian* said the Slovo building built to house prominent writers, scholars and artists "lost every window and part of its roof when a missile landed nearby," and the Fine Arts Museum has been damaged, too. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/15/ukrainian-heritage-under-threat-truth-soviet-era-russia> *Geneva Solutions* said the Assumption Cathedral was seriously damaged. Archives within these structures may have been suffered. <https://genevasolutions.news/global-news/un-agencies-geneva-heritage-fund-mobilise-to-protect-ukrainian-cultural-sites>

And there is implied destruction. *Euromaidan* reported on 29 March, using information from the Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group, that "more than 60 Ukrainian churches and religious buildings were destroyed by the Russian army during the month of the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war." <https://euromaidanpress.com/2022/03/29/russo-ukrainian-war-day-34-irpin-is-liberated-russia-is-trying-to-completely-destroy-the-infrastructure-and-residential-areas-of-ukrainian-cities/> The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a speech on 30 March, said her staff members "verified 77 incidents in which medical facilities were damaged to various degrees," of which 10 were completely destroyed. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/03/update-human-rights-council-ukraine> And the images of damaged and destroyed government buildings, like the churches and medical facilities, suggest major destruction of archives.

But major bodies of records are being created, too. Refugee operations, both by international bodies such as the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and local and national programs, official and volunteer, are creating records at an enormous pace, trying to make sure the identities and locations of the refugees are known while providing assistance of every kind. Humanitarian groups, too, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, are creating records of efforts to feed and to relocate people from danger zones such as Mariupol. Medical facilities and groups such as Médecins Sans Frontières are creating substantial bodies of records, too.

However, one set of records that almost surely will be incomplete is the registration of identities of the dead. With mass graves, hasty burials, and chaos in the streets, the recording of identities—even if known—is not likely to be complete. Getting the dead off streets and into graves is a priority; reports of mobile cremation vans raise the specter of massive future identification problems, with solutions available only through scientific methods.

The International Council on Archives has suspended Russian and Belorussian state archives bodies from participation. Many organizations are assisting archives in Ukraine, from copying extant online digital materials (for example, Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online <https://www.sucho.org/>) to sending in boxes and packing materials to sponsoring digitization programs. (<https://www.zyri.net/2022/03/23/russo-ukrainian-war-race-against-time-to-save-the-scores-of-ukrainian-composers/>). UNESCO, the International Committee of the Blue Shield, and others have emergency programs.

As Hennadi Boriak, the former national archivist of Ukraine, wrote on 5 April, “We do hope that God will preserve Ukrainian archives!” Amen, but God is going to need some help from humankind.

International news.

Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia. The Chambers launched two new services to enhance access to public case file records: allowing the public to submit requests for specific documents through a document request form and requests for general access to case files through a database access request form. <https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/articles/eccc-launches-document-access-service-pilots-judicial-database-access>

Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. The Executive Secretariat carried out “an exhaustive review of more than 5,000 files of petitions received during the last two decades in which there has been no activity on the part of the petitioner” for over 3 years. The Commission adopted a resolution warning parties that if there is no response from the petitioners by the end of May, the petitions will be sent to the archives. https://www-oas-org.translate.google.es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2022/057.asp&_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=auto

International Criminal Court (ICC). Following the 28 February announcement that the Prosecutor opened an investigation into the situation in Ukraine, civil society organizations from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and international supporters issued a call to “all States to increase their financial support to the Court without undue delay” and urged the international community to assist the Prosecutor by documenting war crimes: “civil society is once again on the frontline of documentation.” However, warned two lawyers writing in *Just Security*, while user-generated evidence “is, in many respects, a boon for ICC prosecutors,” it “also comes with significant risks—for both those doing the documentation and those hoping to use the documentation. These risks must be managed, with the help of best practices guidance, to ensure the security of users, the authentication of evidence, and the representativeness of the crime base presented to the Court.” <https://www.justsecurity.org/80404/the-intl-criminal-courts-ukraine-investigation-a-test-case-for-user-generated-evidence/>; https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/88178-icc-civil-society-ukraine-russia-belarus-call-more-resources-investigation-ukraine.html?mc_cid=28ae20b9d6&mc_eid=cac5f32aeb

The Court released arrest warrants for three high-level former South Ossetian officials for crimes committed during the 2008 civil war in Georgia. *Justiceinfo.net* interviewed a Georgian activist who said these warrants were finally released six years after the investigation was opened: “because of Ukraine everything changed.” He also said, “One of the problems that the Office [of the Prosecutor] had in its investigations was the lack of evidence. Because from the moment they got engaged it was already too late—it was several years after the war—some of the key witnesses had already died. And during the preliminary examination period the Office has done almost nothing to secure this evidence which could have been used later in court.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/88833-icc-georgia-because-ukraine-everything-changed.html>

Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Appeals Chamber judges reversed the earlier acquittals of Hassan Habib Merhi and Hussein Hassan Oneissi, saying the trial judges “wrongly assessed the circumstantial evidence in the case, which was based almost entirely on mobile phone records,” *justiceinfo.net* reported. “Around 300 witnesses had been heard during the trial and 170,000 pages of evidence submitted over the 15 years” of investigation and trial. The Prosecutor said “the accused were convicted on the basis of complicated, technical telecommunications evidence. A conviction based extensively on technical data is historical in terms of international justice.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/88918-special-tribunal-for-lebanons-second-best-justice.html>

United Nations. “The Montreux Convention is serving an important role in the Ukraine conflict,” wrote professor Alpasian Ozerdem in *The Conversation*. The 1936 Convention “gives Turkey control over the water route between the Black Sea –home to a major Russian naval force—and the Mediterranean Sea and beyond.” On 28 February Turkey agreed to a request by Ukraine to close the straits to Russian warships, with the caveat that Russian ships returning to their home port would be permitted to enter. The signed Convention is in the holdings of the League of Nations archives. https://theconversation.com/what-the-montreux-convention-is-and-what-it-means-for-the-ukraine-war-178136?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%208%202022%20-%202227622095&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20March%208%202022%20-%202227622095+CID_e5c9cdd9cc131f336d821d83100e56f8&utm_source=campaign_monitor_us&utm_term=What%20the%20Montreux%20Convention%20is%20and%20what%20it%20means%20for%20the%20Ukraine%20war

The Secretary-General released the 2021 report on the UN’s efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in its work. “According to the report, 445 allegations were received in 2021, representing an increase over the 387 received in 2020;” 115 “related to UN entities” with the remainder of the allegations involving non-UN persons. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114012>

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) released a “landmark decision” saying “the criminalization of consensual, same-sex intimacy between women is a human rights violation.” A Sri Lankan woman brought the case with the support of the NGO Human Dignity Trust, which worked on the case for eight years, “building on evidence from its report *Breaking the Silence*, which highlights the global extent and impact of criminalisation on lesbian and bisexual women.” <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/CEDAW-C-81-D-134-2018-English-clean-copy.pdf>

The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health issued a report on water security of Africa. “The assessment reveals that the state of water-related data on just about any water issue in Africa remains ‘very poor’ despite all efforts undertaken to date.” In fact, “it may be argued that water data availability itself should be seen as an indicator in future water security assessments. Data limitations, however, do not change the main outcome of this assessment, which is strong and clear: levels of water security in Africa overall are unacceptably low.” <https://inweh.unu.edu/water-security-in-africa-a-preliminary-assessment/v>

World Health Organization (WHO). WHO released “a strategy to strengthen and scale up genomic surveillance around the world.” (Genomic Surveillance is “the process of constantly monitoring pathogens and analyzing their genetic similarities and differences.”) WHO data show only 68% of countries have the capacity for surveillance. “The strategy is shaped around 5 key objectives targeting access to adequate tools and technologies, a strengthened workforce, the enhancement of data sharing and utility, adequate connections and flow of information, and the readiness for future emergencies.” <https://www.who.int/initiatives/genomic-surveillance-strategy>

World Meteorological Organization. “Roughly half the world’s countries do not have multi-hazard early warning systems, according to the UN’s World Meteorological Organization. Some 60% lack basic water information services designed to gather and analyze data on surface, ground, and atmospheric water, which could help reduce flooding and better manage water,” *The New Humanitarian* reported. Noting there are “countless examples where data scarcity can cost lives,” it said “inadequate funding, poor data-sharing between countries, and conflict, at least in some parts of the world, contribute to the data shortfalls.” <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2022/03/01/how-climate-data-scarcity-costs-lives>

World/general news.

Business records. A leak of more than 8 million company records “revealed how the mining company Solway, operating illegally in El Estor, a Maya Q’eqchi town near the Caribbean coastline [of Guatemala], bought local police and Indigenous leaders, spied on journalists, classified residents as allies or enemies, and sought to expel communities from ancestral land,” *El Faro* reported. Twenty international news outlets had access to the leaks; see links here to three articles.

<https://forbiddenstories.org/mining-secrets-data-leak-reveals-aggressive-tactics-of-mining-giant-in-guatemala/>;
<https://theintercept.com/2022/03/27/solway-guatemala-nickel-mine/?emci=19b1bdf5-35b0-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&emdi=ac32a329-37b0-ec11-997e-281878b83d8a&ceid=4606001>; <https://mailchi.mp/elfaro.net/el-estor-6214192?e=b68035e8b1>

ZAM Magazine published an investigative report on the “troubling pattern of land-grabbing, violence, pollution, and death” associated with the operation of a VALE company coal mine at Moatize, Mozambique. The NGO *Justica Ambiental* went to court to “obtain access to VALE’s environmental monitoring reports from 2013 to 2020,” which the court ordered VALE to turn over, but the company appealed and did not produce the records. The Mozambican Bar Association also asked the court to subpoena “memorandums of understanding and other agreements signed between the government, VALE Mocambique and the affected communities” and the “information regarding ongoing resettlement processes” of those removed from their lands for the mine. The Association prevailed, even on appeal, but the company has yet to provide the documents. <https://africasacountry.com/2022/03/when-people-cough-black-stuff-comes-out>

Mexico’s Supreme Court “cancelled two controversial mining concessions in Indigenous communities,” *Mongabay* reported. Mexican law requires that Indigenous communities are informed of a project such as a mining concession before a license is issued, but the Nahua community in Tecoltemi, where the mine is located, had not been consulted before Almaden Minerals began work. “The Secretariat of Economy argued that the communities near the concession were not Indigenous enough to require prior consultation and had not adequately demonstrated their connection to the territory.” The court disagreed. <https://news.mongabay.com/2022/02/mexicos-top-court-cancels-mining-concessions-near-indigenous-communities/>

France’s Court of Cassation ruled in favor of the NGOs Sherpa and Friends of the Earth France, permitting them under French law to have access to “internal documents held by [oil company] Perenco France, to determine its role in activities denounced as harmful to the environment in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” The executive director of Sherpa said, “This is a key decision: it sets a precedent that facilitates access to evidence for civil society organizations when damage occurs abroad.” <https://www.asso-sherpa.org/victory-over-the-transnational-corporation-perenco-a-step-forward-in-the-fight-against-opacity-and-for-access-to-justice>

“On March 23 a Dutch court ruled that it was impossible to hold the oil company Shell liable for the 1995 trial and execution of Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his fellow Ogoni community leaders,” *justiceinfo.net* reported. The case was brought in 2017 by four of the widows. At an earlier stage of the trial the judges rejected the plaintiff’s “disclosure requests for more evidence from Shell’s records,” leading the court to rely on witness statements which they concluded “were too unclear for them to be sure” of the role of Shell. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/89238-unresolved-responsibility-big-oil-companies-nigeria.html>

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists obtained records of Swedish telecommunications company Ericsson, including an internal investigation report covering the years 2011-2019 that showed Ericsson “sought permission” from ISIS to work in Iraq and “paid to smuggle equipment into ISIS areas.” The 22.5 million emails, complemented by interviews, showed a widespread “pattern of bribery and corruption.” <https://www.icij.org/investigations/ericsson-list/ericsson-leak-isis-iraq-corruption/>

Global Witness, the U.K. NGO, “submitted eight explicit and violent ads containing real examples of Burmese language hate speech against Rohingya—all of which fall under Facebook’s criteria for hate speech—and Facebook approved all eight ads for publishing.” Global Witness removed the ads before they were published. Facebook admitted in 2018 that “it played a role in inciting violence during the genocidal campaign against the Rohingya.” Under the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s guidelines, a group of Rohingya youth filed a complaint against Facebook in Ireland (where it has a data center), “demanding justice for Facebook’s role in facilitating genocide against their community and seeking funding from Facebook for their education.” <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/new-investigation-shows-facebook-approves-ads-containing-hate-speech-inciting-genocide-against-rohingya/>

In February a judge allowed Johnson & Johnson, the U.S. pharmaceutical company, to proceed to bankruptcy and in the process settle more than 40,000 cases against it for manufacturing cancer-causing products, particularly talcum baby powder. During two trials last year, files of the company’s product testing were released, showing that in the 1960s J&J paid for an experiment in which “nearly a dozen men” in Holmesburg Prison in Pennsylvania were the subjects of experiments in which they “were paid

to be injected with potentially cancer-causing asbestos so the company could compare its effect on their skin versus that of talc, a key component in its iconic baby powder,” *Bloomberg* reported. A law professor who follows the J&J litigation said “the testing files could wind up being part of punitive-damages presentations in coming trials.” https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-07/j-j-s-controversial-prison-testing-resurfaces-in-baby-powder-lawsuits?sref=lbQAzuxj&utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=a36b5b1b9e-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-a36b5b1b9e-149736437

Child abuse. New Zealand police and the European Union’s police agency Europol announced the arrest of “dozens” of suspects who had posted images and videos of child abuse and “identified some 90,000 online accounts that had possessed or traded the abuse images,” *AP* reported. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/zealand-led-probe-uncovers-online-child-abuse-network-83200824>

Forced labor. “For the first time in its practice of conducting independent monitoring of forced labor since 2009, the Uzbek Human Rights Forum . . . confirms the absence of systematic forced labour in the 2021 cotton harvest season. Given the progress made in protecting the workers’ rights and complete eradicating [sic] systematic forced labor, the International Coalition Cotton Campaign announces an end to the call for a global boycott of Uzbek Cotton.” <https://www.cottoncampaign.org/news/cotton-campaign-government-of-uzbekistan-joint-statement-on-ending-the-call-for-a-global-boycott-of-uzbek-cotton>

Medical records. “MEDITECH and Google Health announced their intent to collaborate,” using Google’s “search and summarization capabilities” within electronic health records to extract “information from different parts of the patient record to produce a summary of a patient’s health conditions. Clinicians can then explore a deep-dive view of critical information related to treating and monitoring said conditions, including lab results, vitals and medications.” MEDITECH’s executive vice president said the partnership will help “better solve the information burden our customers face” and will “propel data liquidity and support the future of digital health ecosystems.” <https://ehr.meditech.com/news/meditech-and-google-health-collaborate-to-advance-clinical-search-and-discovery-in-expense-ehr>

Migration. In advance of the first International Migration Review Forum to be held 17-20 May where progress on implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will be assessed, the heads of 9 UN agencies plus the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Commission on Missing Persons issued a joint call to States to prevent migrants from dying or going missing. They said that over the past 8 years, more than 47,000 people have died along migration routes. Among the actions States should take are “regularly collecting and making data on migrant deaths and missing migrants publicly available in accordance with the right to privacy and data protection” and “providing avenues through which families can register cases of missing persons and obtain information on search efforts, while respecting the right to privacy and protecting personal data.” <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/act-now-save-lives-migrants-missing>

NGOs from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and the Philippines with FairSquare Projects, a U.K. NGO, compiled a report on the deaths of migrants working in the six Arab Gulf states. Using data from government sources in the sending countries, they compared the statistics with birth and death datasets from the Gulf countries, except Saudi Arabia which “does not make any data available on this issue.” They found that “as many as 10,000 migrant workers from south and south-east Asia die every year in the Gulf countries” and “more than half of the deaths are unexplained,” with “Gulf states . . . failing properly to investigate why so many migrant workers are dying.” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/11/up-to-10000-asian-migrant-workers-die-in-the-gulf-every-year-claims-report>

The Darien Gap on the border between Colombia and Panama “is one of the world’s most dangerous refugee and migrant routes,” said a joint press release of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. The numbers are surging: according to statistics from Panamanian authorities, in the first two months of 2022 8,456 people crossed, compared to 2,928 in the same period in 2021. Venezuelans make up nearly a fourth of the migrants, and children and adolescents were 1,367 of the total. In 2021 “at least 51 people were reported missing or dead” in the Gap. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/3/6243298f4/number-venezuelans-crossing-darien-gap-soars.html>

Nearly 1,000 pages of records from the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol were obtained by immigration attorneys and advocates through Freedom of Information Act litigation; the documents were shared with *The Intercept*. They “offer an unprecedented view of the lengths the U.S. and Mexican governments went” in 2019 “to surveil, detain and deport migrants on their way to the U.S.-Mexican border” and “show how the authorities paid specific attention” to the migrants held in “miserable conditions” in a factory-turned-shelter in the town of Piedras Negras. The records also show that the U.S. Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center “analyzed nearly 10,000 records from migrants who were processed in southern Mexico and coordinated with the governments of Colombia and Panama to track the migrants.” <https://theintercept.com/2022/03/22/cbp-asylum-mexico-piedras-negras/>

Religious archives. “Egyptian authorities have confiscated a newly discovered cache of Jewish archives from an old Cairo cemetery, angering the Jewish community that demands a role in documenting the rare find,” reported *World Israel News*, quoting a story on *Kan Radio*. The al-Basatin cemetery is believed to be “the second-oldest Jewish cemetery in the world, dating back to the ninth century.” A “source” close to the Jewish community said it has “to be involved in the issue . . . These are community and private documents. It [the cache] does not belong to the government.” <https://worldisraelnews.com/egyptian-authorities-confiscate-valuable-jewish-archives-in-cairo/>

Technology. The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre announced that it is now sharing its Data Analysis Methodology, called Bayanat, as open source. It allows “anyone to preserve and analyze large amounts of data, including videos, documents, and interviews.” https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2022/03/03/making-order-out-of-chaos-sjacs-open-source-methodology/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=d37ed8f5be-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-d37ed8f5be-96428969

“Russia’s assault on Ukraine, a conflict between two internet-savvy nations in a region with good cellular coverage, offers rich pickings for open source intelligence, or OSINT,” *WIRED* wrote. The “power to identify people from afar could bring new accountability to armed conflict but also open new avenues for digital attack. Identifying—or misidentifying—people in videos or photos said to be from the front lines could expose them or their families to online harassment or worse. Face algorithms can be wrong, and errors are more common on photos without a clear view of a person’s face, as is often the case for wartime images.” https://www.wired.com/story/facial-recognition-identify-russian-soldiers/?bxid=5e48efcf2ddf9e4807adf975&cndid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_ZZ&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=WIR_Daily_New_031022&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_New_031022&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=new-P3

In Afghanistan, “the Taliban control systems holding sensitive biometric data that Western donor governments left behind” in August 2021, “putting thousands of Afghans at risk,” Human Rights Watch said. “These digital identity and payroll systems contain Afghans’ personal and biometric data, including iris scans, fingerprints, photographs, occupation, home addresses, and names of relatives. The Taliban could use them to target perceived opponents, and Human Rights Watch research suggests that they may have already use the data in some cases.” HRW urged “all those involved in funding and building these biometric systems” to make public “the kind of data that may have been lost or seized following the Taliban takeover, including data they transferred to the former Afghan government or collected on their behalf.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/30/new-evidence-biometric-data-systems-imperil-afghans#>

“Indigenous groups in Canada and the U.S. are using ground penetrating radar to look for burial sites at former residential schools” for Indigenous children, *Undark* reported. The Canadian Archaeological Association working group investigating unmarked graves recommends a 10-step process for conducting the search; one step is doing archival research, which “comes with its own challenges. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, one-third of children who died at residential schools did not have their names recorded upon their death, about one-quarter did not have their gender noted, and one-half had no cause of death cited,” all complicated by the fact that some records have not been released, such as those of Catholic Church bodies. <https://undark.org/2022/03/28/how-radar-is-helping-track-down-lost-indigenous-grave-sites/>

Women. On March 8, International Women’s Day, the NGO Business & Human Rights Resource Centre said that since 2015 it “has recorded more than 3,800 cases of attacks” against human rights defenders. “More than one in five . . . were against women and, in 2021 alone, we recorded 122 attacks” on women human rights defenders, 70% of which were attacks on women defending land and environmental rights. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/international-womens-day-2022-recognising-the-role-of-women-in-advancing-human-rights-defending-the-planet/>

World War II. At the end of World War II, Japan’s Kuril Islands were incorporated into the Soviet Union. Ever since, Russia and Japan have been negotiating a peace treaty, with the Kurils the main stumbling block. The *Russian News Agency* announced that “Russia’s Foreign Ministry said that Moscow terminated peace treaty talks with Tokyo in light of unilateral restrictions imposed by Japan against Russia over Ukraine.” Tokyo protested the termination to Russia’s Ambassador to Japan. <https://tass.com/world/1425705>

An international group of survivors of forced prostitution by Japan’s World War II military petitioned U.N. human rights investigators “to press Seoul and Tokyo to jointly refer” to the International Court of Justice the matter of Japanese responsibility for sexual slavery. They want Japan to “fully accept culpability and offer an unequivocal apology,” *AP* reported. “Japan’s Foreign Affairs Ministry now says its government has found no documents showing the use of coercion in the recruitment of the so-called ‘comfort women’ and refuses to describe the system as sexual slavery.” <https://apnews.com/article/japan-asia-seoul-united-nations-south-korea-f2df28d5ca1a09b112d5ff5da25f2b0c>

Amsterdam’s city archives opened an exhibition, “The Raids of February 22 and 23, 1941,” when the Nazi police seized 400 Jewish men in Amsterdam, “most of whom were never heard from again,” the *New York Times* reported. It is based on the research and book by historian Wally de Lang, who in 2017 “could find no single list of all of the names of the men picked up on February 22 and 23, so she compiled her own from several sources. She was able to put together 390 biographies, each of which has been added to a new database” on the raids. <https://www.socialmedianews.net/she-discovered-what-happened-to-400-dutch-jews-who-disappeared/>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Algeria/France. On the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Evian Accords ending the war in Algeria, a former French conscript who had photographed secret documents while in Algeria called for the opening of the French military archives on the war. Talking to *Histoire coloniale et postcoloniale*, he added that the many documents preserved by French soldiers of that era that are now in various private hands should be given to the national archives and that the strict confidentiality imposed on the veterans should be lifted. <https://histoirecoloniale.net/Jacques-Inrep-ancien-appelle-en-Algerie-demande-l-acces-aux-circulaires-de-Massu.html>

Cambodia/France/United States. On 30 March 1997 four grenades were thrown at an opposition party rally in Phnom Penh, leaving 16 dead and more than 150 wounded. No one was held accountable. This past December a French court issued indictments against two senior Cambodian generals, Huy Piseth and Hing Bun Heang, “for ordering and carrying out the attack” and had “issued a summons for Prime Minister Hun Sen for his role in the attack” but the “French government blocked its delivery, citing head of state immunity,” reported Brad Adams, the Asia director for Human Rights Watch who was working in Cambodia at the time of the attack. In 1997 the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, in a classified report, tentatively implicated Hun Sen. Adams called on the FBI to declassify the “entire report” and follow “the French example by initiating criminal proceedings against those responsible, including the alleged mastermind, Hun Sen.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/30/long-last-signs-justice-1997-cambodia-massacre>

Cameroon/United States. Through a Freedom of Information request, *The Intercept* obtained a 2019 “heavily redacted” U.S. Defense Department document with “details about the U.S. partnership with a unit of the Cameroonian military known as the Rapid Intervention Battalion, or by its French acronym BIR.” The BIR is an “elite Cameroonian military unit long known for committing atrocities—including extrajudicial killings.” https://theintercept.com/2022/03/09/cameroon-military-abuses-bir-127e/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter

Canada/Vatican. The head of archives for Canada's National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) has been granted access to the archives in Rome of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, an order that operated residential schools for Indigenous children in Canada in the 20th century. NCTR is "still negotiating with the Oblates to access the personnel files of priests and residential school staff," with the Oblates seeking to restrict "records from those members who are still alive," *CBC News* reported. NCTR hopes to digitize the Oblates' residential school-related records for research use at the Centre. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/nctr-access-oblates-archives-rome-next-month-1.6389061>

Colombia/Venezuela. In February, the Colombian government cancelled without warning the legal citizenship status of approximately 43,000 Venezuelans in the country. Persons who had their ID cards cancelled cannot carry out many daily activities or access public services and face bureaucratic obstacles, potential detention and deportation. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-60384020>

El Salvador/Netherlands. A court in El Salvador held a hearing on the 1982 assassination of Dutch journalist Hans ter Laag by Salvadoran military during El Salvador's civil war, *teleSUR* reported. "In 1993, the United Nations Truth Commission for El Salvador stated that officers involved in this crime hindered the judicial investigations on it." The records of the truth commission are in the United Nations archives in New York and closed to access. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Salvadoran-Court-Analyzes-Case-of-Dutch-Man-Killed-in-Civil-War-20220318-0009.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8

Europe. The NGO Statewatch issued a report on the "development and deployment of biometric identification technologies by police and border forces in Europe," warning that "the increasing use of the technology is likely to exacerbate existing problems with racist policing and ethnic profiling." Although the European Union originally established "separate systems for the collection and storage of biometric data on different categories of foreign nationals—from asylum seekers to visa-holders and others—that data is now being made 'interoperable' through consolidation in a single, overarching database." <https://www.statewatch.org/publications/reports-and-books/building-the-biometric-state-police-powers-and-discrimination/>

The NGO Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE) published "Shutting out Criticism: How SLAPPs Threaten European Democracy." (SLAPP means strategic lawsuits against public participation that are intended to silence critics.) Reviewing legal cases filed in 30 European jurisdictions from 2010 to 2021, CASE identified 570 SLAPPs across Europe. It pointed out that the data covered only court-recorded lawsuits "and does not therefore consider the extent to which the act of issuing an aggressive legal threat can itself shut down acts of public participation" and "the adverse impact that they have on freedom of association and assembly." <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f2901e7c623033e2122f326/t/6231bde2b87111480858c6aa/1647427074081/CASE+Report+on+SLAPPs+in+Europe.pdf>

France/Rwanda. In April 2021 the "research commission on the French archives relating to Rwanda and the Tutsi genocide," chaired by historian Vincent Duclert, delivered its report. It was tasked with examining French involvement in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994 as well as the French Republic's role in the Tutsi genocide from April to July 1994. It concluded that France had heavy responsibilities for the 1994 events, but ruled out complicity in genocide. The association Survie has now published "notes" from the French secret service, DGSE, that it says confirms that "the state was fully informed about the activity of mercenaries" in Rwanda and their link to the genocidaires, which they claim the Duclert commission did not properly explore. <https://survie.org/themes/genocide-des-tutsis-au-rwanda/article/nouveau-rapport-rwanda-les-mercenaires-invisibles-les-archives-de-la-dgse>

Liberia/United States. Sekou Kamara, allegedly a former commander of the Liberian rebel group LURD during the second Liberian civil war (1999-2003), was arrested in New York for "having lied to the U.S. immigration authorities about his role in the LURD rebel faction in order to enter the country, obtain a permanent resident card . . . and then using it to obtain further documents," the Swiss NGO Civitas Maxima reported. The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission "recognized LURD as one of the significant violator groups" active during the war. <https://civitas-maxima.org/2022/03/29/alleged-former-liberian-rebel-commander-arrested-in-the-u-s/>

Mideast war. The U.N. Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic told a news briefing that the war in Syria “is actually on the uptick again” and “has displaced half of its pre-war population of 22 million,” *Reuters* reported. The panel said in its report that it examined 14 deadly attacks in the second half of 2021 and “urged the United States and all parties to conduct credible and independent investigations into incidents involving civilian casualties in which their forces were implicated.”
<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/syria-war-escalating-more-probes-needed-into-civilian-casualties---un-experts/47416582>

Ukraine war. On 4 March the UN Human Rights Council decided to establish a commission to investigate violations committed during Russia’s military attack on Ukraine.
https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113292?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=9a6601574d-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-9a6601574d-55008469

The International Court of Justice on 16 March ordered Russia to “immediately suspend the military operations, and ensure its military units and any other unit or individual it has control over take steps not to further the conflict.” It told both Russia and Ukraine “to refrain from any action that might aggravate the conflict,” *justiceinfo.net* reported. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/88936-international-court-of-justice-orders-russia-stop-invasion-ukraine.html>

“The Main Intelligence Department of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (GURMO) hacked and leaked documents it claimed it stole from the Russian Beloyarsk Nuclear Power Station.” That is, reported *SC Media*, “the first time a hack-and-leak operation weaponized the leak of intellectual property to harm a nation.” <https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/breach/in-a-first-ukraine-leaks-russian-intellectual-property-as-act-of-war>

The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre compared the actions of Russian military in Syria, which SJAC has documented, with Russia’s reported tactics in Ukraine.
https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2022/03/17/accountability-for-russian-crimes-in-syria-and-ukraine/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=1a57dfb42f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-1a57dfb42f-90540617

National news.

Afghanistan. In the “first major human rights report since the Taliban seized power” in August 2021, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said that from August to February “nearly 400 civilians have been killed in attacks in Afghanistan,” more than 80% of them by Islamic State-Khorasan.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nearly-400-civilians-killed-afghanistan-since-taliban-takeover-un-says-2022-03-07/>

Bolivia. Survivors of the dictatorships that ruled Bolivia between 1964 and 1982 have staged a continuous protest, staying in a hut outside the ministry of justice since 2012, demanding justice for the crimes committed against them, the *Guardian* reported. “In 2017, after five years in the hut, the activists achieved one of their goals: a truth commission.” The commission’s report was presented to the government in March 2021, but it has not been published online and the government has not acted on it.
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/30/bolivian-victims-dictatorships-still-wait-for-justice>

Brazil. At a press conference in September 2016, the prosecutor in an anti-corruption case displayed a graphic showing former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva as the center of a criminal organization. In March the Superior Court of Justice ruled that the now-former prosecutor must pay US\$15,000 in compensation to Lula “for moral damages,” *teleSUR* reported. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Brazil-Former-President-Lula-to-Get-Moral-Damages-Compensation-20220323-0004.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10

Burkina Faso. Thirty-five years after he was assassinated, a military tribunal is trying 14 men accused of the killing former president Thomas Sankara. Sankara’s death certificate said he died of “natural causes,” the *New York Times* reported, and “the day after Sankara’s death, French agents removed sensitive wiretap recordings from the offices of the local intelligence service, the trial heard.” France promised to declassify all its documents related to the Sankara case and provided three batches, which a French official said were “all the requested documents,” but a French expert on Sankara said they “exclude many secret documents including records from the notorious ‘Africa cell’ which coordinated

France's most sensitive activities in its former colonies." For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-10. <https://bdnews24.com/world/africa/2022/03/10/assassinated-in-his-prime-an-iconic-african-leader-haunts-a-trial-and-his-country>

Colombia. According to a report by the United Nations Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "in the first two months of 2022 at least 274,000 people in Colombia were affected by violence, which represents an increase of 621% compared to the same period of 2021." It said 3,000 people have been displaced and 48,000 "are in a situation of confinement, which means an increase of 394% compared to the same period last year," *teleSUR* reported. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights presented its annual report, saying it verified that in 2021 78 "multiple homicides" left 292 people dead, 100 community activists and 54 former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas were killed, and 72,000 people were forced from their homes by illegal armed groups. Adding to the bad news, the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz) reported 48 social leaders were killed in the first quarter of 2022, 6 more than in the same period of 2021.

https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/UN-Violence-in-Colombia-Registers-a-621-Increase-This-Year-20220401-0003.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8;
<https://nationalpost.com/pmn/news-pmn/crime-pmn/colombias-human-rights-situation-worsened-in-2021-says-un?emci=98671b72-cf9b-ec11-a22a-281878b85110&emdi=78a1917c-d09b-ec11-a22a-281878b85110&ceid=4606001>

The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) announced it will open three new "macro-cases": one on crimes committed by the former FARC, including "sexual violence, forced displacement, forced disappearance, use of landmines and town sieges;" the second on crimes carried out by state agents; and the third on crimes against Indigenous persons and Afro-Colombians. JEP said the cases will focus on patterns of behavior identified "after its 'contextual analysis group' studied 458 reports submitted by victims' groups and state agencies and identified 258,000 criminal offenses," *justiceinfo.net* reported. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/88737-first-rift-between-colombia-peace-tribunal-victims.html>

Denmark. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen delivered an in-person "final apology" for taking 22 Greenland Inuit children aged 4 to 9 from their families to be raised in Denmark in 1951, *Courthouse News* reported. In November 2020 a report based on archival sources was issued on the removal program and a written apology was issued but the pandemic delayed the face-to-face apology to the six living persons. The six living relocated children had "sued Denmark for intervening with their rights regarding private and family life;" the case was settled in February with Denmark paying each of them about \$37,000. <https://www.courthousenews.com/denmark-issues-final-apology-for-1950s-social-experiment-on-inuit-children-from-greenland/>

Ecuador. In June 2021 a coalition of 19 human rights organizations published a report "documenting 449 case studies of Ecuadorian earth defenders increasingly under threat." On 10 March the Ecuadorian Congress "granted amnesty to 268 people, primarily Indigenous defenders who had been criminalized and persecuted for their work to defend their territories, rights and nature, including leaders from Indigenous organizations," *Amazon Watch* reported. https://amazonwatch.org/news/2022/0311-justice-served-in-ecuador?utm_source=Amazon+Watch+Newsletter+and+Updates&utm_campaign=355a846b34-2019-04-25-blk%2B_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e6f929728b-355a846b34-342389134&mc_cid=355a846b34&mc_eid=1c591d7820

El Salvador. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held a hearing on "widespread unlawful surveillance using Pegasus spyware against journalists and activists in El Salvador." 35 journalists and human rights defenders were hacked between July 2020 and November 2021, including 22 *El Faro* journalists, with *El Faro* "being banned from government press conferences, ministries withholding information, a surge in on-line and in-person harassment, and threats and physical violence (including threats of sexual violence) against female journalists," the *Guardian* reported. For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-01. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/17/pegasus-spyware-ban-el-salvador-iachr-hearing>

"Saturday, March 26, was the most violent day of the last 20 years in El Salvador," *El Faro* wrote. "Authorities registered 62 murders in just 24 hours, far more than the average 3.4 murders per day throughout 2020 and 2021." The Legislative Assembly then enacted "a 30-day state of exception that suspends the right to association and legal defense, increases the period of detention without cause from 72 hours to 15 days, and allows the government to intercept communications without a warrant." The government attributed most of the murders to gangs. https://elfaro.net/en/202203/el_salvador/26100/Is-Bukele

Ethiopia. A video shared widely on social media showed armed men dragging and then burning “at least three people alive,” *AP* reported. “Tigray’s leaders, who are fighting federal forces and their allies, charged that the burning victims were ethnic Tigrayans.” The government said it will prosecute, but did not say if suspects had been taken into custody. <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/africa/2022/03/12/in-ethiopia-a-video-of-civilians-burned-alive-sparks-anger.html?rf>

Gambia. The Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission approved the amnesty committee’s report which was then sent to the minister of justice. “Out of 25 applications for amnesty, 11 were dismissed, 8 denied, 5 approved while 1 was granted immunity,” *justiceinfo.net* reported, adding that “in theory those who are denied should be sent to trial.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/89070-who-got-amnesty-from-gambias-truth-commission-and-who-didnt.html>

Honduras. “An anti-corruption team” from the Attorney General’s Office “visited presidential offices a week after President Juan Orlando Hernandez stepped down and found paper shredders and none of the financial documents they were looking for, the chief of the investigators said,” *AP* reported, explaining, “all documentation—when I say all, it’s everything—disappeared or was destroyed.” The Hernandez administration had argued that presidential documents were protected under the “official secrets law,” which *Reuters* reported has now been repealed by the new Congress. <https://apnews.com/article/honduras-obstruction-of-justice-drug-trafficking-tegucigalpa-899182325ab37714d241ce67c88b46c4?emci=98671b72-cf9b-ec11-a22a-281878b85110&emdi=78a1917c-d09b-ec11-a22a-281878b85110&ceid=4606001>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/honduras-repeals-secrets-law-fight-against-corruption-2022-03-03/>

Iraq. Human Rights Watch, supported by the Iraqi rights organization IraQueer, documented crimes against LGBT people in Iraq between 2018 and 2021: “8 cases of abductions, 8 cases of attempted murder, 4 extrajudicial killings, 27 cases of sexual violence—including gang rape—45 cases of threats to rape and kill, and 42 cases of online targeting by individuals who identified themselves as members of armed groups against LGBT people in Iraq.” <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/03/23/everyone-wants-me-dead/killings-abductions-torture-and-sexual-violence-against>

Libya. In its report to the UN Human Rights Council, the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya said “profound challenges in ensuring accountability for human rights violations and abuses in Libya remain.” One area of investigation was conditions in acknowledged and secret prisons; the Mission said “from its review of published material . . . there is no comprehensive official statistical data on Libya’s prisons.” Between October 2021 to 23 March, the Mission conducted over 120 interviews and “continued to consider and collect information from a variety of sources, including summaries of accounts and analytical data included in reports of the United Nations, civil society organizations and media; investigators’ direct observations during missions to Libya and third States; domestic Libyan law; information provided by Libyan authorities, other States and reliable stakeholders working on and in Libya; authenticated satellite imagery and audio-visual material; verified open-source material; interviews; and medical examinations by the Mission’s forensic physician.” https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/A_HRC_49_4_AUV.pdf

Mexico. “Mexico’s homicide rates have been steadily dropping since last year, according to official figures. But instead of being the good news . . . it could be signs of a macabre trend: Mexican drug cartels seem to have upped the practice of hiding the dead bodies of their victims instead of leaving their bodies where they drop.” According to statistics from the National Search Commission, more than 240,000 people are on the missing persons register “and more than 80% of them disappeared in the last ten years.” A member of an NGO looking for the missing told *VICE News* she has asked herself why would someone hide the bodies of victims: “We think it’s because if there is no body, there is no crime.” https://www.vice.com/en/article/epx8vw/21-bodies-found-in-a-mass-grave-if-there-is-no-body-there-is-no-crime?utm_source=email&utm_medium=editorial&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=220316

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights’ Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) issued its third report on the September 2014 disappearance of 43 students from Ayotzinapa teacher training school. At the presentation of the report, GIEI “showed a video filmed a month after the disappearances in which members of the Mexican navy seem to be actively manipulating evidence at a waste dump where bodies of the victims were said to have been incinerated,” *EFE* reported. The *Guardian* reported that a former Colombian prosecutor who is supporting the investigation said GIEI

“found evidence that authorities withheld or falsified evidence from the start of the search” for the students, altering both “crime scenes and records.” The report is based on “declassified documents.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/29/mexico-43-disappeared-students-military-report-iguala-ayotzinapa>; <https://www.laprensa-latina.com/new-report-on-mexicos-ayotzinapa-case-shines-spotlight-on-militarys-role/>

Myanmar. The NGO Fortify Rights and the Yale University law school released a report on “the Myanmar junta’s crimes against humanity following the coup d’etat.” It identified “61 senior military and police officials who should be investigated and possibly prosecuted for international crimes,” established “the locations of 1,040 military units nationwide,” and described the military chain of command. The report was based on 128 interviews in Myanmar in 2021, “internal Myanmar military documents” and Fortify Rights’ “manually collected information from open-source media of more than 1,150 incidents of human rights violations from March to May 2021.” <https://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Nowherer%20is%20Safe%20-%20Fortify%20Rights%20Report.pdf>

Nicaragua. The judge in the cases of five prominent political prisoners ignored 1,000 documents placed in evidence and sentenced all to prison terms, *Confidencial* reported. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-09, 2022-02. <https://www.confidencial.com.ni/politica/maynor-curtis-presentamos-1000-documentos-de-pruebas-que-no-fueron-valorados/>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/12/nicaragua-cristiana-chamorro-convicted/>

The UN Human Rights Council decided to establish a three-person expert group to “conduct thorough and independent investigations into all alleged human rights violations and abuses committed in Nicaragua since April 2018, including the possible gender dimensions of such violations and abuses, and their structural root causes.” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-adopts-16-resolutions-establishes-group-human-rights>

Paraguay. Mateo Sobode Chiqueno, an Ayoreo man, has recorded “more than 1,000 cassettes of Ayoreo histories and songs,” the *Guardian* reported. He began taping interviews in 1979 “after seeing missionaries using tape recorders to document their experiences.” The tapes “are being digitized by Iniciativa Amotocodie, a Paraguayan conservation organisation which works with the Ayoreo.” Chiqueno’s project is the subject of a prize-winning film, “Nothing but the Sun.” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/03/for-our-grandchildren-the-man-recording-the-lives-of-paraguays-vanishing-forest-people>

Russia. The U.S. NGO National Security Archive published a briefing book on the Russian NGO Memorial. “Leading the posting are three reports from the Memorial archives written by then-ombudsman for human rights Sergei Kovalev in 1994 and 1995, describing the Russian war in Chechnya in terms directly parallel to what the world is seeing in Ukraine today: Indiscriminate targeting of civilians, ill-informed and badly supplied Russian conscript soldiers, and a Russian leadership more like a ‘mafia organization’ than a government.” <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2022-03-03/liquidation-memorial>

“An investigation by *Bellingcat*, *The Insider* and the *BBC* has now discovered that in the days and months prior to his assassination in 2015, Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was tailed by members of the same assassination squad that would subsequently follow [Vladimir] Kara-Murza, [Dimitri] Bykov and [Alexy] Navalny.” *Bellingcat* used “travel data, phone records, and other public information about Russian citizens which is obtainable through Russia’s black market for data or features in leaked databases.” Court documents showed that “45 out of a total of 55 forensic analyses into the murder of Boris Nemtsov were performed by the FSB’s (security service) Criminalistics Institute,” which “would appear to mean that the FSB unit directly involved in the attempted assassinations and tailing of several other opposition figures was providing a key evidential component for the trial” of the Chechens convicted of the murder of Nemtsov. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-01, 02, 06. <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/03/28/boris-nemtsov-tailed-by-fsb-squad-prior-to-2015-murder/>

Rwanda. “Throughout 2020 and 2021 Human Rights Watch (HRW) monitored trials in which judicial authorities pursued politically motivated prosecutions and perpetuated a culture of intolerance of dissent.” HRW also “reviewed trial documents and verdicts to examine the evidence and arguments of prosecutorial authorities and the basis for judges’ rulings,” used “content published on various channels managed by journalists and commentators on trial,” and interviewed 11 people. HRW’s Central Africa

director said, “The evidence provided by the prosecuting authorities, and what judges have chosen to rely on to justify their conclusions, clearly demonstrates that these cases violate African and international human rights law.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/16/rwanda-wave-free-speech-prosecutions>

Serbia. In March 2021 the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) visited Serbia and checked on conditions in 13 detention facilities, including prisons, police stations and psychiatric hospitals. After conducting 80 interviews, CPT said it “once again received a significant number of credible and consistent allegations of physical ill-treatment of detained persons by police officers, notably in the Belgrade area.” In its review of psychiatric detention CPT said, “It is worrying that the registers on the use of mechanical restraints in the psychiatric Clinic did not record the frequent application of restraints for periods more than two hours, and at times overnight. Consequently, the management of the hospital had no overview of the use of mechanical restraint in the establishment and nor could any external body obtain an accurate picture about its use.” CPT recommended that “each use of means of restraint should be systematically and accurately recorded in a dedicated register as well as in the individual file of the patient” and that “every use of seclusion be recorded in a dedicated register.” <https://rm.coe.int/1680a5c8a4>

South Africa. “Refugees and asylum seekers say challenges with renewing their permits on the country’s new online system leave them at risk of deportation and harassment,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. Refugee advocates say moving government services online can “worsen the so-called digital divide—the gap between those who can access and know how to use the internet and computers and those who don’t.” <https://news.trust.org/item/20220306152304-mswzp/>

A judge in Pretoria’s high court ruled that by not enforcing the Highveld Priority Area (HPA) Air Quality Management Plan the government “was in breach of residents’ constitutional right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and wellbeing,” *TimeLIVE* reported. The judge also “found there was a need for enhanced monitoring of atmospheric emissions in the HPA to ensure the collection of verified, reliable data and that real-time emissions data be made publicly available online and on request.” https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-03-18-no-more-deadly-air-as-environmental-activists-win-pollution-court-case/?utm_campaign=meettedgar&utm_medium=social&utm_source=meettedgar.com

South Sudan. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report on investigations “into grave and widespread violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks against civilians . . . in and around Tambura County, Western Equatoria state, between June and September 2021.” The investigators conducted “at least 400 in-depth interviews with victims, eyewitnesses and other sources” and “identified 31 individuals who may bear the greatest responsibility for violations and abuses committed during this period.” The Human Rights Division of UNMISS “has a confidential document profiling these 31 perpetrators, which includes military and militia commanders, as well as political leaders and government officials, for further accountability purposes.” <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Tambura-Report.pdf>

Sudan. Forces from army intelligence and the Rapid Support forces—a “paramilitary squad composed of former Popular Defence Forces (known as Janjaweed) militiamen”—raided and took over the building of the commission investigating the June 2019 killing of over 100 protesters, *Al Jazeera* reported. The commission’s chairperson said, “What has happened will cripple the investigation and it might finish it altogether.” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/9/sudanese-authorities-raid-offices-of-2019-massacre-tribunal>

Syria. On International Women’s Day the Syrian Network for Human Rights issued a report saying “at least 9,774 women are still detained or forcibly disappeared in Syria, while 16,228 women have been killed, and 93 women have died due to torture” since the armed conflict began in March 2011. <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/03/08/57445/>

Passport delays “have threatened the legal status of Syrians abroad, who are unable to renew their passports so as to prove their identity and extend temporary residencies,” the NGO Syria Justice and Accountability Centre wrote. The delay problem is aggravated by the elevated fees for obtaining or renewing a passport when living outside the country (\$3-\$10 inside the country, \$300-\$800 outside).

“Syrian government officials have blamed the passport delays partially on international sanctions, which they say have restricted access to the paper material needed to print the passports.” But the delay may also have a benefit for the government: applicants living outside the country are “required to submit video testimonials. This digital content allows the Syrian government to geolocate its citizens living abroad, making it easier to continue surveilling those it suspects of dissent or whom it accuses of having left Syria illegally.” https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2022/03/31/passport-delays-threaten-legal-status-of-syrians-abroad/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=042f885325-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-042f885325-96428969

United Kingdom/Scotland. On International Women’s Day Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland’s first minister, offered a formal apology for killing an estimated 3,837 people accused as witches between 1563 and 1736 and “pledged to start the pardon process” for them, *TimeOut* reported. <https://www.timeout.com/news/why-witches-killed-in-medieval-scotland-have-finally-got-an-apology-033022>

United States. “Black people, Latinos and Native Americans were undercounted during the 2020 national census, new U.S. Census Bureau data showed, potentially affecting political representation and federal funding for communities with significant minority populations,” *Reuters* reported. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-census-undercounted-black-people-latinos-native-americans-officials-say-2022-03-10/>

Zayn al-Abidin Muhammad Husayn, also known as Abu Zubaydah, was captured in Pakistan after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 and has spent much of the past two decades detained by the U.S. at Guantanamo Bay. “Attorneys for Zubaydah are suing at the European Court of Human Rights, saying their client was the victim of crimes when he was detained at a CIA black site in Stare Kiejkuty, Poland, between 2002 and 2003, and that Poland had failed to investigate them. Separately in Poland where he is suing to hold officials there accountable, Zubaydah wants James Elmer Mitchell and John Jessen, two doctors who helped set up CIA’s torture program, to testify about his time at the black site,” *Courthouse News* reported. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in March that the state secrets privilege can be used to block the doctors’ testimony, accepting the government’s position that, although the Polish site is widely known, the government considers the existence of the CIA black site to be a state secret, therefore the two doctors cannot testify about events that happened there. <https://www.courthousenews.com/supreme-court-rules-against-guantanamo-detainee-in-fight-over-torture-testimony/>

The Department of Veterans Affairs’ inspector general released three reports on the effort to modernize veterans’ medical records, saying the new system “poses grave safety risks to patients, from medication errors to failures to safeguard patients at high degree of suicide.” <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Massive-digital-health-system-for-veterans-17010754.php>

A research team reported in *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* that historical “redlining”—the discriminatory 1930s government grading of the desirability of neighborhoods—is associated with present-day air pollution disparities in U.S. cities. They used the 1930s maps for 202 cities and compared them to a dataset from the Center for Air, Climate and Energy Solutions that provides “annual ambient concentration predictions for census blocks for 1979-2015,” then used “2010 pollution data to align with the most recent available (2010) decennial census.” They said the findings “highlight the present-day disparities in urban pollution levels reflect a legacy of structural racism in federal policy-making—and resulting investment flows and land use decisions—apparent in maps drawn more than 80 years ago.” <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/acs.estlett.1c01012>

Venezuela. Marta Valiñas, chair of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, told the Human Rights Council that last October Venezuela’s chief prosecutor said 185 State security officials had been convicted for human rights violations. However, “the lack of disaggregated data and key information on the crimes charged or the rank and level of responsibility of the perpetrators continues to be an obstacle to assessing the State’s real efforts to investigate and prosecute these violations.” She also noted that the Commission for the Guarantee of Justice and Reparations for Victims of Crimes against Human Rights, created by a December 2021 law, was “yet to be made operational.” <https://waps.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/03/statement-marta-valinas-chair-independent-international-fact-finding-mission?sub-site=HRC>

Course, publications.

Swisspace course “Documenting and Archiving from a Dealing with the Past Perspective,” 16- 25 May 2022, apply by 30 April: <https://www.swisspace.ch/continuing-education/postgraduate-courses/documenting-and-archiving-from-a-dealing-with-the-past-perspective>

Business and Human Rights Journal special issue on gender, business & human rights: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-and-human-rights-journal/issue/AF38E8407E8799FA2E94CB7E969532B5>

Nuestra Historia issue on the right to be forgotten: https://revistanuestrahistoria.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/nh12_web.pdf

Pierre Hazan, “When Business Helped a Genocide,” *justiceinfo.net*: <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/89160-when-business-helped-a-genocide.html>

Linda Kinstler, “What Russia Is Doing to Ukraine Must Be Preserved—Not Just Seen,” *WIRED*: https://www.wired.com/story/russia-ukraine-war-crimes-evidence-digital-media/?bxid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&cndid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_ZZ&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=WIR_Daily_030522&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_030522&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=P3

Irwin Loy, “‘It’s like the wild west’: Data security in frontline aid,” *The New Humanitarian*: https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/interview/2022/02/28/data-security-in-frontline-aid?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=3bb41110bc-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_03_04_Weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-3bb41110bc-75545741

Howard Varney and Katarzyna Zduńczyk, “Gearing Up the Fight Against Impunity: Dedicated Investigative and Prosecutorial Capacities,” International Center for Transitional Justice and Foundation for Human Rights South Africa: https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/ICTJ_Report_Specialized_Units_Web.pdf

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