
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.

Here are items from each month of the *News* in 2022 that, taken together, illustrate the diversity of human rights issues that involve archives; some may bring a smile, too. To a record 2023!

January. It's never too late: The parliament of Spain's Catalan region "formally pardoned hundreds of women executed for witchcraft between the 15th and 18th centuries."

February. A database of examples of rapid evolution among plants and animals as climates changed records "everything from the cranial depth of the common chaffinch to the lifespan of the Trinidadian guppy."

March. Bravo: For the first time since it began monitoring forced labor, the Uzbek Human Rights Forum confirmed the absence of systematic forced labour in the 2021 cotton harvest season.

April. The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court signed an agreement to become part of a joint investigation team with Eurojust, the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, and Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine "to facilitate investigations and international judicial cooperation" and "effectively gather evidence on core international crimes committed in Ukraine and bring those responsible to justice."

May. A less happy first: The UN High Commissioner for Refugees said that for the first time 100 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, representing 1% of the global population and equalling the population of the 14th most populous country in the world.

June. An armed group occupied the court in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, setting fire to the files of the courts in Port-au-Prince and Croix-des-Bouquets.

July. The Swiss cement company Holcim emitted more than seven billion tons of CO₂ from 1950 to 2021, which amounts to 0.42% of all global industrial CO₂ emissions since the year 1750.

August. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released its assessment of human rights concerns about government actions in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region of China.

September. The International Labour Organisation's surveys estimated that 27.6 million people are in situations of forced labor and 22 million are living in forced marriages.

October. In Guatemala, two groups of Indigenous women proposed a law that would protect their weaving designs, fearing that companies owned by non-Indigenous Guatemalans would patent their traditional designs and prevent them from weaving them.

November. JBS, the world's largest meat company, said it was the victim of a cattle laundering fraud for buying cattle from a farm operated by one of the biggest deforesters in Brazil.

December. Cheers: In advance of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 2023, on 10 December 2022 the UN launched “a year-long campaign to showcase the UDHR by focusing on its legacy, relevance and activism.”

SAHR News. Responding to a call by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, SAHR submitted comments on Human Rights Council Resolution 49/20--Rights of the child: realizing the rights of child and family reunification.

The next First Tuesday Talk will be on February 7 with Dagmar Hovestädt, head of the department of outreach at the Stasi Records Archive at the Federal Archives of Germany, speaking about the Stasi archives. The talk will be on Zoom at 4 PM Paris time, in English with no translation.

International news.

European Court of Justice. Since 2018 the European Union (EU) and since 2020 the U.S. have required public “ultimate-beneficial ownership (UBO) registries, where corporations must declare which human beings control them and receive their profits,” *The Economist* explained. In late November the European Court of Justice ruled that such registers “violate owners’ right to privacy and struck down an EU directive that opened them to the public,” limiting future access to parties with a “legitimate interest.” Civil society and journalism groups were dismayed, as the use of the registries has been a key part of investigations into international money-laundering such as that exposed in the Pandora Papers. Registries are also “a crucial tool in enforcing international sanctions against Russia and others,” and tax evasion “could become harder to combat.” <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2022/12/01/the-eus-top-court-just-made-it-harder-to-uncover-dirty-money>

European Parliament. By a vote of 507 in favor, 12 opposed and 7 abstentions, the European Parliament recognized “the Holodomor, the artificial famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine caused by a deliberate policy of the Soviet regime, as a genocide against the Ukrainian people, as it was committed with the intent to destroy a group of people by deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction.” The resolution also “calls on all countries, in particular the Russian Federation and the other countries which emerged following the break-up of the Soviet Union, to open up their archives on the artificial famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine.” And it “condemns the current Russian Regime’s manipulation of historical memory” and the closure of the Memorial organizations, and calls on all EU institutions and members states “to support academia and civil society in the documentation of, research into and education on political repression and totalitarian crimes in the Soviet Union.” <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221209IPR64427/holodomor-parliament-recognises-soviet-starvation-of-ukrainians-as-genocide>

European Union/Frontex. NGOs Human Rights Watch and Border Forensics released a “multimedia research feature” showing that EU’s border agency Frontex uses “aerial surveillance to enable the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept migrant boats, knowing that migrant and asylum seekers will face systematic and widespread abuse when forcibly returned to Libya,” which makes “Frontex complicit in the abuse.” The research used “official and open-source data, including drone and plane flight tracks, together with information from Sea-Watch, a civilian rescue organization . . . Alarm Phone, a hotline for migrants in distress at sea, and the testimony of survivors.” In a separate but related action, on 28 November the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights filed a complaint before the International Criminal Court “arguing European responsibility for crimes against humanity committed against migrants and refugees in Libya.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/12/eu-frontex-complicit-abuse-libya>; <https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/interceptions-of-migrants-and-refugees-at-sea/>

International Criminal Court (ICC). *Al Jazeera Media Network* “submitted a formal request . . . to investigate and prosecute those responsible for killing veteran Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh” while she was “covering an Israeli military raid on a refugee camp in Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank.” Israel said the killing was accidental and it would not investigate. *Al Jazeera*’s dossier “gathers all available eyewitness evidence and video footage, as well as new material on the killing of Abu Akleh,” which it argues is “part of a wider campaign to target and silence *Al Jazeera*.”

For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-09. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/6/al-jazeera-takes-the-killing-of-shireen-abu-akleh-to-the-icc>

For the first time, a Palestinian filed a complaint with the ICC against the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority (PA), *BBC News* reported. Nizar Banat was a critic of the PA and “was known for social media posts in which he accused powerful individuals of corruption.” He was arrested on 24 June 2021 by the PA’s Preventive Security Service and died in custody. Giving up on the PA military case against 14 officers involved in the arrest, the Banat family applied to the ICC “for an unpoliticised investigation and prosecution of criminals,” Banat’s brother said. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-63985086>

International Labor Organization (ILO). ILO, with the cooperation of Lloyd’s Register Foundation and the polling company Gallup, surveyed employees’ experiences of violence and harassment at work, *UN News* reported. Interviewing nearly 75,000 employed individuals aged 15 or older in 121 countries and territories, the survey determined that almost 23% of workers have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence or harassment in the workplace; only half told another person about it. A director at Lloyd’s said that to tackle “global safety challenges as difficult and deep-rooted as violence and harassment at work, it is critical to have good data to understand the extent of the problem and to identify those most at risk, especially in places where little reliable data may have existed previously.” Among the recommendations is “regular collection of robust data on violence and harassment at work, at national, regional and global levels, to inform prevention and remediation laws and mechanisms, policies and programmes.” https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_863095.pdf

Kosovo Specialist Chambers. The court “sentenced former Kosovo Liberation Army unit commander Sali Mustafa to 26 years in prison for war crimes including arbitrary detention, torture and murder,” *BIRN* reported. This is the first war crimes judgment handed down by the Chambers. For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-09. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/12/16/kosovo-ex-guerrilla-convicted-of-war-crimes-by-hague-court/>

United Nations. The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) will be celebrated on 10 December 2023. On Human Rights Day, 10 December 2022, the UN launched “a year-long campaign to showcase the UDHR by focusing on its legacy, relevance and activism.” <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

UNITAD, the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/ISIL, said it has “converted 5.5 million physical pages of documentary evidence of ISIL-related crimes into digital formats and is currently supporting digitization at six different Iraqi sites,” *UN News* reported. UNITAD has an agreement with Germany “to collect data and DNA reference samples from the Yazidi community residing there for a campaign to identify human remains in Iraq.” UNITAD also supports national prosecutions of ISIL crimes, working with 17 Member States that have requested assistance. Reporting to the Security Council, the Special Advisor leading UNITAD said, “The ability of the Team to collect testimonial evidence from witnesses in direct response to these requests [from Member States], combined with its capacity to identify corroborating internal ISIL documentation from battlefield evidence, has been of significant assistance in supporting investigations by national jurisdictions.” https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131387?utm_source=UN+News+-+Newsletter&utm_campaign=ca6435e970-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_12_06_01_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fdbf1af606-ca6435e970-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D

The High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a message celebrating the adoption of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)’s General Recommendation 39 on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls (GR39). He said the General Recommendation makes specific recommendations that State parties (which is almost every country) should implement “to ensure that we advance the rights of indigenous women and girls where it matters most—in their daily lives.” Among the dozens of recommendations in GR39 are those focusing on “prevention of and protection from gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls,” including a recommendation that States “systematically collect disaggregated data and undertake studies, in collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations, to assess the magnitude, gravity and root causes of gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls, in particular sexual violence and exploitation, to inform

measures to prevent and respond to such violence.” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/12/opening-remarks-volker-turk-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights-high>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no39-2022-rights-indigeneous>

In 2019 the International Law Commission, “a body of legal experts charged with drafting proposed new conventions for the United Nations to consider adopting,” sent a draft convention on crimes against humanity to the UN’s Sixth Committee which oversees international legal issues. “No such treaty exists currently, something that human rights advocates and legal scholars describe as a gaping hole in international law,” *Foreign Policy* explained. When the draft saw no action, in October eight countries introduced the draft resolution for Committee action and “set a timetable for debating the resolution.” Ten countries objected to the action, including Russia, China, and North Korea, but the draft resolution now has 86 co-sponsors. *Foreign Policy* based its report on “internal U.N. documents and interviews with nine U.N. diplomats and experts.” Thanks to Jens Boel for the link.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/12/23/united-nations-china-russia-treaty-crimes-against-humanity-international-law/>

WIRED reported on the United Nations Populations Fund’s (UNFPA) efforts to use technology to enhance reproductive health, particularly among young women “because pregnancy is the number one killer of girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide.” In Colombia, UNFPA supports the NGO Partera Vital (Vital Midwife) which developed “a mobile app to help midwives register newborns and identify risk factors and complications that warrant urgent referrals to the nearest hospital.” It also scraped 12,000 Spanish-language tweets, identified 22 prevalent harmful myths about contraception, and created a website “meant for young women, educators, and policy makers, along with infographics debunking each myth.” https://www.wired.com/story/how-the-uns-sex-agency-uses-tech-to-save-mothers-lives/?bxiid=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_121122&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_121122&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=P6

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity agreed on a global biodiversity framework. Part of the agreement “is a decision to establish ‘a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources, including a global fund’,” *Health Policy Watch* reported. The framework encourages “the depositing of more digital sequence information on genetic resources, with appropriate information on geographical origin and other relevant metadata, in public databases,” and said that to ensure benefits from using the digital data, practices should “be consistent with open access to data” and should “take into account the rights of indigenous people and local communities, including with respect to the traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that they hold.” <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/biodiversity-deal-outlines-an-open-access-digital-sequence-information-paradigm/>

The UN launched the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, *UN News* announced. It will include establishing “UN-system wide cooperation and public-private partnership mechanisms” to develop “appropriate guidelines and technical standards in cooperation with international standards organizations for language digitization, documentation, and innovation and knowledge through sharing good practices in the field of language technology” (Output 3, Activity 3.3). For archives-related matters, see also Output 2, Activity 2.1; Output 6, Activity 6.1; and Output 10, Activity 10.2.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131807>; <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379851/PDF/379851eng.pdf.multi>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Nearly 40,000 Syrians living in a refugee camp in Jordan access benefits (such as purchasing food) by having the iris of their eye scanned which unlocks “payment from a digital aid account with the help of blockchain technology,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. A spokesperson for UNHCR said “refugees were informed about the objectives of gathering their data when they were asked to give permission” for the initial scan for the database, the biometric data is not shared, and refugees can opt out of the program. “But digital rights groups question the use of such new technology among vulnerable groups such as refugees, and the need for them to surrender sensitive biometric data in order to receive vital food aid.” <https://www.context.news/surveillance/in-jordan-refugees-scan-irises-to-collect-aid-but-is-it-ethical>

World/general news.

Business. Agropalma is the “only Brazilian company with the sustainability certificate issued by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil” and is the exporter of a quarter of Brazil’s palm oil exports, *Mongabay* wrote. Communities along the Acara River in Para state say that “part of the area occupied by Agropalma overlaps with their ancestral land, including two cemeteries.” The accusation “that more than half of the 107,000 hectares (264,000 acres) registered by Agropalma was derived from fraudulent land titles and even the creation of a fake land registration bureau” was part of a suit against Agropalma brought by state prosecutors. The court ordered Agropalma’s titles revoked in 2018 and 2020, but “despite admitting the deeds were counterfeited,” Agropalma “now is seeking to repurchase the land from Para state.” *Mongabay* “sifted through thousands of pages of documents to investigate the land-grabbing accusation,” also looking at conflicts over areas used by other oil companies, and concluded, simply, “root of problem: unreliable land titles.” <https://news.mongabay.com/2022/12/major-brazil-palm-oil-exporter-accused-of-fraud-land-grabbing-over-quilombola-cemeteries/>

Global Witness also reported on the “severe human rights abuses and land rights abuses against Indigenous, Quilombola and other communities who traditionally live in the oil palm areas.” Following its September 2022 investigative report, Global Witness “gathered video and interview evidence showing that, on and after 28 November, armed men reportedly acting on behalf of BBF [Brasil Biofuels] have: Forced men and women to lay face down on the floor at gunpoint, as if they were criminals; Attacked and hurt community members, allegedly including a pregnant woman; Threatened to shoot those who were attempting to protect the territory.” The international agricultural products company Cargill told Global Witness it has “suspended BBF from its palm supply chain,” and since Cargill supplies Hershey, General Mills and Kellogg those companies also no longer use BBF oil. For background see *SAHR News* 2022-09. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/violence-torture-and-threats-continue-allege-land-and-environmental-defenders-amazonian-brazil-palm-oil-regiondefenders-amazonian-brazil-palm-oil-region/>

“Shell has agreed to pay \$15.9 million in compensation to communities in Nigeria impacted by four oil spills that occurred from its pipelines in the Niger Delta between 2004 and 2007,” *ABC News* reported. In 2021 The Hague Court of Appeal ruled that Shell’s Liberia subsidiary was responsible and liable for the pollution caused by the four pipeline leaks. These leaks are far from the only ones: according to Nigeria’s National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, 246,000 liters of oil were spilled just from January to March 2022. For background, see *SAHR News* 2021-01. <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/shell-pay-159-million-settlement-nigerian-communities-impacted/story?id=95751780>

Meta was sued in Kenya for “human rights abuses and killings in Ethiopia caused by hate speech on Facebook,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* reported. “The petition alleges that Meta has repeatedly failed to take down posts calling for violence, including those promoting concentration camps and rape as a weapon of war.” One claimant is a man, now in exile, whose father was murdered “after two Facebook posts targeted him as a member of the Tigray ethnic group;” the other plaintiff is a lawyer working for Amnesty International in Kenya who “claims to have been targeted on Facebook over his work in Ethiopia.” Both Amnesty and Global Witness are among the named “interested parties.” <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2022-12-14/meta-sued-for-2bn-over-ethiopia-hate-speech-revealed-by-bureau>

Ranking Digital Rights, a U.S.-based NGO, issued a “Telco Giants Scorecard,” analyzing “12 of the biggest global telecommunications companies, headquartered in 10 different countries” and reviewing “more than 250 aspects of their company policies that affect people’s human rights.” Finding: “none of the 12 telecommunications companies . . . earned a passing grade.” <https://rankingdigitalrights.org/tgs22/executive-summary>

“At least four major suppliers of Hyundai Motor Co and sister Kia Corp have employed child labor at Alabama [U.S.] factories in recent years, a *Reuters* investigation found.” The journalists interviewed “more than 100” people and “reviewed thousands of pages of court records, corporate documents, police reports and other records.” They found that fake IDs are used by some minors and some adults do not have “legitimate documentation.” After *Reuters* published a story in July 2022 on child labor in Hyundai’s supply chain “staffing firms have fired foreign workers from at least five factories.” https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-immigration-hyundai/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-briefing&utm_term=12-16-2022

Climate change. The European Union adopted a law requiring “firms supplying palm oil, cattle, soy, coffee, cocoa, timber and rubber—as well as some derived products such as beef or furniture—to the EU market to prove their supply chains are not fueling the destruction of forests,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. Businesses also “have to demonstrate that the rights of indigenous people were respected in their operations.” Businesses that do not comply could face fines; records will be crucial to documenting compliance. https://www.context.news/climate-risks/can-a-new-eu-law-stop-firms-selling-goods-linked-to-deforestation?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=context-climate

“As part of its investigation into climate disinformation, the [U.S.] House Oversight Committee subpoenaed documents from four of the world’s largest oil companies; their U.S. trade association, the American Petroleum Institute; and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber did not comply with the subpoena,” but the rest submitted documents, *The Intercept* reported. The Committee released more than 1,500 pages that include the companies’ “international communications about media relations, advertising, and marketing campaigns from 2015 to 2021. Taken together, they reveal that the industry’s approach on climate really hasn’t changed since scientists first started warning that the burning of fossil fuels was becoming a problem: push ‘solutions’ that keep fossil fuels profitable, downplay climate impacts, overstate the industry’s commitments, and bully the media if they don’t stay on message.” https://theintercept.com/2022/12/24/oil-gas-climate-disinformation/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter

Colonialism. Ukraine’s *Zaborona* news agency, with Ukrainian journalists and supported by the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, created Volya Hub, “an online platform where journalists and other content creators from countries previously or currently colonized by Russia can tell their stories,” said *Zaborona*. Encouraging contributions from “partners from Eastern and Central Europe, Baltic States, and Central Asia,” the organizers wrote, “Russia has spent and is continuing to spend enormous resources to rewrite, erase or hijack historical facts and manufacture disinformation about the history of the Russian military, economic and political imprint. This distorts international conversation.” <https://euromaidanpress.com/2022/12/26/new-us-ukrainian-network-to-promote-awareness-of-russian-colonialisms-crimes-past-and-present/>; <https://zaborona.com/en/volya-hub-there-is-a-network-about-the-russian-colonialism/>

Medical records. The International Peace Institute, a U.S.-based NGO, published *Strengthening Data to Protect Healthcare in Conflict Zones*. Data is “essential to understand the scale and scope of the problem” of attacks on healthcare in situations of armed conflict, “protect health services and workers, prioritize resources to those most impacted, prevent future attacks and hold perpetrators accountable.” The authors compared the “two current global systems” collecting such data—the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA) and the database produced by the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) in partnership with Insecurity Insight (II)—and found “gaps in coordination, stakeholder engagement and availability of useful data.” Multiple actors will need to work to “overcome gaps in data collection and quality, geographical coverage, public availability of information, and naming of perpetrators.” https://www.statnews.com/2022/12/13/telehealth-facebook-google-tracking-health-data/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=3ab52ac71b-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-3ab52ac71b-149736437 <https://www.ipinst.org/2022/11/strengthening-data-to-protect-healthcare-in-conflict-zones>

A study funded by the U.S. government and conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University (U.S.) analyzed two decades of studies, primarily from Canada, Spain and Switzerland, on mistakes in emergency room diagnoses. They then applied the ratios to the U.S. and estimated that of the 130 million annual visits to hospital emergency departments in the U.S. (data from the National Center for Health Statistics), roughly 7.4 million people are inaccurately diagnosed. https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/products/diagnostic-errors-emergency/research#field_report_title_1

Migration. The Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN), an “independent Network of NGOs and associations mainly based in the Balkan regions and in Greece,” published *Black Book of Pushbacks*, *BIRN* reported. BVMN conducted 1,635 interviews that provided information on 24,990 persons; migrants “were beaten, kicked, humiliated and arbitrarily detained before being illegally pushed back, both at the EU’s external borders and from deep within the territory of its member states,” including Austria, Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Albania. It

said the “pushbacks are not sporadic cases but that violence, torture and humiliation are growing and being normalized.” <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/12/08/study-reports-25000-violent-pushbacks-at-cu-borders/>

The Intercept obtained 30,000 pages of Italian court records that shed light on “Italy’s sprawling investigation into the work of humanitarian rescue NGOs” operating in the Mediterranean to pick up migrants attempting to cross from Libya to Italy. The police were “working to prove what is, in effect, a conspiracy theory: that humanitarian NGOs in the Central Mediterranean are profiting off migration by colluding with smugglers in Libya.” Four members of Jugend Rettet, a German NGO, are on trial in Sicily for “aiding and abetting illegal immigration;” seventeen other “aid workers and professional mariners are facing the same and other charges;” Save the Children and Medecins San Frontieres “are charged as organizations, as is the company that owned the ships they leased.” The investigators listened in “on conversations protected by attorney-client privilege and journalists’ calls with sources. Police hired the Italian company RCS Lab to remotely hack the phones of two Medicins Sans Frontieres employees.” The court file “spans over four years of investigations and includes transcripts of wiretaps, clandestine recordings, and police interrogations; material scraped from seized electronic devices; and reports written by an undercover officer.” https://theintercept.com/2022/12/21/italy-iuventa-humanitarian-rescue/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20Intercept%20Newsletter

Privacy. “The video of a man raping his 9-year-old daughter was discovered in New Zealand in 2016,” *AP* wrote; the child was finally found in Bisbee, Arizona, U.S. Although police, prosecutors and internet companies “chase behind in a futile effort to remove the images,” according to the U.S. NGO National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) the video was seen 4,500 times in 2021. “The data provided to the *AP* also shows that police in the U.S. referred the . . . video, or portions of it, to NCMEC for identification 1,850 times since it was discovered, contributing to nearly 800 arrests on federal child pornography charges last year [2021] alone.” https://apnews.com/article/video-victimizes-child-long-after-abuser-is-gone-a749889073eccc7e0d9d5e6c6af38b92?user_email=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&utm_medium=Afternoon_Wire&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_campaign=Dec%202023%20afternoon%20wire&utm_term=Afternoon%20Wire

Google agreed to pay a total of \$29.5 million to settle two lawsuits, one brought by the U.S. state of Indiana and the other by the District of Columbia, over “the company’s tracking of customer locations,” *Yahoo* reported. Google used the location data to build detailed user profiles and target ads. As part of the settlement “Google will be required to make clear to its customers how their location data is collected, stored and used.” <https://www.yahoo.com/now/google-paying-29-5-million-234052618.html>

Handheld “biometric capture” devices to collect fingerprints, iris scans, and other data that would identify people were used by U.S. troops in the Middle East, reported *American Military News* quoting the *New York Times*. Six of the devices were offered on eBay, with data on thousands of people. They were purchased by “European hackers concerned about their security;” the hacker group said it “plans on deleting personal data from the devices after analyzing them for vulnerabilities.” <https://americanmilitarynews.com/2022/12/troops-fingerprints-iris-scans-sold-on-ebay/>

Refugees. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees said that an “estimated 24,000 people have arrived” at Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camps since the end of September, “forced from their homes by extremist violence in neighboring Somalia and an ‘unrelenting’ drought.” More than 80,000 people are now at Dadaab, and since the end of October over 350 cases of cholera have been identified, mostly of children. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131397>

Repatriation. Three separate patterns of repatriation emerged in December: State-to-State: Germany returned 22 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, the “first step in fulfilling its agreement with Nigeria . . . to release all 1,130 Benin Bronzes from German museums,” *NPR* reported. According to the *New York Times*, German cultural officials created an online catalog that listed the Bronzes held in disparate collections, which provided the foundation for the agreement with Nigeria. University-to-State: The University of Cambridge (U.K.) will return 116 Benin Bronzes to the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *BBC News* reported. Church-to-church: The Vatican announced that Pope Francis ordered the Vatican Museums to return three pieces of Parthenon marbles to Greece—not to the State but to the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, *artnet news* reported. The Vatican called it a “donation.” <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/21/1144666811/germany-nigeria-returns-benin-bronzes-looted>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england->

Afghanistan/United Kingdom. The U.K. Ministry of Defence announced that it has established “an independent statutory inquiry to investigate and report on allegations of wrongdoing by the British Armed Forces in relation to their conduct of deliberate detention operations in Afghanistan. The inquiry will investigate alleged activity during the period mid-2010 to mid-2013.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-11, 2021-11. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mod-launches-independent-inquiry-to-investigate-allegations-of-wrongdoing-by-british-armed-forces-in-afghanistan>;
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/15/uk-launches-investigation-into-afghan-war-crimes-claims-sas>

Afghanistan/United States. *ProPublica* published a compelling investigative report on the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-backed operations that “killed countless civilians.” The reporter, an Afghan woman adopted as a child by a British family, spent three and a half years on the story during which she “catalogued hundreds of night raids by one of four Zero Unit squads,” squadrons of Afghan special forces soldiers who “were funded, trained and armed by the CIA to go after targets believed to be a threat to the United States.” She was assisted by an Afghan government employee, a forensic pathologist, who had “access to official records to verify the identities of those killed;” they also used “medical records, birth and death certificates, in-person witness interviews and a forensic database to identify the dead.” She eventually identified at least 452 civilians killed by that squad over four years. U.S. special operations forces soldiers working with the CIA “often joined” Zero Unit raids, but in the U.S. “complete casualty data has remained either classified, unavailable or untracked.”
<https://www.propublica.org/article/afghanistan-night-raids-zero-units-lynzy-billing>

Chile/United States. In 1905, two U.S. fugitives got into a brawl in the Chilean port city of Antofagasta and one shot and killed a lawman. The fugitives were known in the U.S. by the aliases Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, made famous in a 1969 film. Two U.S. researchers found the judicial case file on the homicide in Chile’s national archives, docketed under the name Frank Boyd, the alias Sundance (real name Harry Longabaugh) was using at the time. The researchers were led to the judicial file by using the digitized copy of *El Industrial* newspaper that covered the case, the *Guardian* reported.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/16/butch-cassidy-sundance-kid-argentina-chile-bolivia?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Mideast war. The Costs of War project at Brown University (U.S.) published *Uncompensated Allies: How Contracting Companies and U.S. Government Agencies Failed Third-Country Nationals in Afghanistan*. The two authors explained that the U.S. Defense Base Act “calls for the provision of compensation to all workers, no matter their nationality, injured under U.S. contract, or to their next of kin in the case of death.” They analyzed “datasets obtained through FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] requests from the U.S. Army and Department of Labor” and interviewed over 200 third-country nationals (TCN) who had worked for the U.S. military in Afghanistan. “Of the estimated 3,917 contractors killed in Afghanistan and Pakistan between October 2001 and August 2021, approximately half of these were TCNs.” They wrote that “military contracting companies circumvented the Defense Base Act regulation in numerous ways, preventing workers—who were often uninformed about their rights—from receiving their full compensation amounts.” The U.S. government has “done little to enforce the regulations, only rarely punishing companies.”
<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2022/Coburn%20and%20Gill%20-%20DBA%20CoW%20Paper%20Final%20-%20Dec%202022.pdf>

Rwanda/United Kingdom. U.K.’s high court ruled that the government’s plan to deport migrants to Rwanda “did not breach the UN’s Refugee Convention or human rights laws,” *BBC News* reported. For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-04. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64024461>;
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/dec/19/rwanda-deportation-scheme-legal-shameful-britain-asylum-seekers?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Ukraine war. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said that from 24 February 2022, when the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, to 26 December 2022 it recorded 17,831 civilian casualties in Ukraine: 6,884 killed and 10,947 injured. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine collected the information on casualties through “interviews with victims and their relatives; witnesses; analysis of corroborating material confidentially shared . . . ; official records; open-source documents, photo and video materials; forensic records and reports; criminal investigation materials; court documents; reports by international and national non-governmental organisations;

public reports by law enforcement and military actors; data from medical facilities and local authorities.” OHCHR believes the actual casualty figures are “considerably higher, as the receipt of information from some locations where intense hostilities have been going on has been delayed and many reports are still pending corroboration.” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/12/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-26-december-2022>

Soon after Russia invaded Ukraine, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) set up a Bureau for the International Armed Conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine to collect, centralize, and transmit information about the fate and whereabouts of missing people. It has “received more than 45,000 calls, emails and online forms since March,” ICRC told *Geneva Solutions*. The ICRC’s head of data said “handling all this data, managing it and analysing it is a key task.” https://genevasolutions.news/peace-humanitarian/missing-in-action-who-do-you-turn-to-the-icrc-s-central-tracing-agency?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email

PEN Ukraine and PEN America published a major report on the Russian attacks against culture. It said the “Ukrainian government has documented damage and destruction to at least 49 libraries and archives.” In the Chernihiv region, among other losses, the State Archival Service “reported that Russian attacks destroyed the Security Service archives, which included the former Soviet secret police (NKVD) documents related to Soviet repression against Ukrainians. Approximately 13,000 files were destroyed.” In Bucha, the archives of Vyacheslav Chornovil, a Soviet-era dissident and head of the Ukrainian Helsinki monitoring group, were destroyed, as were the archives of fellow dissident Mykola Plahotniuk. Among the nine PEN recommendations to the Government of Ukraine is: “With the support of international partners, along with UNESCO and private funders, digitizing cultural archives that are vulnerable to destruction amid conflict. Once archived, copies of materials should be housed securely overseas so that their outright destruction cannot be achieved. Securing these cultural artifacts for posterity would help obstruct and even disincentivize efforts at cultural erasure.” Thanks to Antoon De Baets for the link. <https://pen.org/report/ukrainian-culture-under-attack/>

AP journalists were the last international media to leave Mariupol before Russian forces took over the city. Now, contacting 30 residents from Mariupol, including 13 still living there, plus using “satellite imagery, hundreds of videos gathered from inside the city, and Russian documents showing a master plan,” *AP* concluded that the Russian military is making “a comprehensive effort to suppress Mariupol’s collective history and memory as a Ukrainian city.” https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-erasing-mariupol-499dceae43ed77f2ebfe750ea99b9ad9?user_email=f553fa26cd5d27697a335ab74e22a11c9b48c47784712d14145ae3c0ed4aad10&utm_medium=Morning_Wire&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_campaign=Dec22_MorningWire&utm_term=Morning%20Wire%20Subscribers

“Russian troops hunted Ukrainians by name, using lists prepared with the help of their intelligence services. In the crosshairs were government officials, journalists, activists, veterans, religious leaders and lawyers. The *AP* documented a sample of 61 cases across Ukraine, drawing on Russian lists of names obtained by Ukrainian authorities, photographic evidence of abuse, Russian media accounts and interviews with dozens of victims, family and friends, and Ukrainian officials and activists. Some victims were held at detention sites, where they were interrogated, beaten and subjected to electric shocks, survivors said. Some ended up in Russia. Others died.” According to “leaked U.S. intelligence and U.K. national security analysts,” Russia’s Federal Security Service led a months-long effort to compile the hit lists. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/find-russians-hunt-ukrainians-lists-95644059>

PassBlue interviewed a Ukrainian woman, a math teacher, who was a prisoner of war in Russia for six months until she was part of a prisoner exchange. Among her revelations was, “[T]hey made me sign documents saying that I was treated well, that I received food and medical help, and that I wasn’t abused.” She was, in fact, seriously physically and psychologically abused. *The Atlantic* reported on another woman formerly imprisoned in Russia. “Two middle-aged male interrogators ordered the 27-year-old Ukrainian paramedic to strip naked, she told me recently, then they took photographs of her from the front and back.” She also said “prison officials had demanded nail parings and locks of her hair for DNA records.” Think of the prisoner of war records that are accumulating. https://www.passblue.com/2022/12/15/she-was-a-prisoner-of-war-in-russia-beaten-repeatedly-now-shes-home-recovering/?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=3400eb778a-RSS_PassBlue&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-3400eb778a-55008469; https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/12/ukrainian-prisoner-of-war-in-russia/672343/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=atlantic-daily-newsletter&utm_content=20221207&utm_term=The%20Atlantic%20Daily

According to the National Police of Ukraine, since the beginning of the invasion “investigators of the National Police of Ukraine have initiated 49,219 criminal proceedings over crimes committed by service members of the armed forces of the Russian Federation and their accomplices in the territory of Ukraine.” <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3636436-more-than-49000-proceedings-initiated-over-crimes-committed-by-russian-military-in-ukraine.html>

Killings of Civilians: Summary Executions and Attacks on Individual Civilians in Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Sumy Regions in the context of the Russian Federation’s Armed Attack against Ukraine is an OHCHR report based on the work of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. The Mission documented the death of 441 civilians in the regions in the initial 6 weeks of the invasion and another 198 killings remain to be corroborated. Men and boys comprised 88% of all victims of summary executions, “suggesting that males were disproportionately targeted on the basis of their gender.” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/un-report-details-summary-executions-civilians-russian-troops-northern>

After the Russian invasion, fearing that orphaned babies at the regional hospital in Kherson would be seized and sent to Russia for adoption, the hospital staff “began fabricating orphans’ medical records to make it appear like they were too ill to move,” *AP* reported. The head of intensive care said, “We deliberately wrote false information.” Also in the Kherson area, the director of a center for social and psychological rehabilitation “was also falsifying paperwork to hide 52 orphaned and vulnerable children.” <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-health-europe-orphans-f283aa4d22fdab59a43a16ca0be54baf>

The *New York Times* ran a series of heavily documented articles on human rights crimes committed during the conflict:

“Putin’s War” <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/16/world/europe/russia-putin-war-failures-ukraine.html>

“Counting Russia’s Dead with Tips and Tombstones”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/18/world/europe/russia-death-toll-war.html>

“The Road of Death” [Bucha, Ukraine] <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/27/us/politics/a-russian-military-unit-killed-dozens-in-bucha-our-investigation-shows.html>

“A Culture under Fire” <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/27/arts/design/cultural-heritage-ukraine-russia-war.html>

National news.

Barbados. The High Court “struck down colonial-era laws that criminalize gay sex,” *AP* reported. It did not say what will happen to the records of previous convictions under those statutes. <https://apnews.com/article/caribbean-barbados-human-rights-lgbtq-people-d50b08c91ffec4e671c84e2d3d658894>

China. Safeguard Defenders, a Madrid-based NGO, issued a report on China’s establishment of “police service centers” in 53 countries around the world. This publication, supplementing two previous ones, is “based on open source statements by PRC [People’s Republic of China] authorities, Chinese police or State/Party media.” The reports document “the PRC’s illicit methods to harass, threaten, intimidate and force targets to return to China for persecution,” including by threatening relatives living in China. *CNN* reported that China’s Foreign Affairs Ministry “denied it is running undeclared police forces outside its territory.” As of 4 December, the NGO’s reports “prompted investigations in at least 13 different countries so far and enflamed an increasingly heated diplomatic tussle between China and nations like Canada, home to a large Chinese diaspora.” <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/blog/patrol-and-persuade-follow-110-overseas-investigation>; <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/04/world/china-overseas-police-stations-intl-cmd/index.html>

Colombia. The human rights ombudsman said “Colombia will end the year with at least 199 killings of social leaders and human rights defenders—the highest level recorded—due to attacks by illegal armed groups in areas tied to the drug trade,” *Reuters* reported. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/07/colombia-murders-human-rights-defenders-record>

El Salvador. Human Rights Watch and Cristosal reported that their research found that “Salvadoran security forces have committed widespread human rights violations since the adoption of a state of emergency approved in late March 2022, in response to a peak in gang violence,” including “mass arbitrary detention, torture and other forms of ill-treatment against detainees, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody, and abuse-ridden prosecutions.” For the report, the two NGOs

interviewed more than 1,100 people from all 14 states in El Salvador and also “reviewed relevant case files, medical records and death certificates, and consulted international forensic experts from the Independent Forensic Expert Group on some cases.” https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/07/el-salvador-widespread-abuses-under-state-emergency?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

India. Stan Swamy, an 84-year-old Jesuit priest, was arrested in 2020 on terrorism charges while advocating “for rights for Dalits—the Indian group once known as ‘untouchables’—as well as for Indian Muslims and indigenous people.” He died in prison in 2021. *WIRED* reported that the forensics firm Arsenal Consulting released a report on their analysis of the hard drive on Swamy’s computer which found that hackers planted evidence on it. The company also found “fresh clues that the hackers who fabricated that evidence were collaborating with the Pune City Police investigating him.” For background, see *SAHR News* 2022-06. https://www.wired.com/story/modified-elephant-stan-swamy-hacked-evidence-frame-bhima-koregaon-16/?bxiid=5c48efcf2ddf9c4807adf975&endid=53684912&esrc=sign-up-page&source=EDT_WIR_NEWSLETTER_0_DAILY_ZZ&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_content=WIR_Daily_121422&utm_mailing=WIR_Daily_121422&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl&utm_term=P6

Indonesia. Indonesia’s parliament “approved a new criminal code which will apply to Indonesians and foreigners alike,” *Reuters* reported. Among other changes, it “banned sex outside marriage with a punishment of up to one year in jail.” A spokesperson for the justice ministry “said the new laws regulating morality were limited by who could report them, such as a parent, spouse or child of suspected offenders.” The new code also bans “insulting the president or state institutions, spreading views counter to the state ideology, and staging protests without notification,” along with giving “more lenient sentences for those charged with corruption.” The changes will not come into effect for three years “to allow for implementing regulations to be drafted.” https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesias-parliament-passes-controversial-new-criminal-code-2022-12-06/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-briefing&utm_term=12-06-2022

Iran. The Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights said information it obtained showed “at least 476 people including 64 children have been killed by security forces in the nationwide protests” as of 27 December. Deaths have been recorded in 25 provinces. The current anti-government protests began in September following the death of Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Iran’s morality police, after she was detained for what they called inappropriate attire. <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5669/>

Japan. The Diet changed Civil Code provisions to “allow the new husband of a remarried woman to assume paternity of children born within 300 days of divorce from her previous partner,” *Mainichi* reported. The change solves “the issue of divorced women leaving their children off family registers to avoid former husbands being recognized as fathers, leading to difficulties in the children accessing health and other services.” <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20221211/p2g/00m/0na/010000c>

Nigeria. *Reuters* reported three important stories under the heading “Nightmare in Nigeria.” A fourth article describes how the U.S., U.K., the UN and international humanitarian agencies struggle between supporting the government and denouncing alleged abuses by its military. The three are:

1. *The Abortion Assault.* “Since at least 2013, the Nigerian military has conducted a secret, systematic and illegal abortion programme in the country’s northeast, ending at least 10,000 pregnancies among women and girls.” The reporters interviewed “33 women and girls who say they underwent abortions while in the custody of the Nigerian Army. Just one said she freely gave consent.” They also interviewed healthcare workers and security personnel, including soldiers, and “reviewed copies of military documents and civilian hospital records describing or tallying thousands of abortion procedures.” The Nigerian military denied the program ever existed; two days after the report was published UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on “Nigerian authorities to fully investigate these allegations and make sure there’s accountability.” https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/nigeria-military-abortions/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-briefing&utm_term=12-07-2022; <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-secretary-general-calls-investigation-nigeria-forced-abortions-report-2022-12-09/>
2. *Smothered, Poisoned and Shot.* This article alleged that “the Nigerian Army and allied security forces have slaughtered children during their gruelling 13-year war against Islamist

extremists in the country's northeast. . . More than 40 sources said they saw the Nigerian military target and kill children or saw the dead bodies of children after a military operation." The report is based on interviews with 44 civilian witnesses and 15 security force members; the Nigerian military said the reporting "is an insult to Nigerians and part of a foreign effort to undermine the country's fight against the insurgents."

https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/nigeria-military-children/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

3. *A War on Women*. "Thousands of women and girls have been kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery by Boko Haram and its Islamic State offshoot [Islamic State West Africa Province, ISWAP]." The article reports the story of one woman brutalized by men from both Army and rebels.

https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/nigeria-military-mother-profile/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-briefing&utm_term=12-14-2022

Pakistan. The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIOED) said that 81 missing persons had returned to their homes in November and over 240 of the missing were found dead. It said it had received 9,133 "complaints" about missing individuals, *South Asia Intelligence Review* reported. A researcher writing for *Eurasia Review* looked at the data on the COIOED website and found that at least 1,262 Baloch people have disappeared since 2000 but the numbers are "a stark underestimate, when compared with data extracted from news reports, as well as from non-government sources." She called Balochistan "The Land of Hopelessness." <https://www.satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-21-No.-25>; <https://www.eurasiareview.com/20122022-pakistan-balochistan-the-land-of-hopelessness/>

Russia. Since 2013, spreading "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" to minors was prohibited by law, but a new law both expands that to all ages and outlaws "advertising, media and online resources, books, films and theater productions deemed to contain such 'propaganda,'" *AP* reported. Violators are liable for significant fines. "The Kremlin did not immediately announce Putin's signature [on the law], but it was shown on a copy of the measure published on the website of the Duma." <https://apnews.com/article/putin-europe-business-gay-rights-3d08c68ecd95d41511d96336c4f1aa9e>

Sudan. Sudanese military and civilian leaders signed a "framework agreement" that initially will create a two-year civilian transitional authority led by a prime minister chosen by the coalition of civilian leaders who signed the agreement and a second phase for public consultations over transitional justice, military and security reform, and the two-year-old agreement over demilitarizing the conflict-ridden Darfur region. However, the *Sudan Tribune* pointed out, "On the executed copy of the framework agreement . . . there were some blank signature lines assigned to political forces that were not present but efforts are underway to bring them on board." <https://sudantribune.com/article268894/>

Syria. The Syrian Network for Human Rights announced, "Since the beginning of 2022, we have obtained 547 new death certificates. The new batch of certificates stands out . . . because these were obtained from sources within the Syrian regime and have not been published by the regime's civil register offices." The families had not been notified of the deaths nor informed of the burial locations nor received the bodies. Among the certificates were four for persons whose images were in the leaked photos known as the "Caesar photos" from Syrian military hospitals. <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/12/20/snhr-obtains-hundreds-of-death-certificates-for-people-forcibly-disappeared-by-the-syrian-regime-whose-families-have-not-been-notified-of-their-deaths-which-have-not-been-announced-by-civil-register/>

Türkiye. The Media and Law Studies Association, a Turkish NGO which has been monitoring freedom of expression trials since 2018 and which currently has the biggest trial monitoring program in Turkey, published its annual trial monitoring report. It lays out data gathered through monitoring 446 hearings in 210 freedom of expression trials in which 1,398 people were charged in 23 different cities. "In 41 trials monitored between September 1, 2021, and July 20, 2022, 67 people were sentenced to 299 years 2 months and 24 days in prison. 36 people among those sentenced were tried in separate cases based on law articles which the European Court of Human Rights determined in many of its judgments to be sources of systematic rights violations." It found a "radical increase" in the prison sentences handed down during the period. <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/MLSA-1-September-2021-20-June-2022-Trial-Monitoring-Report.pdf>

United States. Congress passed and sent to the President for signature the “Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act,” which enables prosecution of alleged war criminals in the United States regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator or the victim. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4240/text>

A research group studied 1999-2020 data from the National Vital Statistics System on 38,362 homicide victims aged 0 to 17 years of age and 2003-2019 data on child homicide victims in 45 states as reported to the National Violent Death Reporting System. They found the overall child homicide rate “has increased annually,” with the rate increasing for boys and decreasing for girls, they reported in *JAMA Pediatrics*. “Homicides of children 10 years or younger were most commonly precipitated by abuse/neglect, perpetrated by parents/caregivers. Homicides of 11- to 17-year-olds were most commonly precipitated by crime and arguments and perpetrated by someone known to them, especially friends and acquaintances.” [https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2799356?guestAccessKey=302e18c0-8e68-424c-93da-ce71dc98df4f&utm_source=For The Media&utm_source=STAT%20Newsletters&utm_medium=referral&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_campaign=b8b6e00281-MR_COPY_01&utm_content=tfl&utm_term=121922&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-b8b6e00281-149736437](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2799356?guestAccessKey=302e18c0-8e68-424c-93da-ce71dc98df4f&utm_source=For%20The%20Media&utm_source=STAT%20Newsletters&utm_medium=referral&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_campaign=b8b6e00281-MR_COPY_01&utm_content=tfl&utm_term=121922&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-b8b6e00281-149736437)

The Gun Violence Archive, an NGO, said on 26 December that 6,023 U.S. children 17 years old or younger were killed or hurt in gunfire since 1 January 2022, surpassing the 5,708 killed or hurt in 2021, reported *Yahoo News*. <https://www.yahoo.com/gma/more-6-000-children-killed-214448420.html>

A *STAT* investigation found that 1,013 incarcerated people died from “hepatitis C-related complications in the six years after a curative drug hit the market,” which was double the death rate in the broader U.S. population. The researchers used data from the U.S. Department of Justice that was submitted by state prison administrations pursuant to the Federal Death In Custody Reporting Act. https://www.statnews.com/death-sentence/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=41522dd75c-Weekend Reads COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-41522dd75c-149736437

The University of California at San Francisco created a Program for Historical Reconciliation that is to conduct “research into institutional legacies or any claims of past unethical conduct relating to biomedical and clinical research, the University’s relationship to our community and industry, and material artifacts that the University holds.” It issued its first report, focusing on “experiments from the 1960s and 1970s involving incarcerated men at the California Medical Facility . . . in Vacaville” that were performed by two faculty members in the Department of Dermatology. “Over a six-month period, the committee gathered some 7,000 archival documents, medical journal articles, interviews, documentaries and books” and reported that “based on our archival research of internal human subject research review board(s) records and State of California hearing proceedings” it concluded that the professors “and others engaged in questionable informed consent practices at the prison, especially before 1969.” After the report’s release, the University’s Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost issued an “official statement of remorse.” <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2022/12/424471/ucsf-issues-report-apologizes-unethical-1960-70s-prison-research>

The Princeton & Slavery Project, which investigates Princeton University’s involvement with the institution of slavery, posted volunteer researcher Jon Ort’s essay “What Princeton Owes to Firestone’s Exploitation of Liberia.” The Firestone family was a major donor to the university. “A century after slavery ended in the United States, Princeton continued to profit from the system of forced labor that Firestone [rubber company] devised in Liberia. The story of Firestone, Liberia, and Princeton reveals how racist exploitation entangled and enriched Nassau Hall [Princeton] through the 20th century. To implicate Princeton only in antebellum U.S. slavery ignores the bloody harvest that Firestone sowed and Princeton reaped.” <https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/what-princeton-owes-to-firestone>

The *Washington Post* reported on the Indigenous people in the Southwest who were enslaved there in the years before and after the Civil War. When they were enslaved “they commonly lost their tribal communities—which means their descendants are often unable to prove their genealogy, in order to enroll in an American Indian tribe today,” which in turn means “they cannot access medical care through the Indian Health Service or qualify for other government benefits.” Land claims from the period when Spain controlled New Mexico were “denied by the U.S. Senate when the land changed from Spanish to Mexican to American.” Genealogists are now working with descendants of the former

enslaved people to provide the evidence of Indigenous heritage, using such sources as baptismal records and the personal papers of enslavers. <https://catfishwaiter.blog/2022/12/native-americans-were-enslaved-in-new-mexico-even-after-civil-war/>

“Across the country, fossil fuel companies have walked away from thousands of oil and gas wells, leaving them unplugged and idle even as many of these drill sites leak greenhouse gas emissions and pose direct threats to human health,” the *Washington Post* reported. A 2021 law provides money to states to plug the abandoned wells, which “has set off a scramble among state officials to document the wells within their borders.” States have now “reported more than 120,000 abandoned wells in total, marking a nearly 50% increase from the 81,000 wells they reported last year.” Ohio, which had reported 891 wells in 2021 now reports 20,439, which a spokeswoman for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources said was the result of a “comprehensive review of its records.” Comparing the well locations with census data, researchers at the Environmental Defense Fund and McGill University (Canada) determined that “14 million people live within a mile of an orphaned well, including 1.3 million adults with asthma.” https://news.yahoo.com/money-table-states-identify-120-173315280.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall

Venezuela. “Human remains were found in mining areas around southern Bolivar [province]” in November, the head of the Venezuelan Armed Forces’ Strategic Operational Command said, attributing the deaths to R Organization, “a criminal group that controls illegal mines and communities” in the area. Venezuela’s Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship earlier had reported at least 37 people missing in Bolivar’s mining areas between September 2021 and April 2022. Mine workers are stripped of their phones, making it impossible for them to maintain contact with families, *Insight Crime* reported; consequently, “victims of these gangs join the lists of disappeared and can take a long time to be found or even be reported as missing.” https://insightcrime.org/news/mass-graves-venezuela-connected-disappearances-illegal-mining-hub/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Good reads.

Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, “Holding Minors Accountable for Serious Crimes Committed in Syria”: https://syriaaccountability.org/holding-minors-accountable-for-serious-crimes-committed-in-syria-2/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=0d0e4fc17a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-0d0e4fc17a-96428969

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