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### Commentary

From Israel to the Congo, biometric databases were in the news in July. Israel launched a biometric database as a two-year pilot project, reported *ifex.org*. The government's idea is to link the identity cards carried by Israelis citizens to a database carrying fingerprints and data on "facial contours" to make "identity cards less susceptible to forgery and misuse by criminals or terrorists." Human rights groups have challenged the pilot in the Israeli Supreme Court on grounds both of privacy and of the security of the data (in 2006 information from Israel's Census Authority on 9 million citizens was leaked over the internet).

[http://www.ifex.org/israel/2013/07/24/biometric\\_database/](http://www.ifex.org/israel/2013/07/24/biometric_database/)

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nation's International Organization on Migration also has a pilot project on biometrics. According to information the IOM provided to *Inner City Press*, "Lacking a national registry of population, and specifically vulnerable populations, IOM and other humanitarian organizations have had to use manual registration process relying on, typically, worn and outdated voter registration cards issued by the Government of DRC to identify and track beneficiaries of aid. The proposed biometric registration system is based on previous IOM implementation including, but not limited to, Sudan . . . The process consists of finger print devices and servers to store and cross-check the information." IOM said it "will adhere to strict information management principles while also engaging in information sharing with humanitarian organizations in need to such information, including the World Food Programme who was a principal partner of us in the digital registration in Sudan."

<http://innercitypress.blogspot.com/2013/07/biometrics-in-drc-explained-by-iom-as.html>

Elsewhere, the troubled nation of Guinea-Bissau is considering a biometric census, after its National Assembly passed a law allowing biometric voter registration. In July the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau called it a "time-consuming and costly" choice and urged the country to use manual registration for the upcoming election.

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2013\\_26.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_26.pdf);

<http://uniogbis.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=9874&mid=12838&ItemID=20420>.

Nigeria in June established a biometric data base for all arrested illegal immigrants, *Punch* reported, and is considering a mass biometric census. <http://www.punchng.com/feature/lagos-pulse/immigration-sets-up-biometric-database-for-deported-immigrants/> And India is creating the world's largest biometric database, registering biological information on its 1.2 billion people. (For a glimpse of the global spread of biometric databases, see the annual report of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a U.S. NGO, at <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2012/12/biometric-id-systems-grew-internationally-2012-and-so-did-concerns-about-privacy>.)

What data goes into a biometric database? It varies by country and by project, but it may include fingerprints and palm prints, scans of the eye's iris and retina, photographs that show facial contours, samples of handwriting, recordings of speech, and DNA codes. In other words, the data that serves to distinguish one person from another.

Governments and universities and businesses are all deeply involved in research into biometrics. The U.S. government-supported Biometric Consortium lists projects from, for example, Italy's University of Bologna and China's Center for Biometrics and Security Research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. <http://www.biometrics.org/html/research.html> The work is so widespread that the International Standards Organization has a special committee, JTC 1/SC 37, to work on biometrics topics.

Much of the debate about the use of biometrics has focused on privacy and security: Should the government or business have this information on me? How will the holder of the information keep it secure? Little has been written about the archival implications of this highly personal data in institutional databases, but given the rapid spread of these programs all over the world, it is essential that archivists focus on it now.

Twenty years ago some archivists argued that databases were not records, while others regularly appraised databases for retention or disposal. Moreover, archivists often appraised the paper records that preceded an automated database (for example, the fingerprint files of the police); sometimes the automation of the records led archivists to reappraise them and retain some that, because of volume, had been nearly unmanageable in paper formats.

The debate over whether databases are records is now antique. Databases are simply the way organizations operate today, and archivists must incorporate them into the archival program. Some of the biometric databases being created will have a short life, like the aid recipient databases created by the United Nations (one must hope). Others, such as identity databases, are likely to stay in the custody of the creating agency for long periods of time. But in either case, and in whatever institution the databases are created and maintained, archivists need to ensure that they know what data is collected, how it is managed, and whether it should be preserved after its primary use ends. It is a solemn responsibility with serious implications for the rights of us all.

### **International news.**

European Union/Kosovo. In a complicated case, the District Court in Kosovo is retrying ten former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army who are accused of violating "the bodily integrity and health of an unspecified number of Serb and Albanian civilians and Serb prisoners of war" at Klecka prison during 1998-1999, *BIRN* reported. (The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia acquitted the leading defendant, Fatmir Limaj, of similar charges in 2005.) The Kosovo court asked the European Union's rule-of-law mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to give it access to the psychological report it holds on Agim Zogaj, who was a guard at the prison and who kept a diary that is a key document for the prosecution. Zogaj was a potential witness in a previous trial in Kosovo of these defendants and provided his diary, gave statements, and was the subject of a psychological assessment at the time; he committed suicide in September 2011. EULEX refused to release the assessment "on the grounds that the document is classified" and declassifying the file would "create a dangerous precedent for other qualified documents" and would "not be in line with a European council decision on confidential information held by the EU." <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eulex-denies-access-in-witness-x-file> During the

trial, a forensic archaeologist said that a scythe found in one of the graves she excavated in the village of Klecka was “an implement mentioned in the diaries” kept by Zogaj.

[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/expert-explains-discovery-of-bodies-in-klecka-area?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=8684b7bd93-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_561b9a25c3-8684b7bd93-311109073](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/expert-explains-discovery-of-bodies-in-klecka-area?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=8684b7bd93-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-8684b7bd93-311109073) Fatmir Limaj is also being tried on unrelated charges of corruption and organized crimes, but the evidence police gathered while searching his house and office is “excluded from the case because officers conducted the searches without a written court order,” *BIRN* reported. <http://www.rai-see.org/news/south-eastern-europe/3860-kosovo-ex-minister-limaj-to-face-corruption-trial.html>

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The ICTY Prosecutor and the lawyer representing the families of the victims of 1995 Srebrenica massacre are arguing over the return to the families of “preserved items of the victims” that were used as evidence. The attorneys maintain that “about 90 per cent [of] the preserved items should be classed as personal” and so should be returned, including such items as blindfolds. Although these artifacts are technically not records, they are critical pieces of evidence. Also, the attorney for the victims told *BIRN* that his team has “collected a lot of evidence” about ICTY’s destruction in 2005 and 2006 of approximately 2000 items that were found in the mass graves.

[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/interview-tribunal-delays-return-of-srebrenica-victims-belongings?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=c66c7a7832-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_561b9a25c3-c66c7a7832-311109073](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/interview-tribunal-delays-return-of-srebrenica-victims-belongings?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=c66c7a7832-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-c66c7a7832-311109073)

United Nations/Haiti. A group of 25 scientists who investigated the source of a cholera outbreak in Haiti that killed thousands of people since in 2010 has concluded that “U.N. peacekeepers from Nepal probably introduced the strain into the Haitian population,” the *Washington Post* reported. Even before the report was issued, the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti filed a compensation claim with the UN on behalf of the families of 5000 victims, and it is “preparing lawsuits against the United Nations in U.S. and Haitian courts on behalf of thousands more.” Clearly the documentation of the study will be vital evidence in the lawsuits, if they are permitted to go forward in spite of the U.N. immunity privileges. One of the issues will be where the records of the research are located, since the scientists come from eight institutions, university, government, and corporate, in Canada, Haiti and the United States.

[http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-25/world/40861517\\_1\\_cholera-strain-cholera-epidemic-minustah](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-25/world/40861517_1_cholera-strain-cholera-epidemic-minustah); for the report, see <http://mbio.asm.org/content/4/4/e00398-13>.

## **World news.**

The “Information is Beautiful” blog released a visualization of “selected” data breaches that each lost over 30,000 records on individuals between 2004 and 2013.

<http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/worlds-biggest-data-breaches-hacks/>

The *New York Times* reported that U.S. museums “have backtracked on their pledge to settle Holocaust recovery claims on the merits, and have resorted instead to legal and other tactics to block survivors or their heirs from pursuing claims.” Critics claim that the museums are not forthcoming with provenance information from museum records.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/arts/design/museums-faulted-on-efforts-to-return-art-looted-by-nazis.html?pagewanted=all>

## **Bilateral and multilateral news.**

Bosnia/Croatia/Serbia. The Croatian Mine Action Centre said 509 people have been killed by mines since 1991, nearly half of them people attempting to clear explosives. As *BIRN* noted, during the 1991-1995 war, “Both sides laid mines along the frontlines, often not making records of which territory had been mined.” [http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/mines-killed-509-in-croatia-since-1991?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=148e6dc210-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_561b9a25c3-148e6dc210-311109073](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/mines-killed-509-in-croatia-since-1991?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=148e6dc210-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-148e6dc210-311109073)

Chad/Senegal. Hissenne Habre, the former dictator of Chad, was arrested and brought before the special court set up in Senegal to try him. Charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture, he will face evidence from his own records, a “meticulous and large paper trail” found by Human Rights Watch in 1990 after Habre was deposed. In addition, *Crisis Watch* reported that in Chad “3 Habre-era officials including 2 directors of political police force [were] arrested and charged with torture.” <http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/habre-slams-judicial-farce-1.1541992#.Uf1iNDHD IU>; <http://impunitywatch.com/former-chad-dictator-faces-war-crime-charges/>

Croatia/Serbia. Croatia gave Serbia a list of approximately 1500 Serbs “indicted or convicted for war crimes committed during the 1991-1995 war.” The list, reported the *Telegraph*, was previously secret and was “an obstacle for Serb refugees wanting to return to their homes in Croatia after the war as they did not know if they were on the wanted list.” <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/serbia/7891218/Croatia-gives-Serbia-list-of-1500-indicted-or-convicted-for-war-crimes.html>

Cyprus/United Kingdom. The United Kingdom released the sixth body of records from the former Colonial Administration (“migrated archives”); the Foreign Office disclosed the existence of the records in 2011 (for background see *HRWG News* 2011-04, 2013-5 and 06). This tranche relates to the national struggle in Cyprus and, among other information, provides insights into reports of terrorism in the U.K. and Cyprus, prisons in the U.K. and Egypt, and courts-martial, reported *Cyprus-mail.com*. <http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/07/30/british-archives-show-greek-cypriot-agitators-were-monitored-in-the-uk-during-eoka-struggle/>

Germany/United Kingdom. The Bank of England released an official history, written in 1950, detailing its role in 1939 in transferring gold it was holding for the government of Czechoslovakia to the account of the German Reichsbank after the Nazis had invaded Czechoslovakia. For the story in the *Telegraph*, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/bank-of-england/10212234/Bank-of-England-helped-the-Nazis-to-sell-plundered-gold.html>; for the archival description of the history by the Bank of England Archives, see <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/archive/Pages/digitalcontent/archivedocs/warhistoryww2.aspx>

Israel/Palestine. Identity documents are crucial for the exercise of human rights. According to *Al-Monitor*, up to 35,000 people are “stuck in Gaza without identity cards.” These are Palestinians who were “born in other countries and now reside in Gaza with no identity cards issued by the Israeli-run Palestinian registration,” primarily because they arrived without “a reunion document” which can be issued “if a first-degree relative holds an identity card.” The head of Gaza’s Civil

Affairs Office told the reporter that Israeli officials say “the file of the identity cards is closed until further notice.” Without the identity cards people cannot leave Gaza, even to visit the West Bank or to get medical treatment abroad. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/07/gaza-identity-cards-israel.html>

Lebanon/Syria. Walid Jumblat, a member of parliament and the leader of the Druze community in Lebanon, warned that the international community is not paying sufficient attention to developments in the city of Homs, Syria: “The destruction of real-estate records in [the] city and their replacement with others of different sects is an attempt to alter the political and sectarian identity of the regions stretching from Damascus to the Syrian coast.”

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/89098-jumblat-destruction-of-homs-real-estate-records-attempt-to-alter-city-s-identity>

United Kingdom/Northern Ireland//United States. In a twist that is worthy of a novel, the struggle over the oral history interviews made with former paramilitaries about the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland may be useless after all (for background, see *HRWG News* 2012-01 and 2013-04). According to the *Irish News*, Boston College, which holds the interviews, does not have all the codes that identify the participants in the interviews and they also do not have some of the deeds of gift for the interviews. The attorney who is representing the interviewers said the loss of this information “greatly diminishes the value of the evidence. If they [the speakers] can’t be identified, they’re meaningless, or almost meaningless.” By the end of July officials at Boston College and the interviewers were blaming each other for the problem.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/value-of-boston-college-tapes-diminished-by-anonymous-voices-1.1476190>

### **National news.**

Australia. The Child Protection Commissioner of the state of Queensland ruled that the government’s decision in 1990 to shred the records of the 1989 inquiry into the management of the John Oxley Youth Detention Centre where child abuse was alleged to have taken place was “prima facie” unlawful. For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-02 and 2013-04.

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/shredding-heiner-documents-unlawful-carmody-20130701-2p764.html>

Bosnia. A foundation was established in Bihac to “offer support and financial assistance to families of former Bosnian Army servicemen who are being prosecuted for war crimes as well as obtaining documents and helping state institutions establish the truth about the 1990s conflict in the area,” *BIRN* reported. The president of the foundation’s board promised to do “extensive work on collecting documentation on crimes,” and the minister for veterans affairs in the local Bihac government said he would “help the foundation obtain documents on war crimes.”

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnian-krajina-truth-commission-formed>

The problem of the lack of personal identity numbers for persons born since February remained unresolved. The numbers are required for obtaining key documents such as passports and health care cards. A proposed law to establish a mechanism for issuing identity numbers was adopted by one house of parliament but vetoed by the other, *BIRN* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-06. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosniaks-dismiss-id-number-law-in-parliament>



Brazil. Human Rights Watch (HRW) sent a letter to the governor and state attorney general of Sao Paulo state urging them to investigate extrajudicial executions by state police officers. HRW “analyzed the Sao Paulo Homicide Investigation Units’ police reports of death by people shot while resisting arrest in Sao Paulo city in 2012” and found that “approximately 95 percent” died. The Americas director at HRW said, “Evidence gathered across cases in São Paulo shows a clear pattern of police executing victims and then covering up their crimes.” In 20 cases examined by Human Rights Watch, officers removed victims from crime scenes and delivered them to hospitals in what they claimed were “rescue” attempts. Not one of the 20 “rescued” victims survived.  
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/29/brazil-executions-cover-ups-police>

The records supporting the project and publication *Brasil: Nunca Mais (Brazil: Never Again)*, which provided details of the 1964-1979 torture and crimes of the military dictatorship in Brazil, have been digitized and the approximately 900,000 pages will be posted on a website for the use of the public and the current truth commission (for background, see HRWG News 2011-06).  
<http://www.prr3.mpf.mp.br/bnmdigital/index.php> The archives of the Amnesty Commission also are being digitized and will be accessioned into the National Archives, with copies available to the truth commission. Thanks to Hans von Rutte and Vitor Fonseca for this information.

Canada. The long-running story of the records of the gun registry in Quebec continued. The federal government destroyed the data on 5.6 million rifles and shotguns registered in other Canadian provinces, but Quebec wants to keep the data to use for its own gun registry. In July Quebec lost a court case that would allow it to retain the data, but the province plans to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, reported the Montreal Gazette. For background, see HRWG News 2012-04, 2012-05, 2012-09, and 2012-11.  
<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/Judge+rejects+Quebec+attempt+block+Ottawa+from/8696319/story.html>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, based on documents obtained by an historian, announced that “the Canadian government conducted nutritional experiments on malnourished aboriginal children and adults attending residential schools during and after the Second World War,” reported *CBC News*. The chairman of the Commission said in an interview with CBC Radio that the Commission knows “that there were research initiatives that were conducted with regard to medicines that were used ultimately to treat the Canadian population. Some of those medicines were tested in aboriginal communities and residential schools” and some of the medicines that were subsequently developed “were withheld from children in residential schools.” Both the Commission and aboriginal groups called for the federal government to “turn over all archival documents related to residential schools.”  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/story/2013/07/31/medical-testing-on-aboriginals-murray-sinclair-trc.html>; <http://www.change.org/en-CA/petitions/cdn-library-archives-museum-workers-call-for-release-of-residential-school-documents>

The University of Manitoba has been chosen to host the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s National Research Centre, which will include the records of the Commission.  
[http://issuu.com/uofmanitoba\\_bulletin/docs/july\\_18\\_2013.bulletin-web/3?e=5581112/4220669](http://issuu.com/uofmanitoba_bulletin/docs/july_18_2013.bulletin-web/3?e=5581112/4220669)

Colombia. The National Center of Historical Memory Group released its final report. Of the 218,094 Colombians killed by armed conflict between 1958 and 2012, the report says 80% were civilians and most of the killings “occurred after far-right militias backed by ranchers and cocaine traffickers emerged in the 1980s to counter the FARC and other leftist rebels,” reported the *Associated Press*. The Center is to establish a museum of the history of the conflict, which

presumably will hold the records of the Center and the background materials used for the final report. [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-24/world/40860493\\_1\\_peace-talks-main-leftist-rebel-group-conflict](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-24/world/40860493_1_peace-talks-main-leftist-rebel-group-conflict); for the report itself, see <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/voxpathuli.html>

Georgia. The commission established to monitor the destruction of illegally obtained surveillance footage made by the previous government announced that the most “sensitive and dirty” footage will be destroyed by August 15, *DFWatch.net* reported. The remainder of the “huge archive of illegal footage in the interior Ministry” will be managed under “a set of rules for what should be done and how to handle the archive” that will be developed by the commission. The government believes that “tens of thousands of illegal, secret recordings made by its security services over the last several years” are “floating around” in private hands. The government is “preparing to offer an amnesty to people who made or possess the tapes as long as they turn them in,” according to *Civil.ge*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-04, 2013-05, and 2013-06.

<http://dfwatch.net/dirty-archive-to-be-destroyed-in-two-weeks-37889>

[http://www.tol.org/client/article/23879-georgia-offers-amnesty-to-collect-illegal-surveillance-tapes-baku-hits-back-at-rfe.html?utm\\_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm\\_campaign=aab3b5208f-TOL\\_newsletter\\_27\\_8\\_2012&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_35d0a711b5-aab3b5208f-298065710](http://www.tol.org/client/article/23879-georgia-offers-amnesty-to-collect-illegal-surveillance-tapes-baku-hits-back-at-rfe.html?utm_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm_campaign=aab3b5208f-TOL_newsletter_27_8_2012&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_35d0a711b5-aab3b5208f-298065710)

India. In Goa, six decades of panchnamas (“the first listing of the evidence and findings a police officer makes at a crime scene”) are kept at the old forensic medicine department building of Goa Medical College. The College is moving and is concerned about moving the records; the head of the forensic medicine department told *Bernama*, “We fear shifting them without expert advice because a slight mishandling can destroy them.” The new report said the “state government has been advised to seek assistance from the Archives Department to restore the records for its heritage value.” The College’s administrator said, “Much of these records are not required for any investigation purposes by the police but they certainly have emotional value.” Why police records are in the custody of the College is not clear.

<http://www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v7/wn/newsworld.php?id=966878>

Jamaica. The news team of *Jamaica Gleaner* made a covert visit to the University Hospital of the West Indies and found that they could “walk off the streets and gain access to thousands of medical records.” They saw “a stack of medical records . . . being used by personnel in the medical records library as a doorstop,” “boxes in a corridor adjacent to the hospital’s medical library,” and records unattended on trolleys. The reporters entered a room “filled with thousands of medical records,” took some off the shelves, photographed them and put them back “without being questioned.” In April 2012 the chief executive officer of the hospital had promised to implement a “hawk-like security system” to ensure that confidential records were protected. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130707/lead/lead2.html>

Latvia. Activists began collecting signatures on a petition to require disclosure of “information from the archives of the Committee for State Security (KGB)” that would allow the public to know the names of the “people connected with the KGB” who now hold a public position in Latvia, reported the *Russian Legal Information Agency*. The records are in the custody of the national archives. <http://rapsinews.com/news/20130729/268357056.html>

Macedonia. The lustration process in Macedonia continues to be controversial (for background, see *HRWG News* 2012-03, 2012-06, 2012-07, and 2013-01). The Lustration Commission named Slavko Janevski, “one of the most renowned Macedonian writers of poetry and prose” who died in

2000, a “collaborator with the secret services in the former Yugoslavia.” *BIRN* reported that the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Macedonian PEN Centre and the Macedonian Writers’ Association “condemned the lustration” because the purpose of the lustration law is to bar collaborators from holding public office--clearly not possible for a dead man. One member of the Commission said he thought the decision was wrong: “I have seen the documents and I claim the late academic was not a collaborator with the secret services for ideological reasons. He only gave statement regarding his colleagues’ value.” Subsequently, the Commission said two academics who criticized the lustration of Janevski also were informers. The Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights said the lustration process “has turned into an open witch-hunt.”

In an interview with *BIRN*, Tome Adziev, the president of the Commission, explained the Commission’s process: “We get lists of former and current people in power from all institutions in the state. We are getting these lists to check them and we are checking them fully, unselectively, we are trying to see if some of those people have a record. If some people have documents in institutions such as police or archive, in accordance with commission’s assignment, one of its members reviews the documents, makes a report on it and submits it to the commission. We vote only after all of us have been convinced that the documents are valid and that the person can be proclaimed a secret service informant.” He argued that the Commission did not mention Janevski but journalists drew that conclusion from initials of a person used in a public session: “If the commission proclaims a person who is not alive to be a collaborator, it must not publish the name, or the decision, or the documents. All that would remain in the commission’s archives, it is being entered into the register and the case is being closed.” Asked about the authenticity of the reports from the secret service, Adziev replied, “The documents we review are of historical significance, archives in the state archive of Macedonia. We are not creating those documents now. Despite being made by the secret service, that’s a document of great importance for Macedonian history.”

[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/lustration-of-macedonian-writer-sparks-outcry?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=813b06114f-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_561b9a25c3-813b06114f-311109073](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/lustration-of-macedonian-writer-sparks-outcry?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=813b06114f-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-813b06114f-311109073); <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonian-lustration-deemed-witch-hunt>; <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-s-top-spy-hunter-denies-aiding-government>

Morocco. In June *Maarifpress.com* published 170 pages of lists of businesspeople in Casablanca accused of “using hard drugs, forming networks of cocaine trafficking, and even organizing orgies that involved underage girls.” The lists, which appeared to be from a police file, included names, addresses, phone numbers, vehicle registration numbers, social contacts, and even physical descriptions, reported *TelQuel*. The police denied that the lists came from the police, and now a notary public has confessed to fabricating the lists and giving them to the press. [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2013/07/casablanca-morocco-case-drugs-sex.html?utm\\_source=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=7832](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2013/07/casablanca-morocco-case-drugs-sex.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=7832)

Myanmar. Myanmar’s president abolished the Nasaka border security force, the “most prominent state authority” in Rakhine State and “an agency created for oppressive purposes, and with an institutional culture of corruption and abuse,” according to the International Crisis Group, an NGO based in Belgium. Rakhine State has seen repeated violence between Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya communities (for background see *HRWG News* 2013-05). It is essential that the archives of the Nasaka force be preserved in an appropriate professional archival institution. <http://www.crisisgroupblogs.org/resolvingconflict/2013/07/16/myanmars-nasaka-disbanding-an-abusive-agency/>



Netherlands. Students digitizing part of the Amsterdam city archives discovered records showing that Jews had been “billed and fined for non-payment of erfpack—a tax on land use—during the [Second World] war years,” reported *Dutchnews.nl*. Officials are now trying to determine whether the “same thing happened with gas and electricity bills,” and the city’s mayor said that any Jew who paid these bills after the war “should now get that money back plus interest.”  
[http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/07/jews\\_should\\_get\\_wwii\\_property.php](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/07/jews_should_get_wwii_property.php)

Russia. The Federal Protection Service is buying electric typewriters. An FSO source told *Izvestiya* that after Wikileaks and the Edward Snowden exposures, “It has been decided to expand the practice of creating paper documents,” which he said is also the practice in the “defence ministry, the emergencies ministry and the special services.” A former director of the Federal Security Service said, “From the point of view of security, any means of electronic communication is vulnerable. . . So from the point of view of preserving secrets the most primitive methods are preferable: a person’s hand and a pen, or a typewriter.”  
<http://blogs.wsj.com/emerging europe/2013/07/11/russia-seeks-low-tech-devices-to-safeguard-state-secrets/?mod=WSJBlog>;  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/10173645/Kremlin-returns-to-typewriters-to-avoid-computer-leaks.html>

Human Rights Watch reported that government officials inspected the Sochi office of Memorial, a leading human rights organization. They “asked to see all the documents relating to the office’s work and read through several files on migrant worker cases” but did not search the premises, access the computers, or remove records. The officials also contacted the landlord of the building where Memorial has offices and asked for a copy of Memorial’s lease. The inspection came the day after Memorial complained to the local prosecutor that a company constructing facilities for the 2014 Olympic Games was seriously violating the rights of migrant workers.  
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/25/russia-rights-group-targeted-sochi>

Sierra Leone. The Secretary to the Cabinet said the Parliament will not pass a Freedom of Information Bill because there is “poor records management within Government’s Ministries, Departments and Agencies,” *awoko* reported. The head of the Records Management Office at the Public Sector Reform Unit said the government is working to improve records management but his office is “faced with serious funding constraints.” <http://awoko.org/2013/07/09/sierra-leone-government-not-ready-to-pass-foi-act/>

Slovenia. When Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, only those who had Slovenian state citizenship within the old Yugoslavia got citizenship in the independent Slovenia, leaving people who were state citizens in other parts of Yugoslavia but were legal residents of Slovenia without citizenship and without legal status. Civic Link, a Slovenian NGO, told *BIRN* that the people from other Yugoslav states “lost their permanent residency in Slovenia. The police at the time were taking their documents in the streets, entering their apartments. They lost the right to work, social care, everything.” A Serb who was stripped of his legal status said, “Even my child was denied any rights. Years afterwards, we managed to prove that I am her father, because for the Slovenian state I simply didn’t exist.” After a decision in the European Court of Human Rights in 2012, the Slovenian state gave these “erased” persons until July 24 “to request compensation or the return of possessions and property.”  
[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/illegally-erased-ex-yugoslavs-ask-rights-from-slovenia?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=0c8d952e](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/illegally-erased-ex-yugoslavs-ask-rights-from-slovenia?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=0c8d952e)

Sweden. As required by the Police Data Act which came into force in 2012, the Swedish Police is establishing a “central e-archive for all police operations and its 28,000 employees. 1.8 million new paper files per year are expected to be replaced by digital files,” *CyberMedia* reported. <http://www.ciol.com/ciol/news/191669/swedish-police-captures-archives>

Tajikistan. The Committee on Religious Affairs closed five of the six existing madrasas (educational institutions); the five were said to be operating “without proper documents,” reported *islam.ru*. <http://islam.ru/en/content/news/tajikistan-authority-suspended-activities-five-madrassah>

United Kingdom/Northern Ireland. The University of Ulster is establishing a digital archives on the “Troubles” where “organizations, groups and individuals will be able to deposit digital copies of [their] stories.” <http://news.ulster.ac.uk/releases/2013/7037.html>

The family of Jean McConville, who was killed in 1972 during the “Troubles” and whose murder is being investigated, causing the row over oral interviews (see United Kingdom/Northern Ireland/United States above), is considering submitting a Freedom of Information request to the U.K. government for the release of “a number of war diaries of regiments stationed at the Divis Street flats [in Belfast]” at the time McConville disappeared. According to *thejournal.ie*, in the U.K. “documents such as the war diaries are usually released under the 30-year-rule but those from Divis Street in the early 1970s have been exempt.” <http://www.thejournal.ie/could-british-war-diaries-help-solve-the-jean-mcconville-murder-992346-Jul2013/>

United States. The *Associated Press* reported that the admiral in charge of the Special Operations Command that carried out the raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound ordered the Command to send its records on the raid to the CIA and then purge the information from its computers. Queried about this transfer by the press, the Defense Department argued that because the operation was “conducted under the director of the CIA director” they were actually CIA records in the first place. A spokesperson for the National Archives said that although the Archives must approve transferring government records from one agency to another, “it was the Archives’ understanding that the military records belonged to the CIA, so transferring them wouldn’t have required permission.” The Defense Department also said it worried about protecting the identities of the participants in the raid and their families; CIA “operational records” are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act, but the records of the Defense Department are covered. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal\\_government/top-special-operations-officer-directed-shift-of-bin-laden-records-to-cia-to-keep-files-secret/2013/07/08/d030bfaa-e7a5-11e2-818e-aa29e855f3ab\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal_government/top-special-operations-officer-directed-shift-of-bin-laden-records-to-cia-to-keep-files-secret/2013/07/08/d030bfaa-e7a5-11e2-818e-aa29e855f3ab_story.html)

A federal judge ordered the Secret Service to release its records on Aaron Swartz. Swartz allegedly illegally downloaded “millions of scholarly journal articles” from the digital service JSTOR in 2011 and was facing prosecution on computer fraud charges when he committed suicide in January 2013. According to the *Huffington Post*, Swartz’s “family and supporters have said they believe the government’s aggressive prosecution of the case played a role” in the suicide. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/09/secret-service-aaron-swartz\\_n\\_3568201.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/09/secret-service-aaron-swartz_n_3568201.html)

Two farm groups sued the Environmental Protection Agency to prevent it from releasing “farmers’ and ranchers’ names, home addresses, GPS coordinates and personal contact information” to environmental organizations that had filed Freedom of Information Act requests.

For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-04. <http://www.agri-pulse.com/Farm-groups-file-lawsuit-to-stop-EPA-release-of-farmers-personal-data-07082013.asp>

*Public.Resource.Org* discovered that the Internal Revenue Service failed to remove individual Social Security numbers from the required filings by political organizations that the IRS regularly posts on its website. The breach, which exposed “tens of thousands” of numbers, caused the IRS to close the database temporarily. <https://bulk.resource.org/irs.gov/eo/doc/irs.gov.20130707.html>  
*California*. <http://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-kamala-d-harris-releases-report-data-breaches-25-million>

Haliburton, a giant oilfield services company, was under contract to British Petroleum to supply cement to the drilling rig that exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, killing eleven people and dumping millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf. A number of lawsuits regarding the responsibility for the accident are underway. In July Haliburton plead guilty "to one misdemeanor violation associated with the deletion of records created after the Macondo well incident, to pay the statutory maximum fine of \$200,000 and to accept a term of three years probation," reported *theledger.com*. <http://www.theledger.com/article/20130725/NEWS/130729513/1410?Title=Feds-Halliburton-Destroyed-Records-Related-to-2010-Deep-Horizon-Oil-Spill>

*California*. The state attorney general released a report on the 131 data breaches reported to the her office in 2012, showing that 2.5 million Californians had personal information exposed through an electronic data breach. California law requires companies and state agencies to report to the Office of the Attorney General any breach that involves information on more the 500 persons. <http://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-kamala-d-harris-releases-report-data-breaches-25-million>

*Illinois/Wisconsin*. Workers at a cemetery in Waukesha, Wisconsin, found “eight or nine large binders with information that is 10 or more years old” in a trash can; the documents were from the Chicago, Illinois, police department. The Waukesha police said they are investigating because the documents appeared to be “daily police bulletins or blotters marked confidential,” but the Chicago police said the binders are “old reference material that do not include case reports or sensitive material.” As Waukesha’s *WTMJ Radio* said, “A strange find at a solemn place.” <http://www.620wtmj.com/news/local/Confidential-police-secrets-from-Chicago-found-in-Waukesha-216856911.html>

## **Publications**

Swisspeace published a report “Archives for a Peaceful Future,” which examines the management and use of records of truth commissions.

[http://archivesproject.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/archivesproject/Publications/Essential\\_1\\_2013\\_Juni.pdf](http://archivesproject.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/archivesproject/Publications/Essential_1_2013_Juni.pdf)

WITNESS, a U.S. NGO, launched a new website: [Activists’ Guide to Archiving Video](#).

WITNESS says the content was developed by its archivists “in response to the challenges and needs identified by activists using digital video for human rights advocacy and documentation.” WITNESS plans future releases of the *Guide* in Arabic and Spanish.

The *Annual Report 2013* of the Network of Concerned Historians (NCH) is now available at <http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content/ar.html>. This is the 19<sup>th</sup> annual report; it covers

events of 2012 and 2013.

*Groniek*, the historical journal of the history students at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands, published an issue devoted to “violent history” and the ethical and political implications of an historical attitude in the context of commissions, tribunals, and other transitional institutions. Most articles are in Dutch, but two (one on Croatia and one on the Marshall Islands) are in English. <http://groniek.nl/en/uitgave/>

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