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Commentary.

Hold ‘em or fold ‘em? Use it or lose it? In the popular card game poker, hold ‘em [them] means you play with the cards you have and fold ‘em means you throw them down and quit. Use it or lose it is a popular culture phrase, often referring to sexual activity by senior citizens. Both phrases have something to teach us about archives of conflict.

As the wars in Syria, Iraq and perhaps Afghanistan decrease in intensity, demands increase to hold perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable for their actions. Enormous quantities of information have been amassed by official bodies such as the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria and a host of private groups including the Commission for International Justice and Accountability in Syria and Iraq, the Syrian Justice and Accountability Center, the Syrian Observatory, the International Bar Associations’ *eyewitness to Atrocities* app, and others. There is no dearth of evidence.

Realistically, the International Criminal Court will not handle cases arising from these conflicts; it prosecutes high-level officials and military leaders, not the majority of persons who committed crimes. The courts of local and national governments are too weak or corrupt to be fair. Yet victims want a justice process. https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2019/04/17/prosecuting-isis-in-northeast-syria/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=e2fc334ad1-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-e2fc334ad1-90540617

A troubling element is the recent decision by the International Criminal Court on Afghanistan. In November 2017 the ICC Prosecutor asked the judges “for permission to open an investigation into alleged war crimes committed in the Afghan conflict, including by the U.S. military,” *Justiceinfo.net* reported. In March 2019 the U.S. Secretary of State announced, “If you’re responsible for the proposed ICC investigation of U.S. personnel in connection with the situation in Afghanistan you should not assume that you still have, or will get, a visa or that you will [be] permitted to enter the U.S.” In April the visa of the ICC prosecutor was revoked; the ICC judges decided to deny the Prosecutor’s request to open an investigation. A recently departed ICC prosecutor said that “the information about alleged crimes by the CIA was very strong,” and in the wake of the decision “we may see a situation where alleged criminal activity under international law that has been acknowledged by the U.S. government and documented by other courts, government, NGOs and victims go unprosecuted.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/live-feed/40582-us-in-first-sanctions-against-icc.html> ; https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2019/04/05/US-denies-entry-for-ICC-prosecutor-under-new-ban/7091554464008/ ; <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/tribunals/icc/41098-reality-check-for-the-icc-in-afghanistan.html>

So the world is accumulating an ever-increasing amount of evidence on crimes that go unpunished, from Sri Lanka to Papua to Rwanda. The list of only UN investigations into serious international crimes is long—Congo, Myanmar, Burundi, South Sudan, etc.--and the records exist; see <http://libraryresources.unog.ch/factfinding/chronolist>. Add to that the records of the nongovernmental organizations that monitor conflicts and we have persuasive records of atrocities committed. Should we say that because this evidence can’t be used now, we will lose the opportunity to hold accountable (use it or lose it)? Or do we believe that, in the longer term, there may be a path to justice (hold ‘em not fold ‘em)?

We are seeing some evidence that many years later persons can be held accountable. Both Peru and Romania are beginning trials for crimes committed in the 1980s; Argentina recently completed a trial on events in 1976 (see items below). Sudan’s dictator, long under ICC indictment, is now in jail; whether he will be transferred to The Hague is unclear. Having records of the atrocities committed is essential, perhaps especially for delayed justice. So to archivists who manage records of conflicts and investigations, the advice is: Hold ‘em.

HRWG News. The Human Rights Working Group was created in 2003. It has become a permanent feature of the international archival landscape, and in April it petitioned the International Council on Archives' leadership to be recognized as an official ICA section, which would give it a seat on the Executive Board. The Executive Board provisionally approved the request, and final action will be taken at the ICA annual meeting in October.

International news.

European Commission. The Commission released “Seven essentials for achieving trustworthy Artificial Intelligence.” The third is “Privacy and data governance: Citizens should have full control over their own data, while data concerning them will not be used to harm or discriminate against them.” https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/artificial-intelligence-2019-apr-08_en

European Parliament. The Parliament adopted a whistleblower directive: “This Directive provides for protection against retaliation for those who report on evasive and/or abusive arrangements that could otherwise go undetected, with a view to strengthening the ability of competent authorities to safeguard the proper functioning of the internal market and remove distortions and barriers to trade that affect the competitiveness of the companies in the internal market, directly linked to the free movement rules and also relevant for the application of the State aid rules.” Principles 15 and 16 of the ICA working paper “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists and Records Managers in Support of Human Rights” are statements on whistleblower protection. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0398-AM-155-155_EN.pdf

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Rwanda's Minister of Justice called for the records of the Tribunal to be transferred to Rwanda from the successor court's archives in Arusha, Tanzania, reported *The New Times*. The court's President replied that it would “facilitate researchers, lecturers and families of Genocide survivors and others to obtain desired information.” A British journalist said, “What happened in 1994 is that NGOs came here [Rwanda] and just took documents. Human Rights Watch still has original copies too. All these documents belong to the Rwandan people.” <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/rwanda-sustain-push-transfer-genocide-archives>

World Health Organization (WHO). WHO issued a guideline, “Recommendations on Digital Interventions for Health System Strengthening,” including issues of birth and death notification via mobile devices and “digital tracking of patients'/clients' health status and services within a health record.” <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311941/9789241550505-eng.pdf?ua=1>

World/general news.

Business records. A “Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea” was published by the nongovernmental organization Human Rights at Sea. Drafted by an international team of professors, it “was supported with input and observers from multiple UN agencies, leading human rights lawyers, international and civil society organizations.” It aims “to raise global awareness of the abuse of human rights at sea and to mobilise a concerted international effort to put an end to it.” A common problem is fishing companies seizing passports and identity documentation from workers; see, for example, the Thailand item in *HRWG News* 2017-04. Thanks to Blanca Bazaco for the information. <https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/2019/04/05/first-geneva-declaration-on-human-rights-at-sea-published/>

In December 2018 a court in Argentina found two executives of Ford Motor Argentina guilty of crimes against humanity for the 1976 kidnapping and torture of 24 workers. The reasoning for the ruling was not released until 15 March 2019, reported *justiceinfo.net*. The judgement found “that a central motive” of the corporation “was to discipline workers and fight trade-union activity.” The decision provides “detailed and specific analysis of the ways Ford Motor Argentina officials got involved in the repression. The judges state that there was, on the part of Ford authorities and top officials, ‘a specific contribution of information about the workers to be kidnapped.’ On the one hand, they handed the military forces the personnel files, and on the other hand, it is proved that the information given by Ford top officials to the military in order to carry out the kidnappings took the form of lists of people to be

detailed.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-12. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/justiceinfo-comment-and-debate/opinion/40813-the-ford-trial-in-argentina-a-workers-victory.html>

The Supreme Court of the U.K. ruled that “a case brought by almost 2,000 Zambian villagers against Konkola Copper Mines [KCM] and its parent company Vedanta Resources Plc [of the U.K.] can be heard by the English courts,” Leigh Day law firm reported. The villagers say the “toxic effluent discharge” from the Nchango Copper Mine operated by KCM is polluting their land and causing health problems. “The court heard that Vedanta has published materials claiming to have control and responsibility over KCM and material in which it asserted its responsibility for the establishment of appropriate group-wide environmental control and sustainability standards.” The Court ruled that “Vedanta must be held accountable for these publicly made statements.” <https://www.leighday.co.uk/News/2019/April-2019/Supreme-Court-rules-Zambian-villagers-case-against>

After the collapse of a Vale tailing dam in Brazil in January killed an estimated 300 people, the Church of England Pensions Board and the Swedish Council on Ethics wrote to “683 listed resource companies, including major miners,” asking them “to disclose on their websites within 45 days answers to 20 questions, covering issues such as the height of dams, their volume, engineering records and safety check,” *Reuters* reported. And FIDH, an international NGO, reported that 86 organizations sent a letter to companies and investors in mining and steel, urging them to “exercise due diligence regarding the situation in Brazil” and “require Vale S.A. to adequately repair the victims of these events and provide guarantees of non-repetition.” The National Water Agency of Brazil reported that Vale S.A. has 168 dams in Brazil and 1 in 3 present a high “potential associated damage.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-vale-sa-disaster-tailings/ethical-investors-ask-miners-to-publish-tailings-dam-details-idUSKCN1RH176>; <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/globalisation-human-rights/human-rights-and-environmental-rights/brumadinho-dam-ngos-urge-companies-and-investors-to-use-leverage-and>

The governor of Nigeria’s Bayelsa State appointed a commission to investigate the “environmental and human damage” in the oil fields, reported *CNN*, and named the U.K.’s Archbishop of York to head it. “A 2018 study by the *Journal of Health and Pollution* found that more than 12,000 oil spill incidents have occurred in the oil-rich region [of the Niger Delta] between 1976 and 2014.” As the Commission goes forward, records of the York Archbishopric are likely to include information relating to oil enterprises. https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/26/africa/nigeria-oil-spill-inquiry-intl/index.html?utm_source=Media+Review+for+March+27%2C+2019&utm_campaign=Media+Review+for+March+27%2C+2019&utm_medium=email

Reuters reported, “Microsoft Corp recently rejected a California law enforcement agency’s request to install facial recognition technology in officers’ cars and body cameras due to human rights concerns, company President Brad Smith said.” However, Microsoft did provide the technology to a U.S. prison where the company “concluded that the environment would be limited and that it would improve safety inside the unnamed institution.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-microsoft-ai/microsoft-turned-down-facial-recognition-sales-on-human-rights-concerns-idUSKCN1RS2FV>

In an open letter, dozens of prominent artificial-intelligence researchers called on Amazon to stop selling its facial-recognition technology Rekognition to law enforcement agencies because bias in identification of women and minorities is a systemic problem and there are “no laws or required standards to ensure that Rekognition is used in a manner that does not infringe on civil liberties.” <https://medium.com/@bu64dcjrytwitb8/on-recent-research-auditing-commercial-facial-analysis-technology-19148bda1832>

The nongovernmental organizations Fair Wear Foundation and Care International published a study of sexual harassment and violence in Vietnamese clothing and shoe factories, reported the *Guardian*. They interviewed 763 women in factories in three provinces and nearly half (43.1%) said they had “suffered at least one form of violence and/or harassment in the previous year.” A spokesman for the European Outdoor Group, “whose members include some of the world’s best-known outdoor brands,” said, “It’s a never-ending task to try to get the evidence to drive the change that’s needed. And although we don’t know what factories the interviewees came from, it’s clear you’ll find examples of this all over. This evidence will help us drive the argument that there needs to be change.” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/apr/07/violence-sexual-abuse-vietnam-garment-factory?fbclid=IwAR17LpHu5cpMf3IGMITkTMVL8pKC7ZuleUbsDrBrU9mz7J1A8tXUjCwLqVY>

A court in the Netherlands said it has jurisdiction to hear a damages suit brought against Royal Dutch Shell by four widows of activists executed by the Nigerian government in 1995, *Reuters* reported. The presiding judge “ordered Shell to turn over documents that could help the claimants’ case, specifically any evidence that Shell paid people to give false information about the activists to Nigerian law-enforcement officials.” Shell’s representative said the company will “give the claimants access to internal documents as ordered.” And the nongovernmental organization Friends of the Earth Netherlands and around 400 co-plaintiffs delivered a court summons to Shell “to cease its destruction of the climate.” It highlighted “the company’s early knowledge of climate change and its own role in causing it,” pointing to “leaked company documents” that show Shell understood climate science but continued to “lobby against climate policy and to invest billions in further oil and gas extraction.” <https://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL5N22D1BJ>; <https://www.foei.org/press/climate-legal-summons-submitted-shell>

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of the Netherlands ruled that Chevron Corporation cannot be forced to pay the \$9.5 billion judgment handed down in Ecuador against the company for soil and water contamination in the Lago Agrio region. The court said the decision, which upholds lower courts, is “consistent with public policy and justified to prevent irreversible harm to Chevron,” *Reuters* reported. *Reuters* also reported that the Supreme Court of Canada “dismissed claims attempting to force Chevron Corp’s Canadian unit to pay” the \$9.5 billion judgment. For background to this long case, see *HRWG News* 2019-03. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chevron-netherlands-ecuador/chevron-says-dutch-supreme-court-rejects-ecuadors-95-billion-claim-idUSKCN1RS0DE>; <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-chevron-canada-ecuador/canadian-court-dismisses-ecuadors-95-billion-claim-against-chevron-canada-idUKKCN1RG2GP>

Justice. The nongovernmental World Justice Project, after “reviewing more than 600 global and country-specific data sources and identifying a core set of measurement questions and corresponding data sources,” issued a report, “Measuring the Justice Gap: A People-Centered Assessment of Unmet Justice Needs Around the World.” It estimated that 1.5 billion people “cannot obtain justice for civil, administrative, or criminal justice problems,” 4.5 billion people “are excluded from the opportunities the law provides” (such as having identity documents), and 253 million people “live in extreme conditions of injustice.” <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/publications/special-reports/measuring-justice-gap>

Microsoft and the Clooney Foundation for Justice announced a partnership “to help advance human rights through TrialWatch, a program that trains and equips trial monitors to document and determine whether trials are conducted in a fair way.” The program employs “AI-powered text to speech and language translation” to help “speed the input of data and enable experts around the world to help assess a trial’s fairness even if they don’t speak a local language.” The Foundation plans to “build quantitative and qualitative reports that will be reviewed and evaluated by its legal experts.” The Foundation should ensure that these archives are carefully managed. <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2019/04/25/tech-that-makes-the-world-a-witness-to-courtroom-injustices-across-the-globe/>

Medical records. In a study published in *JAMA Psychiatry*, researchers said they used records of 2,063 British teenagers, whose health had been followed from birth through age 18, to determine the incidence of psychotic experiences. The researchers found that almost a third of the children had at least one psychotic experience since age 12, and those living in areas with the most pollution (particularly if exposed to nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen oxide) were more likely to have psychotic experiences. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2729441?resultClick=1>

A public health researcher at the Institute of Policy Studies in Singapore led a team studying “sex ratios at birth, for the first time, for every country.” After “combing through decades of census data, national survey responses, and birth records” the team “discovered that in most regions of the world, sex ratios diverge significantly from the historical norm” of 100 female births to 102 to 107 male births. They concluded that, without unnatural selection, an additional 23.1 million females would have been born since 1970. That shows, commented *Wired*, “how societal values can skew the laws of nature.” [https://www.wired.com/story/first-big-survey-of-births-finds-millions-of-missing-women/?CNDID=53684912&CNDID=53684912&bxid=MjcwMDU3MDMwNzYzS0&hasha=8fcd7efd9e9d6389b9f914ad34a5948d&hashb=be86af3880f5d49a71f804266e79b70bb4fa408d&mbid=nl_041619_daily_list1_p3&source=DAILY_NEWSLETTER&utm_brand=wired&utm_mailing=WIRED%20NL%20041619%20\(1\)&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl](https://www.wired.com/story/first-big-survey-of-births-finds-millions-of-missing-women/?CNDID=53684912&CNDID=53684912&bxid=MjcwMDU3MDMwNzYzS0&hasha=8fcd7efd9e9d6389b9f914ad34a5948d&hashb=be86af3880f5d49a71f804266e79b70bb4fa408d&mbid=nl_041619_daily_list1_p3&source=DAILY_NEWSLETTER&utm_brand=wired&utm_mailing=WIRED%20NL%20041619%20(1)&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl)

Privacy. The pregnancy-tracking app called Ovia “has become a powerful monitoring tool for employers and health insurers, which under the banner of corporate wellness have aggressively pushed to gather more data about their workers’ lives than ever before,” the *Washington Post* reported. “Employers who pay the apps’ developer, Ovia Health, can offer their workers a special version of the app that relays their health data—in a ‘de-identified,’ aggregated form—to an internal employer website accessible by human resources personnel.” <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/04/14/tracking-pregnancy-app/>

Bloomberg News reported that “Amazon.com Inc employs thousands of people around the world to help improve the Alexa digital assistant powering its line of Echo speakers” by listening “to voice recordings captured in Echo owners’ homes and offices.” The recordings sent to the Alexa reviewers apparently “don’t provide a user’s full name and address but are associated with an account number, as well as the user’s first name and the device’s serial number.” Alexa’s privacy settings give users “the option of disabling the use of their voice recordings for the development of new features.” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-10/is-anyone-listening-to-you-on-alexa-a-global-team-reviews-audio>

Forbes reported, “Sensitive data has been found on 42% of hard drives purchased on eBay” in the U.S., U.K., Germany and Finland and analyzed by Ontrack, a data recovery service. In addition to the “sensitive” data, 15% of the drives had personally identifiable information. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/daveywinder/2019/04/25/researchers-find-dangerous-levels-of-sensitive-data-for-sale-on-ebay/#2f911afb964>

Technology. The Internet Archives, a nonprofit organization that saves copies of webpages and other digital information, said on 10 April that in the previous week it received more than 550 “takedown notices” from Europol’s European Union Internet Referral Unit and its French counterpart. “They included URLs for major collection pages, each containing millions of items . . . as well as links to scientific research and U.S. government reports, including TV footage from *CSPAN*,” reported *The Verge*. <https://www.theverge.com/2019/4/11/18305968/eu-internet-terrorist-content-takedown-mistakes-internet-archive-org>

World War II. “A state-affiliated Korean think tank has compiled the first complete catalog of documents on Japan’s wartime sexual slavery, including rare records,” reported *Korea JoongAng Daily*. In four volumes, it includes documents compiled from Japan, the Allied powers during World War II, China, Taiwan and Thailand, listing “when the documents were produced, the original source and where they are preserved.” <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3060960>

More than 600 books, including 11 valuable medieval manuscripts, were returned to the University and Regional Library of Bonn after Sotheby’s auction house received 150 of them for auction, *The Art Newspaper* reported. Sotheby’s staff members matched the items with the Library’s “meticulous inventory of losses recording some of the 180,000 volumes missing since the Second World War.” Another 450 books were found in the garage of the woman who sent the volumes for auction. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/bonn-library-recovers-600-books-missing-since-the-second-world-war>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Afghanistan/U.S. In its quarterly report, the United Nations said that “between January and March insurgent groups killed 227 civilians and injured 736 others” while “Afghan and international forces caused 305 deaths and 303 injuries--a 39% jump from the same period last year.” It also said air strikes killed 145 civilians during the period, “half of them women and children,” and the UN “attributed almost all of these to American forces,” the *BBC* reported. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-48047356>

Argentina/United States. The U.S. gave Argentina the final tranche of declassified U.S. government records created between 1975 and 1984 related to human rights abuses committed during the military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983). The transfer marked the end of the “largest government-to-government declassification release in United States history,” the U.S. National Archives said. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/southern-cone/2019-04-12/declassification-diplomacy-trump-administration-turns-over-massive-collection-intelligence-records>

Balkans. “Two Bosniak men from Srebrenica shot by the Scorpions paramilitary unit in 1995—murders that were videotaped by the notorious Serb fighters—have been identified after their remains were

exhumed from a mass grave,” *BIRN* reported. The recording was shown at trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/04/26/two-srebrenica-victims-killed-by-serb-scorpions-identified/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=b7b8c00d29-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-b7b8c00d29-319725265

BIRN also reported that at the end of the Serbian-Kosovo war in July 1999, “cadastral documents registered in the period from 1983 to 1999 were removed by the Serbian authorities, along with many other official documents.” In 2011 the European Union facilitated an Agreement for the Return of Cadastral Records; the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency “is now waiting for scanned cadastral documents to be returned from Serbia via the EU’s office in Kosovo”—an estimated 4.6 million copies. However, Serbia made “property transactions between and to Kosovo Albanians” illegal in 1989,” so for ten years such contracts were not registered. “Thousands of property disputes are stalled in the courts, waiting to be resolved, because of the lack of original cadastral records.” <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/04/03/lost-property-kosovos-missing-records-prolong-post-war-legal-battles/>

Belgium/Burundi/Congo/Rwanda. Belgium’s prime minister officially apologized “for the kidnapping, segregation, deportation and forced adoption of thousands of children born to mixed-race couples during its colonial rule of Burundi, Congo and Rwanda,” the *New York Times* reported. “An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 children were segregated from their parents . . . and placed in orphanages and schools predominantly run by the Catholic Church.” The prime minister said the government will provide resources to finance research on the separations, “open up its colonial archives to metis people, and offer administrative help to those seeking to gain access to their official records and seeking Belgian nationality.” For background see *HRWG News* 2018-03. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/world/europe/belgium-kidnapping-congo-rwanda-burundi.html>

France/Rwanda. French president Emmanuel Macron announced the appointment of an eight person commission to consult “all France’s archives relating to the [Rwandan] genocide . . . in order to analyse the role and engagement of France during that period.” The commissioners “will have access to classified documents from the foreign and defence ministries but also the DGSE, France’s external intelligence service, and reportedly the archives of then president Francois Mitterrand,” *The Telegraph* reported. Tensions over the composition of the commission were reported in *Jeune Afrique*. <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/757783/politique/genocide-des-tutsi-au-rwanda-une-commission-denquete-francaise-cree-des-tensions-chez-les-historiens/>; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/05/france-throw-open-archives-rwanda-genocide-clarify-role-25-years/>

France/United Arab Emirates/Yemen. The investigative website *Disclose* posted a 15 page report dated 25 September 2018 titled “Yemen: security situation,” written by France’s military intelligence agency. It includes “maps that detail the positioning of French-made weapons inside Yemen and on the Saudi side of the border,” *Reuters* reported. The French prime minister’s office issued a statement saying “as far as we know” French arms are “not on the front line,” but “it did not question the authenticity of the documents and neither confirmed nor denied the *Disclose* report.” *Disclose* said its study of “satellite images, video and photographs taken by civilians revealed some [French-made] Leclerc tanks bought by the UAE had taken part in coalition offensives.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190415123649-rf18v/>

Israel/Palestine. Marking Palestinian Children’s Day, the nongovernmental Palestinian Prisoners’ Association said its documentation shows “at least 6,000 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli authorities since 2015.” The Palestinian Authority’s official Committee for Prisoners’ Affairs said its records show 5,700 Palestinians currently imprisoned in Israel, including 48 women and 250 children, *Al Jazeera* reported. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/04/6000-palestinian-children-jailed-israel-2015-ngo-190405162640479.html>

Israel/Russia. “Russian authorities have returned the archive of Israel’s communist party, which was taken from Tel Aviv to Moscow in 1977,” reported *Middle East Monitor*. At that time the party “feared that the [recently elected] right-wing Likud-led government would seize the archive, so it was sent to Moscow.” The archive was actually returned in May 2015 to Israel’s National Library, but “the move has only just been revealed by local media sources inside Israel.” <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190424-russia-returned-communist-party-archive-to-israel-almost-secretly/>

Kazakhstan/Russia. *Nature* published a feature article on the continuing health impacts of radiation exposure around Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan where the Soviet Union conducted more than 110 above-ground nuclear tests between 1949 and 1963. After August 1956, the Soviet military established a medical clinic for those suffering from radiation sickness caused by the blasts. However, “in 1991, following Kazakhstan’s independence from the Soviet Union, officials from Moscow sent a special committee” to the facility; “some records were destroyed. Other classified files were returned to Moscow.” What remains at the clinic is a medical registry used to record the health of people exposed to the tests. “Although the registry does not include every person who was affected, at one point it listed more than 351,000 individuals across 3 generations . . . about 10,000 people have been continually observed since 1962. Researchers consider the registry an important and relatively unexplored resource for understanding the effect of long-term and low-dose radiation.” https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01034-8?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=69c1a2f36e-MR_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-69c1a2f36e-149736437

Liberia/Switzerland. Switzerland’s Office of the Attorney General presented an indictment to the Federal Court against a Liberian man, living in Switzerland, who is “accused of violations of the laws of war as a member of a military faction in the context of internal armed conflict that took place in Liberia between 1989 and 1996.” Before bringing the case, the Attorney General took testimony from more than 25 witnesses and had “international legal assistance from seven States or international organizations.” https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-74457.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=gaamac_newsletter_april_2019&utm_term=2019-04-10

Mideast War. Amnesty International announced that with the nongovernmental organization Airwars it launched an “interactive website documenting hundreds of civilian casualties” in Raqqa, Syria. “Collating almost two years of investigations, it gives a brutally vivid account of more than 1,600 civilian lives lost as a direct result of thousands of U.S., U.K. and French air strikes and tens of thousands of U.S. artillery strikes in the Coalition’s military campaign in Raqqa from June to October 2017.” <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/04/syria-unprecedented-investigation-reveals-us-led-coalition-killed-more-than-1600-civilians-in-raqqa-death-trap/>

The *New York Times* published a feature article, “In Guantanamo Trials, Wrestling with Airing Evidence on Torture.” In 2012 Majid Khan “pleaded guilty to delivering \$50,000 of Qaeda money to a Southeast Asian affiliate that was used to finance the bombing of a Marriott hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2003 that killed 11 people” and “to agreeing to assassinate” Pakistan’s then-president Pervez Musharraf, “a plot that was never pulled off.” He also admitted to “volunteering to work for Al Qaeda after Sept. 11 and plotting with Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the accused architect of the attacks” on the U.S. Arrested in March 2003, he was held by the C.I.A. at a “black site” until September 2006; he is now in Guantanamo prison. The case against him is at the sentencing stage, and his lawyers “asked a military judge . . . to order prosecutors to produce evidence and witnesses about the secret prison network” where he was kept and the torture he underwent. <https://mediaone.us/guantanamo-trials-grapple-with-how-much-evidence-to-allow-about-torture/>

The Islamic State’s *Al Furqan* media network released a video of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the first time in five years he has been seen, although audio recordings said to be by him have been released. He said, reported *Al Jazeera*, “jihad will continue until doomsday.” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2019/04/isil-chief-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-appears-propaganda-video-190429163448332.html>

New Zealand/Rwanda. New Zealand gave Rwanda “text-based documents such as correspondences related to the genocide” in Rwanda in 1994, *CGTN Africa* reported. The Rwandan foreign minister said that “of all the countries having historical ties with Rwanda that were requested to share archive documents in their possession, New Zealand is the first country to respond positively.” <https://africa.cgtn.com/2019/04/20/new-zealand-becomes-first-country-to-hand-over-genocide-archives-to-rwanda/>

Saudi Arabia/United States/Yemen. Bellingcat, the nongovernmental investigative organization, reported that photographs of the remains of a bomb that struck a wedding party in Yemen killing 33 and injuring 55 show that it was manufactured by the U.S. defense firm Raytheon. The U.S. sells such bombs to Saudi Arabia. <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2018/04/27/american-made-bomb-used-airstrike-yemen-wedding/>

Somalia/United States. The U.S. military's Africa Command acknowledged that a 1 April 2018 airstrike killed two civilians. For background, see *HRWG News* 2019-03. <https://www.africom.mil/media-room/pressrelease/31697/u-s-africa-command-commander-directed-review-reveals-civilian-casualties>

Sri Lanka/United States. Lawyers for a Canadian man, an ethnic Tamil who survived torture by the Sri Lankan military, brought a civil damages suit in California against former Sri Lanka defense secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who is a dual U.S.-Sri Lankan citizen. The case is supported by the International Truth and Justice Project, a South African nongovernmental organization that "has the largest archive of testimony and other information pertaining to the final phase of the civil war in Sri Lanka and the post-war period," which can provide important evidence for the case. <https://www.hausfeld.com/news-press/civil-case-filed-in-the-us-against-former-sri-lankan-defence-secretary-gotabaya-rajapaksa>

National news.

Australia. The island state of Tasmania made it optional to list gender on birth certificates, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190410155810-evr1a/>

Bosnia. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe compiles a monthly "Hate Monitor." It logged 33 cases of suspected hate crimes in the first three months of 2019, reported *Eurasia Review*. The legal adviser to the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina said, "When the data are classified according to the target or victim, it can be seen that the vast majority of these incidents are directed against groups or individuals based on their ethnic or religious affiliation." The mission realizes that the real number of hate crimes could be higher, he said, so it "has begun an analysis of this discrepancy in data, starting with research into the problem of non-reporting of these incidents." Bosnian security and statistical institutions "do not keep separate data on hate crimes related to ethnicity or religion." https://www.eurasiareview.com/29042019-hate-crimes-in-bosnia-under-reported-and-rarely-prosecuted-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Brazil. Brazil's government maintains a "dirty list" of companies that have engaged in slave labor. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported that two of Brazil's biggest fashion brands were added to the list, bringing the total to nearly 190, "most of them farms and construction companies." <http://news.trust.org/item/20190403200718-4uiku/>

President Jair Bolsonaro issued Decree 9,759, shutting down the work of both the Perus Working Group, which is "responsible for identifying over a thousand bones found in a mass, clandestine grave in Perus" that dates from the 1964-1985 military dictatorship, and the Araguaia Working Group, which is "responsible for the search and identification of remains of Araguaia guerrilla fighters who battled the dictatorship in the Amazon rainforest between the states of Para and Tocantins in the 1970s," *telesur* reported. The records of both groups must be safely preserved. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Brazils-Bolsonaro-Terminates-Investigation-Teams-Identifying-Remains-of-Dictatorship-Victims-20190423-0010.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10

Canada. Canada appointed its first "Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise," who is to be "a watchdog to enforce responsible conduct by Canadian companies operating abroad," reported *The Canadian Press*. The extent of the power is unclear; the International Trade Minister said he wants "independent legal advice on how best to give [the ombudsperson] the power to make companies disclose documents and answer questions." <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/corporate-ethics-ombudsperson-mining-1.5089059>

Colombia. The nongovernmental organization Programa Somos Defensores (PSD) issued its annual report on attacks against human rights defenders. It said "2018 was, without a doubt, the worst year for defenders" since PSD began tracking data in 2009. PSD said it recognizes the data is an undercount due to under-reporting, but it still documented 155 murders, 34 attacks, 6 thefts of information, 4 detentions, 4 disappearances, 19 law suits filed against defenders, and 583 individual threats. https://somosdefensores.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/informe-somos-defensores-2019-ingles_web.pdf

Cuba. Cuba's new constitution came into force. Among other new elements, it guarantees the right of habeas data ("a legal resource that allows citizens to request personal data held by the state") and expands the guarantees "concerning how evidence is treated during legal proceedings, and the right to solicit the suppression of evidence if it was obtained unlawfully," according to analysis by the Washington Office on Latin America. <https://www.wola.org/analysis/cuba-new-constitution-what-happens-next/>

Ecuador. The *New York Times* reported that the government has installed thousands of Chinese-made surveillance cameras that "all feed into a few centralized surveillance rooms, where dispatchers from multiple agencies view the footage in real time, then help direct police officers and emergency medical workers." Intelligence officers are also viewing the camera feeds. www.nytimes.com/2019/04/26/reader-center/ecuador-china-surveillance-spying.html

Indonesia. Asia Pulp & Paper is one of the world's biggest paper producers. According to an analysis by a "coalition of activists campaigning for the protection of peat forests," 22 of 38 suppliers to Asia Pulp & Paper are "mired in 122 social conflicts centering on land rights." When they overlaid "maps of APP's and its suppliers' concessions with those of local villages" they found overlaps and potential conflicts with at least 602 more villages, *Mongabay* reported. The coalition said the government should review the plantation permits issued to APP and its suppliers and revoke those disputed by local communities. An Indonesian anthropologist who studies land conflicts said "the government currently lacks any mechanism to take over land conflicts stemming from hazy boundaries." <https://news.mongabay.com/2019/04/in-indonesia-a-paper-giant-shuffles-a-litany-of-land-conflicts/>

After the separatist West Papua National Liberation Army killed workers on the Trans Jakarta highway bridge in the Nduga regency, West Papua, the Indonesian military and police launched military operations against the region. An independent Nduga Case Investigation Team from the nongovernmental organization Front Line Defenders issued a report saying "tens of thousands of Nduga residents have fled as a result of the operations" and "a number of local people's homes and public facilities such as community healthcare centres were intentionally torched" by the military, reported *CNN*. A team member said they "found alleged human rights violations" and the operations "resulted in many deaths and deep trauma among Nduga communities." <https://www.asia-pacific-solidarity.net/news/2019-03-29/independent-investigation-finds-widespread-rights-violations-nduga.html>

Iraq. *Justiceinfo.net* reported that the trials of the counter-terrorism court at Tel Keppe have produced 3,370 convictions and 3,794 acquittals since 2016. The prisoners are accused of having joined the Islamic State; the president of the court said the trials have improved because investigators have found more IS data: "Daesh functioned as a State. We found salary slips, registration documents, more than eight terabytes of computer data." <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/tribunals/national-tribunals/41105-iraq-a-day-with-islamic-state-suspects-at-tel-keppe-tribunal.html>

Ireland. In 2015, following the explosive news that there were no burial records for almost 800 children who died in the Tuam mother and baby home, the government established the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation. It issued its 5th interim report, saying that the "major issues about burials arise in the cases of Bessborough and Tuam," some of the institutions sent the bodies of the dead children to medical schools to use as anatomical subjects, in general the records of the burials are incomplete or missing, and church institutions have not been forthcoming about the events. The Commission said that the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which ran three homes, provided the Commission with an affidavit that "was, in many respects, speculative, inaccurate and misleading." [http://www.mbhcoi.ie/MBH.nsf/page/LPRN-BBBF8312151717-9/\\$File/With%20redacted%20pics_Burials%205th%20Interim%20report%20for%20printers_FINAL%20Softcopy_Redacted.pdf](http://www.mbhcoi.ie/MBH.nsf/page/LPRN-BBBF8312151717-9/$File/With%20redacted%20pics_Burials%205th%20Interim%20report%20for%20printers_FINAL%20Softcopy_Redacted.pdf)

Israel. Yaacov Lozowick, the former Israeli State Archivist, published an essay in *Haaretz* on the delayed release of the minutes of the cabinet meeting of 1 October 1967 where it was "decided that the establishment of settlements across the Green Line (the pre-war ceasefire line that constituted Israel's effective border) would require government approval" and also discussed the results of a census that was conducted in the West Bank and Gaza immediately after the Six-Day War. After an account of the meeting was published in a memoir by a former Jewish Agency official, Lozowick asked the Archives

to open the minutes, which it did. <https://www.haaretz.com/magazine/.premium-a-glimpse-into-the-obscure-world-of-israel-s-state-archives-1.7110809>

Japan. Parliament enacted legislation to provide redress, including 3.2 million yen (\$28,600) in compensation, for each of the estimated 25,000 people who were sterilized without consent under the 1948 Eugenics Protection Law which remained in place until 1996, the *Associated Press* reported. Medical records will be crucial in determining who will get compensation. https://news.yahoo.com/japan-apologizes-those-forcibly-sterilized-vows-redress-034621997.html;_ylt=A2KLfSgiEtNc0yAAQmhpCWVH;_ylu=X3oDMTByMHZ0NG9yBGNvbG8DYmYxBHBvcwM3BHZ0aWQDBHNIYwNzcg--

Liberia. The Liberian National Bar Association finally endorsed the full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2009 report and the establishment of a War and Economic Crimes court, *The New Republic* reported. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201904020244.html>

Malaysia. The National Human Rights Commission issued a 95-page report on the disappearance of a Christian pastor in 2017 and a Muslim activist in 2016, concluding that they were "probably abducted by state agents," *BenarNews* reported. The Commission urged the government to create a task force to conduct a further investigation; the prime minister said he will wait until a new inspector general of police is appointed to "set up a group to study where there is substance in the hearsay evidence used" by the Commission. The abduction of the pastor was captured on surveillance cameras. https://www.eurasiareview.com/06042019-malaysia-mahathir-agrees-to-fresh-probe-into-disappearances-of-pastor-activist/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Mexico. The government "released a trove of files from the country's old domestic intelligence agency [the Federal Security Department]," reported the *Associated Press*. Included in the release was a 63-page file on current president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who had ordered the opening of the records. <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2019/04/16/news/mexico-releases-spy-agencys-files-on-current-president/>

Myanmar. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said Myanmar's military carried out a helicopter attack on a village, "firing at Rohingya Muslims who were tending livestock and crops in the fields," killing at least seven and injuring 18 others, *telesur* reported. The OHCHR spokeswoman said, "These particular killings we have been able to verify with some certainty," and that OHCHR "received a large number of videos and photographs of the attack." She said the attacks on civilians "may constitute war crimes." https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/UN-Warns-of-War-Crimes-Against-Rohingya-After-Military-Airstrike-Killed-at-least-5-Farmers-20190406-0009.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=15

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed Nicholas Koumjian to head the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, which was established by the Human Rights Council on 27 September 2018 and "welcomed" by the General Assembly on 22 December 2018. The Mechanism is to collect evidence and prepare prosecutorial files "on the most serious international crimes committed in Myanmar since 2011." <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sga1869.doc.htm>

Pakistan. Basing its numbers on "data shared by the Balochistan Home Department," the National Commission for Human Rights stated that from January 2012 to December 2017 "509 members of the Hazara community were killed and 627 injured in various incidents of terrorism in Quetta," *South Asia Terrorism Portal* reported. The Hazara, "who follow the tenets of Shia Islam, have a longstanding history of being subject to sectarian violence by the TTP [Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan] and other Sunni extremist groups in Balochistan." <https://www.satp.org/second-sight-volume-1-no-36>

South Asia Terrorism Portal also reported, "Polio immunization programmes in Pakistan have been reeling under terrorist attacks with a total of 51 health workers killed and 52 injured since 2012 (data till April 26, 2019)" and "54 security personnel were killed and 21 sustained injuries while providing security" to the polio workers. The *Portal* acknowledges the data is partial and the toll may be higher. <https://www.satp.org/second-sight-volume-1-no-40>

Peru. Reniec, the national register of persons, is retraining registrars to “recognize the proper way” to write on birth certificates and identification documents the names as given by any of Peru’s 55 indigenous peoples, reported the *Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/04/peru-indigenous-names-public-records>

In 2003 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave the Public Prosecutor a file “with all its investigation requesting that the human rights violations committed in Huanta in 1984 be investigated.” Finally, after more than 15 years of legal manoeuvres, the court handling terrorism crimes announced that it will set a date for a trial of naval officers involved in the killing of evangelicals in the community of Callqui in Huanta province and the disappearance of a journalist investigating the murders, reported *La Republica*. https://larepublica.pe/politica/1457739-fiscal-acusa-marinos-violaciones-ddhh-cometidos-huanta?fbclid=IwAR0qh4WpDEx-jnY2J3LdcjoR2wICu_UmbyOkOFnyeGP_xCownHyGc6M9yXQ#.XMRPu6sjzpA.facebook

Philippines. At the end of March the Moro Islamic Liberation Front announced that it had given the government a list of 12,000 fighters to be decommissioned, and on 25 April the Presidential Peace Adviser said those names were given to the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB), reported *MindaNews*. The IDB, which is chaired by Turkey with representatives from Norway and Brunei plus four local experts, is to “verify, register and inventory the MILF fighters and their weapons.” The records of the IDB should be secured and preserved in government archives. <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2019/04/decommissioning-of-12000-milf-members-may-be-finished-by-november/>

The Supreme Court “ordered the release of police documents on thousands of killings of suspects in the president’s anti-drug crackdown, in a ruling that human rights groups said could shed light on allegations of extrajudicial killings,” the *Associated Press* reported. The Court’s spokesman said the government’s solicitor general is to provide the records to the nongovernmental Center for International Law and the Free Legal Assistance Group. “More than 5,000 mostly poor drug suspects have died in purported guns battles with police.” <https://apnews.com/b4f1653e558749f29862848d105d6bf6>

Romania. “Former president Ion Iliescu and other former top officials are to stand trial for commandeering the 1989 uprising and for fomenting an atmosphere of chaos and confusion to take power that resulted in many unnecessary deaths,” *BIRN* reported. “The indictment, written by military prosecutors who reopened the investigation in 2016, comprises 12 volumes. The whole file totals 3,330 volumes, 2,030 of which include fresh evidence collected after June 13, 2016.” The European Court of Human Rights ordered the reopening. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/04/08/romania-indicts-former-officials-for-usurping-1989-revolution/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=71c3ee9291-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-71c3ee9291-319725265

Serbia. *BIRN* reported that the Belgrade Higher Court convicted four former Serbian State Security employees of the 1999 murder of journalist Slavko Curuvija, an outspoken opponent of the regime of then president Slobodan Milosevic. The case began in 2015 and the lower court twice tried “to dismiss potentially crucial evidence—records of mobile phone communications between the Secret Service operatives”—but “the decision was overturned both times on appeal.” https://balkaninsight.com/2019/04/05/serbia-convicts-state-security-officers-of-journalists-murder/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=d2e813d79c-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-d2e813d79c-319725265

Sierra Leone. Using British colonial records of the slave trade that “in many cases” include in the descriptions “drawings of facial scars made by Africans to show their origins and identities,” a researcher at Canada’s Trent University is developing a computer program to recognize and catalog the scars, reported *PRI*. The data will be fed into the international information hub called “Enslaved,” which is scheduled to go online in 2020. Meanwhile, the national archives of Sierra Leone holds the original records in buildings “with broken windows, frequent power failures and no air-conditioning.” <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-04-04/archivists-race-digitize-slavery-records-history-lost>

Sri Lanka. Following the horrific serial bombings on 21 April that killed over 250 people, the government admitted that two weeks previously India had supplied “specific intelligence . . . identifying the date, the locations, the nature of imminent attacks, the perpetrator group and, indeed, the identities of the individual perpetrators.” President Sirisena said the intelligence had not reached him, raising questions about data management in the government. *South Asia Terrorism Portal* remarked that

intelligence agencies would be expected to have “every faction” of a terrorist group “well documented” and the “complete lack of effective surveillance and intelligence gathering on such volatile organisations and individuals is incomprehensible, as, indeed, is the paucity of documentation, reportage and research in the open source.” Islamic State claimed responsibility for the bombing, posting videos and photographs of the bombers swearing allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. <https://www.satp.org/second-sight-volume-1-no-39> ; <https://www.newsweek.com/sri-lanka-bombings-number-dead-falls-100-after-mutilated-bodies-counted-1407018>

Sudan. The nongovernmental organization Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) published a report on 5 April saying, “To date, police and National Intelligence and Security Services forces have entered and conducted attacks on at least seven medical facilities, arrested at least 136 health personnel, fired teargas and other weapons into hospital wards, and closed access to medical care for patients.” In preparing the report, PHR “sought to triangulate eyewitness accounts of attacks with reports from other witnesses, news reports and video footage, legal records, medical documentation, and other sources to produce sufficient data to make assessments.” A week after the report was published, President Omar al-Bashir was overthrown; if he is ever tried, the information PHR assembled will help the prosecution. <https://phr.org/resources/intimidation-and-persecution-sudans-attacks-on-peaceful-protesters-and-physicians/>

Syria. *Wired* published a feature on the “body puller” teams in Raqqa who are opening mass graves and reburying remains that cannot be immediately identified. The teams use Google Maps, Google Earth, satellite images, and oral reports to identify potential locations; when they find a grave they “use Facebook and WhatsApp to crowdsource more information.” Families contact the teams via Facebook or the Raqqa Civil Council office. Teams carry a ledger and forms; each team notes details of the remains and turns the notes over to the Council “which digitizes them and keeps them for when families come.” [https://www.wired.com/story/body-pullers-syria/?CNDID=53684912&CNDID=53684912&bxid=MjcwMDU3MDMwNzYzS0&hasha=8fcd7efd9e9d6389b9f914ad34a5948d&hashb=be86af3880f5d49a71f804266e79b70bb4fa408d&mbid=nl_040719_backchannel_list1_p1&source=BACKCHANNEL_NEWSLETTER&utm_br and=wired&utm_mailing=Backchannel%20NL%20040719%20Top%2050%20\(1\)&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl](https://www.wired.com/story/body-pullers-syria/?CNDID=53684912&CNDID=53684912&bxid=MjcwMDU3MDMwNzYzS0&hasha=8fcd7efd9e9d6389b9f914ad34a5948d&hashb=be86af3880f5d49a71f804266e79b70bb4fa408d&mbid=nl_040719_backchannel_list1_p1&source=BACKCHANNEL_NEWSLETTER&utm_br and=wired&utm_mailing=Backchannel%20NL%20040719%20Top%2050%20(1)&utm_medium=email&utm_source=nl)

Tunisia. *Justiceinfo.net* published an interview with Sihem Bensedrine, the president of the recently concluded Truth and Dignity Commission. Asked what obstacles were most difficult for the Commission to overcome, she said, “I regret very much . . . our sore lack of the documents needed to show that the Tunisian system was surprisingly like that of the Stasi [the former East German political police] in the way it set up denunciation networks. . . . Access to the archives of the political police would have allowed us to show how this practice deconstructs a society, dislocates it and destroys social and family ties. The archives that we obtained through citizens who managed to get their hands on police documents are unfortunately not enough to demonstrate this predatory practice.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/justiceinfo-comment-and-debate/in-depth-interviews/41158-sihem-bensedrine-france-and-the-world-bank-should-compensate-tunisian-victims.html>

United Kingdom. The nongovernmental organization Unseen runs Britain’s official anti-slavery helpline. It said the “hotline identified more than 7,100 potential victims and about 1,850 modern slavery cases” in 2018, “both up by almost half” over 2017, reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. “Only about 10 of the 320 possible labour abuse cases . . . referred to Britain’s anti-slavery agency led to investigations” and only one resulted in an arrest. The main sites of suspected slavery are “car washes, beauty and spa facilities, construction sites, hospitality and agriculture.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190424161749-rqkw3/>

United States. *USA TODAY*, its more than 100 affiliated newsrooms, and the nongovernmental Invisible Institute spent more than a year obtaining disciplinary records from “more than 700 law enforcement agencies . . . focused largely on the biggest 100 police agencies as well as clusters of smaller departments in surrounding areas, partly to examine movement of officers between departments in regions.” Ultimately they gathered “discipline and accountability records on more than 85,000 law enforcement officers” and found that “most misconduct involves routine infractions, but the records reveal . . . 22,924 investigations of officers using excessive force, 3,145 allegations of rape, child molestation and other sexual misconduct, and 2,307 cases of domestic violence by officers.” <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2019/04/24/usa-today-revealing-misconduct-records-police-cops/3223984002/>

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued the annual set of surveillance-related statistics and reported that officials “asked the National Security Agency to unmask the identities of Americans in surveillance-based intelligence reports 16,721 times,” up from 9,529 in 2017. According to the *Washington Post*, “In the course of monitoring communications abroad, the agency routinely picks up the communications of U.S. persons, whose identities are ‘masked’ in reports that are circulated among government agencies, to protect their privacy.” If an agency who receives the report believes it has a need to know who the person or organization was, the NSA is asked to “unmask” the identity. <https://www.stripes.com/news/us/nsa-reveals-more-us-identities-likely-to-warn-victims-of-foreign-spying-report-suggests-1.579075>

The Washington State Attorney General announced that the hotel chain Motel 6 will pay \$12 million to settle the State’s lawsuit against the company “for voluntarily providing guest lists to agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on a routine basis for over two years” (2015-2017) without a warrant “or other lawful basis.” Information was provided on approximately 80,000 guests, resulting “in ICE’s targeted investigation of many guests with Latino-sounding names on or near the Motel 6 properties where they stayed. For some guests, Motel 6’s disclosures resulted in the loss of their homes and jobs and separation from their families.” The fine will pay restitution and monetary damages to the guests, who are asked to contact the Attorney General’s office; what evidence will be required for compensation was not stated. Motel 6, as part of the settlement, is required to “provide records and other reports to the Attorney General’s Office for the next three years to demonstrate compliance.” <https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-motel-6-will-pay-12m-violating-privacy-tens-thousands-washingtonians>

Yemen. Human Rights Watch, reporting on data from the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, said that since 2018 “landmines laid in farmlands, villages, wells, and roads have killed at least 140 civilians, including 19 children, in the Hodeida and Taizz governorates.” It attributed the death toll primarily to Houthi forces. HRW said to support the data it “interviewed civilians injured by landmines as well as civilians fleeing mined areas, aid workers, and a deminer from Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre; analyzed video and photographs collected in country; and reviewed Houthi state and military media channels.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/22/yemen-houthi-landmines-kill-civilians-block-aid>

Zimbabwe. The government “promised to exhume and rebury the bodies of thousands of people killed during a 1980s military campaign aimed at crushing dissidents” in Matabeleland, reported the *Associated Press*. “A 1997 report by the Catholic Commission on Peace and Justice, drawing on more than 1,000 interviews, said 10,000 to 20,000 civilians were killed.” Military records must contain location information. The secretary in the justice ministry said the government “will assist people whose parents died in the campaign to get proper identity documents.” <http://www.dailyjournal.net/2019/04/10/af-zimbabwe-mass-graves/>

Course, publications. The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property announced a course “First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis.” Application deadline 31 May; for information see <https://www.iccrom.org/courses/first-aid-cultural-heritage-times-crisis-fac-2019>

Good reads. Preserving indigenous languages through digital archives: <https://around.uoregon.edu/oq/linguists-and-native-americans-team-up-on-indigenous-languages>

Using declassified imagery captured by U2 spy planes in the 1950s to study archaeological sites: <https://fas.org/blogs/secrecy/2019/04/declass-u2-photos/>; <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/advances-in-archaeological-practice/article/near-eastern-landscapes-and-declassified-u2-aerial-imagery/A16A04FB4990B74B9FF750DCCF31A141/core-reader>

The Sedona Conference and its Working Group 1 on Electronic Document Retention & Production published *Commentary on Defensible Disposition*: https://thesedonaconference.org/publication/Commentary_on_Defensible_Disposition

Trial International published *Universal Jurisdiction Annual Review*: https://trialinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Universal_Jurisdiction_Annual_Review2019.pdf

The GAAMAC (Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes) II Africa Working Group in collaboration with the Uganda National Committee for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention under

the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region published *Manual on Best Practices for the Establishment and Management of National Mechanisms for Genocide and Mass Atrocities Prevention*: https://www.gaamac.org/information-platform-www/media-uploads/AWG_MANUAL_POST_GAAMAC_III_EN_09.04.19.pdf

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