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Commentary.

Coincidence, correlation, causation. Within 16 days of each other in late May and early June, Congolese warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba's conviction was overturned on appeal by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and four former senior military officers in Guatemala were convicted of crimes against humanity. That was a coincidence. Both court decisions created political upheavals in the countries involved. Whether that is correlation or causation is more complicated.

Despite a voluminous case file and a conviction in the lower court, on June 8 the ICC appeals judges, by a 3-2 decision, overturned Bemba's 2016 conviction for war crimes in the Central African Republic. He flew back to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), on August 1, to be greeted by "throng[s] of people—many in T-shirts, hats and scarves bearing his likeness," according to *Reuters*. Bemba quickly followed his "thunderous welcome" (as *African Arguments* reported) by filing to run for president in the election scheduled for December. The DRC constitution sets a limit of two terms for the president, which expired in 2016 for the current president, Joseph Kabila, but he did not step down. At Bemba's return, his supporters chanted, "Kabila, know that Bemba is back," and "hours before the deadline to register candidates," Kabila's party announced that its presidential candidate would be Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who is under European Union sanctions for his role in the crackdown on protests in 2016 when Kabila did not depart. In addition to Bemba, more than a dozen other men have filed to run for president. But is there a correlation—that is, a relationship between two or more things—between Bemba's triumphant return and Kabila's decision to step aside?

Bemba appears to be favored to win the election. *African Arguments* called him "a deeply flawed candidate," but urged the public to "get behind Bemba," because "a rough and muddy diamond is more valuable than certain despair." Bemba has spent the last ten years at the ICC, and as Olivia Bueno pointed out in an opinion piece for the Open Society Justice Initiative, most Congolese "never believed in Bemba's guilt." With the court sitting far away and most of the public unable to see the hearings, understand the language of the court (physical and legal), hear the witnesses, read the transcript or review the evidence, the process lacked credibility to the Congolese voter. The record is there, but it is distant. Until international courts figure out how to share their proceedings with the affected populace (there is substantial literature on court "outreach" problems) and court archives begin providing more of the evidence on line, judging the actions of a man like Bemba and weighing his suitability to be your president will be based on serious information gaps. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/08/impact-of-the-bemba-acquittal-already-seen-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-congo-politics-bemba/supporters-of-congo-opposition-leader-bemba-await-his-return-home-idUSKBN1KM42C>; <http://africanarguments.org/2018/08/10/drc-congo-time-opposition-get-behind-bemba/>

Unlike the distant Bemba trial, the Molina Theissen case dominated Guatemala news during its three-month trial and unanimous May 23 verdict. Again, the trial record is enormous—even the court's judgment ran to 1,075 pages. As Jo-Marie Burt and Paulo Estrada wrote in a three-part examination of the judgment, "Official military documents, international treaties, and domestic jurisprudence were fundamental to the court's determination," and the judges "referred to convictions handed down by Guatemalan courts for the enforced disappearance of Fernando Garcia and Edgar Enrique Saenz Calito, the Spanish Embassy massacre, the Maya Ixil genocide, and the

sexual violence and sexual and domestic slavery against Maya Q'eqchi women in Sepur Zarco, among others.”

The consequences of the judgment came quickly. As *gAZeta* pointed out, in the Garcia and especially the Molina Theissen case, documents from Guatemala’s Historical Archives of the National Police (AHPN) were used by prosecutors to show that the victims were detained by police who handed them over to military units: “conclusive documentary evidence.” Many former members of the military and police units active during Guatemala’s long and bloody civil war are today overt or covert powers in the government. They don’t like the possibility that existing documentation could be used against them in some future public process. So, it is perhaps neither coincidence or correlation but cause that, following the Molina Theissen trial and with more cases hovering in the future, the police archives was removed from the oversight of the national archives (Archivo General de Centroamerica) and reassigned to the vice minister of culture for “Patrimonio,” and the founding executive director of the police archives, Gustavo Meoño, was informed that his contract (which expired on July 31) would not be renewed. One of the most puzzling elements of the changes is the assignment of a member of the Guatemala office of the United Nations Development Program to be the director of AHPN. Neither of these newly responsible persons is known to have archival experience. The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia wrote to his social network that the changes were “a strategy to silence the archive,” a statement that was subsequently removed from the posting but had already been picked up by the press.

In the wake of these events, a group of individuals and nongovernmental organizations created a petition, asking questions about the situation and demanding a guarantee that the police archives will be preserved and continue to be open for use by institutions, organizations and individuals, and that the investigations undertaken by the archives’ staff will continue. The petition, open for signature, is an annex to this issue. The U.S. nongovernmental organization National Security Archive is collecting institutional and individual signatures to be forwarded to Archives without Borders, which will coordinate the international response and the presentation of the petition to the responsible officials.

<http://www.gt.undp.org/content/guatemala/es/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/08/COMUNICADO/archivo-historico-de-la-policia-nacional--ahpn/> ; <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/08/the-molina-theissen-judgment-part-i-overview-of-the-courts-findings/>; <http://gazeta.gt/category/especial-ahpn/> ; https://m.eldiario.es/politica/ONU-Archivo-Historico-Policia-Guatemala_0_800020021.html; <http://gazeta.gt/gustavo-meono-brenner/>

International news.

European Parliament. The European Parliament passed a resolution on “violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing.” Beginning with an extensive list of protocols and other international statements regarding indigenous rights, the resolution has 86 recommendations. It “calls on partner countries to ensure that indigenous people have universal access to their national population registers . . . [and] calls for the EU to support partner countries in establishing civil registry offices and managing them properly” (15); urges “collective registration of land use” (31) and “design and development of a legal and institutional framework for the demarcation and titling of indigenous territories” (37); and “calls on all states, including the EU and its Member States, to collect gender-disaggregated data on the situation of indigenous women” (67). Significantly, it “calls for the EU to set up a grievance mechanism . . . whereby indigenous and local communities can lodge complaints regarding violations and abuses of their rights resulting from EU-based business activities, regardless of the country where the violations and abuses occurred” (45). <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2018-0279+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Court issued a press release on 12 July, announcing that on 30 May it issued an “Advisory Opinion on the Institution of Asylum and its Recognition as a Human Right in the Inter-American System.” The Court declared that asylum processes should be equal whether the person was in the territory of another state or in the diplomatic mission of the country. It also said States have the obligation to conduct “an individualized evaluation of risk, such as the opportunity of a personal interview or a preliminary evaluation of the risk of *refoulement* [forcible return], as well as the obligation to adopt adequate means of protection, including those against arbitrary detention.”
http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/comunicados/cp_28_18_eng.pdf

International Criminal Court (ICC). ICC rules “provide that no reparations order can be issued when there is no conviction.” With the reversal of the conviction of Jean-Pierre Bemba, over 5,000 victims of crimes in the Central African Republic (CAR) are now denied reparations, *International Justice Monitor* reported. The ICC Trust Fund for Victims announced that it would launch an assistance program in the CAR “not related to reparations, consisting of physical, psychological, or material support to victims and their families.” <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/07/bembas-acquittal-raises-concerns-on-reparations-to-victims-in-the-central-african-republic/>

Further complicating ICC reparations issues, judges in the case of the convicted Congolese militia leader Germain Katanga “declined to award reparations to five individuals who are said to have suffered transgenerational harm” (that is, a parent’s harm that affects a child). Although the claimants submitted “statements and exhibits” including “mental health certificates,” the judges said they did not “provide sufficient proof of the causal link,” *International Justice Monitor* summarized.
<https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/07/why-judges-declined-to-offer-reparations-to-victims-of-transgenerational-harm/>

United Nations. Member States agreed to the text of the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.” It is to be formally adopted at an Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco, in December. The very first objective is “Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies,” objective 3 is “Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration,” and objective 4 is “Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation.” These certainly argue for robust national archives programs.
<https://www.un.org/pga/72/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/07/migration.pdf> ;
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/07/1014632>

The UN launched a High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation to “contribute to the broader public debate on the importance of cooperative and interdisciplinary approaches to ensure a safe and inclusive digital future for all taking into account relevant human rights norms.” <https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/global-governance/un-insider/1987-un-chief-asks-melinda-gates-and-ali-baba-s-jack-ma-to-head-digital-experts-panel>

United Nations Human Rights Council. The Council requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue work on “improving accountability and access to remedy” for business-related human rights abuses. Archives are part of this.
http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/38/L.18

World/general news.

Business. In a case that has been going on for over 25 years, Ecuador’s Constitutional Court “rejected Chevron’s request to revise a national court ruling that sentenced it to pay US \$9.5 billion in environmental and social reparations to the communities affected during its operations in the Ecuadorean Amazon between 1964 and 1992,” *telesur* reported. Because Chevron no longer has “assets” in Ecuador, the plaintiffs have tried and failed to get payment from Chevron’s companies in the U.S., Canada, Argentina, and Brazil, but are continuing to search for countries that will

enforce the judgment. For some of the background, see *HRWG News* 2018-05 and 2014-11. https://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Ecuadors-Constitutional-Court-Rules-Against-Chevron-in-Favor-of-Indigenous-Communities-20180711-0007.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

“Internal IBM documents show that its Watson supercomputer often spit out erroneous cancer treatment advice,” *STAT* reported. IBM blamed the problem on the “training of Watson” by using data on hypothetical patients “rather than real patient data.” https://www.statnews.com/2018/07/25/ibm-watson-recommended-unsafe-incorrect-treatments/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=7ad7846147-Weekend_Reads&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-7ad7846147-149736437

Researchers at the University of Bristol Law School and the U.K. nongovernmental organization Human Rights at Sea published a study of the way states that “flag” vessels comply with international human rights obligations vis-à-vis persons on board vessels registered under their flag. The project looked at the ship registries of the United Kingdom, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the Marshall Islands. They found that “specific monitoring and reporting mechanisms dealing with human rights violations are lacking or absent, especially those dealing specifically with violations at sea” and recommended both monitoring and establishing reporting mechanisms “that will allow persons on board vessels to complain of human rights abuses.” https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/HRAS_Bristol_University_First_Flag_State_Human_Rights_Report_July_20181.pdf

The United States Banks Alliance announced it has developed “a set of sophisticated tools” to help financial institutions detect suspicious transactions linked to human trafficking, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The New York County District Attorney said, “Financial records can be powerful weapons in prosecuting traffickers, especially when survivors find it too difficult to be strong witnesses in court.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180719122432-y37ir/>

Climate change. Comparing “decades worth of temperature data against suicide rates in U.S. counties and Mexican municipalities” researchers found “hotter weather was linked to increases in death by suicide,” reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. The study also “analyzed the language used in over half a billion Twitter posts and found that suicide rates and depressive language increased during hot weather.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180723150016-a6bi1/>

Spanish researchers developed a system to track human displacement caused by climate change by “using the tracks of mobile phones,” *Eurasia Review* reported. http://www.eurasiareview.com/09072018-smartphones-used-to-track-migrations-caused-by-climate-change/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Environment. In a newly-designated forest protected area in Madagascar, researchers from the U.K. and Madagascar followed households for two years to evaluate the local costs—the burden of conservation—on them. Using three surveys, they determined that even though the government paid some compensation to people affected by the ban on forest economic activities, no one has been fully compensated for their lost “opportunity costs” and that “ignoring the issue of local costs is both unjust (and therefore immoral) and also unsustainable.” The data developed by the project is “archived with ReShare, the UK data services online repository,” *PeerJ* reported. <https://peerj.com/articles/5106/>

Land. Global Witness, a U.K. nongovernmental organization, reported that 207 land activists were killed in 22 countries in 2017, the highest total since the organization started collecting data in 2002. Agribusiness is the industry most linked to killings, overtaking mining; 53 of the killings were attributed to government security forces. Brazil had 57 murders, the worst year for any country, while the Philippines saw 48

defenders killed, “the highest number ever in an Asian country.” Even with these numbers, Global Witness wrote, “The data we have painstakingly gathered and presented in this report and the case studies included are almost certainly a sizeable underestimate, given the many challenges in identifying and reporting killings.” https://www.globalwitness.org/en-gb/campaigns/environmental-activists/defenders-annual-report/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=defendersJuly18&utm_content=Defenders+annual+report+launch+supporter+email+

Medical records. Researchers at the University of York studied the impact on pregnant women of exposure to second hand smoke (SHS). The researchers looked at the number of pregnancies in 30 developing countries, using Demographic and Health Survey data collected between 2008 and 2013, and found “SHS exposure in pregnant women closely mirrors WHO Global Adult Tobacco Survey male active smoking patterns. Daily SHS exposure accounted for a greater . . . fraction of stillbirths than active smoking, ranging from 1% of stillbirths (Nigeria) to 14% (Indonesia),” *Science Daily* reported. Alarming, 40% of all pregnant women in Pakistan are inhaling second hand smoke “causing approximately 17,000 stillbirths in a year.” <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180720112837.htm>

A research team in Boston, Massachusetts, studied the mortality of 445 “unsheltered homeless adults” over a 10 year period (2000-2009). The team used data “from clinical encounters, medical records, the National Death Index, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health death occurrence files,” the researchers reported in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. They found that adults who “primarily sleep outdoors” had an “all-cause mortality rate” almost 3 times larger than for homeless adults primarily sleeping in shelters and nearly 10 times larger than that for the adult population of Massachusetts.

https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2687991?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=9a7921362e-MR_COPY_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-9a7921362e-149736437

The DNA testing company 23andMe announced a partnership with pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline to develop new drug treatments, with a first project on the gene implicated in Parkinson’s disease. 23andMe said customers “can opt out at any time,” *Engadget* reported, but the president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest said that “asking people to donate their genome sequences ‘for the higher good’ is one thing, but said it was ‘upside-down’ that ‘two for-profit companies enter into an agreement where the jewel in the crown is your gene sequence and you are actually paying for the privilege of participating.’” <https://www.engadget.com/2018/07/26/gsk-23andme-dna-database-drug-development/>

The U.S. National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering published guidance for “Returning Individual Research Results to Participants.” It said the benefits of returning to individuals the results of the analysis of their “biospecimens” must be balanced against risks “such as returning unvalidated or poor-quality results.” https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25094/returning-individual-research-results-to-participants-guidance-for-a-new?utm_source=HMD+Email+List&utm_campaign=6d1cdc8de6-ncpf-pw-Dec1_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_211686812e-6d1cdc8de6-180156329&mc_cid=6d1cdc8de6&mc_eid=9ed352a082

Migration. The Missing Migrants Project, “an organization that traces the deaths of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers who have gone missing along mixed migration routes around the world,” reported that during the first seven months of 2018 2323 migrant fatalities have been recorded worldwide, at least 200 of whom died crossing the Mexico-U.S. border. <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/americas?region=1422>

Privacy. Researchers at Northwestern University were given access by the “file-hosting service” Dropbox to look “at data about academics’ folder-sharing habits,” reported *Wired*. They started with information on 400,000 “unique users” but after “incorporating data from Web of Science” the data set was reduced to 16,000 users

in 1,000 separate academic departments. Dropbox said “the data was delivered to the researchers de-identified,” but “it still appears this research was conducted without the express consent” of the users. https://www.wired.com/story/dropbox-sharing-data-study-ethics?mbid=nl_072518_daily_list3_p3&CNDID=53684912

Researchers from Australia’s CSIRO Data61 found that “touch gestures” (that is, the way a person swipes a phone) “contain sufficient information to uniquely identify and track users,” *CNET* reported. <https://www.cnet.com/news/the-way-you-swipe-your-phone-could-be-used-to-track-you/>

Slavery. The Walk Free Foundation, an Australian nongovernmental organization, publishes an annual Global Slavery Index. Defining slavery as “situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception,” it carried out surveys in 48 countries and had “face-to-face interviews with 70,000 people,” leading to its estimate that 40.3 million people are enslaved worldwide, *CNN* reported. North Korea is listed as having the highest percentage of people in slavery, with an estimated one in ten people (2.6 million) “forced to work.” <https://amp-cnn-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/amp.cnn.com/cnn/2018/07/19/world/global-slavery-index-2018/index.html>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Balkans. The Humanitarian Law Center, a nongovernmental organization in Belgrade, Serbia, published a policy paper “Accounting for Missing Persons from the Armed Conflicts in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia.” The Center strongly argued, “The states in the region, including Serbia, should acknowledge in no uncertain terms that accounting for missing persons is not a matter of political will, but a right that belongs to the families of missing persons and also to other citizens.” In a section on “Information gathering: state archives and war crimes trials,” the Center wrote that military and police archives “contain documented records of many military and police operations carried out during the conflicts” and concluded that “documents held in domestic and international archives which could contribute to and help the process of accounting for missing persons should be made publicly available.” http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Predlog_prakticne_politike_Potruga_z_nestalima_ENG_stampano_ff_15.07.2018.pdf

Bangladesh/Myanmar. In late June the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began registering Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to create “a unified database for the purposes of protection, identity management, documentation, provision of assistance, population statistics and ultimately solutions for an estimated 900,000 refugees who have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh in successive waves of forced displacement.” UNHCR explained, “Biometric data, including iris scans and fingerprints as well as photographs, are used in the exercise to confirm individual identities for all refugees over the age of 12. At the end of the process refugees are provided with new identity cards. For many of the refugees, this will mark the first time they have possessed an individual identity document. These credit card-sized plastic IDs contain a number of anti-fraud features. They are issued jointly by the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR.” This major project underscores the importance of the records of the UN agencies like UNHCR in protecting human rights. <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2018/7/5b3f2794ae/joint-bangladeshunhcr-verification-rohingya-refugees-gets-underway.html?query=rohingya%20refugee%20registration>

Belarus/Russia. The border between Belarus and Russia has not been officially fixed. The two neighbors have now agreed “to begin the task first of drawing a precise line on maps (delimitation) and then putting up signs to indicate where it is (demarcation) by 2026,” *Eurasia Review* reported. A firm border will, among other matters, provide “real controls to prevent one country from dumping its problems onto the other, something Minsk feared Russia would do, especially with illegal immigrants.”

http://www.eurasiareview.com/11072018-belarus-and-russia-agree-to-demarcate-common-border-by-2026-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Brazil/Colombia/United States/ Venezuela. The nongovernmental Washington Office on Latin America issued a report on Venezuelan refugees in Colombia (nearly a million) and Brazil (approaching 125,000). In Colombia, the authorities have conducted a “registry” of Venezuelan migrants. The country’s shelter for migrants has places for only 250 but it “sits mostly empty as it is only open to migrants with all their papers in order.” Colombia does not grant citizenship to children “born to non-legal resident foreigners, and Venezuela’s crisis prevents its citizens from readily obtaining documentation,” so refugee children are born stateless. Colombian hospitals provide emergency services to Venezuelans who don’t have documentation, but preventive care and medicine “are not available if the Venezuelan patient is not registered in the Colombian health system.” Brazil provides more services for refugees, including allowing them to “seek temporary two-year residency in the country with just a national ID card (rather than a passport), and . . . are automatically given a work permit upon submitting their request.” <https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Final-VZ-Migration-Report-Final.pdf>

Cameroon/Serbia. Amnesty International and Bellingcat, nongovernmental organizations, said they “verified that the gun seen in the video” of the extrajudicial executions of two women and two children by Cameroonian soldiers was a Serbian-made Zastava M21, *BIRN* reported. Amnesty said the use of Serbian arms by Cameroonian soldiers to carry out human rights abuses “reflects a pattern of systematic violations,” and called on Serbia to suspend arms exports to Cameroon. The government first called the video “fake news” but later arrested the soldiers involved, reported *The Intercept*. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-urged-to-stop-selling-arms-to-cameroon-07-18-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=7164345e5a-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-7164345e5a-319725265; <https://theintercept.com/2018/07/26/cameroon-executions-us-ally/>

China/Papua New Guinea. Global Witness, a nongovernmental organization, used “satellite imagery to show hundreds of apparent violations” of PNG’s Forestry Act in “major logging operations – all of which hold government permits and all of which continue to export timber.” In 2016, PNG provided 29% of China’s tropical log imports, making it the country’s single largest supplier. The forest is “central to the cultural traditions and livelihoods of PNG’s eight million people,” yet in the past five years 640,000 hectares were deforested by commercial logging. Global Witness called on China to “require importers to go beyond official documents as proof of legality and require importers to investigate and verify the conditions under which the timber was produced” and on PNG to cancel “permits found to have been issued illegally” and “create a publicly accessible electronic system of documents related to the issuance and oversight of logging and clearance permits and operations, including verification of landowner consent and findings from the agency’s checks on operations.” <https://www.globalwitness.org/en-gb/campaigns/forests/major-liability-illegal-logging-papua-new-guinea-threatens-chinas-timber-sector-and-global-reputation/>

Georgia/Poland. The Ministry of Internal Affairs in Georgia gave the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) “maps and photographs, found in a comprehensive query conducted in resources of the Archives of the Ministry as well as in Georgian peer institutions” that relate to “secret burial places of the victims of Soviet repressions,” IPN announced. <http://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1231,Representatives-of-the-Archive-of-the-Ministry-of-Internal-Affairs-in-Georgia-ha.html>

Iran/Israel. “New details from a trove of Iranian nuclear documents stolen by Israeli spies early this year show that Tehran obtained explicit weapons-design information from a foreign source and was on the cusp of mastering key bombmaking technologies when the research was ordered halted 15 years ago,” reported the

Washington Post. “Iran, in a statement released by its UN mission in New York, challenged the authenticity of the documents.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/papers-stolen-in-a-daring-israeli-raid-on-tehran-archive-reveal-the-extent-of-irans-past-weapons-research/2018/07/15/0f7911c8-877c-11e8-8553-a3ce89036c78_story.html?utm_term=.9852eaa36d66

Iraq/Israel/United States. Israel’s *JTA* reported that the U.S. State Department “is working with Iraq to extend the stay of a trove of Jewish artifacts from the country, while a bipartisan group of [U.S.] senators introduced a resolution recommending that the items not be returned as planned in September.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-09. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/249221>

Israel/Yemen. Israel’s Justice Minister asked the state archives “to go through documents that were censored in the 1950s and may include information on actions taken by military medical personnel or agents abroad” that may relate to the disappearance of the nearly 1,000 children of Yemeni immigrants between 1948 and 1954, *Bloomberg News* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-06. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-30/israel-to-check-mossad-archives-for-material-on-missing-children>

Jordan/Syria. The Ministry of Labour said it has issued over 106,000 work permits for Syrian refugees, *The Jordan Times* reported. <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-issues-more-100000-work-permits-syrians>

Latin America. The nongovernmental organization Oxfam interviewed “4,731 men and women aged 15 to 25 in Bolivia, Cuba, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, and showed violence against women is seen as normal” throughout the region, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180725050115-iy0d5/>

Latvia/Russia. When the Soviet Union withdrew from Latvia in 1991, they left behind a “catalog of 4,500 people who served as agents and contacts for the KGB during the 1980s,” *Christian Science Monitor* reported. Latvia’s Parliament voted three times to open the archives, but each time the president vetoed the decision. The government created a “KGB Scientific Commission,” which now has recommended making the list available; its report has been “conceptually” accepted by the parliament, but the final decision has not been made. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2018/0712/Why-a-nearly-30-year-old-list-of-names-is-roiling-modern-Latvia>

Middle East War. The United National Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that “there were 5,122 civilian casualties (1,692 deaths and 3,430 injured) in Afghanistan in the first six months of 2018 - a three percent overall decrease in casualties from last year.” However, civilian deaths were up by one percent, “the most recorded in the same time period” since UNAMA began documenting civilian casualties in 2009. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/07/1014762>

Human Rights Watch noted that “Iraq’s National Security Service, an Iraqi intelligence agency reporting to Iraq’s prime minister, has acknowledged for the first time that it is detaining individuals for prolonged periods of times, despite not having a clear mandate to do so.” It said “Iraqi authorities should publicly clarify which forces have a legal mandate to arrest, hold, and interrogate suspects, and provide a list of all official detention facilities.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/22/iraq-intelligence-agency-admits-holding-hundreds-despite-previous-denials>

UNICEF, the UN children’s agency, said that an estimated 55,000 Syrian children “are cut off from aid and risk starvation” in southwestern Syria’s al-Quneitra province, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, estimated that the offensive in the region has displaced 270,000. The nongovernmental organization Save the Children “and its local partners have given Syrian children

identity bracelets in case they are split from their families.”
<http://news.trust.org/item/20180719184519-8jmhs/>

The Denmark-based Violations Documentation Center in Syria (VDC) is a nongovernmental organization founded by a Syrian human rights activist. Its 600,000 gigabyte database documents 188,957 deaths of the estimated half million people killed in Syria as a result of the war, with “thousands of photographs of men, women and children, witness accounts, ages, causes of death, place names, military ranks and weapon types,” reported the *Guardian*. The “records suggest 77% were potentially killed in contravention of humanitarian law by the Assad regime” and two-thirds of the documented deaths were of civilians. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/23/why-database-of-syrian-atrocities-may-hold-key-to-future-justice>

Both Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC), a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, reported that the Syrian government “updated civil registry records for hundreds of detained Syrians in early July.” HRW said on July 30 that in “the last few weeks, hundreds of Syrian families learned that their loved ones who had disappeared in government detention facilities had died. Many said that they found out as they requested routine records from the Syrian administration and were stunned to find that the authorities had recently registered their relatives as dead.” HRW said it believes “Syria’s security services have meticulous records for everything, including those they kill in detention.” SAJC argued, “The issuance of death certificates in no way represents justice.” Further, because “an immediate family member needs to be present to claim a death certificate, many refugee families are left without a way of inquiring after their disappeared relatives, and report that many lawyers who could inquire on their behalf are unwilling to do so, as they do not want their inquiry recorded by the government.”
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/30/syrias-bureaucracy-death-and-fate-disappeared> ;
https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2018/07/25/seeking-truth-for-syrias-disappeared/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=e0fd3c1eef-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_07_26_12_44&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-e0fd3c1eef-90540617

SJAC also issued a paper on Lebanon’s registration of 3,000 Syrian refugees “who allegedly volunteered to be transferred back to Syria,” noting that the Syrian government “only approved a few hundred.” SAJC warned returnees that Syria’s Law 10 re-zoned areas destroyed by conflict and when the government “announces a redevelopment zone, those with property claims must prove a right to property by submitting documentation.” SAJC said many people do not have documentation for claims and will be “unable to submit files via proxy due to the government’s restrictions on power of attorney designations.”
https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2018/07/18/what-trump-failed-to-say-in-helsinki/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=a02ccc7dd0-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_07_18_08_58&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-a02ccc7dd0-90540617;

National news.

Albania. The Interior Ministry signed an agreement with the International Commission on Missing Persons to allow it “to help the authorities to search for and identify some of the several thousand missing victims of the Communist state.” Parliament still needs to ratify the agreement. An “archive specialist” told *BIRN* the “process of seeking out relevant documents in the country’s archives will be a difficult one” because the “archives are in very bad shape at the Interior Ministry or other institutions where information about victims of Communism could found.”
http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albania-signs-agreement-to-search-victims-of-communism-amidst-skepticism-of-survivors-07-18-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=7164345e5a-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-7164345e5a-319725265

Armenia. Lydian International, a mining company from the island of Jersey, plans to develop a mine near the town of Jermuk. A chemical engineer in the Armenian

diaspora hired “international experts to assess Lydian’s documents related to the project’s environmental impact assessment,” *The Armenian Weekly* reported. The experts concluded: “The water resources of Armenia are at risk from development” of the mine. <https://armenianweekly.com/2018/07/06/roads-to-amulsar-blocked-as-locals-protest-gold-mine/>

Bahrain. According to the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, since 1 January 2018 civil or military courts have stripped 232 people their citizenship, leaving them stateless. Human Rights Watch said, “While authorities claim that these acts are linked to national security, they are in fact punishing people merely for peacefully voicing dissent.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/27/bahrain-hundreds-stripped-citizenship>

Brazil. Video of an indigenous man, “believed to be the only survivor from an isolated tribe,” was released by Funai, the government’s agency for indigenous. Filmed from a distance, the release of the image is controversial, certainly invading the man’s privacy and desire to be left alone. However, the advocacy director of Survival International, a nongovernmental group that works to protect indigenous peoples, told *The Guardian* that she supported the film’s release because “Funai has a duty to show that he is well and alive.” https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/19/footage-sole-survivor-amazon-tribe-emerges-brazil?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=281598&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912

Cameroon. Cameroon’s English-speaking regions are the scene of clashes between the nation’s army and separatist rebels. *Bloomberg News* wrote, “In its first public report to detail the damage from the conflict, the government last month appealed to donors to fund a humanitarian emergency plan for 75,000 displaced people and 22,000 others who’ve fled the country. Separatists have killed 84 members of the security forces in at least 123 attacks since late 2016.” The International Crisis Group, a nongovernmental organization based in Brussels, said more than 220 civilians have been killed in the last 10 months. “Gruesome videos and photos of alleged human-rights abuses by both sides have appeared regularly on Facebook and Twitter, as have mobile-phone videos of military operations in the two regions.” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-24/anglophone-rebellion-seen-raising-risk-of-civil-war-in-cameroon>

Canada. A group claiming responsibility for breaching data on the “detailed medical histories and contact information of possibly tens of thousands of home-care patients in Ontario” provided *CBC News* with a sample of the data “it claims to have accessed” and said it had “requested compensation [from the health-care provider] in exchange for telling them how to fix their security issues and for us to not leak the data online.” <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/carepartners-data-breach-ransom-patients-medical-records-1.4749515>

The Canadian Border Services Agency said its officials “are using DNA testing and ancestry websites to try to establish the nationality of migrants,” *Reuters* reported. It said the agency “obtains consent from clients before submitting their information to DNA websites.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-immigration/canada-using-dna-ancestry-websites-to-investigate-migrants-idUSKBN1KH2KE>

Chile. Police raided Catholic church facilities in Temuco and Villarrica and confiscated “boxes of papers detailing investigations led by the Catholic church against five priests suspected of child molestation and sexual abuse.” The files included “dozens of documents believed to be connected to additional abuse cases,” *telesur* reported. https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Chile-Investigators-Pursue-Sexual-Abuse-Cases-in-Rectory-Raids-20180714-0014.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

China. Government regulators ordered Changchun Changsheng, “China’s second-largest rabies vaccine manufacturer” to stop production and recall its rabies vaccine and diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccine, fearing that they were defective and could

endanger public safety, *STAT* reported. The vaccine maker was found to be “fabricating production and inspection records.” https://www.statnews.com/2018/07/23/chinese-leaders-order-probe-over-vaccine-scandal/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=57b443672b-MR_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-57b443672b-149736437

Colombia. Colombia’s special court, Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (JEP), opened proceedings in the case of extrajudicial killings carried out by the armed forces (known as “false positives” cases). The Prosecutor General presented a report, “Death illegitimately presented as casualties in combat by agents of the State,” stating that between 1998 and 2014 2,248 persons were “murdered by State forces and dressed as guerrillas to be presented as combat kills,” *Colombia Reports* wrote. Meanwhile, “almost 1000 members of the security forces have been released from jail after they registered with the JEP.” <https://colombiareports.com/colombias-war-crimes-tribunal-opens-proceedings-on-army-slaughter-of-civilians/>

Six human rights nongovernmental organizations presented a report to the truth commission, documenting 10 cases that point to “the existence of patterns of murders, threats, attacks and stigmatization campaigns against human rights defenders” and the ineffectiveness of the Attorney General’s office in investigating those crimes. According to figures compiled by Somos Defensores, one of the six, from November 2002 to November 2017, 610 human rights defenders were murdered and more than 4,300 attacked. <https://www.colectivodeabogados.org/?Organizaciones-presentan-informe-a-la-Comision-de-la-Verdad-sobre-crimenes>

Santiago Uribe, the brother of Colombia’s former president Alvaro Uribe (who is still a power in the country), is charged with commanding a death squad “called the Twelve Apostles that is suspected in the murder of hundreds,” reported the *New York Times*. The paper reviewed statements by witnesses and audio recordings in prosecutors’ files and concluded that these pieces of evidence “left little doubt over who was in charge of the killers.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/08/world/americas/colombia-uribe-death-squad.html>

Ethiopia. Human Rights Watch issued a report on the pattern of “serious, widespread human rights violations in Jijiga’s Central Prison . . . between 2011 and early 2018.” In addition to interviewing 98 people, including 70 former prisoners, the report is based on “court documents, medical reports, photos, videos and other relevant material, including academic articles, reports from nongovernmental organizations, and information collected by other credible experts and independent human rights investigators that could corroborate details or patterns of abuse described in the report.” <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/04/we-are-dead/torture-and-other-human-rights-abuses-jail-ogaden-somali-regional>

Germany. Between 1998 and 2011 the National Socialist Underground (NSU), a neo-Nazi terror group, murdered 10 people (9 immigrant shopkeepers and a police officer), carried out two bomb attacks and committed 15 bank robberies. After a trial that lasted five years, five persons were found guilty, one given life imprisonment, one a ten year sentence and the other three “up to three years,” *Handelsblatt Global* reported. The case file is huge, documenting 438 hearings and the testimonies of more than 600 witnesses. During the trial, it emerged that Germany’s domestic intelligence agency, the Verfassungsschutz, destroyed dozens of secret files soon after the death of two leading members of the NSU in 2011 and “senior intelligence officials” ordered that portions of a 2014 report into one of the murders “be kept from public view for 120 years.” Because there is no video documentation of the trial, a coalition of individuals and groups formed NSU-Watch to monitor the trial on a daily basis, “writing reports, summaries and fact sheets into accessible forms (both translating into multiple languages and out of judicial speak) for the social movements and broader public,” Waging Nonviolence, a nongovernmental group, reported. For some of the background, see *HRWG News* 2012-11 and 2013-08.

<https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/neo-nazi-terrorist-beate-zschape-nsu-sentence-trial-944059> ;
<https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/anti-fascists-germany-neo-nazi-nsu-trial/>

Germany's Federal Court of Justice ruled that heirs should have access to the Facebook accounts of the deceased. *DW* reported that the judge decided that "just as books and letters are passed to the heirs" there is "no reason to treat digital content differently." <https://www.dw.com/en/facebook-court-rules-parents-have-rights-to-dead-daughters-account/a-44642230>

Guatemala. Disability Rights International (DRI), a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, began monitoring children in Guatemala's orphanages in 2016, a project whose visibility was heightened after 41 girls burned to death in March 2017 at an orphanage. Its new publication, with Colectivo Vida Independiente, reports on visits since that fire to 7 public and 6 private institutions for orphans or persons with disabilities. It says there are "human rights violations, exploitation and trafficking of children with and without disabilities in Guatemala," "private charities and international donors are supporting orphanages and perpetuating discrimination," and "voluntourism" (travelers and tourists who want to "give back" or "do something good" while they are on a vacation or holiday) "leaves children open to segregation, abuse and further exploitation by traffickers." DRI also documented "extensive sexual abuse and trafficking" at a psychiatric facility for adults. The documentation makes for searing reading, pointing to the importance of protecting the records of nongovernmental organizations. <https://www.driadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/Still-in-Harms-Way-2018.pdf>

Honduras. In advance of yet another hearing on the assassination of human rights activist Berta Caceres in 2016, 19 human rights groups wrote to the presiding judge, complaining that "to date, the prosecution has repeatedly refused to comply with court orders to deliver most of the evidence it has gathered in the investigation, which has resulted in the suspension of at least 5 pre-trial hearings." The evidence includes "computers, digital tablets, cameras and other electronic storage devices seized during the investigation process." <https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Berta-Caceres-Murder-Case-Prosecutors-Are-Withholding-Evidence-20180727-0016.html>

India. On 30 July the Assam state government published a draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), listing only those "who can prove that they or their ancestors entered India before midnight on March 24, 1971 – the eve of the war that led to the creation of Bangladesh," Human Rights Watch reported. This limitation potentially excludes over 4 million people. The government said it "has not formulated an official policy for those people who are excluded" from the NRC, but the finance and health minister of Assam said in December 2017 that "all those whose names do not figure in the NRC will have to be deported." Those deemed "doubtful" will be able "to apply for inclusion" if the Foreigners Tribunal of Assam "declare them as non-foreigners." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/31/india-assams-citizen-identification-can-exclude-4-million-people>

The state of Odisha will give titles to 200,000 households in urban slums; the government used drones to map the settlements, reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. Mumbai is using drones to map its slums, and Maharashtra state is using drones to map rural land holdings. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180724111331-ozspw/>

Indonesia. After Amnesty International (AI) issued a 66-page report saying Indonesia's police and military are responsible for at least 95 extrajudicial killings in Papua and West Papua since 2010, including targeted slayings of activists, the government dismissed the investigation as "just based on interviews," the *Associated Press* reported. AI's Indonesia director "faulted top security minister Wiranto" for lack of attention to the abuses, and added, "We all know Wiranto has been implicated in

human rights violations in East Timor in 1999,” when Timor voted for independence from Indonesia. <https://www.apnews.com/010d496017f44051b0d4e8a783fba09f/Amnesty-Indonesian-forces-behind-unlawful-killings-in-Papua>

Israel. The Military Court of Appeals is “conducting a proceeding to determine whether the record of trial of border policemen prosecuted as a result of a 1956 massacre” of approximately 50 men, women and children in the Israeli-Arab village of Kafr Qasem should be declassified and made public, *Haaretz* reported. The army archivist testified at the closed hearing. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-residents-of-arab-village-demand-israel-open-archives-on-1956-massacre-1.6272443>

Malaysia. A new law in Sarawak state requires indigenous people to “apply to the state for recognition of ancestral domain and communal forest” with a “cap on the size of such land granted to communities,” reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. In response, indigenous peoples “are drawing up detailed maps using drones and testimony from village elders.” The semi-nomadic Penan community has created “nearly two dozen maps” covering an area of 10,000 square kilometers. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180716104938-24b8t/>

Myanmar. Fortify Rights, a nongovernmental organization based in Thailand, issued a report “based primarily on 254 interviews” of persons with information on operations in Rakhine State and “visual evidence, including films and photographs from northern Rakhine state, acquired from original sources as well as open-source media.” It accused the Myanmar military of methodically planning to kill members of the Rohingya ethnic group, and called it genocide. It named 22 military and police officers as responsible and recommended that the United Nations Security Council refer them to the International Criminal Court. http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Fortify_Rights_Long_Swords_July_2018.pdf

Nepal. The Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons has “collected ante-mortem data and information through story-telling from more than 90% of the complainants” in 39 districts and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission “has so far completed preliminary investigation into 2,600 cases,” the *Himalayan Times* reported. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/commission-of-investigation-on-enforced-disappeared-persons-completes-first-phase-probe-in-39-districts/>

Nicaragua. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR) announced an agreement with the government of Nicaragua to establish an Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts for Nicaragua to investigate “the acts of violence that have occurred since April 18.” IAHCR said the experts group “shall have guarantees of autonomy and independence, as well as access to investigation and security files in order to carry out its works.” http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2018/145.asp

The Nicaragua Truth Commission said that protests since April have killed at least 241 people, with nearly half of the deaths in Managua, the capital, but the nongovernmental Nicaragua Association for Human Rights (ANPDH) said 351 demonstrators died and at least 2,100 have been injured, *telesur* reported. https://www.telesur.tv/english/news/New-Report-Nicaraguas-Violent-Protests-Have-Killed-241-So-Far-20180712-0031.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

Russia. “A Russian law requiring internet service providers to keep records of their clients’ traffic and hand them over to the state security services on demand came into force on July 1,” reported *RT*. <https://www.rt.com/politics/431473-russian-law-internet-security/>

The Interior Ministry said “records of Soviet-era gulag labor camp survivors are subject to destruction, but only if the survivor was not convicted of political treason,” *Moscow Times* reported. Historians and human rights researchers pointed out “that

convictions of gulag prisoners under other articles [of the criminal code] could also have been politically motivated.” They want all gulag records preserved.

<https://themoscowtimes.com/news/russian-ministry-only-non-political-gulag-records-destroyed-62231>

Novaya Gazeta released a video “showing 18 prison officials in penal colony No. 1 in Yaroslavl . . . torturing an inmate.” The Federal Penitentiary Service suspended 17 of the guards identified in the video. However: a year ago the video was given to the Russian human rights group Public Verdict, who reported it to authorities, but no criminal case was launched and the inmate was transferred to another penal colony where the torture continued, Human Rights Watch reported. Making the video public appears to have spurred the current action—but the man is still in prison.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/30/leaked-video-blows-lid-torture-russian-prisons>

Saudi Arabia. The Justice Ministry said women will be granted licenses to work as notaries, allowing them to “issue and cancel powers of attorney and certify documents to help establish companies or transfer property rights,” *The New Arab* reported. However, women still “require permission from their closest male relative on basic decisions like enrolling in classes, renewing their passport, or undergoing some medical procedures.” <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/7/10/saudi-women-allowed-to-become-notaries-for-first-time>

Serbia. Milan Nedic was the head of the Nazi-backed Serbian government during World War II. Captured after the war, he was stripped of his civil rights, his property was confiscated, and he committed suicide in prison in February 1946. His family asked the Belgrade Higher Court to annul those decisions and “declare Nedic a victim of political persecution by Yugoslavia’s former Communist authorities,” *BIRN* wrote. The Court, after hearing testimony from historians and reviewing “thousands of pages of contemporary documents,” dismissed the request as “groundless.”

http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-court-dismisses-request-to-rehabilitate-wwii-leader-07-26-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=d70bfd2ae3-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-d70bfd2ae3-319725265

South Sudan. The United Nations reported that from late February onwards fighting in Unity State included “acts that constitute gross violations and abuses of international human rights, and serious violations of international humanitarian law, which in many cases may amount to war crimes.” The report is based on over 75 interviews, visits to “a dozen affected villages to document the scale of violations,” satellite images, photographic evidence and other documents. It recommended “continuing efforts in pursuit of accountability through documentation, evidence collection, and identification of perpetrators.”

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SS/UNMISSReportApril_May2018.pdf

Spain. The new government announced plans to establish a truth commission to investigate crimes against humanity by the Francisco Franco regime, outlaw the organizations “that venerate the memory of the dictator,” wipe out the criminal records of those convicted for opposing the regime, conduct a census of the victims of the civil war and Franco dictatorship, and open an estimated 1,200 mass graves, the *Guardian* reported.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/12/spain-to-establish-truth-commission-for-franco-era-crimes>

Sri Lanka. The United Nations rapporteur on countering terrorism issued a report on his visit, saying, “Impunity is still the rule for those responsible for the routine and systemic use of torture.” The *Guardian* said, “Figures from the Office of the Attorney-General showed that out of 81 prisoners . . . in the judicial phase of their pre-trial detention, 70 had been in detention without trial for more than 5 years and 12 had been in detention without trial for more than 10 years.” In addition, current and former detainees said “they had signed documents in a language they did not understand or were asked to sign at the bottom of a blank piece of paper, having

been tortured, sometimes in exchange for transfer out of police or security service custody.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/23/sri-lankan-reform-has-ground-to-a-halt-with-torture-used-freely-un>

United Kingdom. The National Health Service’s annual report on female genital mutilation (FGM) showed that more than 6,000 women and girls who visited health service in England between April 2017 and March 2018 had undergone FGM at some point in their lives. The government’s “Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Enhanced Dataset (SCCI 2026) is a repository for individual level data collected by healthcare providers in England, including acute hospital providers, mental health providers and GP practices.” FGM is illegal in the U.K. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/female-genital-mutilation/female-genital-mutilation-fgm---annual-report-2017-18/content>

“Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services . . . found that nearly one in five crimes reported to Lincolnshire police were undocumented, potentially leaving some victims shut out from support services,” the *Guardian* reported. The Inspectorate “examined records from the period 1 June to 30 November 2017 and estimated that about 9,400 reported crimes were not recorded per year.” https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/17/uk-police-force-failed-to-record-10000-crimes-watchdog-says?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=281249&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912

The Independent Office of Police Conduct issued official figures showing that 23 people died in or after detention by police in 2017-18, up from 14 people the previous year, the *Guardian* reported. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/25/police-custody-deaths-hit-10-year-high-with-experts-citing-austerity?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=282086&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912

The Thatcher government “drew up a secret blacklist of its own civil servants thought to be ‘subversives’ in order to keep them under observation and block their promotion, papers released at the National Archives disclose,” the *Guardian* wrote. The Cabinet Office said it regarded the blacklist “as a historical matter.” https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/24/subversive-civil-servants-secretly-blacklisted-under-thatcher?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+main+NEW+H+categories&utm_term=281910&subid=22849866&CMP=EMCNEWEML661912

United States. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a nongovernmental organization, asked the National Archives to “investigate the reported disappearance and destruction of records linking immigrant families separated at the border” between the U.S. and Mexico by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), *Courthouse News* reported. A DHS spokesperson said it is “categorically false that DHS destroyed records.” <https://www.courthousenews.com/nonprofit-presses-national-archivist-on-record-preservation/>

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), oversees the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The *Columbia Journalism Review* reported that ACF received 137 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests in June, the “vast majority” concerning immigrant children; HHS’s annual FOIA report showed ACF with “pending requests” dating back to 2014. Furthermore, ACF’s online “reading room” has not had any new documents uploaded since 2015. Reveal, a nonprofit investigative journalism organization, filed a lawsuit against ACF in March, arguing “that the agency’s failure to disclose federal records on the procedures and contracts related to housing migrant children are improper.” Reveal wants access to the “signed agreements between ORR and any private companies housing migrant children or families.” <https://www.cjr.org/analysis/foia-family-separation-border.php>

The Justice Department said it has reopened an investigation into the murder of Emmet Till, a 14-year-old African-American boy whose death 63 years ago is a gruesome symbol of racial hatred. The Department told Congress that the action is “based upon the discovery of new information,” the *New York Times* said. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/12/us/emmett-till-death-investigation.html>

A leaked video of a talk at a Jehovah’s Witness seminar in 2017 shows the group’s “records management overseer” telling a group of elders “that handwritten notes and drafts of internal documents needed to be destroyed because of the potential legal harm they posed to the organization,” the *Inquirer* reported. In 2017 a judge in California fined the Witnesses’ corporate nonprofit more than \$2 million “for refusing to turn over a secretly compiled list of 775 suspected child molesters within the organization.” <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/jehovahs-witnesses-child-sexual-abuse-records-destroy-satan-video-20180709.html>

United States/Pennsylvania. The governor signed a “clean slate” bill that “seals nonviolent criminal records after a decade” if the violator has remained out of trouble and paid all fines and costs. Specified officials will continue to have access to the records. <http://www.governing.com/topics/public-justice-safety/tns-pennsylvania-clean-slate.html>

United States/Texas. Reginald Moore, a former corrections officer, gave Rice University his large collection of materials relating to the State’s leasing of prisoners to local plantations and other private businesses during the period from the end of the Civil War to the start of World War I. <http://news.rice.edu/2018/07/23/activists-archives-of-convict-leasing-system-reside-at-rice/>

Conferences, publications. The International Tracing Service will hold a conference 8-9 October on the theme “Tracing and Documenting Victims of Nazi Persecution: History of the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Context.” https://www.its-arolsen.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Metanavigation/Veranstaltungen/2018/ITS_KONFERENZ_WEBVERSION.pdf

The *Annual Report 2018* of the Network of Concerned Historians is now available, containing “news about the domain where history and human rights intersect.” <http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content/ar.html>

Arc Humanities Press published *The Future of Literary Archives: Diasporic and Dispersed Collections at Risk*, edited by David C. Sutton with Ann Livingstone. It includes discussions of “concepts such as the natural home, the appropriate location, exile, dissidence, fugitive existence, cultural hegemony, patrimony, heritage, and economic migration.”

Video of the 23 April seminar in New York on “The Uses of Truth: Truth Commission Archives, Justice and the Search for the Disappeared in El Salvador” is available at <http://www.dplf.org/en/news/uses-truth-truth-commission-archives-justice-and-search-disappeared-el-salvador>

New supplements for Iraq, Myanmar and Sri Lanka to the International Protocol on documentation and investigation of sexual violence in conflict are published at: <https://ilq2.org/2018/07/11/new-supplements-to-the-international-protocol-on-documentation-and-investigation-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict-for-iraq-myanmar-and-sri-lanka/>

Good reads: Researchers trying to make data algorithms fair: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05469-3>

The impossibility of anonymizing unit record level data relating to individuals: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/13/anonymous-browsing-data-medical-records-identity-privacy>

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The Human Rights Working Group is grateful to the online Italian archival magazine *Il Mondo degli Archivi* for handling the distribution of *HRWG News*. To subscribe to the *News*, enter the required information on the form that you will find here: <https://anai.us13.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5942a8a83f3023c6a5a63139e&id=324882c3f7>

ANNEX

IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE (AHPN), THE UNDERSIGNED ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS DO DECLARE TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP), THE AUTHORITIES OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS, AND THE CITIZENS OF GUATEMALA THE FOLLOWING:

- Our profound recognition of the professional work of the staff of the aforementioned Archive, which over the course of thirteen years rescued and made accessible an important document collection that was found in a state of total neglect and abandonment, transforming it into a national and international benchmark for best practices in archival science and public consultation. We thus express our solidarity with the Archive's staff and its leadership.
- Our concern about the attitude assumed by the UNDP in concert with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, which, in haste and without taking the necessary time to establish basic policies and technical guidelines, intervened in the normal functions of the Archive without guaranteeing the continuity or efficiency of its operations.
- Along those lines, for example, no explanation has been given for why the AHPN Coordinator was not rehired except the simple argument that his contract had come to an end; there was no performance review, no evaluation of results achieved, and no accounting audit. This at the same time that the sectors most implicated in human rights violations in the country have publicly demanded the departure of the Coordinator and that the Archive be prohibited from continuing to fulfill its role in the fight against impunity and the defense of the right to truth and justice.

Given these circumstances, the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the UNDP must provide citizens with answers to the following questions:

— In the case of a document collection of the State of Guatemala, which therefore belongs to the people, is it legal for the Ministry of Culture and Sports to delegate the direction and management of the AHPN to an international entity?

— Faced with the appointment of a new Coordinator of the AHPN, what guarantees that she possesses the experience, capacity and vision needed for the continuity and strengthening of the Archive?

— Given that the UNDP has publicly attested to the existence of funding from the international community guaranteeing the Archive's operations until June of 2019, what is the justification for splitting the contracts of the AHPN consultants into periods of one and two months, an action that violates legally recognized labor rights?

— The UNDP is an entity of the United Nations, which is founded on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Do these actions not constitute a violation of those guarantees?

— In that context, is UNDP headquarters aware of these decisions and does it endorse them?

Due to our concern regarding the instability created within the AHPN by the measures taken by the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the UNDP beginning on August 3, 2018,

WE DEMAND:

1. A guarantee of the inviolability of the information contained in the AHPN and the strict preservation of its document collection, while ensuring the continuation of all work processes in the Archive.
2. The continued openness, efficiency and cooperation with the institutions, organizations and individual users of the AHPN and of the Archive's various investigations, as well as its contribution to the right to truth and search for justice, at a minimum with the same level of commitment demonstrated to date.
3. The reactivation of the Advisory Board, comprised of prominent personalities in academia, culture, and the defense of human rights, to accompany and professionally advise the work of the AHPN.

Guatemala, 7 August
2018

Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial - ECAP-
Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado De Guatemala - ODHAG
Plataforma Internacional Contra la Impunidad
Comisión Internacional de Juristas
Memorial para la Concordia
Ek Balam
Centro de Estudios sobre Conflictividad, Poder y Violencia - CENDES
Manel Vila Motlló. Director General de Cooperación. Departamento de Acción Exterior. Gobierno de Catalunya
National Security Archive - NSA
Verdad y Vida
Movimiento Monseñor Gerardi
Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas - CAFCA
Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo - GAM
Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental
Comisión de Justicia, Paz en la Creación-Familia Franciscana Unida - JPIC-FFU
Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos - CALDH
Fundación Guillermo Toriello
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Organización de Mujeres Adelina Caal Maquín de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas,
Alta Verapaz
Marina de Villagrán
Hilda Morales Trujillo
Kate Doyle
Cecilia Garcés

The National Security Archive is collecting institutional and individual signatures to be forwarded to Archives without Borders, which will coordinate the international response. To sign, send your name (individual or institutional) to kadoyle@gwu.edu with the subject line "AHPN signature."