

News of March 2019

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Commentary.

“Sumer is Icumen in,” sang 13th century Brits. Today both summer and climate change are “icumen in.” The UN Secretary-General, alarmed by the World Meteorological Organization’s report on “rising global temperatures and disastrous consequences,” announced a Climate Action Summit to be held in New York on 23 September. He told Heads of State, “Don’t come with a speech, come with a plan.” <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/sumer-is-icumen-in>; [http://www.eurasiareview.com/31032019-un-chief-calls-for-urgent-action-to-address-dangers-linked-to-climate-change-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/31032019-un-chief-calls-for-urgent-action-to-address-dangers-linked-to-climate-change-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29;); for report see https://gallery.mailchimp.com/daf3c1527c528609c379f3c08/files/82234023-0318-408a-9905-5f84bbb04eee/Climate_Statement_2018.pdf

The Observer Research Foundation, an Indian nongovernmental “think tank,” analyzed the world’s “capacity for climate justice.” Pointing to “extreme weather events and rising average temperatures,” it said “the socio-economic effects of climate change include the potential mass migration of individuals and communities in the future.” Coastal communities in the U.S. and Bangladesh have already been forced to move (see item in *HRWG News* 2019-01); nations like the Maldives, with an average elevation of just a meter and a half above sea level, are in danger of needing to move entire populations if the international community continues its “lacklustere global effort to curb human-induced climate change.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/14032019-capacity-for-climate-justice-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

When people and institutions (commercial, faith-based, educational, medical, non-governmental, governmental, inter-governmental) move, records need to move with them. Archives buildings housing historical records may be located in vulnerable sites and need to be moved. And moving things is hard. Good advance planning is fundamental if the records are to be safely relocated. (For a brief overview of the complexities of preserving records during a planned move, see “Moving Archival Records: Guidelines for Preservation” by Gabriella Albrecht-Kunszeri and Maida H. Loescher, *Comma, The International Journal on Archives*: 2001/3/4.) But planning assumes we know where records are. And ironically, although archivists are the proponents of knowledge about records, often we don’t. A project in the United States to create a map of archives encountered a significant amount of difficulty—and that did not include mapping the locations of records still in the hands of the creators.

What we need now--all over the world but especially in locations under threat from climate change—is to map the location of historical archives and current records and to overlay that map with maps of climate change impacts (for example, the map of sea level change <https://sealevel.nasa.gov/understanding-sea-level/key-indicators/global-mean-sea-level>). That would allow us to identify the materials that need to be either relocated within the nation or, as a last resort, stored (digital copy or analog) in an external safe haven.

Who can do such mapping? National archival institutions, archival associations, universities—in short, any entity with persons who have the skills and time to do it. Donors such as foundations could be tapped for funds. UNESCO should pay a role in promoting the project. And when a regional or national map is completed, stakeholders should gather to decide how to proceed with far-sighted, informed, realistic preservation measures. As the Secretary-General said, we need to stop talking and come together and plan.

HRWG News. The *Guiding Principles for Safe Havens for Archives at Risk* are now online at <https://www.ica.org/en/release-of-the-guiding-principles-for-safe-havens-for-archives-at-risk>

An addendum to this issue of *HRWG News* (English only) is available by writing to Trudy@trudypterson.com

International news.

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The case of *Drelingas v. Lithuania* stems from the post-World War II repression of Lithuanians by the occupying Soviet authorities. After regaining its independence in 1990, Lithuania passed an act defining genocide and stating that “killing and torturing the people of Lithuania, deportation of its population carried out during the years of Nazi and Soviet occupation and annexation of Lithuania corresponds to the definition of the crime of genocide as it is described by international law.” In 2014 Lithuania prosecuted former KGB officer Stanislovas Drelingas for his participation in the 1956 capture of two of the prominent leaders of the partisan resistance to Soviet rule; in 2015 he was found guilty of being an “accessory to genocide”; and in 2016 Lithuania’s Supreme Court upheld the decision. Drelingas submitted his case to ECHR. The Court, by a vote of 5 to 2, agreed with the Lithuanian decision, noting repeatedly the KGB documents the lower courts had relied upon. It also agreed that although the Lithuanian genocide law was not in place in 1956, “customary international law at the time prohibited genocide, in parallel to the 1948 Genocide convention” that the USSR signed in 1949 and Drelingas “had to have been aware in the 1950s that he could be prosecuted for genocide.” Drelingas plans to appeal. A Ukrainian law professor commenting on the case wrote, “If there are no changes to this important decision, the path to a freer retrospective interpretation of the crime of genocide will be open.” <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng/%7B%22itemid%22%3A%22001-191702%22%7D%3A%22http%3A%2F%2Feuromaidanpress.com%2F2019%2F03%2F24%2Fhow-the-echrs-recent-decision-on-a-case-in-lithuania-may-change-the-concept-of-genocide/>

European Parliament. The Directorate-General for External Policies released a study mapping “all relevant cases (35 in total) filed in Member States of the European Union on the basis of alleged corporate human rights abuses in third countries” and providing “an in-depth analysis of 12 cases.” It recommended that EU institutions “improve access to legal remedies in the EU for victims of corporate human rights abuses in third countries.” The study includes a good discussion of the methodology and records used. https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/EXPO_STU%282019%29603475_EN.pdf

International Criminal Court (ICC). “A group of Syrian refugees asked the ICC to open a case against the Syrian regime for crimes against humanity committed during the ongoing war,” *Justiceinfo.net* reported. Syria is not a signatory to the ICC but Jordan, where the refugees are living, is. “Anonymised victim accounts have been provided to the ICC prosecutor.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/live-feed/40507-syrian-refugees-file-icc-case-against-regime.html>

The Philippines withdrew from the ICC on March 17, but the prosecutor’s preliminary examination of crimes against humanity during the Duterte government’s war on drugs will continue. The International Center for Transitional Justice explained that under the ICC Statute “once a preliminary examination is opened, it is not affected by a state’s withdrawal.” The Philippine case was opened in February 2018. https://www.ictj.org/news/life-after-icc-pursuing-accountability-philippines?utm_source=International+Center+for+Transitional+Justice+Newsletter&utm_campaign=7f8158ccdd-World+Report+January+2019+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2d90950d4d-7f8158ccdd-237813513

International Energy Agency (IEA). In 2018 “global energy-related CO₂ emissions rose 1.7% to a historic high,” IEA reported. “Data for energy demand, gross electricity generation and CO₂ emissions from fuel combustion are based on IEA estimates derived from a number of sources, including the latest monthly data submissions to the IEA’s Energy Data Centre, other statistical releases from national administrations, and recent market data from the IEA Market Report Series that cover coal, oil, natural gas, renewables and power.” Alarming, the IEA found “that CO₂ emitted from coal combustion was responsible for over 0.3C of the 1C increased in global average annual surface temperatures above pre-industrial levels. This makes coal the single largest source of global temperature increase.” <https://www.iea.org/geco/emissions/>

Interpol. *The New York Times* reported that Interpol’s routine publication of “red notices”—alerts that a person is wanted for a crime, may have left the country where it occurred, and asks foreign police to make an arrest—has empowered repressive world leaders. The reporters conducted interviews and reviewed records “across five continents,” finding that since a digital red notice system “which allowed governments to disseminate red notices almost instantaneously” was created after the September 11, 2001, attacks, the number of notices increased exponentially. An audit commission urged Interpol to

improve oversight of the notices, which it finally agreed to do in 2016. It is now reviewing “50,000 active red notices that have amassed over the years” and purging those “deemed inadequate.” Was the Interpol archivist consulted about the purging process? <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/world/europe/interpol-most-wanted-red-notices.html>

United Nations. The UN released its sixth “Global Environmental Outlook” at the assembly of environment ministers in Nairobi in March. Produced by 250 scientists and experts from more than 70 countries, it is the “most comprehensive and rigorous assessment on the state of the environment completed by the UN in the last five years,” and it warns that “damage to the planet is so dire that people’s health will be increasingly threatened unless urgent action is taken.” Its chapter 3, “The Current State of our Data and Knowledge,” is essential reading. It notes that there is a growing “recognition that monitoring the environmental dimension of development will require regular, standardized data collection, which can translate into time series statistics and indicators, including time series for geospatial data products. This will increase the emphasis on compiling high-quality information based on international best practices. Transforming the provisioning of environmental data and statistics will require new and innovative means of data collection, including new partnerships with the private sector, multilateral institutions, space agencies, non-governmental organizations and other partners.” In short, “knowledge and data are essential bedrocks of environmental assessment.” <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6>

The *Global Policy Journal* published a special issue titled “Knowledge and Politics in Setting and Measuring the SDGs” [sustainable development goals]. *PassBlue* reported that the specialists who contributed papers found “that the lofty vision that produced the SDGs” has “from the start been undercut and tarnished by political manipulation and a simplistic reliance on metrics—numbers—based often on dubious or unrealistic data.” https://www.passblue.com/2019/03/18/big-holes-in-the-un-development-goals-are-exposed-by-new-studies/?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=ac2585d04e-PassBlue_Fordham_Nov18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-ac2585d04e-55008469

In 2016 the UN Human Rights Council voted to create a database of companies doing business (“directly enabled, supported or profited from”) with Israeli settlements in occupied territories. The High Commissioner announced that the release of the database is again postponed, saying the office needed more time “given the novelty of the mandate and its legal, methodological and factual complexity.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/05/world/middleeast/israel-united-nations-boycott-companies.html>

“The UN’s Special Rapporteur on Toxics said compensation should be paid to Kosovo Roma people who suffered lead poisoning while living for years in UN-run camps near a mining complex after the Kosovo war,” *BIRN* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-04. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/03/14/un-rapporteur-urges-compensation-for-kosovos-poisoned-roma/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=747101205c-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-747101205c-319725265

According to a report by the Secretary-General (SG) to the General Assembly, during calendar year 2018 the UN received 148 sexual abuse and assault allegations “directly involving UN workers” and 111 involving “staff from partner organizations implementing UN programmes.” The SG noted that the UN has established “a Victims Assistance Tracking database to ensure services are provided to survivors and victims adequately and systematically.” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1034901>

UNICEF. UNICEF reported that globally an “estimated 2,000 children under the age of five die every day from diarrhoeal diseases and of these some 1,800 deaths are linked to water, sanitation and hygiene.” UNICEF’s “child mortality data show that about half of under-five deaths occur in only five countries: India, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan and China.” https://www.unicef.org/media/media_68359.html

World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO advisory committee on editing human DNA asked WHO “to establish a global registry of all such research, recommend that editors of scientific journals not publish any unregistered studies, and ask science funders to require that their grantees register their studies,” *STAT* reported. https://www.statnews.com/2019/03/19/who-advisers-call-for-registry-of-human-genome-editing/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=0eeaa60c9e-MR_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-0eeaa60c9e-149736437

World/general news.

Business records. Two stories in March called into question the effectiveness of industry registration of human rights compliant companies:

*Bonsucro is “a multi-stakeholder organization” whose members commit to “uphold the law and respect human rights in the production of sugarcane.” It is registered in the United Kingdom and is a multinational enterprise under the Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). One of the members of Bonsucro is Mitr Phol, a Thailand company that is Asia’s largest sugarcane producer. Between 2008 and 2009 five Cambodian villages with 711 inhabitants were displaced by Mitr Phol and some families were detained, although “most” of the families “had legally recognizable claims to their property.” In October 2015 the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand ruled that Mitr Phol was “in serious breach of its responsibility to respect human rights under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.” Nothing changed, so the villagers next filed a complaint with Bonsucro saying Mitr Phol was violating Bonsucro’s code of conduct and standards; Bonsucro dismissed it. Now they have asked the United Kingdom’s National Contact point for the OECD Guidelines to “make specific recommendations to bring Bonsucro into compliance with the OECD Guidelines with respect to the Mitr Phol case.” <https://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/UK-NCP-Specific-Instance-Bonsucro-FINAL.pdf>

*Rainforest Alliance certifies forestry and agriculture companies that “meet environmental and social standards” while Fairtrade certifies that products were produced according to “social, environmental, and economic standards.” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* investigated tea plantations in Sri Lanka that were certified by the two groups and found labor conditions that violate labor laws. Both groups said they are investigating, but “the expose raises questions about the effectiveness of ethical label schemes—which are used by major tea brands and can mean higher prices—and their ability to detect and combat labour abuses of workers at the bottom of global supply chains.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190327004859-frjnm/>

Meanwhile, a fashion industry group launched a free, open-source tool called the Open Apparel Registry that optimistically “seeks to untangle often opaque supply chains by identifying every factory by name and address.” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* commented, “Fashion is recognized as a high risk industry for worker abuse, while complex international supply chains as products are sourced, manufactured, packaged and distributed can make it hard to spot forced labour.” The dataset will include data released by brands, factory groups and governments. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190328074747-srz4m/>

Samarco Mineração S.A. is a Brazilian joint-venture mining company with Vale and BHP. The 2015 collapse of a Samarco dam in Brazil that held refuse from mining operations killed 19 people, spilled toxic sludge into a nearby river, and destroyed three villages. In a criminal case against 21 Samarco employees and directors for “negligent homicide and environmental crimes,” documents presented to the court “including board meeting minutes and expert reports suggest Samarco executives and board members, including BHP and Vale-appointed directors, knew of mounting problems with the dam’s structure and were aware of adverse risk assessment years before the collapse,” *Sydney Morning Herald* reported. <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/profit-before-people-documents-allege-bhp-execs-were-warned-over-deadly-dam-20190215-p50y6y.html>

The Quebec Court of Appeal upheld a 2015 lower court ruling ordering three tobacco companies to pay an estimated \$17 billion to Quebec smokers “who either fell ill or were addicted,” *Canadian Press* reported. At the lower court “nearly 43,000 documents were entered into evidence, including internal tobacco company documents that showed smokers didn’t know or understand the risks associated with cigarettes.” <https://panow.com/2019/03/03/appeals-court-upholds-landmark-ruling-ordering-tobacco-companies-to-pay-billions/>

Justiceinfo.net published a review of the long-running case that communities in Ecuador brought against Chevron-Texaco for the massive pollution of the Lago Agrio region. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-09. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/justiceinfo-comment-and-debate/opinion/40565-ecuador-toxic-justice-and-tourism-by-texaco-waste-pools.html>

A Federal court in California ruled that a man's exposure to the Monsanto company's weedkiller Roundup "was a substantial factor in causing his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma" (a cancer), *The Reporter* wrote. For background see *HRWG News* 2018-08. <https://www.law.com/therecorder/2019/03/19/federal-jury-finds-roundup-was-substantial-factor-in-california-mans-cancer/>

Church records. Using "data from over 10,000 local parishes," the Catholic Church in Poland released statistics showing that from 1990 to mid-2018 "church officials received abuse reports concerning 382 priests" and 625 children "most of them age 15 or younger, were sexually abused by members of the Catholic clergy," reported the *New York Times*. The co-director of an organization which represents victims of clerical abuse called for opening the files because "the numbers don't tell the whole story." <https://blendle.com/i/the-new-york-times/grim-findings-on-priest-abuse-in-poland-625-victims-since-1990/bnl-newyorktimes-20190315-9-1?sharer=eyJ2ZXJzaW9uLjoiMSIsInVpZCI6ImFyY2hpdmVzdGhwliwiaXRibV9pZCI6ImJubC1uZXNd5b3JrdGltZXMtMjAxOTAzMTUuO-V8xIn0%3D>

Colonial records. A Kenyan writer argued in *Al Jazeera* that while it is important to return "stolen cultural treasures" from the colonial period, former colonial powers need to fully open the colonial archives and return them to the countries from which they were taken as a "significant first step in a long-overdue journey of reckoning." <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/path-colonial-reckoning-archives-museums-190314181138553.html>

Land records. "A push to formalize land claims, map settlements and digitize records is not always in the best interests of vulnerable communities and may even lead to greater rights abuses, analysts warned," *Thomson Reuters Foundation* wrote. A professor at the University of Twente in the Netherlands said "with indigenous communities, the importance of keeping a place sacred is keeping it secret" and "making their claims formal and their land visible—through mapping and open data" may expose sacred sites. An officer with a U.S. non-profit that develops digital tools to document land claims said that "community feedback—and consent—is essential to determining what data on land should be open." http://www.thisisplace.org/i/?id=90841210-17a3-405d-a1ba-a37b26803c75&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Place

Medical records. A report in the *European Heart Journal* said "new data indicated the hazardous health impact of PM2.5"—coarse dust particles of 2.5 micrometers in diameter that are the main cause of respiratory and cardiovascular disease—"was much worse than previously thought." The researchers estimated that air pollution caused 8.8 million extra deaths in 2015, more than the World Health Organization estimate of deaths due to smoking (about 7 million people globally each year). The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment told *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, "Air pollution violates the rights to life, to health, the rights of the child, and also violates the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment." Monitoring air quality and preserving those records is key. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190312100825-peuu9/>; <http://news.trust.org/item/20190304211714-efuz/>

The "human reference genome" is a digital database of the nucleic acid sequence in a genome. Comparing the reference DNA with the DNA of an individual enables geneticists to look for differences and try to identify the reason for certain medical conditions. A serious problem is that the reference genome "falls short in ways that have become embarrassing, misleading, and in the worst cases, emblematic of the white European dominance of science," *STAT* reported. https://www.statnews.com/2019/03/11/human-reference-genome-shortcomings/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=804269874e-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-804269874e-149736437

23andMe announced that it will now tell its customers their risk of getting type 2 diabetes, *STAT* reported. The company "built the test using genetic data from more than 2.5 million of its customers who'd agreed to participate in research." <https://www.statnews.com/2019/03/10/23andme-will-tell-you-how-your-dna-affects-your-diabetes-risk-will-it-be-useful/>

"Nuance, a maker of speech recognition software, is testing a . . . listening system that, without need for mouse and keyboard, can transcribe a conversation between a doctor and patient and upload key portions of it into a medical record," *STAT* reported. They hope to market it next year. <https://www.statnews.com/2019/03/04/voice-recognition-automates-data-entry-during-office->

[visits/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=d924bc26b3-Weekend_Reads_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-d924bc26b3-149736437](https://www.bmj.com/content/364/bmj.1920?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=d924bc26b3-Weekend_Reads_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-d924bc26b3-149736437)

A research team looked at how user data in the U.K., U.S., Canada and Australia is shared by top rated medicine-related apps developers and estimated the privacy risk to app users, the *British Medical Journal* reported. They found “sharing of user data is routine, yet far from transparent” and app developers “should disclose all data sharing practices and allow users to choose precisely what data are shared and with whom.” https://www.bmj.com/content/364/bmj.1920?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=3864b26b34-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-3864b26b34-149736437

Technology. *VICE News* analyzed how Facebook, Twitter and You Tube failed to keep the video images of the ghastly Christchurch, New Zealand, mosque shootings from being posted and then copied and re-uploaded hundreds of times. https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/7xnjye/how-facebook-twitter-and-youtube-failed-to-keep-gruesome-mosque-shooting-video-from-going-viral

World War II. An historian mapped the locations where the USSR held German prisoners of war after the end of the conflict and found “that economics rather than punishment dictated camp distribution,” *Perspectives on History* reported. https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/february-2019/beyond-the-archive-what-gis-mapping-reveals-about-german-pows-in-soviet-russia?utm_source=Perspectives+Newsletter&utm_campaign=2166a1d0e5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_03_04_02_49&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a422cf946-2166a1d0e5-137582719

Pope Francis announced that in March 2020 the Vatican will open its archives on the pontificate of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), reported *Catholic News Agency*. An estimated 16 million documents will be released. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/vatican-to-open-wwii-secret-archives-of-pope-pius-xii-18073>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Balkans. Amnesty International published “Pushed to the Edge: Violence and Abuse against Refugees and Migrants along the Balkans Route.” Amnesty interviewed 94 “refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers” who are stranded in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and found that “systemic and deliberate pushbacks and collective expulsions—sometimes accompanied with violence and intimidation—are a regular occurrence at the border” between Croatia and BiH. A third of the refugees interviewed said they had “experienced violence at the hands of the Croatian police” and “many described how they were beaten and intimidated and had their documents and mobile phones stolen or destroyed” by Croatian authorities. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0599642019ENGLISH.PDF>

Writing on 22 March, the Humanitarian Law Center in Belgrade said that “over the past few weeks, the contents of the war crimes cases that have been processed or are still being prosecuted before the War Crimes Chamber of the Belgrade High Court have been removed from the official website of the OWCP [Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor].” Previously “the website of the OWCP was a rare example of the well-designed and satisfactory page of a state body full of content;” however, “it is now no longer possible to find submissions of even elementary information regarding previous statistics, cases, indictments, closing argument or complaints. By removing the stated content, the public’s right to be informed in a continuous and timely manner about the indictments, as well as about the phases of individual war crimes proceedings, has been endangered.” <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=36470&lang=de>

Bulgaria/Russia. After a military coup on 9 September 1944, a Moscow-aligned government took over Bulgaria; Soviet Army troops seized Bulgarian government archives from the period 1934-1944 and shipped them to Moscow where they remain. In February the Russian Ambassador to Bulgaria was asked when Russia would return the archives; he replied that Bulgaria can have copies but “the originals cannot be handed over in accordance with Federal Law No. 64 of 15 April 1998,” reported *polygraph.info*. <https://www.polygraph.info/a/fact-check-bulgaria-archives-russia/29807418.html>

Georgia/Russia. *Al Jazeera* reported that historians in Georgia accuse “the national archive of blanking out information about crimes committed when Georgia was part of the erstwhile USSR,” calling it “the censorship of Soviet archives.” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/georgias-historians-fight-censorship-soviet-archives-190301115434540.html>

Germany/Namibia/United States. “A U.S. judge on Wednesday dismissed a lawsuit seeking to require Germany to pay damages over genocide and property seizures by colonists in what is now Namibia more than a century ago,” *Reuters* reported. The judge found that Germany was covered by “sovereign immunity” which protects it from suit in the United States. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-01. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-namibia-genocide-germany/lawsuit-against-germany-over-namibian-genocide-is-dismissed-in-new-york-idUSKCN1QN2SQ>

Iraq/United Kingdom. Reminding us that documents come in many formats and from many ages, the *Guardian* reported that a Babylonian kudurru, “an official document drawn up on the instructions of the Babylonian king to record the gift of lands or other benefits bestowed on a particular individual,” was seized at London’s Heathrow airport as someone attempted to smuggle it into the U.K. It dates from the second millennium BC and is being turned over to Iraq where it is believed to have been looted from an archaeological site. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/mar/10/babylonian-treasure-seized-at-heathrow-to-be-returned-to-iraq>

ISIS. According to Syria’s nationality law, a mother cannot pass her citizenship to her children unless the father is unknown. The nongovernmental Syria Justice and Accountability Center (SJAC) reported that the children born to Syrian mothers and foreign ISIS fighters do not possess Syrian citizenship and many “do not have strong claims to citizenship in their fathers’ home countries.” The children might have ISIS-issued citizenship papers or birth certificates, but these do not have legal standing outside ISIS territory. “Some women have begun to skirt this problem by registering their babies under the child’s maternal grandfather’s name.” In Iraq the children of foreign fighters also remain stateless and without basic identification papers that provide access to basic services. SJAC recommended that Syria legalize mothers to pass citizenship to their children, establish “an official process for registering births and marriages that took place under the control of ISIS,” and provide children with identification papers.

https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2019/03/12/legal-limbo-the-future-of-isis-children/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=8c2b76c719-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-8c2b76c719-90540617

Reuters reported that about 1,100 children of ISIS fighters “are caught in the wheels of Iraqi justice,” the youngest staying with their mothers in prison, “at least seven of whom have died because of the poor conditions, according to detainees, embassy records reviewed by *Reuters* and sources familiar with the prison.” “Several hundred older children are being prosecuted for offences ranging from illegally entering Iraq to fighting for Islamic State,” with 185 children aged 9 to 18 convicted and held in juvenile detention in Baghdad. Human Rights Watch researchers interviewed 29 boys and youths who “had been detained for alleged ISIS association” and the families of eight other children who had been arrested as ISIS suspects. They found that the children had been tortured into confessing an affiliation with ISIS, have not had defense lawyers, and judges ignored their claims of innocence in trials that lasted “no more than 10 minutes.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190321104812-ntuir/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/06/iraq-isis-child-suspects-arbitrarily-arrested-tortured>

In the same story *Reuters* reported, “Documents from the Rusafa Central Criminal Court, reviewed by *Reuters*, show that . . . 494 foreign women [from more than 18 countries were] convicted there between late 2017 and August 2018 for belonging to or aiding” ISIS, with records showing “up to 20 women were sentenced to death by hanging for belonging to Islamic State or participating in its activities.” Furthermore, “confirming the identities of the women and children is hard in a maze of conflicting testimony and unreliable paperwork. There are few original documents to work with because many of the women parted with their identity cards in a pledge of allegiance to Islamic State.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190321104812-ntuir/>

Indonesia is trying to verify whether some people in the Syrian camps for displaced persons are its citizens, *BenarNews* reported, after media reports and online videos showed a group of about 50 persons who said they were Indonesians and wanted to go home. Again, the people no longer have “official documents such as passports and identification cards” and the government will “have to confirm and cross-check information with various parties including relatives.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/30032019-indonesia-verifying-citizenship-of-islamic-state-families-stranded-in-syria/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Kosovo/Turkey. *BIRN* reported that six Turkish citizens, all of whom “had permits to be in Kosovo, were wanted by Ankara over their alleged links to a movement led by the exiled Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen.” In March 2018 they were deported to Turkey, where they since “have been held in detention in a Turkish prison.” Kosovo officials, including the prime minister and president, said they had not been informed of the forced return, but *BIRN* obtained a report commissioned by the parliament on the episode, which shows the timeline of events, the checks on the six men’s IDs, and plans for the operation 17 days before it took place. The report says, “On 12 and 19 March, 2018, a senior official” of the Kosovar intelligence agency “went personally to the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration in the Ministry of Interior to review the records of six Turkish nationals.” And in a horrible case of mistaken identity, one of the men deported was not the person that Turkey wanted, and although his photograph “was the only ‘document’ through which Kosovo Police established his identity” they still deported him. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/03/08/former-kosovo-intelligence-chief-observed-turks-being-deported/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=a8696e8724-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-a8696e8724-319725265 ; https://balkaninsight.com/2019/03/12/kosovo-knowingly-deported-wrong-man-to-turkey-report/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=2d8a0abb53-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-2d8a0abb53-319725265 ; https://balkaninsight.com/2019/03/13/ankara-indicts-six-turks-deported-kosovo/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=747101205c-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-747101205c-319725265

Latvia/Russia. *New York Review of Books* published an article on the aftermath of Latvia’s opening for public research the 4,000 index cards created by the former KGB in Latvia. <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/03/05/a-partial-freedom-what-latvia-found-in-the-kgb-archives/>

Libya/Turkey. Libya’s Justice Minister asked Turkey to “provide the ministry with the Ottoman archive of the Libyan real estate,” saying it needs “to benefit from the previous Ottoman archives in Libya related to property ownership,” *Xinhua* reported. Libya was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1551 to 1864. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/11/c_137884305.htm

Lithuania/Russia. In a case that has been in litigation since 2016, Lithuania convicted 67 former Soviet military and KGB officials for “war crimes over a deadly crackdown aimed at stopping the Baltic state breaking away from the USSR in 1991,” *BBC News* reported. Only two of the men were present in the court; the others were convicted in absentia. The press did not report the volume of documents entered in the case. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47725239>

Peru/Venezuela. The head of the UN’s International Organization for Migration mission in Peru said that from 2017-2018 Peru officially recorded “more than 1,700 victims of human trafficking, of which about 10% were Venezuelan,” *Reuters* reported. “Many people . . . arrive without documentation, without being able to identify themselves, and above all, boys and girls who are not accompanied arrive, and they can be easily recruited (by traffickers).” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190312233911-qnluh/>

Saudi Arabia/United Arab Emirates/United Kingdom/United States/Yemen. The nongovernmental organizations Mwatana for Human Rights (Yemen), University Network for Human Rights (U.S.-based) and PAX (Netherlands) released “Day of Judgement: The Role of the US and Europe in Civilian Death, Destruction, and Trauma in Yemen today.” It said between April 2015 and April 2018, 27 “apparently unlawful” Saudi/UAE Coalition attacks killed “at least 203 civilians and injured at least 749.” All 27 “likely involved” weapons produced in the U.S. and/or U.K. To document the attacks, Mwatana researchers visited the scenes; photographed the areas, any weapon remnants recovered and other evidence; interviewed “scores” of people; and “commissioned a weapons expert to analyze the photographs of weapons remnants.” <https://www.humanrightsnetwork.org/press/2019/3/5/us-and-european-arms-used-to-attack-yemeni-civilians-1>

National news.

Australia. In a landmark ruling, the High Court ruled that the Ngaliwurru and Nungali peoples in the Northern Territory should be compensated for their ancestral territory lost in the 1980s and ‘90s when the government began building infrastructure and public works there. The court said the owners not only should be paid the value of the land and lost interest but also “compensation for cultural loss.” The court said “it assessed the groups’ ‘spiritual relationship’ with the land and ‘spiritual hurt’ by the

disconnection” and awarded 1.3 million Australian dollars for “cultural loss.” <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/03/13/asia-pacific/landmark-court-ruling-spark-land-compensation-claims-indigenous-australians/#.Xlu3hJgXAdW>; <http://eresources.hcourt.gov.au/showCase/2019/HCA/7>

Using data from Newcastle University’s Colonial Frontier Massacres Project, the *Guardian* produced a sophisticated map showing the location of each conflict between Indigenous Australians and settlers, 1788-1928, in which more than six people died. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2019/mar/04/massacre-map-australia-the-killing-times-frontier-wars>

Brazil. Prosecutors brought charges against a retired army major “who allegedly led a massacre of dozens of leftist guerrillas” in the Amazon region during the country’s military dictatorship (1964-1985), the *Associated Press* reported. Military records should be available for the prosecution. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/19/brazil-retired-major-charged-over-massacre-during-dictatorship>

Burkina Faso. Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a report on atrocities by armed Islamists and security forces in the Sahel region, documenting “over 40 killings by armed Islamist groups, mostly of people suspected of collaborating with the government, and the execution by Burkinabe security forces of over 115 men accused of supporting or harboring the armed Islamists.” The incidents took place in 32 villages from mid-2018 to February 2019. HRW interviewed 92 victims and witnesses to the abuses, and for “nearly all of the incidents documented . . . witnesses provided lists of the victims and drew maps indicating where the bodies of the men were found and where they were buried.” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/22/burkina-faso-atrocities-armed-islamists-security-forces>

Cameroon. “A television show that featured a demonstration of how to physically abuse your wife has sparked outrage . . . and calls for an end to impunity,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. According to UN Women, “more than half [of] all Cameroonian women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partners at some point in their lives.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190307160008-nxp5y/>

Canada. In the continuing controversy over access to the Catholic Church records of residential schools, *CBC News* quoted the former general counsel of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as saying “the document production from the Catholic church was ‘appalling,’” that “very few” of the 88 Catholic Church entities involved “actually turned over records” and most records that were provided came from “corporate level” archives rather than “secret archives” they allegedly have. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/archives-st-anne-s-residential-school-abuse-allegations-1.5039150>

Indigenous people in Canada have high rates of psychological distress and suicide. The *Canadian Medical Association Journal* published a study of the “socioeconomic inequalities in psychological distress and suicidal behaviors and the factors that explain them.” The researchers used the “nationally representative” 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey collected by Statistics Canada from Indigenous adults living off-reserve in Canada. After determining the level of psychological stress and reported thoughts or attempts of suicide among the population, the researchers concluded that “food insecurity and income” were the major causes of mental distress. http://www.cmaj.ca/content/191/12/E325?utm_source=STAT%20Newsletters&utm_campaign=ccc1e82acf-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-ccc1e82acf-149736437

A corporation is proposing to build a “smart city” in central Toronto which it says “could lead to a six-fold drop in greenhouse gas emissions by pooling residents’ data,” reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. The company “says collecting data on everything from who cycles to work to what time people run their dishwashers is essential for creating climate-mitigating systems and technologies,” but critics say the proposal amounts to “permanent surveillance,” the loss of privacy, and the data becoming the property of the company for its unrestricted use. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190311165021-5wk3r/>

Chile. Three retired soldiers were sentenced to 10 years in prison and eight others received three-year sentences for acting as accomplices in the 1986 attack on two “democracy activists who were doused with petrol and set on fire,” the *Guardian* reported. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ruled on the case in 1988, noting that it had seen testimony from the criminal court in Santiago and various records of the army; it told Chile to make amends for and determine the “responsibility of the perpetrators of so reprehensible an act and to subject those persons to proper punishment to avoid the

future recurrence of such condemnable crimes.” Better late than never.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/21/chile-soldiers-activists-attack-rodriigo-rojas-carmen-quintana>;
http://www.worldcourts.com/iacmhr/eng/decisions/1988.09.12_Rojas_DeNegri_v_Chile.pdf

Democratic Republic of Congo. “A special investigative mission to Yumbi territory in Mai-Ndombe province, in the west of the Democratic Republic of Congo, found that horrific intercommunal attacks carried out between 16 and 18 December 2018 at four locations were planned and executed with the support of customary chiefs and may amount to crimes against humanity,” the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ press release said. At least 535 men, women and children were killed and 111 others injured and almost 1,000 buildings in three towns, mostly houses but also “some churches, schools and health centres were destroyed or looted.” This report demonstrates the importance of preserving UN records of investigations. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24307&LangID=E>

Denmark. After the police investigated 118 reports that a video was circulating online depicting the death of one of the two Scandinavian women killed in Morocco’s Atlas Mountains last December, they arrested 14 people for sharing the graphic video, charging twelve with violating the privacy of the victims and their families and two with having “explicitly approved of the terrorist act,” reported the *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/07/world/europe/denmark-isis-video-arrests.html>

Dominican Republic. Amnesty International interviewed 46 female sex workers and “conducted focus groups which included an additional 18 sex workers” and gathered “strong evidence which suggests that women sex workers in the Dominican Republic are frequent targets for sexual torture and other ill-treatment by police.” Amnesty made “verbatim transcripts of the interviews” and coded them using Nvivo software to allow “careful exploration and comparison of emerging themes.” No forensic or other official corroboration of the reported attacks was available because of the “heavy under-reporting of rape and sexual violence” by the women. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/If-they-can-have-her-why-cant-we.pdf>

El Salvador. Parliament is “considering granting amnesty to those accused of crimes committed during the country’s brutal civil war in the 1980s,” *ProPublica* reported. One of the worst was the El Mozote massacre where hundreds of people were killed by the army in December 1981. In a cable released after a Freedom of Information Act request, the U.S. Ambassador said she had been told that “sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate culpability of crimes against humanity and war crimes at El Mozote.” <https://www.propublica.org/article/el-salvador-considers-amnesty-for-those-accused-of-crimes-during-its-civil-war>

Germany. The head of the Stasi records agency told reporters that in the future the Stasi records will come under the auspices of the Bundesarchiv (Federal archives) “to help preserve them and ensure they remain accessible, above all to victims,” *Reuters* reported. The date of the change “is still to be decided,” probably in “the next couple years” after the lower house of Parliament gives its approval. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2019-03-13/former-east-german-stasi-files-to-live-on-in-federal-archive>

India. India’s next elections begin April 11, but “millions of women and homeless people will be barred from voting . . . because of biases and difficulties in getting identification papers,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190326085625-n3rkp/>

Mizoram state in northeast India enacted the Mizoram Maintenance of Household Registers Bill. It created two registers, one for “citizen residents and another for non-citizen residents of a village/area/town,” *The Hindu* reported. “Every householder as well as every member of household” must give the president of the village council “all such information, particulars and passport-size photographs of the members of the household as may be required by the registering authorities.” All government departments and police may use the registers; the purpose is to “detect illegal foreigners staying and ‘eating away’ benefits of development schemes.” <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2019/03/20/the-mizoram-maintenance-of-household-registers-bill-2019/>

In June, Maharashtra state will begin surveying the inhabited areas of 40,000 villages with “dozens of drones mounted with high-resolution cameras” in order to give land titles to the people living there, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. A nongovernmental organization published a study showing that in just eight of India’s 29 states “there are more an 1,200 laws related to land, alongside about 150

Federal laws” largely dealing with “reform acquisition, taxation, land use and records.” Land and property cases make up “about two-thirds of all civil cases in India.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190314104441-gmsxp/>; <http://news.trust.org/item/20190318084634-4u1a9/>

Ireland. The records—an estimated 2 million documents—of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, the Residential Institutions Redress Board, and the Residential Institutions Redress Review Committee are to be preserved, transferred to the National Archives, and sealed for 75 years unless a review in 25 years revises the timeline, *Irish Times* reported. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/over-two-million-documents-from-redress-bodies-to-be-sealed-in-national-archives-1.3810208>

Japan. Human Rights Watch issued a report on the barriers faced by transgender people. “In Japan, transgender people who want to legally change their gender must appeal to a family court under the GID [Gender Identity Disorder] Act, which was introduced in 2004. The procedure is discriminatory, requiring applicants to be single and without children under age 20, to undergo a psychiatric evaluation to receive a diagnosis of “gender identity disorder,” and to be sterilized,” HRW wrote. To assist in getting a response from Japan after HRW conducted interviews with transgender people in 2015, HRW asked the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to invoke Special Procedures. Two UN Special Rapporteurs then wrote to the Japanese government asking for answers to questions on the treatment of transgender persons. The correspondence is included as an informative appendix to the HRW report. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/03/19/really-high-hurdle/japans-abusive-transgender-legal-recognition-process>

Mexico. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said that starting March 4 the national archives would open the records of the National Center for Investigation and Security that show “how intelligence agencies targeted activists and opposition groups during the country’s ‘dirty war’” from the 1960s to 1980s, *AFP* reported. <https://theglobepost.com/2019/03/01/obrador-dirty-war-archives/>

The National Human Rights Commission issued a report on the disappearance of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa in September 2014. It said, reported *telesur*, that “under the former Enrique Pena Nieto administration, three tiers of Mexican legislation conspired together with criminal organizations to mislead investigators.” The report implicated 17 officials on 128 counts of human rights violations and collusion. It “consolidated some 672 interviews, 500 victim-assistance operations, 223 expert examinations, over 3,000 analyses and revisions of 41 criminal and federal files, as well as 724 field investigations and 1,890 formal information requests.” https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Rights-Commission-Links-Mexican-Authorities-to-Ayotzinapa-Case-20190314-0033.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

“Nearly 750 members of the Mexican military have reportedly died in service since Mexico’s ‘War on Drugs’ began in 2006,” *telesur* reported. The National Defense Secretariat published a list of 543 names of army and air force personnel killed; 2010 was the most violent year. The nongovernmental organization Semaforo Delictivo reported that it documented 22,365 homicide cases in 2018. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/750-Military-Killed-in-Mexico-Since-War-on-Drugs-Began-20190328-0010.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=18

Myanmar. The military announced the appointment of a three-member “investigation court” to look into the August 2017 attacks on military checkpoints by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, but it “will pointedly not examine the brutal military response to those attacks, which has driven more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims into neighboring Bangladesh,” *coconuts* reported. The court will also “further scrutinize and [verify] the respective reports” by rights groups that have described the military’s campaign against civilians as “crimes against humanity.” Human Rights Watch said the purpose of the court was to “cover-up . . . the atrocities in Rakhine State.” Preserve the court records. <https://coconuts.co/yanon/news/myanmar-military-form-investigative-body-look-2017-arsa-attacks/>

New Zealand. *TV New Zealand* said it will “vest access of its Maori material with a Maori body” and will not sell its Maori archival material to the U.S. company Getty Images for distribution. https://www.waateanews.com/waateanews/x_news/MjEzNTU/TVNZ-to-hand-over-control-of-M%C4%81ori-archive

In a model of action to protect records important for human rights, Archives New Zealand revoked the authority “to dispose of public records relevant to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical

Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-Based Institutions.” <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1903/S00305/chief-archivist-announces-disposal-moratorium-on-records.htm>

Nigeria. “Stakeholders in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State have agreed to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Committee . . . with the aim of bringing an end [to the] circle of violence in the area.” <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kajuru-communities-to-set-up-truth-and-reconciliation-committee.html>

Russia. The Federal Security Service declassified the documents related to the criminal case against Alexander Kolchak, who was captured and killed in 1920 as he led the White Armies against the Bolshevik Red Army during the Russian civil war (1917-1923). *Meduza* reported that although the documents are declassified, curiously “viewing them is still prohibited.” <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2019/03/25/admiral-alexander-kolchak-s-archives-have-been-declassified-why-is-the-white-army-leader-still-so-controversial>

“Russia’s intelligence service has refused to declassify the names of members of Stalin’s notorious three-judge panels that issued death sentences without trials,” *The Moscow Times* reported. A legal adviser to the current intelligence service “reportedly” said that the release of names “could harm both the living relatives of officials who signed the protocols and the objective assessment of the 1937-38 historical period.” It quoted *Znak.com* reporting that “the head archivist in Novosibirsk region has barred researchers from accessing local NKVD [security service] files pending an examination for classified materials.” <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/03/14/authorities-seal-stalin-era-nkvd-archives-reports-a64804>

Syria. UNICEF’s Executive Director issued a statement that in 2018 “1,106 children were killed in the fighting [in Syria]—the highest ever number of children killed in a single year since the start of the war. These are only the numbers that the UN has been able to verify, which means the true figures are likely much higher.” Mines are the leading cause of child casualties. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/2018-deadliest-year-yet-children-syria-war-enters-9th-year>

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) predicted that “Syrians are likely to file more than 2 million lawsuits seeking restitution for lost and damaged property,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. NRC pointed out the “legal limbo” that Syrian women face: land documents typically only had men’s names (only 4% of female refugees NRC surveyed had property in Syria registered in their name), “most land has been destroyed . . . and what little is left to claim is largely out of women’s reach as they cannot provide the necessary documents to get property titles.” Tragically, this is fueling child marriage as women are “desperate to marry their daughters to landowners so they have a roof over their head.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190328194635-fsymu/>

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced it has “concluded that a ‘toxic chemical’ containing chlorine was used in an attack last April in the Syria town of Douma” killing dozens of people, *Reuters* reported. Preserving the records of OPCW is critical for future use in war crimes trials. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-chemicalweapons-idUSKCN1QI57V>

A Syrian rights group, Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights, issued a report saying it had interviewed 138 men who had been in Syrian government custody and found that “more than 40% reported some form of sexual assault” and “almost 90%” said prison guards had forced them to strip naked, the *Washington Post* reported. <https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/report-syrian-forces-use-widespread-sexual-violence-to-humiliate-and-silence-male-prisoners-1.572152>

Tunisia. The Truth and Dignity Commission issued a report accusing President Beji Caid Essebsi of “complicity in torture” and his predecessor Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali of “corruption,” the *Guardian* reported. “The report lists government efforts to prevent the [Commission from] accessing national archives to find evidence of past crimes.” However, the report “includes findings from interviews with 1,782 Tunisian resistance fighters of crimes committed by occupying French forces before the end of French rule in 1956.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/26/tunisian-president-accused-of-complicity-in-torture-report>

Turkey. The nongovernmental International Crisis Group (ICG) announced it has an “infographic depicting parameters of fatalities in the conflict” between Turkish forces and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). It includes “data for ages, ranks and hometowns of security force fatalities, as well as

gender and hometowns of PKK militants killed.” ICG data shows at least 4,280 deaths since July 2015, with 57% of them PKK militants (of which 23% were female) and 27% security forces. During 2018, 2.8 PKK militants were killed to each security force fatality. https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/turkeys-pkk-conflict-visual-explainer?utm_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm_campaign=d8438e07cb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_14_02_11&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1dab8c11ea-d8438e07cb-359425329

United Kingdom. Northern Ireland’s Public Prosecution Service announced that “despite examining evidence in 19 cases” only one former British paratrooper will be “charged in connection with the killings of civil rights demonstrators on Bloody Sunday” (30 January 1972) in Derry, the *Guardian* reported. The prosecutor said “much of the material which was available for consideration by the inquiry is not admissible in criminal proceedings due to strict rules of evidence that apply.” <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/14/one-soldier-to-face-charges-over-bloody-sunday-killings>

United States. President Trump signed an executive order that reversed President Obama’s order requiring the Director of National Intelligence to report the number of deaths from U.S. operations in noncombat zones like Somalia, *Jurist* reported. Amnesty International investigated five U.S. “airstrikes and raids” in Somalia since 2017 and determined that they killed 14 civilians and injured 8, based on interviews with more than 150 people, including members of the U.S. military, and “rigorous” analysis of “corroborating evidence, including satellite imagery, munitions fragments, and photos from the aftermath of air strikes.” <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/the-hidden-us-war-in-somalia/>
<https://www.jurist.org/news/2019/03/trump-signs-order-lifting-reporting-requirements-for-airstrikes-in-noncombat-conflict-zones/>

“The National Security Agency (NSA) has quietly shut down a system that analyzes logs of Americans’ domestic calls and texts,” the *New York Times* reported. The program began after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S., and NSA “has used the call detail records—metadata showing who called whom and when, but not the content of what was said—as a map of social networks, analyzing links between people to identify associates of terrorism suspects.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/04/us/politics/nsa-phone-records-program-shut-down.html>

“Documents obtained by *NBC 7 Investigates* show the U.S. government created a secret database of activists, journalists, and social media influencers tied to the [Central American] migrant caravan and in some cases placed alerts on their passports.” Provided by a person from the Department of Homeland Security, the “documents or screenshots show a SharePoint application” that was used by several U.S. government agencies under the umbrella “Operation Secure Line.” The documents list people to be targeted for screening at the border, including 10 journalists, a U.S. attorney, and 48 people from the U.S. and other countries “labeled as organizers, instigators or their roles ‘unknown,’” including “advocates” from organizations like the nongovernmental Border Angels and Pueblo Sin Fronteras. <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/investigations/Source-Leaked-Documents-Show-the-US-Government-Tracking-Journalists-and-Advocates-Through-a-Secret-Database-506783231.html>

In August 2017 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued an intelligence assessment to more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies that designated “Black Identity Extremists Likely Motivated to Target Law Enforcement Offices” as a new domestic terror threat. The American Civil Liberties Union sued the FBI for all records “shedding light on the creation and use of the “Black Identity Extremist” label.” <https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/fbi-wont-hand-over-its-surveillance-records-black>

In 2014 the FBI took possession of 7,000 cultural artifacts from a man in Indiana, including “approximately 500 sets of human remains looted largely from Native American burial grounds.” He collected the material “all over the globe.” The FBI wants to return them “to their rightful owners” but the man had not kept “detailed records.” Now the FBI has created an “invitation-only website that contains information about all the recovered material” and through the United Nations “notified member nations about the recovered artifacts and the website.” The Bureau said, “Official representatives of Native American tribes and foreign governments that would like to determine whether they have a claim to any of the recovered artifacts” should contact the Bureau’s art theft program at artifacts@fbi.gov. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-seeks-owners-of-recovered-cultural-artifacts-022719>

The Census Bureau asked the Department of Homeland Security to provide “comprehensive information” about the legal status of millions of immigrants before the 2020 census begins, the

Associated Press reported. The data sought “would include noncitizens’ full names and addresses, birth dates and places, as well as Social Security numbers and highly sensitive alien registration numbers, according to a document signed by the Census Bureau and obtained by *AP*.” <https://apnews.com/0f33f3454d7f4fd78803455d4da672c6>

The Food and Drug Administration announced it will “release hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of previously unpublished injury and malfunction reports tied to about 100 medical devices,” reported *Kaiser Health News*. https://khn.org/news/fda-chief-calls-for-release-of-all-data-tracking-problems-with-medical-devices/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=cce24a71c1-MR_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-cce24a71c1-149736437

A joint investigation by *Fortune* and *Kaiser Health News* looked at whether turning medical charts into electronic records made U.S. health care better, safer and cheaper. The conclusion: “the system is an unholy mess . . . a digital revolution gone wrong.” <http://fortune.com/longform/medical-records/>

Two hospitals in Arizona went bankrupt last summer and “more than 300 patients” tried and failed to get their medical records from the hospitals’ closed electronic-records system, reported *Medical Technology*. A judge ordered the electronic-records company to reactivate the system for 90 days, allowing people to receive copies of the records. The company says it is not subject to records-retention regulations that apply to hospitals and doctors and may destroy the records after the 90 days elapses. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/college-student-who-needs-lifesaving-surgery-will-get-her-medical-records/ar-BBTUaSt>

Venezuela. *CNN* released videos showing how the failed 2018 assassination attempt against President Nicolas Maduro was prepared on a Colombian farm, reported *telesur*. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Assassination-Attempt-on-President-Maduro-No-Longer-Alleged-for-CNN-20190315-0005.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10

Good reads. Early evidence of the Holocaust: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/remembering-early-holocaust-researchers-who-gathered-evidence-nazi-crimes-180971586/>

Call for an international convention to return African art: <HTTPS://WWW.JUSTICEINFO.NET/EN/JUSTICEINFO-COMMENT-AND-DEBATE/IN-DEPTH-INTERVIEWS/40576-ALAIN-GODONOU-WE-NEED-AN-INTERNATIONAL-CONVENTION-TO-RETURN-AFRICAN-ART.HTML>

Writing “hello” in automated DNA data storage: <https://phys.org/news/2019-03-fully-automated-dna-storage.html>

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