

News of May 2019

Issue no. 114

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Commentary.

Ask a classroom of university students to list the researcher advantages of digital archives, whether digitized or born digital, and you get predictable answers: available without respect to location, time of day, age, physical mobility, or political system--in other words, democratic access. Some savvy students may say it helps preserve papers and photographs because they aren't handled. A few may complain gently about the thousands of hits they get for a simple query, but most are happy to search without having to develop a search strategy. They fail to note that the actual researcher is a machine.

The broad uses of artificial intelligence (AI) and the increasingly sophisticated algorithms employed raise significant issues for researchers, for human rights and for archives.

Consider this: According to the *Daily Mail*, the European Union plans to introduce "swarms of AI driven robots that can patrol borders by surveillance of the sea and land." The robots' data will be fed to a control room where it will be linked to data from "static sensors." An algorithm will then identify "threats" to be sent to "border authorities" and "operational personnel." A leader of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control told the Italian magazine *Il Manifesto* the group wants "to prevent two functions of the machines: target selection and targeting." AI systems for facial recognition are known to incorporate bias: according to researchers at two U.S. universities "three commercially released facial-analysis programs from major technology companies demonstrate both skin-type and gender biases." In tests, "the three programs' error rates in determining the gender of light-skinned men were never worse than 0.8 percent. For darker-skinned women, however, the error rates ballooned — to more than 20 percent in one case and more than 34 percent in the other two." So how accurate will the EU robots be in identifying border crossers, smugglers, and polluters, the targets of the EU programs?
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-7022589/Swarms-automated-drones-controlled-AI-patrol-Europes-borders-using-powerful-sensors.html>; <http://news.mit.edu/2018/study-finds-gender-skin-type-bias-artificial-intelligence-systems-0212>

Or think about this records issue: A non-profit organization in California developed an algorithm which "can, at the touch of a button, delete the criminal records of thousands of people," *Digital Journal* reported. Called "Clear My Record," the algorithm examines "thousands of lines of conviction data and determines eligibility [for destruction] within minutes." The developer says it could "clear 250,000 convictions throughout California by the end of 2019." Let's hope the algorithm was taught records retention rules.
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/tech-and-science/technology/justice-algorithm-wipes-the-criminal-past-of-thousands/article/548754>

Or this structural archives issue: A records management official in a government agency that is installing an artificial intelligence system to manage the agency's records from retention to retrieval to destruction was asked if the AI system eventually would be transferred to the national archives along with the records. He said he thought that the national archives would never hold AI-powered records, that the records would stay permanently in the agency and be managed by it with the national archives having solely a monitoring role.

Or this freedom of information issue: Is an algorithm employed by a government reachable as a record under a freedom of information act? Italy has a case on point. After a national public exam to hire teachers, the Italian Ministry of Education used an algorithm to assign teachers to schools. A legal battle followed, as teachers unhappy with assignments demanded to know how the algorithm worked. Italy's highest administrative court decided that the algorithm was an administrative document, created by humans who gave it specific instructions, and therefore was covered by the right of access law. (Thanks to Giulia Barrera for the information.) <https://parere.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/notizie/algorithmi-delle-pa-una-sentenza:for-the-court> decision see https://www.giustizia-amministrativa.it/portale/pages/istituzionale/visualizza/?nodeRef=&schema=cds&nrg=201704477&nomeFile=201902270_11.html&subDir=Pr [ovvedimenti](https://www.giustizia-amministrativa.it/portale/pages/istituzionale/visualizza/?nodeRef=&schema=cds&nrg=201704477&nomeFile=201902270_11.html&subDir=Pr)

Finally, in addition to concerns about bias in targeting as a human rights issue and destruction and retrieval as archives issues, AI adopters are realizing that “training” a major AI system is a massive task. Moreover: As reported in a new paper, researchers at a U.S. university “performed a life cycle assessment for training several common large AI models. They found that the process can emit more than 626,000 pounds of carbon dioxide equivalent—nearly five times the lifetime emission of the average American car (and that includes manufacture of the car itself).” So in addition to the complex intellectual task of training, there is an environmental impact. <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/613630/training-a-single-ai-model-can-emit-as-much-carbon-as-five-cars-in-their-lifetimes/>

The Council of Europe (CoE) has taken a step to address the human rights concerns that arise from the machine as researcher. CoE’s Commissioner for Human Rights issued “Unboxing Artificial Intelligence: 10 Steps to Protect Human Rights.” Step 7, on data protection and privacy, says member states should have legislative safeguards when AI systems are used to process “genetic data; personal data relating to offences, criminal proceedings and convictions, and related security measures; biometric data; personal data relating to ‘racial’ or ethnic origin, political opinions, trade-union membership, religious or other beliefs, health or sexual life.” <https://rm.coe.int/unboxing-artificial-intelligence-10-steps-to-protect-human-rights-reco/1680946e64> Now we need to think how those principles will apply to archives.

As long ago as 1951 Alan Turing, the brilliant World War II era British mathematician and computer visionary, wrote in the essay *Intelligent Machinery, A Heretical Theory*, “It seems probable that once the machine thinking method had started, it would not take long to outstrip our feeble powers... They would be able to converse with each other to sharpen their wits. At some stage therefore, we should have to expect the machines to take control.” <http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/intelligent-machinery-a-heretical-theory.pdf>

It’s time to take notice.

International news.

European Union (EU). The EU established “a centralized information system containing the identification of those non-EU citizens that have been convicted by binding ruling in EU Member States.” It will contain “alphanumeric identity details and fingerprints” of those convicted of crimes “and facial recognition may be incorporated in the system and used in the future.” https://www.eurasiareview.com/29052019-eu-creates-data-base-to-identify-non-eu-citizens-with-criminal-convictions-in-member-states/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

International Court of Justice (ICJ). Belize voted to send to ICJ its conflict with Guatemala over the border between the two nations, *Reuters* reported. Guatemala claims the southern half of Belize is its territory and rejects the line drawn by the 1859 treaty between the United Kingdom (then the colonial master of Belize) and Guatemala. Treaties and their related foreign affairs records will be at the center of this case. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-belize-referendum-guatemala-border/belizeans-vote-to-ask-u-n-court-to-settle-guatemala-border-dispute-idUSKCN1SFIQT>

United Nations. The Security Council adopted resolution 2467 (2019) on conflict-related sexual violence. Among the provisions are a request to the “Secretary-General and relevant UN entities to further strengthen the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence” and emphasizes that “all efforts to document and investigate sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations should take into account the specific needs of survivors, be well-coordinated, and respect safety, confidentiality and informed consent of survivors as well as independence and impartiality.” <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2467>

United Nations Human Rights Council. The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises issued “Gender dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.” It says, “Business enterprises should track the effectiveness of their responses by using sex disaggregated data, collected in line with a human rights-based approach, and outcome indicators developed in consultation with affected women, women’s

organizations and gender experts.” Maintaining good corporate records is essential to measure the progress to the goals. https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/A_HRC_41_43.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR and the Bangladesh government are registering Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, using biodata and biometric data including fingerprints and iris scans. Refugees “receive a plastic ID card that includes a photo and basic information such as date of birth and gender” written in both Bengali and English and showing Myanmar as country of origin. Refugees under the age of 12 do not get a card but families “receive an attestation showing the details of all family members.” By mid-May over 270,000 of the estimated 900,000 refugees had been registered. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2019/5/5cde66b84/registration-gives-rohingya-refugees-identification-first-time.html>

World/general news.

Anti-Semitism. Tel Aviv University’s Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry released its annual report on violent anti-Semitic acts, including assault, vandalism, and arson, which they found rose 13% worldwide in 2018, to 387 incidents. The U.S. Anti-Defamation League also published its annual report on anti-Semitic acts in the U.S. (harassment, vandalism, and assault), reporting 1,879 incidents in 2018, down 5% from 2017. https://www.eurasiareview.com/03052019-major-violent-attacks-against-jews-spiked-13-worldwide-in-2018/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29; <https://www.adl.org/audit2018#major-findings>

Business records. Odebrecht is a giant construction firm that works throughout Latin America; it is accused of paying bribes to politicians and other officials in at least ten countries in the region. In Peru the company agreed to pay a \$200 million fine “and provide documents and testimony regarding its criminal activity in Peru.” At the end of April Odebrecht’s former Peru country manager began to testify and confirmed that it had “illegally funded the campaigns of the country’s last four presidents as well as Keiko Fujimori, the runner-up in the 2011 and 2016 presidential elections,” *Americas Quarterly* reported. https://www.americasquarterly.org/content/deal-or-not-deal-question-prosecutors-latin-america?utm_source=AQ%27s+Week+in+Review&utm_campaign=fa0ef1ba4d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_02_15_01_52_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6a33e16b5d-fa0ef1ba4d-26124681; <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-39194395>

Brazil sued tobacco companies Philip Morris International and British American Tobacco to “recuperate losses over the last five years for the treatment of 26 diseases with scientifically proven links to tobacco usage,” *AP* reported. “Brazil’s Health Ministry estimates that the country loses the equivalent of \$3.5 billion per year due to medical expenses and lost productivity from nicotine addiction,” *Reuters* reported. Philip Morris responded with a statement saying “for the past 20 years, courts in Brazil have consistently found that tobacco manufacturers are not liable for smoking-related damages.” Corporate records, medical records, and previous court records all will play a part in this case. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-tobacco-lawsuit/in-landmark-case-brazil-sues-top-tobacco-firms-to-recover-public-health-costs-idUSKCN1SS2DN>; <https://www.readingeagle.com/ap/article/brazil-sues-tobacco-companies-to-recover-public-health-costs>

In 2017 a court in the United Kingdom rejected a suit by a group of Nigerians who claimed that they had suffered environmental and human rights injuries from Royal Dutch Shell’s operations in Nigeria (*Okpabi and another v Royal Dutch Shell plc and another*). An appeals court upheld the decision. However, in April this year, another U.K. court decided that Zambian claimants can bring a group action in the U.K. courts for alleged harm to their health and farming activities by the actions of the Nchanga Copper Mine (*Vedanta Resources plc and another v Lungowe and others*). Now 49 civil society organizations from around the world jointly appealed to the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom to allow an appeal of the *Okpabi* decision based on the judgment in *Vedanta*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2019-04. https://corporate-responsibility.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Rule-15-Submission.CORE_.Okpabi-v-Shell-UKSC-20180068.280519.pdf

In 2016 twenty-one Sudanese refugees living the United States filed a class action lawsuit against French bank BNP Paribas “over its role as the Sudan regime’s main bank 1997-2007” which “furthered the regime’s campaign of murder, mass rape, torture and deliberate HIV infection against its own people,” *Reuters* reported. Although BNP Paribas has a New York office, a lower court dismissed the

suit, but an appeals court has now reversed it and the case will proceed. <https://www.reuters.com/article/bnp-paribas-sudan-lawsuit/update-1-bnp-paribas-must-face-revived-lawsuit-over-sudanese-genocide-u-s-appeals-court-idUSL2N22Y0XR>

Eight civil society organizations funded a study of working conditions in the construction, food services and agro-industry sectors in the Beqaa Valley, where both Lebanese and Syrian workers are employed. The researchers used a survey to collect data from 403 workers, half from each nation. They found that only 17% of workers have a written contract; Syrians working in Lebanon “are almost always never registered” in the National Social Security Fund (51% of the Lebanese are) and do not benefit from its services; furthermore, in 51% of the cases the “employer does not fully declare employee salaries to the NSSF” and “more than 58% of workers are paid less than the minimum wage.” <https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/69779.pdf>

In a case brought against Monsanto/Bayer for cancer caused by its herbicide named Roundup, a California jury awarded a couple \$2 billion. The jury concluded that Monsanto did not warn users about the known health hazards in Roundup’s active ingredient, glyphosate. Many more lawsuits are likely, and the cases already decided are being appealed to higher courts. For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-08 and 2019-03. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/13/business/monsanto-roundup-cancer-verdict.html?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=6936502fd9-MR_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-6936502fd9-149736437

Church records. Pope Francis issued a new law for the Catholic church, decreeing that priests and nuns must report accusations of sexual abuse to church authorities and requiring “every diocese around the world [to] create an accessible, confidential reporting system to receive claims of sexual abuse and cover-up,” the *Associated Press* reported. The law also “outlines the preliminary investigation procedures to be used when the accused predator is a member of the church hierarchy.” These records must have exemplary management. <https://www.masslive.com/news/2019/05/pope-francis-issues-vatican-law-requiring-priests-nuns-to-report-clergy-sex-abuse-and-cover-up.html>

Climate change. Eight residents of Torres Strait Islands, a group of more than 270 low-lying islands between Australia and Papua New Guinea that are subject to flooding from global warming, lodged a formal complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Committee against Australia. They accuse Australia “of breaching their human rights by falling short on its Paris climate accord pledges,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The nongovernmental group ClientEarth said this is “the first legal action worldwide brought by inhabitants of low-lying islands against a nation state.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190513075240-vucxq/>; https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/13/torres-strait-islanders-take-climate-change-complaint-to-the-united-nations?CMP=share_btn_link

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) issued a Global Report on Internal Displacement based on the “11,511 data entries in the IDMC database by cause of displacement recorded in 2018.” It clearly explains the problems of the data, but estimates that “a record 41.3 million people were uprooted within their own countries last year due to conflicts and violence . . . with 2/3 displaced in just 10 countries.” This is greater than the 25.4 million refugees and 3.1 million asylum seekers worldwide in 2017 recorded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Noting that more displaced go to urban rather than rural areas, IDMC called for “an evidence base” that can “systematically account for urban IDPs,” including such steps as “record their number and the duration and severity of their displacement, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant criteria,” “collaborate with humanitarian, development and other stakeholders working to reduce vulnerability and risk to ensure that any data collected is interoperable,” and “build on communities’ existing capacities, including for the collection of data.” <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID.pdf>

Medical records. In Kenya, Dahabo Adi Galgallo, an epidemiologist, analyzed data from 2015-2016 on 60 women pastoralists who had given birth and found that 40% of all baby deaths happened to mothers who received no care before the birth. She “came up with the idea of a bracelet containing a GPS system that could be worn by these women,” which allows her to locate each woman before the health team makes a site visit (they make 10 site visits each month within a county). Since the bracelets were given out in 2017, the women have “surpassed four ante-natal visits,” and Galgallo told *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, “For those with GPS, there have been zero deaths of both mothers and infants.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190502074519-kee4n/>

A team of researchers used “national vital statistics data from 1990-2015 from four publicly available data repositories in the U.S., Mexico, Brazil and Colombia” to assess changes over time and racial and educational variation in deaths by gunshot. They reported in *Lancet Public Health 2019* that in all four countries firearm mortality is highest among young adult men and is “strongly associated with race and ethnicity and low education levels.” Sadly, they said that in the U.S. firearm mortality “can be considered the primary driver for the marked differences in the overall mortality observed between young white and black men, regardless of educational level.” They noted that they limited the study to four American countries that had both high firearm mortality and “high-quality cause of death data,” commenting that “Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala also have high firearm mortality, but their vital registration systems have gaps in coverage and quality and do not consistently report on educational attainment or race.” [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(19\)30018-0/fulltext?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=fdc53a47f7-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-fdc53a47f7-149736437](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(19)30018-0/fulltext?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=fdc53a47f7-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-fdc53a47f7-149736437)

Mother Jones reported on three studies showing the strong relationship between air pollution and dementia, all of which depended on records in the U.K., Canada and the U.S. <https://www.wired.com/story/air-pollution-dementia/>

Clinical Infectious Diseases reported on a study that found that tracking antibiotic-resistant bacteria through an online patient registry helped medical facilities in the U.S. State of Illinois prevent further infections. https://academic.oup.com/cid/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/cid/ciz300/5486092?redirectedFrom=fulltext&utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=a1d03797e3-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-a1d03797e3-149736437

Digital technologies are so greatly affecting health practice worldwide that *The Lancet* is now publishing a new Open Access journal on the subject, called *The Lancet Digital Health*. https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landig/home?dgcid=email-authors_email_tldh19&utm_campaign=STMJ_91366_SC&utm_medium=email&utm_dgroup=91366_MAIN_NOAB_SGL_ALL&utm_acid=468454007&SIS_ID=-1&dgcid=STMJ_91366_SC&CMX_ID=&utm_in=DM512173&utm_source=AC_59

Refugees. The World Refugee Council published “Data Protection and Digital Agency for Refugees.” It “analyzes how the vast amount of data collected from refugees is gathered, stored and shared today, and considers the additional risks this collection process poses to an already vulnerable population navigating a perilous information-decision gap.” <https://www.worldrefugeecouncil.org/publications/data-protection-and-digital-agency-refugees>

Technology. On 15 May 2019, 8 companies, 17 governments, and the European Commission adopted the Christchurch Call, a voluntary commitment to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. <https://www.christchurchcall.com/christchurch-call.pdf>

Nature published an article on the practice of “tracking unknowing populations using mobile-phone records” for humanitarian purposes such as to deliver aid, predict the spread of infectious diseases, or pinpoint locations of poverty. “At least 20 mobile-phone companies have donated their proprietary information to such efforts, including operators in 100 countries that back an initiative called Big Data for Social Good, sponsored by the GSMA, an international mobile-phone association.” *Nature* said “scientists working under the rubric of ‘data for good’ have analysed calls from millions of phone owners” in at least two dozen low- and middle-income countries. However, “concerns are rising over the lack of consent involved; the potential for breaches of privacy, even from anonymized data sets; and the possibility of misuse by commercial or government entities interested in surveillance.” A researcher said “it’s time to create thorough guidelines for assessing the benefits and risks of data-for-good studies that use call records.” <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01679-5>

The social media giant Twitter said that between June and December 2018 it received 6,904 government requests for information on 11,112 accounts and turned over “some data in just over half of all cases,” *techcrunch* reported. It also said 116,513 accounts were suspended for “promotion of terrorism” and 458,989 for “violating its rules relating to child sexual exploitation.” <https://techcrunch.com/2019/05/09/twitter-transparency-report/>; for the report see <https://transparency.twitter.com/en/information-requests.html>

World War II. The International Tracing Service/Arolsen Archives announced it uploaded “more than 13 million documents from Nazi concentration camps, including prisoner cards and death notices.” <https://arolsen-archives.org/en/news/more-than-13-million-documents/>

In 2016 the descendants of Hermann Stieve (died 1952), a former director of the Berlin Institute of Anatomy who specialized in research into the female reproductive system, discovered they had 300 glass microscope slides with remains of prisoners of the Nazis whose bodies were used for research by Stieve. According to the *New York Times*, Stieve “was particularly interested in the physical effects that stress and fear had on women’s reproductive systems.” He used “the meticulous records kept by the prison guards” to chose the victims whose bodies he wished to obtain. After the discovery of the slides, a professor at Brandenburg Medical School was asked to determine the origin of the samples, and he found Stieve’s own autopsy records of the period, listing 184 names, 172 of them women, reported *The Guardian*. All slides were buried ceremoniously in a Berlin cemetery on 13 May. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/12/remains-of-dissected-nazi-prisoners-to-be-laid-to-rest-in-berlin>; <https://pressfrom.info/us/news/world/-276511-they-resisted-hitler-they-were-executed-at-last-they-lay-at-rest.html#>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Colombia/Venezuela. UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, said “thousands of children born in Colombia to Venezuelan mothers are stuck in legal limbo with no identity documents,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. According to Colombia’s constitution, a child must have at least one parent who is Colombian to obtain citizenship. The nearly 3,300 children born of Venezuelan parents in Colombia since late 2017 are registered in Colombia’s National Civil Registry but have birth certificates that read “Not valid to show nationality.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20190523172405-yd939/>

Ecuador/Israel/United States. After a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency document was released in 2014 “revealing that Ecuador assisted in Operation Condor,” Ecuador’s attorney general opened an investigation into the death of former leftist president Jaime Roldos Aguilera in a 1981 plane crash. (Operation Condor was the code name for coordinated intelligence operations against leftist regime opponents by governments in South America in the 1970s and 1980s.) The attorney general closed the investigation without a public explanation. *Telesur* reported that a prominent Ecuadorian historian lodged a request with the attorney general to reopen the investigation, citing “the alleged role of the . . . CIA and the Israeli Mossad” in the death and arguing that after the death “information was misplaced.” https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Ecuador-Request-to-Reopen-Probe-on-CIA-Killing-of-Jaime-Roldos-20190522-0022.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

Ireland/United Kingdom (Northern Ireland). The widow of a man killed in a 1975 bomb attack in Dublin-Monaghan during the “Troubles” asked the Irish prime minister to release the files in his office from an investigation at that time. *BBC News* noted that the group Justice for the Forgotten has long urged for an “open inquiry into allegations that British security agents colluded with the terrorists” to plot the bombing and some families of the dead have called on the U.K. government to release its “classified security files on the attacks.” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48303360>

Israel/Palestine. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory appealed for 20 million dollars in emergency funding for Gaza “to save the shattered limbs of some 1,700 people who have been seriously injured in demonstrations against Israel along the border fence” in the past year. The UN said 29,000 people have been injured, of which 7,000 have been shot with live ammunition, and 120 amputations (including 20 of children) have already taken place. <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hundreds-wounded-gaza-protesters-risk-limb-amputation-without>

After a two-year campaign, the nongovernmental Akevot Institute obtained the release by the National Archives of File GL-17005/6 from the Office of the Arab Affairs Advisor at the Prime Minister’s Office containing 446 pages documenting “some of the final chapter of the Military Government over Palestinian citizens of Israel, before it was formally replaced with civilian oversight mechanisms in December 1966.” According to an article in *Haaretz*, “The newly revealed documents describe the ways Israel prevented Arabs from returning to villages they had left in 1948, even after the restrictions on them had been lifted.” Thanks to Lior Yavne, the director of Akevot, for this information.

<https://www.akevot.org.il/en/article/aims-and-means-3-file-gl-17005-6-the-reordering-of-control-over-palestinian-citizens-of-israel-at-the-late-stages-of-the-military-government/>; <https://www.haaretz.com/premium-israel-lifted-military-rule-over-arabs-in-1966-only-after-ensuring-they-couldn-t-ret-1.7297983>

Kosovo/Serbia. A female member of Kosovo’s parliament showed media a photograph which she said “showed three Serbian soldiers raping an ethnic Albanian woman during the war” in 1998-99. *BIRN* reported that prosecutors have now launched an investigation into whether the photograph is authentic “after online searches turned up the same image on web pages that suggest it was actually taken during the Iraq war.” Other Kosovo politicians denounced the politician for making the photograph public. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/05/17/kosovo-prosecutors-investigate-whether-war-rape-photo-is-fake/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=8feb9d4cb-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-8feb9d4cb-319725265

Latvia/Russia. Latvia’s parliament enacted a law instructing the National Archives to publish on its website the “filing system and other documents associated with KGB still stored in the National Archives,” the *Baltic News Network* reported. <https://bnn-news.com/latvia-to-publish-additional-kgb-filing-system-and-other-documents-200447>

Middle East war. A new organization of Syrian families based in Paris held a joint news conference with Human Rights Watch to call for the creation of “a formal mechanism to address the issue of missing persons in Northeast Syria.” The nongovernmental organization Syrian Justice and Accountability Centre issued a statement supporting the call, but cautioned: “This will require a comprehensive missing persons program, including the creation of a database congregating reports of missing and relevant information that could help identify victims. It [will] also require extensive material resources and technical training for those exhuming graves, to ensure that evidence is carefully documented and stored, and to allow investigators to begin the long process of identification.” https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2019/05/16/families-of-isis-missing-deserve-truth/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=6fdc1a84a8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-6fdc1a84a8-90540617

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) conducted 121 interviews with Syrian refugees in Jordan about their views of “return, justice and coexistence.” ICTJ wrote, “One of the clearest findings of this study is the complexity of the challenges that Syrians will face in rebuilding social relationships after the war. Refugees interviewed highlighted sectarian divisions based on distrust, intolerance, and even hatred of other groups.” Among the two dozen recommendations are:

*“The Syrian government should allow the United Nations and other specialized international organizations to be fully engaged in the process of refugee return . . . [and] to regularly collect and verify population data at the community level;”

*The international community “should only sponsor a political settlement guaranteeing that detailed and sufficient information is provided to the families of those forcibly disappeared and abducted, mass graves are identified and protected, and mechanisms for DNA identification of victims are put in place with a timeframe for implementation;” and

*All actors should “help refugees to obtain the documents necessary to prove ownership of property.” https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ_Briefing_SyrianRefugees_Jordan_Final.pdf

According to *Reuters*, “U.S. forces have quietly sent at least 30 suspected foreign Islamic State fighters captured in Syria last year and in late 2017 to stand trial in Iraq, interviews with the men, Iraqi sources and [Iraqi] court documents show.” The UN special rapporteur for human rights while countering terrorism said, “The sub-contraction of trials . . . to an ill-resourced, under-funded, ill-equipped criminal justice system in Iraq can only be described as an abrogation of responsibility.”

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamicstate-transfers/exclusive-islamic-state-suspects-sent-by-u-s-from-syria-to-iraq-idUSKCN1SZ0R1?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=da9d312225-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-da9d312225-90540617

In the Netherlands, the war crimes prosecutor, “following up on information from German judicial authorities,” announced the arrest of a Syrian “career combatant” accused of committing war crimes and terrorism offences in Syria, reported *justiceinfo.net*. In July the trial will begin of a returned Dutch ISIS fighter “accused of posing [for a photo] with the remains of a crucified victim, which amounts to outrage upon personal dignity and humiliating and degrading treatment, a war crime.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/tribunals/national-tribunals/41499-the-dutch-war-crimes-unit-hits-harder-on-syrian-suspects.html>

West Africa. *The New Humanitarian* reported that data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) show that civilian fatalities between November 2018 and March 2019 rose by an “alarming” 7,000% in Burkina Faso, 500% in Niger, and 300% in Mali compared to the same period the year before. Among the causes: “Jihadist groups are manipulating inter-communal conflicts.” <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/special-report/2019/05/30/briefing-civilian-fallout-sahel-s-spreading-militancy>

National news.

Albania. After a legal challenge by *BIRN*, the Court of Appeals ordered “the declassification and publication” of yearly reports, 1980-1989, and statistical information on the number of Albanians “under active surveillance” in that period by the Sigurimi, Albania’s Communist-era security service. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/05/29/birn-wins-appeal-to-declassify-albanian-secret-police-files/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=221f1e3304-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-221f1e3304-319725265

Argentina. After eleven cases, some dating as far back as 2007, were consolidated into one, a court in San Martin began hearing a “megacase” against 22 military and police officers. The case incorporates complaints from 322 victims of the Campo de Mayo military barracks, where clandestine centers of the “Dirty War” (1976-1983) operated, and includes disappearances of pregnant women and ex-workers of Mercedes Benz. A woman told *El Espectador*, “We hope for justice and also that data will appear that will allow us to know where our missing relatives are and who took our brother or sister.” The record of the consolidated case will be massive. <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Argentine-Court-Begins-Joint-Process-of-322-Dirty-War-Cases-20190430-0025.html>

Brazil. “According to the Rio de Janeiro State Institute of Public Security, 434 military police killings took place in Rio de Janeiro in the first quarter of 2019, averaging 7 deaths per day,” making this “the most violent 90 day period in recorded history.” The data did NOT include killings by the Rio Civil Police, *telesur* reported. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Brazils-Military-Police-Kills-434-in-Rio-de-Janeiro-in-2019-20190519-0007.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=8

Cameroon. The nongovernmental International Crisis Group (ICG) conducted more than 160 interviews between August and December to analyze the current conflict and propose ways to resolve it. ICG reported that at least 1,850 people have been killed, more than 170 villages destroyed, 530,000 people internally displaced, and 35,000 have fled to Nigeria since September 2017. ICG said it “submitted the findings of [the] report to Cameroon’s government in mid-April but has not received a response.” ICG called for a preliminary investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC), but Cameroon is not an ICC member and the only path to the ICC would be through a referral by the UN Security Council. *Justiceinfo.net* reported that at an informal meeting on 13 May the Security Council denounced “serious human rights violations” in the conflict. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arrive-aux-pourparlers> ; <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/tribunals/icc/41453-could-icc-intervention-deter-conflict-in-cameroon.html>

China. New Century Press published 209 pages of documents of meetings “called in June 1989 to consolidate support for the armed suppression of student protesters who had occupied Tiananmen Square until the army rolled in.” According to the documents, published as *The Last Secret: The Final Documents From the June Fourth Crackdown*, “each official stepped in line behind Deng Xiaoping, the elderly leader who ordered the crackdown, and each denounced Mr. Zhao [Ziyang], the Communist Party general secretary ousted for favoring compromise to end the months of protests,” reported the *New York Times*. <https://www.enmnews.com/2019/05/31/new-documents-show-power-games-behind-chinas-tiananmen-crackdown/>

Colombia. A spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said it is “alarmed” by the “strikingly high number” of human rights defenders “killed, harassed and threatened in Colombia.” The spokesman said OHCHR’s office in Colombia is “closely following up” on the reports by civil society, state institutions and the national human rights institution that 51 human rights defenders and activists have been killed in the first four months of 2019, with community leaders accounting “for more than 70% of all recorded killings.” https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/05/1038281?fbclid=IwAR3_YaJkRcrD5rPqa8eON1joOcDyk4NyQvNBSXO1GjwjxxsCjRLLKx08

Newly public documents show that in 2005 the Colombian army's current commander, General Nicacio Martinez Espinel, authorized at least seven payments to Colombian soldiers related to “false positive” operations. (“False positives” are the deaths of rural civilians by soldiers who dressed the dead in paramilitary fatigues and claimed they were guerrilla fighters, thus inflating the count of guerrillas killed.) The *Associated Press* said these documents are in the hands of prosecutors. https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/New-Evidence-Links-Colombias-Army-Chief-to-Civilian-Killings-20190526-0013.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=12

Frighteningly, the *New York Times* reported that Espinel “acknowledged issuing” new orders in 2019 “to double the number of criminals and militants they kill, capture or force to surrender in battle” and to have “officers set concrete goals for killing, capturing or forcing criminal groups and militants to surrender.” <http://www.oneworldmedia.us/news/colombian-armys-kill-orders-put-civilians-at-risk-officers-say/>

Congo-Brazzaville. Congo-Brazzaville was in civil war from 1993 to 1999; Denis Sassou Nguesso took power in 1997 and remains president today. In May 1999 he urged people who had fled to the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo to return. However, *AFP* reported, when they reached Brazzaville’s port “353 of them were never seen again” and are “widely believed to have been murdered.” In 2002 several human rights NGOs in France sued President Sassou-Nguesso and three senior officials in his regime for “crimes against humanity, disappearances and torture”; Congo asked the International Court of Justice in The Hague to freeze the French legal proceedings. A French lawyer said the French case (with its evidence) remains “bogged down,” while the father of one of the missing said, “We are finding that our missing children are simply victims with no perpetrators.” <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/tribunals/mixed-tribunals/41402-the-missing-of-brazzaville-beach-20-years-on.html>

Egypt. Human Rights Watch published a report documenting how in North Sinai “the Egyptian military and police have carried out systematic and widespread arbitrary arrests—including of children—enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings, collective punishment, and forced evictions—abuses it has attempted to conceal through an effective ban on independent reporting.” The report is based on 54 interviews, “medical and legal documents that victims or their families provided,” photographs and video footage (both official and on social media), official statements, and over 50 satellite images. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/05/28/if-you-are-afraid-your-lives-leave-sinai/egyptian-security-forces-and-isis>

El Salvador. A proposed law on “National Reconciliation” which would (among other things) provide de facto amnesty for crimes committed during El Salvador’s 1980-1992 civil war drew furious public opposition. The President of the Inter-American Court requested El Salvador to “immediately suspend the legislative procedure” on the draft bill “until the Plenary of the court addresses the request of provisional measures during the next Period of Sessions.” With support eroding, the coalition of left and right that proposed the bill did not bring the measure to a vote. It is not clear whether the bill is truly dead or not. As drafted it contained provisions on archives, truth commission records and a documentation center that would be injurious to the nation’s documentary heritage. Thanks to Cath Collins for the information. http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/medidas/mozote_se_01.pdf; <http://www.contrapunto.com.sv/contrapuntotv/video/video-collins-hay-un-paralelo-entre-el-discurso-del-fmln-con-lo-que-dijo-pinochet/9886>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/28/opinion/contributors/in-el-salvador-left-joins-right-in-asking-for-war-crimes-amnesty.html?ref=nyt-es&mcid=nyt-es&subid=article>

Two related articles provide a sobering picture of life for girls in El Salvador. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* wrote about gangs who force girls to “wed only to kill their husbands for the life insurance” which is handed over to the gang. “To force the women into marriage, victims were beaten naked by gang members.” A prosecutor who won a landmark conviction of seven gang members for the practice obtained video evidence “showing how the women were beaten in such an inhumane way that it almost looked like they had been left for dead.” *Univision* reported on violence driving girls to suicide: more than half of the women who died by suicide are “between 10 and 24 years old, according to official data.” The nongovernmental organization *Hablame de Respeto* reported that 854 girls age 14 were raped between 2015 and 2017, mostly in San Salvador. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190529152615-nmpbg/>; <https://www.univision.com/especiales/noticias/2019/girls-suicide-el-salvador/index.html>

Guatemala. At a 27 May press conference, the Interior Minister, who is in charge of the police, said he wanted to reassert control of the Historical Archives of the National Police (AHPN). He threatened not to renew the custody agreement with the Ministry of Culture, to which the records were transferred by agreement in 2009, and to terminate Culture's rights to the facility where the archives are housed. He also said the government would prepare legal action to challenge the agreements that put a digital security copy of the AHPN records in the Federal Archives of Switzerland and a use copy with the University of Texas. After major protests, the agreement with Culture was extended for six months, but the archives remain in jeopardy. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/news/guatemala/2019-05-30/imminent-threat-guatemalas-historical-archive-national-police-ahpn>

Twenty years ago the *Diario Militar*, a book of photographs of 183 people who were forcibly disappeared during the civil war plus coded references to their executions (with a few exceptions), was made public by Guatemala research specialist Kate Doyle, who received it from an unidentified source. Since that time, the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation has identified the remains of eight of the persons pictured. *International Justice Monitor* reported that families of the victims held a press conference on 20 May, demanding that the government "create a national mechanism to search for the 45,000 victims of enforced disappearance," create a genetic database to help in future identifications of remains, and declassify "all relevant military documents." <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2019/05/families-of-victims-demand-truth-and-justice-on-the-20th-anniversary-of-the-publication-of-the-diario-militar/>

India. Two nongovernmental organizations, the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons and the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, published "Torture: Indian State's Instrument of Control in Indian-administered Jammu & Kashmir." They examined 432 case studies, 2007-2017, "focusing on the trends and patterns, targets, perpetrators, context and impact of torture." They began with a questionnaire to get first-hand accounts, then added "signed statements from eyewitnesses, legal documents from the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, findings and documents filed before the SHRC [State Human Rights Commission], judgments of the High Court" and published materials. These research materials need to be securely preserved. <http://jkccs.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/TORTURE-Indian-State%E2%80%99s-Instrument-of-Control-in-Indian-administered-Jammu-and-Kashmir.pdf>

Japan. Between 1948 and 1996 an estimated 25,000 people were sterilized "with at least 16,500 not having given consent to procedures a eugenics panel could approve, often after a cursory review," reported *Reuters*. "Few records remain" of the program. A Sendai district court, ruling on the forced sterilization of two women as teenagers, found the practice was "unconstitutional" but rejected their demands for compensation. In April Japan passed a law to compensate the victims, see *HRWG News* 2019-04. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190528065308-cg3xq/>

Kenya. In April *BBC News* reported that "a suspected death squad operating inside Kenya's police force is using Facebook to target and kill young men they believe to be gang members." A representative of a local community center said, "They profile them on Facebook, after one week or a month they shoot them, and put pictures of their dead bodies on Facebook." He said human rights activists have been similarly profiled. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47805113>

Kosovo. *BIRN* monitored 520 court hearings in Kosovo and reported that in 2018 the number of resolved corruption cases fell, as did verdicts that imposed prison sentences and verdicts that imposed fines or parole sentences, but "there was a drastic increase in acquittals and cases that were dropped." https://balkaninsight.com/2019/05/23/kosovos-anti-corruption-efforts-inadequate-birn-report-says/?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=7ff4d8b693-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-7ff4d8b693-319725265

Malaysia. The author of a book on the Malaysian riots of 13 May 1969 urged the government to "declassify the official secrets in the vaults of the cabinet and the Special Branch" on the events and establish a truth commission on the riots. The official death toll was 196, mainly Chinese Malaysians, but the author believes it was substantially greater. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/475898>

Mali. MINUSMA, the UN peacekeeping mission, sent a special fact-finding team to Ogossagou village where a massacre occurred on 23 March. The team made a preliminary report on 3 May; it said that a group of traditional hunters (Dozos) killed at least 157 members of the Fulani community, set fire to at

least 220 huts, and injured at least 65 more persons. The team also located and confirmed “the existence of at least three mass graves containing at least 40 bodies in each of the first two, and at least 70 bodies in the third.” The mission’s director of human rights said the violations documented in Ogossagou “taken in context, could be characterized as crimes against humanity.” The team’s notes are important evidence. <https://minusma.unmissions.org/communiqu%C3%A9-de-presse-conclusions-pr%C3%A9liminaires-de-la-mission-d%E2%80%99enqu%C3%AAte-sp%C3%A9ciale-sur-les-graves>

Mexico. The Supreme Court decided that “everyone has the right to define their own sexual and gender identity and it is the state’s responsibility to guarantee this decision, which is reflected in the different documents, mainly the birth certificate.” It ordered the state of Jalisco to issue a new birth certificate to a citizen who changed sex and name, *Reuters* reported. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190509005255-k9pvo/>

Myanmar. Two *Reuters* journalists arrested in Myanmar in December 2017 were freed. Prior to their release, the *Washington Post* ran a story on the Myanmar police’s use of Cellebrite technology to pull “documents from the reporters’ phones including itineraries for Pope Francis’s visit to the country and the vice president’s travels, as well as details of the military’s campaign in Rakhine, according to the court documents and the defense lawyer. A judge deemed the information to be secret,” and the men were arrested on claims of violating state secrecy laws. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/security-tech-companies-once-flocked-to-myanmar-one-firms-tools-were-used-against-two-journalists-/2019/05/04/d4e9f7f0-5b5d-11e9-b8e3-b03311fbbbf_story.html?utm_term=.ec0d18246a53

Amnesty International published a new report on war crimes and abuses in Myanmar’s Rakhine State, saying the military has “killed and injured civilians in indiscriminate attacks since January 2019” and “carried out extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances.” It is based on 81 interviews, photographs, videos and satellite imagery, and information from humanitarian officials, human rights activists, and other experts. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/05/myanmar-military-commits-war-crimes-latest-operation-rakhine-state/>

Netherlands. The government adopted the Child Labour Due Diligence Bill requiring companies to identify, prevent and if necessary address the issue of child labor in their supply chains. Assuming companies will have to file declarations, these will be important government records for holding them accountable. <https://www.mvopplatform.nl/en/the-netherlands-takes-a-historic-step-by-adopting-child-labour-due-diligence-law/>

Nigeria. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and the World Bank commissioned a study to assess the risks of the Nigeria For Women project, a \$100 million program to improve women's livelihoods by providing grants, skills training and business advice. The study team conducted more than 200 interviews in three states on attitudes and compared the data with information from the Nigeria Demographic Health Survey 2013 and other “nationally representative surveys.” They found that the risk of gender-based violence against women, especially from “intimate partners,” increased as women’s economic position strengthened, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190529160451-lrlvf/>; for the study <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31573/Gender-Based-Violence-An-Analysis-of-the-Implications-for-the-Nigeria-for-Women-Project.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Pakistan. Since 2009, the Balochistan Inspector General of Police announced, 911 police officers have been killed on duty, *Dawn* reported. He also said that the province is constructing its first “women police station”: “Due to traditional and tribal taboos women cannot visit police stations to lodge their complaints. With the opening of the first women police station, most legal and social issues of women will be resolved. The completion of a police station for women will also provide jobs for females.” <https://www.dawn.com/news/1479433>

South Africa. Almost 300 cases referred to the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2003 have not been pursued. In February ten former TRC commissioners wrote a letter to the President saying the “failure to investigate and prosecute . . . represents a deep betrayal of all those who participated in good faith in the TRC process.” Now the head of the NPA’s Priority Crimes Litigation Unit “admitted in court papers . . . that the prosecuting authority had been influenced by political interests.” The families of the victims are asking the “state capture inquiry” known as the Zondo Commission to look into how the NPA “was captured when it refused to

investigate those apartheid crimes.” Two cases are now open. <https://theconversation.com/ahmed-timol-the-quest-for-justice-for-people-murdered-in-apartheids-jails-116843> ; <https://www.newframe.com/apartheid-victims-ask-zondo-to-probe-npa-capture/>

After nine years of litigation, in 2016 the Department of Justice released to the nongovernmental organization South African History Archives (SAHA) the TRC Victims Database holding records of around 22,000 cases that came to the TRC. SAHA transformed the database into a format which can be searched for persons, sources, acts, perpetrators, witnesses and events; it is now publicly available. <https://www.facebook.com/events/2219805191667991/>

The minister of water and sanitation released statistics in Parliament showing that “118 mines around South Africa are polluting rivers, inadequately testing for contamination or otherwise dirtying South Africa’s waterways,” and 115 mines are “operating without proper water permits,” reported *Mail and Guardian*. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-05-17-00-big-increase-in-mine-water-pollution>

Sri Lanka. At the end of the civil war in 2009, then president Sirisena vowed to return all land confiscated from the Tamils in the northern and eastern provinces by 31 December 2018. However, “nearly 30,000 acres (12,140 hectares) of private land were still being held as of March 31, according to government officials,” reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. The spokesman for the army said the land is retained for “security purposes.” http://www.thisisplace.org/i/?id=3eac1dd8-6697-4c40-a637-4fc4dc60e468&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Place

Syria. The Syrian Justice and Accountability Center released a report analyzing 5,000 pages of intelligence agency documents from offices that were abandoned by the Syrian government during the current war. “The analyzed documents provide a unique, contemporaneous record of the decision-making processes of the Syrian intelligence agencies, exposing not only serious human rights violations but also the extent to which these agencies permeate every aspect of Syrian life.” It is a remarkable product. https://syriaaccountability.org/library/walls-have-ears/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=7c7816575c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_10_02_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-7c7816575c-90540617

In related reporting, *CNN* produced “How 'document hunters' spirited thousands of government files out of Syria” and the *New York Times* published “Inside Syria’s Torture Prisons,” featuring photographs of redacted memos “sent to Syria’s head of military intelligence reporting detainees’ deaths.” <https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/28/middleeast/syria-war-crimes-investigators-cija-intl/index.html>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/11/world/middleeast/syria-torture-prisons.html?fbclid=IwAR3N8KoI25yJQbA1AF3TSnmpLkG07tTImDF55DzOHdzrmmgKRbObUBODWog>

Taiwan. The government passed a law legalizing same-sex marriage between Taiwanese “or with foreigners whose countries recognize same-sex marriage,” *Reuters* reported. A same-sex couple can adopt a child only if it is “biologically related to at least one of the same-sex pair.” Such adoption records will have to include the results of DNA tests. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190517060114-tfpgg/>

The Transitional Justice Commission, “after reviewing the files,” found “the verdict, the death certificate and other legal documents” that allowed an indigenous man to find the grave of his father, who was a White Terror victim, *Taiwan News* reported. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3692818>

Tunisia. The Court of Audit released its report on the Truth and Dignity Commission (IVD). According to *justiceinfo.net*, “Its main finding concerns the difficulties of the IVD in defining human rights violations, ‘given the confusion at the conceptual level’” and argues that this “impacted the accuracy of the data.” The IVD had classified 3,449 cases as “victims” (which made them eligible for compensation) and later classified them as “requires more checks,” all of which had to be resolved. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/truth-commissions/41404-tunisia-and-the-disputed-accounts-of-its-truth-commission.html>

Turkey. Eleven members of the Turkish Medical Association have been sentenced to 20 months in prison for issuing a statement on 24 January 2018 saying “war is a man-made public health problem,” *The Lancet* reported. One was given an additional 19 months for social media postings the government said were “inciting hatred and hostility.” All eleven are free pending an appeal. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2819%2931083-9>

Uganda. The government announced that in the next fiscal year it will issue birth certificates to the estimated 6,000 children born during the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war in northern Uganda, some born of young women who were abducted by the LRA and were rescued with children. https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1500173/govt-register-children-born-lra-war

Ukraine. The Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine announced that it declassified "almost 350 documents from its archive on the activities of the Ukrainian National Republic" (1918-1921). <https://www.unian.info/society/10545939-ukraine-intelligence-declassifies-hundreds-of-documents-on-unr.html>

United Kingdom. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) "failed to gain explicit consent from individuals before signing them up to a voice ID system for telephone enquiries," *BBC News* reported. The Information Commissioner's Office said this was a "significant breach" of data laws. HMRC is deleting the voice records of 5 million persons recorded prior to October 2018, but will continue to use the system for calls from that date onward when it began asking callers if they want to use the service. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-48150575>

The United Nations special rapporteur for extreme poverty issued a report on his visit to the U.K. in November 2018. He said there is a "crisis of destitution and . . . chronic insecurity of low-income earners," and "largely as a result of slashed government spending on services, close to 40 percent of children are predicted to be living in poverty two years from now; 16 percent of people over 65 live in relative poverty; and millions of those who are in-work are dependent upon various forms of charity to cope." "But," he added, "statistics alone cannot capture the full picture of poverty in the United Kingdom." Among his recommendations are to "introduce a single, multidimensional measure of poverty" and to "systematically measure food security," both of which require good recordkeeping. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24636&LangID=E>

United States. The Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which is responsible for the care of minors who enter the U.S. without authorization or a guardian, has since October 2017 been "keeping a spreadsheet of pregnant minors in their custody." According to *VICE News*, the spreadsheet lists the "fetus' gestational age," "whether the pregnancy arose from consensual sex and whether 'TOP'—or 'termination of pregnancy' had been requested." In March 2018 a Federal judge forbade ORR "from blocking minors' access to abortion counseling and care;" the American Civil Liberties Union is considering raising the issue of the spreadsheet in court. https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/vb9vq9/the-trump-administration-has-a-spreadsheet-of-migrant-teens-who-want-abortions

The Intercept and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists reviewed "more than 8,400 reports describing placements of ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] detainees in solitary confinement" and found that isolation is "a go-to tool, rather than a last resort, to manage and punish even the most vulnerable detainees for weeks and months at a time." ICE said "it does not keep records of every solitary confinement placement . . . [but] only cases in which detainees were held in isolation for more than 14 days, and when immigrants with a 'special vulnerability' were placed in isolation." The UN special rapporteur on torture has said that solitary confinement "should be banned" except in very exceptional circumstances and that "isolation for more than 15 days constitutes 'inhuman and degrading treatment'." <https://theintercept.com/2019/05/21/ice-solitary-confinement-immigration-detention/>

ICE advertised for a contractor to help implement "a rapid DNA test . . . to verify familial relationships" of migrants trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, *UPI* reported. "Officials said they will require written and voluntary consent from the migrants for the DNA collection and testing. Additionally, no DNA information will be stored by the U.S. government and chemicals within the test machine would destroy the samples." https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2019/05/29/ICE-seeks-DNA-tests-to-weed-out-fraudulent-family-claims-at-border/8321559154023/

"Since 2006--five years after the start of major combat operations in Afghanistan and three years after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq--a total of 16,652 active duty personnel and mobilized reservists have died while serving in the U.S. armed forces," the Congressional Research Service said, based on data obtained from the Department of Defense. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF10899.pdf>

The Justice Department’s Inspector General said that only about 20 of 120 Bureau of Prisons (BOP) institutions keep data electronically, pointing out “you can’t do data analytics, obviously, with paper records.” He compared the work of BOP and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and said the justice system can’t work “if you don’t have the people who are day to day doing the heavy lifting of following the leads, looking at what the data looks like, doing the data analytics, following the various pieces of information and data that is out there, to piece together what is ultimately the investigation and the leads that are needed to solve the most challenging case.” <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/justice-department/2019/05/doj-ig-highlights-data-staffing-issues-at-bop-departmentwide/>

The U.S. military called for proposals “to analyze 350 billion social-media posts from around the world to help it track how popular movements evolve,” *Bloomberg News* reported. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-25/u-s-military-to-trawl-through-350-billion-social-media-messages>

In a case important for the treaty rights of indigenous peoples, the Supreme Court held that the Crow Tribe’s hunting rights under the 1868 Treaty between the Crow Tribe and the U.S. government, which was concluded before Wyoming became a state but covered territory in modern-day Montana and Wyoming, did not expire upon Wyoming’s statehood. https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/18pdf/17-532_q86b.pdf

The Marshall Project, a nongovernmental organization, compared estimates of undocumented populations sorted by metro area (derived from comparing Census Bureau and Department of Homeland Security data) with local crime rates published by the FBI. They found that “between 2007 and 2016, violent crime decreased slightly and similarly across most areas, regardless of whether the undocumented population rose or fell” and “property crime was either entirely unaffected or fell slightly with rising numbers of undocumented immigrants.” In sum, the analysis shows “no tie between immigration status and criminality.” <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2019/05/13/is-there-a-connection-between-undocumented-immigrants-and-crime>

Conferences, publications.

The Association for Computing Machinery issued a call for papers for the 2020 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT* 2020) in Barcelona, Spain, 27-30 January 2020, bringing together “researchers and practitioners interested in fairness, accountability, and transparency in socio-technical systems.” Paper proposals due 22 August 2019. For information: <https://fatconference.org/2020/callforpapers.html>

swisspeace, in collaboration with the University of Basel, offers “Dealing with the Past & Conflict Transformation Course” in Basel 9-13 September 2019. Applications close 15 July 2019. For information: academy@swisspeace.ch or swisspeace [website](http://www.swisspeace.ch).

Good reads.

Geneva Academy. *Disability and Armed Conflict*. The World Health Organization says persons with disabilities represent at least 15 percent of every population: <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/news/detail/227-our-new-publication-addresses-the-devastating-impact-of-conflict-on-persons-with-disabilities>

Blinken Open Society Archives. Refugee DocsMap, a visual geographic catalog of recent documentary films on the global refugee experience in the 20-21th century: <https://refugeedocsmap.osaarchivum.org/>

International Crisis Group. War memorials photographed in Tamil areas of Sri Lanka: https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/picturing-sri-lankas-undead-war?utm_source=Sign+Up+to+Crisis+Group%27s+Email+Updates&utm_campaign=e14d70ecf5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_05_16_04_55&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1dab8c11ea-e14d70ecf5-359425329

UNESCO Slave Route Project. “Legacies of Slavery – A Resource Book for Managers of Sites and Itineraries of Memory”: <https://en.unesco.org/news/new-publication-legacies-slavery-resource-book-managers-sites-and-itineraries-memory>

Undark. Using genealogical documents and DNA to search for the causes of Alzheimer’s disease: https://undark.org/article/colombia-race-alzheimers-dementia-africa/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=383e299453-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-383e299453-149736437

Please share news with us! trudy@trudypeterson.com

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