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**News from the HRWG and commentary.** The Human Rights Working Group has been closely following reports of threats to archives in Argentina, Bolivia, Hungary, Japan and Russia.

In December 2016 the Government of Argentina issued Modernization decree No. 44/16, transferring the responsibility for appraisal away from the national archivist and to the directors of government agencies. This took the crucial decision-making power out of the hands of the professional archivists who are trained to judge what documents must be preserved as constituent parts of that nation's documentary heritage. Fortunately, after protests by many people and organizations, the government repealed the transfer of authority and reaffirmed the role of the national archives. Now the authority of the national archives should be reviewed and strengthened to ensure that it can effectively identify, appraise, and accession not only paper records but also the growing mass of Argentine government digital records.

The Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (CEDIB), begun in 1970, has been based at the state University Mayor de San Simón since 1993. In 2012 its document and news archive was declared "Documentary Heritage of the city of Cochabamba." In March CEDIB was told by a notarized letter from the university's rector that it had to leave in two days, reported the *Guardian*, because "a Chinese institute must be installed here immediately." The CEDIB website says, "We are in the need to move our Archive and Library, which is 45 years old and has systematized more than 11 million news items, 60 thousand books and other documents on the recent history of Bolivia." The CEDIB's director said, "It's a trove of historical evidence to which members of the general public can turn to if they need to know things involving them, particularly those concerning human rights. For example, using a CEDIB dossier, victims of the dictatorships were able to back-up their demands for reparation from the state."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/andes-to-the-amazon/2017/apr/08/top-bolivian-ngo-faces-forced- eviction> ; <http://www.cedib.org/>

In Hungary the Open Society Archives is part of Central European University, which is the focus of a new law that targets it for critical changes if not complete closure. On April 26, the European Commission, "on the basis of an in-depth legal assessment of the Hungarian Higher Education Law of 4 April" said "the law is not compatible with the fundamental internal market freedoms, notably the freedom to provide services and the freedom of establishment but also with the right of academic freedom, the right to education and the freedom to conduct a business as provided by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as with the Union's legal obligations under international trade law." The Hungarian Government has one month to respond to these concerns. The Archives holds a wide variety of records and personal papers related to human rights and the rule of law; what would happen to the holdings in the event of a temporary or permanent closure is of great concern. Ironically, the Archives, now threatened, has been seen as a safe haven for important materials from the Balkans and Eastern Europe. <http://www.osaarchivum.org/>

Two events caused concern in Japan. In early April *The Mainichi* reported that the Chiba Prefectural Archives "discarded about 500 volumes of documents related to World War II, including names of the war dead and registry data of bereaved families." After protests by "groups specializing in history" the disposal work has been halted and the archives is reconsidering the selection process. The same newspaper next reported that government ministries are said to be preparing to destroy documents designated as "special state secrets." The Public Records and Archives Management Act covers documents that include special state secrets; they "can be disposed of after they undergo checks by the Cabinet Office once their storage term is up." It is not clear that the Cabinet Office is checking to see that records designated as permanent are not being destroyed; the National Archives apparently has no oversight role. "However, according to implementation guidelines of the State Secrecy Law--or the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated

Secrets--documents that have been around for over 30 years after the information they contain was designated special state secrets are considered highly important, and must all be transferred to the National Archives of Japan and elsewhere for storage.” <http://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20170407/p2a/00m/0na/016000c>;  
<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20170417/p2a/00m/0na/008000c>

Finally, in Russia “a curator at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg has claimed that government authorities have seized archives and books . . . related to the Soviet’s sale of art nationalized after the Bolshevik Revolution to Western collectors.” In a Facebook posting he wrote that archives have been taken not only from the Hermitage but “similar operations have taken place at the State Historical Museum and State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.” The Hermitage and the Pushkin denied the allegation.  
<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/museums/archives-and-books-documenting-soviet-era-art-sales-seized-from-hermitage/>

These worrisome cases are simply the ones that have made the press in recent days. The Human Rights Working Group knows that more archives in all parts of the world are under pressure. Only constant watchfulness, as occurred in Argentina and Japan, can protect our vital archival heritage.

### **International news.**

European Court of Human Rights. The Court found that Macedonia’s controversial lustration process “deprived a communist-era official, Peter Karajanov, of a fair trial and violated his privacy by publishing his name before the final ruling was passed,” reported *BIRN*. Karajanov claimed that the lustration commission had used the documents of a person who had the same name (Peter Karajanov) to make the case against him. For background on the lustration controversy, see *HRWG News* 2016-07 and 10.  
[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/strasbourg-court-rules-against-macedonian-lustration-case-04-07-2017?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=e8c501ab40-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-e8c501ab40-319755321](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/strasbourg-court-rules-against-macedonian-lustration-case-04-07-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=e8c501ab40-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-e8c501ab40-319755321)

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. “An independent investigation report . . . concludes that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) failed to ensure protection of core labor standards when providing a EUR 30 million loan to Türk Traktör – a Turkish manufacturer of tractors and agricultural machinery. In response, EBRD committed to improve their internal procedures,” reported *SOMO*. The authors of the report urged EBRD to obtain further and better information from Türk Traktör in order to monitor its labor practices. <https://www.somo.nl/erdb-fails-respect-turkish-labor-rights/>

European Court of Human Rights. In the case brought by relatives of victims of the Beslan, Russia, school siege in 2004, where more than 300 people were killed and many others wounded, the Court found Russian officials had not only fallen short in their protection of life but also failed to examine adequately the remains and the evidence in the aftermath. The Court said “deficient forensic measures led to a situation where it was impossible to establish, with any degree of certainty, the causes of death of at least a third of all the victims, and the exact circumstances and location of the bodies of many more.” Further, it said, “the investigation failed to properly secure, collect and record evidence at the school building on 4 September. This resulted in a report being drawn up that was incomplete in many important respects.” Finally, the Court said, “It also notes the failure to ensure a sufficient degree of public scrutiny by restricting the victims’ access to some of the key expert reports.” The Court ordered Russia to pay 2.955 million euros (about \$3.14 million) in damages and 88,000 euros in legal costs. Russia said it would appeal the ruling.  
<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22%3A%22001-172660%22%7D>

European Union. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) issued an opinion, “Improving access to remedy in the area of business and human rights at the EU level.” It said “remedies, both state-based and non-state-based, must offer, at the very minimum, a certain level of transparency to the general public as to their existence and their general operations.” Acknowledging that “several tools” including the European e-Justice Portal, provide much relevant information, the FRA argued that the EU still lacks “a repository for [reports from] EU companies that have obligations under EU instruments . . . with details on their delivery on these obligations, including access to remedy – procedures and practice.”  
<http://fra.europa.eu/en/opinion/2017/business-human-rights>

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Families who were displaced from their farmland in northeast Haiti to make way for the Caracol Industrial Park (CIP) complained to the Inter-American Bank's Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism because the Bank "financed the CIP from its earliest stages." The complaint says the families were "impoverished in the name of development" and "at no point were any major project documents or information made available to the victims in an appropriate format and language." <http://www.accountabilitycounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/1.12.17-Caracol-Industrial-Park-MICI-complaint-1.pdf>

International Court of Justice (ICJ). In the case of Ukraine v. Russian Federation, the Court issued "provisional measures" requiring Russia to "refrain from imposing limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to conserve its representative institutions" and to "ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian language." It said reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OSCE Human Rights Assessment Mission on Crimea "show, prima facie, that there have been limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatars to choose their representative institutions, and restrictions in terms of the availability of Ukrainian language education in Crimean schools." <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/166/19412.pdf>

United Nations. A new report from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change said "health risks related to climate change are on the rise worldwide." The report is based on data submitted by fourteen countries plus the European Union, a number of nongovernmental institutions, and various United Nations bodies. <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/sbsta/eng/02.pdf>

In February 2016 a panel of advisers urged the UN "to publicly apologize and compensate hundreds of ethnic Roma who were poisoned by lead waste in decrepit camps run by its peacekeeping mission in Kosovo" between 1998 and 2012, the *New York Times* reported. The UN still has not done so. The *Times* says the UN is hesitating to issue a document that contains "any language . . . that could be construed as acknowledging liability." The UN lawyers clearly understand the power of the record. [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/18/world/europe/roma-gypsies-lead-poisoning-un.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/18/world/europe/roma-gypsies-lead-poisoning-un.html?_r=0)

United Nations Human Rights Council. At its meeting on March 24, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on North Korea, which included the decision "to strengthen" the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' "monitoring and documentation efforts," establish "a central information and evidence repository," and have "experts in legal accountability assess all information and testimonies with a view to developing possible strategies to be used in any future accountability process." Subsequently, *The Hankyoreh* reported that the "archive of information and evidence on human rights abuses by the North Korean regime" will be established "in physically distant Geneva for the security and total confidentiality of sensitive information." <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G17/069/64/PDF/G1706964.pdf?OpenElement>; [http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_northkorea/788901.html](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/788901.html)

## World/general news.

Business records. A new investigation by Global Witness and Finance Uncovered, nongovernmental organizations, reported that Shell, the Anglo-Dutch corporation, and the Italian oil company Eni "participated in a vast bribery scheme for one of Africa's most valuable oil blocks" in Nigeria. Using leaked corporate emails, evidence from court cases (apparently including records seized in a February 2016 police raid on Shell's headquarters), and information from phone calls tapped by Dutch police, the NGOs concluded that "the amount paid for the oil block is one and a half times what the UN says is needed to respond to the current famine crisis – but the money was diverted into private pockets" in Nigeria. [https://www.globalwitness.org/en-gb/campaigns/oil-gas-and-mining/shell-knew/?utm\\_source=Supporter+Email+List&utm\\_campaign=0b24a0902a-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_04\\_10&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_2246df3038-0b24a0902a-130032821](https://www.globalwitness.org/en-gb/campaigns/oil-gas-and-mining/shell-knew/?utm_source=Supporter+Email+List&utm_campaign=0b24a0902a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_04_10&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2246df3038-0b24a0902a-130032821)

The 2017 "Ranking Digital Rights Corporate Accountability Index" was released at the end of March. It ranked 22 "of the world's most powerful telecommunications, internet, and mobile companies on their public commitments and disclosed policies affecting users' freedom of expression and privacy." The Index

says company disclosure “is inadequate across the board” leaving users without “the information they need to make informed choices.” <https://rankingdigitalrights.org/index2017/>

The Corporate Accountability Quarterly Bulletin features “Overcoming unequal access to information - frequent barriers to remedy for victims of corporate abuse.” <http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=bdd1a6a40ffad39c8719632f&id=45108fe9d8&e=f7f8d1dd34>

Guantanamo Bay prison records. In a case brought by news organizations, a U.S. federal appeals court ruled that the U.S. military can withhold from public view “at least 28 videotapes showing guards at the Guantanamo Bay wartime prison extracting a hunger-striking detainee from his cell and then force-feeding him,” reported the *New York Times*. The tapes were part of the court records in a lawsuit challenging the military’s use of force-feeding procedures, but were sealed at that time. [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/31/us/politics/guantanamo-detainees-force-feeding-videos.html?smid=tw-share&\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/31/us/politics/guantanamo-detainees-force-feeding-videos.html?smid=tw-share&_r=1)

Medical records. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted approval to a genetic testing company to offer tests for 10 medical conditions (including risk factors for developing diseases such as Parkinson’s, late-onset Alzheimers’ and celiac disease) and to send the results directly to the person who submitted the sample, not to a medical professional, *STAT* reported. It is not clear who would be responsible for maintaining a record of the analysis provided to the person. <https://www.statnews.com/2017/04/06/genetic-test-alzheimers/>

Hyland’s said that at the request of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration it was recalling from sale all its infant teething tablets, “following reports that the tablets had caused seizures and other severe complications in hundreds of infants,” *STAT* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-02. <https://www.statnews.com/2017/04/13/homeopathy-tablets-recall/>

World War II. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial center in Jerusalem, has now identified the names of about 4.7 million of the estimated 6 million Jews who were murdered during the Nazi regime, reported *BBC News*. However, only about half of the estimated 1.5 million children killed have been identified. “The memorial holds some 205m Holocaust-related documents, which are examined meticulously in the search for names.” <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39062221>

The European Shoah Legacy Institute released the Immovable Property Restitution Study, the “first-ever comprehensive compilation of all significant legislation passed since 1945 by the 47 states that participated in the 2009 Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference and endorsed the 2009 Terezin Declaration.” The Declaration focused on the restitution of real (immovable) property, whether private, communal or heirless. <http://shoahlegacy.org/restitution-of-immovable-property/>

A U.S. federal court ruled that a lawsuit can proceed against Germany over claims relating to “the Nazi-era theft from Jewish dealers of a celebrated collection of gilded medieval art treasures.” The judge ruled “that since the Nazis’ organized plunder of Jewish property was part and parcel of their later genocide of the Jews – a crime under international law – the court has jurisdiction to hear the case,” *Reuters* reported. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nazi-artwork-idUSKBN17601L>

### **Bilateral and multilateral news.**

Argentina/France. France agreed to “support the trials of human rights violations” during the Argentine dictatorship (1976-1983) by delivering copies of the French diplomatic files relating to the Argentine crimes against humanity, *RFI* with *AFP* reported. “More than 20 French citizens are still missing in Argentina,” and France “welcomed thousands of exiles who fled” during the period of dictatorship. <http://es.rfi.fr/general/20170405-argentina-recibe-de-francia-archivos-de-la-represion-en-dictadura>

Argentina/Vatican/Uruguay. The Vatican began “the first phase of declassifying its archives on Uruguay’s military dictatorship,” reported *telesur*. The Vatican is “also carrying forward a declassification process with its archives on the dictatorship in Argentina . . . with files from the Argentine Episcopal Conference.” <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Vatican-Begins-Declassifying-Documents-on-Uruguay-Dictatorship--20170424-0016.html>

Argentina/United States. The United States “released over 900 previously classified State Department records on human rights abuses in Argentina, providing important insights into the notorious Southern Cone multinational entity known as Operation Condor,” the National Security Archive reported. “The records reveal that Condor members considered opening ‘field offices’ in the U.S. and Europe, and offer new information about the fate of disappeared militants from the 1970s and 1980s.”

<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB588-Trump-release-continues-US-declassified-diplomacy-with-Arentina/>

Armenia/Israel/Turkey. In a classic case of archival sleuthing, an historian located “a long-lost telegram used as evidence in military tribunals” held in Turkey in 1919-1920 that convicted some of the Turkish planners of the Armenian genocide, reported the *New York Times*. Apparently fearing the records would be destroyed, a “collection of court records” were shipped out of Turkey in 1922 by “Armenian leaders.” By the 1930s they were in the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem where they were “photographed in the 1940s by an Armenian monk who passed the photos on to a nephew currently living in New York.” The historian used the New York materials. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-archive-yields-armenian-genocide-smoking-gun/>

Bangladesh/India. In the wake of an historic agreement in 2015 to demarcate the border between Bangladesh and India, people in the areas exchanged between the two countries were given a choice of citizenship and received citizenship and identity cards. The Observer Research Foundation analyzed the progress of the implementation of the agreement and found that records of land ownership “have been misplaced or lost and the final decision” on ownership of the land now firmly on one or the other side of the border “may be based on word of mouth.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2015-05.

[http://www.eurasiareview.com/26042017-from-stateless-to-new-citizens-a-quest-for-more-pro-active-rehabilitation-policies-analysis/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/26042017-from-stateless-to-new-citizens-a-quest-for-more-pro-active-rehabilitation-policies-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Bangladesh/India (Jammu)/Myanmar. At a press conference that was audio recorded by several media outlets, the president of the Jammu (India) chamber of commerce and industry said that if the central government does not deport Rohingyas and Bangladeshis from Jammu “we would be left with no option but to launch a movement ‘Identify and Kill’ against foreign settlers who are criminals across the state. It would not be an offence if they are unrolled to death since they are not citizens of this state,” *KL News Network* reported. The importance of preserving the audio records of the press conference cannot be overstated. <http://www.kashmirilife.net/jammu-chamber-to-launch-identify-kill-campaign-against-rohingya-refugees-137095/>

Belgium/Burundi/Congo/Rwanda/Vatican. The Catholic Church in Belgium “apologized for forcefully uprooting children of mixed race from their families” in the then Belgian Congo and today’s Rwanda and Burundi “and putting them in special care centres run by the Church,” reported *The New Times*. The Belgian bishops also called “on all Catholic institutions in Africa, Belgium and Rome to open up their archives.” “By gaining access to the archives, some of those still trying to trace their roots will at last have closure.” <http://allafrica.com/stories/201704270034.html>

Canada/Guatemala. Between 2008 and 2011 Hudbay, the giant Canadian mining company, owned the Fenix mine in Guatemala. In 2009 the head of security for the mine allegedly killed one man and shot another who is now paralyzed as they protested at the mining site. *Marketwired* reported that a Guatemala court has acquitted the man of the charges, despite what the lawyers for the victims called “damning eyewitness testimony of the murder and ballistic and forensic evidence.” The court in its decision asked the government to charge the victims, witnesses, and even a prosecutor with “false testimony, obstruction of justice, forgery of public documents and document tampering.” The victims are pursuing the case in a court in Canada, where Hudbay has been required to turn over “thousands of internal corporate documents” to the lawyers for the victims. <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/klippensteins-barristers-solicitors-alleged-killer-005323123.html>

Colombia/United States. In response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit by the National Security Archive, a nongovernmental organization in the United States, more records relating to Chiquita Brands International’s financing of the paramilitary AUC in Colombia have been released. They include Security and Exchange Commission deposition transcripts that “detail years of payments” and reveal for the first time the identities and roles “of the individual Chiquita executives who approved and oversaw years of payments to groups responsible for countless human rights violations in Colombia.”

<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB586-Testimony-Reveals-Chiquita-Executives-Behind-Terror-Payments/>

Colombia/Ecuador/United States. A group of Ecuadorian farmers sued DynCorp International, a U.S. company that had a contract with Colombia to fly planes that sprayed a chemical killing coca plants. The farmers said the pilots were reckless and the chemicals drifted to their farms in Ecuador, damaging their health and their crops. *The Associated Press* reported that a jury found “DynCorp responsible for the subcontractor’s pilots between 2000 and 2007, but not for employees of Colombian law enforcement” (Colombian police sometimes flew the planes). Since the farmers did not know who was piloting the plane that caused the harm, the jury did not award damages. Another trial is set for December for other plaintiffs. Corporate records, as well as those of Colombia’s police, should provide flight records.  
<http://www.readingeagle.com/ap/article/us-jury-rejects-damages-for-ecuadoran-farmers-in-coca-eradication-spraying>

France/Rwanda. The International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, a nongovernmental organization based in France, urged France to “make public all diplomatic, military, political and financial documents relating to France’s actions in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994,” *The New Times* reported. Rwanda’s Ministry of Justice “is currently investigating a number of French military and political leaders of that period . . . for possible roles, direct or indirect, in the genocide against the Tutsi.”  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201704110210.html>

Kosovo/Serbia. The Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights said “Kosovo must end impunity for the crimes committed” during the 1998-1999 conflict with Serbia. He urged both countries to “show more political commitment” to resolving cases of missing persons, and “called for the archives of the Serbian army and police to be opened up so that any information about the fate of the missing can be utilized to find their graves.” [http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/council-of-europe-kosovo-war-victims-denied-justice--04-10-2017?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=f736bfd384-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-f736bfd384-319755321](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/council-of-europe-kosovo-war-victims-denied-justice--04-10-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=f736bfd384-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-f736bfd384-319755321)

Liberia/Netherlands/Sierra Leone. A Dutch court convicted Guus Kouwenhoven of “being an accessory to war crimes and arms trafficking for selling weapons to Liberia’s then president Charles Taylor during civil wars” in Liberia and Sierra Leone, reported *The Guardian*. The court said he used his timber trading business as a cover for smuggling weapons in defiance of a UN arms embargo. Global Witness, a nongovernmental organization, had gathered extensive evidence about Kouwenhoven’s company, and Dutch prosecutors cited that research when they brought charges. <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2017/apr/22/dutch-arms-trafficker-to-liberia-guus-kouwenhoven-given-war-crimes-conviction>; for the Global Witness study see <https://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/taylormade2.pdf>

Poland/Russia. In 2010 a plane carrying Poland’s president Lech Kaczynski and 95 other people crashed in western Russia, killing everyone on board. The Polish government now has reinvestigated the crash, and the inquiry members say they consider “the possibility of an explosion to be quite likely” based “on an analysis of a conversation between the plane’s pilots and Russian air traffic controllers on the ground.” It is not clear where the recording was kept since 2010. *EurActiv* said members of the previous investigation, which decided the crash was due to human error and bad weather, disagreed with the new report.  
[http://www.eurasiareview.com/12042017-poland-probe-finds-explosion-caused-presidential-jet-crash/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/12042017-poland-probe-finds-explosion-caused-presidential-jet-crash/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Saudi Arabia/United Kingdom/Yemen. London’s Metropolitan Police Service “received a referral of an allegation of war crimes, made against Saudi Arabia, committed in Yemen.” The Met spokesman said the Service is “conducting a ‘scoping exercise’” to decide whether it could identify a suspect and begin an investigation, reported *The Independent*. The police records will be important if in the future a prosecution is brought anywhere in the world. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/saudi-arabia-theresa-may-war-crimes-metropolitan-police-investigate-visit-trade-mission-a7663706.html>

Syria war parties. On April 4 the White Helmets, a Syrian volunteer organization, posted videos it said showed a sarin gas attack on the northern Syrian town of Khan Sheikhoun that killed over 80 people and sickened hundreds more. Dozens of media reports followed; Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and the Russian Defense Ministry claimed the videos were faked. The director general of the United Nations’ Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons said the report of sarin gas at Khan Sheikhoun is one of more than 45 allegations of chemical weapons use, all of which “are recorded by our experts, who follow this every day.” He called the test results on samples taken from victims “incontrovertible” evidence

that sarin or a similar substance was used. At the end of the month, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs said the French “national evaluation” provided “evidence of the use of sarin gas and the Syrian regime’s responsibility” in the April 4 attack. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/18042017-russian-defense-ministry-questions-videos-of-syria-chemical-attack/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29;](http://www.eurasiareview.com/18042017-russian-defense-ministry-questions-videos-of-syria-chemical-attack/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29;) [http://www.eurasiareview.com/29042017-syria-chemical-weapons-allegedly-used-45-times/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29;](http://www.eurasiareview.com/29042017-syria-chemical-weapons-allegedly-used-45-times/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29;) <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/syria/events/article/chemical-attack-in-syria-national-evaluation-presented-by-jean-marc-ayrault>

*Reuters* reported that “most European states” require persons seeking refugee status to produce “documentation that is hard for people from countries such as Syria to obtain.” “States variously call for passports, birth and marriage certificates, proofs of guardianship, documents to prove people lived together, or fresh medical records. Some also expect legally certified translations.” In other works, as one asylum seeker said, they “need paperwork from the regime which is a party in the problematic situation which we, in the first place, are fleeing from.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170426090735-p2p0r/>

### **National news.**

**Afghanistan.** The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, a nongovernmental organization based in London, published a report on child labor in coal mines. The deputy governor of Samangan province, which has a large number of mines, said “more than 1,000 of some 5,000 people working in these mines are underage.” He said his office had written “hundreds of letters to the ministry of mines and industries on the subject, but no action had been taken.” A spokesman for the ministry of mines said it had written “to the ministry of the interior a number of times asking them to act over illegal extraction.” A labor union leader has a copy of a 2014 letter the ministry of labor sent to mine owners confirming “it was illegal to employ children in heavy labor.” Clearly there are enough government records to document the problem. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/12042017-afghanistan-child-labor-in-coal-mines/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/12042017-afghanistan-child-labor-in-coal-mines/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

**Argentina.** For four decades the famous Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have marched weekly in Buenos Aires to pressure the government to clarify the fate of their missing children or grandchildren and to bring the Argentine dictatorship’s torturers and killers to justice. The Mothers have had success, although incomplete, in both quests, but they are worried that the present government is attempting to “whitewash history,” the *Guardian* reported. The government now suggests “the number of victims may have only been around 9,000, citing a provisional figure drawn up by a special commission after the return of democracy in 1983. But the military themselves reported killing 22,000 people in a 1978 communication to Chilean intelligence.” [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/28/mothers-plaza-de-mayo-argentina-anniversary?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm\\_term=223666&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/28/mothers-plaza-de-mayo-argentina-anniversary?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA+-+Collections+2017&utm_term=223666&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection)

**Australia.** “Previously classified documents about Australia’s asylum seeker turnback missions have been released during a landmark court battle, but parts of them will remain secret after a tribunal ruled they would ‘subvert’ operations,” *Guardian Australia* reported. The released records include records of the immigration department, a series of “board ship logs” from customs vessels, and items from a “quasi-military” taskforce. [https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/apr/03/details-of-australias-asylum-seeker-turnback-operations-released-in-foi-battle?utm\\_source=Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=54d2fe3084-Newsletter\\_April\\_2017&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_84a7f06290-54d2fe3084-225732189](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/apr/03/details-of-australias-asylum-seeker-turnback-operations-released-in-foi-battle?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_campaign=54d2fe3084-Newsletter_April_2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_84a7f06290-54d2fe3084-225732189)

**Brazil.** “Brazilian prosecutors are demanding answers after the names of 17 employers profiting [from] human trafficking disappeared from the country’s ‘dirty list’ which names and shames companies engaged in modern slavery,” *Reuters* reported. The list is maintained by the ministry of labor, and the ministry’s website said that as of April 1 “more than 65 employers had been caught by labour inspectors for subjecting workers to conditions akin to slavery.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170417155609-w99nh/>

Brazil is beginning a pilot project to use blockchain technology to record property deeds. For the implications of blockchain technology for archives, see the article by Victoria Lemieux. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/RMJ-12-2015-0042>; <http://www.blockchainubc.ca/main/article/blockchain-ubc-partner--ubitquity--working-on-blockchain-secured-platform-for-real-estate-recordkeeping--announces-historic-pilot-with-a-land-records-bureau-in-brazil>

Canada. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) “for the first time is publicly confirming it uses cellphone surveillance devices in investigations across Canada,” reported *CBC News*. The RCMP’s chief superintendent said that use of a Mobile Device Identifier (MDI) “requires senior police approval as well as getting a judge’s order.” An MDI was used in 19 criminal investigations in 2016; in all but one case (an emergency) the police got a warrant prior to use. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/rcmp-surveillance-imsi-catcher-mdi-stingray-cellphone-1.4056750>

China. “China’s air quality inspectors found problems at more than 3,000 companies in the first three months of this year, of which a large proportion were found to be falsifying data” the Ministry of Environmental Protection reported. *Reuters* said “official data” published at the end of March “showed that air quality was markedly worse in the first two months of the year than the same period of 2016.” [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-pollution-idUSKBN17207B?link\\_id=75&can\\_id=&source=email-media-mentions-march-31-2017&email\\_referrer=media-mentions-march-31-2017&email\\_subject=media-mentions-march-31-2017](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-pollution-idUSKBN17207B?link_id=75&can_id=&source=email-media-mentions-march-31-2017&email_referrer=media-mentions-march-31-2017&email_subject=media-mentions-march-31-2017)

Colombia. As part of the peace agreement with the FARC rebel group the government “inaugurated an historic Truth Commission that will investigate the victimization of civilians during the 52-year war between a multitude of actors, including the state,” *Colombia Reports* wrote. The Commission “will not be able to impose penalties or transfer evidence or confessions to any judicial entity.” <http://colombiareports.com/colombia-creates-historic-truth-commission/>

The International Crisis Group, a nongovernmental organization based in Brussels, reported that on April 4 the FARC leadership “handed over” to the government a “list of all fighters in cantonments, totaling 6,804 full-time guerrilla fighters and 1,541 urban militia guerrilla fighters.” It said “other list(s) with all militia fighters [are] still pending.” <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia>

Croatia. In a libel suit brought by a Tomislav Karamarko, a Croatian politician, against a former official of the Yugoslav State Security Service (SDS) who accused him of being an informer for the SDS, another former SDS officer testified that Karamarko’s records “should exist in official documentation” of the SDS and would confirm his role in a “special operation” codenamed “Trs” (reeds). The court decided to “ask the Croatian State Archives to provide documentation regarding operation ‘Trs’,” *BIRN* reported. [http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/ex-croatian-rightist-leader-called-yugoslav-informer-04-26-2017?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=943e9895ac-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-943e9895ac-319755321](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/ex-croatian-rightist-leader-called-yugoslav-informer-04-26-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=943e9895ac-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-943e9895ac-319755321)

Egypt. *Mekameleen*, an Egyptian opposition satellite channel based in Turkey, posted a video showing what appear to be Egyptian soldiers shooting two blindfolded men in the head, *Al Jazeera* reported, saying it “could not independently verify the video’s authenticity.” The video seems to have been filmed during a raid in December 2016 in the Sinai where the Egyptian army has been accused of carrying out extrajudicial killings and “staging events to make the deaths appear to be casualties of a gun battle.” <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/army-accused-extrajudicial-killings-leaked-video-170421105355148.html>

Jews in Egypt maintained life cycle registers “containing every detail of the births, marriages and deaths of Jews from Alexandria and Cairo, which date back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” Once kept in the two main synagogues “last year, without prior warning, government officials arrived at the synagogues and took away the registers, which are now stored in the Egyptian National Archives” where they are not accessible, reported *The Jewish Chronicle*. “Most Egyptian Jews left the country in two waves, after 1948 and again after 1967,” and some of them “depend on the information in the registers to prove their Jewish status.” <https://www.thejc.com/news/world/vital-papers-proving-jewish-identity-held-back-by-egypt-1.436284>

France/Guadeloupe. In May 1967 at Pointe a Pitre, a labor strike became a major clash between police (Kepis Rouges) and workers, students, and other protesters. By the end of the three days of unrest, at least 87 persons were dead. *Carib Creole News* reported that since 2005 Guadeloupe has demanded a serious inquiry into the killings of May 1967, “but all the archives of the hospitals and the mayor’s office relative to the period have mysteriously disappeared and are not accessible.” <http://www.caraibcreolenews.com/index.php/service-presse/item/9109-guadeloupe-appel-pour-la-verite-la-justice-la-reparation-et-la-rehabilitation-pour-les-victimes-des-massacres-des-26-et-27-mai-1967-a-pointe-a-pitre>

Georgia. In Abkhazia, a break-away part of Georgia, the authorities began “issuing residence permits to ethnic Georgians” who have lived in Abkhazia “for at least ten years since 1999,” *Civil.Ge* reported. “The document allows its owners to retain Georgian citizenship, to reside in the region and cross the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) with the rest of Georgia.” It will not give “full political rights” to the ethnic Georgians, permits them to sell but not purchase property, and if a permit holder leaves Abkhazia for over six months he “would be stripped of the document.” [http://www.eurasiareview.com/20042017-georgia-authorities-use-blockchain-technology-for-developing-land-registry/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/20042017-georgia-authorities-use-blockchain-technology-for-developing-land-registry/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

As in Brazil (see above), Georgia is beginning to register land titles and property transactions with blockchain technology. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/26042017-abkhazia-issuing-residence-permits-to-ethnic-georgians/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/26042017-abkhazia-issuing-residence-permits-to-ethnic-georgians/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Guatemala. After a pre-trial hearing on the Dos Erres massacre case on March 31, the public prosecutor “outlined the charges and evidence against [former president] Rios Montt, including official military documents, eyewitness testimony, and expert reports,” reported *International Justice Monitor*. The judge “determined that there is sufficient evidence” and set the case for trial. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2017/04/rios-montt-to-face-second-genocide-trial-for-the-dos-erres-massacre/>

India. In Kashmir, army men “tied a man to the front of a jeep as a human shield,” reported *Reuters*. After a video showing the incident “circulated widely on social media” police filed a case against the army over the incident. A Kashmiri human rights activist told *Reuters*, “This is not the first human shield case. What is different now is that this case has been documented, thanks to social media.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170417080614-mmua8a/>

Indonesia. In 2015 Indonesian forest fires lasted for months, causing massive air pollution and leading to an estimated 100,000 premature deaths in the region, Friends of the Earth, a nongovernmental organization, wrote. The organization’s Indonesian branch, WALHI, “analyzed satellite data of 181 palm oil company concessions from the 2015 fire season” and published a report on the damage caused. Now a court, which had the report before it as evidence in a citizens’ lawsuit against the government of the province of Central Kalimantan, has ordered the government “to review the permits of palm oil companies associated with massive forest and peat land fires in 2015.” <http://www.ecowatch.com/indonesia-deforestation-palm-oil-2346201626.html>

Ireland. In the course of a trial, “it emerged that a large number of Garda [national police] stations had facilities to record phone calls” and conversations “between dozens of prisoners and their solicitors had been ‘inadvertently recorded’ by the state’s prison service,” reported *The Irish News*. A supreme court judge has been appointed to investigate the phone-taping practice. The government said that the police and the Department of Justice “should ensure the retention and preservation of all tapes, complete a full inventory, and ensure that the tapes can be accessed.” <http://www.irishnews.com/news/2014/04/02/news/judge-appointed-to-probe-garda-call-taping-scandal-87916/>

After a mass grave was found at the Bon Secours mother-and-baby home run by Catholic nuns in the town of Tuam in Galway, a Commission of Investigation was established in 2014 which has not yet finished its investigation. According to *Galway Bay fm*, members of the Galway County Council questioned whether Galway has made available all the archives relating to the home. The Acting CEO said “efforts are focused on making records available in an appropriate manner and in line with statutory requirements on how personal information is dealt with.” <https://galwaybayfm.ie/county-chief-says-archives-tuam-mother-baby-home-made-available/>

Jordan. The Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, a nongovernmental organization based in Amman, issued a statement saying “Jordan lacks an accurate and comprehensive database on work-related injuries, accidents, and diseases. The only data available pertain to cases of workers covered by occupational insurance, which only make up roughly half of the national labor force.” <http://www.phenixcenter.net/en/read-news/171>

Kenya. At a court hearing on a petition brought by survivors of the sexual and gender-based violence that occurred after the 2007 election, a senior prosecutor—the head of the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Division—admitted that prosecutors have never followed up on “allegations of sexual crimes made to two

government-appointed commissions that investigated the violence.” She also said she had not asked the commissions “to share the complaints they received,” although one of them reviewed over 900 such cases, *International Justice Monitor* reported. [https://www.ijmonitor.org/2017/04/witness-says-prosecution-never-followed-up-on-sexual-crimes-allegations-made-to-government-commissions/?utm\\_source=International+Justice+Monitor&utm\\_campaign=b8041194bb-kenya-monitor-rss&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_f42ffeffb9-b8041194bb-49700673](https://www.ijmonitor.org/2017/04/witness-says-prosecution-never-followed-up-on-sexual-crimes-allegations-made-to-government-commissions/?utm_source=International+Justice+Monitor&utm_campaign=b8041194bb-kenya-monitor-rss&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f42ffeffb9-b8041194bb-49700673)

“Kenya’s police watchdog has launched an investigation into a video that appears to show a policeman executing an alleged gang member in Nairobi,” *Newsweek* reported. The police commander told a Kenyan newspaper that the video was “acted” not a real event. <http://www.newsweek.com/eastleigh-kenya-police-shooting-578148>

Lebanon. On the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the start of the civil war, the International Committee of the Red Cross “called on Lebanese authorities to run a project to collect DNA samples and also to pass a law that will help families of the missing get clarity on what happened to them,” the *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. “There is currently no public database or exact numbers for people who went missing during the civil war between 1975-1990 in which an estimated 150,000 people were killed.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170413204723-17j1q/>

Mexico. The National Commission on Human Rights reported that “it had accounted for 855 mass graves across Mexico over the last decade, finding 1,548 corpses” only half of which have been identified, reported *Reuters*. It also said that the official number of “disappeared” people rose to 30,000 by the end of 2016. However, six of Mexico’s 32 federal entities are not in the count because they “failed to respond” to inquiries by the Commission on the number of missing persons. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-violence-idUSKBN1782XN>; <http://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/hidden-graves-count-1143-in-last-10-years/>

Philippines. The Philippine Universal Periodic Review Watch, a “network of faith-based and human rights groups,” told the United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings that it has “documented many of the thousands that were killed without due process, mostly from urban poor communities,” during the term of the present government. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/15042017-philippines-interfaith-group-report-on-killings-to-un/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/15042017-philippines-interfaith-group-report-on-killings-to-un/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Poland. The Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) announced that it had identified the names and biographies of 12 people who were victims of the former communist regime. “Some of them were killed in the Rakowiecka prison in Warsaw, the remains of others – tracked down by the Secret Political Police (UB) and convicted by makeshift military courts – were located in Kielce, Lublin or Bialystok.” The families of the 12 were presented with “identification notes” by Poland’s President at a ceremony. <http://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/934,Further-victims-of-totalitarianism-regain-their-names.html>

Russia. Yury Dimitriyev, an historian who is head of the Karelia province chapter of the rights advocacy group Memorial, was arrested last December and charged with “preparing and circulating child pornography,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* reported. In 1997 Dimitriyev and colleagues discovered the mass grave of more than 9,500 Solovki prison camp inmates executed in 1937-1938; currently he participates “in a Memorial project to create an online database giving details about some 40,000 agents of Stalin’s secret police.” Ominously, while Dimitriyev has been in custody, his “latest research—450 pages of meticulous investigation—and his entire research archive disappeared without a trace.” Thanks to Antoon de Baets for the news. <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-stalin-historian-supporters-reject-child-pornography-charges/28455238.html>

Police searched the Moscow offices of Open Russia, a nongovernmental organization leading a pro-democracy movement. A staff member told *Reuters* “the police were seeking to establish and document links between the foundation’s Russian and British arms to make sure they could ban both.” <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-politics-protests-searches-idUSKBN17T2RC>

*TASS* published an article, translated and published by *Ciel FM*, reporting that Russian President Vladimir Putin had expressed his support for broad access to the military archives, saying it is “fundamentally important to ensure wide access to archival material and ensure its publication. The ability to address the sources . . . is effective against many kinds of speculation and myths.” He called for wide availability of archives through creating websites: “modern quality Internet resources with interactive functions.” <http://www.cielfm.be/poutine-sest-prononce-pour-un-large-acces-aux-archives-militaires/>

To stop conspiracy theories that suggest Hitler did not commit suicide at the end of World War II, “the Russian State Archive is ready to furnish the skull of Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler for any examination to prove its authenticity, its director Larisa Rogova told TASS.” <http://tass.com/society/943789>

Russia/Chechnya. A panel of UN human rights experts issued a statement saying, “We urge the authorities to put an end to the persecution of people perceived to be gay or bisexual in the Chechen Republic who are living in a climate of fear fueled by homophobic speeches by local authorities.” The panel was responding to “reports emerging from Chechnya since March of abductions of men perceived to be gay or bisexual, carried out by local militia and local security forces and followed by arbitrary detention, violence, torture and other ill-treatment.” The abuse is “reported to have taken place at an unofficial detention centre.” Several days later, *Novaya Gazeta* said it had identified six detention centres. A Russian Investigative Committee opened an inquiry, which should create records about the violence, even if the “unofficial centres” do not maintain records. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21501&LangID=E> ; <http://www.newsweek.com/russian-newspaper-reports-chechnya-runs-six-gay-prisons-589383>

Rwanda. A man whose case was transferred to Rwanda from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for his role in the Rwandan genocide, *Reuters* reported. Records of the case would include both ICTR and Rwanda government materials. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-rwanda-genocide-idUSKBN17M1L5>

Serbia. A former Serbian state security official told the murder trial of opposition journalist Slavko Curuvija that the security service destroyed documentary evidence: “According to the statements from the officers who worked for the service, it could be learned that documentation from all over Serbia was destroyed at the Belgrade Security Institute in the night between October 7 and 8, 2000,” which was two days after Slobodan Milosevic was overthrown, *BIRN* noted. [http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-security-destroyed-documents-about-journalist-s-murder-04-06-2017?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=e8c501ab40-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-e8c501ab40-319755321](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-security-destroyed-documents-about-journalist-s-murder-04-06-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=e8c501ab40-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-e8c501ab40-319755321)

The Humanitarian Law Center responded to Serbia’s official report to the UN Committee for Human Rights, demonstrating that the state is “manipulating data on the effectiveness of the prosecution of war crimes in Serbia.” <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=33529&lang=de>

Spain. The government “acknowledged that the Francisco Franco National Foundation has documents classified as secret, despite being a private body,” *El Telegrafo* reported. A digital copy may have been provided to the government; it is not clear whether the documents have been withheld for privacy or national security interests and whether they would shed light on the continuing debates over the civil war and the subsequent repression. <http://www.eltelegrafo.com.ec/noticias/cultura/7/archivos-reabren-debate-sobre-el-franquismo>

Sudan. Public opposition to the use of cyanide in gold mining and processing near villages has led to “increasing protest among residents who feel unsafe,” reported *Africa Times*. Some 30 companies are mining in South Kordofan state and “at least” 11 are using cyanide. Not only corporate records but police records should show the extent of the cyanide operations because “many” of the mining companies are working “under police protection” and “the Sudanese Ministry of Metal sent 190 officers to protect facilities” at the El Hadaf mining company alone. <https://africetimes.com/2017/03/30/sudan-environmental-activist-on-mining-questioned-by-security-forces/>

Thailand. The UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) “urged the Thai government to remedy continued abuses on fishing vessels operating in Thai waters,” reported the *Guardian*. Among the complaints by the ILO was that “the majority of fishers, particularly migrant workers, have their SIDs [Seafarer Identification Documents] withheld by employers.” Calling the practice a “serious problem that may increase fishers’ vulnerability to abuse, by leaving workers undocumented, reducing their freedom of movement and preventing them from leaving an employment relationship,” ILO requested the government “to take the necessary measures to ensure that the confiscation of identity documents is prohibited by law, to investigate such abuses and to punish those responsible who are in breach of the law.” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/mar/30/thailand-failing-to-stamp-out-murder-slavery-fishing-industry-starvation-forced->

[labour-trafficking?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](#) ; for the ILO report on seamen [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_549113.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_549113.pdf)

The *Associated Press* reported that a man in Thailand hanged his 11-month-old daughter “on Facebook Live and then killed himself.” The police found the bodies “after receiving reports of the video.” Facebook took down the video late in the afternoon the day after the man made the broadcast.

<http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-thailand-facebook-live-killing-20170425-story.html>

Ukraine. In 2015 Ukraine’s parliament passed a law opening the country’s Soviet-era secret police (KGB) archives. The records are held at the historical archives of Ukraine’s security service, but they will “eventually” be transferred to the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* reported. The director of the security archives said there are no exemptions for privacy, but warned that the archives are not complete: “Documents weren’t always saved in their entirety through World War II. Moreover, after the democratic opposition captured the [East German] Stasi archives, the KGB in 1990 ordered a purging of some records.” <http://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-kgb-archives-secret-police-archives-opened-anniversary/28445724.html>

United Kingdom. *The Times* reported that Home Office records show “convicted slavers have paid millions in compensation in the past three years but less than 5 per cent has reached their victims.” The Home Office said the figures were “from confiscation orders made by judges, and showed only part of the amount paid by traffickers to victims” which might have been paid through “compensation orders.” However, Hope for Justice, a nongovernmental organization, said only four compensation orders have been issued in the past three years. [https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/slaves-miss-out-on-3m-compensation-fcz5w9r7g?CMP=TNLEmail\\_118918\\_1770475](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/slaves-miss-out-on-3m-compensation-fcz5w9r7g?CMP=TNLEmail_118918_1770475)

The National Archives released 24 previously top secret files from the UK security service MI5. “The records cover a range of subjects and span the interwar years, Second World War and post-war era up to the mid 1960s; the personal files include individuals classed as Second World War German intelligence agents, Soviet intelligence agents, communists, and suspected communist and Russian sympathisers.” <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/latest-mi5-files-released-2/>

United Kingdom/Northern Ireland. “The British spy known as Stakeknife has been directly linked with 18 murders,” reported *The Times* quoting Northern Ireland’s prosecution service. Stakeknife “infiltrated the IRA [Irish Republican Army] at a high level while working for the British State in the 1980s.” His role came to light and the investigation into his career “was launched after the police ombudsman for Northern Ireland passed a confidential file to the DPP [Director of Public Prosecutions].” [https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/ireland/stakeknives-links-to-18-murders-exposed-m6779mw5n?CMP=TNLEmail\\_118918\\_1666006](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/ireland/stakeknives-links-to-18-murders-exposed-m6779mw5n?CMP=TNLEmail_118918_1666006)

United States. *The Lancet* published a series of research papers on health inequalities in the United States, drawing on many kinds of Federal government data. The researchers found that “the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans now live 10 to 15 years longer than the poorest 1 percent.” <http://www.thelancet.com/series/america-equity-equality-in-health>

The Trump administration’s online database of immigrants in detention, launched during April, included the names of children in immigration custody. The Department of Homeland Security has now removed the data for children, but “attorneys representing immigrants expressed anger and worry over the release of names that were supposed to be protected” including information on adults seeking asylum, reported the *Los Angeles Times*. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-children-in-immigration-database-20170426-story.html>

The Ramapoughs are an aboriginal group in the Mid-Atlantic region, mostly living on the border of the states of New York and New Jersey. Although recognized by New Jersey, the tribe does not have federal recognition, excluding them from a variety of rights and services, the *New York Times* reported. Part of their problem in gaining recognition arose from a census classification system used in New Jersey where “until 1870, the state allowed for residents to be counted only as white, back free or black slave, causing many Ramapoughs to be misclassified.” [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/14/nyregion/ramapough-tribe-fights-pipeline.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/14/nyregion/ramapough-tribe-fights-pipeline.html?_r=0)

United States/Florida. “The *Tampa Bay Times* asked all of Florida’s nearly 400 law enforcement agencies for reports generated when an officer fired a gun and someone was injured or killed, from January 1, 2009, to December 31, 2014.” After receiving the reports the newspaper “supplemented the documents with Florida Department of Law Enforcements reports, subsequent newspaper and television news coverage, press releases, criminal and civil court documents and fresh interviews with police, witnesses and families of those shot.” The paper created a public database with the findings, which shows that at least 827 people were shot by police—one every 2 ½ days. <http://www.tampabay.com/projects/2017/investigations/florida-police-shootings/about-this-project-methodology/>

United States/Oklahoma. A major investigative report from *BuzzFeed News* said the Shadow Mountain psychiatric hospital is a “profoundly troubled facility where frequent violence endangers patients and staff alike, where children as young as 5 are separated from their parents and held in dangerous situations, and where wards lack adequate staffing and staff lack adequate training.” The reporters used “police records, state inspection reports, [records of] lawsuits, as well as interviews” and internal surveillance videos. [https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosalindadams/shadow-mountain?utm\\_term=.rvwQQKpyyd#.wdZRRw9ZZA](https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosalindadams/shadow-mountain?utm_term=.rvwQQKpyyd#.wdZRRw9ZZA)

Zambia. In 2015 the Supreme Court of Zambia found the Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) guilty of “gross recklessness” and damage to the health of villagers. The Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) issued two “Compliance and Environmental Restoration Orders” to KCM. The *Lusaka Times* reported that “documents obtained from KCM’s Legal Department show that the mining giant has been emitting sulphur dioxide and cadmium which are 10.3 times and 13.41 times above the statutory limits respectively. According to leaked copies of the orders, ZEMA now wants KCM to take measures to reduce or eliminate the risk on human health and the environment.” <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2017/03/28/kcm-polluting-environment-10-times-statuary-limit/>

### **Conferences, publications.**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is holding a consultation on 7 July in Geneva on “ways to prevent, contain and/or mitigate the detrimental impact of the damage to or destruction of cultural heritage on the enjoyment of human rights, including cultural rights by all, and on best practices in this regard.” <https://mcprodadas.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/NGO1%20English-v1.pdf?et rid=206152460&et cid=1303454>

Archivists Hana Habjan (Slovenia) and Branka Molnar (Croatia) ask for answers to a survey on what knowledge and skills are expected of archivists who manage e-records. The survey is <http://www.mojaanketa.si/anketa/600221363/> or write to [hana.habjan@zal-lj.si](mailto:hana.habjan@zal-lj.si)

An international workshop on “Data Sharing, Holocaust Documentation and the Digital Humanities. Best Practices, Case Studies, Benefits” will be held in Venice on 29-30 June 2017, organized by Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea in conjunction with the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI); for information contact Laura Brazzo [laurabrazzo@cdec.it](mailto:laurabrazzo@cdec.it)

The Sedona Conference issued for public comment “International Principles for Addressing Data Protection in Cross-Border Government & Internal Investigations: Principles, Commentary & Best Practices.” <https://thesedonaconference.org/publication/International%20Investigations%20Principles?>

Good reads. Amnesty International annual review of the use of the death penalty worldwide <http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/press-releases/death-penalty-2016-alarming-surge-in-recorded-executions-sees-highest-toll-in-more-than-25-years>

Al Jazeera on the sale of spyware to countries “notorious for human rights abuse” <http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/europe/2017/04/revealed-surveillance-world-illegal-trades-170409085723858.html>

Report of PHEME, a multinational project funded by the European Commission focusing on truth in online media, “Pathology of a Fake News Story” <https://medium.com/thoughts-on-journalism/pathology-of-a-fake-news-story-aa572e6764e8>

*Legaltech News* published two useful articles in April. One was on the use of video depositions and the advances in “being able to automatically sync video to transcripts.” The other asked “Should you Facebook the Jury?” and noted that while “social media profiles can present a trove of data points for jury selection, the ethics and legality of researching jurors online depends heavily on jurisdiction.”

<http://www.legaltechnews.com/id=1202783941225/Video-Depositions-May-Come-of-Age-in-the-Cloud-Era?mcode=0&curindex=0&curpage=ALL>; <http://www.legaltechnews.com/id=1202784633675/Should-You-Facebook-the-Jury-Yes-No-Probably?kw=Should%20You%20%27Facebook%27%20the%20Jury?%20Yes.%20No.%20Probably.&et=editorial&bu=Law%20Technology%20News&cn=20170426&src=EMC-Email&pt=Afternoon%20Update>

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