
News of March 2018

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Commentary.

Borders and edges, boundaries and walls and fences: they simultaneously keep out and keep in. On a farm, for instance, the yell, “The cattle are out!” means everyone rushes to round up the animals and get them back safely inside the fence where they belong—that is, keep them in. Or think of the Iron Curtain, which was erected to keep in, for example, the East Germans who might have strayed to the West. Then there is the fence that keeps out: your neighbor’s dog does not come in and jump on your toddler; the U.S. president wants to build a wall to keep Central Americans from entering the U.S.

Borders featured in disputes in March. Bolivia brought a case against Chile at the International Court of Justice, trying to “reclaim its coastal territory from Chile” to gain access to the Pacific Ocean, which it lost in the 1904 peace treaty that ended the 19th century War of the Pacific. Landlocked, Bolivia wants the court to order Chile to “negotiate in good will” over access to the sea because the 1904 treaty was “signed under duress.” In the early 1970s the two countries, both under dictatorships, worked together in Plan Condor, the South American states’ coordinated hunt to eliminate anyone linked to left-wing ideas. In 1975 Chile entered into negotiations with Bolivia and proposed an exchange of territory that would give Bolivia a corridor to the sea, but the negotiations broke down and the two governments have not had formal diplomatic relations since 1978. The attitudes of the people living in the proposed area whose citizenship would change from Chilean to Bolivian do not seem to be part of either state’s argument.
https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Bolivias-Morales-Asks-for-Just-and-Accurate-Ruling-in-Sea-Access-Claim-20180319-0007.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10;
https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Chile-Rebukes-Bolivia-at-International-Court-of-Justice-Denies-Being-Isolationist-Villain--20180322-0003.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10;
<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Bolivia-to-Chile-at-International-Court-of-Justice-You-Took-Our-Coast-by-Force-20180326-0005.html>

Across the Pacific, Australia and Timor-Leste signed a treaty, mediated by a commission established under the UN convention on the Law of the Sea, defining the permanent maritime boundary between them. The border was seen by Timor-Leste as an issue of sovereignty, while Australia “sought a boundary that was aligned with its continental shelf.” The basic question, however, was the exploitation of the oil and gas fields between the two countries and the associated pipeline and processing plants. In the background was the 1989 Timor Gap Treaty that was signed between Australia and Indonesia, while Timor-Leste was still ruled by Jakarta, and the 1972 “continental shelf boundary” agreement between them. Timor-Leste has yet to reach an agreement with Indonesia on its maritime boundaries, and Timor-Leste’s petroleum minister said those negotiations could be “complicated.”
http://www.eurasiareview.com/28032018-timor-leste-australia-maritime-boundary-treaty-victory-for-dili-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29; http://www.eurasiareview.com/14032018-bullied-relations-australia-east-timor-and-natural-resources-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

In Europe, Kosovo’s parliament ratified the border with Montenegro, which the European Union required for Kosovars to gain visa-free travel to the EU states.
<https://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/xx-kosovo-parliament-approves-montenegro-border-deal-03-21-2018>
Meanwhile, the border disputes in Kashmir, in Ngorno-Karabakh, in Gaza, and in war-torn Syria continue to foster death and despair.

Settling disagreements by international courts or mediation is surely preferable to continued conflict. In preparation for such negotiations, it is helpful if not essential for communities to build “collective territorial viewpoints.” The techniques and resources outlined in the *Manual of Collective Mapping: Critical Cartographic Resources for Territorial Processes of Collaborative Creation* by the Argentine team of Julia Risler and Pablo Ares are useful tools in such processes. https://issuu.com/iconoclasistas/docs/manual_mapping_ingles Whether mapping the location of oil and gas, the route to the sea, or a fence between neighbors, a border line is socially constructed, and its acceptance depends on acknowledging the human rights of people who live on both sides of it. Archives maintain the drawn maps and the treaties, but those documents, important as they are, only recognize the current political reality. It is the intertwined social threads that make a boundary real, even if the cattle do get out.

HRWG News. In late January the HRWG contacted UNESCO Assistant Director-General Frank LaRue regarding the future direction of the UNESCO Memory of the World program. With the agreement of Mr. LaRue, who is no longer with UNESCO, the exchange of letters is attached as an annex to this issue.

International news.

African Development Bank (ADB). The ADB board of directors approved the Bank’s Records Management and Archives Policy. <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/african-development-bank-board-approves-records-management-policy-17898/>

Council of Europe. The Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation “to member states on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries.” It acknowledges both that the internet “plays a particularly important role with respect to the right to freedom of expression” and that it “has facilitated an increase of privacy-related risks and infringements and has spurred the spread of certain forms of harassment, hatred and incitement to violence.” <https://rm.coe.int/draft-recommendation-on-internet-intermediaries-7th-revised-version-/1680770c37>

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The 24 Latin American and Caribbean nations who are members of ECLAC adopted “the first binding regional agreement to protect the rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.” The agreement will be open for signature by all Latin American and Caribbean states at the UN in September. <https://www.cepal.org/en/subsidiary-bodies/acuerdo-regional-acceso-la-informacion-la-participacion-publica-acceso-la-justicia>

European Court of Human Rights. The Court rejected Ireland’s case that 14 men interned in Northern Ireland in the 1970s were subjected to torture, *Irish Times* reported. The case had been decided in 2014, but Ireland argued that since that ruling it had discovered “new documents” showing “that the UK knew of the long-term effects the interrogation techniques used on the men would have.” <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/treatment-of-hooded-men-not-torture-human-rights-court-rules-1.3433551>

International Criminal Court (ICC). The Appeals Chamber said that Ahmad al Faqi al Mahdi, who was convicted of war crimes in Mali, cannot know the identity of individual victims applying for reparations (he was ordered to pay 2.7 million Euros in collective and individual reparations). The Appeals Chamber said the Trust Fund for Victims has the responsibility for receiving and screening the applications for reparations, reported *International Justice Monitor*, and victims dissatisfied with the Fund’s decision can apply to the trial chamber for reconsideration. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/03/appeals-chamber-slightly-amends-reparations-order-in-al-mahdi->

[case/?utm_source=International+Justice+Monitor&utm_campaign=3645a57a6c-international-justice-news&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f42ffeffb9-3645a57a6c-49700673](https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/03/appeals-judges-affirm-witness-tampering-convictions-against-bemba-and-his-lawyers/)

The Appeals Chamber of the ICC upheld the witness tampering convictions of Jean-Pierre Bemba and four others, but overturned the conviction on “presentation of false oral testimony.” The Court decided that the “false testimony” rule “is applicable to the presentation of false or forged documentary evidence” not oral evidence, *International Justice Monitor* reported. The judges found that the prosecutors did not violate international privacy law by accessing information on money transfers as shown in Western Union records and that the “admission of detention center records of Bemba’s communications” was appropriate. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/03/appeals-judges-affirm-witness-tampering-convictions-against-bemba-and-his-lawyers/>

The government of the Philippines announced it is withdrawing from the Court. https://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Philippines-to-Withdraw-from-the-ICC-Immediately-Duterte-20180314-0044.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=16

Interpol. “Boys are more likely than girls to suffer the worst forms of online sexual exploitation,” although girls account for two-thirds of the victims,” according to a report by Interpol and a Bangkok nongovernmental organization, reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. “The findings were based on an analysis of a database of over one million abuse images and videos from around the globe collected by Interpol.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180307074533-tx3zv/>

Kosovo Specialist Chambers. The chief prosecutor said his office has “collected around 700,000 pages of documents, some 6,000 videos, transcripts and other items during investigations of possible war crimes,” *BIRN* reported. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-specialist-prosecutor-gives-final-speech-before-resigning-03-23-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=56b57bd16d-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-56b57bd16d-319755321

Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT). Two UK-based professors asked MICT to give them amicus curiae (friend of the court) status at the Radovan Karadzic appeal hearing. They have “examined Karadzic’s first-instance verdict using a new computer program called CISpaces, analyzing the argumentation used in the court’s decision,” *BIRN* reported. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/computer-analysis-could-show-karadzic-s-intent-in-srebrenica--03-07-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=6ca9a25865-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-6ca9a25865-319755321

At the trial of Serbian State Security Service (SDB) chiefs Jovica Stanisic and Frank Simatovic for war crimes in Croatia in 1991, a prosecution military expert quoted from reports of the Yugoslav People’s Army and the Serb Territorial Defence forces. *BIRN* said the expert claimed that the reports show the SDB chiefs had the “authority to command.” http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgrade-controlled-fighters-who-committed-crimes-in-croatia-03-07-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=6ca9a25865-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-6ca9a25865-319755321

United Nations. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued a wide-ranging “General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.” It asserted that “women, girls, men and boys are affected differently by climate change and disasters, with many women and girls experiencing greater risks, burdens and impacts.” CEDAW made several dozen recommendations, including ones relating to data collection and access to information. It called on states to ensure “affordable, or if necessary, free access to legal services, including legal aid, as well as to official documents such as birth, death and marriage certificates and land registration documents/deeds” (38c) and to “empower , capacitate and provide resources, if necessary through donor support, to the national institutions responsible for

collecting, consolidating and analyzing disaggregated data across all relevant sectors” (39c).

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_37_8642_E.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The High Commissioner called for “allegations of atrocities committed against the Muslim Rohingya minority in Myanmar to be referred to the International Criminal Court for prosecution,” *Reuters* reported. Nearly 700,000 Rohingya fled into Bangladesh since August 2017 and “many have provided harrowing testimonies of executions and rapes of civilians by Myanmar security forces.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-un/u-n-rights-boss-wants-allegations-of-crimes-against-rohingya-referred-to-icc-idUSKCN1GL12B>

UNICEF. UNICEF said “25 million child marriages were prevented worldwide in the last decade, with the largest reduction seen in South Asia,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. In a bad-news-good-news statement, UNICEF’s chief of child protection said that in India “27% of girls, nearly 1.5 million girls, get married before they turn 18”; however, “this is a sharp decline from 47% a decade ago.” UNICEF said “child marriage adds to health, education and abuse risks and increases the chance of intergenerational poverty.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180306000122-fgju5/>

World/general news.

Business. The French company Lafarge is accused of paying bribes to ISIS to keep its cement plant

operating in Syria, although workers in the plant were in mortal danger. In a long feature article, the *New York Times* reported that “local managers tried to mask the payments with fake invoices” signed by the “deputy chief responsible for Syria.” These payments “were telegraphed in monthly security committee meetings between officials at Lafarge headquarters and the Syrian affiliate” and “minutes of the meetings were distributed to other Lafarge officials, including the chief executive.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-03 and 06. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/business/isis-is-coming-how-a-french-company-pushed-the-limits-in-war-torn-syria.html>

Amnesty International released a report “Negligence in the Niger Delta: Decoding Shell and Eni’s Poor Record on Oil Spills.” According to Nigerian government regulations, oil company representatives, “accompanied by government and community representatives, are supposed to visit oil spill sites 24 hours after reporting a spill” and produce a Joint Investigation Visit [JIV] report with “the date the spill started, its location, its likely cause and the amount of oil spilled. In line with industry practice, the companies usually take photographs as well.” Shell began publishing its JIV reports in 2011 and Eni in 2014, and the government began posting them in 2015. Using crowdsourcing research by 3545 people in 142 countries, Amnesty analyzed “3592 JIV documents and photographs,” including handwritten reports. While acknowledging that Shell and Eni “may be more transparent than other companies operating in the Niger Delta,” Amnesty said its “analysis of this information shows that much of it is unreliable and misleading. This could mean that some communities are not receiving the right amounts of compensation or any at all, and also that the full extent of oil contamination is not being properly reported.” <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR4479702018ENGLISH.PDF>

A similar report focused on Exxon oil company. Produced by Global Witness, it said “Exxon is complicit in oil sector corruption in Liberia.” The investigation used “publicly available data published by the Liberian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), a semi-autonomous Liberian agency that requires natural resources companies to report money they pay to the government.” From LEITI information on how much money Exxon paid to Liberia’s oil agency NOCAL for exploration rights, Global Witness argued that Exxon “knew its purchase might enrich former Liberian politicians,”

“structured the deal in a way it hoped would bypass US anti-corruption laws,” and “knew Liberia’s corrupt oil agency had previously bribed officials to approve oil deals.” This took place in 2013, while Liberia was short of money as it attempted to rebuild after 14 years of civil war.
https://www.globalwitness.org/documents/19335/Global_Witness_Exxon_Liberia_report_March2018_medres.pdf

The Kobe Steel company’s “fake data scandal appears to have been wider than it had originally said in October,” reported the *New York Times*. The company “identified 163 additional customers that purchased products affected by the fake data . . . bringing the total to 688.” The quality of the steel, aluminum and copper produced by the Japanese company, which is used in aircraft, cars, and nuclear power plants, among others, was falsified by inspectors. For background see *HRWG News* 2017-10.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/06/business/kobe-steel-ceo-resigns.html>

In a merger of quite breathtaking scope, “Consilio, a global leader in eDiscovery, document review and legal consulting services, and Advanced Discovery, a global eDiscovery and risk management provider, have announced a definitive agreement to unite their worldwide operations,” *Business Wire* reported. The new company will have 14 data centers and 23 document review facilities in 11 countries.
https://www.bizjournals.com/businesswire/press_releases/2018/03/21/20180321005774

Human rights defenders. “A survey by the Business and Human Rights Resource Center recorded a 34% global rise in attacks against human rights activists last year, including 120 alleged murders and hundreds of other cases involving threats, assaults and intimidation,” *The Guardian* reported. Of the 388 attacks documented, land rights activists linked to mining, agribusiness and renewable energy sectors were found to be in the greatest danger. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/09/human-rights-activists-growing-risk-attacks-and-killings-study-claims>

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund, Memria.org, and others launched a project called “I Defend Rights” to “make audible the voices of hundreds of Human Rights Defenders from every part of the world.” They invite people to help “build a massive public audio archive” by recording the answers to three questions; submitters can remain anonymous. It is not clear who will preserve the audio recordings.
<https://www.idefendrights.org/>

Legal matters. Jason Baron, a U.S. lawyer specializing in issues of electronic documents, gave an interview to *eDiscovery Daily*. Commenting on the European Union’s [EU] General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] that will come into effect in May, he said, “On the issue of record retention, GDPR actually represent a sea-change in the way one goes about thinking about a corporate firm’s retention obligations.” Noting that, at least in the U.S., laws usually require a minimum period for keeping records, “the GDPR is flipping that long-held assumption. The specter of having an EU audit where your firm holds petabytes of data that involve potential personal information that has been . . . lying around for a decade or more after a retention period has ended is, shall we say, problematic.” <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/jason-r-baron-of-drinker-biddle-reath-36186/>

Medical records. *The Lancet* published a study of the geographic distribution of cholera cases in sub-Saharan Africa. The researchers used cholera data from 2010 to 2016 from “the World Health Organization, Medecins Sans Frontieres, ProMED, situation reports from Relief Web and other websites, several Ministries of Health, and the scientific literature” as well as “sub-national reporting data directly from the Ministries of Health of Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Sudan,” and public data from UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and UNICEF. Ultimately they had 279 datasets covering 2283 locations. “Although cholera occurs throughout sub-Saharan Africa, its highest incidence is

concentrated in a small proportion of the continent. Prioritising high-risk areas could substantially increase the efficiency of cholera control programmes,” the researchers wrote. “The distribution of cholera will change, but historic trends are usually the best evidence available about future disease incidence, and our confidence in future projections will be highest when past variation is low.” [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)33050-7/fulltext?{\\$trackingTag}](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)33050-7/fulltext?{$trackingTag})

In 1918 influenza killed between 1 and 2% of the world’s population. A team of researchers “scoured archives from a number of cities and countries around the world” to look for “epidemiological patterns.” They found that the flu came in waves; further, that persons who had had a previous similar virus had a milder case and were more likely to survive. They hope the “wave” findings will help public health officials “better prepare for future health disasters.” <https://theconversation.com/how-historical-disease-detectives-are-solving-mysteries-of-the-1918-flu-91887>

Using Uganda as a model, researchers combined Uganda’s census and election data and village boundary information with weather and climate data from the African desk of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to study infectious diseases, particularly hydrocephalus in infants. Hydrocephalus “has a pattern related to the rainfall seasons which varies by location,” *Eurasia Review* reported. With the data, the researchers said they are able to “pinpoint the address of every baby with hydrocephalus and correlate that to a square on the satellite rainfall maps,” thereby identifying “vulnerable areas for epidemic diseases.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/21032018-study-of-climate-change-could-lead-to-understanding-future-of-infectious-disease/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Some diseases are inherited, called Mendelian diseases after Gregor Mendel who discovered the fundamental rules of genetics on inherited characteristics. Researchers at Vanderbilt University (U.S.) and colleagues used DNA samples and records in Vanderbilt’s electronic health records system on 21,701 patients of European descent to study Mendelian diseases, they reported in *Science*. They compared the symptoms documented for each patient with those seen in 1,204 known Mendelian diseases. They found that 3.7% of patients carried a genetic variant linked to a disease—the strategy was “startlingly effective at identifying potential causes of disease”—and concluded “the best solution might be to sequence the entire genome of every patient,” but such a policy “would create an unmanageable glut of genetic data.” <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6381/1233>; https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/health/genetic-mutations-diagnosis.html?rref=collection%2Fcolumn%2Fmatter&action=click&contentCollection=science®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=3&pgtype=collection

Privacy. Cambridge Analytica, the U.K. company that used data from Facebook and other sources to compile psychological traits that affect voter behavior, was in the news for its apparent influence on elections in the U.S., Kenya, Ukraine and Russia, and the Brexit vote in the U.K. As the political scandals broke and questions were raised about the nature and volume of the Facebook data that had been used (apparently 87 million accounts), a web developer asked Facebook and Google for all the information they had stored on him, which they provided. He wrote in the *New Statesman* that the “scale is alarming,” including “dozens of files” he had “explicitly deleted.” “They are the drug addict of data,” he charged. <https://www.newstatesman.com/2018/03/i-asked-facebook-and-google-all-information-they-had-me-what-i-discovered>

Refugees. DIFD, the foreign assistance arm of the U.K. government, funded a project by Caribou Digital to examine “data requirements for service delivery within refugee camps.” Looking at the procedures for registering individuals and considering the basic human rights principle that persons must consent to the information held about

them by institutions such as refugee organizations, the research concluded that “the truth of the matter is that in many humanitarian emergencies informed consent cannot be obtained” and “aid agencies must therefore pay more attention to the way in which identity systems affect the lives and livelihoods of the forcibly displaced, both positively and negatively.” <https://medium.com/caribou-digital/the-refugee-identity-bfc60654229a>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Africa/France. French president Emmanuel Macron appointed a commission of two experts to make plans for the repatriation of African artifacts held in French museums, *allAfrica* reported. The experts are to present their findings by November. Museum archives will be essential sources for the commission researchers. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201803140555.html>

Argentina/Guatemala. An Argentine sociologist who has “investigated Argentine military training to Guatemala” testified at the trial of 5 senior military officials for crimes against humanity, aggravated sexual violation of Emma Molina Theissen, and the enforced disappearance of her brother in 1981. The expert used both Argentine military documents and declassified U.S. government documents to demonstrate the “similarities in the use of enforced disappearance . . . noting the specific ways in which the Argentine military helped train their Guatemalan counterparts in methods of detaining, interrogating, and disappearing suspected subversives,” the *International Justice Monitor’s* court reporters wrote. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/03/the-molina-theissen-trial-witness-illustrates-the-impact-of-argentine-military-training-in-guatemala/>

Balkan States. *BIRN* published a summary of the “little enthusiasm” that Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia have shown for prosecuting “alleged criminals whose case files were sent to them by the UN tribunal in the Hague.” The Tribunal “transferred 25 specific case files and additional dossiers to prosecutors in the former Yugoslav countries, but many investigations were not followed up and the trials that have been staged ended with mixed outcomes.” The Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT), the successor to the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, told *BIRN*, “So far the liaison prosecutors have received more than 1.2 million pages of evidence for use in national war crimes cases” as well as access to the Hague database of more than 9 million pages of documents. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/suspects-evade-justice-as-prosecutors-ignore-un-war-files-03-12-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=bfc61b2b65-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-bfc61b2b65-319755321

Belgium/Burundi. Senators in Burundi demanded “the repatriation of all the archives on Burundi, illegally guarded in Belgium,” its former colonial power, reported *Agence Anadolu*. <https://f.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/burundi-les-s%C3%A9nateurs-demandent-le-rapatriement-des-archives-gard%C3%A9es-en-belgique-/1089551>

Belgium/Burundi/Congo/Rwanda. The lower house of the Federal Parliament in Belgium passed a motion recognizing the “segregation” of the persons born of a “white father and a black mother” in the former Belgian colonies. “Thousands” of these children were separated from their mothers and sent to care homes or adopted by Belgian families. Among other provisions, the resolution asks the government to facilitate the consultation of colonial archives. The association of the children said it wanted a law to “provide easier access to the archives, solve certain administrative problems, such as the absence of a birth certificate” and allow persons “deprived of Belgian nationality to acquire it,” reported *Metrotime*. <https://fr.metrotime.be/2018/03/07/news/unanimite-autour-dune-resolution-reconnaissant-la-segregation-des-metis/>

Bosnia/United States. Once again a Bosnian Serb living in the U.S. has been convicted of making false statements on his application for residence. He failed to disclose that

he was a member of a brigade that was part of the forces responsible for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. *BIRN* reported that after serving an 18 month jail term he will be sent back to Bosnia. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnian-serb-sentenced-in-usa-for-laying-about-war-past-03-30-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=5e90bb6c47-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-5e90bb6c47-319755321

Chile/Sweden. In 2013 residents of Arica, Chile, brought a lawsuit in Sweden against the Swedish company Boliden, which in the mid-1980s exported “smelter sludge” to Arica. The residents of Arica claimed health and environmental damages from the sludge dumped in their community. Boliden argued that the exports “were carried out responsibly,” *Reuters* reported, and the court has now ruled in Boliden’s favor. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-10. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-boliden-lawsuit/swedish-court-rules-in-favor-of-boliden-in-chile-waste-export-case-idUSKCN1GK1JQ>

France/Bulgaria. The writer Julia Kristeva was born in Bulgaria but has lived in France since 1966. The Bulgarian government Dossier Commission, which is to identify publicly those who worked for the communist-era secret services, announced that Kristeva had been an agent known by the code name “Sabina.” The Commission posted online the entire dossier on Kristeva, who denies ever collaborating, reported the *Sofia Globe*. <https://sofiaglobe.com/2018/03/30/bulgarias-dossier-commission-posts-julia-kristeva-files-online/>

France/Romania. Six letters written by Emil Cioran, the philosopher, to his son between 1936 and 1941 were published by *Nouvelle Revue Francaise*. Cioran was born in Romania but immigrated to France in 1937. The letters were found in the archives of Romania’s National Council for the Study of the Securitate (the communist-era secret police), which *Le Petit Journal* said has a special fonds titled “manuscripts of writers” containing about “25 kilometers of archival documents, prohibited works, memoirs, notices, novels, collections of poetry and letters.” <https://lepetitjournal.com/bucarest/communaute/emil-cioran-les-lettres-confisquées-par-la-securitate-en-exclusivite-224907>

France/Rwanda. *Le Monde* reported, “Twenty-four years after the genocide, access to the archives [on the 1994 killings] remains fraught with difficulties, in France and Rwanda,” but a consensus is growing that the archives should be completely opened. It said the Service historique de la defense (defense department archives) alone has 210 boxes of archives from more than 40 different units that relate to Rwanda 1990-1998. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/03/17/rwanda-le-temps-des-archives_5272373_3212.html

France/Tunisia. The Tunisian truth commission announced that it has “obtained part of the archives” of Tunisia that are in France, *Espace Manager* reported. The records concern the 1955 agreements on the exploitation by France of Tunisian oil, salt, water, phosphates and other resources. The president of the commission said the French documents about the battle of Bizerte (a French naval base) “remain secret” and the commission is trying to obtain documents regarding the installation at Bizerte of a base for the use of nuclear weapons. <https://www.espacemanager.com/livd-obtient-des-archives-secretes-de-la-france-concernant-la-tunisie.html>

Germany/Tanzania. Tanzanian activists and “at least one government official” want Germany to repatriate the human remains that were collected before World War II and are now held by “at least” 4 German institutions, reported *Hyperallergic Media Inc*. The institutions’ records should provide critical provenance information. <https://hyperallergic.com/433003/tanzania-repatriation-human-remains-germany/>

Germany/United Kingdom. “Files from the vaults of the Stasi reveal their frustration with the ‘so-called left’ of the Labour Party and the British anti-nuclear movement during the last years of the Cold War,” *The Times* reported. It “obtained” more than

300 pages of East German records, which it said showed “that the feared Communist secret police were disappointed with their access and influence in the party. Records spanning 20 years until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 were disclosed in the wake of fruitless searches for Stasi files on Jeremy Corbyn after the revelation that he met a Czechoslovak spy in London several times in the 1980s.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2018-02. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/files-record-stasi-scorn-for-labour-in-the70s-k8jzjxvqs>

Israel/North Africa. Israel “said it would open state archives on the mass immigration to Israel from North Africa in the early years of the state after a television series documented systematic, historical racism toward the newcomers,” *Times of Israel* reported. “The decision applies to the National Archives, police archives and the Central Zionist Archives, provided the information does not harm national security or infringe on the privacy of individuals named in the records.” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-racism-claims-state-to-open-archives-on-jewish-north-african-immigration/>

Israeli/Palestine/Turkey. The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center of the Israeli Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center reported that the head of the waqf (Islamic charitable endowment) in Bethlehem gave the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) minister of religious endowments the files he obtained from the Ottoman State Archives “dealing with waqf property in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.” The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, which is working with the PA to locate documents in the Ottoman Archives, gave them to him, *Al Jazeera* reported. The Meir Amit Center alleged that the PA is looking for documentation of Palestinian ownership of lands “to prevent the land from being sold to Israel.” <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/palestinian-authority-collaboration-turkey-searching-ottoman-state-archives-documentation-regarding-palestinian-ownership-lands-including-waqf-property-jerusalem-prev/>

Middle East war. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic issued three findings: a 6-month report covering events July 2017 to January 2018, a paper on sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, and “Detention in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Way Forward.” All three rely on massive accumulations of information: the “Way Forward” based its findings on “over 800 detention-related interviews, as well as considerable documentary material,” the paper on sexual violence is based on 454 interviews, while the 6-month report used 513 interviews, satellite imagery, photographs, videos, and medical records as well as “communications from Member States and reports from the United Nations and non-government organizations.” The “Way Forward” makes important recommendations, including the archives-related “disclose the locations of all official and unofficial places of detention, and provide full lists of the names of all those held in detention;” safeguard “documentation and other evidence—such as medical reports, post mortems, death certificates, detention records, locations of gravesites” and make them available to victims, survivors, their families and “any legitimate mechanism that may be established to look into these issues;” and create “a new independent mechanism with an international mandate to coordinate and consolidate claims regarding missing persons, including persons subjected to enforced disappearance.”

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/AWayForward_DetentionInSyria.pdf?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=c1b1397ae4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_03_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-c1b1397ae4-90540617;
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColSyria/A-HRC-37-CRP-3.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

A U.S. attorney who previously worked at the International Court of Justice published an opinion piece in *Eurasia Review* on the preparations for Syrian war crimes tribunals. He wrote that “millions of vetted documents gathered from countless sources within the Syrian government are being prepared for trial including several hundred Syrian and Iranian war crimes cases.” He reported that “hospital functionaries, working closely with Syrian intelligence agents, have been carefully documenting the regime’s

handiwork, using a distinctive numbering scheme to track victims and keep records of the killings that contain fictitious death certificates.” He concluded that because so much preparatory work has been done, “once jurisdiction is passed to a body like the ICC or a Special International Tribunal for Syria the approaching trials can proceed quite quickly.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/16032018-as-syrian-war-crimes-tribunals-are-readied-qassim-soleimani-instructs-assad-and-irans-militia-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

The Day After, a Syrian nongovernmental organization, held a consultative meeting on “civil registration conditions in opposition-controlled areas and possible ways to find a sustainable mechanism for coordination between parties working in this field to legitimize documents issued by the Syrian opposition parties inside Syria and abroad.” The “most important” recommendation of the meeting was “the necessity to standardize procedures and enforce the Syrian laws adopted for documentation in all directorates, secretariats and civil registry centers, the need for a central body to preserve and issue civil documents . . . in addition to the need for awareness-raising campaigns about the importance of documentation among Syrian citizens and establishing a UN Clearing-House mechanism for the identification of documents.” hjackaly@tda-sy.org

Saudi Arabia/United States. A U.S. District Court in New York asserted jurisdiction in a lawsuit brought against the government of Saudi Arabia by families of those killed in the 11 September 2001 air attacks in the United States. The plaintiffs “highlighted that nearly all of the hijackers were Saudi citizens and claimed that Saudi officials and institutions ‘aided and abetted’ the attackers in the years leading up to the 9/11 attacks,” *Truth in Media* reported. A 2016 Federal law, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, provided the basis for the court to claim jurisdiction, overcoming the doctrine of foreign sovereign immunity which generally exempts a foreign state from prosecution as a state in another nation’s courts. <http://truthinmedia.com/lawsuits-saudi-arabia-911-attacks/>

National news.

Afghanistan. The government introduced a new biometric identity card to “mixed” public reaction, the *Washington Post* reported. The card lists every citizen as “Afghan by nationality” and then allows each person to choose an ethnic identity in one of 14 groups. Small ethnic groups object to their exclusion from the 14, while some larger groups object to the collection of the data because “with no national census conducted since the 1970s, groups have inflated their numbers to enhance political clout.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/new-afghan-id-cards-aimed-at-unifying-the-country-are-doing-the-opposite/2018/03/10/cab05128-1c9b-11e8-98f5-ceecfa8741b6_story.html?utm_term=.5e2631ff4254

The Ministry of Defense announced that between March 2017 and March 2018 it killed 447 “militant commanders,” injured 19,844 and arrested 2,068, while the Afghan Security Forces said they killed 4,000 militants in Northern Afghanistan, injured 2,500 and arrested 200, the *South Asia Intelligence Review* reported. The Afghan police announced that 9 suicide attacks were prevented during that year. <http://www.satp.org/others/latest/latest-archieve.aspx?id=147>

Albania. The Authority for Access to Information on Ex-Sigurimi Files (the Sigurimi was the communist-era secret police) was established in 2016 to manage the police records. It can vet public office holders, but “most of the files remain closed and only the targets of the covert surveillance and their families are allowed to see them,” *BIRN* reported. Lacking access to the records, the Museum of Secret Surveillance nevertheless “is trying to compile a list of those who were killed and prosecuted” during the communist era. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/digging-for-truth-in-communist->

albania-s-secret-files-02-28-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=1aea217dfd-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-1aea217dfd-319755321

Brazil. The 16 million descendants of slaves brought from Africa to Brazil before 1888, known as quilombolas, now live in about 5000 rural communities and around 75% live in poverty. Only about 250 of the settlements “have title deeds to their land, benefiting some 31,000 families, according to government data,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. In March another 500 got title to 220,000 hectares “after a legal fight that lasted more than two decades.” Without land titles the quilomboas “don’t have access to social benefits, such as subsidized housing.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180306145217-ncfc2/>

Canada. “Doctors complain that they are unable to prevent providers hosting their [electronic medical] files from selling” or exploiting for commercial ends data that is supposed to be kept confidential, *La Presse* reported. <http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/sante/201803/02/01-5155859-dossiers-medicaux-a-vendre.php>

Researchers in Toronto went to recycling bins at five hospitals and found “2,687 documents with personally identifiable information, most often papers like clinical notes and medical reports tossed out in doctors’ offices,” according to *STAT* quoting a report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. <https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/>

CBC News reported that Statistics Canada “lost hundreds of sensitive files during the 2016 census process.” <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/statistics-canada-census-lost-forms-1.4566263>

Central African Republic (CAR). In a report based on interviews with CAR refugees in Chad and Cameroon and interviews with aid groups, the International Center for Transitional Justice made a series of recommendations to the CAR government, including to “improve the legal framework on personal documentation and property and land rights in CAR, through administrative procedures and transparent, simple, and decentralized legislation, which would be a crucial political move towards facilitating the return and reintegration of refugees from minority groups.” <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Report-CAR-100-Central-African-March-2018.pdf>

China. Shen Zhihua, “China’s foremost Cold War historian,” told the *New York Times*, “The Chinese Communist Party grew out of an underground operation, was very secretive and didn’t record many things. Of the 1950s Politburo meetings there are few records. They never wrote things down.” He urged China to open its archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/23/world/asia/shen-zhihua-china-history-north-korea.html>

Colombia. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace tribunal, created by the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the FARC rebels, began operation. According to *Reuters*, more than 4,600 former rebels and nearly 1,800 members of the armed forces have already submitted testimony. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-colombia-peace-court/colombia-tribunal-begins-mammoth-task-of-investigating-trying-war-crimes-idUSKCN1GR2P6>

Czech Republic. “Several thousand kilometres of audiovisual materials from political show trials from 1952 were found in a disused plant in central Bohemia,” the National Film Archive director told *CTK*. Records of the show trial of Rudolf Slansky, a famous victim, were found in the “seriously damaged” materials, which include “image and sound negatives, duplicate copies, tape recorder tapes, combined copies and rephotographed copies of original documents from the Central Committee” of the Czechoslovak Communist party. <http://www.praguemonitor.com/2018/03/21/archive-receives-discovered-film-materials-1952-show-trial>

India. Access to Justice Amnesty International India told *Al Jazeera* that during the peak of the armed rebellion in Kashmir in the early 1990s the Indian armed forces tortured and killed persons taken into custody. The nongovernmental group's senior campaigner said, "It is difficult to provide a figure [for the number of persons killed]. Records had not been maintained; most of these cases were not even registered." https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/custodial-killings-covered-kashmir-180227140255001.html?utm_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm_campaign=8882db535b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_13&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e427298a68-8882db535b-225638537

Nearly three years ago India began issuing biometric digital identification cards called Aadhaar. In January it made the use of the cards mandatory to receive benefits such as food rations. The *Washington Post* reported the program "raises fears over loss of privacy" and errors in recording data are "preventing thousands of people from receiving basic entitlements, such as food rations, pensions and fuel subsidies." https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/indias-vast-biometric-program-was-supposed-to-end-corruption-but-the-neediest-may-be-hit-hardest/2018/03/24/bb212a86-289c-11e8-a227-fd2b009466bc_story.html?utm_term=.289568de6d37

Arunchal Pradesh State in India passed legislation giving individual indigenous persons deeds to land that was earlier held jointly as a community. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported that the government believes that "with ownership rights, tribal people will be able to lease out their land and use it as collateral to get loans from banks." However, an expert in customary land use argued that the law is "a way for the state to take land from them more easily for hydro projects and mining." <http://news.trust.org/item/20180315110213-jmdnc/>

Israel. *Haaretz* reported that 38 of the 3500 files on the disappearance of children from Yemenite Israeli families in the 1950s are missing from the state archives. After applauding the government's decision to open the archives on the northern African immigrants in the 1950s (see above), *Haaretz* editorialized that there is no public access to the records of the Shin Bet security service and "the government must adapt the 'archive regulations' to the spirit of the age so the default for any archival document will be to release it, not conceal it from the public." <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-missing-files-on-yemenite-kids-who-disappeared-in-50s-made-public-1.5886402>; <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/israel-s-past-belongs-to-the-public-1.5938041>

Japan. *The Mainichi* reported that in 2016 "the government discarded 444,877 documents slated to be saved for under a year and classified as specially designated secrets." The archival community protested the act entrusting agencies with this decision, with no success. For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-11 and 2014-12. <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20180328/p2a/00m/0na/011000c>

Mexico. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a report on human rights violations in the investigation of the Ayotzinapa case in which 43 students were victims of enforced disappearance, 6 persons (including 3 students) were killed, and at least 40 persons injured during the night of 26-27 September 2014. Mexican police prosecuted 129 people in relation to the events. OHCHR gathered information on 63 of the prosecuted and "based on the analysis of 34 of these cases . . . OHCHR has strong grounds to believe that torture, arbitrary detention and other human rights violations were committed." The "judicial records provide ample evidence of these alleged human rights violations," including absence of information, "inaccurate registration and management of the chain of custody of evidence," false claims, and a "pattern of implausible and self-contradictory justifications." OHCHR called on Mexico's attorney-general to "ensure that detention records include reliable, accurate and exhaustive information regarding the circumstances of the detention; investigate and hold accountable any person responsible for not duly registering arrests or for registering information that does not correspond to the facts." For background, see *HRWG News* 2016-04, 2017-02. http://ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/MX/ExecutiveReportMexico_March2018_EN.PDF

Pakistan. According to *Express Tribune*, a young boy was falsely arrested, then sexually assaulted by a policeman while another police officer “filmed the whole incident.” After release and “after a medical test confirmed the incident” a court ordered the police to prepare a “first information report” to start a case against the police. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1664095/1-boy-sexually-assaulted-filmed-policemen-torture-cell-near-lahore/>

The Ministry of Defense released figures to the Lower House of Parliament showing that since 2015 military courts have sentenced 186 convicts to death, issued verdicts for more than 300 terrorism-related cases, are currently hearing 101 cases, and “53 other cases have been dropped because of a lack of evidence,” *Extremism Watch* reported. <https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-military-tribunals/4303596.html>

Based on data from the Balochistan home department, the National Commission for Human Rights reported that 509 members of the minority Hazara community were killed and 627 injured in “various incidents of terrorism in Quetta during the last five years,” *Dawn* wrote. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1396273>

Writing in *The Nation*, the former chairman of the Pakistan Science Foundation asked, “Are public records safe?” and answered, “A big no; they are totally vulnerable and exposed to infernos of all kinds.” He said that “the easiest way to grab property is by destruction of records” and concluded, “The country is dysfunctional without proper documentation.” <https://nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2018/records-inferno>

South Sudan. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan submitted a report to the Human Rights Council on “incidents in 2016-2017 for which the Commission has been able to collect and preserve evidence,” some of which “may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity” by all parties to the conflict. The Commission “took over 230 detailed individual witness statements and gathered over 58,000 documents, including confidential records, covering incidents in South Sudan since December 2013. All evidence is preserved in the Commission’s database and archives.” However, it noted, “Critical evidence is being lost every day: witnesses are killed, threatened, disappear or are displaced. Physical evidence degrades, and documentary evidence is lost, concealed or destroyed.” https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_37_71_0.pdf

Sri Lanka. After a two year delay, the government officially launched the Office of Missing Persons, which is “tasked with determining the status of all missing persons in Sri Lanka,” *AFP* reported. An estimated 20,000 people went missing during 37 years of fighting. <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/justice-reconciliation/36571-sri-lanka-launches-probe-into-war-era-disappearances.html>

Turkey. Human Rights Watch quoted the Turkish Interior Ministry saying “authorities detained 648 people between January 20 and February 26, 2018, over social media posts criticizing Turkey’s military operations in Afrin” northwestern Syria. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/27/turkey-crackdown-social-media-posts>

United States. Using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Census Bureau, the Department of Agriculture, and the private Guttmacher Institute, the United Health Foundation published “America’s Health Rankings” on the health of women and children. From drug deaths to food insecurity, the results are sobering. On mortality, it found that black children aged 1-18 have a mortality rate twice as high as Asian children and 1.5 times as high as white children, and the maternal mortality rate among black women is 4 times higher than the rate among Asian and Pacific Islanders and Hispanic women and 2.5 times higher than the rate among white women. <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/learn/reports/2018-health-of-women-and-children->

[report?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=5ffa53ee4d-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-5ffa53ee4d-149736437](http://www.eurasiareview.com/30032018-child-sexual-abuse-in-us-costs-up-to-1-5-million-per-child-death/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

With information from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System of the Children’s Bureau and child maltreatment reports from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, researchers examined 20 cases of fatal child sexual abuse and 40,387 cases of nonfatal child sexual abuse that occurred in 2015. Reporting in the journal *Child Abuse and Neglect* and summarized by *Eurasia Review*, they calculated that over a lifetime a girl victim of abuse earns nearly \$300,000 less than a non-victim. The researchers said there is “insufficient information on productivity losses for male victims.” They estimated that by age 18, 26.6% of U.S. girls and 5.1% of U.S. boys are exposed to sexual abuse.

http://www.eurasiareview.com/30032018-child-sexual-abuse-in-us-costs-up-to-1-5-million-per-child-death/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that “disclosures made under the Clery Act, the federal law that requires colleges to report crimes committed on their campuses” to the U.S. Department of Education, showed 1,250 hate crimes on campuses in 2016, up 25% from 2015. Data reported by law-enforcement agencies at public colleges and universities to the Federal Bureau of Investigation “indicate that there was an extraordinary spike in college hate crimes in November 2016,” the month of the last presidential election. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/After-2016-Election-Campus/242577>

Documents obtained by the nongovernmental organization Electronic Frontier Foundation showed that employees working for the giant retailer Best Buy in its computer repair facility in Kentucky “maintained close liaison” with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Employees would call the FBI when they found what they believed to be “illegal material” on the computers they were repairing; an agent would review the content, could “seize the hard drive or computer,” and investigate and prosecute people who sent their devices for repair. <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/03/geek-squads-relationship-fbi-cozier-we-thought>

Rangers in Grand Teton National Park have worn body cameras for over a decade. The Park announced it was discontinuing their use, at least temporarily, saying “It’s our priority to have those rangers in the field rather than the time it takes to do the data management of the body camera program,” reported *Jackson Hole News and Guide*. http://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/cops_courts/grand-teton-axes-body-cameras/article_149ffa43-13d8-50a6-8473-893197b09a0e.html

An analysis by the *Associated Press* found that in the first 8 months of the Trump Administration the Federal government “censored, withheld or said it couldn’t find records sought by citizens, journalists and others more often . . . than at any point in the past decade.” <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-03-12/us-sets-new-record-for-censoring-withholding-govt-files>

United States/New York. The New York City Board of Health amended the city’s Health Code to specify that a birth record will become public “on January 31st of the year following 125 years after the date of birth,” a death record will become public “on January 31st of the year following 75 years after the date of death” and they will be transferred to the city archives only when they are public. The city promises to create a future rule “to expand the categories of qualified applicants who may access birth and death records before the records are transferred.” <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/notice/2018/noa-amend-article207.pdf>

United States/Texas. The *Houston Chronicle* published a 2-part report on health and environmental damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, saying “county, state and federal

records pieced together . . . reveal a far more widespread toxic impact than authorities publicly reported.” <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/In-Houston-and-beyond-Harvey-s-spills-leave-a-12771237.php>

Vietnam. The 88 Project, a nongovernmental organization “that works to extend assistance to political prisoners and their families,” launched its Vietnamese Political Prisoner Database in January. As of 1 March, it listed 23 activists held in pre-trial detention, 113 activists currently serving prison sentences, 15 female political prisoners and 46 ethnic minority political prisoners. <https://globalvoices.org/2018/03/02/heres-what-we-learned-from-the-online-database-of-vietnams-political-prisoners/>

Conferences, publications.

iPRES, the international conference on digital preservation, is holding its meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S., 24-27 September 2018 on the theme “Where art and science meet: the art in science and the science in art.” See iPres2018.org for the full text of the [Call for Contributions](#) and [submission instructions](#), due April 15.

The World Justice Project published *Global Insights on Access to Justice*, “the first-ever effort to capture comparable data on legal needs and public access to civil justice on a global scale.” <https://worldjusticeproject.org/news/global-insights-access-justice>

Using an Arkansas, U.S., case as an example, *The Verge* published “What happens when an algorithm cuts your health care.” <https://www.theverge.com/2018/3/21/17144260/healthcare-medicaid-algorithm-arkansas-cerebral-palsy>

Annex

19 January 2018 at 16:53 PM

Dr. Frank LaRue
Assistant Director-General - Communication and Information
UNESCO

Dear Director LaRue:

The Human Rights Working Group of the International Council on Archives – which is an official partner of UNESCO – is concerned about the process by which archives with human rights elements are evaluated in the Memory of the World (MoW) process. We recognize that over the past quarter century many significant bodies of material with just such importance have been added to the register. We applaud this history.

We were concerned, however, when we learned that the MoW program had apparently considered more than the historical significance of the material when evaluating the recent proposal to list documents relating to the World War II so-called “comfort women”. There can be no doubt that this is documentation of a human rights violation and that the history of the countries and individuals involved have worldwide significance. In fact, the “comfort women” issue involves women from more than a dozen different countries, including some as far away from Japan as The Netherlands.

The idea that the groups proposing the designation have been asked to enter into a “dialogue” with persons who oppose the designation is at odds with the professional judgment that is supposed to be used in determining a MoW registration. As a precedent, it is doubly worrisome.

We understand that the Member States have requested the new Director-General “to engage in a comprehensive review of the Memory of the World Programme.” (<https://en.unesco.org/news/reforming-unesco-s-action-memory-world>). We are writing in order to ask that you convey our concerns to the working party that will engage in the review. We would be very willing to talk with them about this issue.

Sincerely,
Giulia Barrera
Chair, Human Rights Working Group
International Council on Archives

Tuesday, January 23, 2018 at 12:09 PM

Dear Giulia:

I believe that the initiatives of the HR Working Group of the ICA are of extreme importance. All Archives and Documentary Heritage have a great value for all the peoples of the World. They give a perspective into our History, our identity, our great achievements and also our failures and tragic moments from which we should also learn. They help us understand our values and identity as society and peoples.

In this context I fully agree that HR Archives and their preservation and use should be a priority for everyone.

I take note of your considerations on the current debate and Resolutions in UNESCO but I must regret that there is nothing I can do given the fact that I am in the process of leaving the Institution and it is in the midst of selecting a new ADG for CI. While this process is concluded the interim ADG is Dr Getachew Engida, DDG of UNESCO, to whom you should address the correspondence.

With my best regards,
Frank La Rue