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**Commentary.** Awful August is finally over. Hate-fueled killings from Turku to Barcelona to Charlottesville. Violent protests following elections in Kenya and Venezuela. Wind and water destroying communities from India and Bangladesh to Texas and Louisiana. Rohingya refugees struggling through the mud in search of safety, as violence in Yemen and the Middle East creates yet more displaced people. North Korea launching missiles. Records will document all of these, but civil unrest and furious weather also destroy existing archives. What a month.

Much of what we learn about unfolding events comes from social media. Almost unnoticed among the August chaos was YouTube's use of new technology to automatically flag and remove content that breaches its content guidelines. In June Google, the owner of YouTube, "announced it would turn more to technology to identify extremist and terrorism-related video," *CNN Business News* reported. <https://gantdaily.com/2017/08/24/youtube-and-syria-techs-role-as-archivist/> Since that time, according to the *New York Times* and to several activists I contacted, "thousands" of videos have been removed from the YouTube site. Gone are things like Islamic State execution videos. And there is the quandary.

Certainly casual internet users do not want to see snuff videos. The International Organization for Migration complained that people smugglers are using Facebook to "broadcast the abuse and torture of migrants in order to extort ransom money from their families" and called on the company to "police the platform and help crack down on traffickers." <http://news.trust.org/item/20170825150851-a7mav/> Sex traffickers use social media sites to offer the services of those trafficked; jihadi recruiters post hate speech "come hithers." In the aftermath of the Barcelona killings, a video appeared threatening, "Spanish Christians, don't forget the Muslim blood spilt during the Spanish inquisition." <http://metro.co.uk/2017/08/25/new-isis-video-warns-theyre-coming-to-take-back-spain-6877509/#ixzz4qmpO9lZC> Surely these postings are abhorrent.

And yet: The International Criminal Court, as noted below, has indicted a senior Libyan commander; some of the evidence against him is video that circulated on social media. Groups who monitor the conflicts in Syria and Iraq compile social media postings as evidence for future use by justice institutions. As one person told me, small groups of activists rely on the storage capacity of the huge corporations to keep evidence they need alive.

Even with the best of algorithms, social media companies will not be able to eliminate all hate speech and violent videos. And if one post is taken down at one location, it is likely to pop up on another, less policed site. Perhaps a warning symbol affixed to the videos selected by the algorithms as hateful, much like a copyright mark, could at least provide a way to identify and sort but preserve the violent video streams. Documenting violence has never been easy, but it is important that all possible tools are available for those who would assure accountability for the violation of human rights.

### **International news.**

**African Commission on Human Rights (ACHR).** The Commission ruled that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo was responsible for a massacre of 70 people in the southeast of the country in 2004. It also said the government should re-open the criminal investigation into the role an Australian company, Anvil Mining, played in supplying logistical support to the military who committed the grave human rights violations. <https://www.hrlc.org.au/news/2017/8/4/australian-mining-company-in-prosecution-spotlight-for-role-in-congo-massacre>; for the decision, see [http://www.raid-uk.org/sites/default/files/african\\_commission\\_decision\\_on\\_kilwa\\_2017.pdf](http://www.raid-uk.org/sites/default/files/african_commission_decision_on_kilwa_2017.pdf)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA opened a “low-enriched uranium bank” in Kazakhstan to be the repository for nuclear reactor fuel. According to the *Washington Post*, “The bank essentially guarantees that fuel for nuclear power plants will be available, in the case of future disruptions to global uranium markets.” It is hard to think of a more important records management job than ensuring that the records of what is held in the bank are accurate. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/a-uranium-bank-just-opened-in-kazakhstan-to-stop-the-spread-of-nukes/2017/08/29/fd19fc9a-8c63-11e7-a2b0-e68cbf0b1f19\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.c47d889a7bc1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/a-uranium-bank-just-opened-in-kazakhstan-to-stop-the-spread-of-nukes/2017/08/29/fd19fc9a-8c63-11e7-a2b0-e68cbf0b1f19_story.html?utm_term=.c47d889a7bc1)

International Criminal Court (ICC). The Court issued an arrest warrant for Libyan National Army commander Mahmoud Warfalli for alleged war crimes. The ICC said it relied on “(i) recordings of witness interviews and summaries of witness interviews; (ii) video material and transcripts of video material; (iii) internal orders, and social media posts by the Media Centre of the Al-Saiqa Brigade; and (iv) reports of international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and research centres” in making the decision to issue the warrant. [https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2017\\_05031.PDF](https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2017_05031.PDF)

International Organization for Migration (IOM). IOM’s Missing Migrants Project “has recorded more than 1,250 migrant fatalities on the US-Mexico border since 2014, and the deaths in the first 7 months of 2017 are an increase of 17% from 2016.” <https://www.iom.int/news/migrants-crossing-us-mexico-border-dying-faster-rate-2017-un-migration-agency>

United Nations. Carla Del Ponte, a commissioner on the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI), resigned, frustrated that the Security Council has failed to act. Three Syrian nongovernmental organizations published a helpful article explaining the relationship between the COI and the new International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIM), almost all of which relates to the collection and use of documentary evidence. Following Del Ponte’s resignation, Mohammad Al Abdallah, the executive director of the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, published a criticism of the UN’s “missteps in Syria,” but commended the COI for “collecting an enormous amount of documentation, including important first-hand testimonies from victims and witnesses.”

[https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2017/08/02/responding-to-misconceptions-regarding-the-iiim/?utm\\_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm\\_campaign=a17a6f61bf-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_08\\_02&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0a7405c641-a17a6f61bf-96428969](https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2017/08/02/responding-to-misconceptions-regarding-the-iiim/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=a17a6f61bf-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-a17a6f61bf-96428969);  
[https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2017/08/29/del-pontes-resignation-and-the-uns-missteps-in-syria/?utm\\_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm\\_campaign=5f4700bafd-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_08\\_29&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0a7405c641-5f4700bafd-90540617](https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2017/08/29/del-pontes-resignation-and-the-uns-missteps-in-syria/?utm_source=SJAC+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=5f4700bafd-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_29&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0a7405c641-5f4700bafd-90540617)

The Security Council received a report of the UN’s internal inquiry on the murders of two UN staff members, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan, in the Democratic Republic of Congo in March. The report says militia members are likely to have killed them, with a cellphone video a key piece of evidence. However, *Reuters* reported, “Many analysts say the grainy video of the murders raises more questions than it answers.” The “F.B.I. and Swedish police have also been investigating the case separately, decrypting Ms. Catalan’s computer and scrutinizing video footage,” reported the *New York Times*.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-08-16/un-inquiry-finds-congolese-militia-likely-killed-un-monitors>;  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/17/world/africa/congo-united-nations-investigators-killed-nikki-haley.html>

In a four-part series, *Al Jazeera* examined the accusations of sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers. Citing an *Associated Press* investigation, it said that between 2004 and 2016 the UN received “almost 2,000” such allegations. A former UN employee says she believes “the UN is fraught with misreporting,” which the UN denies. France in January dropped a case against French peacekeepers charged with abuses in the Central African Republic (CAR) citing “lack of evidence,” but a lawyer in Bangui applied to reopen the case in the CAR, saying, “We have evidence . . . There was data, testimony.”

[http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/07/peacekeepers-rape-170730075455216.html?utm\\_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm\\_campaign=6df9c6309d-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_08\\_13&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e427298a68-6df9c6309d-225638537](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/07/peacekeepers-rape-170730075455216.html?utm_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm_campaign=6df9c6309d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_13&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e427298a68-6df9c6309d-225638537)

## **World/general news.**

Business records. At the end of July the Spanish multinational firm Ferrovial released its financial report for the first half of 2017. It showed a “40.1% increase in revenues compared to the first half of 2016, largely due to Broadstream,” its Australian subsidiary that operates Australia’s refugee “processing”

centers on Nauru and Manus Island. Amnesty International said, “Every penny made from these centres is tainted with the suffering of women, men and children who the Australian government is making an example of to deter other people from seeking safety on its shores.”

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/07/ferrovial-continues-to-build-a-fortune-on-refugees-despair/>

Global Witness, a U.K. nongovernmental organization, published an investigative report tracing the sale of timber from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to buyers in China, the United States, and other places. After amply demonstrating the environmental problems caused by the timber industry, the NGO recommended that the PNG government “issue an immediate moratorium on the issuance of land titles, leases, or other permits, and any ongoing forest clearance operations, related to large-scale agricultural projects” until it has reviewed the country’s policy and legal framework and “can ensure the free and informed consent of all landowners before the commencement of any such activities on customary land.”

[https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/stained-trade/?utm\\_source=Supporter+Email+List&utm\\_campaign=3a1d3db4b5-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_08\\_09&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_2246df3038-3a1d3db4b5-130032821](https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/stained-trade/?utm_source=Supporter+Email+List&utm_campaign=3a1d3db4b5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2246df3038-3a1d3db4b5-130032821)

A court in Bangladesh ordered the owner of the Rana Plaza garment factory jailed for three years for “failing to declare his personal wealth to Bangladesh’s anti-graft commission,” *Channel News Asia* reported. The Rana Plaza building collapsed in 2013 and killed more than 1,130 people. He has also been charged with violating building codes, but that trial has not been completed.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/bangladesh-court-jails-rana-plaza-owner-for-graft-prosecutor-9167428>

Two academic researchers compared hundreds of Exxon Mobil “internal reports and peer-reviewed research papers with its advertising” from 1972 through 2001. They concluded that Exxon Mobil systematically “misled non-scientific audiences about climate science,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-hiltzik-exxonmobil-20170822-story.html#nws=mcnewsletter>

Between 1935 and 1977 Monsanto produced PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) for use as coolants and lubricators in electrical equipment; they were banned in the U.S. in 1979 “after a weight of evidence linking them to health ailments.” Now “more than 20,000 internal memos, minuted meetings, letters and other documents” obtained from legal discovery and access requests have been digitized and released on line by the Poison Papers Project of the Bioscience Resource Project and the Center for Media and Democracy, two U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations. The *Guardian* quoted the assistant attorney general for the U.S. state of Washington, which is suing Monsanto for clean-up costs from the effects of PCBs in the environment, as saying, “If authentic, these records confirm that Monsanto know that their PCBs were harmful and pervasive in the environment, and kept selling them in spite of that fact.”

Monsanto has not disputed the authenticity of the records.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/09/monsanto-continued-selling-pcb-for-years-despite-knowing-health-risks-archives-reveal>

Open Secrets, a South African nongovernmental organization, published the book *Apartheid Guns and Money*, using research from “approximately 40,000 archival documents from 25 archives in 7 countries.” It details “the complicity between big business and the oppressive apartheid regime” and its ruling National Party, reported the *Daily Maverick*. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-08-01-declassified-apartheid-profits-who-funded-the-national-party/>

A German court rejected a case brought by owners of diesel powered Volkswagen cars that had “illegal engine management software” to cheat emissions standards, *Reuters* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-03. [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-volkswagen-emissions-lawsuit-idUSKCN1BB1H2?et rid=28154834&s\\_campaign=fastforward:newsletter](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-volkswagen-emissions-lawsuit-idUSKCN1BB1H2?et rid=28154834&s_campaign=fastforward:newsletter)

Fingerprints. Using machine learning software and a Michigan State Police dataset of 250,000 fingerprints which had been stripped of identifying personal information, a research team reported it has developed an algorithm that automates the matching of prints against existing fingerprint databases, wrote *Eurasia Review*. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/15082017-automated-fingerprint-analysis-one-step-closer-to-reality/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/15082017-automated-fingerprint-analysis-one-step-closer-to-reality/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

Human trafficking. *Eurasia Review* also reported on another research team using machine learning software. It used publicly available information from “Bitcoin mempool and blockchain,” compared it with sex ads on a website called backpage, and were able to “identify ads potentially tied to human trafficking

rings and link them to public information from Bitcoin—the primary payment method for online sex ads.” The researchers analyzed individual writing styles, which allowed them “to identify cases in which separate advertisements for different individuals share a single author: a telltale sign of a trafficking ring.”

[http://www.eurasiareview.com/17082017-following-bitcoins-to-find-victims-of-human-trafficking/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/17082017-following-bitcoins-to-find-victims-of-human-trafficking/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

**Medical records.** The conflict in Yemen shows no signs of ending, and it now has the largest cholera outbreak in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) said it estimates 5,000 new people are being infected each day, half a million have contracted the disease in just the past four months and 2,000 have died. WHO also said Yemen’s 30,000 health care workers “haven’t been paid for nearly a year,” *STAT* wrote. [https://www.statnews.com/2017/08/15/yemen-cholera-outbreak-deaths/?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=44dda1ebdc-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-44dda1ebdc-149736437](https://www.statnews.com/2017/08/15/yemen-cholera-outbreak-deaths/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=44dda1ebdc-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-44dda1ebdc-149736437)

Using “only 6 electronic medical record-based inputs” (patient history on use of medications, emergency visits, chronic kidney disease and age), researchers developed a tool to “identify patients with Type 2 diabetes at high risk” of falling into crisis-level low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association, Internal Medicine*, they said that categorizing risk might enable patients and their doctors to reduce the risk of hypoglycemic crises and improve patient safety and quality of life. [http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2649265?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=4029aa90bb-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-4029aa90bb-149736437](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2649265?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=4029aa90bb-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-4029aa90bb-149736437)

*Science* reported that “DNA testing data is disturbingly vulnerable to hackers.” The researchers looked at “commonly used, open-source versions” of programs that process and analyze DNA after sequencing and found that the security “is not sufficient if or when attackers target.” <http://gizmodo.com/dna-testing-data-is-disturbingly-vulnerable-to-hackers-1797695128>

Using 43,950 Instagram photos from 166 individuals, a research team reported in *EPJ Data Science* that they were able to use machine learning tools (“color analysis, metadata components, algorithmic face detection”) to “successfully identify markers of depression.” “Human ratings of photo attributes (happy, sad, etc.) were weaker predictors of depression,” they found. “These results suggest new avenues for early screening and detection of mental illness.” <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-017-0110-z>

“Two urban trauma databases were analyzed from India and the USA for fall, motor vehicle collision . . . and assault patients between 2013 and 2015,” a team of researchers wrote in *BMJ Global Health*. As expected, Indian nationals had higher odds of mortality than persons in the US, but the stunning number was that females in India who were assaulted “had nearly 40 times the odds of mortality compared with similarly injured female assault patients in the USA.” <http://gh.bmj.com/content/2/2/e000322>

“Using individual birth and demographic characteristics for over 500,000 birth observations between 1997-2011 in the agriculturally dominated San Joaquin Valley, California,” a team of researchers found that exposure to agricultural pesticides in very high quantities “increases adverse birth outcomes” such as low birth weight, preterm birth, and birth abnormalities. They compared information from the California Birth Statistical Master File and the Pesticide Use Reports from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Writing in *Nature*, they caution that their findings are limited, in part because “birth records do not fully capture adverse outcomes . . . that are difficult to observe at birth nor are they comprehensive with regards to socio-demographics.” [https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-00349-2?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=9a28c46f49-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-9a28c46f49-149736437](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-00349-2?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=9a28c46f49-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-9a28c46f49-149736437)

As the above items demonstrate, using machine learning on records is a medical frontier. In an article in the *Lancet*, a researcher at Berlin, Germany’s Robert Koch Institute says he believes that machine learning with big data is “set to revolutionise the field [of epidemiology] on a scale that is on a par with, and possibly larger than, that brought about by the invention of the microscope and the telescope.” Epidemiology is the study and analysis of the patterns, causes, and effects of health and disease conditions in populations. [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32278-X/fulltext?elsca1=etoc](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32278-X/fulltext?elsca1=etoc)

**Slavery.** Verisk Maplecroft, a U.K. corporation, released its second annual global slavery index. *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported it shows the “European Union recorded the largest increase in slavery of any

world region in 2017, with the arrival of more than 100,000 migrants, many of them extremely vulnerable to exploitation” and the “risk of slave labour in farming, construction and other sectors rose across the region.” North Korea again is the country with most slave labor. <http://news.trust.org/item/20170810000501-ntdiw>

**World War II.** Between 1918 and 1943 over 120,000 Jews immigrated to Argentina. After World War II an estimated 4,800 Holocaust survivors came, as well as Nazi war criminals such as Josef Mengele and Adolf Eichmann. The government digitized 38,779 “letters, telegrams, newspaper clippings, notes and reports from 1929 to 1950” related to the World War II era and gave the digital copy to the U.S. Holocaust Museum which will make them accessible to the public, reported *telesur*. [http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Argentina-Donates-Almost-40000-Documents-to-Holocaust-Museum-20170801-0024.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=30](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Argentina-Donates-Almost-40000-Documents-to-Holocaust-Museum-20170801-0024.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=30)

During renovations at a private home in Hattem, The Netherlands, a 1931 German marriage certificate for a Jewish couple was found in a space inside the house’s chimney, *JTA* reported. The couple and their children died in the Holocaust; the Overijssel Historical Center hopes to locate any surviving relatives. [https://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/news/world\\_news/dutch-historians-find-hidden-marriage-document-of-jewish-holocaust-victims/article\\_969d938d-6638-598e-8aa5-be5f0d589cef.html](https://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/news/world_news/dutch-historians-find-hidden-marriage-document-of-jewish-holocaust-victims/article_969d938d-6638-598e-8aa5-be5f0d589cef.html)

Librarians in Germany are reviewing their holdings to identify books that were looted by the Nazis, particularly from Jewish owners, reported *Deutsche Welle*. One source of information is the inventory made by Reichsstauschstelle, a department of the Nazi-era interior ministry that functioned as a clearing house, keeping track of books brought in and sending them to restock other libraries. <http://www.dw.com/en/nazi-looted-books-found-in-german-libraries/a-39984043>

The *Guardian* printed a long feature on “the last Nazi hunters.” The article, including pictures of archives, reported that over the past decade Germany’s Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes has “conducted more than 20 trips to archives in South America” and holds 1.7 million index cards recording “the names of massacres, battles, concentration camps, victims, witnesses and perpetrators.” The chief prosecutor said, “There are crimes behind these words, but there’s no blood here.” [https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/31/the-last-nazi-hunters?utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm\\_term=241759&subid=22849866&CMP=GT\\_US\\_collection](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/31/the-last-nazi-hunters?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GU+Today+USA++Collections+2017&utm_term=241759&subid=22849866&CMP=GT_US_collection)

Relatives of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved Hungarian Jews from transportation to Nazi death camps but then himself disappeared into the USSR, filed suit against Russia’s FSB security agency, *RFE/RL* reported. They want the agency to make public documents that could shed light on his fate. His niece believes “Russian archives contain documents with direct relevance related to Wallenberg’s fate”; however, “his family and independent experts have not been allowed to examine the documents.” <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-court-wallenburg-case-family-looks-for-answers/28670077.html>

The National Archives of Korea announced that it will make public some 6,000 “written and photographic records showing the forced mobilization of Koreans during Japan’s colonial rule.” The items were collected by a Japanese journalist, donated to a Korean Christian center in Japan, which in turn donated them to the National Archives, reported *KBS World*. [http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news\\_Po\\_detail.htm?No=129377](http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_Po_detail.htm?No=129377)

A South Korean court ruled that Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries should pay compensation to former wartime slave workers. Mitsubishi said it would appeal. *AFP* noted, “It is the second such ruling in four years.” The previous decision is before Korea’s Supreme Court. <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/south-korean-court-orders-japan-s-mitsubishi-to-pay-for-war-9102444>

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

**Caricom/France/Netherlands/Norway/Portugal/Sweden/United Kingdom.** The 15 nations of the Caribbean that comprise Caricom decided “to expand the number of countries receiving demand-payment letters for their role in slavery, as additional research has shed new light on the role of the two countries [Norway and Sweden] in the slave trade,” reported *Amsterdam News*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2014-03. <http://amsterdamnews.com/news/2017/aug/10/caribbean-ups-reparations-pressure-europe/>

Honduras/United States. A long investigative report by *The Intercept* argued that the U.S. military “may have encouraged a 2009 coup in Honduras.” The report is based on official records, including email, that several reporters obtained by using the U.S. freedom of information act, as well as “dozens of interviews” in the U.S. and Honduras. <https://theintercept.com/2017/08/29/honduras-coup-us-defense-department-center-hemispheric-defense-studies-chds/>

Israel/Palestine. *Al Jazeera* published a report on Israel’s practice of keeping the remains of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers “as a tactic for leverage in negotiations.” Palestinian rights groups believe there are “at least 249 Palestinians . . . buried in cemeteries across Israel in closed military zones, and nine others in freezers in Tel Aviv. The cemeteries are made up of mass graves marked with numbers rather than names, and some bodies have been there since the 1967 war.” Cemetery records should be able to match numbers to names. The Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center is documenting the number of bodies, based on information from families or organizations. A representative of the Al Mezan rights center in Gaza told the reporter, “Israel does not give death certificates for the bodies it is withholding.”

[http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/israel-bodies-palestinians-170810075805418.html?utm\\_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm\\_campaign=6df9c6309d-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_08\\_13&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e427298a68-6df9c6309d-225638537](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/israel-bodies-palestinians-170810075805418.html?utm_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm_campaign=6df9c6309d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_13&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e427298a68-6df9c6309d-225638537)

*Al-Monitor* reviewed the work of two women, Rona Sela and Azza el-Hassan, who research the fate of photographic images of pre-Israel Palestine and the work of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Sela focuses on images of pre-1948 Palestinian villages, the control of Palestinian photographs by Israel’s military archives, and the seizure by the Israeli army of archives from the Palestinian Research Center and the Film Center of the PLO when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. El-Hassan searches for films that were taken by PLO’s film unit; she used found images in a 2004 film. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/08/israel-palestine-photography-narrative-conflict.html>

Jordan/Syria. Jordan announced that it will issue “freelance work permits to Syrian migrant workers and refugees,” the *Jordan News Agency* reported. This gives a legal framework for the employment of these unfortunate people and should help prevent their exploitation. <http://jordantimes.com/news/local/trade-unions-federation-issues-freelance-work-permits-syrians>

Kosovo/Serbia/United States. “The U.S. State Department has denied Serbian claims that the late diplomat Richard Holbrooke . . . wrote to the late Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in 1998/9, pledging that the United States would ‘never recognize Kosovo,’” *BIRN* reported. A State Department email to *BIRN* said, “This is simply not true. There is no such letter.” Serbia’s foreign minister also claimed that “no state institution is now in possession of the original copy of the 1995 Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in Bosnia”; however, the State Department said the “entirety of the Dayton Agreement is a matter of public record.” All such agreements signed by the U.S. should be in the U.S. National Archives.

[http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/state-department-denies-existence-of-the-holbrook-s-kosovo-letter-08-21-2017?utm\\_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm\\_campaign=ff960402f1-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a1d9e93e97-ff960402f1-319755321](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/state-department-denies-existence-of-the-holbrook-s-kosovo-letter-08-21-2017?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=ff960402f1-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-ff960402f1-319755321)

Middle East war. The Syrian Network for Human Rights released its 27<sup>th</sup> report on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It said at least five chemical attacks occurred since April 4, when Khan Sheikhoun was attacked with Sarin gas. In total, since March 2011 at least 1,420 individuals were killed by chemical attacks, the great majority civilians, and at least 6,672 were injured. The report is based on information from its network of reporters, “accounts from survivors who experienced the violation firsthand . . . [and] who saw or filmed the violation,” reports from medical personnel, open source data, and information on “the specifics of the geographical site, temperature, and the speed and direction of the wind at the time of the incident.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-05. <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/08/14/45499/>

The parties reached a settlement in the lawsuit against two U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contractors, both psychologists, who designed torture methods for the Agency. In a statement, the plaintiffs said they were pleased with the results: “We were able to tell the world about horrific torture, the CIA had to release secret records, and the psychologists and high-level CIA officials were forced to answer our lawyers’ questions.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-06 and 07. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/17/us/cia-torture-lawsuit-settlement.html>; <https://www.aclu.org/news/cia-torture-psychologists-settle-lawsuit>

In a progressive step, the U.S. commander of the campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria said that to help clear the ground in Mosul he “was looking for a way to lift long-standing rules that keep secret . . . the exact coordinates of unexploded ordnance,” reported the *New York Times*. The newspaper quoted the general saying, “I’m of the belief that if it’s history, there’s nothing wrong with the world knowing about it.” This policy could be a precedent for information about other locations as well.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/17/world/middleeast/pentagon-mosul-unexploded-bombs-islamic-state.html>

Palestine/United Kingdom. The *Guardian* reported that the London police “reopened an investigation into the murder of a controversial Palestinian cartoonist in London 30 years ago.” Parts of the original case file were made public with the announcement. Exactly why the case was reopened is not clear, but the head of the police counter-terrorism unit said, “A lot can change in 30 years--allegiances shift and people who were not willing to speak at the time of the murder may now be prepared to come forward with crucial information.” <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/29/police-reinvestigate-1987-london-of-palestinian-cartoonist-naji-salim-hussain-al-ali->

Saudi Arabia/Yemen. *Middle East Eye* reported that “leaked emails reveal that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is seeking to exit the war against Yemen.” The April 20 emails between the former U.S. Ambassador to Israel and the Emirate’s ambassador to Washington also say that the prince “is OK with the U.S. engaging Iran as long as it is coordinated in advance and the objectives are clear.”

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/exclusive-mohammed-bin-salman-wants-out-yemen-war-leaked-emails-reveal-135340790>

## **National news.**

Afghanistan. “According to Afghan law a mother’s name should not be recorded on a birth certificate,” reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. A campaign is seeking to change this, but a spokesman for the High Court in Kabul said that including a mother’s name on the birth certificate “or on other relevant documents” could “invite unwanted chaos.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170727230424-v188t/>

Argentina. The Catholic Church in Argentina will make public about 3,000 documents from the period of the dictatorship (1976-1983), reported *El Periodico*. <http://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20170818/vaticano-abre-archivos-iglesia-argentina-dictadura-6231973>

Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s garment industry will “digitally map” itself to collect “credible, comprehensive and accurate data” and “bring transparency in the supply chain in an effort to stop abuses,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The project will “provide a detailed industry-wide database of factories, including names, locations, number of workers, product type, export country, certifications and brand customers. Verification of information will be crowdsourced from the public to ensure that information remains up-to-date and accurate.” The first map will be of the factories in the Dhaka region and is to be completed in 2018. <http://news.trust.org/item/20170731104124-vh2yb/>

Bolivia. Bolivia swore in five members of its new truth commission, which is to investigate killings, forced disappearance, torture and arbitrary arrests during the dictatorships that ruled Bolivia from November 4, 1964, to October 10, 1982. According to *Prensa Latina*, the commission has two years to work. A congresswoman said the commission “will have access to classified files that are in the power of Armed Forces and the Police.” A previous truth commission in 1982-1984 ended without completing its work; its archives, if they can be located, should be helpful.

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=17090&SEO=bolivia-launches-truth-commission>

Canada. The Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) released the results of its Ontario Metis Root Ancestors Project that reviewed and compiled “well over 100,000 historical records” which identify “hundreds of Metis Root Ancestors from well-recognized historic Metis communities within Ontario,” *CNW* reported. The project, which took over five years to complete, will “assist individuals applying for MNO citizenship or Harvester Cards.” <http://read.bi/2vSHT4u>; for the Ontario Métis Root Ancestors Project i: <http://www.metisnation.org>. <http://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/M%C3%A9tis-Nation-of-Ontario-Releases-Results-of-Ground-Breaking-Ontario-M%C3%A9tis-Root-Ancestors-Project-491815>

Chile. A judge reopened the case against six people accused of the 1982 murder by poison of former Chilean President Eduardo Frei Montalva, *telesur* reported. “Court documents . . . showed that the assassination had been instigated by the right-wing dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet,” and the exhumation of Frei’s remains in 2016 provided evidence of poisoning, leading the judge to reopen the case, which had been dismissed in 2009. <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Chilean-Judge-Charges-6-in-Ex-Presidents-Murder-20170812-0011.html>

China. A large number of children around the world who are designated as “missing” are children involved in custody fights between parents. But China has a problem of child abduction and trafficking, with state media reporting that a government “campaign that ran from 2009 to 2012 brought in more than 35,000 [children] and busted 9,000 trafficking rings,” reported the *Washington Post*. The father of a missing boy said police cover up cases of missing children, including giving the families who buy children “fabricated registration papers.” The government has “begun building a DNA database to help match parents and children,” and a private website has registered 36,741 sets of parents searching for lost children and 30,370 children searching for parents. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/the-painful-search-for-chinas-missing-children-slowly-gains-momentum/2017/08/13/a0ce1ed8-51b4-11e7-a973-3dae94ed3eb7\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.de9a90044e96](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/the-painful-search-for-chinas-missing-children-slowly-gains-momentum/2017/08/13/a0ce1ed8-51b4-11e7-a973-3dae94ed3eb7_story.html?utm_term=.de9a90044e96)

Lu Yuyu, an activist who began documenting public protest and worker strikes in 2012 which he “tallied on social media,” has been sentenced to four years in prison for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” reported the *Wall Street Journal*. Lu tracked posts on the Chinese social media site Weibo and published a blog, including photos and videos, which “labor activists later relied on as a database of worker protests.” Lu won the Reporters Without Borders press freedom prize in November 2016. <http://www.cetusnews.com/news/China-Sentences-Activist-to-Prison-for-%E2%80%98Picking-Quarrels%E2%80%99.HkU-3boxwZ.html>

Colombia. Colombia’s “transitional justice system has received the case files of 12,000 alleged military war criminals,” *Colombia Reports* wrote. Of these, approximately 4,500 came from soldiers now in jail and 7,494 were Defense Ministry “case files of members of the military either convicted or investigated on war crimes charges.” <https://colombiareports.com/colombias-war-crimes-tribunal-received-files-12000-alleged-military-war-criminals/>

The United Nations mission in Colombia received from the FARC, the former rebel group, a 135 page list of its assets, *El Tiempo* reported. The UN gave the list to Colombia’s Interior Minister; the government will use the list to determine how the assets can be used to benefit the victims of the long-running conflict. <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/a-quienes-beneficia-entrega-de-bienes-de-las-farc-120680>

Democratic Republic of Congo. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report documenting 251 extrajudicial killings in Kasai provinces from mid-March to mid-June. The report is “based on interviews with 96 people who had fled to neighbouring Angola to escape the violence in Kamonia territory in Kasai.” The government said the report was not credible; this again demonstrates the importance of the UN records of these investigations. <http://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/report-mission-united-nations-high-commissioner-human-rights>

Germany. On July 13 Germany’s first Open Data law went into effect. <https://okfn.de/blog/2017/08/Germany-finally-has-an-open-data-law/>

*Pacific Standard* published an article on the work of reassembling torn Stasi records in the regional office in Frankfurt (Oder), a useful addition to information about the Stasi records in the Berlin headquarters. <https://psmag.com/social-justice/the-giant-puzzle-the-stasi-left-behind>

Guatemala. The *National Geographic* published a feature article on the police archives. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com.au/people/this-secret-police-archive-holds-clues-to-terrible-crimes.aspx>

Honduras. In Honduras “nearly 80 percent of the country’s privately held land is either untitled or improperly so, and acquisitions for mining, dams, tourism and other developments are often enforced through violence,” wrote *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. To regularize the situation, the government is beginning to digitize the land records, “nearly all in a dilapidated state,” with about a fifth now in digital format. <http://news.trust.org/item/20170811113650-a54rm/>



India. The Supreme Court ruled that privacy is a fundamental right. According to the *Associated Press*, “The verdict was in response to many petitions filed in courts questioning the validity of assigning a biometric identity card to every individual. The government has made the identity card mandatory for all citizens to avail welfare benefits, but human rights groups raised concerns about the risk of personal data being misused.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2014-04 and 12. <http://time.com/4913629/india-privacy-supreme-court/>

A researcher at the University of California, Berkeley, “tested the links between climate change, crop yields and suicide by pairing the numbers for India’s reported suicides in each of its 32 states between 1967 and 2013, using a dataset prepared by the Indian National Crime Records Bureau, along with statistics on India’s crop yields, and high-resolution climate data.” She concluded that temperature variations in India create higher suicide rates during the growing season, the University reported. “Warming a single day by 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) during India’s agricultural growing season leads to roughly 65 suicides across the country, whenever that day’s temperature is above 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit). Warming a day by 5 degrees Celsius has five times that effect.”

<http://news.berkeley.edu/2017/07/31/study-climate-change-already-causing-suicides-in-india-as-crops-fail/>

Officials in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana told *Thomson Reuters Foundation* that they “are in talks to put land records on blockchain.” They argued that blockchain technology will eliminate fraud in land transactions, but Landesa, a nongovernmental organization, cautioned, “What if the data is incorrectly captured? To get a clean record, you need clean inputs. For that you need community involvement, particularly in rural areas, to verify ownership and resolve disputes.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20170810144350-sdda7/>

Ireland. The United Nations committee against torture “has unequivocally dismissed the state’s investigation” into the abuse of women at Magdalene laundries and “claims damning documents showing church and state collusion against women have been ignored,” the *Times* reported. The committee said “the state had not exhausted all of the information and records of laundries available, and criticized the fact that documents were returned to religious congregations” after the Irish government’s investigation was concluded. For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-02. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/ireland/magdalene-abuse-must-not-go-unpunished-un-tells-ireland-rrln62wgx>

Israel. After the attorney general’s office ruled that all requests for access to archives—whether or not security classified—have to be approved by the body that deposited the material, State Archivist Yaakov Lazowick said, as quoted by *Haaretz*, “A week ago, we really stopped the services of the Archives, according to the instructions of the attorney general. To a great extent (not completely), we have stopped providing service. A researcher who wants to see a file will now have to wait for two months, or half a year or two years. The last is the most likely.” <https://blog.eogn.com/2017/08/02/israel-state-archives-deadlocked-by-legal-restrictions/>

Kenya. The opposition party that lost the August 8 presidential election argued that the election commission servers had been hacked and the vote results were false. The Supreme Court overturned the results of the presidential election, saying the “election was not conducted with accordance with the constitution,” the *Associated Press* reported. <http://time.com/4924594/kenya-presidential-election-overturned-supreme-court/>

Mexico. A judge ordered the attorney general to investigate “whether army commanders played any role in the killing by soldiers of 22 suspected criminals at a warehouse three years ago,” reported the *Associated Press*. The ruling said the government had failed to investigate “a purported military order issued before the incident in which soldiers were urged to ‘shoot down criminals in hours of obscurity’.” Military archives should have the order. <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2017/08/15/world/americas/ap-It-mexico-army-killings.html?rref=collection%2Fspotlightcollection%2Fworld-news-from-ap-and-reuters>

Myanmar. The government’s investigation commission for MaungDaw in Rakhine State issued its report. It said the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report on the Rohingya people was “wrong regarding unlawful indiscriminate shootings, disappearances, raping of women individually and in groups, racial and religious discrimination.” The Arakan Rohingya National Organization denounced the commission report; the UN records of the investigation will be critical pieces of evidence in the future. Later in the month when Kofi Annan’s Advisory Commission on Rakhine submitted its final report, the

government welcomed it. <http://www.myanmaritv.com/news/press-conference-key-findings-investigation-commission-maungdaw-rakhine-state>; <https://www.rvisiontv.com/arno-maungdaw-investigation-commissions-report-not-credible/>

North Korea. The Transitional Justice Working Group, a nongovernmental organization based in Seoul, South Korea, published “Mapping Crimes against Humanity in North Korea: Mass Graves, Killing Sites and Documentary Evidence.” It includes a full discussion of the data collection and methodology used. [https://en.tjwg.org/TJWG\\_Report-Mapping\\_Crimes\\_Against\\_Humanity\\_in\\_North\\_Korea\(July2017\)-Eng\\_Final.pdf](https://en.tjwg.org/TJWG_Report-Mapping_Crimes_Against_Humanity_in_North_Korea(July2017)-Eng_Final.pdf)

Pakistan. A court convicted “two former police officers to 17 years in prison for failing to protect former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, but the same court acquitted five suspected militants who had confessed to taking part in her 2007 assassination,” the *Associated Press* reported. Although the confessions existed, the judge acquitted the five men for “lack of evidence,” calling into question police records in the case. [http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS\\_PAKISTAN\\_BENAZIR\\_BHUTTO?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-08-31-09-58-41](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS_PAKISTAN_BENAZIR_BHUTTO?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-08-31-09-58-41)

Philippines. The Commission on Higher Education issued an order strongly encouraging schools of higher education to impose random mandatory drug testing of students and applicants. Human Rights Watch opposed the order, writing, “Although the order requires that educational authorities keep confidential the results of students who test positive for drug use, schools are empowered to impose sanctions on those students or school applicants, including expulsion or admission denial.”

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/11/philippines-mandatory-college-drug-tests-imperil-students>

Russia. The communications ministry issued an order that, starting July 2018, “instant messenger services and social networks” must provide to the FSB (security ministry) twenty items of information on each of their users, from the name to the full text of all communications to a list of all foreign languages spoken. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/12082017-fsb-demands-detailed-personal-information-on-russians-using-social-networks-oped/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29](http://www.eurasiareview.com/12082017-fsb-demands-detailed-personal-information-on-russians-using-social-networks-oped/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29)

South Africa. “Six million court documents, including divorce orders and marriage certificates, are being ‘held hostage’ in a [payment] dispute between the company storing them and the Department of Justice” with no access possible, reported *Times Live*. Complicating matters even more, the “server at the Pretoria High Court crashed last October and as a result electronic files cannot be accessed.”

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2017-08-07-justice-stalls-as-payment-dispute-rages-on/>

At a colloquium at the University of Witwatersrand, a former minister for intelligence service called upon the government to release apartheid-era archives to the public, including “a list of impimpis (informers) for the ANC’s liberation movement,” reported *News24*. Other participants urged declassification of the apartheid government records, wherever located; the university archivist said that South Africa’s National Archives has “no systematic process of declassifying records--you even have records from the Anglo-Boer War that are still not declassified,” *Times Live* reported. <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/apartheid-era-informers-archives-should-be-made-public-kasrils-20170824>; <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-08-28-apartheid-era-dirty-deals-should-be-declassified-say-activists/>; <https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/life/2017-08-31-government-holds-the-key-to-the-nations-memory/>

United Kingdom. According to information obtained through freedom of information requests to the National Health Service, the *Times* found that during the past reporting year (2015-2016) “more than 5,000 serious incidents involving both children and adults were investigated” at mental health trusts, including 371 suicides, 198 confidential information leaks, and 199 cases of abuse of patients. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/nhs-abuse-of-mental-patients-endemic-wml058tc1>

Seventeen men and one woman were convicted by the Newcastle Crown Court of rape, supplying drugs and inciting prostitution, reported the *Independent*. “Police pieced together links between the offenders, using telephone data to show how they knew each other, gathered at the same places, or had mutual acquaintances.” <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/18-people-convicted-newcastle-girls-young-women-groomed-drugged-raped-sexually-abused-sessions-a7884601.html>

The *Lancet* published a report from a research team that studied the “causes of death up to 10 years after admissions to hospitals for self-inflicted, drug-related or alcohol-related or violent injury during

adolescence.” Using National Health Service records and mortality data from the Office of National Statistics, they found that “risks of suicide were significantly increased after all types of adversity-related injury except for girls who had violent injury” and that “risks of drug or alcohol related death increased by a similar magnitude.” [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)31045-0/fulltext?elsca1=etoc](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)31045-0/fulltext?elsca1=etoc)

United Kingdom/Northern Ireland. “Relatives of Omagh bomb victims are suing Northern Ireland’s police chief over investigative failings they believe let the killers escape justice,” *ITV* reported. The 1998 bombing killed 29 people and is a key event of the period of the “Troubles.” The suit cites “the damning findings of official inquiries and court proceedings.” <http://www.itv.com/news/2017-08-10/omagh-bombing-victims-families-to-sue-northern-irelands-police-chief/>

United States. The American Civil Liberties Union expressed alarm that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) service has asked the National Archives for permission to begin destroying records related to detainees and operations, including records of complaints of sexual and physical abuse by ICE employees. The “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists and Records Managers in Support of Human Rights,” an official paper of the International Council on Archives and endorsed by the Society of American Archivists, is relevant for this appraisal. <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/ice-plans-start-destroying-records-immigrant>

The Treasury Department’s Inspector General for Tax Administration reported “several critical deficiencies in how the IRS handles electronically stored federal records.” The *National Law Review* said the “lapses” identified “may affect the availability of those electronic records for future Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests, litigation and Congressional review.” <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/treasury-inspector-general-tax-administration-pounces-irs-federal-records-retention>

A Federal judge ordered the Justice Department to search for and release historical records relating to a “purge” of gay and lesbian employees by the Federal Bureau of Investigation between 1953-1995, *NBC News* reported. <http://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/court-tells-justice-department-release-1950s-gay-purge-documents-n789056>

Descendants of three men who were among 13 black soldiers court-martialed and hung in the wake of riots in Houston, Texas, in 1917, are seeking posthumous pardons from President Trump. The military court-martial process was revised as a result of the unfair process given the soldiers. The records relating to the revision are in the National Archives. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/08/24/i-am-not-guilty-the-mass-hanging-of-13-black-soldiers-after-the-bloody-1917-houston-riots/?utm\\_term=.86d9863a21bd](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/08/24/i-am-not-guilty-the-mass-hanging-of-13-black-soldiers-after-the-bloody-1917-houston-riots/?utm_term=.86d9863a21bd)

A Federal judge ordered the website-hosting company DreamHost to “provide the Justice Department with records for a website called disruptj20.org from October 2016, when the site debuted, to January 2017,” the *Associated Press* reported. The site was used by protesters to organize demonstrations on inauguration day, January 20. More than 217 people have been charged with rioting and other crimes during those demonstrations. The judge “specified that the government’s process of sifting and vetting the raw information would be closely monitored and he would personally supervise what he called the ‘minimization program’ to ensure that information outside the scope of the government’s request was protected and sealed.” <https://www.csmirror.com/USA/Justice/2017/0825/DreamHost-ordered-to-release-Trump-protest-website-data>

A new study by the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs reported that “the number of households with worst-case housing needs ballooned 66% since 2001,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*. <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-hud-rent-study-20170809-story.html#nws=mcnewsletter>; for the study see <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Worst-Case-Housing-Needs.html>

Researchers collected infant mortality rates, life expectancy at birth, and participant demographics (including poverty levels) in the Appalachian Region seven times between 1990 and 2013. Looking at the large data set, they found that from 2009 to 2013 the “infant mortality rate was 16% higher in Appalachia than the rest of the United States with an even greater disparity among black infants.” Life expectancy for the same period was 2.4 years less for a person living in the region than in the United States as a whole, reported the *American Journal of Managed Care*. <http://www.ajmc.com/newsroom/infant-mortality-and-life-expectancy-in-appalachia-versus-the-rest-of-the-us>

The Marshall Project, a nonprofit news organization, obtained “dozens of data sets” from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and examined 400,000 homicides committed by civilians between 1980 and 2014. The researchers found that “in almost 17 percent of cases when a black man was killed by a non-Hispanic white civilian over the last three decades, the killing was categorized as justifiable” by police as compared to 2 percent of all homicides committed by civilians categorized as justifiable. Furthermore, in one of six cases of a white person killing a black man there was no criminal sanction.

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2017/08/14/killings-of-black-men-by-whites-are-far-more-likely-to-be-ruled-justifiable#.cm6sRDWIE>

The Department of Health and Human Services inspector general’s office issued an “early alert” after finding in an audit in 33 states that “more than 1 in 4 cases of possible sexual and physical abuse against nursing home patients apparently went unreported to police,” the *Associated Press* wrote.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/apnewsbreak-abuse-nursing-homes-unreported-law-49461162>

A study reported by *STAT* “suggests that opioid-related deaths have been underreported, in part because up to a quarter of death certificates don’t document the drug responsible for an individual’s death.” Deaths from opioids were 24% higher than previously estimated. The study says “having accurate information on drug-related deaths is critical to developing policies to combat the crisis.” For the study see

[http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(17\)30313-6/fulltext?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=57b48f0585-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-57b48f0585-149736437](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(17)30313-6/fulltext?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=57b48f0585-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-57b48f0585-149736437)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a study showing that “after increasing from 1999 through 2007, drug overdose death rates for adolescents aged 15-19 declined through 2014, but then increased in 2015.” The data came from the National Center for Health Statistics’ 1999-2015 multiple cause-of-death mortality files. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db282.pdf>

More than 1,000 separate agencies in the United States collect mosquito data but “only 152 agencies make their data publicly available,” a researcher told *The Atlantic*. Researchers “are now calling for the creation of a national database of mosquito records that anyone can access,” arguing that this would enable scientists to “predict the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever or Zika, coordinate control efforts across states and counties, and quickly spot the arrival of new invasive species.”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/mosquito-data/537735/>

In a 30-month study, 1,200 residents of Louisville, Kentucky, tested GPS-enabled medication sensors to measure respiratory health of persons with asthma. The data “pinpointed the location, time, weather, and pollutants in the air” every time the person used an emergency inhaler; the data was available to both the patients and healthcare workers. The researchers found that, among other things, ozone, “most noticeable with the busy roads and highways,” increases asthma risk. “City officials are developing a plan to rein in roadway pollution by designating special freight routes, in the hope of reducing ozone,” reported *City Lab*.

[https://www.citylab.com/environment/2017/08/how-high-tech-inhalers-are-helping-louisville-clear-the-air/535749/?utm\\_source=SFTwitter&utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=1b4f9e70ea-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-1b4f9e70ea-149736437](https://www.citylab.com/environment/2017/08/how-high-tech-inhalers-are-helping-louisville-clear-the-air/535749/?utm_source=SFTwitter&utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=1b4f9e70ea-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-1b4f9e70ea-149736437)

To settle a complaint brought by the Federal Trade Commission, Uber (the “ride-hailing” service) agreed to “protect data and audit use of rider information,” the *Associated Press* reported. A hack of Uber’s computers in 2014 gave access to 100,000 names and driver’s license numbers; other allegations were that Uber had no secure system for handling data on riders and trips.

<http://www.apnewsarchive.com/2017/Ride-hailing-service-Uber-has-agreed-to-protect-customer-data-and-audit-the-use-of-rider-information-in-order-to-settle-a-complaint-filed-by-the-federal-government/id-905ab4e954aa4bcb97492e45a200becf>

The Protenus Breach Barometer is “a monthly snapshot of reported or disclosed breaches impacting the healthcare industry, with data compiled and provided by DataBreaches.net.” The August report said, “July is the first month in 2017 to have hacking incidents outweigh insider breaches to patient data in both frequency and number of affected patient records.”

[https://www.protenus.com/blog/hacking-dominates-breaches-but-one-insider-breach-took-14-years-to-discover?utm\\_campaign=Breach%20Barometer&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-80vFe4GyHKqLCSAk2xuRpUD1-bTO6WFO61SxNIYHvIWTZF779275BLWnrgHWkijy3JNLj8I](https://www.protenus.com/blog/hacking-dominates-breaches-but-one-insider-breach-took-14-years-to-discover?utm_campaign=Breach%20Barometer&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-80vFe4GyHKqLCSAk2xuRpUD1-bTO6WFO61SxNIYHvIWTZF779275BLWnrgHWkijy3JNLj8I)

Aetna, a major health insurance company, sent approximately 12,000 people with HIV-AIDS an envelope that had a window allowing a view of the letter inside that disclosed their HIV status, *STAT* reported.

[https://www.statnews.com/2017/08/24/aetna-hiv-envelopes/?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=dd51ae910e-MR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-dd51ae910e-149736437](https://www.statnews.com/2017/08/24/aetna-hiv-envelopes/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=dd51ae910e-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-dd51ae910e-149736437)

In a piece of good news, using a non-invasive optical scanning technique researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, are able to preserve audio recordings of 78 indigenous California languages which were recorded more than a century ago on approximately 2,700 wax cylinders.

[https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/science\\_nation/waxcylinders.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/science_nation/waxcylinders.jsp)

United States/Maryland. “Suicide rates in rural areas of Maryland are 35-percent higher than in the state’s urban settings, a disparity that can be attributed to the significantly greater use of firearms in rural settings, according to new research from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.”

<https://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2017/higher-rural-suicide-rates-driven-by-use-of-guns.html>

Venezuela. Following the controversial July 30 election of members of the Constituent Assembly, the British company that provided the voting machines used said “the balloting was ‘tampered with’ and the company could not endorse the results,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*. *Reuters* reported it had reviewed “internal electoral council data” which showed that “only 3.7 million people had voted by 5.30 p.m. . . . casting doubt on the 8.1 million people authorities said had voted that day.” Voting closed at 7 p.m. The government denied the claim of tampering and the Assembly was sworn in. <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fig-venezuela-election-results-20170802-story.html#nws=mcnewsletter>

Venezuela installed a Commission for Truth, Justice, and Reparation for Victims “tasked with reviewing and determining the responsibility of perpetrators of violent political acts over the past few years,” *telesur* reported. [http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Venezuela-to-Install-Truth-Justice-and-Reparations-Commission-20170806-0012.html?utm\\_source=planisys&utm\\_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm\\_content=10#comsup](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Venezuela-to-Install-Truth-Justice-and-Reparations-Commission-20170806-0012.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=10#comsup)

Vietnam. The *Phnom Penh Post* reported that the International Finance Corporation’s Compliance Advisor Ombudsman brokered an agreement between the Hoang Anh Gia Lai (HAGL) rubber company and eleven ethnic minority villages affected by its operations. An official said the government “would only approve the agreement once a provincial task force demarcated the boundaries of the land HAGL promised to return to the communities.” Demarcation and titling are critical to efforts to prevent land grabbing and environmental degradation. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/vietnam-rubber-firm-reaches-accord-ratanakiri-ethnic-villages>

A government report on the prison system, posted on an official website, said the number of crimes punishable by death had fallen from 45 in 1993 to 22 in 2009. However, the number of people on death row was 336 in 2011 and 681 in 2016, and 429 had been executed from August 2013 to June 2016. The *New York Times*, quoting Amnesty International, said that means Vietnam had the world’s third-highest execution rate over that period, after China and Iran. <https://www.postnewsreport.com/its-very-easy-to-die-there-how-prisoners-fare-in-vietnam/>

Zimbabwe. The High Court ordered a state diamond company to stop all mining activities “until it has conducted an environmental impact assessment process in accordance with the law and obtained an environmental impact assessment certificate,” reported *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-diamonds-idUSKBN1AH4XL>

## **Courses, publications.**

Migration is central theme of the international Winter School Archives and Education 2018 in Ghent, Belgium, January 29–February 2. [https://faro.be/sites/default/files/bijlagen/kalender/Winter\\_school.pdf](https://faro.be/sites/default/files/bijlagen/kalender/Winter_school.pdf)

Good reads. For a look at Colombia's challenges regarding human rights archives in the transitional justice process see: <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/noticias/noticias-cmh/los-archivos-en-los-procesos-de-justicia-transicional>

ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, a Singapore-based research group, published Kathleen Azali’s “Fake News and Increased Persecution in Indonesia.” [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2017\\_61.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2017_61.pdf)

Jason Baron, a U.S. lawyer specializing in electronic records issues, published an article in *Bloomberg Law* titled “Presidential Tweets and Self-Destructing Messages under the Records Laws: The New Normal.” <http://iginitiative.com/presidential-tweets-self-destructing-messages-records-laws-new-normal/>

*Legaltechnews* offered two useful items, one on ways to secure intellectual property during corporate transitions and the other on keywords to know before beginning a “technology assisted review” (TAR) of records. <http://www.legaltechnews.com/id=1202796606454/5-Ways-to-Secure-Your-Intellectual-Property-During-Corporate-Transitions?kw=5%20Ways%20to%20Secure%20Your%20Intellectual%20Property%20During%20Corporate%20Transitions&et=editorial&bu=Law%20Technology%20News&cn=20170828&src=EMC-Email&pt=Daily%20Alert> ; <http://www.legaltechnews.com/id=1202796708355/Keywords-Before-TAR-What-to-Ask-First?kw=Keywords%20Before%20TAR%20What%20to%20Ask%20First&et=editorial&bu=Law%20Technology%20News&cn=20170829&src=EMC-Email&pt=Daily%20Alert>

The World Bank and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees published “Forcibly Displaced: Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts.” <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25016/9781464809385.pdf?sequence=11&isAllowed=y>

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars published Celina Realuyo’s article, “‘Following the Money Trail’ to Combat Terrorism, Crime, and Corruption in the Americas.” [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/follow\\_the\\_money\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/follow_the_money_final_0.pdf)

On the International Day of the Disappeared, David Tolbert, president of the International Center for Transitional Justice, offered a commentary, “To Prevent Enforce Disappearances, Rethink the Justice and Security Equation.” <https://www.ictj.org/news/prevent-enforced-disappearances-rethink-justice-and-security-equation>

And on a sobering note, the *Washington Post* published “Muslim asylum seekers reckon with Germany’s Nazi past.” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/at-a-site-of-nazi-terror-muslim-refugees-reckon-with-germanys-past/2017/08/10/12e2c864-779b-11e7-8c17-533c52b2f014\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.61c22171d130](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/at-a-site-of-nazi-terror-muslim-refugees-reckon-with-germanys-past/2017/08/10/12e2c864-779b-11e7-8c17-533c52b2f014_story.html?utm_term=.61c22171d130)

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