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Commentary. Ever since a man took a camera up in a balloon in the mid-19th century, we have had aerial photographs. Cameras have gone aloft on kites, on all manner of aircraft, on rockets and with manned space missions, in satellites, in drones and even on the bodies of pigeons. Mapping, surveying and monitoring are obvious uses of contemporary satellite imagery, and increasingly the human rights community is using this tool, albeit in a rather different way. Satellite images of conflict zones are used to locate damage, search for missing persons, identify population and military movements, and monitor sites of special concern, such as cultural heritage locations.

Just during the past year, *HRWG News* has reported the use of satellite photography to document forced eviction of persons living around a mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (issue of 2014-12), estimate the number of deaths at a protest in Cairo in 2013 (2014-08), show deforestation and forced resettlement of indigenous people in Ethiopia (2014-02), identify mass execution sites in Iraq (2014-09), document war crimes in South Sudan (2014-08), demonstrate that the military are building structures for themselves but not for refugees in the northern part of Sri Lanka (2014-08), analyze the destruction at medical facilities in Aleppo and Damascus, Syria (2014-06) and determine the habitation of a prison in Turkmenistan (2014-09). Clearly imagery is an important, versatile new tool. However, as Human Rights Watch noted when it used satellite images to document a systematic campaign of arson directed against the civilian population in northern Nigeria (2015-01), satellite images do not reveal deaths or injuries but when no other information is available “credibly used satellite imagery is the closest we will get to the truth.”

The growing use of this technology in conflict analysis led the American Academy for the Advancement of Science to issue “Satellite Imaging of Cultural Sites in Conflict: A Cautionary Note.” After noting the easy availability of high-resolution commercial satellite images, AAAS wrote, “Researchers and others using this type of information-gathering in sensitive and volatile situations, such as the current conflict in Iraq, face ethical questions related to the public disclosure of such information. They must also consider the technical limitations of satellite technology in analysis.” They warn that even with high-resolution imagery, some objects may appear undamaged if they are small or under cover (such as under trees) and therefore “reports of damage may be unverifiable using satellite technology alone.” But a more serious warning is on disclosure of information gained from the analysis of satellite imagery: “all parties should consider the following questions at a minimum, particularly concerning cultural site analysis in Iraq, when weighing the impact of disclosing research findings:

“What does the affected population gain by our activities?”

“What might be the unintended negative consequences of our activities for people’s security, and how can we avoid or minimize these consequences?”

“Do the activities take into consideration possible protection threats facing the affected population? Might they undermine people’s own efforts to protect themselves?”

“Could the activities inadvertently empower or strengthen the position of armed groups or other actors?”

AAAS invites individuals or organizations to endorse this cautionary statement. <http://www.aaas.org/page/satellite-imaging-cultural-sites-conflict-cautionary-note>

Archives acquire satellite imagery from many sources: military units, mapping services, aerospace companies, geographical and geophysical organizations and their counterparts in universities and research institutes, and now from human rights organizations. The kinds of access questions outlined above echo the concerns archivists have about some uses of aerial photographs and satellite imagery. When I worked at the U.S. National Archives, which has enormous holdings of aerial and satellite images, a researcher

came and asked to see aerial photographs of remote regions of a country well known to have a problem with thefts of antiquities (for a current example, see the story of the statue of a Buddha stolen in 1995 from a village in China—confirmed by local archives—that has now turned up in Budapest http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/22/c_134087352.htm). We made the records available, but I have always wondered whether we abetted plunder. As archivists we cannot and should not police the subsequent use of records by researchers. But we do need to think carefully about the kinds of questions AAAS raises when we make decisions about our use of our holdings in publications, exhibitions, and online portals. Archives are neutral; the use of them is not.

News of the Human Rights Working Group. The Group submitted a revised draft “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights” to the ICA Executive Board for consideration at its April meeting. Thanks to Perrine Canavaggio for translating the text into French.

International news.

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. The International Co-Investigating Judge brought charges against three persons, one woman and two men, in two separate cases. In the press release on each person charged, the Court promised that the lawyers for the defendant will “have access to the case file” that has been assembled. <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/articles/international-co-investigating-judge-charges-meas-muth-absentia-case-003>; <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/articles/international-co-investigating-judge-charges-im-chaem-absentia-case-004>; <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/articles/international-co-investigating-judge-charges-ao-case-004>

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. In a report to the UN Human Rights Council, the Commission said it has begun “sharing evidence, including names of suspects, with national prosecutors and judiciaries which are considering launching their own investigations,” whether cases against citizens or cases under universal jurisdiction, reported *The Guardian*. The Commission also called for the UN Security Council to either refer the Syrian conflict to the International Criminal Court for prosecution or establish an ad hoc tribunal to handle war crimes prosecutions. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/17/call-for-special-tribunal-to-investigate-war-crimes-and-mass-atrocities-in-syria>

International Criminal Court (ICC). The *International Justice Tribune* published a report on the International Criminal Court’s “quest for scientific evidence.” It reviewed the difficulties the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) has had obtaining evidence, noting that OTP’s strategic plan said OTP will improve “its capabilities to collect other forms of evidence in addition to witness statements,” including “information gleaned from computers, phones, emails, internet postings, social media, financial data, photos, audio records, videos, GPS data from cellular devices and satellite images.” www.justicetribune.com, No. 178.

United Nations. The United Nations Secretary-General appointed a panel of three persons to “examine and assess the probative value of new information related to the tragic death, in September 1961, of Dag Hammarskjöld and the members of the party accompanying him.” The panel will review the records of the Hammarskjöld Commission “as well as any relevant records or information released by Member States or by other sources.” The chairman, Mohamed Chande Othman of Tanzania, has had many previous UN posts, including serving as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Archives of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. The panel’s report is expected by the end of June. For background, see *HRWG News* 2014-12. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sga1555.doc.htm>

An internal United Nations expert report from November 2013 on sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers was obtained and published by the non-governmental organization AIDS-Free World. The report said the “UN does not know how serious the problem . . . is because the official numbers mask what appears to be significant amounts of underreporting,” due in part to “record keeping problems, with numbers not matching from one source to another.” It notes that not all cases “get collated in the Misconduct Tracking System” which was designed for the purpose of providing a comprehensive overview

of the problem. It urged creation of “a coherent single database of cases” and more sharing of information between parts of the UN. <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2015/03/16/20740>

On the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, “the most comprehensive international blueprint for advancing women’s human rights,” UN Women “undertook a global review and appraisal of implementation,” gathering national reports from 166 countries. The Secretary-General’s report of the review noted areas of progress, but said “major gaps remain” and called for, among other things, “increased investments in gender statistics.”

http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/sg%20report_synthesis-en_web.pdf

A photo exhibit at the United Nations headquarters featured about two dozen photographs taken in Syria between 2011 and mid-2013 by a former military police photographer who smuggled them out of Syria.

For background, see *HRWG News* 2014-01. http://www.trust.org/item/20150310200501-upuke/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly%20Digest%20110315&utm_content=Weekly%20Digest%20110315+CID_a370550259c7188b7d08390369a06e92&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Graphic%20torture%20photos%20from%20Syria%20on%20display%20at%20United%20Nations

United Nations Human Rights Council. The Council met during March, hearing many reports and producing many resolutions. Among them were:

1. A report by the mission sent to Iraq by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It said the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (IS) “may have committed genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in its attacks against ethnic and religious groups in the country,” but noted that “multiple credible sources” alleged that Iraqi security forces and “associated armed groups” also violated international humanitarian and human right laws. The mission reviewed “all available information, including testimony from [over 100] witnesses and victims and documentation from the Government of Iraq, Member States, and relevant United Nations and non-governmental organisations.” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15755&LangID=E>; A/HRC/28/18 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Pages/ListReports.aspx>
2. A resolution was adopted appointing, for a three year term, a Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15763&LangID=E>
3. A report by the High Commissioner of a September 2014 panel discussion on “history teaching and memorialization processes.” During the panel, Pablo de Grieff, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, urged States to facilitate access to archives, pointing out that the “gap between theory and practice in the area of history teaching and memorialization processes . . . was still widely visible through the denial, on the part of various States, of violations, including massacres and genocide; common manipulation of history for narrow political purposes; obstacles to the work of artists, academics and historians, including for gaining access to archives . . .” During the general discussion, “many delegations insisted on States’ obligations to respect the rights to have access to information . . . States should ensure access to archives and libraries.” Further, governments should “ensure access to library funds and archival materials of public interest, including to researchers from other States.” A/HRC/28/36 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Pages/ListReports.aspx>
4. A report by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, “Copyright policy and the right to science and culture.” The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) issued a statement in support of the report, and several archival associations have signed on to IFLA’s statement. [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_57_ENG.doc.;](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_57_ENG.doc.) <http://www.ifla.org/node/9455> Thanks to Peter Hirtle for the information.

World Bank Group. The World Bank issued a report, “Report Cards: The Impact of Providing School and Child Test Scores on Educational Markets.” Using data from 112 Pakistani villages, the researchers found that the simple matter of providing a written report card to parents increased test scores of pupils, increased primary school enrollment, and decreased private school fees.

http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2015/03/24220579/?cid=DEC_PolicyResearchEN_D_INT

World/general news.

Abu Ghraib videos. Two social workers in Beirut “spend hours each week tapping deep into the lives and minds of terrorists of the Islamic State (IS), al-Qaeda and other groups imprisoned in Lebanon’s notorious Roumieh prison,” reported *al-Monitor*. One former IS fighter told them that to prepare IS members to kill prisoners and hostages “[f]or days . . . they continuously watch the Abu Ghraib videos and pictures of American soldiers torturing and raping the prisoners during the Iraqi war.” <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/terrorism-social-work-jihadist-profile-roumieh-prison.html>

“War on Terror” casualty figures. Three non-governmental organizations in three countries (Germany, Canada, and the United States) issued a report, “Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the ‘War on Terror’: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan.” Using records, individual studies and data published by UN organizations, government bodies and other NGOs, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Physicians for Global Survival, and Physicians for Social Responsibility estimated that the “total body count in the three main war zones” during the 12 years ending in 2013 is “around 1 million people in Iraq, 220,000 in Afghanistan and 80,000 in Pakistan.” For Iraq, the study said, “When comparing the deaths listed in the U.S. military war logs published by WikiLeaks with the IBC [British Iraq Body Count] database entries . . . only every fourth entry in the war logs was to be found in the IBC as well” and “numerous cases of death are missing from both.” <http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/body-count.pdf>

Al-Qaeda files. Files taken from Osama bin Laden’s compound when he was killed were entered as evidence in a terrorism trial recently concluded in Brooklyn, New York, reported *The Intercept*. The 150 pages released include communications between bin Laden, his chief of external operations, his general manager and others connected with the group; topics discussed include the lack of travel documents, plans for operations in Somalia, and the value of palm oil cultivation in West Africa. A comparison by bin Laden between the number of U.S. citizens who die from smoking each year and the number of U.S. persons killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan led him to conclude that the number of war deaths was not yet high enough to force a change in U.S. policy: deaths from smoking “is a huge number compared to the number killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they still have not come out in mass protests to close down the tobacco companies.” <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/03/13/al-qaeda-files-bin-laden-documents-reveal-struggling-organization/>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Afghanistan/Pakistan. Once again underlining the importance of documents for refugees, Afghanistan and Pakistan announced they will begin a joint effort to register all Afghan refugees currently living in Pakistan, reported *Voice of America*. More than 1 million undocumented Afghan refugees are believed to be living in Pakistan, along with 1.6 million already registered, and Pakistan has set a deadline of December 2015 to return them all to Afghanistan. The registration is an effort to help the Afghan government plan for the return. A “joint six-member committee of Afghan and Pakistani experts will oversee the massive exercise” in cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Both countries and UNHCR will have massive records to manage during registration and repatriation. <http://www.voanews.com/content/pakistan-afghanistan-team-up-to-document-refugees/2677147.html>

Africa/France. When Jacques Foccart, the long-time adviser to the French government on African policy, died in 1997, *The Economist* reported that once when Foccart was asked about the murder of an African dissident, he replied, “The archives will reveal the truth.” In late March in Paris his assertion was tested, as the Archives nationales published an inventory of the fonds Foccart, historians and archivists from France and various African countries discussed his legacy in a colloquium, and *Le Monde* published a series of articles on the “dossier Foccart.” <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20150318-france-charles-gaulle-foccart-archives-houphouet-boigny-bat-biafra/>; http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2015/03/24/le-rwanda-et-les-archives-du-genocide_4600215_3212.html; <http://www.economist.com/node/367386>

Armenia/Turkey. On April 24, 1915, Armenian community leaders in Constantinople (now Istanbul) were deported and most were later executed; it is the day Armenians now mark as the beginning of the Armenian genocide. As the hundredth anniversary of that terrible event arrives, both Armenians and Turks are urging the opening of archives—each other’s archives. On March 19, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan opened an exhibition on World War I in the Ottoman Archives Facility in Istanbul. His remarks, reported *Today’s Zaman*, included: “Oh, Armenian diaspora, oh, Armenian administration, our archives are here. We have hundreds of thousands of documents, over a million documents. How many documents do you have? Bring your documents, and we will task the historians, our historians, political scientists, even archeologists and lawyers, let’s seek the truth here.” The National Congress of Western Armenians met ten days later in Paris and issued a list of demands, including unlimited access to the historical archives of the Ottoman Empire because this is “necessary for the re-establishment of the rights of Western Armenians. This should include all cadaster and civil state archives, in addition to all information related to our moral and material losses (damages incurred whether pecuniary or non-pecuniary) and relevant rights.”

http://en.apa.az/xeber_erdogan_calls_on_armenia_and_armenia_dia_224650.html;

http://www.todayszaman.com/national_armenian-diaspora-calls-on-turkey-to-open-border-and-archives_376806.html

Armenia/Turkey/Vatican. *Catholic News Agency* reported that the Vatican published four volumes of its records relating to the Armenian genocide, including “reports by eye witnesses that clearly describe what was going on.” Most of the documents are from the archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/vatican-archives-shed-light-on-tragedy-of-armenian-genocide-30124/>

Bolivia/Chile/Italy/Peru/Uruguay. Between 1975 and 1985 right-wing dictatorships in South America cooperated in Operation Condor, a campaign of political repression against enemies of their regimes. As many as 50,000 people were murdered and 30,000 went missing, among them 23 Italian citizens. Italy is now trying 32 persons from Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay it believes were involved in those cases. Massive archives on the Condor exist, and archivists in those countries are cooperating in an effort to make a consolidated finding aid on Condor.

<https://www.ictj.org/news/trial-operation-condor-resumes-italy> This is the second Condor-related trial Italy has held; for a look at the archival issues involved in the first trial, see Giulia Barrera’s “Of condors and judges: archival musings over a judicial investigation,” *Archival Science*,

December 2009. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10502-009-9109-y>

Bosnia/Croatia. The war crimes trial of a man accused of taking part in the execution of six Bosniak prisoners from Srebrenica began in a county court in eastern Croatia, *Balkan Insight* reported. He was a member of the Scorpions unit, which filmed themselves “taking the six young Bosniaks from a truck with their hands tied behind their backs, and lining them up on a hillside. They immediately shot four of them, then the remaining two were made to carry the bodies into a barn, where they too were killed.” The video was shown at the trial of former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and is in the records of the Tribunal; it will surely be shown at this trial, too.

http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/member-of-scorpions-ried-croatia?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=00e5ceedfb-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-00e5ceedfb-311109073

Bosnia/Serbia/United States. U.S. immigration officials are investigating “at least” 150 Bosnians living in the United States who may have been involved in atrocities during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. In 2005 an official with the Human Rights Violators and War Crimes unit of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement “brought back a trove of Serbian military rosters and proposed checking individual military service and duty records against statements by refugee applicants,” reported the *Washington Post*. The unit continues to gather wartime records from the countries of the former Yugoslavia and, according to the *New York Times*, as “more records from Bosnia become available” the number of suspects could rise to 600.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/28/us-usa-bosnia-warcrimes-idUSKBN0LW0XV20150228>;

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/immigration-team-chases-bosnian-war-criminals-20-years-after-conflicts-end/2015/03/08/806b834e-c1ef-11e4-9ec2-b418f57a4a99_story.html; for an overview of the work of the unit, see

<http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=393404632&m=393748291>

Czech Republic/Russia/Ukraine. Ukraine has increased access to the records of its Soviet-era State Security Service, reported *Radio Praha*. Czech researchers from the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes have used the new access “to fill in some of the gaps about the thousands of Czechs . . . unfortunate enough to feature in the secret police files,” including Czech Jews who ended up in Soviet hands during

World War II and persons who were held in gulag camps. <http://radio.cz/en/section/czech-history/czech-researchers-probe-secret-soviet-era-archives-in-ukraine>

Egypt/Ethiopia/Sudan. The presidents of the three countries signed a Declaration of Principles on water rights and the management of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Previous agreements that date back to 1902 were not annulled by the new Declaration, the Egyptian legal adviser told *al-Monitor*; those agreements should be in the national archives of the signatory countries. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/egypt-eastern-nile-water-agreement-ethiopia-sudan.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=c4ebbd1ead-April_01_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-c4ebbd1ead-93088897

Germany/Greece/United States. The Greek government announced that it will use copies of German World War II documents obtained from the U.S. National Archives to press its claim for German reparation payments for damage done during the war. *Expatica* reported that the Greek parliament also “approved a motion to reactivate a special committee to look into war reparations, reimbursement of a forced war loan and the return of archeological relics seized by German occupation forces.” http://www.expatica.com/de/news/country-news/Greece-to-use-Nazi-army-archives-for-reparation-claim-officials_453469.html

Germany/Poland. A typewritten page listing the names of 15 Polish and Jewish inmates of the Auschwitz death camp was found in a history book at a school in Lodz, Poland, reported *The Associated Press*. The page has burned edges; it is known that the German SS burned some records before it abandoned the camp. http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=24427

Guatemala/United States. Nearly 800 persons--participants in medical experiments in Guatemala in the 1940s and 1950s and the estates and families of 124 people who died from complications of diseases that they contracted through the studies--filed suit against Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, The Rockefeller Foundation and the pharmaceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb over harm from the experiments. A previous suit against the U.S. government was dismissed. The records of the studies, which came to public attention in the autumn of 2010, provide the evidence for the suit. For background, see *HRWG News* 2011-09. <http://jurist.org/paperchase/2015/04/johns-hopkins-sued-for-role-in-guatemala-std-experiments.php#> for the lawsuit see http://jurist.org/paperchase/JHU_Complaint.pdf

India/Pakistan. According to *The Times of India*, “even more than eight decades from Bhagat Singh and his comrades’ martyrdom” the Punjab Archives will not permit access to either the finding aid or the “more than 160 files” of the special tribunal that heard the case Crown vs Sukh Dev, Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-1931. A researcher told *The Times*, “The task of getting copies from the Lahore Archives will have to be taken up by the government of India at the highest level.” An early, renowned fighter for the independence of India, Singh was hanged in 1931 for the murder of a British police officer. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/160-Bhagat-Singh-files-lie-in-oblivion-in-Lahore/articleshow/46657136.cms>

Lebanon/Syria. *The National* reported on the variety of Syrian and Lebanese groups that are collecting digital and physical records of the war in Syria. A Syrian historian said that much of Syria’s history was in photographs and correspondence maintained in homes in Damascus and Aleppo, but “many of those archives have been abandoned, have been stolen, have been burnt or destroyed because of this four-year conflict.” <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/the-race-to-save-syrias-memories-as-uprising-enters-fifth-year#full>

New Zealand/South Pacific. *Reuters* reported that documents released by Edward Snowden and dating back to 2009 show that New Zealand’s Government Communications Security Bureau intercepted “emails, mobile and fixed line phone calls, social media messages and other communications in small Pacific states including Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and French Polynesia” and shared the materials with the other members of the “Five Eyes” surveillance network (Australia, Canada, U.K. and U.S.). http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/04/snowden-new-zealand-spying_n_6804742.html

National news.

Argentina. The government announced plans to declassify all documents related to the investigation into the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center that killed 85 people, *The Associated Press* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2015-02. http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/world-digest-march-13-2015/2015/03/13/59b45c04-c991-11e4-b2a1-bed1aeca2816_story.html

The government posted to its *archivos abiertos* (open archives) website the records of the military junta that were found in the basement of the Argentine Air Force headquarters in 2013. For background, see *HRWG News* 2013-11. Thanks to Roman Lescano for this information. <http://www.archivosabiertos.com/centroDeDocumentos.php?documentos=edificioCondor>

Australia. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a “senior Uniting Church figure” told the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that he did not destroy “crucial documents relating to sexual abuse at Knox Grammar School.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2015-02. <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/uniting-church-head-did-not-destroy-knox-sex-abuse-files-royal-commission-hears-20150302-13swrv.html>

Bosnia. A museum dedicated to the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo will be built in a park in the city center. One of the leaders of the museum effort told *BIRN* that the museum will have “installations, exhibits, an investigative centre, digital library and archive, most of which has been prepared already.” http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/construction-of-sarajevo-siege-museum-expected-soon?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=a087677b71-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-a087677b71-311109073

Canada. Using a system codenamed “Pony Express,” Canada’s Communications Security Establishment (CSE) is “sifting through millions of emails sent to Canadian government agencies and departments, archiving details about them on a database for months or even years,” *The Intercept* reported. The information comes from documents disclosed by Edward Snowden (see also New Zealand/South Pacific above). CSE issued a statement saying the agency deletes intercepted Canadian emails if they contain no cyberthreat. <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/02/25/canada-cse-pony-express-email-surveillance/>

CBC News reported that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) criminal database “remains seriously backlogged six years after Canada’s auditor general warned the out-of-date system was undermining the courts and law enforcement.” In 2013 some 400,000 criminal records had not yet been added to the database; a police association official said the inaccurate data could in some cases “effectively put lives in danger” because police “need to know the criminal past of suspected terrorists they are monitoring, among others.” The RCMP launched a project in November 2014 to clear the backlog by March 2017. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rcmp-database-remains-out-of-date-police-and-prosecutors-say-1.2989397>

The C.D. Howe Institute released research arguing that Canada needs a national vaccination database “to help prevent and deal with future incidents” such as the current measles outbreak in Quebec. The lead researcher told the *Vancouver Sun*, “A key step forward is to track immunization status from birth” but “varied provincial reporting methods and major tracking gaps for preschool children restrict information available to public health authorities.” <http://www.vancouversun.com/health/CrossCanada+vaccination+database+needed+prevent+handle+outbreaks/10881617/story.html>

Chad. Chad’s criminal court convicted 20 top security agents of the 1982-1990 Hissene Habre dictatorship. “Habre’s one-party rule was marked by widespread atrocities, including the targeting of certain ethnic groups,” said Human Rights Watch, which in 2001 recovered the archives of the former Directorate of Documentation and Security. The archives, important evidence in the case, contained the names of 1,208 people who were killed or died in detention and 12,321 victims of human rights violations. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/25/chad-habre-era-agents-convicted-torture>

China. Security agents raided the offices of the Beijing Yirenping Center, a leading human rights organization, and “carted away files, computers and laptops,” reported the *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/27/world/asia/china-raids-offices-of-rights-group-as-crackdown-on-activism-continues.html?_r=0

Colombia. The government and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) continued peace talks in Havana. They announced an agreement “to remove landmines and other explosives from the battlefield,” *Reuters* reported; Colombian government statistics say 11,000 Colombians, including 1,101 children, have been killed or wounded since 1990 by landmines and discarded explosives. The negotiators will ask Norwegian People’s Aid to coordinate the clearance of the devices. The military should have records of its placement of mines, but whether the rebel group has such records is not known. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/07/us-colombia-rebels-idUSKBN0M30T320150307>

Also at the negotiations, the FARC issued a statement asking the government to “proceed to open official archives and declassify reserved information about the different subjects related to the conflict and its persistence” reported *Telesur*. The FARC also demanded the creation of an archives committee of “experts and representatives of the FARC, that will organize and put into action the opening and declassification of archives.” The FARC delegate who read the statement to the press added, “It will be a function of this commission to obtain information in the possession of the United States which will advance the processes that are already in place.” <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/FARC-Asks-Colombian-Government-to-Declassify-Archives-20150304-0033.html>

Ecuador. In 1985 Mireya Cardenas, a member of a revolutionary group, was captured in Costa Rica and returned to brutal military custody in Ecuador. Her son was “put under the care of his uncles and forced to change his last name for protection,” reported *teleSUR*. Now the Reparation for Victims Program has helped him have “his true identity recognized by the state.” The son, re-named Basantes Cardenas, said, “Having this new identity card, which we have to carry everywhere, reinforces that Mireya Cardenas and Fausto Basantes are my parents . . . and this fills me with pride.” <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Reparations-for-Ecuadorian-Victims-of-Crimes-Against-Humanity-20150313-0023.html>

Egypt. A police video was leaked that showed four men forced to face a wall while two women were beaten by police, reported *Mada Masr*. The women “are forced to pose for the camera as they are subjected to physical and verbal assaults. The low-ranking officer filming the raid then directs one of his colleagues to pose with the women for the camera and display his gun in a show of pride, threatening the women that the video would be published on Facebook and go viral to ‘expose’ them.” The Interior Ministry promised to investigate the event. http://www.madamasr.com/news/moi-investigate-video-police-sexually-assaulting-2-women-daqaahlia?mc_cid=bd17c71cd1&mc_eid=1de53490e0&mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWf9wsRonua7Kcu%2FhmjTEU5z17u0kUKCg38431UFwdcjKPmjrlYIETMdq1%2BSLDwEYGJlv6SgFSLHMMa12z7gLXxi%3D

The Ministry of Religious Endowments “awarded 400 preaching permits to Salafist leaders without requiring oration tests, despite the ministry’s previous and constant accusations that they spread extremism,” reported *al-Monitor*. The Salafists “pledged not to use Friday prayers for political purposes” and the Ministry formed a committee “to oversee new imams during Friday prayers, cancel their permits and initiate legal proceedings against them if they failed to abide by their agreement with the ministry, as well as permanently bar them from taking the pulpit of any mosque in the country.” The permit records of the Ministry are essential evidence. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/egypt-endowments-decision-close-worship-places.html>

Haiti. The national archivist appealed to anyone planning to be a candidate in the next election not to “wait until the last minute” to get the documents showing his or her civil status (birth and marriage certificates, etc.) that all candidates must submit to be placed on the ballot. <http://www.communication.gouv.ht/archives/9483>

Iceland. Iceland is well known for its nationwide program to obtain DNA information on its population. Papers published in the journal *Nature Genetics* described medical break-throughs that are now being achieved by using this large set of data. In reporting on the studies, the *New York Times* noted, “Iceland also has impressive genealogical records. . . . Geneticists use national genealogy databases to look for diseases that are unusually common in relatives—a sign that they share” a genetic mutation. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/26/science/in-icelands-dna-clues-to-what-genes-may-cause-disease.html>; for the study <http://www.nature.com/ng/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ng.3247.html>

Macedonia. After the government's Lustration Commission declared that the editor-in-chief of the independent publication *Fokus* was an informant for the former Yugoslav secret police, journalists demonstrated in the street, saying this was an attempt to silence a critical voice. The president of the Commission told a group of journalists that he had "hard evidence that other journalists had worked for the spy agency," reported *BIRN*. The Commission started work in 2009, has reviewed over 29,000 personal files, and has "lustrated" more than 140 people. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonian-journalists-protest-against-the-lustration-of-their-colleague?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=70981cdc5f-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-70981cdc5f-311109073

Netherlands. The district court of The Hague ruled that the country's data-retention law, which requires telecom providers to collect and store data for as long as 12 months, violates the right to privacy and the right to protection of personal data, reported the *Wall Street Journal*. <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2015/03/11/dutch-court-strikes-down-countrys-data-retention-law/>

Serbia. Aleksandar Cortic, a member of parliament from the small Serbian Renewal Movement party, submitted a draft declaration condemning all killings by the former Yugoslav communist regime and urging opening the secret police archives. Cortic said, "One of the most important lines in the declaration is that we want to Law on Opening Secret Files to be adopted. Those files have to be available to the public". According to *Balkan Insight*, the Serbian archives "are thought to contain thousands of secret documents. There were two attempts in the 2000s to have them opened but both failed." http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-should-condemn-communist-oppression?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=00e5ceedfb-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_561b9a25c3-00e5ceedfb-311109073

South Africa. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission held a number of hearings in-camera rather than in public to deal with certain particularly heinous crimes, including high profile murders, bombings and deaths in police custody. The South Africa History Archive (SAHA), using the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) and finally a lawsuit, gained access at the end of 2014 to 174 records from those hearings. The *Daily Maverick* reported that SAHA says that while some of the information in the records is "definitely controversial," the larger significance of its success in the lawsuit is the reinforcement of the power of the PAIA. <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-03-31-trc-secret-records-finally-out-in-the-open/>

The Archival Platform, a joint initiative of the University of Cape Town and the Nelson Mandela Foundation, issued a report, *State of Archives: An Analysis of the State Archival System, 2014*. It calls the state of government record-keeping "embarrassing." An article on the report written by a researcher at the University of Cape Town highlighted the problem with land records, which, he said, are being stolen from the archives "seemingly by people who want to stop claims being lodged on land they hold or to strengthen their own claims where there are competing or overlapping claims." The writer added, "To think that we can have a well-ordered land reform process in light of the failure to take basic steps to secure and make accessible what records are available is unrealistic." <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-03-27-department-fails-to-protect-archives-and-democracy>

Syria. The Syrian opposition began posting on a Facebook page (Standwith Caesar) and on www.safmcd.com/martyr/ photographs of detainees who died in Syrian prisons, selected from the nearly 27,000 photographs smuggled out of Syria by a police photographer who goes by the pseudonym Caesar, the *New York Times* reported. The photos were given to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation in July to try to identify the victims but only a small number of identifications have yet been made; consequently, the opposition decided to begin posting the photos so that family members could identify the missing "and potentially serve as plaintiffs in war crimes cases that could be filed in courts in Europe and possible the United States." http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/05/world/middleeast/syrian-opposition-to-post-thousands-of-photos-of-dead-detainees.html?_r=0

Togo. *Liberation* published an essay by Adama Aly Pal, the archivist for the truth commission in Togo, reflecting on the issues that face the commission and were encountered in managing its archives. http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2015/03/24/au-togo-les-dossiers-de-la-terreur-au-service-de-la-reconciliation_1227548

Tunisia. Last December three Tunisians fighting with the Islamic State (IS) appeared in a video warning that Tunisia would not be secure “as long as Tunisia is not governed by Islam.” As the Bardo Museum in Tunis was being attacked on March 18, killing 19 people and injuring two dozen more, “supporters of the Islamic State circulated the video again on social media, celebrating the attack as a fulfillment of that warning,” reported the *New York Times*. Clearly some affiliates (if not IS itself) are maintaining an archives of IS videos. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/19/world/africa/gunmen-attack-tunis-bardo-national-museum.html?_r=0
<http://www.businessnews.com.tn/disparition-de-plusieurs-documents-des-arives-de-la-presidence,520,54349,3>

Turkey. At “a party meeting in parliament,” the leader of the main opposition political party, CHP, showed a document from the intelligence department of the directorate-general of police that describes two data analysis programs that collect information “with their databases now containing personal details about every person in the country,” reported *al-Monitor*. The CHP also issued a report based on current data by the official Turkish Statistics Institute showing the high poverty level in Turkey and the rising number of workplace accidents. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/turkish-opposition-draws-up-alarming-poverty-map.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=c4ebbd1ead-April_01_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-c4ebbd1ead-93088897

United Kingdom. In what must be a serious embarrassment, the Serious Fraud Office was fined 180,000 pounds after it sent “thousands of confidential documents from a high-profile investigation” to the wrong person, reported *ITV*. The documents on 64 persons included bank statements, hospital invoices, passport details and other information. <http://www.itv.com/news/2015-03-30/serious-fraud-office-fined-180-000-after-sending-confidential-documents-to-wrong-person-in-astounding-blunder/>

Parliament’s Intelligence and Security Committee issued a report on its inquiry into the details of British surveillance activity, launched after the revelations in 2013 from documents obtained by Edward Snowden. According to *The Guardian*, the “single most important revelation” is that the intelligence agencies “have had the capability to trawl through personal records and forms and examine ‘bulk personal datasets’ without any statutory oversight.” However, the report also said the agencies acted within the existing laws and “the bulk collection of data by the government does not amount to mass surveillance or a threat to individual privacy.” And “in a heavily censored section,” the report said the existing datasets contain “personal information about a wide range of people,” “vary in size from hundreds to millions of records,” and “there is no legal constraint on storage, restraint, retention, sharing and destruction.”
<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/mar/12/uk-surveillance-laws-need-total-overhaul-says-landmark-report-edward-snowden>

United States. The U.S. Justice Department issued a report on the practices of the police department in Ferguson, Missouri, where the killing of an unarmed black man last summer by a white police officer led to days of riots. The investigators “conducted hundreds of interviews, reviewed 35,000 pages of police records and analyzed race data compiled for every police stop,” reported the *New York Times*, and concluded that the Ferguson police department was routinely violating the constitutional rights of its black residents. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/04/us/justice-department-finds-pattern-of-police-bias-and-excessive-force-in-ferguson.html>

The Department of Defense (DoD) announced that veterans who were exposed to chemical weapons in Iraq “will be provided with documentation of their exposure and have their medical records updated” and this information “will also be shared with the Department of Veterans Affairs to help veterans receive follow-up care or submit claims,” reported the *New York Times*. DoD said it will screen “at least” 1500 persons, although “medical records reviews of those who filled out their post-deployment health forms had found few cases of likely exposure so far.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/26/world/middleeast/army-apologizes-for-handling-of-chemical-weapon-exposure-cases.html?ref=us>

In an article on access by patients to their medical records, the *New York Times* featured one man who collected “the video of his 10-hour surgery, dozens of medical images, genetic sequencing data, and 300 pages of clinical documents.” http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/01/technology/the-healing-power-of-your-own-medical-data.html?_r=0

Wikimedia and other groups sued the U.S. National Security Agency saying the Agency violates “U.S. constitutional protections and the law by tapping into high-capacity cables, switches and routers that move internet traffic through the United States,” violates Americans’ privacy, and makes individuals worldwide

less likely to share sensitive information, *Reuters* reported. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/10/us-usa-nsa-wikipedia-idUSKBN0M60YA20150310>

Earlier this year Stanford University determined that under U.S. law students had a right to see their university admissions records (see *HRWG News* 2015-01). Spurred by that decision, universities throughout the United States are destroying their admissions records, reported *buzzfeed.com*. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/mollyhensleyclancy/elite-colleges-are-now-destroying-admissions-records#.pubQQN4k6>

In a fascinating example of archival research, a team of California researchers used a set of personal papers at the University of Illinois to show how the sugar industry influenced research in the 1960s on how to eradicate tooth decay and impeded efforts to urge people to eat less sugar. Tooth decay is still a significant problem in the United States. For the report, see *PLOS Medicine* <http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1001798>

In a “friend of the court” brief filed in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court on the constitutionality of state laws that ban same-sex couples from getting married, the Mattachine Society provided information from its research in the records of the U.S. Civil Service Commission’s investigations of worker “loyalty” and “suitability.” Calling his work “archive activism,” a member of the Society said, “The investigation and firing of gay and lesbian federal employees was like shooting fish in a barrel for the General Counsels and legal staff of the Civil Service Commission. The animus, almost sports-like in their writings, is documented in decades of legal advisory files we discovered this year at the National Archives.” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-montgomery/the-animus-amicus-archive_b_6896624.html

United States/California. “Birth tourism” is the business that makes arrangements for pregnant women to come to the United States on tourist visas to give birth to babies who, having been born in the U.S., will be citizens entitled to birth certificates and passports. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents raided 37 locations in California associated with “birth tourism” activities “looking for documents, computer records and other evidence of tax and immigration frauds,” reported the *New York Times*. According to affidavits filed in support of the search warrants, the businesses “hid their income and foreign bank accounts,” making it clear that the government’s goal is to “crack down on the industry promoting maternity tourism, rather than the women having the babies” who were encouraged to “lie to the American authorities about the intent of their trip” in order to obtain a tourist visa. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/04/us/california-homes-raided-in-federal-crackdown-on-chinese-birth-tourism.html>

United States/Massachusetts. The Occupy Movement of 2011-2012 was a mass protest against economic and social inequality; Boston police watched the protesters. After the *Jamaica Plain Gazette* filed a public records request for the police records of the surveillance, the police said, “All Occupy Boston-related bulletins were purged a while back, and we do not have any intelligence reports in our Intel database for Occupy Boston-related activity.” The newspaper noted that the destruction “makes it impossible to know the full extent of the spying.” <http://jamaicaplaingazette.com/2015/03/27/bric-says-it-purged-occupy-boston-spy-files/>

United States/New York. A massive fire in a Brooklyn warehouse in January destroyed the records of more than 1 million closed court cases from the state Supreme Court and family courts in all five New York City boroughs, some cases dating before 1861 and some as late as 2011, *Reuters* reported. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/03/us-new-york-documents-fire-idUSKBN0LZ2QE20150303>

Publications and a request.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published “Rule of Law Tools for Post Conflict States: Archives.” The intended audience is the staff of the Commission’s offices in the field. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_14_4_Archives_en.pdf

The Science and Human Rights Coalition of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science published an updated version of “Human Rights 101: A Brief College-Level Overview.” The document is intended for college students, but it is also a useful refresher course for human rights practitioners and an

introduction for individuals with an interest in the subject.

http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/content_files/AAAS%20Coalition%20Human%20Rights%20101_0.pdf

Project Mosul, a volunteer action by the fellows of the Initial Training Network for Digital Cultural Heritage, is looking for volunteers to help virtually restore the Mosul Museum. This includes finding photos, processing data, contributing to the website and generally helping out with organizing the effort to identify the museum artefacts. Contact projectmosul@itn-dch.net.

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