
News of February 2018

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Commentary

In a Russian history class I once took, the émigré professor insisted on a distinction between intellectuals and intelligentsia. Intelligentsia, he said, were people with education, but what distinguished them was their status as a group possessing influence in society. Intellectuals, on the other hand, were, well, just smart.

Artificial intelligence is all over today's news. It combines the professor's two definitions: it is smart (it has a huge memory, it makes decisions based on its memory) but the way it is smart reflects the social class of the people who had the power to build it. Just look at two examples:

*Researchers in the U.S. found that “three commercially released facial-analysis programs from major technology companies demonstrate both skin-type and gender biases.” In a set of photos, the artificial intelligence programs correctly identified white males as white males more than 99% of the time, but only 65% of the time correctly identified darker-skinned females. The probable reason: the data set used to “teach” the artificial intelligence was heavily male and white. <http://news.mit.edu/2018/study-finds-gender-skin-type-bias-artificial-intelligence-systems-0212>

*Human Rights Watch reported that authorities in China's Xinjiang province are using big data analysis for a “predictive policing” program which “aggregates data about people—often without their knowledge.” The data is gathered from an enormous variety of sources, ranging from surveillance cameras to “wifi sniffers” to information obtained during home visits. Persons have been detained because the software identified them as potential threats. <https://www.hrw.org/print/315321>

Advocates argue that artificial intelligence algorithms can successfully take on questions as varied as identifying depression in people by analysis of facial expressions, reducing snarls in urban transport, pinpointing crime hotspots and upgrading slums. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180228105555-8071d/>;

<http://news.trust.org/item/20180227163731-j2fe9/> Medical researchers are rapidly adopting artificial intelligence tools, as a look at any recent issue of *HRWG News* will show.

Artificial intelligence relies on information, both the type of data selected to “teach” the programs and the data against which the programs run. And artificial intelligence produces information, such as when to arrest people in Xinjiang or to treat an illness. Archivists must be involved both in ensuring that the inputs are reliable data and in preserving the results. We have to get this right: people's lives literally depend on it.

HRWG News. Thanks to the Italian archival magazine *Il Mondo degli Archivi*, it is now possible to subscribe to *HRWG News* in French and Spanish as well as

English. To subscribe, write to <https://anai.us13.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5942a8a83f3023c6a5a63139e&id=324882c3f7>

Readers will notice that the section of national news in this issue is brief. The reason is that so much news happened in February that including it all would have made this issue more than we can reasonably ask volunteers to translate into French and Spanish (as they patiently do for each issue). Consequently, this issue has all the news from international sources, on topics of general interest, and with bilateral or multilateral concerns, but only a few national items. An English-only supplement to this issue with all the national news (from Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Georgia, India, Iran, Ireland, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States) is available to anyone who requests it from Trudy@trudypeterson.com.

International news.

European Court of Human Rights. In January the Court issued a ruling in a case from Spain in which a Spanish supermarket chain used “covert video surveillance” of its employees after suspicions of theft had arisen; as a result some employees were fired. The supermarket management had informed the employees about some but not all the cameras. The Court held that “individuals should be clearly informed about the storage and processing of personal data” and that the employees were not given proper warning; therefore, their rights to privacy were not properly safeguarded. <https://www.dataguidance.com/ecthr-workplace-surveillance/>

European Court of Justice. In three related cases, the Court ruled for the European Medicine Agency, “upholding EMA’s decisions to release documents” in accordance with the European “Transparency Regulation.” One case related to the disclosure of “similarity and superiority reports on an orphan medicine” for human use, a second on a clinical study report, and the third on studies of a veterinary medicine. In each case the pharmaceutical companies had challenged the release. http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Press_release/2018/02/WC500243216.pdf

Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In March 2016 Colombia requested an advisory opinion from the Court on the scope of State obligations to protect human rights, with respect to damages to the marine life in the Greater Caribbean region. In a precedent-setting opinion, the Court said that a healthy environment is a right “fundamental to the existence of humanity.” It further said that States must avoid causing “significant” environmental damage inside or outside their territory,” requiring them to conduct “effective and independent environmental impact studies, as well as mitigation and contingency plans for potential damages” and share information with other States. States are to “guarantee the rights to public participation, access to information related to potential environmental harms, and access to justice in decision-making that could affect the environment,” reported the nongovernmental organization AIDA.

<http://www.aida-americas.org/release/inter-american-court-establishes-historic-precedent-for-the-protection-of-human-rights> for advisory opinion see http://www.aida-americas.org/sites/default/files/oc23_corte_idh.pdf

For the first time, the Court is hearing a case on gender-based violence in Venezuela, as a woman who was “kidnapped and abused as a teenager nearly two decades ago” asked the court to find “Venezuela responsible for failing to protect her,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The case came to the Court from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which in 2007 ruled that the Venezuelan government had failed to protect her, did not investigate her case with ‘due diligence’ or provide proper care to her after rescue, and ordered the government to “improve health care for rape survivors and [set] up protocols to investigate violence against women.” After the commission found that Venezuelan did not act on the recommendations, it sent the case (with its records) to the Court. “Government figures” from Venezuela show that “of the nearly 71,000 cases of gender violence reported in 2014, less than one percent went to trial.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180206200451-k1qwj/>

International Criminal Court (ICC). The charges against Bosco Ntaganda, the former Congolese militia leader, include the use of child soldiers and the rape and sexual slavery of them. Recorded testimonies of six defense witnesses were admitted as evidence, of which four related to the validity of birth certificates of child soldiers, *International Justice Monitor* reported. <https://www.ijmonitor.org/2018/02/child-soldiers-age-at-center-of-recorded-witness-testimony-admitted-into-ntaganda-trial-evidence/>

Since the ICC began collecting material three months ago “for a possible war crimes case involving Afghanistan, it has gotten a staggering 1.17 million statements from Afghans who say they were victims,” reported the *Associated Press*. Organizing those statements is a serious records management task. <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/2018/The-International-Criminal-Court-says-it-has-received-over-1-million-statements-from-Afghans-claiming-to-be-victims-of-war-crimes/id-9546fd4a7470451b9593d7f6a34cdaf2>

The Prosecutor announced, “Following a careful, independent and impartial review of a number of communications and reports documenting alleged crimes potentially falling within the jurisdiction” of the ICC, she “decided to open a preliminary examination” into the high number of extra-judicial killings in the Philippines’ current “war on drugs” and the repression of the political opposition in Venezuela. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=180208-otp-stat>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In 2017, UNHCR “received reports from 622 [refugee] survivors of sexual and gender-based violence on the Greek Aegean islands;” 28% of them also were violated after arriving in mainland Greece. Because of the shame and fear associated with reporting attacks, the number is likely to be “much higher.” http://www.unhcr.org/5a7d67c4b?utm_source=PR_COMMS&utm_medium=email&utm_content=UNHCR%20Communication%20Service&utm_campaign=HQ_EN_BriefingNotes_171027

United Nations Human Rights Council. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the U.S. detention of a Pakistani man, Ammar al Baluchi, at Guantanamo Bay is “arbitrary and breaches international law.” This is the second finding that al Baluchi is wrongly held. The Working Group said the lawyers defending al Baluchi do not have “access to evidence under the same conditions as the prosecution;” in particular, “information regarding the alleged torture of Mr. al Baluchi under the [Central Intelligence] Agency programme has not been provided to his lawyers.”

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22730&LangID=E> ; for the opinion http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session80/A_HRC_WGAD_2017_89.pdf

UNICEF. In a new report on infant mortality, UNICEF said that in low-income countries the average newborn mortality rate is 27 deaths per 1,000 births, while in high-income countries that rate is 3 deaths per 1,000. The United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation made the estimates based on “annual consultations with member states” and the World Health Organization’s Global Health Workforce Statistics 2016 Update. Pakistan is the most dangerous: “For every 1,000 babies born in Pakistan in 2016, 46 died before the end of their first month—a staggering 1 in 22.” https://www.unicef.org/media/media_102677.html?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=5627e2195b-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-5627e2195b-149736437

World Bank. In an interview with *Forbes*, Denis Robitaille, the Bank’s Chief Information Officer, announced that the Bank is “putting in place a Development Data Hub.” He said he is “excited about blockchain,” explaining, “I was based in Thailand when the Tsunami hit, killing 250,000 people. Many of the survivors not only lost their family and their friends, but also all their papers, and consequently their rights. This led to a widespread land-grab by powerful interests, which the survivors could not fight. Imagine if one day they could have their land titles secured through blockchain or some other decentralized technology.” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterhigh/2018/02/26/the-world-banks-cios-on-the-role-technology-will-play-in-ending-extreme-poverty/>

World/general news.

Business records. In an unprecedented, welcome move, the U.K. multinational consumer goods company Unilever “laid bare its entire palm oil supply chain, including all the suppliers and mills it sources from”—1,400 mills and over 300 direct suppliers of “the oil used in products from snacks and soaps to cosmetics and biofuels.” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* noted that the palm oil industry “has been plagued by concerns about deforestation and human rights abuses.” <http://www.eco-business.com/news/unilever-lays-bare-palm-oil-supply-chain-in-rare-industry-move/>

In similar news, Total, the French oil giant, announced that by policy it supports “contract transparency” (that is, the publication of the legal framework for “extractive projects”) and advocated that “host states . . . disclose their petroleum contracts and licenses,” *resourcegovernance.org* reported. http://goxi.org/profiles/blogs/total-becomes-first-major-oil-company-to-support-contract?xg_source=msg_mes_network

Using an innovative research method, the “Garment Worker Diaries” is a “yearlong research project led by Microfinance Opportunities [a nongovernmental organization] in collaboration with Fashion Revolution and supported by C&A Foundation.” Focusing on the lives and wages of garment workers in Cambodia, Bangladesh and India, “over 12 months, researchers will visit the same set of garment workers each week to learn about what garment workers earn and buy, how they spend their time each day, and what their working conditions are like.” The object is to collect enough data on economic activity “to advocate for changes in consumer and corporate behavior and policy changes that improve the living and working conditions of garment workers everywhere.” For the diaries, see <http://workerdiaries.org/garment-worker-diaries-reports/>

An article in *Science* said that humans are now fishing at least 55% of the world's oceans and, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 31.4% of global fish stocks were over-fished or fished unsustainably as of 2013, while an additional 58.1% were “fully fished,” the *Washington Post* reported. The findings relied on “data from Global Fishing Watch,” whose researchers “compiled billions of data points from tracking systems that the U.N. International Maritime Organization requires for about 70,000 fishing vessels.” <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/new-maps-show-the-utterly-massive-imprint-of-fishing-on-the-worlds-oceans/>

Eight years ago Allergan “paid \$150 million to settle criminal charges of illegally marketing three drugs,” one of which was Celexa, an antidepressant for children, *STAT* reported. “Newly unsealed documents” show that “in all but one of the clinical trials of the drugs failed (on every efficacy measure used during the studies).” The U.S. attorney in Massachusetts has been urged to reopen the case. <https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2018/02/08/celexa-forest-allergan-trials/>

Aetna, a large U.S. insurance company, agreed “to pay \$1.15 million and enhance its privacy practices” because in 2017 it sent “HIV patients information on how to fill their prescriptions using envelopes with large clear plastic windows,” through which the “HIV status of some patients was visible to third parties.” For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-08. <https://www.huntonprivacyblog.com/2018/01/30/aetna-agrees-1-15-million-settlement-new-york-attorney-general/>

More than 355 lawsuits are pending against the Monsanto Corporation in the U.S. District Court in San Francisco, “filed by people alleging that exposure to Roundup herbicide caused them or their loved ones to develop non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and that Monsanto covered up the risks,” reported the nongovernmental organization U.S. Right to Know. The first trial is scheduled for June. The nongovernmental organization Avaaz, which has been involved in the cases, received a subpoena from Monsanto, commanding it to “hand over every private email, note, or record we have regarding Monsanto, including the names and email addresses” of persons who have signed its anti-Monsanto campaigns. <https://usrtk.org/pesticides/mdl-monsanto-glyphosate-cancer-case-key-documents-analysis/>

The Vodaphone Foundation, “the charitable arm of the British mobile operator,” announced that it will launch a program in Ghana to use anonymized mobile phone data “to track and control epidemics, helping prevent a repeat of the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak,” *Reuters* reported. “The level of activity at each mobile phone mast will provide of heat map of where people are and how far they are moving during an outbreak, while the data gathered will be used for decision-making in a number of areas—including health, agriculture and transportation.” New data for the archives. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180226095959-8rgjj/>

According to the Business & Human Rights Resource Center, a U.K. nongovernmental organization, “more than 120 activists campaigning to protect their land, environment and labor rights from business interests were killed last year—an almost 50% increase on 2016,” reported *Thomson Reuters Foundation*. Most were “involved in land rights campaign opposing mines, plantations and power plants.” Most attacks were either in Central or South

America or the Philippines. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-rights-attacks/killings-and-threats-against-land-rights-defenders-soar-in-2017-rights-group-idUSKBN1FQ24D>

Climate change. Researchers at the University of Colorado and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration used 25 years of satellite data to calculate that global sea rise is “accelerating a little each year, like a driver merging onto a highway.” Driven by melting ice in Greenland and Antarctica, “if the oceans continue to change at this pace, sea level will rise 65 cm (26 inches) by 2100—enough to cause significant problems for coastal cities.” <https://cires.colorado.edu/news/sea-level-rise-accelerating>

A team from the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment used climate data from 1901 to 2014 to create global maps of precipitation variability trends, *Eurasia Review* reported. They found that “over the past century year-to-year precipitation variability has increased significantly on 49 percent of the world’s grazing lands, affecting vegetation and constraining its ability to support livestock.” With an estimated 800 million people around the world dependent on livestock that graze for their livelihoods and food security, this is an ominous trend. http://www.eurasiareview.com/20022018-global-grazing-lands-increasingly-vulnerable-to-changing-climate/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Using “historical radar data from weather monitoring archives” meteorologists from Rothamsted Research found that bats, which regularly migrate from Mexico north to Bracken Cave in Texas, are migrating “roughly two weeks earlier than they were 22 years ago.” They also found from “written cave surveys” that no bats stayed all winter in the mid-1950s but now 3.5% do. They said the bats’ “behavioral patterns indicate a response to some environmental change.” <https://www.rothamsted.ac.uk/news/bats-barometer-change>

Cybersecurity. The DQ Institute, a nongovernmental group, published the 2018 DQ Impact Report, “a multi-nation study of online child safety and digital citizenship, based on a sample size of 34,000 schoolchildren aged between 8 and 12 years, across 29 countries,” *Eurasia Review* reported. It said 56% of the children “are exposed to at least one online-related challenge”—including cyberbullying, video game addiction, offline meetings and online sexual behaviors—“which has also been linked to digital identity theft, digital disinformation and reduced human empathy.” http://www.eurasiareview.com/09022018-majority-of-8-12-year-olds-subject-to-online-threats/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Education. Plan International, a nongovernmental organization, launched a digital database to track girls’ rights around the globe, such as “policy documents on issues from health to marriage to education.” The organization hopes policymakers will “use this data to better understand how girls are disadvantaged, hold governments to account, and draw up better programmes to support those most at risk.” <http://news.trust.org/item/20180207161320-ezh1a/>

Medical records. Using data from the World Health Organization’s Global Tuberculosis (TB) database for 2012 and TB surveillance statistics from Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, Romania and Estonia, researchers from the University of Adelaide, Australia, estimated that “1.8 million young people between 10

and 24 years of age” are likely to develop TB each year, “with young adults aged 20 to 24 years at the greatest risk.” The researchers said “a lack of high-quality data from some countries may affect the quality of the estimates,” *Eurasia Review* reported, but the current data show that preventive measures need to specifically target young people in countries, such as those in South Asia, with intense TB epidemics. http://www.eurasiareview.com/22022018-estimated-1-8-million-young-people-develop-tb-every-year/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29

Press freedom. The Freedom of the Press Foundation announced that it is “launching an online archives collection in partnership with Archive-It” to help news organizations “preserve sites in their entirety before their archives can be taken down or manipulated” by a new owner. <https://freedom.press/news/archiving-alternative-press-threatened-wealthy-buyers/?source=techstories.org> For background on the problem the Foundation hopes to solve, see *Colombia Journalism Review’s* “Erasing History”: https://www.cjr.org/special_report/microfilm-newspapers-media-digital.php

Privacy. A German court ruled that Facebook’s requirement that users must sign up using their real names “is illegal and that users must be allowed to sign up for the service under pseudonyms to comply with a decade-old privacy law,” *The Verge* reported. The court said that the “policy was ‘a covert way’ of obtaining users’ consent to share their names.” <https://www.theverge.com/2018/2/12/17005746/facebook-real-name-policy-illegal-german-court-rules>

Right to be forgotten. Google said it has received 2.4 million “right to be forgotten” requests since 2014, *engadget* reported. Most requests (89%) come from private individuals from France, Germany and the U.K. Google has complied with 43.3% of the requests <https://www.engadget.com/2018/02/27/google-details-2-4-million-right-to-be-forgotten-requests/>

Sex abuse. Many media outlets reported the accusations of sexual misconduct by aid workers in Haiti. Oxfam, one of the accused agencies, said it would create an independent High-Level Commission on Sexual Misconduct, Accountability and Culture Change that will have access to Oxfam records. In addition it will publish a 2011 internal investigation into misconduct in Haiti by its staff members and will create “a global database of accredited referees to end the use of forged, dishonest or unreliable references by past or current Oxfam staff.” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported that in November 2017 it asked “10 leading aid agencies for figures on sex abuse cases, as well as how many staff members were sack as a result.” Only Oxfam and Save the Children responded immediately, with 4 more groups reporting later and 4 not responding. Even the august International Committee of the Red Cross announced that it is building a database to collect data on staff misconduct, but it “cannot provide reliable historical data” about it. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180216060011-2emwb/>; <http://news.trust.org/item/20180213185917-40v2e/>

Technology. *IT News* reported that the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is undertaking a major new project to “come up with ways that human rights can be prioritised in the design and regulation of new technologies.” AHRC plans to publish an issues paper and hold a conference on the topic in the middle of the year. <https://www.itnews.com.au/news/australian-project-to-embed-human-rights-in-new-technology-484854>

Torture. A U.S. Federal judge ruled that three Iraqi men formerly detained at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq can sue CACI Premier Technology, the military contractor whose employees committed abuse of the prisoners that, said the court, “rises to the level of torture.” The Center for Constitutional Rights noted, “While a number of low-level military officers were court-martialed over their roles in the abuse, CACI has gone unpunished . . . even though U.S. military investigators long ago concluded that CACI interrogators conspired with the U.S. soldiers who were later court martialed to ‘soften up’ detainees for interrogations, according to statements by co-conspirators.” The court martial records could be relevant evidence. https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/private-corporation-may-be-sued-role-abu-ghraib-torture-judge-rules?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=tweet2&utm_campaign=Corporate%20Abuses&utm_content=press%20release

World War II. “Documents and video footage have been found showing massacres of Korean comfort women by the Japanese military shortly before the end of World War II,” reported *Hankyoreh*. The brief footage was taken in Tengchong, in China’s Yunnan Province, on September 15, 1944. It was found in the U.S. National Archives among records of the Signal Corps. <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3045001&cloc=joongangdaily/home/newslst1> ; http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/834094.html

The International Tracing Service launched a new campaign to return personal items to victims of Nazi persecution, reported *The Times of Israel*. Most of the objects were confiscated from prisoners of the Gestapo in Hamburg or at the Neuengamme, Dachau and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps. “In 1963, the German government transferred some 4,500 envelopes containing these items to ITS from various restitution organizations that were closing;” around 1500 have been handed over since then, and ITS wants to return the rest. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/new-campaign-launched-to-return-personal-effects-to-victims-of-nazi-persecution/>

The winter of 1944-45 in the Netherlands was one of famine, and an estimated 20,000 people died of starvation. Using “death records of hundreds of thousands of Dutch people born during the mid-1940s,” a team of Dutch and a U.S. geneticists “found that the people who had been in utero during the famine . . . died at a higher rate than people born before or afterward.” After analyzing blood samples and doing genetic testing, the researchers suggested that the metabolism of those born to starving mothers may be “in a lower gear,” reported the *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/31/science/dutch-famine-genes.html>

Bilateral and multilateral news.

Afghanistan/Pakistan. An estimated 200,000 nomadic herders in Afghanistan are “running out of food and stranded with their dying animals after Pakistan closed the border, blocking access to pastureland” to which they traditionally migrate, *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. The French charity Action Against Hunger said it had approached “two major aid donors” for funds for food for the herders, but both said no; one declined saying “there was not enough data” on the herders’ plight. <http://news.trust.org/item/20180219135642-y1p1g/>

Armenia/The Netherlands/Turkey. By a margin of 147 to 3, the lower house of the Dutch parliament voted to recognize the massacre of as many as 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 as genocide, the *Associated*

Press reported. The acting Foreign Minister said that the Dutch government would not accept the vote as an official position because the government “only recognizes events as genocide if that description is supported by a binding U.N. Security Council resolution or a verdict from an international court,” neither of which has occurred. <http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-dutch-lawmakers-label-massacre-of-armenians-as-genocide-2018-2>

China/Hong Kong/United Kingdom. “Hong Kong democracy activists are demanding that Britain releases tens of thousands of unseen files from the former colony that they believe are urgently needed to help defend its autonomy as Beijing tightens control,” the *Guardian* reported. The colonial records were transferred to the U.K. when Hong Kong returned to China in 1997. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/04/hong-kong-democracy-activists-urge-uk-release-unseen-files-foreign-office>

Cote d’Ivoire/The Netherlands. In 2006 the multinational oil-trading company Trafigura loaded toxic waste onto a ship in The Netherlands, sailed it to Cote d’Ivoire, and hired a local company in Abidjan to dispose of it. The company dumped the waste in 12 sites around the city. In 2012 the government asked UN Environment to do an audit of the contamination at the dumping sites. The UN reported on 30 January that none of the sites “requires additional intervention,” but because more than 100,000 people who were near the sites sought medical assistance from public health facilities after the dumping, the report (among other recommendations) called for “a public health monitoring programme [to] be established to understand and address possible long-term health effects of exposure to the toxic wastes in 2006.” Amnesty International echoed the need for health monitoring, adding that it “is also calling on the Dutch government to provide funding for this work because, six weeks before the waste was dumped in Abidjan, Dutch authorities allowed Trafigura to export the waste from Amsterdam despite knowing it was hazardous and required specialist treatment.” The medical records resulting for the monitoring should be used to inform treatment and compensation, not merely to “understand.” <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/un-environment-releases-independent-audit-sites-affected-toxic-waste>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/01/Cote-dIvoire-Communities-at-centre-of-toxic-waste-dump-need-answers/>

Croatia/Serbia. The visit to Zagreb by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic was heavily covered by media. Families of persons still missing from the 1990s Balkan wars hoped that he would bring information on the locations of wartime mass graves. Vucic did give Croatia’s president “about a dozen packages of files on missing Serbs from the Croatian municipality of Dvar,” reported *BIRN*; however, after the visit the Croatian Commission for Imprisoned and Missing Persons, which is part of the War Veterans’ Ministry, said “the information handed over by Vucic has turned out to be about people who have already been found.” http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/missing-persons-families-seek-answers-as-vucic-visits-croatia-02-09-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=81737ef750-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-81737ef750-319755321; http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-brings-missing-serbs-documents-to-croatia-s-grabar-kitarovic-02-12-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=75eeec7b42-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-75eeec7b42-319755321; http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-institutions-not-cooperating-on-croatia-s-missing-persons-issue-02-26-2018?utm_source=Balkan+Transitional+Justice+Daily+Newsletter+-+NEW&utm_campaign=ceb358e239-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a1d9e93e97-ceb358e239-319755321

Czech Republic/United Kingdom. A former spy for the StB (the communist-era Czechoslovak secret police) claimed that Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the U.K. Labour Party, was a paid informant for the police. However, the *Independent* reported that “Svetlana Ptacnikova, director of the Czech Security Forces Archive that includes StB documents, said: ‘Mr Corbyn was neither registered [by the StB] as a collaborator, nor does this [allegation] stem from archive documents.’” The *Independent* said a “second file on Mr Corbyn is reportedly held in the archives of the former East German secret police, the Stasi, and can only be released with the Labour leader’s permission.” <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/was-jeremy-corbyn-czech-informer-cold-war-truth-fact-evidence-jan-sarkocy-a8218461.html>

France/Spain. As promised in March 2017, France gave Spain “thousands of documents” related to the Basque militant group ETA, reported *L’Expression*. http://www.lexpressiondz.com/linformation_en_continue/285890-la-france-remet-les-archives-de-%26%23039%3Beta-%C3%A0-l%E2%80%99espagne.html

Israel/Palestine. A security camera video showed Israeli troops “kicking and beating” a Palestinian man, eventually killing him “during a predawn arrest raid in the West Bank town of Jericho,” the *Associated Press* reported. Acknowledging the video evidence, the Israeli military said “the incident is under investigation.” <http://nationalpost.com/pmn/news-pmn/palestinian-killed-in-israeli-army-arrest-raid-in-west-bank>

Middle East war. According to the 2017 annual report of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the UN Human Rights Office, more than 10,000 Afghan civilians lost their lives or suffered injuries during 2017. This is a decrease of 9% from 2016, but “the report highlights the high number of casualties caused by suicide bombings and other attacks using improvised explosive devices.” <https://unama.unmissions.org/afghanistan-10000-civilian-casualties-2017-un-report-suicide-attacks-and-ieds-caused-high-number>

The task of picking up bodies and burying them in Mosul, Iraq, is unpleasant and disputed. The Iraqi general who heads Mosul’s Civil Defence, which is responsible for collecting civilian bodies and issuing death certificates, said it collected 2,585 civilian bodies by mid-January, *Reuters* reported. Many are still unidentified and the Defence teams have stopped operating; the general said, “Why should we have to give terrorists a proper burial?” The municipal government “has had to set up its own specialized team to field requests filed by city residents to find more than 9,000 missing people,” and is working through “a backlog of 300 bodies.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-mosul-bodies-insight/battle-over-bodies-rages-quietly-in-iraqs-mosul-long-after-islamic-state-defeat-idUSKBN1FP129>

“Families of suspected Islamic State members pay a steep price,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*. Many are afraid to leave the camps where they are living, and local “security authorities” impose requirements on return: the “families must obtain a security clearance. They may need to find a sponsor to take responsibility if they break the law. They may also have to supply proof that the locality where they intend to go is willing to accept them.” In one case, police confiscated the identity documents of persons believed to be IS relatives “so they wouldn’t leave” the camp. In another, the family’s house was destroyed in an airstrike and their identity cards were destroyed; the city said it would not provide replacement documents “to Islamic State families;”

without the documents the mother “could not persuade a local hospital to release the bodies of her dead family members.” <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-islamic-state-families-20180226-story.html#nws=mcnewsletter>

At the Arab Land Conference in Dubai, a representative of the Norwegian Refugee Council predicted that Syrians “are likely to file more than 2 million lawsuits seeking restitution for lost and damaged property,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation* reported. “The war has destroyed many Syria land registries, while a large proportion of displaced people have lost their ownership documents or lacked them in the first place . . . Syria had started to digitise land records just before the conflict began, leaving a huge documentation gap and complicating efforts to evict illegal tenants from properties.”

<http://www.thisisplace.org/i/?id=2dcc8941-1462-4805-8e35-54f41658d52b>

In a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of a U.S. citizen held by the U.S. military as an Islamic State supporter, the U.S. government told the court that captured IS recruiting files provided evidence. Data from a captured thumb drive, said the government, “consists of foreign fighter bio sheets, including a form that indicates Petitioner registered as an ISIL fighter on July . . . 2014.” See page 192 of the appendix to the government’s brief. <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/does-v-mattis-appendix-government-opening-brief-transfer>

Nigeria/United Kingdom. “The Court of Appeal in London ruled on Wednesday that two Nigerian communities cannot pursue Royal Dutch Shell in English courts over oil spills in Nigeria’s Delta region,” *Reuters* reported. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-01. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-shell-nigeria-court/appeal-court-rules-nigerians-cannot-pursue-shell-spill-claim-in-england-idUSKCN1FY1V0>

National news.

Cambodia. Sam Rainsy, an exiled leader of the Cambodian opposition now living in France, filed suit in a U.S. Federal Court in California, seeking “information in Facebook’s possession regarding [Cambodian Prime Minister] Hun Sen’s misuse of social media to deceive Cambodia’s electorate and to commit human rights abuses,” reported the Global Committee for the Rule of Law. “The Petition seeks disclosure of Facebook’s records relating to Hun Sen’s and his allies’ misuse of the site, including Hun’s expenditure of state money to advertise on the network. The filing highlights the role Facebook plays in countries like Cambodia, where traditional media and access to information has been repressed.” <http://globalcommitteefortheruleoflaw.org/sam-rainsys-legal-action-u-s-misuse-facebook-hun-sen/>

Cuba. Activist Lia Villares was arrested and held for 30 hours; the police confiscated all her work and personal data, including her computers and hard drives. After release, she wrote an essay, saying it is “the most nauseating scene of your life: your privacy, your mementos, all the memories you have stored away throughout the years in small digital files, records, your whole life in the hands of thugs trained to destroy all your work.” <http://cubanews.cubaverdad.net/2018/02/imagine-your-worst-nightmare-lia-villares/>

India. A report by the nongovernmental organization WeSpeakOut, based on a survey in four Indian states with a high concentration of Bohra communities, found that three out of four girls are forced to undergo female genital

mutilation during their pre-teens. (The Bohra community practices a Shia sect of Islam.) The study included testimonies from survivors and traditional circumcisers. The congressman who released the study said the findings made the government's position that there was no evidence of the practice "untenable," reported the *Press Trust of India*. For background, see *HRWG News* 2017-12. http://www.ptinews.com/news/9467355_Study-shows-FGM-widely-practised-among-Bohras-evokes.html For the study see <http://wespeakout.org/posts/wespeakout-commissioned-fgm-c-khatna-study-releases-results/>

Iran. Referring to documentation published on the new website Archives of the Baha'i Persecution in Iran, 25 international legal experts wrote to the head of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, saying "this collection of records vividly demonstrates the depth and breadth of unjust, relentless, and systematic oppression against a religious minority. It also provides evidence in the form of contemporaneous documents of this persecution which contrasts sharply with statements of denial made over the years by the Iranian authorities." <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/25-legal-experts-urge-iranian-official-to-address-public-archive-of-abuses-against-bahais/>

Poland. The president signed the new "Holocaust Law" on 6 February, which makes it a criminal offense to assert that Poles were complicit in the Holocaust. It is likely to greatly change the research in archives relating to World War II that will be done by Polish scholars. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/02/01/polands-senate-passes-holocaust-complicity-bill-despite-concerns-from-u-s-israel/?utm_term=.dc23108971c8 For a statement by 44 U.S. academic organizations condemning the legislation, see <https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/statements-and-resolutions-of-support-and-protest/aha-condemns-polish-law-criminalizing-public-discussion-of-polish-complicity-in-nazi-war-crimes>

Romania. The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes published the result of its investigation into three former orphanages. *TRT World* commented, "When the investigators studied orphanage archives with forensic specialists, they were shocked by the findings." The Institute researchers recorded the murders of 771 children and estimated that as many as 10,000 children may have died through malnutrition during the years that Nicolae Ceausescu was in power (1965-1989). <https://www.trtworld.com/europe/romania-investigates-crimes-of-ceausescu-s-orphanages-15063>

United States. The Inspector General of the Department of Energy reported that Los Alamos National Laboratory, which produces nuclear weapons, had "longstanding issues in the lab's record-keeping" for the Chronic Beryllium Disease Prevention Program. "The lab did not keep a proper inventory of the amount of beryllium on site . . . and could not assure contaminated areas were safe before allowing work to continue." Beryllium is used to produce many items "from cellphone to nuclear weapons" but is toxic even in small quantities of fine dust, settling in the lungs where it can lead to lung disease and cancer, reported *The Santa Fe New Mexican*. https://www.propublica.org/article/federal-watchdog-identifies-new-workplace-safety-problems-at-los-alamos-lab?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=dc2914cc7d-MR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-dc2914cc7d-149736437

Conferences.

New Philanthropy Capital, a U.K. nongovernmental organization, is having a roundtable on 22 March on the topic, "Should the charity sector develop a

charter which articulates on how personal data should be used for social good?” See www.thinkNPC.org

L’Association des archivistes français organise, le 30 mars 2018, une journée d’études sur “Open data et règlement général européen sur la protection des données à caractère personnel : où en sommes-nous ?” S’inscrire: <https://www.weezevent.com/ag2018-odrgdp>

The 15th Image and Research Conference will be held 21 to 24 November 2018 in Girona, Catalunya. The theme is “AV Archiving beyond Boundaries.” See: http://www.girona.cat/sgdap/cat/jornades_properes-ENG.php

Please share news with us! trudy@trudypeterson.com

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