



# BCHR

Newsletter

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# The BCHR Network

The BCHR Network is pleased to present the BCHR Update Newsletter, which provides a host of insights into the work of the network and its members. The main purpose of this newsletter is to a) share information about the work of the network and its members to a wider audience, and b) to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between the network members themselves and with other interested parties.

- Click [here](#) to learn more about the BCHR Network
- Click [here](#) for a complete list of the BCHR Network members

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# Network Announcements

**Don't miss out! Only a few spots left. REGISTER NOW!**

Annual meeting, 28 November 2019, Geneva.

Our next annual conference will take place on **Thursday 28 November 2019** at **WMO**, Geneva.

We are delighted to bring together experts from the academia, practitioners, international organisations and NGOs to discuss how business interact with human rights in contexts of post-conflict. New researches and projects are reshaping this field of work and new trends are forcing us to rethink about new standing points for reflection and action.

The event will revolve around the presentation of outstanding experts in the fields of business and peace and the interactions of companies in complex contexts such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Syria, among other topics. At the end of the day, the UNWG will hold a public consultation.

Join us for a day of insights, learning, discussions and networking.

The Network annual conference provides an authoritative platform for debate in an open, critical and interdisciplinary manner.

**You can find the program here.**

**Please register here.**

# Other announcements

## A. EVENTS, COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

### • Un forum on business and human rights

**Date:** 25-27th November / **Place:** Geneva

A key message from the 2018 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights was that **governments must step up their action and leadership**. Currently, they are not doing enough to meet their duty to protect against business-related human rights abuse. While important legal developments are evolving in some jurisdictions, and the number of countries developing national action plans on business and human rights continues to grow, the effectiveness of current efforts and the lack of wider action are being called into question.

The lack of government leadership, reflected in governance gaps and a lack of policy coherence at all levels – national, regional and global – remains a fundamental challenge to ensuring that the human rights and dignity of all are upheld in the context of business activities. These gaps have been a recurrent theme at all Forums since the first edition in 2012, and a key reason for the development of the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), which provide the main reference for Forum discussions.

**The 2019 Forum will focus on the need for all governments to demonstrate progress, commitments and plans in implementing the State duty to protect and strengthening accountability.** As the Guiding Principles clarify, ensuring access to effective remedy is also a part of the State duty to protect against business-related human rights abuse, and discussions on government action need to address the full spectrum of measures from prevention to remediation.

The Forum agenda will look at what governments need to do to foster business respect for human rights, including by getting their own house in order and by setting clear expectations and creating incentives for responsible business conduct. In doing so, the agenda will consider the Guiding Principles' call for "a **smart mix of measures** – national and international, mandatory and voluntary – to foster business respect for human rights" and what this can mean in practice.

[Program here](#)

## B. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

### • Report raises concerns about potential complicity in corruption among companies buying cobalt from DRC

**Author:** Resource Matters - October 2019

In 2019, Resource Matters published a report (See no evil, speaks no evil) alleging that companies producing technology that requires cobalt (such as cell phones, cars, or others with rechargeable batteries) are unable

to avoid the potential corruption in the DRC. The report links Glencore, the world's largest provider of cobalt, to risky payments to companies sanctioned for corruption and recommends stronger due diligence and audits of Glencore's purchasing and payments.

[Learn more](#)

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## • **Defending The Philippines: How broken promises are leaving land and environmental defenders at the mercy of business at all costs**

**Author:** Global Witness - September 2019

Duterte's broken promises are leaving activists at the mercy of business at all costs in the Philippines, the country with the most killings of land and environmental defenders in 2018. Violence against land and environmental defenders is a systemic problem, spanning many different regions of the country and many different industries, and the army uses force to silence activism. 52 defenders have been killed extra-judicially in the last three years... Indigenous leader Renato Anglao was murdered in Bukidnon after leading some protests against the violations of indigenous rights by ranchers doing business with the international 'agri-giants', like former Del Monte Consultant Lorenzo. In Palawan, Ruben Arzaga, member of a group opposing the illicit hardwood logging fueled by the surge in boutique hotels, was the twelfth murdered in less than two decades. Other defenders have been threatened by local businessmen. In Compostela Valley, a farmers' association leader, Jimmy Saypan, was murdered after protesting against the illegal activities of a gold and silver mine linked to San Miguel Corporation, headed by Duterte donor Ang. Others members have been imprisoned or harassed by the army. In Bataan, following Gloria Capitan's murder, community activists are threatened for opposing a toxic coal-power plant imposed without proper consultation, controlled by San Miguel Corporation, and backed by Standard Chartered and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation. In none of these cases has justice been done.

[Learn more](#)

# International News

- **Myanmar: UN Special Rapporteur calls for targeted sanctions against military-run companies with projects endangering communities**

**Author:** Yanghee Lee, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

**Source:** United Nations - **Published on:** 24 October 2019

Yanghee Lee, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, told the UN General Assembly in New York that she sees no discernable improvement to the situation in Myanmar.

Lee called for targeted sanctions against the Tatmadaw's companies and its commanders most responsible for serious violations. She also said that the Security Council must refer the entire situation to the International Criminal Court or establish an international tribunal to try alleged perpetrators of international crimes. The international community should also work with civil society to develop transformative processes in accordance with the pillars of justice, truth, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence.

[Learn more](#)

- **Peru: The government does not address the reactivated conflicts in indigenous communities and critical local Chinese mining company Las Bambas, according to NGOs**

New road closures by communities protesting noise pollution and particulate matter, destruction of their roads and difficulties with the Chinese miner Las Bambas [part of MMG, part of China Minmetals] occur when the country comes out of the crisis policy that put the government of Vizcarra in suspense.

[Learn more](#)

- **Facebook suspends Russian accounts that meddled in the domestic politics of 8 African countries**

**Author:** Africanews **Published on:** 7 November 2019

Facebook said it had suspended three networks of Russian accounts that meddled in the domestic politics of eight African countries, and were tied to a Russian businessman accused of interfering in past U.S. elections. The influence operations hiding behind fake identities were traced back to Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has been indicted in the United States in connection with a campaign targeting the

2016 US elections. "Each of these operations created networks of accounts to mislead others about who they were and what they were doing," Facebook cybersecurity chief Nathaniel Gleicher said in a statement.

The campaigns used almost 200 fake and compromised accounts to target people in Madagascar, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Sudan and Libya, Facebook said. Between them, the accounts amassed more than 1 million followers.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Ghana: Significant growth in the number of Chinese miners cause diplomatic tensions

**Author:** Hagan Sibiri, East Asia Forum **Published on:** 6 November 2019

Ghana is Africa's second-largest gold producer after South Africa and small-scale mining accounts for about 30 per cent of total gold output. The small-scale mining sector was legalised in 1989 for citizens while explicitly forbidding the involvement of foreigners. But since 2010, Ghana has become an attractive destination for foreign gold mercantilists, particularly those from China. The Chinese miners in Ghana, generally known as the 'Shanglin gang', predominantly originate from Shanglin County in Guangxi. Their motivations for moving are varied. While Chinese media sources such as the Guangzhou-based 21st Century Business Herald suggest that Shanglin miners go to Ghana to seek their fortune, some residents of Shanglin blame the Chinese government for encouraging the Ghanaian gold rush.

[Learn more](#)

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## • So. Africa: Coal mining pollution in Mpumalanga province photographically documented

**Author:** Kim Harrisberg, Thomson Reuters **Published on:** 29 October 2019

Gas-billowing coal plants, cracked earth, abandoned mines and lifeless water. These are some of the stark images documenting coal mining pollution in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. These photographs, in a recently launched book called Broken Land and an exhibition in Johannesburg, display the work of South African photojournalist Daylin Paul who spent four years documenting the environmental impacts of South Africa's coal industry. "In Mpumalanga there is dust everywhere. The water is milky. The air is a smoggy brown and it burns your throat to breathe," said 34-year-old, speaking from London, where he is hoping to bring his exhibition.

[Learn more](#)



- **China's new infrastructure corridor through Myanmar faces risks of further conflicts and environmental degradation**

**Author:** Nicolas Lo, China Dialogue **Published on:** 29 October 2019

China's new infrastructure corridor through Myanmar crosses war-torn regions, risking further conflict and environmental degradation

Myanmar and China signed an agreement to establish the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), as part of China's Belt and Road global infrastructure initiative that corridor is mired in conflict between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed groups. If China wants the CMEC to succeed, its companies need to regain the public's trust in Myanmar and show that "win-win" scenarios are not mere words. Development benefits need to be distributed equitably across the population

[Learn more](#)

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- **Zimbabwe: Army and police accused of forcing youths to mine for diamonds in Marange, company denies allegations**

**Author:** Desmond Chingarande, Zimbabwe Daily **Published on:** 24 October 2019

MARANGE villagers have alleged that they are being forced by military personnel to work in the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company (ZCDC) diamond fields, a month after the United States raised a red flag on the country and banned the trading of rough diamonds mined in the area. The US barred the trading of rough diamonds from Zimbabwe last month, accusing the country of using forced labour at its diamond fields in Marange.

[Learn more](#)

## Blogs and Opinions

**Author:** Daniela Malpica - **Published on:** October 2019

### **¿Por qué debería importar a las empresas la Justicia Transicional? Parte II**

Para la ONU, empresas e inversionistas deben de interesarse por la actuación del gobierno y concientizarse sobre la realidad de la violencia y la importancia de construir sociedades pacíficas y justas.

[Learn more](#)

**Author:** Bernardo Mariani and Tang Xiaomin, Saferworld - **Published on:** 21 October 2019

### **Role of business sector and its peacebuilding potential need to be redefined in Belt and Road Initiative**

Since it was first announced in 2013, China's Belt and Road Initiative has been off to a bumpy start. But in Beijing and elsewhere, there is growing recognition of the need for change. Bernardo Mariani and Xiaomin Tang look at some of the latest issues around the initiative and outline what an alternative approach could look like.

[Learn more](#)

**Author:** Esther Rose, All Africa - **Published on:** 12 November 2019

### **So. Africa: Civil society & community members urge govt. to accept “responsible investment only”**

In an open letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa activist lawyers, civil society and community organisations have urged the president to consider “responsible investment only” in light of growing concerns of the environmental impact of among others, coal mining, that is leading to the displacement of people, the lack of drinking water and pollution. “For far too long, coal companies have been allowed to pollute water resources, destroy people’s health, agricultural livelihoods and any chance for future generations to live on the land and enjoy fresh, clean air and water and health” said Thomas Mnguni from GroundWork, one of the organisations making the call.

[Learn more](#)

## About our Network

The Network brings together researchers, practitioners and NGO members from various fields with the aim of researching and analysing the role of business in conflict situations reducing the human and people's rights violations and any other negative social and environmental impact as well as other adverse consequences. It also looks at the potential role of companies in relation to peace building.

The Network reflects upon the causes, dynamics and consequences of business involvement in armed conflicts and systematic state repression, as well as upon existing or potential responses to such involvements in light of the responsibilities of all concerned actors and ongoing international and local efforts to develop and apply appropriate initiatives and guidelines.

Visit: <http://www.networkbchr.org/>

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## Sharing and posting materials

We very much welcome your comments and suggestions for how the BCHR newsletter can better serve the network's needs and interests as well as those of its members. We kindly invite you to share this newsletter with academics, NGO and practitioners that might be interested in its content.

If you are interested in contributing to future editions of the newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact us at [maria.prandi@networkbchr.org](mailto:maria.prandi@networkbchr.org).

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