



# BCHR

Newsletter

January 2019  
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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

# INDEX / Newsletter

<b>1. Other announcements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
a. Call for submissions.....	<b>4</b>
a. Events, workshops and courses.....	<b>4</b>
b. New Library Resources.....	<b>5</b>
<b>2. International News</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>3. About our network</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4. Sharing and posting materials</b> .....	<b>10</b>

# Other announcements

## A. CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### • Call for submissions: the relationship between private military and security companies and extractive industry companies from a human rights perspective in law and practice

**Date:** 17th January 2019 / **Place:** Washington, DC / online Environmental Peacebuilding Association

The Working Group on Mercenaries has issued a Call for Submissions on PMSCs and the Extractive Industry. The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the rights of peoples to self-determination is mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council (A/HRC/RES/33/4) to monitor mercenaries, mercenary related activities, and the activities of private military and security companies (PMSCs).

In July 2017, the Working Group convened an expert consultation entitled “private military and security companies in extractive industries – impact on human rights”. In this context, the Working Group seeks the assistance of interested States, inter-governmental organisations, civil society organizations, experts, private companies and other stakeholders in elaborating its thematic report.

[Learn more](#)

## B. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

### • 2019 OECD Forum on Due Diligence Guidance in the Garment and Footwear Sector

**Date:** 13th - 14th February 2019

**Place:** Paris

The 2019 OECD Forum on Due Diligence Guidance in the Garment and Footwear Sector is taking place on 12-15 February 2019. Participation is by invitation only. If you would like to attend and have not received an invitation, please submit an application to participate in the Forum on the link provided below.

[Learn more](#)

## C. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

### • Un expert issues new guiding principles on economic reforms and human rights

#### Author: Enough Project

Human rights must be an integral component of policymaking to ensure economic reforms help advance societies, rather than hinder people's lives, said Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, the Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights. Bohoslavsky, published the Guiding Principles on Human Rights Impact Assessments of Economic Reforms to assist States, international financial institutions, creditors, civil society and others to ensure that economic policies are embedded in human rights.

[Learn more](#)

### • Collective Protection of Human Rights Defenders: A Collective Approach to the Right to Defend Human Rights

#### Author: Protection International

With the recent 20th anniversary of the UN declaration on Human Rights Defenders, much attention is currently focused on the indispensable work carried out by communities of human rights defenders across the globe. In this context, it is important to consider that human rights defenders do not usually work alone, but in groups, in association with others, in social movements, building collective networks and supporting each other

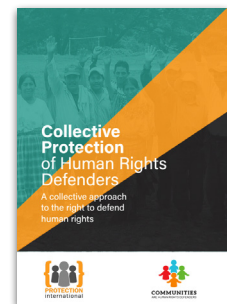


Image from: <https://tinyurl.com/y8jw8g4a>

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### • Business and Human Rights: Current Issues

#### Author: Editors María Chiara Marullo – Francisco Javier Zamora Cabot.

The collective publication includes the contributions of twenty-one authors. It highlights the high valuation enjoyed by the Spanish legal doctrine in Italy, which joins the Italian one to advance into innovative treatments that lead to a better knowledge of the interdisciplinary field constituted by the existing relationship between companies and human rights.

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# International News

- **Investigating DR Congo's Illegal Gold Trade**

**Date:** 8th December 2018 / **Source:** DW

The conflict-ridden African nation is rich in gold — and gold smugglers, who are often linked to rebel groups. But tracing commercially available gold back to illegal mining operations is easier said than done. The current mood in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is tense. A general election finally took place after a two-year delay and the country is now holding its collective breath as it awaits the results. Meanwhile, armed groups in the north-east continue to take advantage of a weak government and meddle in the minerals trade. While they are not the primary cause of the ongoing violence, the conflict minerals have sustained the armed groups.

In the DRC's many artisanal mines, gold is both valuable and easy to find. So these armed groups will often try to find a way to get involved in the industry, mostly through forced labor or smuggling. As a result, the DRC does not fully profit from the gold mining industry. IPIS estimates that between 75 and 98 percent of the gold crosses the border into Uganda illegally.

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- **The Story Of How Women Are Subjected To Violence In Indian Factories**

**Date:** 2nd January 2019 / **Source:** Forbes

On January 1, 2019, women in the state of Kerala, India, have formed a 385-mile human chain "Women's Wall" in protest against communalism and gender discrimination. The protest was allegedly sparked by a row over access to a Hindu temple, Sabarimala shrine. However, gender discrimination in India has many faces and goes far beyond a denial of access to religious places

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- **Green Advocates, IDI Develop New Tools to Hold Oil Palm Farmers Accountable for Environmental and Human Rights Violations**

**Date:** 7th January 2019 / **Source:** Daily Observer

Green Advocates International (GAI) and Inclusive Development International (IDI) have developed new advocacy tools that would be used by local communities to hold oil palm growers accountable for environmental and human rights violations committed in Liberia.

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## • UK Supreme Court Hears Landmark Case on Corporate Rights Violations

**Date:** 14th January 2019 / **Source:** RAID

On 15 and 16 January 2019, the UK Supreme Court will hear a case of crucial importance for victims of corporate human rights violations. The case, Vedanta Resources Plc and Another v Lungowe and others, is brought by leading human rights law firm Leigh Day on behalf of over 1,800 Zambian citizens who say Vedanta Resources, a UK company, and its Zambian subsidiary, Konkola Copper Mines Plc, polluted local water sources causing damage to their land and livelihoods.

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## • Texwinca Holdings Ltd

**Date:** 17th January 2019 / **Source:** Council on Ethics - Norwegian Pension Fund

The Council on Ethics recommended to exclude the company Texwinca Holdings Ltd from the Government Pension Fund due to an unacceptable risk of the company being responsible for systematic human rights violations. Texwinca is a Chinese company that produces yarn, knitted fabrics and garments. Texwinca owns 50 per cent of the shares in Megawell Industrial Ltd, making it that company's largest shareholder.

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## • Employees of a Unilever tea plantation in Kenya turn to the UK Supreme Court in search of justice

**Date:** 18th January 2019 / **Source:** Redress

A case arising from the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya is being litigated in London, where over 200 victims who were living and working at the time on a tea plantation owned by a subsidiary of Unilever are seeking compensation from the company for the injuries and losses they suffered. The claim arises out of allegations that Unilever failed to protect their tea workers from the ethnic violence in 2007 at Unilever Tea Kenya Ltd.

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- **Can Slave Labour Charges Against Canadian Company Be Heard in Court in Canada? Supreme Court of Canada Hears Arguments**

**Date:** 23rd January 2019 / **Source:** Mining Watch

The Supreme Court of Canada is hearing an appeal by Nevsun Resources Limited (TSX: NSU/NYSE MKT: NSU) of lower court rulings that accusations against it regarding the use of forced labour at its Bisha mine in Eritrea should be heard in British Columbia, not Eritrea.

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- **Displaced Villagers Urge Permanent Halt to Myitsone Hydropower Project**

**Date:** 25th January 2019 / **Source:** Myanmar Times

Villagers displaced by the start of construction on the Chinese-funded Myitsone dam in Kachin State urged the government to cancel the project, which was halted in 2011 after widespread protests. "To permanently stop the Myitsone dam project and to be able to return to our original homes is the intention of the residents," the group of residents, calling themselves Mungchying Rawt Jat, said in a statement.

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- **A Wake Up Call for the Cambodian Textile Industry**

**Date:** 29th January 2019 / **Source:** Fashionating World

Though, a recent survey by UN initiative Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) indicates improving conditions in the country's garment factories, human rights violations demand new mechanisms for accountability and transparency in these companies. Hun Sen government and the international race to search the cheapest labor, have created an economy that forces Cambodians, especially women, to rely on these low-paying jobs that still expose them to rights violations.

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## 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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