



# BCHR

## Newsletter

August 2019  
N°46



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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

## **SAVE THE DATE: Annual meeting, 28 November 2019 in Geneva.**

Our next annual conference will take place on Thursday 28 November 2018 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.

# Other announcements

## A. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

- **The new climate for Business – BSR Conference 2019**

**Date:** 12-14 November / **Place:** San Jose (Costa Rica)

This annual BSR conference will explore the transformations that are creating a new climate for business and help to pave the way for companies, people, and planet to thrive in this era of rapid change.

[Learn more](#)

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## B. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

- **The Global Magnitski Act of the United States: International Sanctions against corruption and severe Human Rights Violations.**

**Author:** Francisco Javier Zamora Cabot and Maria Chiara Marullo / **Source:** Ordine internazionale e diritti umani  
The international legal scene has been enriched in recent times with a sanctions act, i.e. the Global Magnitski Act (GMA), passed by the United States Congress in 2016 and which combines the fight against corruption and against serious violations of human rights. The GMA has made a big impression and has already generated a considerable amount of practice and enforcement activities. It has also been the subject of increasing attention outside the US and has even served as a model for foreign legislators.

This paper makes a succinct presentation of this legal instrument. An introductory section reminds the reader of the multiple ways in which the United States addresses the abovementioned problems: corruption and violations of human rights. The following section describes the GMA and its contents in a synthetic way, as well as provides a summary of the main milestones of its practical application, up to the present time. In the third section, an assessment of the GMA is provided, highlighting both its positive aspects and those that could be open to discussion.

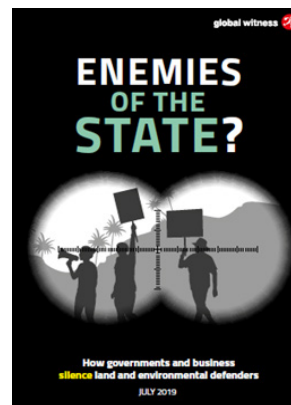
Next, other similar legal instruments are that can be seen as GMA's reflections at the comparative level are presented. The conclusions see the GMA in a favorable light, provided it is always considered as a complement and not a substitute for the already existing mechanisms to fight against the abovementioned problems.

[Learn more](#)

- **ENEMIES OF THE STATE? How governments and businesses silence land and environmental defenders**

**Author and Source:** Global Witness

Calls to protect the planet are growing louder – but around the world, those defending their land and our environment are being silenced. More than three such people were murdered on average every week in 2018, with attacks driven by destructive industries like mining, logging and agribusiness.



[The report can be downloaded through](#)

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- **Natural Resource Conflicts and Sustainable Development**

**Authors:** E. Gunilla Almered Olsson and Pernille Gooch (Earthscan Studies in Natural Resource Management, 2019)

Providing both a theoretical background and practical examples of natural resource conflict, this volume explores the pressures on natural resources leading to scarcity and conflict

[More information](#)

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- **Natural Resource Governance, Grievances and Conflict**

**Author:** Janine Romero Valenzuela / **Source:** Springer Nature, 2019

Janine Romero Valenzuela analyses the Bolivian lithium program in the largest empirical study to date with a focus on local perspectives and governance, identifying grievances and conflict dimensions. The case study shows that it is particularly an altered governance approach, the local trust in government and the high expectations that the Morales administration could create around lithium that influence local viewpoints. By applying the meaningful grievance concept on the local level, the book supports a further refinement of theories on a resource-governance-conflict-link.

[More information](#)

## • Interview with John E. Katsos on his most recent book “Business, Peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development”

### Why did you decide to publish this book together with Rina and Jason?

“Business, Peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development” came out of our desire to create a go-to book for practitioners, researchers, and educators on business and peace. The field is so multidisciplinary that it can be difficult for both experts in the field and for newcomers to understand the where new research and findings fit into the existing conversation. This book should help as the touchstone for everyone in the field.

### What is the purpose of the book?

The purpose of “Business, Peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development” is to help explain what business and peace is, how business can promote peace, and what business efforts to promote peace mean to other institutions supporting sustainable development.

The book presents different case studies from a regional perspective. What would be the key conclusions in relation to each of them? (please mention 3 for each case).

The book has four country case studies in three regions: Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. All four case studies have varied conclusions on business involvement in different contexts, but some common themes emerge. The most straightforward is that the conflict context matters a great deal in determining the type of business involvement needed and the types of peace impacts expected. There is no “one size fits all” approach for business trying to enhance peace. The second is that private, for-profit economic activity will not de facto enhance peace. It must do so in particular ways in different contexts. Just operating isn’t enough; operating ethically and thoughtfully is more likely to get to the sought after goal of peace. A final conclusion is that more research has to be done. The results are surprising and interesting in part because they challenge existing assumptions. The field and development actors need more research to provide more thorough guidance before and during, not just after, business involvement.



### You know the ISIS case very well. What are the lessons learned?

The main lesson that institutional actors should learn from the ISIS case is that small, local companies do not have the same advantages than multinationals or outside companies, but they are also much more trusted in conflict and post-conflict settings by their local communities. The small local companies will do their best to

continue to operate and will try to enhance peace more readily than multinational companies. Multinationals will be the first to leave at any sign of trouble, whereas local companies will remain because their options for leaving are substantially more limited. Those companies that stay are providing real social value and often have substantially more built up trust than those who leave or who are perceived of as outsiders. Yet, in order to stay and continue operating, these businesses had to make difficult choices. Those on the outside never had to make these choices, but are not as trusted locally. This has clear implications for reconstruction funding and development institutions. By supporting local companies that survived conflict, they are funding actors who are more trusted locally but come with “baggage”. By supporting “outsiders”, they are funding actors who are “cleaner” but less trusted by the communities the organizations want to help. There are clear trade-offs to both and funding institutions must be aware of the decisions they are making.

### **What are the issues that would need further research/debate in the future?**

The business and peace field needs more empirical evidence on attempted and intended peacebuilding by the private sector. The book presents four case studies and references the two dozen or so empirical studies that have been done in the field. Many more will be needed in a greater diversity of conflicts for businesses, NGOs, and IGOs to make better determinations on when, how, and why businesses should be involved in peacebuilding and the kinds of impacts they can have.

### **What companies should bear in mind when operating in context of conflict and post-conflict?**

Peace, like human rights, is simultaneously absolute and relative. The absolute state of peace is not a place that exists anywhere on earth today, yet it is used as an aspirational tool to drive change in a positive direction. At the same time, relative measures are still incredibly useful in understanding the real differences among contexts within which businesses operating. Companies (and countries) will likely never be “perfect” peacebuilders, but, in trying to be, they can get measurably better at it over time.

**[More information](#)**



# International News

- **How Hong Kong maids became caught in a ‘humanitarian tsunami’**

**Author:** Katie McQue / **Published on:** July 22, 2019 / **Source:** The Guardian

Migrant workers who become pregnant by their employers face dismissal, homelessness and a swift return home. The problematic is increasing in Hong Kong, in spite of the country’s regulation on the issue.

[Learn more](#)

- **The living hell of young girls enslaved in Bangladesh’s brothels**

**Author:** Corinne Redfern / **Published on:** July 6, 2019 / **Source:** The Guardian

“Sometimes I wake up and I don’t understand why I’m not dead yet”. Sold by traffickers, trapped for years and raped many times a day. This is the life of tens of thousands of underage girls in Bangladesh, whose illusion of ending up in at least a garment factory is broken into pieces.

[Learn more](#)

- **Gorillas, charcoal and the fight for survival in Congo’s rainforest**

**Author:** Peter Beaumont / **Published on:** July 22, 2019 / **Source:** The Guardian

A deadly conflict simmers between the autochthon people forced out of Kahuzi-Biéga national park, and the rangers protecting the land

[Learn more](#)

- **Sierra Leone faces legal challenge over ban on pregnant schoolgirls**

**Author:** Ruth Maclean / **Published on:** June 27, 2019 / **Source:** The Guardian

Many girls were orphaned in the west African country’s deadly Ebola outbreak and, as they were left vulnerable and forced to fend for themselves, there was a spike in pregnancies. When schools reopened after the outbreak was contained, the government banned them from attending, to protect “innocent girls” from a bad influence.

[Learn more](#)

- **Large Swiss firms must start gender pay gap reporting in 2020**

**Author:** The Local Switzer / **Published on:** August 22, 2019 / **Source:** The Local Switzer

The Swiss government announced that new rules making it compulsory for the country’s largest firms to carry out equal pay reporting will come into force on July 1st 2020.

[Learn more](#)

## Blogs and Opinions

**Author:** Delphine van Solinge at the International Committee of the Red Cross /

**Published on:** June 12, 2019

### **Digital risks for populations in armed conflict: Five key gaps the humanitarian sector should address**

The Digital Revolution is affecting the lives of people around the world, from connected citizens in developed countries with huge internet bandwidth, to people living in less developed places, lower-tech digital environments or countries affected by armed conflict and violence. Humanitarian organisations working in those contexts are increasingly being exposed and confronted to digital technologies upon which they are ever more reliant. Their use—which is influenced by a number of intertwined elements (objective, level of literacy, funding etc)—can bring both positive and negative implications, including increased risks for affected populations.

[Lear more](#)

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**Author:** Laurie Goering on Thomson Reuters Foundation / **Published on:** August 22, 2019

### **More deals, less conflict? Cross-border water planning key, report warns**

Fewer than one in three of the world's transboundary rivers and lake basins and just nine of the 350 aquifers that straddle more than one country have cross-border management systems in place, according to a new "Blue Peace" index by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

[Lear 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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