



BCHR

Newsletter

October 2018
N°36



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

1. Network Announcements	4
More than 40 experts will join us in our next annual meeting in Geneva!	
2. Other announcements	5
a. Events, workshops and courses.....	5
b. New Library Resources.....	6
3. International News	7
4. Blogs and Opinions	10
6. About our network	11
7. Sharing and posting materials	12

Network Announcements

We are glad to announce that more than 40 experts will join us in our next annual meeting that will take place on the 29th of November in Geneva.

This year's conference will discuss emerging approaches to transitional justice that deal with business and human rights. The trials, truth commissions, and reparations typically included within the set of transitional justice remedy mechanisms have focused primarily on abuses by state authorities' or by non-state actors directly connected to the state, such as paramilitary groups or death squads. Moreover, the focus on legal accountability after conflict ignores calls from civil society for transformative justice and the impact of business operations on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Innovative uses of transitional justice mechanisms, however, have started to address, even if marginally, corporate accountability for human rights abuse (including ESCR) and crimes under international law and have attempted to provide redress for victims.

Part of the programme will be dedicated to support the new project of the **UN Working Group on Business & Human Rights** to identify and clarify policy options for States and business along the conflict cycle, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and international best practice. The Working Group project seeks to "unpack" implications of the UN Guiding Principles for conflict and post-conflict contexts. The project will also address issues related to the role and responsibilities of business in post-conflict transitional justice and what access to remedy looks like as part of a post-conflict business and human rights agenda. This session will be co-hosted with the Geneva Academy.

Register [here](#) to become a member of the network. (link a la web)

Click [here](#) to know more about the network.

Other announcements

A. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

• Philippines Human Rights Commission's 6th Hearings on Climate-Related Human Rights Impacts of Fossil Fuel Companies

Date: November 6th to 8th

Place: Moot Court Room, London School of Economics

The Philippines Human Rights Commission will hold its 6th round of hearings on its *National Inquiry on the Impact of Climate Change on the Human Rights of the Filipino People and the Responsibility of Therefor, if any, of the "Carbon Majors"*.

[Learn more](#)

• Breakfast meeting: How Business Can Support Civic Freedoms and Human Rights Defenders

Date: November 12th

Place: 7A Centralen, 4th floor Vasagatan 7, 111 20 Stockholm

Human rights defenders and civil society organizations are being increasingly attacked and criminalized around the world, and face growing legal and administrative restrictions. At the same time the rule of law is being undermined in many countries, and business are starting to take notice and action. The purpose of the roundtable is to discuss the possible role of business on this increasingly urgent agenda.

[Learn more](#)

• The launch of the 2018 results of the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB)

Date: November 12th

Place: Aviva Level, 2B Auditorium, St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, London, EC3P 3DQ

At the launch, the CHRB will unveil the results of its 2018 annual benchmark. There have been a number of exciting developments since the Pilot Benchmark in March 2017, and this year's launch will provide an opportunity to discuss progress over these past months and learn how the findings are (and will) be used to drive improvements over time.

[Learn more](#)

B. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

• **A Call to Action: Ending the Use of all Forms of Child Labour in Supply Chains Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

Author: The Subcommittee on International Human Rights of Canada

This document of The Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Subcommittee) is based on a study on child labour in supply chains in November and December 2017. The Subcommittee recommends that the Government of Canada consider how to use its import regime and procurement policies to stimulate businesses to eliminate the use of child labour in their supply chains.

[Learn more](#)

• **Shared Space Under Pressure: Business Support for Civic Freedoms and Human Rights Defenders, Guidance for Companies**

Author: Bennett Freeman with Sif Thorgeirsson, Adele Barzelay y Brooks Reed

This guidance represents a major step forward for business action. It is a clear and practical guide to realistic action by responsible companies, investors, industry associations and business leaders. It is informed by both the pragmatism of the market, and the principles of freedom and fair play. It is also the result of over 90 interviews with business leaders, investors, civil society advocates and other international experts who gladly volunteered their insights.



<https://tinyurl.com/ya9n9myh>

[Learn more](#)

• **Never Send to Know ..., Critical Commentary on the Sentence Jesner V. Arab Bank, Supreme Court of the United States**

Author: Francisco Javier Zamora Cabot y Maria Chiara Marullo

This text provides critical insights, from the International private law perspective, of the ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case Jesner v. Arab Bank. This judgment has set an important precedent in relation with the process of access restriction to courts in the United States as far as international disputes involving serious infringements on Human Rights are concerned, making them impossible with regard to foreign corporations, and probably setting the land for this to happen with domestic ones as well.

[Learn more](#)

International News

• Statement Regarding the Colombian Attorney General's Failure to Investigate Drummond's Financing of the AUC

Date: September 15th

Source: International Rights Advocates (IRA)

International Rights Advocates (IRA) represents over 690 Colombian nationals in several cases filed in the United States against the American coal company, Drummond Company Inc., concerning the company's financing of AUC paramilitaries in Colombia that killed innocent people.

[Learn more](#)

• Two Relatives of Environmental Members Killed

Date: September 26th

Source: Amnesty International

On 22 September, two relatives of members of the Rios Vivos Movement were killed in Antioquia, Colombia. These killings come after several others of environmental human rights defenders, members of the same movement, affected by the environmental and human rights impact of the Hidroituango dam construction.

[Learn more](#)

• U.S. Top Court Mulls Pollution Dispute Over Power Plant in India

Date: October 31st

Source: Reuters

The U.S. Supreme Court on the 24th of October appeared unlikely to revive a lawsuit by villagers in India seeking to hold a Washington-based international financial institution responsible for environmental damage they blame on a power plant it financed by International Finance Corp.

[Learn more](#)

• Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Submit File to ICC Prosecutor: Investigate and Prosecute Pillage, Appropriation and Destruction of Palestinian Natural Resources

Date: October 26th

Source: Al Haq

Al-Haq, Al Mezan and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) submitted a 500-page file on alleged crimes committed by Israelis, in particular high-level Israeli officials, and individuals associated with corporations that are extracting and destroying Palestinian natural resources. The organizations provide a reasonable basis to believe that Israelis and private actors have committed the war crimes of extensive destruction and appropriation of property, pillage, and destruction and seizure of property.

[Learn more](#)

• Liberia: Community Forestry Hijacked by Logging Companies, Risk of Future Conflict Heightens

Date: October 10th / **Source:** Front Page Africa

A new investigation from Global Witness has revealed how progressive community forestry in Liberia is being undermined by the logging industry, with companies reportedly using a number of shady tricks. Liberian law is meant to give communities the right to sustainably manage their own forests, empowering people to nurture and protect their customary lands and to call the shots when negotiating with companies such as logging firms.

[Learn more](#)

• Sweden to Interrogate Oil Firm Over Human Rights Violation in South Sudan

Date: October 18th / **Source:** Sudan Tribune

The Swedish center-left government on October 11 approved the prosecutor's application to question Lundin Petroleum's chairman, Ian Lundin, and CEO, Alex Schneider, for gross human rights violations in South Sudan. In 2010, Swedish prosecutor opened a preliminary investigation into Lundin Petroleum's activities in Sudan and South Sudan after a report by the European Coalition on Oil in Sudan (ECOS) said the company was possibly complicit in human rights abuses in Block 5A between 1997 and 2003.

[Learn more](#)

• Rwanda Starts Tracking Conflict Metal Tantalum with Blockchain

Date: October 17th / **Source:** Coin Desk

Renowned U.S. human rights attorney Steven Donziger, who has helped impoverished communities in the Rwanda has turned to blockchain to track the supply chain of tantalum, a metal used in consumer electronics, in a bid to address concerns over conflict minerals in global markets. Using blockchain and smart contracts technology to trace provenance is fast gaining traction in the mining industry.

[Learn more](#)

• Rwanda Starts Tracking Conflict Metal Tantalum with Blockchain

Date: October 17th / **Source:** Coin Desk

The Office in Mexico of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned today, in a joint statement with the National Commission of Human Rights, the murder of the indigenous human rights defender Julián Carrillo Martínez, one of the main leaders of the Rarámuri community of Coloradas de la Virgen, of the municipality of Guadalupe y Calvo, Chihuahua.

[Learn more](#)

Blogs and Opinions

Article by: Aruna Kashyap

Human Rights Watch. Germany Paved the Way for Revamping “Social Audits,” Italy Should Follow

ago, Pakistani worker representatives and European rights groups filed a complaint with Italian authorities against RINA. RINA, an auditing firm, issued a report certifying the Ali Enterprises factory. Weeks after they issued an SA8000 certificate—a standard for labor and social compliance in the industry—the factory burned down killing more than 250 workers. So, the question is can a factory that is certified burn down? And are “social audits” and certifications working?

[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/>

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.
