

BCHR NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Network for Business, Conflict and Human Rights

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Call for submissions;
Events, workshops, and courses;
New Library Resources;
News on the United States, Hong Kong, Cambodia, and more.



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.

ABOUT THE BCHR NETWORK:

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

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NETWORK ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are sorry to announce that AFRILAW will no longer be hosting the Secretariat of the BCHR Network. The pandemic as well as personal circumstances have resulted in Chinwike Okerere's resignation from the Coordinator position. We would like to warmly thank Chinwike for all his work and engagement during all these months and we wish him all the best.

In the meantime, the Network's Advisory Board will be in charge of ensuring the daily tasks necessary to maintain the Network's activities. As a reminder, please note that the current members of the Advisory Board are:

- Charity Ryerson, Corporate Accountability Lab, charity@corpaccountabilitylab.org
- Jonathan Kolieb, RMIT University, jonathan.kolieb@rmit.edu.au
- Juan Andrés Cano, PeaceStartup Foundation, Juan@peacestartup.org
- Maria Prandi, BHR, maria.prandi@businessandhumanrights.es

In this regard, we welcome new additions to the Advisory Board. If you would like to hear more about the role and/or join the Advisory Board, please get in touch.

Similarly, if you or your organisation are interested in serving as the BCHRN Secretariat and/or Coordinator, please send an email to the Board.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that our next Annual Meeting will take place virtually, spread over three sessions to be scheduled during the weeks of November 9th and 16th. We will share a preliminary program in the following weeks but if you have a panel proposal on a relevant topic, please do not hesitate to contact us at: maria.prandi@networkbchr.org

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance

Deadline: To secure early acceptance, submit before December 31 2020. The last date for submissions is February 28 2021.

The Conference Organizing Committee is currently inviting submission of abstracts for the 7th International Conference on CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance to be held from 23rd to 25th June 2021 in Lisbon, Portugal. Key themes of the conference include CSR and Sustainable Development Goals, Corporate Governance, Human Rights and Business Sustainability, Sustainable Supply Chain, and many others. Abstracts are to be a maximum of 300 words.

Abstract submissions are accepted in three categories to be specified during abstract submission:

- Full Academic Paper (approx. 6000 words)
- Short Academic Paper/Work in Progress (approx. 2500 words)
- Practitioner Presentation (1 page abstract)

For more information and the abstract submission page, click [here](#). Organizers can be contacted at csr.iarraiano@iscal.ipl.pt.

The African Journal of Legal Studies

Deadline: Submissions accepted on a rolling basis

The African Journal of Legal Studies welcomes articles, notes and book reviews related to human rights and the rule of law in Africa. This journal aims to present diverse perspectives on the fundamental, long-term and systemic problems of human rights and governance, as well as emerging issues, and possible solutions to them.

Articles should range between 5,000-10,000 words.

Book reviews and Notes should not exceed 2,000 words.

For more information, author instructions and the online submissions page, click [here](#).

European Journal of Legal Studies

Deadline: Submissions accepted on a rolling basis

The European Journal of Legal Studies accepts submissions in the fields of European law, International law, Comparative law and Legal theory. They particularly welcome contextual and/or interdisciplinary approaches to legal scholarship. The journal accepts submissions in any language, however it is requested authors provide an abstract in English at the time of submission. Under the journal's open access policy, no publication fees are charged.

The journal welcomes:

- General articles (9,000-12,000 words including footnotes)
- New Voice articles for early career scholars (4,000-5,000 words including footnotes)

Articles should be submitted as Word files to: submissions.ejls@eui.eu

For more information, click [here](#).

EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE LABOUR DIMENSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE

Date: October 19 2020 - November 23 2020

Hosted by: The International Labor Organization (ILO)

Companies that fully understand their employees' rights are better at respecting them. In this course, participants work through the complex issues that companies may face when designing new due diligence processes. Core questions include: What should we do when national law is not consistent with the International Labour Standards? How can we balance competing rights? What should we do when the government does not fulfill its duty to protect workers? Join this dynamic course to discover the answers to these questions and many more.

Register for the online course [here](#) before October 12 2020.

[Learn more](#)

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

Date: September 15 2020 - January 12 2021

Hosted by: British Institute of International and Comparative Law

The aim of this webinar is to gather scholars, legal practitioners, companies, civil society, government representatives, policy advisers, investors, insurers, and other relevant stakeholders from Southern European jurisdictions in order to provide insights into the current regulatory landscape, and the lessons that can be learned from other jurisdictions. The webinars will be multilingual.

Register for individual webinars [here](#).

[Learn more](#)

ISEAS-SPF ASIA IMPACT DIALOGUE WEBINAR SERIES: ENHANCING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Date: Wednesdays September 2 - October 7 2020

Hosted by: Yusof Ishak Institute and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation

This 6 part webinar series examines the sustainable development and human rights challenges present in the Southeast Asian region. It aims to promote a responsible business environment to assist in enabling sustainable long term growth in the region. It will examine new forms of social projects and responsible practices undertaken by states, the private sector, and responsible business stakeholders that address the human rights impacts of business.

Topics include labour force engagement, institutional mechanisms for addressing responsible business practices, migration, post Covid recovery, environmental protection, sustainable finance and the future of responsible business in Southeast Asia.

Register for individual webinars [here](#).

[Learn more](#)

NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

MINING INJUSTICE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION: COUNTERING KAPPES, CASSIDAY & ASSOCIATES' CLAIMS OVER A GOLD-MINING PROJECT IN GUATEMALA

Published: August 24 2020

Authors: Luis Solano, Ellen Moore, and Jen Moore

Source: Institute for Policy Studies

This report outlines the repressive tactics and unjust usage of the international arbitration system by US mining firm Kappes, Cassidy & Associates (KCA). After mining operations were met with local protest, KCA utilised private and state security forces to overcome local resistance towards the El Tambor gold mine in Guatemala.

After community resistance forced the company to halt mining operations, KCA filed a claim in the Guatemalan courts, but it was subsequently thrown out. KCA is now using the international arbitration system to have the unwanted mine forcibly approved, or seeking hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation for unearned profits.

[Learn More](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

INDONESIA: AUTHORITIES OUTRAGED BY SEVERE LABOR ABUSE IN CHINESE SHIPPING VESSELS

Published: July-August, 2020

Source: Business & Human Rights Resource Center

This past July, an Indonesian crew accused a Chinese fishing company of forced labour, human trafficking and maltreatment onboard tuna fishing vessel. Since then, media reports have cited numerous cases of labor exploitation and human rights abuses to Indonesian workers on Chinese ships.

The Indonesian police has responded by charging three recruiting agency bosses over the torture death of a crew member in a foreign ship. Domestic and foreign NGOs are also calling on the Indonesian government to combat exploitative practices in the fishing industry.

In turn, the Chinese government is making promises to tighten regulations on their distant-water fishing fleet. Enforcing these changes in the Distant-Water Fishing Management Regulation could lead to a more sustainable use of maritime resources and a more effective control of illegal activity in the notorious fishing vessels.

[Learn more](#)

QATAR: LITTLE PROGRESS ON PROTECTING MIGRANT WORKERS

Published: August 24 2020

Source: Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch's report "How Can We Work Without Wages?: Salary Abuses Facing Migrant Workers Ahead of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022" shows that employers across Qatar frequently violate workers' right to wages. This reports also shows Qatar has failed to meet its 2017 commitment to the ILO to protect migrant workers from wage abuses and to abolish the kafala system. "We have heard of workers starving due to delayed wages, indebted workers toiling in Qatar only to get underpaid wages, and workers trapped in abusive working conditions due to fear of retaliation," said Michael Page, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at HRW.

[Learn More](#)

BRAZIL: NEW EVIDENCE CONNECTS JBS MEAT GIANT TO ILLEGAL DEFORESTATION OF THE AMAZON

Published: July-August, 2020

Source: Business & Human Rights Resource Center

JBS, the world's largest meat processing company, has just been accused of buying cattle from indirect suppliers who are under sanction for deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. This is not the first time that allegations of environmental offences on JBS's supply chains have been made. In fact, JBS' activities in the Amazon have already been investigated four times this past year: by the Guardian, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and Réporter Brasil, Greenpeace and Amnesty International.

JBS has recently released a statement denying any tie with illegal environmental practices. It mentions the company's direct supplier monitoring system as the basis of its "unequivocal zero deforestation approach." However, sceptics remain adamant that the investigation must continue. Even foreign politicians such as British MP Angus MacNeil have expressed their concerns over cattle traceability in Brazil. This could be consequential for the Brazilian meat export industry.

[Learn more](#)

UZBEKISTAN: RESPONSIBLE SOURCING FOR COTTON PACT TO SHAPE THE COUNTRY'S TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Published: August 17 2020

Author: Leonie Barrie

Source: Just-style

Since 2006, Uzbekistan's practice of using forced labor for picking cotton has been condemned by over 300 apparel brands and retailers. These brands continue to boycott Uzbekistan cotton with fervor, but perhaps not for long. The Uzbek government has committed to draft and implement a new Responsible Sourcing Agreement, which is to improve the rights of cotton pickers and criminalise forced labor.

[Learn more](#)

BLOGS AND OPINIONS

COVID-19 AND MIGRANT WORKERS WAGE THEFT

Published: July 31 2020

Source: Institute for Human Rights and Business

COVID-19 has severely impacted migrant workers throughout Southeast Asia and exacerbated their economic struggles. These workers' work permits are usually tied to employers who have control over cancelling their permits and repatriating them, creating positions of control, dependency, and easy abuse. As the rate of infection among migrant workers spiked, large numbers of them were repatriated. Many of these workers took out loans to pay for their recruitment costs, but now have been sent home with no way to repay their debt. Furthermore, levels of wage non-payment are expected to be unprecedented, particularly for those being repatriated.

IHRB calls on businesses to adopt clear and transparent recruitment policies that prohibit the charging of recruitment fees to migrant workers, irrespective of where or how they are recruited.

[Learn more](#)

BIPARTISANSHIP GROWS IN U.S. CONGRESS AROUND AGGRESSIVE CORPORATE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS ON SUPPLY CHAIN RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

Published: August 25 2020

Source: Global Compliance News

The Slave-Free Business Certification Act, introduced on July 20 2020, would require every covered business entity to audit and report on instances of forced labor in their supply chains. Companies that deliberately violate the Act could be liable for civil damages of up to \$100 million and punitive damages of up to \$500 million.

Although the Act is unlikely to become law in this Congressional Session, its introduction is evidence of the growing interest in Congress to create legal mechanisms aimed at eradicating forced labor from supply chains. It is also evidence of the different political factions whose interests and motives may coalesce in the near future to generate more significant legal obligations in supply chain activities. Bipartisan support within Congress for these types of initiatives is growing and includes Republicans focused on anti-trafficking and anti-slavery initiatives, and Democrats focused on broader human rights concerns and corporate accountability.

[Learn more](#)

PROGRESS IN THE NEWEST UN DRAFT TREATY ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Published: August 25 2020

Author: Doug Cassel

Source: Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

The latest draft of the UN treaty on Business and Human Rights, from August 6, is considered to be a major improvement, with amendments aimed at appeasing all three major constituencies: victims, states, and business. Recent changes should increase the chances of mass state participation in constructive negotiations, defuse several key business objections, and offer important advances for victims.

Although the next session of the UN Working Group is scheduled for October 2020, it is unlikely to be decisive due to conditions created by COVID among other issues. However, this draft presents a valuable opportunity for further progress towards the creation of a globally implemented treaty that will assist in preventing human rights abuses and provide victims with real access to justice.

[Learn more](#)

JORDAN'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR NEEDS HUMAN RIGHTS REGULATION TO CREATE JOBS AND PROTECT WOMEN WORKERS AND REFUGEES

Published: August 19 2020

Authors: Mouhanad Sharabati and Salma Huerbi

Source: Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

Although labour laws in Jordan were amended in 2008 to include agriculture workers in its provisions, no regulatory framework has been issued to date. The agriculture sector is one of the largest in Jordan and provides income for the most vulnerable members of society including women, refugees and migrant workers. This failure to issue a regulatory framework is not only preventing workers from obtaining labour rights awarded to those in other sectors, but subjecting vulnerable workers to poor conditions and labour right abuses.

In the current climate, with COVID-19 raising concerns regarding food security, the importance of agriculture workers is clear, yet the government has yet to indicate any measures will be taken to protect these workers during the pandemic.

[Learn more](#)

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.

ABOUT THE 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 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/>