

# 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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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### ***Artificial Intelligence and Normative Challenges: International and Comparative Legal Perspectives***

**Deadline:** December 15 2020

The Faculty of Law of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Kalliopi Koufa Foundation for the Promotion of International and Human Rights Law, with the support of the European Society of International Law, have issued a Call for Abstracts/Papers for a colloquium on “Artificial Intelligence and Normative Challenges: International and Comparative Legal Perspectives” to take place on 1-2 April 2021, in Thessaloniki, Greece, or in a hybrid form/as a webinar, depending on the evolution of the current pandemic. Selected papers will be considered for publication in an edited number of a law journal specializing in Artificial Intelligence.

The goal of the colloquium is to explore the impact of AI on various areas of human conduct and the response of law generally, and particularly of international law, thereto. Indicatively, but not exclusively, the conveners of the colloquium invite the submission of abstracts in thematic clusters, including:

#### AI, *Jus ad Bellum*, *Jus in Bello*

This last thematic cluster aims at examining the consequences of AI in international humanitarian law and the law on the use of force. Are Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWSs) by themselves endangering the collective security system? How do AWSs modify aspects of the use of force, particularly in the cyberspace where the use of AI is prevalent? What does AU influence the regulations about *jus ad bellum* given its expanding autonomy? And with regard to *jus in bello*: How does AI challenge basic principles of IHL, such as humanity/humanely treatment, distinction, proportionality or the taking of precautions? In what ways constant evolution in data processing improves AI's capabilities in armed conflict? How can human control and predictability be realized when using AI? What differences will exist with regard to IHL between unmanned machines reaching kinetic decisions and fully autonomous weapons?

The abstracts should contain a one-page (500 words max.) description of the proposed presentation and are to be accompanied by a short (two-page max.) CV of the author(s). The abstracts should be sent to the following email address: ai.normative@gmail.com, by 15 December 2020. Successful applicants will be notified by 15 January 2021. For more information on the conference and its sub-themes as well as submission instructions, click [here](#).

***Glasgow Centre for International Law and Security Working Paper Series*****Deadline:** Rolling

In October 2020, Glasgow Centre for International Law and Security (GCILS) launched its new Working Paper Series, aiming at publishing, disseminating and promoting high quality research papers. It will focus on all matters of international law and will be available in electronic form on this website, as well as on the SSRN's pages.

The first batch in the series also includes papers from Alain Zysset on global constitutionalism and international criminal law, Anna Chadwick on human rights, poverty and capitalism, Christian Tams on international courts and violent conflict, and James Devaney on evidence and investment arbitration.

Anyone wishing to participate in the series can contact James Devaney (james.devaney@glasgow.ac.uk) or the GCILS team (gcils@glasgow.ac.uk). Submissions are welcome throughout the year.

For more information on the working paper series, click [here](#).

***Delocalised Justice: The transnationalisation of corporate accountability for human rights violations originating in Africa*****Deadline:** January 15 2021

In this collaboration between Asser Institute's Doing Business Right project and AfronomicsLaw, they welcome contributions from scholars working on African international law, African perspectives of international/transnational law, as well as scholars working on business and human rights more generally. The aim is to bring a plurality of voices into conversation with each other, and to generate original (and critical) engagements with the operation of transnational justice in the business and human rights space. With important developments taking place at the international level, such as the drafting of a binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, the preparation of European legislation on mandatory human rights due diligence, as well as the emergence of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is set to foster business across African borders, such discussions are not only timely, they are also necessary.

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

## EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

### IMPLEMENTING HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

**Date:** December 10 2020

**Time:** 14:00 - 15:30 CET

**Hosted by:** Geneva Center for Business and Human Rights, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

Join the organizers, the Chairs of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights and business practitioners to:

- Understand the ambitions for the 'new decade of global business and human rights implementation
- Explore existing mapping tools for supply chain human rights risk assessments
- Discuss gaps, challenges and possible solutions to better assess and address human rights risks, moving beyond tier 1

Register for the event [here](#).

### ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES FOR PEACE AND SDGs OF THE GENEVA FORUM FOR ECOSOC NGOs

**Date:** December 7 - 11 2020

**Hosted by:** NGO Objectif Sciences International and United Nations

The aim of the GENEVA FORUM, organized by the NGO OSI, is to create a meeting of all the active parties who wish to collaborate on the subjects on the agenda from one year to the next. The 2020 Forum's subject is Peace and Sustainable Development Goals.

Workshops and meetings for all UN officials, NGOs and countries that wish. Guests are Heads of State, Ambassadors, Scientists, Financiers, Entrepreneurs, Investors, Philanthropists, Journalists, Experts and students. Workshops and meetings include:

- Annual International Conference on Conflict Mediation and Resolution for Peace and SDGs
- Opportunities of Ethical Business Projects for Sustainable Development
- Annual International Conference on Smart Finance for Peace and SDGs
- Annual International Conference on Impact Investment and Philanthropy for Peace and SDGs
- General Assembly of the NGO International Conflict Mediators

Register for the forum [here](#).

## NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

### **ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIES IN CONTEXTS OF HIGH POLARIZATION AND RISK OF REPRISALS**

**Published:** October 2020

**Source:** Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism (MICI),  
Inter-American Development Bank

This DB report addresses the resolution of socio-environmental conflicts related to development initiatives.

...Every practice, in order to be considered effective, without a doubt requires the empirical evidence of its results and impacts, but in addition to that, its robustness arises from the theoretical knowledge and expertise of its practitioners. In the field of conflict resolution, this is no exception. No doubt there can exist innate abilities for facilitation, mediation, and negotiation, which after years of application are refined and perfected, but experience shows us that these abilities fall short in practice if they are not supported by academic preparation and the technical-theoretical knowledge of the discipline. In that context, the purpose of conflict resolution (Consultation Phase) of the Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism cannot be developed casually if one wishes to achieve the results expected by the Executive Boards of the Institutions of the IDB Group, the officials responsible for the operations and, in particular, by the Requesters. The robustness of the MICI is the result of the sum of the technical capacity and knowledge of each of its members. Within the scope of the tenth anniversary of the Mechanism, our objective in 2020 is to share with our various partners not only our practical experience but also the contributions to accountability and promotion of sustainable development which serve as the basis for our daily management...

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### **THE MIDEAST ARMS BAZAAR: TOP ARMS SUPPLIERS TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, 2015-2019**

**Published:** September 2020

**Source:** Center for International Policy, Arms & Security Program

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been the site of multiple wars throughout this century. The vast bulk of the weapons used in current conflicts are supplied by outside powers. This report documents top arms suppliers and recipients in the region between 2015 and 2019, based on data compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### RECRUITED AS SECURITY GUARDS IN THE UAE, DECEIVED INTO WORKING IN CONFLICT-RIDDEN LIBYA INSTEAD

**Published:** November 1 2020

**Source:** Human Rights Watch

Some Sudanese men experienced several exploitative recruitment practices and migrant labor abuses commonly faced by migrant workers in the UAE and the wider Gulf region. What appears to be unusual in their case is that the deception they were subjected to ultimately put them at risk of becoming potential military targets in a country embroiled in a years-long civil war, in what could amount to a violation of international humanitarian law. HRW's investigation into their plight highlights just one example of the UAE's pernicious involvement in foreign conflicts, which includes funneling vast amounts of money and weapons to abusive local armed groups in Yemen and Libya and hiring foreign fighters to help wage its proxy wars in the region. In the last five years alone, UAE-led proxy forces have arbitrarily detained, forcibly disappeared, and tortured Yemenis in south and east Yemen, including Yemeni activists who have criticized coalition abuses.

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### JUSTICE ADVANCES FOR THE U'WA NATION

**Published:** November 3 2020

**Source:** EarthRights International

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights sent *U'wa Indigenous People vs. Colombia* to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights after finding the State of Colombia responsible for violating the U'wa's rights to collective property, culture, freedom of thought and expression, participation in government, fair trial, and judicial protection as enshrined in the American Convention on Human Rights.

This landmark victory comes after centuries of resistance and territorial defense. For more than 25 years, the U'Wa Nation has fought for justice in national courts and the Inter-American system, seeking truth, justice, and full reparation for the systematic violations of their rights caused by militarization, the imposition of extractive projects, and the lack of recognition of their ancestral territory, kera shikará. As a consequence of the internal armed conflict and the effects of extractive industries in their territory, the U'wa Nation was recognized by the Colombian Constitutional Court in 2009's Decision 004 as an Indigenous group at risk of physical or cultural extermination.

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## ANGLO ASIAN BLASTED FOR STATEMENT ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

**Published:** November 10 2020

**Source:** MINING.COM

Just hours before Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia signed a deal to end the war over the disputed area of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian National Committee (ANC) UK issued a release blasting Anglo Asian Mining's (LON: AAZ) position during the conflict, which reignited back in September. In detail, the grassroots organization rejected a media statement issued by the AIM-listed company welcoming what the miner called "the liberation" of the Zangilan district, which hosts the Vejnaly contract area.

"It is sad that a London-listed company should think it appropriate to put out a press release celebrating the 'liberation' of land that it plans to exploit for commercial gain. That 'liberation' has come about through the expulsion of the ethnic Armenians who lived there," ANC's statement reads. "We believe Anglo Asian Mining is taking advantage of the war and exploiting an unstable region to maximise profits for its investors, and without a care in the world for how the conflict is impacting civilians. This is shameful."

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## OVER 100 BANGLADESHI RMG WORKERS RESCUED FROM ETHIOPIA CONFLICT ZONE

**Published:** November 14 2020

**Source:** Dhaka Tribune

All the 104 readymade garment factory workers employed at a DBL factory in Ethiopia, who were stuck in Ethiopia's conflict-torn northern Tigray region, have been rescued with support from the United Nations (UN). Fighting in Tigray broke out between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a regional force that controls Tigray, the country's northernmost state.

Following diplomatic developments, the workers of DBL Industries PLC, Ethiopia were rescued from Tigray with the support from UN convoy and went on their way to Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Their rescue occurred 9 days after fights broke out and hundred had reportedly been killed.

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## MEXICO REACHES WATER DEAL WITH US DESPITE VIOLENT PROTESTS

**Published:** October 22 2020

**Source:** BBC

Mexico has reached a deal to settle its water debts with the US despite widespread protests by Mexican farmers, some of which turned violent. A bilateral treaty signed in 1944 says the two countries must share water sources along their arid border. Mexican farmers say they need the water themselves, in what has been one of the driest years in decades. But the US says Mexico has recently not been fulfilling the agreement and owed almost a year's worth of water. Last month, hundreds of Mexican farmers seized La Boquilla dam in Chihuahua state to stop water being diverted to the US, leading to violent clashes with Mexico's National Guard. A woman was shot dead in the unrest, in what the National Guard called "a regrettable accident".

Farmers in the US have been putting pressure on the Trump administration to make Mexico meet its obligations. Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Mexico would now make up its shortfall. "If we need water for human consumption they will provide it and if we have a severe drought they will help us," he told reporters.

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## ETHIOPIA SHUTS DOWN TELEPHONE, INTERNET SERVICES IN TIGRAY

**Published:** November 5 2020

**Source:** The East African

The Ethiopian government on November 4 began restricting telephone and internet services to the troubled Tigray region, hours after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military response to an ambush on the military.

Information access rights group, Access Now, indicated the region had been closed to the world after Addis Ababa imposed a six-month State of Emergency, accusing Tigray of threatening the sovereignty of Ethiopia.

"The government of Ethiopia has again shut down the internet," Access Now said. "Mobile network, fixed-line internet and landline telephony have been cut in Tigray, as PM declares a state of emergency and orders military intervention against Tigray People's Liberation Front."

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## BLOGS AND OPINIONS

### BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARMED CONFLICTS—EXCLUSION OF CORPORATE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LIABILITY FROM THE SECOND REVISED DRAFT

**Published:** September 8 2020

**Author:** Jelena Aparac

**Source:** OpinioJuris

The Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Other Businesses with Respect to Human Rights (“IGWG”) was mandated by the Human Rights Council (res 26/9) to draft a legally binding instrument on business and human rights. War is the biggest business of today generating billions of dollars for the multinational corporations. And yet, the realities of corporate involvement in armed conflicts are still excluded from the draft. States, victims and even business can all benefit from a well structured and clear treaty that reflects the business realities of today and tomorrow, including when the corporations contribute to the most egregious human rights abuses amounting to international crimes.

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### A BRUTAL WAR AND RIVERS POISONED WITH EVERY RAINFALL: HOW ONE MINE DESTROYED AN ISLAND

**Published:** September 30 2020

**Author:** Matthew G. Allen

**Source:** The Conversation

In September, 156 people from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, in Papua New Guinea, petitioned the Australian government to investigate Rio Tinto over a copper mine that devastated their homeland. In 1988, disputes around the notorious Panguna mine sparked a lengthy civil war in Bougainville, leading to the deaths of up to 20,000 people. The war is long over and the mine has been closed for 30 years, but its brutal legacy continues.

[Learn more](#)

## SHARING AND POSTING MATERIALS

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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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## ABOUT THE NETWORK

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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.

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