



# BCHR

Newsletter

December 2018  
N°38



Image from: <https://tinyurl.com/y83fypyc>

# 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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# Other announcements

## A. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

- **Seminar: “Environmental Peacebuilding: The Year in Review and the Year Ahead”**

**Date:** 17th January 2019 / **Place:** Washington, DC / online Environmental Peacebuilding Association  
The Environmental Peacebuilding Association will host its first year-in-review seminar “Environmental Peacebuilding: The Year in Review and the Year Ahead.” The event will showcase important developments in the environmental peacebuilding field in the past year and preview what is in store for 2019.

[Learn more](#)

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- **MOOC on Environmental Security & Sustaining Peace**

**Date:** 11th February 2019 / **Place:** : online Environmental Peacebuilding Association and SDG Academy  
Based on two decades of experience, UN Environment, the Environmental Law Institute, Columbia University, Duke University, and the University of California-Irvine have developed a MOOC on Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace. Offered on the SDG Academy platform and in partnership with the Environmental Peacebuilding Association, the course synthesizes 100,000 pages of material and hundreds of case studies from over 60 post-conflict countries into seven hours of film.

[Learn more](#)

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## B. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

### • **New Report – Powering Down Corruption: Tackling Transparency and Human Rights Risks from Congo’s Cobalt Mines to Global Supply Chains**

**Author: Enough Project**

The Enough Project released a report documenting the links between cobalt mining, corruption, and human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo). The report, “Powering Down Corruption: Tackling Transparency and Human Rights Risks from Congo’s Cobalt Mines to Global Supply Chains,” is based on findings from interviews both inside and outside Congo with over 500 miners, traders, government officials, and representatives from civil society and end-user companies.

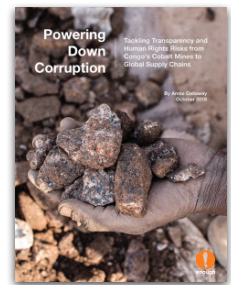


Image from: <https://tinyurl.com/y63f1pyc>

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### • **Mining the Disclosures 2018: An Investor Guide to Conflict Minerals Reporting in Year Five**

**Author: Raphaël Deberdt and Patricia Jurewicz**

In the fifth consecutive year of analyzing companies’ conflict minerals compliance and reporting, and in a time marked by uncertainty regarding the future of the conflict minerals rule, RSN’s research unveils different strategies used by companies and industries. The comparison between 2017 and 2018 scores regrettably shows a decline in due diligence efforts of a large number of companies



Image from: <https://tinyurl.com/y6jmytqm>

[Learn more](#)

### • **Global Business of Forced Labour project.**

**Author: Genevieve LeBaron, SPERI & University of Sheffield.**

The project is a first-of-its kind international research study investigating the business models of forced labour in global agricultural supply chains. Over two years the project systematically mapped the business of forced labour, focusing on case studies of cocoa and tea supply chains.

Through extensive primary research in the cocoa industry in Ghana and the tea industry in India and with domestic and international business actors, the project generated an original dataset that sheds light on the drivers and patterns of forced labour in agricultural supply chains feeding UK markets.



Image from: <http://globalbusinessofforcedlabour.ac.uk/report/>

[Learn more](#)

## • **Business, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development:**

This book deciphers how different forms of corporate engagement in the pursuit of peace and development have different impacts and outcomes. It looks specifically at how the private sector can better deliver peace contributions in fragile, violent and conflict settings and then at the deeper consequences of this agenda upon businesses, governments, international institutions and not least local communities that are presumed to be the beneficiaries of such actions. It is the first book to compile the state-of-the-field in one place and is therefore an essential guide for students, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners on the role of business in peace.

[Learn more](#)

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## • **The Business of Human Rights**

*The Business of Human Rights* demystifies the relevance of human rights for business, explaining how the corporate responsibility to respect human rights under the UN Guiding Principles can be implemented in practice. It provides a straight-forward, practical guide that can be easily read and interpreted by managers to help businesses navigate this complex area of legislation and 'soft' law to fulfil their responsibilities. It explains the potential legal, financial and reputational implications for corporations and the steps they need to take to address them.

The book tracks some of the major global developments in business and human rights, including the emergence of foreign, transnational and international law; and the proliferation of multi-stakeholder initiatives on business and human rights. Case studies from a range of sectors and industries – such as extractives, apparel, fast-moving consumer goods, electronics, and banking and finance – illustrate the enormous risks and opportunities human rights pose for business in practice.

[Learn more](#)

# International News

## • NGOs and Citizens File Lawsuit with Germany's Highest Court to Enforce Climate Protection

**Date:** 29th November / **Source:** Clean Energy Wire

A group of German citizens and NGOs has filed a lawsuit with the country's constitutional court to oblige the government to pursue a more rigorous climate policy to "protect [the individuals'] right to life, physical integrity, and free development, as well as their property rights," Jürgen Döschner writes on the public broadcaster WDR's website. "It's unclear whether the lawsuit will be accepted, but it will certainly have an effect" by creating publicity, Döschner writes.

[Learn more](#)

## • Diamond Policy gets Cabinet Nod

**Date:** 5th december / **Source:** Herald

Cabinet approved on the 4th of december the Zimbabwe National Diamond Policy which is expected to regulate the diamond mining sector and ensure accountability in the mining, processing and selling of the precious mineral. The policy will see only the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company (ZCDC), Murowa Diamonds and two other companies to be approved by Government undertaking diamond exploration and mining in the country.

[Learn more](#)

## • Modern Slavery Bill Targets Canadian Imports Of Goods Made By Slaves

**Date:** 14th December / **Source:** Huffington Post

As many as 1,200 Canadian companies could be importing products made by children and forced labourers. A proposed federal bill is hoping to crack down on Canadian companies that import products tainted by child and forced labour.

The Modern Slavery Bill, tabled in the House of Commons Thursday by Liberal MP John McKay, would require companies to publicly release a report every year, detailing what they've done to ensure their supply chains are transparent and free of goods and materials fully or partially produced by children and forced labourers.

[Learn more](#)

## • Canadian regulator to fine Glencore-controlled miner over Congo

**Date:** 16th December / **Source:** Reuters

A Glencore-controlled mining company and some of its current and former executives have agreed to pay more than \$22 million to settle Canadian allegations they hid the risks of doing business with an Israeli close to Congolese President Joseph Kabila, the Wall Street Journal reported. The expected settlement between the Ontario Securities Commission and Toronto-listed Katanga Mining Ltd is related to the company's business activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2014 and 2016, the Journal reported, citing an anonymous source.

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## • Dutch Supreme Court Upholds Weapon Smuggling Conviction

**Date:** 18th December / **Source:** The Associated Press

The Dutch Supreme Court has upheld the war crimes conviction of a timber dealer who was found guilty last year of selling arms to former Liberian leader Charles Taylor and of complicity in war crimes committed by Taylor's forces in Liberia and Guinea from 2000 to 2003. Guus Kouwenhoven was first convicted of arms smuggling in 2006 but later cleared on appeal. He was convicted in April last year based on new evidence and sentenced to 19 years in prison.

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## • Supreme Court set to hear Nevsun Resources Case on Eritrea Human Rights abuses

**Date:** 27th December / **Source:** Financial Post

The future of the Canadian resource industry hangs in the balance as the Supreme Court of Canada prepares to hear a high-profile case accusing Canadian miner Nevsun Resources Ltd. of human rights abuses in Eritrea. At the heart of the hearing, set for Jan. 23, is whether customary international law (CIL) — a fairly undefined and shifting body of law that has, to date, only been applied to sovereign states — will now apply to Canadian companies. Traditionally, Canadian courts have been loath to deal with violations of international law that have occurred abroad.

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## • Residents Call For End to Mining Activities in Myanmar's Kachin State

**Date:** 12th December /**Source:** RFA

Residents from two townships in northern Myanmar's Kachin state gathered in the state capital Myitkyina on Friday to demand that officials end to mining activities in their region, saying that the operations have polluted a key water source, those involved in the event said.

The residents of 22 villages located near mining sites in Chipwi and Pang War townships say they are now facing a drinking water shortage, and that they are fearful about using water from Chipwi creek because it makes their skin itchever when they come into contact with it.

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[Learn more](#)

## • CORE and ICJ to intervene in UK Supreme Court case

**Date:** 21st December /**Source:** ICJ

The two organizations will provide evidence on comparative law and international standards regarding the responsibilities of companies in relation to human rights and environmental protection, in particular the recognition of a duty of care of parent companies in relation to the communities living in the surrounding of companies operations.

In August 2015, 1800 Zambian villagers launched a legal action in the UK against mining company Vedanta Resources Plc and its Zambian subsidiary, Konkola Copper Mines, claiming that their water sources and farming land were poisoned from the copper mining operations of both companies.

Last year, the Court of Appeal upheld a High Court ruling that the Zambian claimants had a legal right to bring a claim through the courts in the UK and that a parent company may owe a duty of care to third parties affected by its subsidiary. Vedanta is appealing this ruling in the Supreme Court.

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[Learn more](#)

## • More than 70 Dutch Schemes Back Sustainable Investment Covenant

**Date:** 21st December /**Source:** IPE

More than 70 large Dutch pension funds with combined assets of almost €1.2trn have signed a covenant with NGOs, trade unions and the Dutch government pledging worldwide co-operation on sustainable investment.

The aim of the agreement is to exert worldwide influence on policies and outcomes related to human rights, labour conditions and the environment through pension funds' combined investment clout.

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[Learn more](#)

# Blogs and Opinions

**Article by:** Dana Drugmand

## **Climate Liability**

Climate liability lawsuits exploded onto the world stage in 2018—a year that began with New York City suing five oil majors and ended with France facing a potential lawsuit for failing to make climate progress and the European Parliament announcing a probe into ExxonMobil’s decades-long climate misinformation campaign. From litigation to investigations, the strategies for holding the world’s biggest carbon polluters, including governments and corporations, accountable for climate damage are diverse and growing.

[Learn more](#)

**Article by:** Nicolas Niarchos

## **Is one of Africa’s oldest conflict nearest its ends?**

### **The New Yorker**

For the past forty years, tens of thousands of Moroccan soldiers have manned a wall of sand that curls for one and a half thousand miles through the howling Sahara. The vast plain around it is empty and flat, interrupted only by occasional horseshoe dunes that traverse it. But the Berm, as the wall is known, is no natural phenomenon. It was built by the Kingdom of Morocco, in the nineteen-eighties, and it’s the longest defensive fortification in use today—and the second-longest ever, after China’s Great Wall. The crude barrier, surrounded by land mines, electric fences, and barbed wire, partitions a wind-blasted chunk of desert the size of Colorado known as the Western Sahara.

[Learn more](#)

## **Documentary: Un Agujero en el Muro (A Hole in the Wall)**

Six stories which show the day to day of the Saharans who live in the occupied territories of the Western Sahara

[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/>

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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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