



# BCHR

Newsletter

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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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# Other announcements

## A. CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### • The Human Rights Council adopts by consensus on Resolution on Environmental Human Rights Defenders.

Great news on the adoption by Consensus on Resolution on Environmental Human Rights Defenders. Without a doubt this is a profound message sent by the Human Rights Council for the protection of environmental human rights defenders as they dedicate their lives to the defense of the environment.

The full discussion and adoption of the draft resolution (L22.Rev1), including comments from some States such as Irak, Egypt, Pakistan or China can find them on the UN webcast.

-To see the webcast use this link: <http://tinyurl.com/y2kas3qo>

-You can find the resolution in this link: <http://tinyurl.com/y6n9ywes>

Please feel free to circulate this to your networks!

### • Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: Call for inputs into its Accountability and Remedy Project III.

**Accountability and Remedy Project III:** The Accountability and Remedy Project (ARP) has been ongoing since 2014 and is focused on improving rights-holders' access to remedy in cases of business-related human rights abuse. This is done through the development of practical guidance to States and non-State actors on how to enhance the effectiveness of the three categories of grievance mechanism referred to in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in Pillar Three. The latest phase of ARP, ARP III, focuses on the third category of mechanism – non-State-based grievance mechanisms.

-More information on ARP III can be found in this two-page information note [here](#)

-The larger scoping paper for the project [here](#)

-And our dedicated ARP III website [here](#)

**Call for inputs:** The strength of ARP's recommendations derives from its evidence-based, inclusive, and transparent process, which seeks to gather as much information from as many stakeholders as possible, from as many jurisdictions and sectors as possible. We thus very much welcome any contribution you would like to give.

-One way to contribute is through our current call for input through questionnaires, which are available in English, French, and Spanish on our website until 30 April 2019: [here](#)

Anyone who has knowledge of and/or experience with non-State-based grievance mechanisms may respond to our open process questionnaire. This questionnaire allows you to share information about cases or incidents, information about particular mechanisms or categories of mechanisms more generally, and/or resources relevant for ARP III.

-The questionnaire is available [here](#)

This questionnaire complements some more specific questionnaires targeted to particular types of stakeholders, including one targeted directly to users of private grievance mechanisms and their representatives (if you choose to respond to only a single questionnaire, we encourage you to answer the applicable targeted questionnaire).

-The second questionnaire is [here](#)

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights would greatly appreciate any responses to the appropriate questionnaires, as well as any help sharing the questionnaires as widely as possible throughout your relevant networks. If you would like to assist those who have used private grievance mechanisms fill out the targeted survey, please feel free to help provided it is safe to do so. We prefer respondents to answer questionnaires using the online forms; however, for those who prefer to email their responses, a Word version of each questionnaire is available on the ARP III website in the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/y5andhnm>

If you have any questions or comments related to ARP III, and/or if you would like to contribute to the project in some other way, please feel free to write directly to Ben Shea at [bshea@ohchr.org](mailto:bshea@ohchr.org).

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## • Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict – Beyond the ILC

The International Law Commission included the topic “*Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict*” in 2011 on its future program of work. It is now in the stage of finalizing the project by drafting principles that address the phases of pre-conflict, during conflict, and post-conflict in light of different fields of international law, in particular looking into the laws of armed conflict, human rights law and international environmental law. This special issue, which includes papers discussed during a workshop held in Hamburg in March 2019 (for the program and speakers, see <https://www.jura.uni-hamburg.de/die-fakultaet/aktuelle-meldungen/2019-01-151.html>), attempts to consolidate the legal protection of the environment during the three phases of armed conflict by the laws of armed conflict, human rights law and international environmental law. Contributions should address one (or several) of the three conflict phases with regard to environmental protection. Submissions can also zoom out of the three phases and look at different actors and affected groups, for instance, and how they are impacted by the environment and armed conflicts.

Deadline: 1 June 2019

[Learn more](#)

## B. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

### • Moving from conflict to peace: The need for a Business Coalition for Peace in the Greater Mediterranean Region.

**Date:** March 2019

**Place:** Istanbul, Turkey.

**Author:** Mark van Dorp, Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law

A total of 20 participants from businesses, civil society, international organizations and academics took part in the meeting. The meeting was hosted by TÜSIAD, the Turkish Industry and Business Association and has been made possible with the financial support of the Hollings Center for International Dialogue.



A team of business and peace experts have taken the initiative to organize a Round Table

meeting whereby business leaders and investors that are active in the Greater Mediterranean region (including Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa) discussed the idea of a “Business Coalition for Peace”. This coalition is envisaged as a business-to-business platform facilitating the sharing of best practices and innovative solutions to operational challenges, as well as developing opportunities to stabilize and build markets in fragile and conflict affected states. Ultimately, the platform can contribute to building positive peace as well as help improve business policies and practices to prevent companies from contributing to conflict and fragility.

During the meeting, the different options for engaging in peacebuilding in the Greater Mediterranean Region by businesses were explored. The conclusion of the meeting was that there is a need and interest to further develop a business coalition or a ‘business club for peace’ in the Greater Mediterranean region, given the large challenges for establishing a positive peace based on peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region and the growing awareness by businesses that they have a role to play in overcoming these challenges. The participants to the meeting agreed that the way forward is to identify interested parties who would be willing to support such a platform.

[Learn more](#)



## C. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

- **Changing the course of impunity: Protection and access to justice for human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico**

**Author: PBI México and Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)**

This report by PBI Mexico and WOLA focuses on how the new government can create a safer and more conducive environment for journalists and human rights defenders to carry out their important work. Its main findings are: The protection measures offered by the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists are often insufficient. The Mechanism suffers from serious deficiencies in terms of adequate staff and budget levels. In the Mechanism there are only 35 officials who supervise the protection of 831 journalists and human rights defenders. The Mechanism has made some progress in the development of strategies that transcend the immediate protection of journalists and human rights defenders. Mexican authorities and security forces are frequently identified as being responsible for attacks against journalists and human rights defenders. The inability of the Mexican government to adequately investigate and punish attacks against journalists and human rights defenders has left this population vulnerable to attack.



[Learn more](#)

# International news

- **Amnesty International: Lithium batteries are stained for human rights violations.**

**Published on:** 21st March 2019 / **Author:** Amnesty International

Amnesty International is publicly challenging leaders within the electric vehicle industry to make the world's first completely ethical battery within five years. At the [Nordic Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Summit in Oslo](#), the organization is highlighting how lithium-ion batteries, which power electric cars and electronics, are linked to human rights abuses including child labour in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and environmental risks which could undermine their green potential.

Amnesty International has documented serious human rights violations linked to the extraction of the minerals used in lithium-ion batteries, particularly in the DRC. [A 2016 investigation](#) found children and adults in southern DRC working in hand-dug cobalt mines facing serious health risks, neither protected by the government nor respected by companies that profit from their labour. Amnesty's [research has linked](#) these mines to the supply chains of many of the world's leading electronics brands and electric vehicle companies.

[Learn more](#)

- **Pointing out 826 environmental conflicts.**

**Author:** Zócalo

In the last 12 years, Mexico registered 826 environmental conflicts related to mining, hydrocarbon and hydroelectric and wind assemblies.

According to the mapping made from the review of 964 journalistic notes, mining is the activity that causes the greatest number of conflicts when registering 374 conflicting facts reported in 134 mining projects.

To reduce the presence of socio-environmental conflicts, Gisela Zasemberg, Flacso Mexico research professor and mapping coordinator, stressed the importance of the existence of a National Citizen Participation Law that articulates the ejidal assemblies as a central figure that allows communities to decide on his territory.

[Learn more](#)

## • Why land related issues in Turkana should be dealt with presently?

**Published on:** 29th March 2019 / **Author:** Ikal Angelei (Friends of Lake Turkana), in Standard Digital (Kenya)

The uneasy relationship between foreign capital and indigenous lands in Africa has only increased with the emergence of new resource frontiers and grand nationalist visions of infrastructural development in Africa. As multinational corporations push further into Kenya's vulnerable and indigenous territories in the quest for investment opportunities, narratives of displacement and land dispossession follow in their wake. In 2012, the Kibaki government launched the Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopian Transport (LAPSSET) corridor, a Sh2.5 trillion infrastructure project that would comprise highways, oil pipeline, railways, resort cities, a 32- berth port in Lamu, airports and fibre optic cable, connecting Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Granted, infrastructure has been conceived as the enabler for development and the zenith of what it means to be a modern society.

[Learn more](#)

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## • The European Parliament Working Group on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC Group) announces a bold Shadow EU Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct.

**Published:** 19th March 2019 / **Author:** European Parliament

On 19 March 2019, the European Parliament Working Group on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC Group) announced a bold Shadow EU Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct. The MEPs initiative is a reaction to the EU's failure to develop an action plan on responsible business conduct, despite a 2011 commitment from the European Commission to implement the UN Guiding Principles, and sets out the necessary steps towards ensuring a responsible and accountable European business sector.

You can see the entire document "Shadow EU Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights within the EU" in the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/y6khla6y>

## • Can blockchain apps ensure a responsible mineral supply chain?

**Published on:** 22nd March 2019 / **Author:** Forbes

Verifying the origins of metals and minerals and ensuring the extraction of these resources are not benefiting warlords has been an ever-increasing concern of mining companies in recent years.

In 2010, the US passed the Dodd-Frank Act, which in Section 1502 included a requirement for any US firm to ensure that mineral resources they procured, including tin, tantalum, gold, and tungsten, was sourced responsibly and not for the enrichment of anyone involved in armed conflict.

Though the Trump administration has moved to repeal this measure, it still remains on the books and in effect.

The EU has also adopted new import regulations on conflict minerals, implemented as of May 2017. The new measures will apply to all EU-based companies from January 2021, requiring them to report their supply chain due diligence obligations on sourcing of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold and ensure armed groups can no longer use these minerals as a way to finance warfare and human rights abuses.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Israel/Palestine: Israel's exploitation of Palestinian Resources is Human Rights Violation, says UN expert.

**Published on:** 18th March 2019. / **Author:** UNHR, UN Human Rights

Israel's exploitation of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for its own use is in direct violation of its legal responsibilities as an occupying power, says UN Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk.

"For nearly five million Palestinians living under occupation, the degradation of their water supply, the exploitation of their natural resources and the defacing of their environment, are symptomatic of the lack of any meaningful control they have over their daily lives," Lynk said presenting a report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

"Israel's policy of usurping Palestinian natural resources and disregarding the environment has robbed the Palestinians of vital assets, and means they simply cannot enjoy their right to development."

[Learn more](#)

## Blogs and Opinions

**Author by** Alison Davidian, Australian Strategic Policy Institute / **Published on:** 20 March 2019

### **Managing our resources: women, mining and conflict in the Asia-Pacific.**

Women's traditional roles and responsibilities mean that they're highly dependent on the environment for their survival and welfare and thus particularly affected by the environmental impacts of extractive industries. For example, when miners change water flows or pollute land, women have greater difficulty finding water and food. Women who lose their traditional livelihoods are unable to meet the needs that the land once supplied, or to offset that loss with compensation.

[Learn more](#)

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## 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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