

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

Anthropology and Conservation Virtual Conference

Deadline: March 12, 2021

The Royal Anthropological Institute is very pleased to announce the call for panel proposals for a major interdisciplinary conference on Anthropology and Conservation.

The aim of the conference is simple: it is increasingly recognised that conservation can only be properly achieved with Indigenous Peoples, in full recognition of their rights. It is therefore urgent that we develop cross-disciplinary understanding not just of conservation, but also of way that conservation and people go together. The conference will be held virtually.

The conference was originally proposed by the University of East Anglia's School of International Development, and the organisers are pleased to welcome as co-organisers alongside UEA: Forest Peoples Programme, the Linnean Society, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the University of Kent's School of Anthropology and Conservation, the Anthropology and Environment Society (a section of the AAA), Botanic Garden Conservation International and the Society of Ethnobiology.

The RAI indicates a few possible areas of interest below. However, it would not wish to restrict any potential suggestion, and proposals are welcome on any aspect of the theme, whether theoretical, methodological or ethnographic. Proposals from any of the sub-fields of anthropology (social anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology or linguistics) are welcome, as well as any of the sub-fields of conservation. We would particularly welcome panel proposals that have any combination of anthropologists, indigenous peoples and conservationists as co-convenors.

The organisers would also particularly welcome proposals and papers from Indigenous Peoples, as well as from international or transnational bodies, whether organised around conservation or rights, or a combination.

All proposals must be made via the [online form](#). Proposals should consist of a panel title, a (very) short abstract of less than 300 characters, and a long abstract of 250 words.

Report on the role of private military and security companies in humanitarian action

Deadline: March 9, 2021

The decades since the end of the Cold War have witnessed a significant expansion in the number, type and size of humanitarian organisations, including a proliferation of actors operating in complex humanitarian emergencies. In its efforts to keep pace with the growing demands of protracted conflicts, the ever more frequent man-made and natural disasters, pandemics and displacement, the 'humanitarian landscape' as traditionally understood is undergoing significant change. The rise of 'new' or 'different' actors, including private military and security companies (PMSCs) and the emergence of new forms and modalities of humanitarian assistance are illustrations of such shifts.

While considerable attention has been paid in the last decade on the relationship between humanitarian actors and State security forces, little consideration has been accorded to the proliferation of private sector providers in complex humanitarian emergencies. Such involvement raises concern about the legitimacy, accountability, and control of PMSCs. Most importantly, the role of PMSC in humanitarian action, and militarization of humanitarian aid has raised concerns over their impacts on the legal and ethical foundations of the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and operational independence. Reliable information on the nature, scale and oversight of PMSCs services in humanitarian settings is sorely lacking.

Building on its previous work on PMSCs (see A/HRC/45/9, A/HRC/39/49), the Working Group on the use of mercenaries decided to tackle the issue and identify the key human rights challenges posed by the use of private security services in humanitarian contexts.

This thematic study on the role of PMSCs in humanitarian action will focus on the current trends, practices and human rights impacts of contracting private security services, as well as related regulations, monitoring and oversight mechanisms. On this basis, the Working Group hopes to formulate concrete, time-bound and actionable recommendations aiming to ensure that the human rights and IHL protection of all civilian populations in humanitarian contexts are guaranteed when PMSCs provide some form of support or assistance.

Inputs may be sent via e-mail mercenaries@ohchr.org, and must be received by 9 March 2021. When submitting your reply, kindly indicate if you have any objections with regard to your reply being posted on this website.

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

Call for Papers on Conflict in Rural Society for Historia Agraria de América Latina (HAAL)

Deadline: June 31, 2021

Rural society in Latin America has been shaped by struggles over land and natural resources, from the expansion of the hacienda system in the colonial era to recent disputes over oil, gas and mineral extraction. Such struggles take place across multiple scales that include village level politics and the claims of particular ethnic and social groups, as well as the realms of national, international and transnational politics. At stake are not only the material questions of property ownership and access to resources but competing ideas about the role and status of the rural environment, and the cultural, political and spiritual significance of particular territories. As such, rural conflicts frequently intersect with broader confrontations over religion, race, national identity and ideology.

By bringing together research on rural conflicts in different regions and historical periods, this issue seeks to generate comparative reflections on the nature of conflict in rural Latin America and how it has evolved over time. Recognising that “rural society” is not a fixed object of study, the editors are also interested in articles that examine the role of conflict in creating and maintaining divisions between the urban and the rural. Work that promotes dialogue on different theoretical and methodological perspectives is especially welcome.

We invite the submission of articles on political, social, cultural or environmental history that contribute to the study of conflict in rural society, focusing on any period or geographical area of Latin America. Possible thematic areas include but are not limited to:

- Disputes over land titles and land rights
- Guerrilla warfare and its wider social impact
- Political struggles over land reform
- Territorial conflicts between different national, religious or ethnic groups
- Social conflicts related to the extractive industries
- Confrontations between rural and urban institutions/organisations

Papers may be presented in Spanish, Portuguese or English. Manuscripts must be original, unpublished and fully anonymized, that is, free of any identifying information in both the text and notes. Articles should have a maximum length of 8,000 words including notes and references and must be presented in accordance with the journal style guidelines: Times New Roman 12, letter size, double-spaced, consecutive page numbers, and 2.5cm (1 inch) margins.

To submit an article manuscript visit [**here**](#).

EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT AND CONSERVATION: MĀORI AND NI'VAN COMMUNITIES (A ROAD TO GENEVA EVENT)

Date: February 7-8, 2021

Hosted by: Join Gideon Edwards, Peter Mataira, Mirali Shukla, Finnish Sámi community and the Ainu community from Japan.

Community resilience in the face of drastic environmental changes requires a deeper understanding of the struggles being felt most dramatically. The speakers in this web series are part of a larger, global community or marginalized and Indigenous community members, and we highlight these voices as agents of change in the fight for environmental conversation and conflict resolution. The first person, Indigenous communication of the experiences and ideas presented is an extremely important feature of this event. We aim to present a platform for underrepresented indigenous voices to be highlighted as primary speakers on an international stage.

Register for the event [here](#).

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS IN ACCESS TO REMEDY FOR BUSINESS-RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Date: February 10, 2021

Hosted by: The Danish Institute for Human Rights

Effective access to remedy remains a key gap in the area of business and human rights. In a recent study, the Danish Institute for Human Rights has been looking at the capacities of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) to contribute to effective remedy for business-related human rights abuses and suggestions for how to enhance these.

In two webinars, the Institute will be joined by expert speakers and NHRI representatives to discuss some of the main findings and ways forward.

The research analysed the 2019 survey data generated by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, as well as four in-depth qualitative case studies developed in collaboration with the NHRIs of Kenya, Niger, Nigeria and Uganda. The findings seek to serve as a resource for NHRIs and other actors to strengthen the role of NHRIs; as well as to inform current international and national processes that address the role of NHRIs in access to remedy.

Register [here](#)

NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

SHARING OIL RENTS AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Published: January 11, 2021

Source: Environmental Peacebuilding

This paper investigates how the devolution of oil windfalls affects the likelihood of political violence. It shows that transferring large shares of oil wealth can prevent conflict, while transferring small shares can trigger it.

Among the different transfer schemes, fiscal transfers (to subnational governments) yield the highest levels of consumption, but direct transfers (to people) are the most effective in preventing conflict. By averting conflict, transfers can improve ex ante welfare; however, only a subset of the ex ante welfare optimal transfers is optimal ex post and thus self-enforcing. Among them, those that avert conflict by reinforcing repressive regimes are of particular policy interest.

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SEVEN QUESTIONS TO HELP DETERMINE WHEN A COMPANY SHOULD REMEDY HUMAN RIGHTS HARM UNDER THE UNGPS

Published: January 2021

Source: BSR

A recent OECD National Contact Point (NCP) case from Australia illustrates the fluid nature of a company's business activities and its responsibility to participate in providing remedy under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The UNGPs discuss three separate concepts—cause, contribute, and directly linked—to define a company's connection to a negative impact and subsequent duty to provide a remedy. These are not rigid categories but rather “guiding principles” designed to assist companies in assessing how they can act responsibly.

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NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN PALESTINE

Source: Al-Haq - Defending Human Rights

Upholding international human rights standards is traditionally the responsibility of governments, aimed at regulating relations between the State, individuals and groups. But with the increased role of corporate actors, nationally and internationally, the issue of business impact on the enjoyment of human rights has garnered a great deal of attention. Although the primary duty to protect human rights remains with national governments, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights in their operations.

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THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S GLOBAL RISKS REPORT

Published: January 19, 2021

Source: World Economic Forum

The 16th edition of the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report analyses the risks from societal fractures—manifested through persistent and emerging risks to human health, rising unemployment, widening digital divides, youth disillusionment, and geopolitical fragmentation. Businesses risk a disorderly shakeout which can exclude large cohorts of workers and companies from the markets of the future. Environmental degradation—still an existential threat to humanity—risks intersecting with societal fractures to bring about severe consequences.

Yet, with the world more attuned to risk, lessons can be drawn to strengthen response and resilience. In 2020, the risk of a pandemic became reality. As governments, businesses, and societies grapple with COVID-19, societal cohesion is more important than ever.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WILL THE UK REALLY REFUSE TRADE DEALS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS?

Published: January 19, 2021

Source: BBC

The UK is forging its post-Brexit path as a "confident, independent nation - and an energetic force for good", according to the government.

It's free to set trade on its own terms, pursue opportunities and higher living standards. But can it square profit with principle?

Is turning a blind eye to human rights violations worth it to have a trade deal that knocks a couple of quid off the price of an imported shirt?

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LIBERIA: MINERS, LOGGERS CLASH OVER GBARPOLU FOREST

Published: January 7, 2021

Source: Front Page Africa

On March 4 2019, Korninga B, an authorized forest community, signed a logging contract with Singaporean-Indian logging company Indo Africa Plantation Liberia Incorporated. To log in the 31,818-hectare forest in the Bopolu and Bokomu districts, the company promised to make an annual contribution of US\$ 30,000 for scholarships, US\$25,000 for medical support, annual road maintenance and other things within the first six months after signing the agreement. Indo Africa also promised to build a youth center in the chiefdom.

However, one year and 10 months later, not a single project has been done. Indo African says it cannot implement these projects as promised because two other mining company is operating in the same forest. Belle Fasama, a Liberian-owned company, has two gold prospecting licenses and MNG Gold has an exploration license here. The two companies have cleared portions of the forest, felling marketable timber species, according to Ruth Varney, the coordinator of western region of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), which also includes Bomi and Grand Cape Mount. The mining companies' licenses expire in 2021 and 2025, respectively.

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MYANMAR: KIRIN SHOULD SEVER MILITARY FIRM TIES

Published: January 8, 2021

Source: Human Rights Watch

Japan-based Kirin Holdings Company, Ltd. should publish its investigation report on the military-owned Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. (MEHL) and swiftly cut ties with the company, Human Rights Watch said today. Kirin announced the conclusion of an investigation by Deloitte Tohmatsu Financial Advisory LLC on January 7, 2021, but declined to publish the report for confidentiality reasons.

“Kirin should regain some trust of consumers, investors, and rights groups by releasing the details of its investigation into the operations of its Myanmar military business partner,” said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “Kirin’s business association with MEHL raises serious human rights concerns that need urgent action, not further obfuscation behind an investigation whose results are kept secret.”

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AGRIBUSINESS GIANTS ADM, BUNGE TRADING IN ‘CONFLICT’ PALM OIL, NEW HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT SAYS

Published: January 5, 2021

Source: Eco-business

US agribusiness giants Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and Bunge are buying palm oil from mills in Indonesia that have been publicly linked to land and human rights violations and environmental destruction, a new report alleges.

Both companies are major players in the global palm oil industry, buying from 800 to 1,000 palm oil mills in Indonesia, the world’s biggest producer of the commodity. ADM is a major shareholder in Wilmar International Limited, the world’s biggest palm oil trader, while Bunge has a 70 per cent stake in industry giant IOI Loders Croklaan.

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BLOGS AND OPINIONS

WE NEED NEW LAWS TO STOP COMPANIES PROFITING FROM MURDER

Published: January 7, 2021

Author: Alice Harrison

Source: global witness

“Now we’re hearing they want to plant 1,000 more hectares of oil palms. But I don’t know where they’re going to plant them, because we’re here. They’ll first need to remove us from this land,” Hernán Bedoya told filmmakers in 2016, sitting on his front porch in Colombia’s Choco region.

The following year he was murdered in broad daylight, when two masked gunmen on a motorbike sprayed him with 13 bullets.

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ON PHONE & INTERNET SHUTDOWN IN ONGOING CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY REGION

Published: November, 2020

Source: Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

Following the outbreak of hostilities on November 4, phone and internet communications were swiftly cut in the Tigray region. Humanitarian agencies have highlighted that access and telecommunications limitations in most parts of Tigray have made it difficult to assess the full impact of ongoing hostilities on the civilian population and the overall security of humanitarian workers in the region.

[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/>