



# BCHR

Newsletter

MARCH 2016  
N°9



# The BCHR Network

The BCHR Network is pleased to send you the BCHR 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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## Network Announcements

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We are pleased to announce that the next BCHR Network annual meeting will take place on the **17th of November 2016** in Geneva, following the closing of the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights. All our members are most welcome to take part in this international gathering aimed at discussing the latest developments in the network's field of research as well as the next activities of the Network.

We kindly invite you to send us your suggestions regarding contents by sending an email to: [maria.prandi@networkbchr.org](mailto:maria.prandi@networkbchr.org)

We would be delighted to hear about your ideas to make the most of this event.

You are invited to register online [here](#).

## Other announcements

### A. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

#### • **International Symposium: Community Engagement with Extractive Industries**

**Date: 14 April 2016**

Place: Berlin

Organized by: Natural Justice & The Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Foundation and Natural Justice would like to invite experts involved in the field of extractive industries, infrastructure, community rights to an international Symposium in Berlin on April 14th to present and discuss experiences and lessons-learned from the four pilot cases of the action research Project.



[Learn more](#)

#### • **Illicit Goods in the Supply Chain (Minerals)**

**Date: 14 April 2016**

Place: Online webinar

Organized by: The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime and Babson College's Initiative on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

What are the most promising practices to eradicate human trafficking from the supply chains within the mining industry, including gold and other minerals? How does labour exploitation in the mining industry relate to other forms of human trafficking and illicit trade? The webinar will focus on these questions and more in a two-hour discussion.



[Learn more](#)

#### • **3rd Intl. Seminar on Human Rights and Business**

**Date: 27-29 April 2016**

Place: PUC Rio, at 22, Rua Rosário de Mello, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Organized by: Homa – Centre for Human Rights and Business of the Fed. Univ. of Juiz de Fora, Fed. Univ. of Juiz de Fora, Center for Human Rights at PUC-Rio & Friedrich Ebert Foundation

This event aims to bring together national and international leaders and experts in the field, social movement activists, NGOs, trade union movements and other social players involved in the process of protection and defence of human rights in the context of violations by companies.

[Learn more](#)

## • **Business and Human Rights Roundtable on ‘International Human Rights Law and Business: Evaluating the Impact of UNGPs’**

**Date: 29 March 2016**

Place: 2121 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052

Organized by: American Society of International Law (ASIL)

ASIL’s Human Rights Interest Group will hold a Roundtable event on Business and Human Rights on March 29, 2016, at George Washington University Law School. On the eve of ASIL’s Annual Meeting, the Roundtable will gather academic experts and practitioners to explore the Impact of the U.N.’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights



[Learn more](#)

## • **Voluntary Principles on Business and Human Rights Annual Plenary**

**Date: 20 April 2016**

Place: Bogotá-Colombia, JW Marriott Hotel (calle 73 # 8-60).

Organized by: Plenary of the Voluntary Principles

Each year the Voluntary Principles Initiative hosts an Annual Plenary Meeting which provides an opportunity for stakeholders to come together and discuss security and human rights issues in the extractive industry.

[Please write to: SAItschuller@foleyhoag.com](mailto:SAItschuller@foleyhoag.com)

## **B. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES**

### • **The Opportunity of Peace**

**Author:** Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP)

This publication presents a broadened agenda for transformation, without aiming to be exhaustive. The report examines some of the crucial topics of the peace agenda, which are also areas in which FIP aspires to make fundamental contributions. The publication is also an invitation to jointly build Colombia’s peace with a more ambitious and comprehensive focus than that which is currently illustrated by public discussion and it calls the private sector to make its contributions in peace-making.

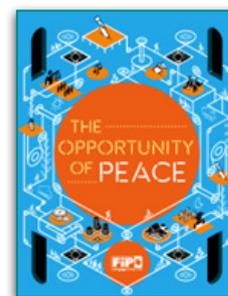


Image taken from: <http://tinyurl.com/hro4yws>

[Learn more](#)

## • Dredging in the Dark

**Author:** SOMO and Both ENDS

The Dutch government and the Dutch dredging companies involved in the Suez Canal expansion failed to consider the adverse impact of their activities would have on both human rights and the environment. These are the findings of SOMO and Both ENDS in their research report: “Dredging in the Dark”.

[Learn more](#)



Image taken from: <http://tinyurl.com/j4izbbu>

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## • Meaningful Community Engagement in the Extractive Industries: Stakeholder Perspectives and Research Priorities

**Author:** Wilson, E., Best, S., Blackmore, E., Ospanova, S.

This publication explores whether there is a shared understanding of what “meaningful community engagement” means in the context of extractive industry development. It discusses the challenges faced by companies, governments and civil society organisations in ensuring that community engagement processes are meaningful in practice.

[Learn more](#)



Image taken from: <http://tinyurl.com/hfn5ww>

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## • Human Rights Risks in Mining. A Baseline Study

**Author:** Maximilian Spohr and Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law

In light of the on-going debate on human rights in the extractive industries, the publication contributes to the related discussion on human rights in the mining sector. It attempts to close a gap in the related discussion by providing an impartial analysis that adequately considers the technical and legal correlations.

[Learn more](#)



Image taken from: <http://tinyurl.com/hwbehayz>

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## • Women-Led Action Oriented Research on the Negative Impacts of Oil on Women’s Rights, Land and Food Sovereignty in Uganda’s Oil Region

**Author:** Women-Led Action

Commercial Mining in Uganda and generally in the world is accelerating. In most countries with extractive resources, mining is both done on large scale and artisanal and Uganda is no exception. Studies carried out have shown significant negative impacts of both large scale and artisanal forms of mining on the environment, health, food and human rights more especially on women, elderly, children and the youth.

[Learn more](#)

## International News

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- **Seven Charged Over Samarco Dam Disaster**

**Source:** BBC

**Date:** 23 February 2016

Brazilian authorities have charged the president of mining company Samarco and six others with homicide for the mining disaster that killed 19 people last November. The police report also said that Samarco's emergency plan to warn nearby villagers was insufficient. [Learn more](#)

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- **Indigenous Communities are Forced to Clean Up A 3,000-Barrel Oil Spill in Peru's Amazon**

**Date:** 26 February 2016

PetroPeru operations have caused recent oil spills. Representatives of PetroPeru offered the equivalent of eight dollars per bucket of oil to each person who could get oil waste out from the rivers. The labourers were not warned about the dangers of such activity, nor were they given special protection or training. [Learn more](#)

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- **¿Is the Illegal Trade in Congolese Minerals Financing Terror?**

**Source:** Institute for Security Studies

**Date:** 02 March 2016

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) is currently conducting a research project that tracks illicit financial flows related to resource extraction in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The studies have found that where multinationals were once the major players, terror groups are now increasingly joining the criminal networks that extort minerals from the eastern part of the country. [Learn more](#)

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- **PAX Calls For Import Stop on Blood Coal**

**Date:** 03 March 2016

**Source:** PAX

PAX is urging eight European energy companies to stop buying coal from mining companies Drummond and Prodeco/Glencore. According to PAX these mining companies have so far not made any efforts to reconcile with victims of grave human rights violations in the Colombian mining region of Cesar in which they operate. [Learn more](#)

## • The Spanish Supreme Court Confirms Corporate Criminal Liability

**Date:** 07 March 2016

**Source:** Global Compliance News

In its recent Sentence 154/2016, dated 29 February, the Spanish Supreme Court ruled, for the first time, that companies can incur criminal liability. The Supreme Court confirmed the sentences that were issued by the National Court in which three companies were convicted for their involvement in crimes against public health.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Committee of Ministers Adopted Recommendation on Human Rights and Business

**Date:** 07 March 2016

**Source:** Council of Europe Portal

Building on the 2011 UN Guiding Principles, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 on human rights and business, a text that provides more specific guidance to assist member States in preventing and remedying human rights violations by business enterprises and also insists on measures to induce business to respect human rights.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Palestinians Sue Alleged Settlement Supporters for \$34.5 Billion in U.S. Court

**Date:** 08 March 2016

**Source:** Haaretz

Sheldon Adelson, Irving Moskowitz, Friends of the IDF, Bank Leumi, Bank Hapoalim and Volvo are among the respondents named in a suit filed in Washington D.C.

[Learn more](#)

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## • FMO Suspends all Activities in Honduras Effective Immediately

**Date:** 16 March 2016

**Source:** FMO

FMO decided to suspend all activities in Honduras, effective immediately. This means that the FMO will not engage in new projects or commitments and that no disbursements will be made, including the Agua Zarca project in Honduras.

[Learn more](#)

## • G4s to Sell Off Operations in Israel as BDS Claims Victory

**Date:** 10 March 2016

**Source:** Europe Newsweek

G4S, the world's largest security firm, is selling its entire business in Israel in a move that it said on Thursday was for "commercial reasons." The global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign has claimed that it was responsible for the decision because of pressure it applied on the British firm.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Investors Welcome New Tool that Rates Corporate Performance on Human Rights

**Date:** 22 March 2016

**Source:** SHIFT and International Centre on Corporate Responsibility

The Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB), formally launched on March 21 2016, is an independent and voluntary reporting system that will rank leading companies on their human rights policies, processes and performance. The intention of the CHRB is to facilitate evaluation of corporate performance on key human rights KPIs, exposing where companies are excelling and where they need improvement and to provide a clear benchmark of individual performance against peer companies.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Malaysian Baram Mega-Dam Project Scrapped, Indigenous People Take Back Land

**Date:** 22 March 2016

**Source:** Asian Correspondent

SARAWAK'S controversial mega-dams project is officially dead – ending a three-year battle to stop developmental aggression. The Sarawak state government has finally bowed to pressure from local communities who have been protesting against the construction of 12 mega-dams along the Baram river in the Malaysian province of Borneo.

[Learn more](#)

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## • Human Rights Council Adopts Historic Resolution on Protection of Defenders of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

**Date:** 24 March 2016

**Source:** International Service for Human Rights

The Resolution provides invaluable guidance to States and business on protection of defenders of economic, social and cultural rights. It affirms the legitimate and essential role of human rights defenders in promoting, protecting and contributing to the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights - including indigenous rights and the right to development - and condemns restrictions and attacks against them by both States and business enterprises.

[Learn more](#)

## Blogs and Opinions

**Article by:** Annie Kelly

### **¿Can a Business Ever Source Responsibly From a War Zone?**

If done right, companies working in areas of conflict can play a major role in the rebuilding of peaceful and prosperous societies. Companies trying to manage supply chains in conflict or post-conflict environments must have robust systems in place to ensure that they are not contributing to insecurity.

[Learn more](#)

**Article by:** Damiano de Felice, co-authored by Sarah Zoen

### **Who is in Charge? A key Question for Human Rights Impact Assessments**

The practicalities of hybrid human rights impact assessments (HRIAs) are challenging (from redressing power imbalances to including legitimate mediation, from ensuring independent funding to empowering communities to say no to harmful projects). The article, tackles the different issues that surround HRIAs and the different initiatives and toolkits available in order to undertake a HRIAs.

[Learn more](#)

**Article by:** Josh Fisher (Faculty for the Environment, Peace, and Security Certification at Columbia University)

### **Climate and Conflict: El Niño's Ability to Magnify Tensions Between Companies and Communities**

Climate change has the potential to foment tensions between companies and communities, by multiplying the environmental hazards associated with mining. The El Niño event of 2015 brought with it one of the most severe droughts that many villages in Papua New Guinea's highland provinces had experienced in several decades.

[Learn more](#)

**Article by:** Tom Burgis (Financial Times Investigations)

### **The Great Land Rush. Ethiopia: The Billionaire´s Farm**

Across the globe, investors are betting billions on land. Tom Burgis reports from Ethiopia, where a tycoon has planted a vast rice farm in soils tainted by years of conflict.

[Learn more](#)

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**Article by:** Valentina Azarova

### **On Business and Human Rights in Illegal Territorial Regimes**

The author comments on the Human Rights Watch Report: *Occupation, Inc.: How Settlement Businesses Contribute to Israel's Violations of Palestinian Rights* and tackles 3 main points related to the mentioned Human Rights Watch report.

[Learn more](#)

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**Video by:** Sarah Federman

### **Aller Simple: Corporate Accountability for Mass Atrocity- A study of the French National Railroads**

Sarah Federman provides an overview of her research in role of the French national railroads in the transport of deportees from France to Auschwitz during WWII and the conflict that ensues today over that role.

[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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