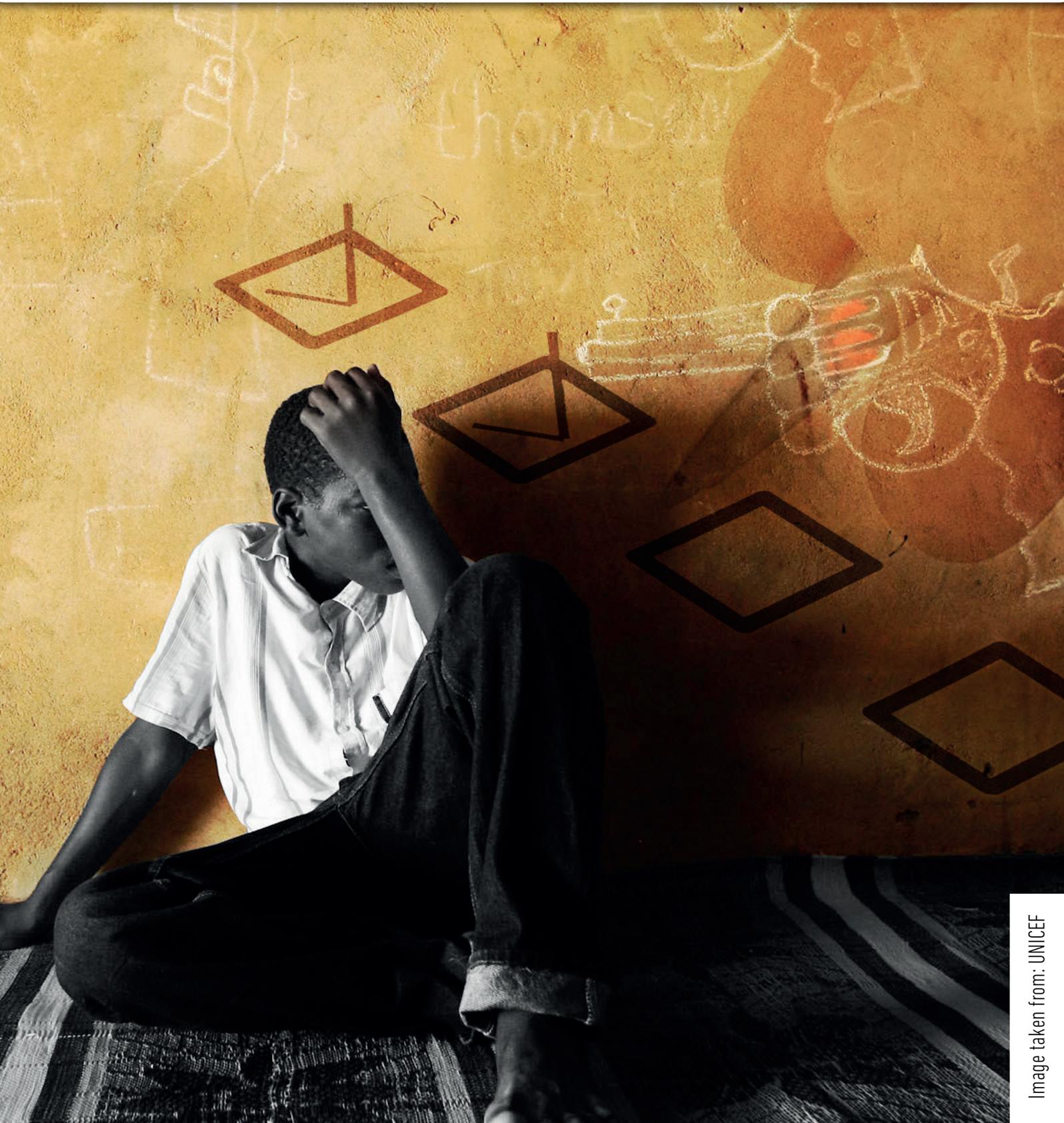




BCHR

Newsletter

APRIL 2017
N°22



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

INDEX / Newsletter

1. Network Announcements	4
The next BCHR Network annual meeting will take place on the 30th of November 2017 in Geneva, following the closing of the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights. You are invited to register online here .	
2. Other announcements	5
a. Public Consultations, call for papers.....	5
b. Events, workshops and courses.....	6
c. New Library Resources.....	8
3. International News	10
4. Blogs and Opinions	13
5. About our network	14
6. Sharing and posting materials	14

Network Announcements

We are pleased to announce that the next BCHR Network annual meeting will take place on the 30th of November 2017 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

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. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS, CALL FOR PAPERS.

- **Special Issue on the Relationship between International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law**

Deadlines for submission of abstracts: July 1, 2017

The theme of this special edition of the Journal of Human Rights and International Legal Discourse is the relationship between international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In recent years, debates have centred on the question of whether human rights law should apply in terms of armed conflict. Now, although it is generally accepted that human rights law does continue to apply in terms of armed conflict, a debate continues about when and how human rights law should apply alongside international humanitarian law. This special edition of the journal of Human Rights and International Legal Discourse seeks to review contemporary practice on these questions.

Submissions are welcomed on the following broad themes, amongst others: The relevance of the relationship between international humanitarian law and human rights law when it comes to non-State actors, such as armed groups or transnational corporations.

For more information please contact: k.m.a.fortin@uu.nl | steven.dewulf@uantwerpen.be

B. EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

- **UN Working Group consultation on UN Forum, role of business in protecting human rights defenders**

Date: May 10

Place: Palais des Nations, room XVI

Organized by: United Nations

During its 17th session, the Working Group on Business and Human Rights will hold an open consultation with civil society organisations. The meeting will provide an opportunity for CSOs to share their experiences with the Working Group and for the Working Group to present its plans and reports for 2017, and plans for the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights to be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 to 29 November, 2017.

[Learn more](#)

C. NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES

• Corporate Legal Accountability Annual Briefing: Corporate impunity is common & remedy for victims is rare

Author: Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

The aim of the Corporate Legal Accountability Annual Briefing is to highlight the latest legal developments in holding companies to account for human rights abuses, to share knowledge among lawyers and ultimately strengthen accountability. Companies' involvement in human rights abuses is on the increase and likely to get worse, particularly in the use of deep national politics influence to shield themselves from accountability and targeting activists using the judicial system to suppress them with piling lawsuits.



Image taken from: <https://goo.gl/3KDDN>

[Learn more](#)

• Child Rights and Security Checklist

Author: UNICEF

The Child Right and Security Checklist identifies criteria for companies and government to assess the extent to which their security frameworks are attentive to and protective of children's rights. The content of the checklist can be used by both extractive and non-extractive companies to help identify, improve, and create greater stakeholder confidence in their protection of children's rights within their security programs. The checklist can also be used by the government in the fulfilment of their obligation to protect human rights, help businesses fulfil their responsibilities to respect human rights and reduce security-related human rights abuses of children and youths around the world.

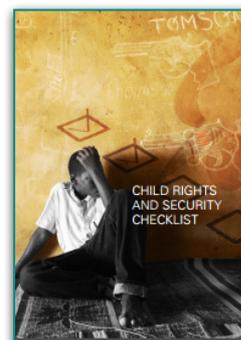


Image taken from: <https://goo.gl/DvZ68C>

[Learn more](#)

• Child Rights and Mining Toolkit

Author: UNICEF

As a follow-up to the Extractive Pilot, UNICEF commissioned Synergy Global Consulting to develop practical guidance for mining companies that want to take concrete steps in addressing their potential positive or negative child rights impacts. UNICEF's Child Rights and Mining Toolkit is the result of this work. The toolkit is drafted to assist stakeholders in the mining sector in the improvement of their social and environmental conducts towards better respect and advancement of children's rights in specific areas.

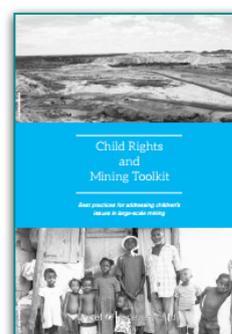


Image taken from: <https://goo.gl/tvycps>

[Learn more](#)

International News

- **East Africa: Activists say Africa Gold Refinery could fuel conflict in mineral-rich areas; company denies allegations**

Date: February 21

Source: Reuters Africa

Uganda's first gold refinery, which opened on the 20th February, is said to use raw gold from conflict-ridden South Sudan and Eastern Congo, its owner Africa Gold Refinery said, dismissing activists' concerns that such a move could fuel violence in the region.

[Learn more](#)

- **Call for new rules for human rights disputes involving business**

Source: Global Arbitration News

Date: March 24

Three international law specialists have proposed drafting a special set of rules for the arbitration of disputes over alleged human rights abuses by businesses, arguing that it would solve an access to justice problem and have a preventative effect all the way down the supply chain.

[Learn more](#)

- **AU Set On Making African Businesses More Responsive To Human Rights**

Date: March 24

Source: Premium Times

The responsibility to sanitise the business environment on the African continent, to strike a balance between the needs of businesses and the rights of the people to a fair life and environment, and to offer a better safety net to Africans by making businesses more responsive to human rights has led to the drafting of the African Union Policy on Business and Human Rights. The draft document offers the framework for both prevention of human rights abuses and remediation when they occur.

[Learn more](#)

- **Canada: Canadian Companies And The Effects Of Foreign Operations – Out Of Sight, Front Of Mind**

Date: March 27

Source: Borden Ladner Gervais

As the domestic Canadian economy continues to mature, companies with a healthy appetite for risk can find themselves looking outside Canada to generate significant returns. Investments in foreign jurisdictions come with a myriad of challenges – uncertain legal structures and slow and cumbersome regulatory processes are just two of many, but the risk profile of these foreign adventures can be high for Canadian companies.

[Learn more](#)

- **Certified to fish: Jakarta conference brings hope to fishermen the world over**

Date: March 27

Source: Foundation for International Human Rights Reporting Standards

In dealing with slavery and crimes associated with the scourge of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) that skims billions of dollars yearly, the International Conference on Human Rights Protection in the Fishing Industry was held on Monday 27 March in Jakarta, Indonesia. A culmination of almost two years of intensive effort since the revelation by the Associated Press of the tragic events in Bejina and Ambon, human rights certification process is mandated as a criteria for a licence to operate in the Indonesian fishing industry.

[Learn more](#)

- **Mexican Archdiocese: Companies That Help Build Trump's Wall Are "Traitors"**

Date: March 27

Source: Common Dreams

Denouncing President Donald Trump's proposed border wall between Mexico and the United States as "an open threat that violates relations and peace," the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Mexico City said the previous day (Sunday) that companies who profit from its construction are "traitors to the homeland."

[Learn more](#)

- **Did Papua New Guinea Police Commit Atrocities for Gold Company?**

Date: March 28

Source: Telesur TV

Human rights advocates in Papua New Guinea raised alarm following shocking accusations of violence levelled at police by villagers residing near the Porgera Joint Venture Gold Mine owned by Barrick Gold, the world's largest gold mining company. The police stand accused of taking part in a pre-dawn operation Saturday where villagers said 150 houses were torched.

[Learn more](#)

- **El Salvador Votes for Water over Gold**

Date: March 30

Source: Institute for Policy Studies

The people of El Salvador and their international allies against irresponsible mining are celebrating a historic victory. After a long battle against global mining companies that were determined to plunder the country's natural resources for short-term profits, El Salvador's Legislative Assembly has voted to ban all metal mining projects. The new law, approved on March 29, aims to protect the nation's environment and natural resources.

[Learn more](#)

• Greece: Human rights court awards €576,000 to forced labour migrant strawberry-pickers

Date: March 30

Source: Human Rights Europe

Forty-two migrants, forced to pick strawberries under armed guard, have won the backing of human rights judges in their complaint against Greece. The European Court of Human Rights ruled today that the Bangladeshis were subjected to forced labour and did not receive effective protection from the Greek State.

[Learn more](#)

• Tanzania struggles to end child labor from the lure of gold

Date: April 3

Source: Reuters

There are more than four million child labourers in Tanzania aged between 5 and 17, according to a government survey released last year in conjunction with the International Labour Organization. That's roughly a third of the country's children. More than three million are involved in hazardous jobs including illegal mining.

[Learn more](#)

• Public Statement on Scottish Government Commitment to a Human Rights Dimension to Trade and Investment

Date: April 7

Source: Amnesty International

Amnesty International welcomes the commitment by the Scottish Government, endorsed by the Scottish Parliament, to undertake human rights due diligence before entering into trade or investment agreements. This development is a result of concerns raised by the organization about an MoU signed by the Scottish Government with two Chinese companies (of which one has been implicated for involvement in human rights abuses in DR Congo) for inward investment into Scotland.

[Learn more](#)

• Panama Meeting On Human Rights, Environmental Issues Sows Hope And Disappointment

Date: April 8

Source: Intercontinental Cry

The waters were rising again in Weni Bagama's community when she headed to Panama City to meet with government officials about the flooding from the Barro Blanco hydroelectric dam. Bagama was one of 10 people scheduled to speak April 4 at the first in a series of meetings on the problem of human rights violations against environmental defenders throughout the country. There are currently more than 90 human rights cases related to environmental issues recorded in Panama according to the Ministry of Environment.

[Learn more](#)

- **Brazilian tribal leader fronts global protests for land rights**

Date: April 18

Source: Survival International

A global wave of protest organized by Survival International has called for a halt to the destruction of tribal peoples' land, lives, and human rights in Brazil, on the country's Day of the Indian. Survival supporters and members of the public demonstrated at the Brazilian embassy in London, demanding land rights for the Guarani and other tribes across the country. Protests also took place in Brazil, the United States, Spain, Italy and Germany.

[Learn more](#)

Blogs and Opinions

Article by: Hannah Koh

Has the conversation about palm oil moved from environment to people?

Cleaning up the oil palm industry's supply chains must go beyond environmental impact to the workforce. Fair working conditions and better lives for smallholders must be front and centre, say industry leaders.

[Learn more](#)

Article by: Nadia Bernaz

EU Fundamental Rights Agency Calls for Better Access to Remedies through Criminal Justice

On 10 April 2017, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) published an Opinion on improving access to remedy in the area of business and human rights at the EU level, providing advice on how to ensure access to remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses. This blog post briefly presents the main aspects of the Opinion, and then focuses on the area of criminal legal remedies for victims of business-related human rights abuses.

[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/>

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.
