

INTRODUCTION

This **twenty-fifth *Annual Report of the Network of Concerned Historians (NCH)*** contains news about the domain where history and human rights intersect, in particular about the censorship of history and the persecution of historians, archivists, and archaeologists around the globe, as reported by various human rights organizations and other sources. It mainly covers events and developments of 2018 and 2019.

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All *Annual Reports* (1995–2019) were compiled by [Antoon De Baets](#).

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AFGHANISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2016, 2018.

ALBANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2012, 2015–2018.

In May 2019, after a legal challenge by BIRN Albania (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Albania) initiated in March 2016, an appeals court ordered the declassification of annual reports compiled by the Communist-era secret service Sigurimi in 1980–1989 and statistics on the number of Albanians under its active surveillance in that period. The court dismissed the argument of the current State Information Service (SHISH), which has controlled a large part of the Sigurimi archive since the fall of Communism, that such information should be kept secret in perpetuity. The ruling, which cannot be appealed, upheld a first-instance court decision from November 2016.¹

See also Serbia/Kosovo.

ALGERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2001–2018.

During the armed conflict of 1992–2000, the security forces, allied militias, and armed Islamist groups battling the government killed more than 100,000, according to estimates, and forcibly disappeared several thousand whose fate remains unknown. The 2006 law implementing the Charter on Peace and National Reconciliation granted legal immunity to perpetrators of grave abuses. It also criminalized acts of speech that “denigrate” state institutions or security forces in relation to their conduct during that conflict. The law promised compensation for families of “disappeared” persons but brought them no closer to learning what happened to their missing relatives.

On 6 June 2018, the appeals court in Relizane upheld a two-year prison sentence against blogger Abdullah Benaoum for social-media publications accusing the authorities and the Algerian army of being responsible for several massacres of civilians and the disappearance of thousands during the

¹ Gjergj Erebara, “[BIRN Wins Appeal to Declassify Albanian Secret Police Files](#),” *Balkan Insight* (29 May 2019).

internal armed conflict (1992–2000). The charges were based both on penal code articles prohibiting the defamation of public institutions and article 46 of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which prohibited exploiting the wounds of the “‘National Tragedy’ to harm the institutions of Algeria” or tarnish its image internationally. Benaoum was serving his term at the end of 2018.²

On 7 May 2019, a group of students at the University of Tizi Ouzou used violent force to obstruct an on-campus event commemorating the 39th anniversary of the Berber Spring (a series of peaceful protests in 1980 supporting Berber cultural and linguistic rights in Algeria that followed the cancelation of a speech by Berber poet Mouloud Mammeri at the University of Tizi Ouzou). Students had organized the event, entitled “From the Berber Cultural Movement of 1980 to the Popular Movement of February 2019,” to discuss the Berber Spring. The event apparently drew parallels between the Berber Spring and the nationwide pro-democracy protests that had taken place since February 2019. A group of students reportedly entered the campus auditorium where the commemoration was taking place and demanded its cancelation, reportedly attacking some of the event’s attendees and throwing a tear gas canister. Shortly thereafter, the speakers fled the venue and the event was abandoned. On 8 May 2019, the rector of the University of Tizi Ouzou condemned the violence.

Since 1980, Algerians as well as the Kabyle across North Africa have commemorated the anniversary of the Berber Spring on 20 April. On 18 April 2001, during preparations for the 21st anniversary of the Berber Spring, an 18-year-old student was killed whilst in police custody in Tizi Ouzou. The incident sparked riots and confrontations between civilians and the security forces which spread through the region and resulted in the deaths of around 123 protestors. It became known as the Black Spring. As a result of the 2001 events, a Citizens’ Movement was created which has since propelled other political movements to front the cause of Kabyle identity.³

ANGOLA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2009, 2017.

² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 25–26, 27–28.

³ Scholars at Risk, “[University of Tizi Ouzou](#)” (7 May 2019); Yasmina Allouche, “[Algeria’s Repression of the Berber Uprising](#),” *Middle East Monitor* (20 April 2017).

ARGENTINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2018.

As of November 2018, the Attorney-General's Office reported 3,007 people charged, 867 convicted, and 110 acquitted of crimes committed by the last military junta (1976–1983). Of 599 cases alleging crimes against humanity, judges had issued rulings in 2003. Prosecutions were made possible by a series of actions taken in the early 2000s by Congress, the Supreme Court, and federal judges annulling amnesty laws and striking down pardons of former officials implicated in the crimes. As of November 2018, 128 people who were illegally taken from their parents as children during the dictatorship had been identified. Many were reunited with their families. In May 2018, an appeals court upheld the criminal conviction of 12 people accused of participating in Operation Condor, a regional strategy to coordinate repressive efforts by dictatorships in several Latin American countries. They were sentenced to up to 25 years in prison for participating in an illicit association that kidnapped 103 people. The large number of victims, suspects, and cases made it difficult for prosecutors and judges to bring those responsible to justice while respecting their due process rights. Argentine law allowed judges to send inmates age 70 and older to serve their time under house arrest. The Attorney-General's Office reported in September that 641 pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners were under house arrest. In 2016, the government said it would not appeal judicial rulings granting house arrest to pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners.⁴

Twenty-five years after the 1994 bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people and injured more than 300, no one has been convicted of the crime. The investigation stalled when Iran, which Argentina's judiciary suspects of ordering the attack, refused to allow Argentine investigators to interview Iranian suspects in Argentina. In 2013 Argentina and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that allowed an international commission of jurists to review evidence and question Iranian suspects—but only in Tehran—likely rendering the interviews inadmissible in an Argentine court. A federal court declared the MOU unconstitutional; the Mauricio Macri administration did not appeal. Red notices—a form of international arrest warrant—that the government requested from Interpol to detain several Iranians implicated in the attack remained in force. In September 2018, President Macri called on Iranian authorities to collaborate with the investigations during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly. In January 2015, Alberto Nisman, the prosecutor in charge of investigating the bombing, was found dead in his home with a single gunshot wound to the head and a pistol beside him matching the wound. His death came just days after he had

⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 34–35.

filed a criminal complaint accusing then-President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and her foreign affairs minister of conspiring with Iran to undermine the investigation. A federal court dismissed Nisman's complaint, but, following an appeal, in 2016 the judiciary ordered the case reopened. In March 2018, an appeals court upheld a decision ordering the pretrial detention of Fernández de Kirchner for her alleged role in the cover-up. It was not implemented because she had parliamentary immunity as a senator. As of November 2018, courts had not determined whether Nisman's death was suicide or murder. In 2015, several officials—including former President Carlos Menem, his head of intelligence, and a judge—were put on trial for alleged interference with the initial investigation into the bombing. The trial continued at the end of 2018.⁵

See also Ecuador.

ARMENIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2006, 2010, 2014–2016.

AUSTRALIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2001, 2003, 2007–2009, 2014–2016, 2018.

Between 1939 and 1944, Barney Waria (1873–1948), reportedly the last initiated Ngadjuri man, was extensively interviewed about the Aboriginal Ngadjuri people and culture by anthropologist-in-training Ronald Berndt (–1990). In 1994, Berndt's wife and fellow anthropologist Catherine died. Her will, written in 1993 and following her husband's wishes, stipulated a 30-year embargo (until 2024) on a subset of their extensive collection of papers, including the Waria field notebooks stored in the Berndt Museum at the University of Western Australia. In November 2017, Waria's grandson Vince Copley senior ([1937–]) and three other archaeologists from Flinders University and the University of Queensland demanded access to the notebooks to anthropologist John Stanton, the literary executor of Ronald and Catherine Berndt's estate. Copley expressed the wish to read them with his adult children before he died in order to give them a fuller picture of their Ngadjuri ancestry. Between 1936 and 1944, Waria had worked with three anthropologists (Norman Tindale, Charles Mountford, and Ronald Berndt). Copley argued that Berndt's field notes were intellectual property jointly held by Aboriginal

⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 37–38.

Elders, such as Barney Waria, and that the university should re-assess the legal basis for the embargo. Stanton confirmed that the notebooks containing Waria's interviews had been read by people outside the Berndt Museum on only two occasions, both times after South Australia Supreme Court writs. The notebooks written by Tindale and Mountford were readily available in libraries and museums.⁶

In 1977, a court had ruled that *Nomads of the Australian Desert* (Adelaide 1976), a book by anthropologist Charles Mountford (1890–1976) about Central Australian Aboriginal lifestyles, art, and myths, had to be withdrawn from sale in the Northern Territory because it reproduced images of tribal sites and items of cultural and religious significance forbidden to uninitiated members of the Pitjantjatjara people. The Pitjantjatjara Council proved that an obligation of confidence was placed on Mountford when he took the photographs during a 1940 field trip. In 1982, the court ruled that more than 100 slides taken by Mountford and dealing with secret ceremonies belonged to the Pitjantjatjara Council.⁷

AUSTRIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2001, 2005–2007, 2009, 2018.

AZERBAIJAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997–1998, 2008–2013, 2015–2018.

Authorities held dozens of critics in prison for up to 30 days following pro forma court hearings on bogus misdemeanor charges, including six members of the opposition REAL political party after they had organized a peaceful march in Baku in May to mark the centennial anniversary of the Azerbaijan Republic.⁸

In December 2018, writer Akram Aylisli was once again prevented from attending an international literary event in Switzerland in January 2019. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2013* and *2016*.]⁹

⁶ Claire Smith, Gary Jackson, Geoffrey Gray, Vincent Copley, "[Who Owns a Family's Story? Why It's Time to Lift the Berndt Field Notes Embargo](#)," *The Conversation* (13 September 2018).

⁷ M. Blakeney, "The Protection of Traditional Knowledge under Intellectual Property Law," *European Intellectual Property Review* (2000), 255; T. Janke, *Our Culture: Our Future; Report on Australian Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights* (1998), 72–74; J. Ritchie, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 15 (Melbourne 2000), 432.

⁸ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 55.

⁹ International PEN, "[Azerbaijan: Harassment of Writer Must End](#)" (19 December 2018).

BAHRAIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2008–2012, 2015–2017.

BANGLADESH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001, 2004–2006, 2008–2018.

On 9 June 2018, the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) investigation agency handed over the documents of four war crimes cases (Abdul Quader Molla, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Chowdhury Moeen Uddin, Ashrafuzzaman Khan) to the Directorate of Archives and Libraries. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2011* and *2013–2017*.]¹⁰

See also Myanmar.

BELARUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2000, 2005–2007, 2009–2011, 2014–2018.

Police arbitrarily detained at least 110 people in connection with peaceful protests held in Minsk and other cities on 25 March 2018, traditionally celebrated by the opposition as Freedom Day (the anniversary of the creation of the Belarusian People’s Republic or Belarusian National Republic in 1918). In the lead-up to the rally in Minsk, police arrested opposition leader Mikalay Statkevich and three rally organizers. Courts sentenced them to up to 10-days’ detention. Police detained seven members of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee and Viasna while they monitored the rally in central Minsk, charging six with “participating in unauthorized mass events” and additionally charging one with “disobeying a police officer.” All were released the same day, and in April 2018 they filed appeals against unlawful actions by police. An official inquiry found no police misconduct. In August 2018, the charges against the activists were dropped due to the statute of limitations. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2009* and *2017–2018*.]¹¹

In [April] 2019, officials used bulldozers to demolish 70 “illegally erected” crosses marking Kurapaty

¹⁰ “[Archiving of War Crimes Starts](#),” *Daily Star* (10 June 2018).

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 76.

[Kuropaty], a site of Stalinist mass executions near Minsk discovered in 1987–1988. The crosses formed an unofficial memorial. Officials estimated that about 30,000 victims of the Stalinist terror were buried at Kuropaty, but independent historians said that as many as 200,000 were shot there by Soviet secret police in the 1930s and 1940s. Fifteen civil society activists were detained by police. In March 2019, President Alexander Lukashenko criticized those who had placed the crosses at Kuropaty. “We’re going to restore order at Kuropaty, so that there are no demonstrations with crosses around the perimeter,” he told a public meeting. No government memorial has been placed at Kuropaty.¹²

BELGIUM

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2008, 2010–2012.

See Burundi, Rwanda.

BELIZE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014.

BOLIVIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2009–2018.

Bolivia has prosecuted only a few of the officials responsible for human rights violations committed under authoritarian governments in the period 1964–1982, partly because the armed forces have at times refused to give information to judicial authorities about the fate of people killed or forcibly disappeared. A truth commission established by the government in August 2017 to carry out non-judicial investigations of grave human rights abuses committed during that period continued to operate in 2018. The commission, which would provide information to prosecutors and judges trying to convict those responsible for abuses, was originally required by law to publish a report on its findings by August 2019, but in May the Plurinational Assembly (the legislature) allowed the president to extend the deadline by one year.¹³

¹² “[Belarus Demolishes Crosses at Soviet-era Execution Site](#),” *BBC News* (4 April 2019).

¹³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 79.

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2018.

In July 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed a joint Declaration on War Crimes at a summit meeting on the Western Balkans with regional and European Union leaders, committing to assist efforts to bring perpetrators of human rights crimes to justice. However, the Bosnian government did not support a civil society-backed initiative to establish a regional truth commission, known as RECOM. With the closure of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in December 2017, the prosecution of war crimes in domestic courts took on a new importance. But in practice, progress in Bosnia remained slow. A revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy had been waiting approval by the Council of Ministers since February 2018. The revised strategy aimed to improve the process of determining which cases merit handling by the State Court War Crimes Chamber and prosecutor, and which could be dealt with in entity, district, and cantonal courts.

There were 114 cases for war crimes before the State Court involving 296 defendants as of September 2018. Between January and September 2018, the court delivered 29 verdicts, 14 convictions, 12 acquittals, and three partial acquittals. The court delivered seven verdicts for conflict-related sexual violence, five of which were convictions. Between January and September 2018, the Supreme Court of Republika Srpska, which tries war crimes cases in that entity, received seven war crime cases, four of which resulted in convictions and three of which were being processed at the end of 2018. One of the four convictions was for conflict-related sexual violence. Statistics for cantonal courts in the federation were not available at the end of 2018. In January 2018, the State Court confirmed a genocide indictment against former Bosnian Serb Interior Minister Tomislav Kovac. He was accused of controlling the police forces involved in capturing, detaining, and executing up to 8,000 Bosniak men in Srebrenica in 1995.

Several cases were dealt with during the year by the residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunal (MICT) set up to deal with any outstanding issues arising from the ICTY caseload. In April 2018, former Bosnian Serb wartime President Radovan Karadzic in the appeal hearings at the MICT against his March 2016 conviction at the ICTY for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, denied the charges and demanded a new trial. Prosecutors urged the judges at the MICT to reject Karadzic's appeal and change his sentence to life in prison.¹⁴

On 14 August 2018, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska (RS) voted to annul a 2004 report that had acknowledged that Bosnian Serb forces had violated humanitarian law by killing thousands of

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 86–87.

Bosniaks during the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. RS president Milorad Dodik argued that it contained “false data” and that it was created under pressure from the international community’s High Representative in Bosnia at the time, Paddy Ashdown. He said that it did not include crimes against Serbs. The RS Assembly ordered the RS government to draw up a new report, which was to discuss Srebrenica in 1992–1995, including “the suffering of Serbs in and around Srebrenica.” The decision was not backed by Bosniak and Croat members of the RS Assembly and sparked negative reactions from Bosniak politicians who condemned the move as an electoral gesture.

In February 2019, RS established two commissions to probe wartime crimes in Srebrenica and Sarajevo. The move was criticized from many sides as unhelpful for achieving truth and justice and as an attempt to rewrite and deny history.¹⁵

BOTSWANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

BRAZIL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2003, 2005–2018.

The perpetrators of human rights abuses during military rule from 1964 to 1985 were shielded from justice by a 1979 amnesty law that the Supreme Court upheld in 2010, a decision that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled violated Brazil’s obligations under international law. Since 2012, federal prosecutors have charged more than 40 former military officers and other agents of the dictatorship with killings, kidnappings, and other serious human rights abuses. Lower courts dismissed most of the cases, while the Supreme Court halted two, pending re-examination of the amnesty law.

In July 2018, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights condemned Brazil’s handling of the case of journalist Vladimir Herzog, whom state agents tortured and killed in 1975. The court ruled that killing should be considered a crime against humanity and ordered Brazilian institutions to recognize that this type of crime is not subject to statutes of limitation. In compliance with the ruling, federal prosecutors re-opened the Herzog investigation.¹⁶

¹⁵ Danijel Kovacevic (BIRN), “[Bosnian Serb MPs Annul Report Acknowledging Srebrenica](#),” *Balkan Insight* (14 August 2018); Mladen Lakic, “[Western Diplomats Criticise Bosnian Serb Srebrenica Commission](#),” *Balkan Insight* (8 February 2019); Filip Rudic, “[Bosnian Serb War Commissions ‘Seeking to Revise Truth’: Academics](#),” *Balkan Insight* (21 February 2019).

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 99.

In the run-up to the presidential elections of 28 October 2018, historian Janaína de Almeida Teles (1967–) and her mother Maria Amélia [Amelinha] de Almeida Teles were interviewed on television about their experience as victims of torture under the military dictatorship during the broadcast time of one of the two presidential candidates, Fernando Haddad. Promptly, both were subjected to a wave of attacks on social media (including death threats) by adherents of the other presidential candidate, Jair Bolsonaro (who won the elections). In December 1972 Maria Amélia de Almeida Teles and her husband, two members of the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB), were imprisoned and tortured in the DOI-Codi detention center in São Paulo, including by the prison’s director, colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra. Janaína Teles and her brother, then five and four years respectively, were kidnapped by the Operação Bandeirante (Oban), also under Ustra’s command, and forced to attend the torture sessions of their parents. In 2008, the Tribunal de Justiça (Court of Justice) in São Paulo declared that Ustra had been a torturer. Punishment for his crimes was prevented by the 1979 amnesty law. Janaína Teles was specialized in the history of the military dictatorship (1964–1985).¹⁷

On 29 March 2019, judge Ivani Silva da Luz barred a planned celebration marking the anniversary of the 31 March 1964 military coup. He said that the celebration, ordered by President Jair Bolsonaro and to be carried out by the Defense Ministry, was not “compatible with the process of democratic reconstruction” and that commemorative dates had to be approved by the Congress. On 26 March 2019, the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office (MPF) had declared that celebrating the dictatorship would be celebrating “an unconstitutional regime responsible for serious crimes of violation of human rights” and that “This initiative sounds like an apology for the practice of mass atrocities and therefore deserves social and political repudiation.” On 29 March 2019, Fabián Salvioli, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence, declared that “Attempts to revise history and justify or condone gross human rights violations of the past must be clearly rejected by all authorities and society as a whole ...” On 30 March 2019, however, appeals judge Maria do Carmo Cardoso overturned the ban, allowing the government’s argument that Brazilian democracy was strong enough to support a “pluralism of ideas” and saying that commemorating the coup was not rewriting history nor hiding the truth.

Bolsonaro, a former army captain, had defended the celebration, stating that the aim was to remember the era rather than commemorate military rule itself. He viewed the 1964 events not as a

¹⁷ Carla Osmo, personal communication (25 October 2018); Nina Schneider, personal communications (25–26 October 2018); Comissão Nacional da Verdade, *Relatório*, volume 1 (Brasília 2014) [<http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br>], 368–369, 385, 407, 410, 954; “[Edson e Janaína Teles](#),” *Memórias da Ditadura*; Aluizio Palmar, “[Mortos e desaparecidos políticos: reparação ou impunidade?](#)” *Documentos Revelados* (29 June 2012); Roney Domingos, “[Julgamento mostra que ferida do regime militar ainda não sarou](#),” (1 November 2006); Antoon De Baets, “The Censorship of History and Fact-Finding in Brazil (1964–2018),” in Nina Schneider, ed., *The Brazilian Truth Commission in the Latin American Context: Local, National, and Global Perspectives* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2019), 68–85.

coup but as a necessary intervention to spare the country from Communist domination. He repeatedly praised one of the dictatorship's most notorious torture chiefs, Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra [see previous entry]. He also denied that Portuguese colonizers (1500–1821) had been responsible for slavery here and blamed Africans instead. Public broadcaster EBC also stopped using the words “coup” and “dictatorship,” referring to the period as the “military regime.”¹⁸

In early April 2019, President Jair Bolsonaro and then Education Minister Ricardo Vélez advocated revising the history textbooks to paint the dictatorship in a more favorable light. They denied that the 1964 military ousting of democratically elected President João Goulart was a coup. Vélez referred to the 21 years of military rule (1964–1985) as “a democratic regime by force which was necessary at the time” and said that the toppling of Goulart was “an institutional shift, not a coup against the constitution at the time.” He also said that there would be a “progressive shift” in history textbooks to reflect “a wider version of history.” The president of the Brazilian Association of Textbooks, Cândido Grangeiro, was very critical of the plan.¹⁹

In mid-April 2019, the government ordered the closure of two working groups responsible for finding and identifying the bodies of people forcibly disappeared during the military dictatorship (1964–1985). By order of Decree 9,759, it shut down the work of the Perus Working Group (PWG), responsible for identifying over a thousand bones found in a mass, clandestine grave in Perus, west of São Paulo, and the Araguaia Working Group (AWG), responsible for the search and identification of remains of Araguaia guerrilla fighters who battled the dictatorship in the Amazon rainforest between the states of Para and Tocantins in the 1970s. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 1999, 2005, 2008–2012 and 2015.*]²⁰

¹⁸ Ishaan Tharoor, “[The Grim History that Brazil’s President Wants to Celebrate](#),” *Washington Post* (27 March 2019); “[Bolsonaro’s Coup Celebration Barred by Judge](#),” *BBC News* (30 March 2019); “[Brazil Judge Overturns Ban on Bolsonaro’s Coup Celebration](#),” *BBC News* (31 March 2019); “[Brazil Must Reconsider Plan to Celebrate Military Coup Anniversary, Says UN Expert](#),” (press release; 29 March 2019); Lucinda Elliott & Tom Phillips, “[Bolsonaro’s Pledge to Return Brazil to Past Alarms Survivors of Dictatorship](#),” *Guardian* (22 October 2018); Samantha Pearson, “[Bolsonaro Takes Aim at Brazil’s History](#),” *Wall Street Journal* (12 April 2019).

¹⁹ “[Brazil Textbooks ‘To Be Revised To Deny 1964 Coup’](#),” *BBC News* (4 April 2019); Samantha Pearson, “[Bolsonaro Takes Aim at Brazil’s History](#),” *Wall Street Journal* (12 April 2019); Katy Watson, “[How Brazil’s Culture Wars Are Being Waged in Classrooms](#),” *BBC News* (7 May 2019).

²⁰ Ramzy Baroud, “[Brazil’s Bolsonaro Terminates Investigation Teams Identifying Remains of Dictatorship Victims](#),” *Telesur* (23 April 2019).

BULGARIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015–2017.

History teacher and political candidate Emil Jassim filed four defamation cases against several media outlets, who had spread untrue and defamatory claims that he had been involved in “anti-Bulgarian propaganda.” Prior to filing the cases, he had been the victim of threats and intimidation for his attempts to encourage interethnic dialogue and for his defense of the rights of minority groups in Bulgaria. He was assaulted after filing the cases.²¹

In February 2019, Russian Ambassador to Bulgaria Anatoliy Makarov was asked when Russia would return the Bulgarian government archives from the period 1923–1944 taken to the USSR after the Communist takeover in September 1944. He replied that Bulgaria could receive copies but that “the originals cannot be handed over in accordance with Federal Law No. 64 of 15 April 1998 [‘On Cultural Valuables Displaced (to the USSR) as a result of World War II and Located on the Territory of the Russian Federation’].” He added that some of the archives had been returned in 1949 and 1958. The documents had been seized “from different Bulgarian institutions and by different representatives of the Soviet government, or by the Allied Control Commission in connection with the preparation of the Nuremberg process.” In 2009, the Bulgarian government had formally asked Moscow to return the seized archives. The Russian law violated the Hague Conventions of 1907 and 1954 and the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Instead of following international law, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had established special “Trophy Brigades” to ransack museums, castles, and state coffers, seize millions of cultural treasures, state archives, and gold in Germany and Eastern Europe and transport them to the USSR. As Bulgarian researchers made requests for copies of original documents, Moscow demanded exorbitant payments.²²

BURKINA FASO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2004, 2005, 2013, 2015–2018.

²¹ Michel Forst, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, [World Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders](#) (December 2018), 415.

²² Margarita Assenova, “[Moscow Refuses to Return Bulgarian Archives](#),” *polygraph.info* (7 March 2019).

BURUNDI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2003, 2005–2015, 2017–2018.

On 1 July 2019, Burundi's 57th Independence Day, President Pierre Nkurunziza renamed national landmarks in his independence-day speech to reflect the historical contribution of the majority Hutu ethnic group. The renaming was meant to “remind Burundians of their history” and “to remove names that emerge from betrayal and bad behavior brought in by colonialism.” Nkurunziza was a former Hutu rebel leader who became the second president to be chosen in democratic elections in 2005, after the end of a civil war. The National Stadium, named after Louis Rwagasore (the first prime minister, assassinated before Burundi attained independence in 1962), was renamed Heroes Stadium; the main airport in Bujumbura was renamed Melchior Ndadaye airport (after Burundi's first democratically elected president, an ethnic Hutu who only ruled for three months in 1993 before he was assassinated after his reforms antagonized the Tutsi-dominated army); the 3rd September Street (marking the day that former military leader Pierre Buyoya overthrew his cousin President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza in 1987) was renamed Lt-Gen. Adolphe Nshimirimana Street (after Nkurunziza's presidential adviser and former head of the intelligence unit, who was assassinated in 2015); and the new presidential palace was renamed after King Ntare Rushatsi (reportedly Burundi's first king in 1680–1709).²³

²³ [“Burundi's Pierre Nkurunziza Renames Historical Landmarks,”](#) *BBC News* (2 July 2019).

CAMBODIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2018.

CAMEROON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2012–2014, 2016.

CANADA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000, 2002–2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2009, 2012–2018.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised a “renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples,” but there remain considerable challenges to undoing decades of systemic discrimination. In February 2018, the government announced fundamental changes to how the federal government recognizes Indigenous rights and land title, vowing to work with Indigenous communities across Canada to develop a new legal framework to advance self-determination and self-governance. In May 2018, parliament passed a bill aimed at ensuring that the laws were in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.²⁴

In May 2018, the Senate passed Bill C-66, which expunged the records of individuals who were prosecuted because of their sexuality when homosexuality was criminalized in Canada. The bill followed Prime Minister Trudeau’s 2017 apology in the House of Commons for the historic mistreatment of sexual minorities by the government.²⁵

In early August 2018, the city of Victoria, British Columbia, decided to remove a statue of John A. Macdonald (1815–1891), which had been frequently vandalized. Known as the “Father of Confederation,” Macdonald had also established the so-called Residential Schools (a network of boarding schools for Indigenous peoples) and sponsored a highly racist Indian Act in 1876. In 2016, the Canadian Elementary School Teachers Association had voted in favor of taking the name Macdonald from schools. In June 2018, the Canadian Historical Association took the name off its prize for most

²⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 120.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 122.

influential Canadian history book of the year.²⁶

In [2018], a group of 41 individuals requested the Superior Court of Ontario to issue an order clarifying which privacy protections applied to the records transferred to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation by the now closed Truth and Reconciliation Commission that investigated the history of the Indian Residential Schools System and the Independent Assessment Process. On 25 October 2018, the judge ruled that there is no requirement in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) “that provides that all personal information in the historical records should be permanently withheld.”²⁷

On 28 November 2018, an expert committee of three historians (Terry Copp, Jennifer Lonergan, and John Zucchi) submitted a report to the English Montreal School Board in which it concluded that Quebec high school history textbooks introduced for Grade 9 and 10 in September 2017 were “fundamentally flawed” and should be removed from all schools across the province. According to the report, by focusing narrowly on the history of French Quebecois, the textbooks largely ignored contributions by Quebec’s Indigenous, Anglophone, Italian, Greek, Portuguese, Jewish, Haitian, and other cultural communities as well as Blacks and women. The committee recommended continued use of the current books until June 2021 when corrected versions could be introduced.²⁸

In June 2019 it became known that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) destroyed a Cold War dossier on Pierre Trudeau (Prime Minister in 1968–1979 and 1980–1984) in 1989 instead of turning it over to the national archives. The Trudeau file was among hundreds of thousands CSIS inherited in the 1980s after the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) Security Service was dissolved following a series of scandals. When in 1988, James Kelleher, the federal minister responsible for CSIS at the time, directed the CSIS to sort through the files, some RCMP records (including voluminous files on Quebec premier René Lévesque and NDP leaders David Lewis and Tommy Douglas) were sent to Library and Archives Canada. In 2012 it was revealed that other records were destroyed, including dossiers on Prime Ministers John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson. Still other files, judged to have current value at the time, went to CSIS’s active intelligence holdings.

The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) kept watch on Trudeau for more than thirty

²⁶ Jennifer Ackerman, “[The Statue Dilemma: Indigenous Research Week Tackles Commemoration of Historic Figures](#),” *Regina Leader-Post* (28 September 2018); Mark Wolfram, “[The Past and Future of the Iconoclast](#),” *Historical Dialogues* (4 September 2018).

²⁷ Superior Court of Justice, Ontario, *Fontaine versus Canada* (2018; <http://canlii.ca/t/hvq7c> or <http://www.concernedhistorians.org/le/599.pdf>); International Council on Archives Human Rights Working Group, *Newsletter* (November 2018), 12–13.

²⁸ Giuseppe Valiante, “[Quebec High School History Textbooks Are ‘Fundamentally Flawed,’ Should Be Removed: Committee](#),” *Canadian Press* (29 November 2018).

years, charting his path from a public intellectual who visited the Soviet Union in the early 1950s through his time as a Liberal prime minister. The FBI's heavily censored, 151-page dossier was released under the United States Freedom of Information Act just months after Trudeau's death in September 2000. The Canadian press recently requested Trudeau's RCMP file under the access law from Library and Archives Canada and CSIS prior to the 20th anniversary of his passing in 2020. The archives replied that they did not have a Trudeau dossier; CSIS said its records indicated that the file was destroyed on 30 January 1989. CSIS also said that a 1988 analysis of the Trudeau file had concluded that it did not meet the threshold in the CSIS Act to justify being kept in service's active inventory and that it also fell short of criteria for preservation set out by the national archives.²⁹

See also China, Poland.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2006–2009, 2011–2012, 2014–2018.

While some local courts rendered convictions of armed group leaders implicated in serious crimes, overall impunity for past abuses and war crimes continued. The Special Criminal Court, a hybrid court with national and international judges and prosecutors that would focus on grave international crimes committed since 2003, officially began to function in October 2018. In May, parliament had passed the rules of procedure and evidence necessary for the court to proceed with investigations and prosecutions.

The Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC) continued its second investigation into the situation in the Central African Republic, into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the country since 2012. On 17 November 2018, the ICC took Alfred Yékatom, known as “Rombhot,” into custody. Yékatom was an anti-balaka leader who had been charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed between December 2013 and August 2014. In September 2018, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council decided to continue the mandate of the UN independent expert on the Central African Republic for another year.³⁰

See also Congo (Democratic Republic), India.

²⁹ Jim Bronskill, “[CSIS Destroyed Secret File on Pierre Trudeau, Stunning Historians](#),” *CBC* (15 June 2019).

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 125, 128–129.

CHAD

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2012, 2015–2016.

CHILE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2018.

Chilean courts continued to prosecute former police and military officers responsible for human rights abuses during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990). Notable convictions in 2018 included 24 former DINA (secret police) agents for their participation in the enforced disappearances of 119 leftist collaborators between 1974 and 1975, known as "Operation Colombo." In November 2018, Juan Emilio Cheyre, an officer under Pinochet and the commander-in-chief of the Chilean army from 2002 to 2006, was convicted for his role in the murder of 15 people following the 1973 coup. Cheyre was the most senior official to be held accountable for human rights abuses during the Pinochet years.

Chile continued to maintain a 50-year veil of secrecy over victim's testimony given to the National Commission on Political Prison and Torture from November 2003 to May 2004. The testimony revealed places of detention and torture methods used by the dictatorship, and identified former political prisoners and torture victims. The Michelle Bachelet administration had submitted a bill to lift the secrecy order in 2017, which had generated heated debate between those who believed revealing the testimony would violate victims' rights to privacy, and those who believed revealing it is necessary to fully punish the guilty and bring justice to victims.

In a controversial decision in July 2018, the Supreme Court granted conditional release to seven former police and military officers who had been serving sentences for human rights abuses committed during the Pinochet dictatorship. Members of opposition parties attempted to remove the three Supreme Court judges responsible for the decision, but Chile's congress rejected the attempt.³¹

³¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 130.

CHINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2018.

In July 2018, the first Chinese-language edition of *Red-Color News Soldier*, a book by photographer Li Zhensheng ([1940]–), was published by the Chinese University Press of Hong Kong. Containing photos from a collection of more than 100,000 taken by Li during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) when he was working at a local newspaper in northeastern China, the Chinese edition could be distributed only within the semiautonomous city of Hong Kong but not on the mainland. The photos had been exhibited in more than 60 countries since 2003. For many years, Li had hidden his collection under the floorboards of his home in Harbin. Censors had rejected an earlier attempt to publish the Chinese-language edition without explanation. Although his photos could not be published in the mainland, Li had given lectures on the Cultural Revolution at several Chinese universities, including Tsinghua University and Peking University. A recent exhibition at the Capital Museum in Beijing featuring historical images taken by photographers for the official news agency Xinhua had made no mention of the Cultural Revolution.³²

On 1 August 2018, Zhou Yunzhong, an assistant history professor at the Department of History, School of Humanities, Xiamen (Amoy) University, Fujian province, was dismissed for expressing negative opinions about China and the Chinese on his microblog under the nickname “Donghai Daozi.” Reportedly criticizing the declining moral values and saying that “[t]he highest achievements of the Chinese people consist[ed] of lying, cooking the books and issuing fake contracts,” he was accused of “distorting historical facts, damaging the image of the Party and the country, hurting the feelings of the Chinese people, and crossing the bottom line of teachers’ morality and style.” Zhou received his BA from Nanjing University and his Ph.D. from Fudan University. He was a specialist in historical geography, the ancient Silk Road, and the history of Yuan and Ming Dynasties.³³

In late January 2019, one of the most popular shows, *Story of Yanxi Palace*, a historical fiction located in eighteenth-century Beijing during the Qing dynasty, was pulled from state-run television channels after an article in *Theory Weekly* (linked to state newspaper *Beijing Daily*) had criticized the “negative impact” of imperial dramas, singling out *Story of Yanxi Palace*. The show was, however, still available

³² Amy Qin, “[A Photographer’s Quest to Reverse China’s Historical Amnesia](#),” *New York Times* (1 January 2019).

³³ “[Teachers in Xiamen University Have Been Dismissed because of Wrong Statements](#),” *Wao News* (1 September 2018); “[Together with Jie Jie Liang, Who Is the Donghai Dao Zi Who Was Dismissed by the Xiamen University?](#)” (2 September 2018); Wong Lok-to & Shi Shan, “[Professor Fired after Tweeting that Chinese ‘Lie, Commit Fraud and Poison Each Other’](#),” *Radio Free Asia* (4 September 2018).

on the iQiyi network, the place that *Story of Yanxi Palace* was initially produced for and was first shown. The article listed several “negative impacts” of this and similar shows on Chinese society, like propagating a luxurious and hedonistic lifestyle, encouraging admiration for imperial life and a glorification of emperors overshadowing the heroes of today. Official ideas promoting the thought that the rise of China was peaceful and that China believes in harmony was contrasted with *Story of Yanxi Palace*, which painted an image of a China of intrigue, conspiracy, power struggles, conflict, commercialism, and consumerism.³⁴

On 11 February 2019, film director Zhang Yimou’s much anticipated latest feature, *One Second*, was withdrawn from the Berlin International Film Festival, officially for “technical reasons.” Based on a novel by Zhang’s frequent collaborator Yan Geling, the film was set during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and followed a fugitive and a homeless girl who were drawn together by an enigmatic film reel. Zhang classic debut feature, *Red Sorghum*, had won the Golden Bear for best picture at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival in 1988.³⁵

Officials tried to silence Xu Zhangrun, a law professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing who had issued a series of essays that criticized the Chinese Communist Party and Xi Jinping, and called for a reappraisal of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre. In March 2019, Tsinghua suspended him, put him under internal investigation, and barred him from teaching and research. On 28 April 2019, security police in plain clothes kept watch as Xu gathered with two dozen friends and well-wishers to lay flowers at an inscribed stone memorial that commemorated Wang Guowei (1877–1927), a famous historian at Tsinghua who had committed suicide in 1927, for his “independence of spirit and freedom of thought.”³⁶

In March 2019, a Chinese online education company, VIPKid, that employs 60,000 teachers in the United States and Canada dismissed two American teachers for discussing the 1989 Tiananmen massacre and Taiwan with their students in China.³⁷

In the run-up to the centenary of the 4 May 1919 Revolution, officials told schools to guard against displays of discontent around 4 May. In 1989, the seventieth anniversary of the 4 May 1919 Revolution

³⁴ Andreas Illmer, “[Yanxi Palace: Why China Turned against Its Most Popular Show](#),” *BBC News* (8 February 2019).

³⁵ Patrick Brzeski, “[Berlin Film Festival: Zhang Yimou’s ‘One Second’ Withdrawn from Competition](#),” *Hollywood Reporter* (11 February 2019).

³⁶ Chris Buckley & Amy Qin, “[Xi Praises a Student Protest in China – From 100 Years Ago](#),” *New York Times* (29 April 2019); Yojana Sharma, “[Tiananmen Square a Topic that Still Can’t Be Studied](#),” *University World News* (25 May 2019).

³⁷ Louisa Lim, “[After Tiananmen, China Conquers History Itself](#),” *New York Times* (2 June 2019); Julie Steinberg & Shan Li, “[Chinese Education Startup Puts Western Teachers on Notice](#),” *Wall Street Journal* (21 March 2019).

inspired the massive Tiananmen square student protests which ended in a massacre on 4 June 1989. Lin Xianzhi, a writer in southern China, said that [in April 2019] publishers backed out of reissuing his 2012 book, “The Spirit of May 4,” which stressed the iconoclastic side of that time.³⁸

In late May 2019, a financial-information company, Refinitiv, partly owned by the news organization Thomson Reuters, removed articles related to the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre from the feeds of its data terminals in China, complying with censorship demands. It prevented some articles that included mentions of the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations from appearing on its Eikon software and mobile app in China. On 3 June 2019, Reuters reported that the Cyberspace Administration of China, which censored online speech, had threatened to suspend Refinitiv if it did not comply. A small number of people shared the news of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre by posting images that appeared upside down or were otherwise manipulated to fool censoring software.³⁹

On 31 May 2019—in the run-up to the 30th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, New Century Press, a Hong Kong–based publisher, published *Zuihou de mimi: Zhonggong shisanjie sizhong quanhui “liusi” jielun wengao* (The Last Secret: The Final Documents From the June Fourth Crackdown; 209 pages), a group of secret speeches that top officials delivered at an enlarged Politburo meeting of 19–21 June 1989, consolidating support for the armed repression, backing Deng Xiaoping’s order for the crackdown and Zhao Ziyang’s purge. New Century obtained the transcripts (and two sets of written remarks) from a party official who managed to make copies at the time. Bao Tong, the father of Bao Pu, the publisher of New Century Press, was a former top aide to Zhao Ziyang. Bao Pu also helped issue Zhao’s memoirs and a diary-like account by Li Peng, the Chinese premier who supported the crackdown.

In 2001, the magazine *Foreign Affairs* had published excerpts from *The Tiananmen Papers*, a series of official reports and meeting minutes that had been smuggled out of China and that documented the fierce debates and contentious decision-making that unfolded as the Chinese Communist Party reacted to the protests in the spring of 1989. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2001–2002*.] The newly leaked speeches shed light on what happened after the crackdown, making clear the lessons party leaders drew from the Tiananmen crisis.⁴⁰

On 4 June 2019, police reportedly detained and interrogated Yang Shaozheng, a former Guizhou

³⁸ Chris Buckley & Amy Qin, “[Xi Praises a Student Protest in China – From 100 Years Ago](#),” *New York Times* (29 April 2019).

³⁹ Marc Tracy, “[In China, a Reuters Partner Blocks Articles on the Tiananmen Square Massacre](#),” *New York Times* (4 June 2019).

⁴⁰ Andrew Nathan, “[The New Tiananmen Papers: Inside the Secret Meeting That Changed China](#),” *Foreign Affairs* (July–August 2019); “[New Documents Show Power Games Behind China’s Tiananmen Crackdown](#),” *ENM News* (31 May 2019).

University professor of economics, in connection to social-media posts regarding the 1989 Tiananmen massacre. On the night of 3 June 2019, Yang reportedly described in a post on social-media platform WeChat the number of fatalities resulting from the army's crackdown on protesters at Tiananmen Square on 3–4 June 1989. The next morning, police reportedly detained Yang, accusing him of “picking quarrels and stirring up trouble.” After taking him into custody, officers reportedly handcuffed Yang to a chair and interrogated him for eight hours. Yang, however, managed to escape and fled to an unknown location. On 15 August 2018, Guizhou University had expelled Yang, in apparent retaliation for academic writings, including an article in which he raised questions over the economic costs of maintaining the Chinese Communist Party.⁴¹

Inner Mongolia

On 11 July 2018, Public Security Bureau personnel detained ethnic Mongolian historian Lhamjab A. Borjigin (1944–) in Xilinhot (regional capital of Xilin Gol League in the region's northwest), pending prosecution for his book *Ulaan Huvisgal (China's Cultural Revolution)*, which was identified as a publication that advocated national separatism and undermined ethnic harmony. On 19 July 2018, he was indicted on charges of separatism and sabotaging national unity. Borjigin had gathered testimony of persecution during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in Inner Mongolia (Southern Mongolia) and published his book in 2006, calling the events a “genocide.” In the book, he estimated that the campaign had taken the lives of at least 27,900 persons and that 346,000 persons had been imprisoned and tortured, detailing accounts of torture techniques. The book was rejected by major state-run Chinese publishing houses but eventually published by an underground press at the author's own expense. It was widely read among ethnic Mongolians. A second edition was issued and it was published in Cyrillic Mongolian scripts in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. In 2017, an abridged audio version was published. If convicted, he risked fifteen years in prison.⁴²

Xinjiang

In April 2017, musician Abdurehim Heyit (1964–), a *dutar* specialist and member of the Xinjiang Song and Dance Troupe who wrote many songs reflecting on Uyghur history and culture, was arrested and held without formal charge in Urumchi. The poet who wrote the lyrics, Abdurehim Abdulla, was arrested at the same time. Their arrest was most likely linked to the song “Atilar” (Forefathers). The song, which had previously been cleared by government censors, was about remembering past sacrifices made by the forefathers and called upon younger generations to respect them. Due to the phrase

⁴¹ Scholars at Risk, [Incident](#) (4 June 2019).

⁴² [“China Holds Ethnic Mongolian Historian Who Wrote ‘Genocide’ Book,”](#) *Radio Free Asia* (23 July 2018); Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC), [“Southern Mongolian Writer Faces Charges of ‘National Separatism’ and ‘Sabotaging National Unity’](#)” (23 July 2018); American PEN, [“Detention of Southern Mongolian Author is Putting Historical Inquiry on Trial”](#) (25 July 2018).

“jenglerde shehit” (martyrs of war), however, it was interpreted as encouraging jihad and radicalism. Under the crackdown in Xinjiang which began in April 2017, expressions of ethnic pride—even those previously approved by state censors—were conflated with ethnic separatism and criminalized as Islamic extremism. Heyit was reportedly sentenced to eight years’ imprisonment.⁴³

At the end of 2017, Erkin Tursun, a history teacher by education, was detained. Tursun had graduated from the history faculty at Xinjiang University, hosted a show on Ili Television, and opened a school of music, arts, dance, and language for Uyghur children. Later, he directed a movie about the social problems facing Uyghurs, such as drug use and high divorce rates. In 2002 or 2003, he had gone to Japan on a cultural exchange program, traveling on a diplomatic passport. His wife, mathematics teacher Gulnar Telet, was also detained. In August 2018, their son Alfred, living in the United States, learned that Erkin Tursun received a prison sentence of between nine and eleven years on an unknown charge and might be held in Xinyuan prison near Kanas.⁴⁴

In November or December 2017, Rahile Dawut ([1966]–), an anthropologist and ethnographer who studied Uyghur traditions at Xinjiang University in Urumqi, and Gheyretjan Osman, a history and literature professor at the same university, were secretly detained together with three other academics after they had been called “the leading figures in Uyghur ideology” at Xinjiang University. They disappeared and were possibly interned in a so-called re-education camp. Uyghur academics with foreign links and specializing in Uyghur Muslim culture, language, or religion were particularly targeted in the crackdown on the Uyghur Muslim population of Xinjiang, which began in April 2017 as a campaign to clamp down on religious extremism, separatism, and terrorism, but had since broadened in scope to include anyone who was critical. The government purged so-called “two-faced” Uyghur teachers in particular, those who paid lip service to the Chinese Communist Party line but were suspected of secretly resisting the hard-line policies. Until recently, Dawut’s work was welcomed by Chinese officials: she had received grants and support from the Ministry of Culture. She had earned an international reputation as an expert on Uyghur shrines, folklore, music and crafts neglected by previous generations of scholars.⁴⁵

⁴³ Rachel Harris & Aziz Isa Elkun, “[‘Uyghur Dutar King’ Detained in China](#),” *Freemuse* (1 November 2017); Kurban Niyaz, “[Prominent Uyghur Musician Arrested Amid Ideological Purge in Xinjiang](#),” *Radio Free Asia* (2 November 2017).

⁴⁴ Uyghur Human Rights Project, [Detained and Disappeared: Intellectuals Under Assault in the Uyghur Homeland](#) (Washington: UHRP, October 2019), 13–14.

⁴⁵ Yojana Sharma, “[Scholars Targeted as Uighur Purge Engulfs Universities](#),” *World University News* (28 September 2018); Chris Buckley & Austin Ramzy, “[Star Scholar Disappears as Crackdown Engulfs Western China](#),” *New York Times* (10 August 2018); Uyghur Human Rights Project, [The Persecution of the Intellectuals in the Uyghur Region: Disappeared Forever?](#) (Washington: UHRP, October 2018), 5–6; Uyghur Human Rights Project, [Detained and Disappeared: Intellectuals Under Assault in the Uyghur Homeland](#) (Washington: UHRP, October 2019), 5.

In March 2018, Abdukerim Rahman (1941–), known as the father of folklore studies and a professor at Xinjiang University (1964–2011) in Urumqi, was taken to a “re-education camp,” apparently after charges of being a “two-faced” person. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), he spent terms in prison and many of his collections were lost. In 1979, he was rehabilitated. In 1983, he started the first graduate program in Xinjiang Minority Literature at the university. In 2000 he became a founder of the Folklore Museum at Xinjiang University. He published more than twenty books, including *History of Uyghur Culture*. His book *Uyghur Folk Literature* was reprinted more than ten times. He published a 12-volume *Encyclopedia of Uyghur Folk Literature*, containing thousands of legends, folk tales, epic poems, ballads, and proverbs.⁴⁶

On 2 September 2018, Gulnar Obul (female), a professor from Kashgar University, Xinjiang, was dismissed for “two-faced activities” together with another professor and the university’s president and vice president. High-level cadres at the university led by a disciplinary committee from the XUAR (Xinjiang) Education Supervision Bureau said that the four were dismissed because they exhibited “separatist tendencies.” Their names were deleted from the university’s website. Obul had been detained for publishing an article about Uyghur culture and history (entitled “Dialogue on Cultural Formation in Xinjiang”) that included her opinions on religious extremism in 2016. An official said that while her views were praised at the time, they were now deemed “two-faced.” Her whereabouts were unknown.⁴⁷

In May 2019, Timothy Grose, an assistant professor of China studies at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Terre Haute, Indiana, accused the chief editor of *China and Asia: A Journal in Historical Studies* (Brill), Han Xiaorong (a professor and head of the department of Chinese culture at Hong Kong Polytechnic University), of censoring his November 2018 review of anthropologist Tom Cliff’s *Oil and Water: Being Han in Xinjiang* (University of Chicago Press), an ethnographic study of members of the majority Han ethnic group who had settled in Xinjiang. Han had requested the deletion of an opening paragraph that contextualized the book in light of Chinese Communist Party policy toward members of the Uyghur ethnic minority group in the region of Xinjiang, discussing the detention of Uyghurs in “concentration re-education centers.” Grose did not want to delete the passage and when the journal was slow in responding, he offered the review to the British online magazine *The Asia Dialogue*, which published it without changes.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Amy Anderson, “[How Is Abdukerim Rahman Surviving without His Books?](#)” *Art of Life in Chinese Central Asia* (2 October 2018); Uyghur Human Rights Project, [The Persecution of the Intellectuals in the Uyghur Region: Disappeared Forever?](#) (Washington: UHRP, October 2018), 6.

⁴⁷ “[Xinjiang’s Kashgar University Sacks Four ‘Two-Faced’ Uyghur Professors](#),” *Radio Free Asia* (19 September 2018); Uyghur Human Rights Project, [The Persecution of the Intellectuals in the Uyghur Region: Disappeared Forever?](#) (Washington: UHRP, October 2018), 7.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Redden, “[Another Alleged Case of Censorship Roils China Studies](#),” *Inside HigherEd* (20 May

See also Iran, Korea (South), Vietnam.

COLOMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–1998, 2000, 2004, 2006–2018.

The 52-year armed conflict (1964–2016) between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government officially ended with a peace accord in 2016, but violence associated with armed groups increased again in 2018 after initial declines following a 2015 FARC ceasefire. Civilians suffered serious abuses at the hands of the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas, FARC dissidents, and paramilitary successor groups. Human rights defenders, journalists, indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, and other community activists faced death threats and violence. Violence associated with the conflict had forcibly displaced more than 8.1 million Colombians since 1985.

The 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC provided for the creation of a “Special Jurisdiction for Peace” (JEP; a special tribunal established to prosecute the conflict’s worst abuses) to try those responsible for gross human rights violations committed during the conflict. FARC guerrillas and members of the armed forces responsible for crimes against humanity and serious war crimes who fully cooperated with the new jurisdiction and confessed their crimes were subject to as much as eight years of “effective restrictions on freedoms and rights,” but no prison time. Throughout 2018, JEP magistrates prioritized four situations for analysis: kidnappings committed by the FARC; false-positive killings (from 2002 through 2008, army brigades across Colombia routinely executed civilians in what have come to be known as “false-positive” killings); army and FARC abuses against Afro-Colombian and indigenous people in three municipalities in the southern province of Nariño between 1990 and 2016; and FARC and army abuses committed in the northern zone of Urabá between 1986 and 2016.

In July 2018, lawmakers passed a law containing a provision that suspended, unless defendants requested otherwise, Special Jurisdiction prosecutions of soldiers of the Colombian Armed Forces until the government created a “special and differentiated process” for them. The provision, which was proposed by the Democratic Center—the party of former President Álvaro Uribe and President Iván Duque—and was being reviewed by the Constitutional Court at the end of 2018, could halt prosecutions for false-positive killings. Throughout 2018, the Democratic Center introduced in Congress other bills that would seriously undermine prosecutions against members of the armed forces, including by allowing soldiers to receive sentencing benefits regardless of whether they confessed their crimes. But

these proposals had for the most part been withdrawn or fixed by lawmakers at the end of 2018. The Democratic Center falsely accused Special Jurisdiction magistrates of being biased against the armed forces. A bill that would name 14 additional judges in the Special Jurisdiction remained pending in Congress at the end of 2018.⁴⁹

On 29 November 2018, the Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition was officially launched. It had to produce an analysis of more than fifty years of political violence and civil war in three years. Despite a ruling of the Constitutional Court earlier in 2018 that the commission would have access to all records, the armed forces tried to restrict access to its key archival files (including records of military intelligence agencies responsible for serious abuses and those linked to illegal paramilitary groups and drug traffickers). In addition, a smear campaign was waged against Father Francisco DeRoux, the human rights advocate who served as Commission president. Also in November 2018, Gonzalo Sánchez resigned his post as the director of the National Center for Historical Memory, saying that “the political atmosphere” had forced him to step aside. In an interview with *El Espectador*, he said that he feared the “political instrumentalization” of the center. Meanwhile, the records of insurgent groups like the FARC and the paramilitary AUC were reportedly in disarray, and most of them would probably never be recovered.⁵⁰

CONGO (Democratic Republic)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2000, 2003–2018.

In June 2018, an appeals chamber at the International Criminal Court (ICC) overturned the war crimes and crimes against humanity convictions of Jean-Pierre Bemba, a former vice-president of Congo and leader of the Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo). Bemba was found guilty of rape, murder, and pillage in March 2016 for crimes committed in the Central African Republic in 2002 and 2003. In September 2018, the appeals chamber sentenced him to twelve months for a related conviction of witness tampering, but this time had already been served. Bemba returned to Congo in August 2018. Interpreting witness tampering as a form of corruption prohibited by the Congolese electoral law for presidential candidates, Congo’s electoral commission later invalidated Bemba’s presidential candidacy in what appeared to be a politically motivated decision.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 151, 155–156.

⁵⁰ Michael Evans, “[Colombia Truth Commission Opens Doors, but Faces Significant Barriers to Access.](#)” *National Security Archive* (29 November 2018).

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 125, 128,

See also Uganda.

CONGO (Republic)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004–2006, 2008, 2010–2012.

On 5–14 May 1999, Congolese refugees who had fled the civil war (1993–1999) crossed the river between the two Congos to return to their homeland. When they reached Brazzaville’s port, called “The Beach,” they went through a selection process. At least 353 of them were never seen again. Under pressure from the missing’s families, Congo’s parliament launched a probe in 2002, broadening the scope to cover all forced disappearances recorded in the country since 1992. A trial finally opened in Brazzaville three years later with fifteen defendants in the dock, mostly serving officers in the security forces. They were all acquitted in August 2005. However, the court ordered the state to pay compensation to close kin of 86 of the 353 missing men. Separately in France, several human rights NGOs went to court with a suit alleging “crimes against humanity, disappearances and torture.” The case, lodged in early 2002, targeted President Sassou-Nguesso and three senior officials in his regime and was still pending. In November 2007, the Ministry of Security and Public Order banned a commemoration for the missing planned by NGO’s and families of the victims, saying it would disturb public order. At the time, the authorities were hunting members of the rebel Ninja militia loyal to former Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas. Some of the missing were executed on the premises of the security forces, including the General Directorate of Presidential Security, according to a 2012 United Nations report based on testimony by people claiming to be survivors.⁵²

COSTA RICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010.

173.

⁵² Amnesty International, *Report 2004* (London: Amnesty International, 2004), 45; Amnesty International, *Report 2005* (London: Amnesty International, 2005), 86; Amnesty International, *Report 2006* (London: Amnesty International, 2006), 98; Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, *Steadfast in Protest: Annual Report 2007* (Paris and Geneva 2008), 70; AFP, “[The Missing of Brazzaville’s ‘Beach,’ 20 Years On,](#)” *JusticeInfo.Net* (14 May 2019).

CÔTE D’IVOIRE

See Ivory Coast.

CROATIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2001, 2003–2013, 2015–2018.

In June 2018, the parliament passed legislation barring public access to archive materials on individuals aged 100 and over, living and deceased. The government argued that the law was meant to defend the “victims of communism” and aimed at protecting the privacy of the deceased, but critics said that the legislation served to silence research into the collaboration of the wartime Ustasha government with the Nazis. Former Croatian Culture Minister and historian Zlatko Hasanbegovic called the legislation “cowardly and underhanded.” An estimated 80,000 files, including those pertaining to the fascist Ustasha movement, would be closed to the public.⁵³

CUBA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2002, 2006, 2010–2012, 2015–2016, 2018.

CYPRUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2005, 2008–2011, 2013, 2015–2018.

⁵³ Neta Bar and Israel Hayom Staff, “[Historians Accuse Croatia of Covering Up World War II Crimes](#),” *Jewish News Syndicate* (17 July 2018).

CZECH REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–1998, 2000, 2010, 2013–2018.

In August 2018, the inscription on a monument honoring Marshal Ivan Konev, who was twice designated a Hero of the Soviet Union by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, was rewritten to highlight the marshal's prominent role in suppressing the Prague Spring in 1968.⁵⁴

On 18 January 2019, an unidentified man (1964–) seriously injured himself by setting himself on fire at Wenceslas Square in Prague as Czechs marked the 50th anniversary of the self-immolation on 19 January 1969 of history student Jan Palach (1948–1969) in protest at the Soviet invasion that crushed the Prague spring. The man was taken to hospital after bystanders doused the flames that enveloped him.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Antony Kalashnikov, "[Soviet War Memorials in Eastern Europe Continue to Strain Relations with Russia](#)," *The Conversation* (20 August 2018).

⁵⁵ Reuters, "[Man Sets Himself on Fire in Prague as Czechs Mark 1968 Protest](#)" (18 January 2019).

DENMARK

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2006–2007, 2013, 2016–2018.

In [November] 2018, Danske Slægtsforskere—the association of Danish genealogical researchers—published a part of the so-called Bovrup Archive, a list of DNSAP [Danish Nazi party] members. In 1945 the list had been copied and published in book form by members of the Danish Resistance who were angry that many ex-Nazis seemed to escape punishment. The original archive contained around 50,000 names, but for some reason the published version only contained 28,000. However, the 1945 book was subjected to a court injunction; it was not publicly available. Historians and other interested parties had to resort to scouring second-hand bookshops for copies. Danish data protection laws stated that persons must be dead for at least ten years before information about them could be revealed; consequently, only 5,265 names from the archive would be published.⁵⁶

DJIBOUTI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013.

⁵⁶ Stephen Gadd, "[Danish Nazi Membership Archives Available Online for the First Time](#)," *CPH Post* (2 November 2018).

ECUADOR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2007, 2009–2018.

A truth commission set up by the Rafael Correa administration to investigate government abuses from 1984 to 2008 (from the beginning of the repressive presidency of León Febres Cordero until Correa took office) documented 136 cases of gross human rights violations involving 456 victims, including 68 extrajudicial executions and 17 disappearances. A special prosecutorial unit created in 2010 to investigate the cases had initiated judicial procedures in less than ten of them, and final rulings were rendered in only two. Both the investigation and judicialization of the remaining cases appeared to be completely stalled.⁵⁷

On 22 May 2019, historian Jaime Galarza presented a request at the Attorney-General's office to reopen the investigation on the alleged role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Israeli Mossad in the 1981 murder of left-wing President Jaime Roldós Aguilera (in office August 1979—May 1981). In his book, "Who Killed Roldós," Galarza argued that the CIA and the Israelis were involved in the crime as part of Operation Condor in the region.

After Roldós's death information was misplaced, people were threatened, peasants from the alleged area of the accident disappeared, and some military personnel involved or aware of the event died in plane crashes. After a CIA document was released in 2014 revealing that Ecuador assisted in Operation Condor, the office of former Attorney-General Galo Chiriboga opened an investigation into Roldós's death, but it had been filed without explanation.⁵⁸

See also Argentina.

EGYPT

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2001, 2003, 2006–2007, 2010–2018.

In [2018], the censors banned *In the Last Days of the City*, a film about the two years which preceded the 2011 Egyptian Revolution by British-Egyptian actor and producer Khalid Abdalla. The film was pulled from the Cairo International Film Festival and banned in Egypt. Abdalla sued the censorship board. He said that footage of signs of discontent such as scenes of striking workers, Islamist marches,

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 180.

⁵⁸ "[Ecuador: Request to Reopen Probe on CIA Killing of Jaime Roldos](#)," *Telesur* (22 May 2019).

and police brutality could have been problematic.⁵⁹

In mid-April 2019, historian of religions and assistant professor Adam Duker resigned from the Abdulhadi H. Taher Chair of Comparative Religions (2016–2019) at the American University in Cairo (AUC), saying in his letter that AUC has been in breach of contract since July 2017 by denying him the title included in his contract and retaliating against him for his refusal to stop using it. A historian of the sixteenth-century French religion wars, Duker taught about Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism in a “Religions of the World” survey course. Saudi businessman Tarek Taher (son of Abdulhadi H. Taher) persuaded the AUC leadership to withdraw the title awarded in Duker’s contract after the latter had refused his demand that he advocate for Islam over other religions in his teaching. At a meeting in January 2017, Taher had also demanded the right to pre-approve all of Duker’s lectures and course materials and insisted that he not teach any non-Abrahamic religions. The chair (2002–2019) had been the largest endowment for the humanities in the Arabic-speaking world (at approximately \$3.5 million). In April 2019, the AUC Faculty Senate Grievance Committee had formally determined that Duker did not commit faculty misconduct and expressed concern that Taher had been allowed to interfere in academic matters and influence the decision to strip Duker of his title.⁶⁰

EL SALVADOR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2018.

In July 2016, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a 1993 amnesty law that prohibited the prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity, committed overwhelmingly by state security forces, according to the United Nations Truth Commission, during the country’s civil war (1979–1992).

In March 2017, former military commanders were brought to trial for their alleged responsibility for the 1981 El Mozote massacre, in which 978 civilians died, including 553 children, and soldiers committed mass rapes. The trial was ongoing at the end of 2018. Four other cases remained open but had not reached trial, including one related to the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero as he celebrated mass in a hospital chapel in March 1980, a day after his radio homily begging soldiers to stop their repression and killings. In October 2018, a judge ordered the arrest of ex-Captain Álvaro Saravia for his alleged role in planning the crime.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Jemimah Steinfeld, “An Undelivered Love Letter,” *Index on Censorship*, 47 no. 4 (winter 2018), 61–63.

⁶⁰ Gilgamesh Nabeel & Mina Nader, “[American University Cairo Religion Professor Loses Post in Academic Freedom Fight](#),” *Religion News Service* (14 May 2019); Elizabeth Redden, “[A Donor’s Demands, a Revoked Chair](#),” *Inside HigherEd* (24 May 2019).

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 193.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

Beginning 16 July 2018, the government held a five-day “National Dialogue and Political Interaction,” an event that President Teodoro Obiang initiated to bring political opposition activists and groups, including those in exile, into dialogue with the government and ruling party. Obiang promised amnesty to political prisoners and opposition members who were sentenced by an Equatoguinean court while living in exile. However, most opposition groups and leaders remained wary of this promise and did not attend the dialogue. Moreover, the imprisoned Citizens for Innovation (CI) members were not released until 22 October 2018, when Obiang issued a pardon for them and 48 other prisoners. Obiang did not provide any official reason for the pardon.⁶²

ERITREA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008, 2016, 2018.

See Ethiopia.

ESTONIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2010, 2015, 2017.

ETHIOPIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2011, 2015–2018.

In [2008], historian Abebaw Ayalew was forced to quit his position at Addis Ababa University and accept a lectureship at the School of Fine Arts because “he had not followed the official historical explanations.” In August 2018, he was again working at Addis Ababa University.⁶³

⁶² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 201.

⁶³ Koert Lindijer, “Het is wennen, te kunnen zeggen wat je vindt,” *NRC Handelsblad* (1–2 September 2018), 21.

After he acceded to power in 2 April 2018, President Abiy Ahmed reportedly reintroduced the independence of history teaching at the Addis Ababa University.⁶⁴

In July 2018, Ethiopia and Eritrea resolved a decades-long stalemate, signed a peace agreement and agreed to implement the 2002 international boundary commission decision. Relations between the countries had been violent or frozen since their troops clashed in the border town of Badme in 1998.⁶⁵

On 13–16 September 2018, tens of thousands of people gathered to welcome back leaders of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), one of the groups removed from a list of terror organizations earlier in 2018 by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. In the days leading up to the OLF leaders' arrival, supporters of the group trickled into the capital Addis Ababa carrying and waving its controversial, multicolored flag. Many Oromo—the country's largest ethnic group representing about a third of the 100 million inhabitants—saw the OLF and flag as a resistance against decades of alleged discriminatory practices by elites belonging to other ethnic groups. However, the move angered some residents in Addis Ababa—who saw the flag as a symbol to separate the Oromia region from the rest of Ethiopia—leading to clashes that left more than 20 people dead. The flag riots reportedly unfolded as young Oromos, popularly known as Qeerroo, started painting sidewalks with their patriotic flag colors and removing other flags. Abiy, himself an Oromo, condemned the violence. Police called on citizens to respect each other's freedom of expression, including carrying flags of their own choice.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Koert Lindijer, "Het is wennen, te kunnen zeggen wat je vindt," *NRC Handelsblad* (1–2 September 2018), 21.

⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 213.

⁶⁶ AFP, "[Violence in Ethiopian Capital ahead of Opposition Group's Return](#)," *News24* (13 September 2018); "[Riots Leave Ethiopian Capital in a State of Tension](#)," *Prensa Latina* (14 September 2018); Abdi Latif Dahir, "[Ethiopia's Flag Protests Show a Nation Fighting to Become United](#)," *Quartz Africa* (17 September 2018).

FIJI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2006, 2010.

FINLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2012, 2017.

FRANCE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1999, 2001–2009, 2011–2014, 2016–2018.

See Congo (Republic), Egypt, Poland, Turkey, Vietnam.

GABON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2016, 2018.

GAMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2016–2018.

GEORGIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2003, 2010–2012, 2014, 2016.

The International Criminal Court continued its investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the lead-up to, during, and after the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2010–2012* and *2016*.]⁶⁷

GERMANY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997–2000, 2003, 2006–2013, 2015–2017.

On 29 August 2018, a golden statue of Turkish President Recep Erdogan was removed in Wiesbaden. Part of the Wiesbaden biennial art exhibition with the theme of “Bad News,” the four-meter tall statue looked like the one of Saddam Hussein that was taken down after the American invasion in Baghdad in 2003. The city declared that it could not guarantee public order and safety of Erdogan’s followers and opponents at the location where it had been shown for two days.⁶⁸

In [2018], the Hamburg State Archive destroyed an estimated one million death certificates dating from 1876 to 1953 (including those from the Nazi era). The archive’s director, Udo Schäfer, admitted that it was a mistake: he thought that it were duplicates, adding that almost all the information contained in the files could be found in other archived documents, like death registries and in files from prisons or

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 247.

⁶⁸ Rob Vreeken, “[Gouden standbeeld Erdogan in Wiesbaden na twee dagen verwijderd, kunstwerk deed emoties hoog oplopen](#),” *Volkskrant* (29 August 2018).

hospitals).⁶⁹

While on a tour in the Sachsenhausen Memorial, a former Nazi concentration camp outside Berlin, in July 2018, members of the far-right populist party Alternative for Germany (AfD) interrupted the guide to cast doubt on the existence of Sachsenhausen's gas chambers and diminish the crimes committed in Nazi death camps. AfD co-leader Alexander Gauland referred to the Nazi era as a "speck of bird poop" in Germany's otherwise admirable history, while Björn Höcke, leader of AfD's most extreme wing, called Berlin's Holocaust memorial a "monument of shame" and defended Holocaust deniers. In January 2019, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas wrote in a newspaper that "Right-wing populist provocateurs diminish the Holocaust, knowing that such a breach of taboo will garner maximum attention."⁷⁰

On 27 September 2018 during its General Assembly in Münster, the Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands (Association of German Historians) adopted a Resolution on Current Threats to Democracy. It stated, among others, that "In Germany as in numerous other countries, excessive attacks on democratic institutions are currently threatening the foundations of the political order. As historians, we feel it is our duty to warn against these threats. Dispute is essential in a pluralistic society, but it must follow certain rules if it is not going to undermine democracy itself." It singled out five basic attitudes for democratic interaction in politics and society: "for historically sensitive speech, against discriminatory terms"; "for parliamentary democracy and a pluralistic culture of debate, against populism"; "for unified European action, against nationalist unilateralism"; "for humanity and the rule of law, against the slander of migrants"; and "for critical engagement with the past, against the political misuse of history."⁷¹

See also China, Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom.

⁶⁹ JTA, "[Holocaust Historian Slams Germany for Shedding Millions of Death Records](#)," *Haaretz* (23 September 2018).

⁷⁰ Emily Schultheis, "[Teaching the Holocaust in Germany as a Resurgent Far Right Questions It](#)," *The Atlantic* (10 April 2019).

⁷¹ "[Resolution des Verbandes der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands zu gegenwärtigen Gefährdungen der Demokratie / Resolution of the Association of German Historians \(VHD, Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands\) on Current Threats to Democracy](#)." (Stellungnahme; Münster 27 September 2018).

GHANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2004–2008, 2017.

In October 2016, the authorities announced that they would remove a statue of the Indian leader and pacifist Mahatma Gandhi (unveiled by Indian President Pranab Mukherjee in June 2016) from the University of Ghana's Legon campus in Accra and relocate it. The statue had sparked protests over Gandhi's racism: when he lived in South Africa at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, he had advocated the superiority of Indians over black Africans and used the derogatory term *kaffir* to refer to native Africans. On 12 December 2018, the campus-based news outlet *Radio Univers* reported that the statue had been taken down.⁷²

GREECE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1999, 2004–2011, 2013–2018.

In December 2018, the children of General Athanassios Chrissochoou, the commander and governor of Greek Macedonia during the occupation (from April 1941) who collaborated with the Nazis, sued three inhabitants of Thessaloniki, Aleko Gripas, Spiridon Saketta, and Triantafilou Mitafidi, for insulting their father's memory because they had lobbied the municipality to remove the latter's name from one of the streets and replace it with the name of historian Alberto Nar (1947–2005), a descendant of Jewish victims of the wartime genocide in Thessaloniki. Although the initiative had been approved by the municipal council on 26 March 2018, the family sued and demanded 600.000 euros in damages and six months' imprisonment for each of the defendants.⁷³

On 20 January 2019, protesters clashed with police in Athens at a big rally to oppose the government's deal with Macedonia (FYROM) on changing the latter's name into North Macedonia. Police fired tear gas at some of those attending the protest which attracted tens of thousands. The name Macedonia was sensitive to many Greeks who said it implied a claim on the Greek province of the same name. In mid-January, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras narrowly survived a vote of no confidence after his junior

⁷² Abigail Abrams, "[Ghana Will Remove 'Racist' Gandhi Statue From Its Oldest University](#)," *Time* (6 October 2016); "[Petition: Gandhi's Statue at the University Of Ghana Must Come Down](#)" (12 September 2016); "[University of Ghana Removes Mahatma Gandhi Statue at the Centre of Anti-Racism Protests](#)," *Scroll.in* (13 December 2018).

⁷³ [Children of General Athanasios Chrysochoou versus three persons](#) (10 December 2018); Antonis Liakos, personal communication (31 December 2018 and 6 March 2019); "La Réhabilitation de la mémoire historique et ses négateurs: En soutien à des citoyens de Salonique poursuivis en justice" ([2019])

coalition partner withdrew support. Some members of the parliament received death threats intended to influence their vote.⁷⁴

GRENADA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007.

GUATEMALA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2018.

In 2011 and 2012, five former members of the military had been convicted for their roles in the 1982 Dos Erres massacre, in which army special forces killed around 200 civilians as part of their counterinsurgency policy during the armed conflict (1960–1996). In May 2013, former President Efraín Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity for the assassination of over 1,771 Mayan Ixil civilians in 105 massacres, when he was head of state (1982–1983). He was sentenced to 80 years in prison, but ten days later the Constitutional Court overturned the verdict on procedural grounds. The retrial began in March 2016 but it was suspended two months later because of outstanding legal challenges. The trial restarted in October 2017 with just one session per week. Ríos Montt died in April, before the trial concluded. In September 2018, the other defendant in the case, the former head of intelligence, was acquitted.⁷⁵

On 3 August 2018, Gustavo Meoño Brenner, the director of the [Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional](#) (AHPN; Historical Archive of the National Police), was abruptly dismissed. AHPN's remaining staff of more than 50 people was placed on temporary contract. Oversight for AHPN was transferred from the national archives, where it had functioned since 2009, to the Ministry of Culture and Sports. The Ministry and the Guatemalan office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, responsible for administering international donations to the AHPN) agreed to eliminate the position of director in favor of a “technical liaison” and hired a trained archivist with no human rights experience

⁷⁴ “[The Man Who Has Focused on One Word for 23 Years](#),” *BBC News* (2 August 2017); “[Greece Macedonia: Name Dispute Draws Mass Protest in Athens](#),” *BBC News* (4 February 2018); Guy Delauney, “[Macedonia: Why the Row with Greece over the Name Runs so Deep](#),” *BBC News* (8 February 2018); “[Macedonia Name Dispute: PMs Watch as Ministers Sign ‘Historic’ Deal](#),” *BBC News* (17 June 2018); “[Macedonia Parliament Agrees to Change Country’s Name](#),” *BBC News* (11 January 2019); “[Macedonia and Greece: Clashes in Athens over Neighbour’s Name Change](#),” *BBC News* (20 January 2019).

⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 249–250.

to replace Meoño. They also dismissed all but one member of the investigative staff dedicated to locating and analyzing police records containing information about illegal state terror campaigns during the 1970s and 1980s. Since its discovery in 2005, the AHPN had crucially contributed to human rights trials with its records serving as legal evidence for the prosecution. This enraged powerful military intelligence and operational officers who were responsible for human rights violations in the 1980s have sought to harass, intimidate, and shut down the human rights and justice organizations contributing to the prosecutions. This probably caused the government of President Jimmy Morales to seek to control the AHPN and dismiss its director.

On 27 May 2019, Interior Minister Enrique Degenhart (in charge of the police) declared his intent to assert his control over the AHPN, including new restrictions on AHPN access and possible legal action against “foreign institutions” holding digitized copies of the documents (the Federal Archives of Switzerland and the University of Texas at Austin). Degenhart referred to the collection as the “Historical Archive of the National Civil Police”—incorrectly imposing the name of the security force he headed for the National Police, which was abolished in 1997 by the peace accords for its role in assassinating, disappearing, and torturing Guatemalan citizens during the internal conflict (1960–1996). After major protests, the agreement with the Ministry of Culture was extended for six months. [See also *NCH Annual Report 2013*.]

Guatemalan media outlets reported in late March 2019 that both the chief of the General Archive of the Supreme Court (Rossana Aracely Alvarado Cortez) and the head of the Court’s Information System (Daniel Girón) were pressured to resign by Justice Department (Organismo Judicial) officials. Another archive under stress was the collection of records of the former “Presidential General Staff” (Estado Mayor Presidencial—EMP, dissolved in 2003), located inside the General Archive of Central America, Guatemala’s national archives since 2012.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Kate Doyle, “[Guatemala Police Archive under Threat](#),” *National Security Archive* (13 August 2018) (including petition text); Asociación Latinoamericana de Archivos (ALA), “[Comunicado ante la situación del Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional de Guatemala](#)” (letter to the United Nations Development Programme office in Guatemala and Minister of Culture) (Mexico DF, 7 November 2018); Asociación Latinoamericana de Archivos (ALA), “Comunicado ante la situación del Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional de Guatemala” (letter to Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) in International Council on Archives Human Rights Working Group, *Newsletter* (November 2018), issue 108, 17–19; Archiveros sin Fronteras Internacional, “[Declaración sobre la situación del Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional de Guatemala \(AHPN\)](#)” (s.d. [November 2018]); International Council on Archives Human Rights Working Group (Giulia Barrera), Letter to United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet (15 November 2018) in International Council on Archives Human Rights Working Group, *Newsletter* (November 2018), issue 108, 15–16; National Security Archive, “Imminent Threat to Guatemala’s Historical Archive of the National Police (AHPN)” (Press release, 30 May 2019); Mandato del Grupo de Trabajo sobre las Desapariciones Forzadas o Involuntarias; y del Relator Especial sobre la promoción de la verdad, la justicia, la reparación y las garantías de no repetición, *Letter to Prime Minister of Guatemala* (30 May 2019); Kate Doyle, “[Imminent Threat to Guatemala’s Historical Archive of the National Police \(AHPN\)](#),” *National Security Archive* (30 May 2019); [NCH Campaign](#) (2018).

GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2009–2018.

There was meaningful progress in the investigation of the 28 September 2009 stadium massacre, in which security forces killed over 150 peaceful opposition supporters, and raped dozens of women. In December 2017, the panel of Guinean judges investigating the massacre concluded over seven years of investigations. At least 13 suspects were indicted, including Moussa Dadis Camara, the then leader of the military junta that ruled Guinea in September 2009, and two high-ranking officials currently serving in the security forces. The investigation ended before judges had located and exhumed mass graves believed to contain more than 100 victims. However, the trial had yet to start at the end of 2018. In April 2018, the Ministry of Justice created a steering committee to prepare for the trial by securing funding and ensuring adequate security for witnesses and magistrates. The committee, which included key figures in the national justice system, United Nations representatives, and international donors, had only met three times over a seven-month period, but it had identified a location and budget for the trial.⁷⁷

GUINEA-BISSAU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2012, 2015.

GUYANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997.

⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 255–256.

HAITI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2000–2003, 2006, 2008–2009, 2013–2018.

As of November 2018, a re-opened investigation into crimes committed by former President Jean-Claude Duvalier's collaborators remained pending. Duvalier died in 2014, six months after the Port-of-Prince Court of Appeal ruled that the statute of limitations could not be applied to crimes against humanity and ordered that investigations against him should continue for human rights crimes allegedly committed during his tenure as president (1971–1986). Allegations of violations included arbitrary detentions, torture, disappearances, summary executions, and forced exile.⁷⁸

HONDURAS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1998, 2001–2002, 2009–2015.

HONG KONG

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996. *See* China.

HUNGARY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997, 2004, 2007–2018.

In 1946, historian John Lukacs (1924–2019) emigrated to the United States because he did not want to live in Communist-dominated Hungary. From partly Jewish origin, he had lived in hiding after the German occupation of Hungary in 1944. He wrote mainly about the history of World War II.⁷⁹

On 28 December 2018, the authorities removed a statue of Imre Nagy (1896–1958), pro-reform Communist and hero of the 1956 anti-Soviet uprising executed in 1958, from Martyrs' Square in front of the parliament building (where it was erected in 1996) to Jaszai Mari Square, a northern location of

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 260.

⁷⁹ *NRC Handelsblad* (5 December 2008) 7; "[John Lukacs, Iconoclastic Scholar of History, Dies at 95.](#)" *Washington Post* (6 May 2019).

Budapest. It would be replaced by a monument to the victims of the Red Terror (a purge of anti-Communist forces by a short-lived Communist regime in 1919), which replicated one that stood there during the pro-Nazi rule of wartime Admiral Miklós Horthy (1868–1957), who fueled anti-Semitism. Some critics accused Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s nationalist government of revising Hungary’s history, while its supporters argued that the aim was to return parts of Budapest to their pre-World War Two appearance, before the decades of Communist rule (1949–1989). On 16 June 1989, Orbán—then an anti-Communist activist—had addressed a rally celebrating Nagy’s reburial and rehabilitation.⁸⁰

See also Romania.

⁸⁰ [“Hungary Removes Statue of Anti-Soviet Hero Imre Nagy,”](#) *BBC News* (28 December 2018); Benjamin Novak, [“Hungarians Fume as Statue of Former Leader Is Downgraded,”](#) *New York Times* (28 December 2018).

INDIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1997, 2000–2018.

On 16 October 2018, historian Ramachandra Guha, public intellectual and author of a two-volume biography of Mahatma Gandhi, announced that he had accepted a position at the private Ahmedabad University (AU), Gujarat, as a professor of humanities, but on 1 November he tweeted that he would not join the new position due to “circumstances beyond his control.” Pravin Desai, a leader of the student wing—Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)—of the local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had declared to the press that ABVP had submitted a memorandum to AU on 19 October saying that it did not want Guha to teach at the university because he wrote “anti-national” books. They said that Guha’s writings “encouraged divisive tendencies, alienation in the name of independence of the individual, freeing terrorists in the name of independence of the individual, and separating Jammu and Kashmir from the Indian union.” They also referred to him as a Communist. Guha has been an outspoken critic of Hindu nationalist politics (represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s BJP). Hours before refusing the teaching offer, Guha had compared Modi to Emperor Jean-Bédél Bokassa, the Central African Republic’s ruler (1966–1976) infamous for his cruelty, in a tweet. In late October, Guha had also criticized the Modi government over an expensive statue for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, which was the world’s tallest statue.⁸¹

On 7 June 2019, Ram Puniyani ([1945]–), a former IIT Bombay (Indian Institute of Technology Bombay) professor and social worker known for his anti-Hindutva views, informed Mumbai police that on 6 June 2019 he got threat calls from an unidentified person who told him to stop the work that he was doing or that he would face the consequences (“dekh lenge.”) Puniyani had his own YouTube channel where he spoke on rationalist and anti-Hindutva issues. In some of his recent YouTube videos, Puniyani had criticized cow vigilantes and lynchings. He had also spoken about Pragya Singh Thakur’s assertion that Mahatma Gandhi’s murderer, Nathuram Godse, was a “patriot.” The video was titled “2nd Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by Calling Nathuram Godse as Patriotic.” Puniyani had received similar threats a few years ago.⁸²

See also Ghana, Malawi.

⁸¹ Soutik Biswas, “[Ramachandra Guha: How the Right Wing Hounded out a Gandhi Biographer](#),” *BBC News* (3 November 2018); Shuriah Niazi, “[International Historian Bows to Right-Wing Pressure](#),” *University World News* (8 November 2018).

⁸² “[Ex-IIT Professor Ram Puniyani Says He Got Threat Calls for Anti-Hindutva Stance](#),” *Telegraph* (8 June 2019).

INDONESIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2001–2002, 2004–2013, 2015–2018.

In August 2018, the national police chief, General Tito Karnavian, announced that police would reopen their investigation into the murder in 2004 of human rights defender Munir Thalib. Investigations and prosecutions in the case to date have failed to uncover the full circumstances of Munir’s killing or target the most senior officials believed responsible.⁸³

See also Netherlands.

IRAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2018.

In 1979, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, the work of historian Ehsan Yarshater (1920–2018), Columbia University’s first chairman of Iranian Studies (1961–) and founder of its Center for Iranian Studies (1968–), was cut short. He was forced to suspend publication of the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, founded and edited (1972–2017) by him. Yarshater, who never returned to Iran after the revolution, had restarted the encyclopedia at Columbia University with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the early 1980s.⁸⁴

On 29 August 2018, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that Iran had no legal basis for the arrest and detention of American-Chinese Ph.D. history student Xiyue Wang, and that he should be released immediately. Mary Beth Norton, president of the American Historical Association, wrote a letter to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei expressing “deep concern” about Wang’s ten-year prison sentence. [See also *NCH Annual Report 2018*.]⁸⁵

⁸³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 286.

⁸⁴ Amir-Hussein Radjy, “[Ehsan Yarshater, Iran Scholar with a Monumental Vision, Dies at 98](#),” *New York Times* (18 September 2018).

⁸⁵ Website about Xiyue Wang: <https://sites.google.com/view/freexiyuewang>; United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, [Opinion No. 52/2018 concerning Xiyue Wang \(Islamic Republic of Iran\)](#) (29 August 2018); Middle East Studies Association, [Letter to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei re Xiyue Wang](#) (5 September 2018); Princeton University, “[U.N. Committee Calls for Immediate Release of Princeton Graduate Student Imprisoned in Iran](#)” (10 September 2018); “[Statement from Wife of Xiyue Wang in Response to UN Committee Opinion Letter](#),” *Facebook* (10 September 2018); Scholars at Risk, *Free to Think: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project* (New York: SAR, 2018), 35; Jennifer Griffin & Lucas Tomlinson, “[Wife of US Scholar Imprisoned in Iran Speaks Out: ‘His Only Crime Is He’s American’](#),” *Fox News* (15 January 2019); “[UN Experts Urge Iran to Release Imprisoned American Scholar Xiyue Wang](#)” (press

See also Argentina, United States, Yemen.

IRAQ

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000–2018.

Correction: historian Bashar Awad Marouf [see *NCH Annual Report 2014*] was not killed in December 2013. He went into exile in Jordan. Apologies for this error.

Under international law some of the brutal crimes perpetrated by Islamic State (ISIS) since 2014 amounted to war crimes and possibly to crimes against humanity or genocide. In 2018, Iraq failed to pass legislation to make war crimes and crimes against humanity specific offenses under domestic law. Judges instead prosecuted ISIS suspects with the single charge of ISIS affiliation, under domestic counterterrorism legislation. The trials were generally rushed, based on a defendant's confession, and did not involve victim participation. Authorities did little to protect, gather, and use in criminal prosecutions evidence found at mass gravesites left by ISIS. The Iraqi government and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) conducted thousands of trials of ISIS suspects without a strategy to prioritize the worst abuses under Iraqi and international law.

Iraq also passed Law No. 20, Compensating the Victims of Military Operations, Military Mistakes and Terrorist Actions in 2009, creating governmental commissions to compensate Iraqis affected by terrorism, military operations, and military errors. Compensation commissions in areas that fell under ISIS control in 2014 had received thousands of compensation requests but had yet to pay out any claims from 2014 onward.

Based on a United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution adopted in September 2017, a UN investigative team was created to document serious crimes committed by ISIS in Iraq. By the end of 2018, the team had yet to properly launch investigations in Iraq.⁸⁶

See also Germany, United States.

release; 7 May 2019); "[Wife Pleads for Release of Princeton Student Incarcerated in Iran While Doing Research on Dissertation](#)," *Committee of Concerned Scientists* (9 June 2019); Laura Dean, "[The Threat of War Brings New Fears to an American Hostage in Iran](#)," *New Yorker* (24 June 2019); "[UN Experts Urge Iran to Release Imprisoned American Scholar Xiyue Wang](#)" (press release, 7 May 2019); Hua Qu, "[My Husband Is Unjustly Imprisoned in Iran: The International Community Must Help](#)," *Washington Post* (24 May 2019); [NCH Campaign](#) (2018; including two follow-ups).

⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 297–298.

IRELAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2013, 2015–2016.

ISRAEL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000–2003, 2008–2014, 2016–2018.

On 27 June 2018, the Prime Ministers of Israel (Benjamin Netanyahu) and Poland (Mateusz Morawiecki) issued a joint declaration following the adaptation of the so-called Holocaust law in Poland [see *NCH Annual Report 2018*]. The semi-official Polish PKO Foundation placed full-page ads with the declaration in newspapers around the world. Critics said, however, that the declaration downplayed the role of many Poles who willingly cooperated with the Nazis. While it appeared to give the same prominence to those Poles who helped Jews and those who persecuted them, Yad Vashem stated on 5 July 2018 that “Poles’ assistance to Jews during the Holocaust was relatively rare, and attacks against and even the murder of Jews were widespread phenomena.” Others charged that it inaccurately compared anti-Semitism with anti-Polonism in the passage: “Both governments vehemently condemn all forms of anti-Semitism ... Both governments also express their rejection of anti-Polonism and other negative national stereotypes.” Education Minister Naftali Bennett rejected the joint statement as factually inaccurate and said that it would not be taught in Israel schools. He further called on Netanyahu to rescind it or bring it to a vote in the cabinet for approval. Opposition leaders joined Bennett’s calls. Leading Israeli Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer called it “a betrayal of the memory of the Holocaust and the interest of the Jewish people.” In a reaction to all the accusations, Netanyahu said: “Regarding the Polish law, the goal of the contacts with the Polish government was to abrogate the criminal clauses in the Polish law that cast a pall of fear over research and free discourse regarding the Holocaust. This goal has been achieved.” On Wednesday 11 July 2018, the Knesset would debate a motion to hold a declarative vote denouncing the joint statement.⁸⁷

On 1 August 2018, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly called Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis and asked that Switzerland stop funding [Akevot](#), the Institute for Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Research, founded in 2014. A week later, Israeli Ambassador to Switzerland Jacob Keidar met

⁸⁷ [“Joint Declaration of Prime Ministers of the State of Israel and the Republic of Poland”](#) (27 June 2018); Raoul Wootliff and TOI Staff, Raphael Ahren, [“Poles Launch Global Drive to Promote Holocaust Law Deal, Roiling Israeli Critics.”](#) *Times of Israel* (5 July 2018); [“Amid Criticism of Poland Holocaust deal, PM Says He’ll ‘Listen to Historians’.”](#) *Times of Israel* (8 July 2018).

in Bern with officials from the Swiss Foreign Ministry's Middle East desk, handing over an unsigned document containing the same request and alleging that "[t]his Institute [Akevot] aims to locate evidence of policies or decisions in the archives of the State of Israel that led, in the opinion of the researchers at the Institute, to human rights violations and transfer the findings to the alleged victims ... The purpose—legal warfare against the State of Israel inside Israel and abroad." The document repeated allegations by right-wing organizations against Akevot, including some found in a report published by the group Ad Kan (founded in 2015) in July 2018. According to the newspaper *Haaretz*, Ad Kan's 38-page report contained a series of "deceptions and inaccuracies," including ill-founded allegations that Akevot "gather[ed] intelligence for the Swiss and Norwegian governments and [stole] Israeli secrets by working together with state archivists and putting its own people on the Supreme Council of Archives."⁸⁸

In the summer of 2018, the State Archives (a branch of the Prime Minister's Office) published a catalog of some 300,000 classified files (with their names, dates, and origin within the state bureaucracy), including more than 2,000 documents from before the state was founded in 1948. The very existence of the files had been kept a secret until recently; 125 files dated back to the 1800s. One-fifth of the files deemed most sensitive were excluded from the disclosure. The oldest item, a Foreign Ministry document entitled "Parker Report," dated back to 1821. Documents from most ministries appeared in the catalog, with the exception of the Defense Ministry (aside from one cache of records produced during Israel's first, short-lived occupation of Gaza in 1956), the military, the Mossad, and the Shin Bet security service. Almost three quarters of the files came from the Israel Police (28.2 percent), the Foreign Ministry (24.2 percent), and the Prime Minister's Office (21 percent).⁸⁹

In early October 2018, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his intention to extend the secrecy of information stored in security service archives from 70 to 90 years, including materials contained in the Shin Bet and Mossad archives, the archives of the Atomic Energy Commission, nuclear research centers, the Institute for Biological Research, and the Army Intelligence Division. They included records about the Deir Yassin massacre in April 1948. [See also *NCH Annual Report 2010*]. The Supreme Council of Archives, a body within the Israel State Archives that advised the Office of the Prime Minister on matters of classification, recommended against extending the classification period by more than five years. In December 2018, an amendment to the classification regulations stipulated to effectively keep the documents secret for 90 years. The existence of the amendment was

⁸⁸ Chaim Levinson & Noa Landau, "[How a Right-wing NGO's Agenda Became Israeli Government Policy](#)," *Haaretz* (12 October 2018); Akevot, [Ad Kan's smear campaign against Akevot Institute](#) (August 2018).

⁸⁹ Asaf Shalev, "[More than 100 Files from the 1800s Are Still Classified in Israel's Archives](#)," *+972 Magazine* (15 February 2019).

revealed publicly for the first time on 4 February 2019, when Netanyahu's office said that its goal was to protect Israel's assets and informants who remain alive, or their descendants in foreign countries. In 2010, Netanyahu had signed a similar order extending the confidentiality of archives from 50 to 70 years.⁹⁰

See also Argentina, Ecuador, Poland, Romania.

ITALY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016–2018.

On 10 December 2018, the police said they were investigating the theft of 20 memorial plaques commemorating the Holocaust. The small brass plaques—dedicated to members of a Jewish family, De Consiglio—were dug out from Rome's pavements during the night.⁹¹

In mid-May 2019, history teacher Rosa Maria Dell'Aria ([1955]–) was suspended for fifteen days on half pay after an investigation by the education ministry's provincial authority in Palermo, Sicily, found that she had not "supervised" her students' work at Vittorio Emanuele III school. In January 2019, two students, aged fifteen and sixteen, had made a video as part of a project for International Holocaust Remembrance Day comparing current events to anti-Semitic persecution. The video compared a security decree drafted by rightist interior minister and leader of the political party Lega, Matteo Salvini, and approved by parliament in December 2018, to Benito Mussolini's 1938 racial laws. The 1938 racial laws led to the expulsion of 6,500 Jewish schoolchildren and about 700 professors, many of whom were deported to concentration camps. Salvini's law left hundreds of asylum seekers in legal limbo by removing humanitarian protection for those not eligible for refugee status. Many, including thousands of students and members of the opposition Democratic Party, protested the suspension. Marco Anello, the head of the education ministry's provincial authority in Palermo, defended the suspension: "Comparing the security decree to a racial law means offending not only Salvini but also the Italian state."⁹²

⁹⁰ "[Netanyahu Bans Publication of Archive Materials on Deir Yassin Massacre](#)," *Palestine News Network* (4 October 2018); Joseph Fitsanakis, "[Israel Extends Intelligence Document Classification Period to 90 Years](#)," *IntelNews* (6 February 2019).

⁹¹ Paul Kirby, "[Anti-Semitism Pervades European Life. Says EU Report](#)," *BBC News* (10 December 2018).

⁹² Lorenzo Tondo, "[Teacher Suspended after Her Pupils Criticise Italian Far-Right Law](#)," *Guardian* (19 May 2019); Valerio Alfonso Bruno, "[Why Freedom of Expression Is At Stake In Italy: The Suspension of a Teacher Is Sparking Debate across the Country](#)," *Public Seminar* (6 June 2019).

See also Vatican.

IVORY COAST (Côte d’Ivoire)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2006–2018.

Ivory Coast’s Special Investigative and Examination Cell continued its investigations into the human rights abuses of the 2010–2011 post-election crisis, which left more than 3,000 dead and more than 150 women raped. The cell, established in 2011, had charged more than two dozen senior military officers and political leaders with crimes against humanity or war crimes. However, the August 2018 amnesty announcement “for national reconciliation” for 800 people implicated in crimes related to the post-election crisis and subsequent political violence raised major doubts about whether those responsible for the crisis’ worst abuses would be tried in Ivorian courts. A government order implementing the amnesty stated that it would not apply to individuals who were “members of the military and armed groups.” But the list of people released or exonerated under the amnesty included individuals accused of serious human rights violations during the 2010–2011 crisis, both from pro-Ouattara and pro-Gbagbo forces.

Those released due to the amnesty included former first lady Simone Gbagbo. Her acquittal in an Ivorian court for crimes against humanity during the post-election crisis was overturned by the Supreme Court on 26 July 2018, but the amnesty meant that she would not now be retried. Simone Gbagbo was also wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on four counts of crimes against humanity, but the Ivorian government had refused to transfer her to The Hague. The amnesty did at least result in the release of hundreds of pro-Gbagbo sympathizers who had languished for years in pretrial detention without trial, or who had been convicted of “threats against state security” in trials that often lacked basic due process. The ICC continued the trial of Laurent Gbagbo, former President and historian, and Charles Blé Goudé for crimes against humanity committed during the 2010–2011 crisis. The prosecution closed its case in early 2018, and the defense filed a no-case-to-answer submission in July, arguing that the charges against the two should be dismissed. In early 2019, both defendants were acquitted.

The ICC continued its investigations into crimes committed by pro-Ouattara forces during the crisis, but had yet to issue arrest warrants. President Alassane Ouattara said that no further individuals would be transferred to The Hague. Neither Ivory Coast’s Special Cell nor the ICC were investigating crimes committed during election-related violence in 2000 or the 2002–2003 armed conflict.⁹³

⁹³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 159–160.

JAMAICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017–2018.

JAPAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2018.

Persons forcibly sterilized under the Eugenic Protection Act between 1948 and 1996 sued the government for compensation. Under the law, approximately 84,000 persons, mostly with genetic disorders (including at least around 16,500 persons forced to have sterilization surgery), were victimized. In May 2018, a bipartisan committee was established to create a law that was expected to address both compensation and apologies to the victims.⁹⁴

Hirofumi Yoshimura, mayor of Osaka, ended its “sister city” ties with San Francisco over the display of a statue entitled “Women’s Column of Strength,” depicting women forced to work as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers during World War Two. He said that the “comfort women” monument “destroyed the relationship of trust between the two cities (which had existed since 1957). In a letter, Yoshimura explained that part of the “problem” was the monument’s inscription, which he said “present[ed] uncertain and one-sided claims as historical facts.” The inscription read: “This monument bears witness to the suffering of hundreds of thousands of women and girls euphemistically called ‘comfort women,’ who were sexually enslaved by the Japanese Imperial armed forces in thirteen Asian-Pacific countries from 1931 to 1945.”⁹⁵

On 30 November 2018, Japan’s oldest English-language newspaper, *Japan Times* (founded 1897), sparked anger among staff and readers after revising its description of wartime sex slaves and forced laborers from the Korean peninsula: “forced laborers” would become “wartime laborers,” “women who were forced to provide sex for Japanese troops before and during World War II” would become “women who worked in wartime brothels, including those who did so against their will, to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.” Reporters and editors were not consulted about the change.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 315.

⁹⁵ “[Osaka Cuts San Francisco Ties over ‘Comfort Women’ Statue](#),” *BBC News* (4 October 2018); Hirofumi Yoshimura (Mayor of Osaka), [Letter to London Breed \(Mayor of San Francisco\)](#) re Termination of Sister City Relationship (2 October 2018).

⁹⁶ Justin McCurry, “[‘Comfort women’: Anger as Japan Paper Alters Description of WWII Terms](#),” *Guardian* (30 November 2018).

See also China, Korea (North).

JORDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003–2004, 2015, 2018.

See Iraq.

KAZAKHSTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999–2001, 2007, 2012.

KENYA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2000, 2002–2005, 2007, 2009–2018.

See United Kingdom.

KOREA, NORTH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2006–2007, 2009–2011, 2013–2015, 2017.

Japan continued to demand the return of 12 Japanese citizens whom North Korea abducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Some Japanese civil society groups insisted that the number of abductees was much higher. On 19 August 2018, five victims of the “Paradise on Earth” campaign, which used false promises to recruit approximately 93,000 ethnic Koreans (Zainichi) and Japanese nationals in Japan to go to North Korea between 1959 and 1984, sued the North Korean government for damages.⁹⁷

See also Japan, Korea (South).

KOREA, SOUTH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1998–2001, 2003, 2006, 2008–2010, 2012–2013, 2016–2018.

A Center for North Korean Human Rights Records was created under the Ministry of Unification to act as an archive of North Korean human rights violations for possible use in future prosecutions.⁹⁸

In October and November 2018, the Supreme Court ordered two Japanese companies (Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal and Mitsubishi) to compensate South Koreans forced to work in their factories during

⁹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 317, 442.

⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 534.

World War II. Japan insisted that all matters concerning allegations of forced labor were settled under 1965 agreements that established bilateral diplomatic ties, but the Supreme Court ruled that those agreements should not impede individual victims' rights to seek redress. The rulings could open the floodgates for other victims and their families to file class-action lawsuits against 300 Japanese companies still in operation that were believed to have used forced labor at the time. Hundreds of thousands of Koreans were forced to work for Japan's war efforts in Japan, China, and elsewhere, according to South Korean historians. Only a few thousand were still believed alive. Japan reportedly intended to bring the case before the International Court of Justice.⁹⁹

On 21 November 2018, the minister of gender equality and family shut down the Japanese-founded Reconciliation and Healing Foundation (created in July 2016), effectively shelving the 2015 agreement, in which Japan had apologized for the wartime sexual slavery system and promised to give 1 billion yen (\$8.6 million) to a fund for Korean women. [See *NCH Annual Reports 2017–2018*.]¹⁰⁰

See also Japan, Korea (North).

KOSOVO

See Serbia / Kosovo.

KUWAIT

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2000, 2004–2005, 2018.

KYRGYZSTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010–2013, 2016–2017.

⁹⁹ Choe Sang-Hun & Rick Gladstone, "[How a World War II-Era Reparations Case Is Roiling Asia](#)," *New York Times* (30 October 2018); Choe Sang-Hun, "[South Korean Court Orders Mitsubishi of Japan to Pay for Forced Wartime Labor](#)," *New York Times* (29 November 2018).

¹⁰⁰ Choe Sang-Hun, "[South Korea Signals End to 'Final' Deal with Japan Over Wartime Sex Slaves](#)," *New York Times* (21 November 2018).

LATVIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2006, 2008, 2015–2016.

In [June] 2018, the Commission for the Study of KGB Materials (established in 2015 with a three-year mandate) recommended making the list with names of 30,000 KGB agents and informers available; its report had been “conceptually” accepted by the parliament, but the final decision had not been made. In previous years, the parliament had voted three times to open the archives (once in 2004 and twice in 2006), but each time then President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga had vetoed the decision. In contrast, her successor Valdis Zatlers (serving in 2007–2011) argued that the list should be published. [See also *NCH Annual Report 2015*.]¹⁰¹

LEBANON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2003, 2006–2018.

An estimated 17,000 Lebanese were kidnapped or “disappeared” during the civil war (1975–1990). On 12 November 2018, parliament passed a landmark law creating an independent national commission to investigate the fate of the disappeared. Article 27 of the law stated that those found responsible for the disappearances would be held accountable.¹⁰²

In 2018, a street in Beirut’s suburb of Ghobeiry—known for its strong support for Hezbollah—was named after Hezbollah military leader Mustafa Badreddine (1961–2016). Badreddine allegedly masterminded the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. The street itself led to Rafik Hariri University Hospital. Hariri’s son, Saad Hariri, Lebanon’s prime minister, called the move “seditious.” Badreddine had been designated a terrorist by the United States; he was killed in Syria, where he allegedly led Hezbollah units fighting in support of President Bashar al-Assad.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Gordon Sander, “[Why a Nearly 30-year-old List of Names Is Roiling Modern Latvia](#),” *Christian Science Monitor* (12 July 2018).

¹⁰² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 356.

¹⁰³ “[Mustafa Badreddine Street Sparks Outrage in Lebanon](#),” *BBC News* (19 September 2018).

LIBERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2001, 2004–2015, 2018.

LIBYA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2005–2018.

In April 2017, the International Criminal Court (ICC) unsealed an arrest warrant that it had issued in 2013 for Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, who, under ousted leader Muammar Gaddafi, headed the Internal Security Agency, for serious crimes committed during the 2011 uprising. His whereabouts were unknown at the end of 2018. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, a son of Muammar Gaddafi, who was sentenced to death in absentia by a Libyan court in 2015, continued to be subject to an ICC arrest warrant to face charges of crimes against humanity. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi's current whereabouts cannot be confirmed; independent international observers had not seen or heard from him since 2014. In her November 2018 update to the Security Council, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda responded to a challenge brought by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi disputing the admissibility of his case in front of the ICC and she affirmed that he should be arrested and surrendered to the court.¹⁰⁴

Since 2011, militias and forces affiliated with several interim authorities, as well as Islamic State fighters, have attacked religious minorities, including Sufis, Ibadis, and Christians, and destroyed religious sites in Libya with impunity. On 28 November 2017, unidentified assailants set fire to Zawiyat Sheikha Radiya, a historic Sufi mosque in Tripoli, heavily damaging it. This attack followed the destruction by unidentified assailants in October 2017 of Sidi Abu Gharara, another historic Sufi mosque in Tripoli. In July 2018, unidentified armed groups attacked and damaged at least four Sufi sites in the Al-Majouri and Al-Kish neighborhoods of Benghazi.¹⁰⁵

LITHUANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005, 2009, 2015, 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 360.

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 362.

MACEDONIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2006–2008, 2010–2015, 2017–2018.

See Greece.

MADAGASCAR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

MALAYSIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2002, 2007–2008, 2010–2011, 2016–2017.

On 10 January 2019, in her report about Malaysia, the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights Karima Bennouna wrote that: “Islamization has also affected official views of the past, with reports that the pre-Islamic history of Malaysia, as well as non-Muslim cultural heritage, are being omitted from textbooks so that the contributions of Malaysians of Chinese and Indian descent and of indigenous peoples are marginalized. Certain contributions by indigenous peoples, such as stories, are progressively modified to make them more ‘Malay,’ thereby erasing their origins.”¹⁰⁶

On 13 May 2019, the fiftieth anniversary of the 1969 riots, Kua Kia Soong, the author of *May 13: Declassified Documents on the Malaysian Riots of 1969* (2007), urged the government to declassify secret Cabinet and Special Branch files on the riots and establish a truth commission. The official death toll was 196, mainly Chinese Malaysians, but Kua Kia Soong believed that it was substantially greater. The thesis of his book was that the pogrom against the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur in 1969 was an attempt orchestrated by the “emergent Malay state capitalist class” to create a situation to justify the coup d’etat against Tunku Abdul Rahman in the state of emergency that followed.¹⁰⁷

See also Yemen.

¹⁰⁶ UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, *Visit to Malaysia* (UN Doc. A/HRC/40/53/Add.1) (10 January 2019), paragraph 80.

¹⁰⁷ Kua Kia Soong, “[50 Years On, It’s Time to Declassify the Secrets of May 13](#),” *Malaysiakini* (13 May 2019).

MALAWI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2012.

In October 2018, the High Court in the capital Blantyre granted an injunction temporarily suspending work on a statue for the Indian non-violent resistance leader Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948). The case had been initiated by the Gandhi Must Fall group, which accused Gandhi of using racial slurs. It cited quotes from his writings, in which he described Africans as “savages or the Natives of Africa” and “kaffirs” (an insulting racial slur for a black African). In 2015, a Gandhi statue in South Africa was vandalized by a man who painted it white.¹⁰⁸

MALDIVES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2009–2010, 2013.

MALI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011, 2013–2018.

Judicial authorities made scant progress in investigating over 100 complaints filed by victims of alleged abuses during the armed conflict (2012–2013), and few investigations into more recent communal violence and security force abuse were opened. In June 2018, the government passed a “national consensus” law extending amnesty to members of armed groups involved in the 2012–2013 hostilities who had not been accused of violent crimes. Human rights groups called for the postponement of the law’s passage pending impartial investigations into abuses committed since 2012. The trial of former coup leader General Amadou Haya Sanogo and 17 other members of the security services for the 2012 killing of 21 elite “Red Beret” soldiers was suspended in December 2016.¹⁰⁹

In 2018, the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) made significant progress in fulfilling its mandate. With improved funding and personnel, the CNDH investigated abuses, issued numerous communiqués, and visited detention centers to advocate on victims’ behalf. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2014 with a mandate to investigate crimes and root causes

¹⁰⁸ “[Malawi Court Halts Work on Gandhi Statue after Critics Brand Him Racist](#),” *BBC News* (31 October 2018).

¹⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 381.

of violence dating back to 1960, made meaningful progress. The 25-member commission had taken over 9,300 victim and witness statements, but its credibility had been weakened by the inclusion of nine armed group members and the exclusion of victims' representatives.¹¹⁰

MALTA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2012.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2015.

MAURITANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2002, 2009, 2011, 2017.

Mauritania abolished slavery in 1981 and criminalized it in 2007. The government claimed that there was no longer any slavery, only its legacy, in the form of extreme poverty and exclusion, which it was addressing. The Global Slavery Index estimated that there were 90,000 slaves in Mauritania, or 2 percent of the population, including those who endured “modern” forms of the practice, such as forced or bonded labor. Three special courts that prosecuted slavery-related crimes had tried a handful of cases since their creation under a 2015 law. In March 2018, the special court in Nouadhibou reportedly sentenced a father and son to 20 years in prison and, in a separate case, a woman to ten years in prison for enslaving others.¹¹¹

On 7 August 2018, authorities arrested politician Biram Dah Abeid [Biram Ould Obeidi], a historian and lawyer by training again. [See also *NCH Annual Report 2017*.] Abeid, who while imprisoned won a seat in the 2018 National Assembly elections, remained in pre-trial detention as of the end of 2018, under investigation for reportedly insulting and threatening a journalist. In the June 2019 presidential elections, he ended second with 18,58 percent of the votes.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 382.

¹¹¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 389.

¹¹² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 387.

MAURITIUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2012.

MEXICO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999, 2001–2018.

Since 2006, enforced disappearances by security forces has been a widespread problem. Criminal organizations have also been responsible for many disappearances. In October 2018, the interior minister stated that the whereabouts of more than 37,400 people who had gone missing since 2006 remained unknown. According to the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), more than 3,900 bodies had been found in over 1,300 clandestine graves since 2007. Prosecutors and police routinely neglected to take basic investigative steps to identify those responsible for enforced disappearances, often telling the missing people's families to investigate on their own. Since 2013, the Attorney-General's office has had a specialized office to investigate and prosecute disappearances. As of August 2018, it had opened 1,255 investigations but only pressed charges in 11 cases. It did not report any convictions. In November 2017, Congress passed a law on disappearances that established a single nationwide definition for the crime and mandated the creation of entities to facilitate their investigation and prosecution. These included the National Search Commission (CNB) that was created in March 2018 to coordinate search efforts in the field, and the National Search System (SNB), established in October 2018 to coordinate state institutions involved in the search for the disappeared. However, at the end of 2018 these entities were not yet fully operational. In July 2018, the Citizen Council of the National Search System, an advisory body created by the disappearances law, reported that the CNB was not receiving the resources it needed to fulfill its mandate. The council also criticized the lack of coordination between institutions, and expressed its concern that most states lagged behind in implementing the law. Only 13 out of 32 states had created a specialized prosecutor's office and only nine out of 32 states had local search commissions or offices, even though the law mandated the creation of those entities by February and April 2018, respectively. Victims' families have repeatedly denounced serious shortcomings regarding the identification and storage of bodies.¹¹³

On 2 October 2018, the anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre of 2 October 1968 in which at least 44 students died, it was reported that the government had removed, censored, or reclassified thousands of

¹¹³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 394–395.

previously accessible documents from the era of the Dirty War (which between 1964 and 1982 had left an estimated 2,000 people disappeared and an unknown number of political dissenters dead) from a special collection which had been in the General Archive of the Nation (AGN) since 2002. The records came from the political intelligence branch of the Interior Secretariat, the old domestic intelligence agency Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS), and the Secretariat of Defense (Sedena). AGN director Mercedes de la Vega defended her actions by citing a 2012 Archives Law and new, stricter requirements to protect personal privacy. Even the most widely known and published records had been rendered illegible.¹¹⁴

On 1 March 2019, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced that within days he would open files of the National Center for Investigation and Security (CISEN) showing how intelligence agencies targeted activists and opposition groups during the “Dirty War” (1964–1982). The files were housed in the Lecumberri national archive, a former prison in the capital where numerous opposition figures were once incarcerated.¹¹⁵

MOLDOVA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2003, 2010.

MONGOLIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2013.

See also China.

MONTENEGRO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2017.

¹¹⁴ Kate Doyle, “[Fifty Years After Tlatelolco, Censoring the Mexican Archives: Mexico’s “Dirty War” Files Withdrawn from Public Access](#),” *National Security Archive* (2 October 2018); Elisabeth Malkin, “[50 Years After a Student Massacre, Mexico Reflects on Democracy](#),” *New York Times* (1 October 2018).

¹¹⁵ AFP, “[Mexico’s President to Open Archives on ‘Dirty War’ Period](#),” *The Globe Post* (3 March 2019).

MOROCCO / WESTERN SAHARA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2013, 2015–2018.

MOZAMBIQUE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2001, 2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2018.

In July 2018, the department of public relations and psychological warfare of the Myanmar Army published a 117-page book on the Rohingya crisis, entitled “Myanmar Politics and the Tatmadaw: Part I,” relating the army’s narrative of August 2017 when some 700,000 Rohingya fled Rakhine to Bangladesh. In the book the military denied the allegations of abuses, blaming the violence on “Bengali terrorists” reportedly intent on carving out a Rohingya state named Arkistan. Upon investigation, however, Reuters found that three of the eight historical “documentary photos” from the book were faked: “The book purports they were taken in the western state of Rakhine,” when in fact one was taken in Bangladesh in 1971, another was of Rwandans fleeing into Tanzania in 1996, and a third, whose caption says it shows ‘Bengalis’ entering Myanmar, actually showed Rohingya and Bangladeshis leaving Myanmar in 2015.” Reuters called this a “chilling rewriting of history in what appears to be an attempt to justify the killing of thousands of Rohingya over the last year in attacks by the army that the UN has condemned as genocide.”¹¹⁶

In July 2018, police violently quelled a demonstration in Karenni State, tasing and baton-charging protesters who were marching against plans to erect a statue of Myanmar’s independence leader, General Aung San (1915–1947). Ten Karenni youth activists were arrested and charged with alarming the public and incitement.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Reuters, “[Myanmar Army Fakes Photos and History in Sinister Rewrite of Rohingya Crisis](#),” *The Guardian* (31 August 2018).

¹¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 418.

In August 2018, a United Nations-mandated fact-finding mission found that the military abuses committed in Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan States since 2011 “undoubtedly amounted to the gravest crimes under international law,” and called for senior military officials, including Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, to face investigation and prosecution for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 413.

NAMIBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 2006–2009, 2011, 2016–2018.

NEPAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007–2018.

The Attorney-General, appointed by the new Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli, promised to amend flawed legislation on transitional justice mechanisms to bring them in line with Supreme Court directives and international law.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) held extensive hearings throughout Nepal during 2018, meeting victims of the country's decade-long conflict between government and Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist (CPN–M) forces (1996–2006). Although the terms of the two commissions were extended in 2018, concerns lingered over their independence and impartiality, particularly with the CPN–M, a vested party in the conflict, joining the ruling party in the new government in early 2018.

Due to flaws in the legislation setting up the transitional justice mechanisms, the international community had withdrawn support for the commissions, beginning in 2014. In June 2018, the Attorney-General pledged to amend the laws to bring them into compliance with international law, and in particular to withdraw clauses allowing amnesties for perpetrators credibly accused of war crime violations. However, the proposed amendments did not properly address concerns around entrenched impunity. Perpetrators who faced credible allegations against them continued to remain in positions of power. Cases filed before the courts remained stalled as the police and relevant authorities refused to conduct investigations that would enable indictments and prosecutions to proceed. The main political parties continued to insist that these were political cases and should not be handled by regular courts.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 421–422, 424.

NETHERLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 2004–2005, 2007–2018.

When on 17 January 1969 Joop [=Johan] Hueting (1927–2018) on television denounced the war crimes committed by the Dutch army in Indonesia during the police actions of 1947–1949, he received death threats from veterans and with his family moved to a hidden location for some time. Hueting had been a soldier at the time who had witnessed the crimes, which as a whistleblower he said were structural and ordered. Later that year, an official report confirmed 110 cases of “exceptional violence.” Journalists who subsequently interviewed veterans about the crimes were also threatened.¹²⁰

In February or March 2018, *Sax*, the magazine of Saxion University in Enschede, refused to publish an article about a film on the 1915 Assyrian genocide in the Ottoman Empire made by fourth-year media student Shayno Numansen ([1994–]) on the grounds that the topic was too sensitive and that threats and hate mail would endanger the student’s safety—a reason dismissed by Numansen.¹²¹

In August 2018, historian Coen Cornelissen was sued for posthumous defamation and for defamation by five members of the Ottema family in Almelo over his book *De Ottema’s, het relaas over een NSB-familie* (The Ottema’s, the Story of a NSB Family) (Denekamp: Heinink, 2018). The publisher was ordered to withdraw the remaining 69 unsold copies from circulation. During World War II, contractor Otte Ottema (1889–1981) belonged to the NSB (National-Socialistische Beweging, National-Socialist Movement) and his daughter Aly Ottema (deceased) belonged to the Nationale Jeugdstorm (NSJ; National Youth Storm, closely linked to the NSB). The complainants were Aly Ottema’s children.¹²²

On 4 October 2018, lawyer Bram Moszkowicz announced that he would sue historian Paul Bronzwaer from Maastricht for defamation of his ill father, Max Moszkowicz (1926–), and, possibly, for anti-Semitism. As a child, Moszkowicz had spent a thousand days in four concentration camps. In his biography, *De Bokser—het leven van Max Moszkowicz* (2018; *The Boxer—The Life of Max Moszkowicz*), journalist Marcel Haenen had quoted extracts from an interview with Bronzwaer, in which the latter had said that Moszkowicz exploited the Holocaust by posing as a martyr. When Bronzwaer publicly doubted the quote, Haenen replied that he had taped the interview and that

¹²⁰ Kester Freriks, “Overleden: Joop Hueting (1927–2018): Indië-veteranen jaagden hem zijn huis uit,” *NRC Handelsblad* (14 November 2018), 8; Kester Freriks, “Na zijn bekentenis kanelde het beeld over Indië,” *NRC Handelsblad* (20 January 2016), 12–13.

¹²¹ “De Aramese genocide lag te gevoelig, kreeg ze te horen,” *NRC Handelsblad* (10 juli 2018), 11.

¹²² Sander van Walsum, “[“Verscheurde” familie wil boek over NSB-verleden uit de handel](#),” *Volkscrant* (23 August 2018); Lucien Baard, “[Tweents oorlogsboek uit de handel: ‘Vecht niet tegen het boek, maar tegen het taboe’](#),” *Tubantia* (23 August 2018).

Bronzwaer had approved the text before publication. The president of the Jewish community of the province of Limbourg, Benoit Wesly, demanded Bronzwaer's apology, but when Bronzwaer issued a brief one, the Moszkowicz family did not accept it.¹²³

On 18 December 2018, the District Court in Amsterdam ruled that the National Archives had to re-examine the request by the Stichting Onderzoek Oorlogsmisdaden (Foundation Research War Crimes) to search the Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (CABR; Central Archives for Special Criminal Jurisdiction) for information about alleged Nazi camp executioners who were still alive. The archive's refusal to grant access was negligent and insufficiently substantiated, the judge found. The archive appealed the verdict, saying that it would not review the 300.000 relevant files for names of camp executioners still alive for three reasons: it was not its task, it was not practically possible, and it violated the European General Data Protection Regulation.¹²⁴

On 29 June 2019, Dutch-Surinamese journalist Sandew Hira was to give the annual Ketu Koti lecture in Amsterdam in commemoration of the abolition of slavery in the Dutch colony of Surinam (on 1 July 1863). After opponents, including Theo Para, charged on the Suriname online platform *Waterkant* that Hira was a supporter of Suriname's President Desi Bouterse and of an amnesty for the crimes against humanity committed under the latter's military dictatorship (1980–1987), the organizing institution, [Ninsee](#) (The National Institute Dutch Slavery Past and Legacy), canceled the lecture on 15 June 2019.¹²⁵

See also South Africa, Syria.

¹²³ Paul van der Steen, "[Excuus geëist na uitlating over Max Moszkowicz](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (4 October 2018); Paul van der Steen, "[Moszkowicz: aangifte tegen historicus die vader 'Holocaust-exploitant' noemde](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (12 October 2018); Paul van der Steen, "[Excuses na uitlatingen over Max Moszkowicz vallen verkeerd](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (26 October 2018).

¹²⁴ District Court Amsterdam, [Stichting Onderzoek Oorlogsmisdaden versus Algemene Rijksarchivaris](#) (18 December 2018); District Court Amsterdam, [X versus Algemene Rijksarchivaris](#) (27 May 2016); Marcel Haenen, "Stichting eist toegang tot dossiers oorlogsmisdadigers," *NRC Handelsblad* (12 October 2018), 8; Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid, "[Antwoorden Kamervragen inzake de beperkte openbaarheid van het Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging](#)" (letter no. 2396058; 4 pages; 31 October 2018); Marcel Haenen, "Nationaal Archief weigert kampbeulen op te sporen," *NRC Handelsblad* (28 February 2019), 2.

¹²⁵ Elsbeth Stoker, "[Ketu Koti-lezing gaat niet door na onenigheid over de spreker](#)," *Volkscrant* (16 June 2019).

NEW ZEALAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2017.

In 2019, pressure from the New Zealand Māori Council and the Māori screen industry organisation Ngā Aho Whakaari resulted in TV New Zealand (TVNZ) ruling out the sale of Māori archival material through its distribution deal with United States company Getty Images. TVNZ would vest access of its Māori material with a Māori body.¹²⁶

NICARAGUA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998.

NIGER

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2013.

NIGERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2006, 2008, 2010–2013, 2016–2018.

Decades-old communal conflict between nomadic herdsman and farmers in the Middle Belt intensified in 2018 and further exacerbated the security situation in the country. At least 1,600 people were killed and another 300,000 displaced as a result of the violence.¹²⁷

NORWAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2012, 2016–2017.

See Israel.

¹²⁶ “[TVNZ to Hand Over Control of Māori Archive](#),” *WaateaNews.com* (21 March 2019).

¹²⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 431.

OMAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2017.

On 13 June 2018, writer and online activist Abdullah Habib [see *NCH Annual Report 2017*] was released from Samail Central Prison while serving a six-month prison sentence on charges under article 19 of the Information Technology Crimes Act for “using the internet in what would prejudice the state public order” in addition to “contempt of religions.” Habib was due for release in October 2018, however was pardoned under Sultan Qaboos’ amnesty on the occasion of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 443–444.

PAKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2009–2012, 2014, 2016, 2018.

In May 2018, a mob led by anti-blasphemy clerics attacked and destroyed two historic Ahmadiyya religious buildings.¹²⁹

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998–2002, 2008–2010, 2013–2015, 2018.

PANAMA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2008, 2013, 2015–2017.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014.

PARAGUAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2005, 2007, 2009–2010, 2012, 2015.

On 24 March 2019, historian Milda Rivarola was attacked with eggs by a mob in her residence because she had denounced the asphaltting of a central zone of historical patrimony in her town, Quyquyhó, Paraguari Department, because it would destroy its colonial architecture and cobbled outlook. Rivarola is a member of the Academia Paraguaya de la Historia (Paraguayan Academy of History). She had been a journalist for the TV Pública Paraguay.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 448.

¹³⁰ Comité paraguayo de ciencias históricas, “Comunicado” (Asunción 25 March 2019); “[Atacan vivienda de la historiadora Milda Rivarola en Quyquyhó](#),” *Última hora* (25 March 2019).

PERU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2018.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission had estimated that almost 70,000 people died or were subject to enforced disappearance during the armed conflict (1980–2000). Many were victims of atrocities by the Shining Path and other insurgent groups; others were victims of human rights violations by state agents. Authorities have made limited progress in prosecuting wartime abuses by government forces, in part due to lack of collaboration from the Defense Ministry. According to human rights groups, prosecutors had only achieved rulings in 78 cases related to abuses committed during the armed conflict, as of May 2017, and only 17 convictions.

Although then-President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski granted former President Alberto Fujimori an “humanitarian pardon” in December 2017 based on claims of illness, on 3 October 2018, a Supreme Court judge overturned the pardon and ordered Fujimori’s imprisonment. An appeal remained pending at the end of 2018, and Fujimori had not been sent back to prison. On 12 October 2018, Fujimori supporters in Congress passed a bill that would have granted prisoners who are over a certain age and have served a third of their sentences the right to serve the remainder under “electronic surveillance.” Proponents of the bill said it was intended to ease prison conditions for elderly prisoners, but the timing and language in the bill showed its objective was to ensure Fujimori’s freedom. On 22 October 2018, President Martín Vizcarra vetoed the bill.

In April 2018, a senior prosecutor ordered that Fujimori and three of his health ministers be indicted in connection with forced sterilizations of mostly poor and indigenous women. At the end of 2018, Fujimori and his ministers had not been charged. In 2015, the government had created a national registry of victims of forced sterilizations committed between 1995 and 2001. More than 5,000 victims had been registered at the end of 2018.

In September 2018, the National Penal Chamber of Peru sentenced leaders of Shining Path, including its founder Abimael Guzmán, to life in prison for terrorist acts. Guzmán was already serving life in prison for the 1983 killing of 69 peasants in the town of Santiago de Lucanamarca.

In 2017, new evidence surfaced corroborating longstanding allegations that former President Ollanta Humala ordered egregious human rights violations, including torture, enforced disappearances, and killings, committed by security forces in the early 1990s at the Madre Mía military base in the Alto Huallaga region. In September 2018, a commission of lawmakers charged with investigating allegations of extrajudicial killings at the Madre Mía base in 1992 concluded there was sufficient evidence against Humala to warrant reopening criminal investigations.

Courts made much less progress in addressing violations, including extrajudicial killings, disappearances, and torture, committed during the earlier administrations of Fernando Belaúnde (1980–

1985) and Alan García (1985–1990). In August 2018, the National Criminal Chamber sentenced two retired military agents to up to 30 years in prison for their role in the forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of 53 people at the Cabitos military base, in Ayacucho, in 1983. In the same month, the remains of several victims were exhumed from a nearby clandestine cemetery and given to their relatives. The authorities estimated that some 20,000 people disappeared during the armed conflict. In September, President Vizcarra ordered the establishment of a genetic profile bank that would help in the search for those disappeared.¹³¹

PHILIPPINES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2015.

In April 2019, the Concerned Artists of the Philippines said that the presence the Marcos family—Imelda Marcos (1929–) and her three children, wife and offspring of former President (1965–1986) Ferdinand Marcos (1917–1989)—in any art event was a manifestation of the culture of impunity and forgetfulness as they continued to “move in cultural circles without the benefit of any recognition of or remorse for their crimes against the Filipino people” and “It is every Filipino artist’s duty to wage a cultural boycott on a family that advocates disinformation, historical revisionism, patronage and cronyism, dynastic politics, and outright suppression.” The remarks came as the President of the Ateneo de Manila University (a private Jesuit research university in Quezon City, founded in 1859), Jose Ramon Villarín, apologized for the “hurt” that the presence of Irene Marcos-Araneta (of Marcos’s youngest daughter, 1960–) in the Areté creative hub event on campus in early April brought to the victims of Martial Law (1972–1981). He also reaffirmed Ateneo’s commitment to the call for justice to the victims and the university’s stance against historical revisionism.¹³²

POLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2000–2001, 2004–2005, 2007–2011, 2014–2018.

On 15 November 2018, Jan Grabowski, a Holocaust historian working at the University of Ottawa, Canada, sued the Polish League Against Defamation, which was allied to Poland’s ruling nationalist

¹³¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 461–463.

¹³² [“Universities Challenged to Declare Marcoses ‘Personae Non Gratae,’ Barred from ‘All Events,’”](#) *Manila Times* (14 April 2019).

party, for libel after a campaign against him for his studies of Polish violence against Jews during World War II. In 2017, the league had said that Grabowski “falsifie[d] the history of Poland, proclaiming the thesis that Poles [were] complicit in the extermination of Jews.” Grabowski’s *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* documented the involvement of Poles in one rural area in finding and killing Jews who had escaped from ghettos and were trying to survive by hiding among gentiles. It was awarded the 2014 Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research. Grabowski said that he received death threats after its publication. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2017–2018*.]¹³³

In early December 2018, the government closed down the Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (IEŚW; iesw.lublin.pl; Institute of East-Central Europe) in Lublin. Its director, historian Mirosław Filipowicz (1963–), and most of the staff were dismissed. Founded as a NGO by historian Jerzy Kłoczowski, the IEŚW published a two-volume synthesis of Belarusian and Ukrainian history written by Belarusian and Ukrainian authors (Genad’ Sahanovich, Zakhary Shybieka, Natalia Jakovenko, and Jaroslav Hrytsak), which was never published in Belarus. An official research institute supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2001, IEŚW recently published a three-volume bilingual Polish-Russian companion to history for history teachers, prepared in cooperation with the Russian Academy of Sciences. A new institute supervised by the Prime Minister was founded to replace IEŚW, focusing on the so-called Three Seas Initiative (a forum of European Union member states in Central and Eastern Europe). Filipowicz also resigned his position as Polish co-chairman (2016–2018) of the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Issues (founded 2002), as a consequence of which the group ceased to exist.¹³⁴

On 21–22 February 2019, a French-Polish conference on “La nouvelle école polonaise d’histoire de la Shoah” (“The New Polish School of History of the Holocaust”) organized in Paris by the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and the Centre national de recherche scientifique was interrupted by Polish “patriots” in the audience. In its main evening broadcast, the Polish State Television TVP called the conference “a festival of anti-Polish lies.” In early March 2019, a publication of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research, the two-volume *Dalej jest noc: Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* (Night Without an End: The fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland) was attacked in the Polish press.¹³⁵

¹³³ “[Holocaust Expert Jan Grabowski Sues Polish League for Defamation](#),” *Times* (17 November 2018); AP, “[Holocaust Scholar Sues Group That Said He ‘Slandered’ Poland](#),” *New York Times* (16 November 2018).

¹³⁴ Mirosław Filipowicz, personal communications (3 December 2018; 22 March and 4 April 2019).

¹³⁵ Polish Center for Holocaust Research, “Declaration Concerning the Conference in Paris” (24 February 2019); Polish Center for Holocaust Research, “[Regarding Attacks on ‘Night without End’ and the Center’s Academic Credibility](#)” (12 March 2019); Mirosław Filipowicz, personal communication (22 March 2019).

On 1 March 2019, the Minister of Culture Piotr Gliński did not extend the mandate of historian Dariusz Stola, the first director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews (2014–2019). Stola was a professor at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, specializing in Polish-Jewish relations, the Holocaust, the Communist regime in Poland, and international migrations in the twentieth century. He came under attack from the politicians and media associated with the Law and Justice (PiS) government because he criticized the Amendment to the Institute of National Remembrance Act. [See *NCH Annual Report 2018*.] He then organized an exhibition entitled *Estranged: March '68 and Its Aftermath*, about the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign in Poland, which also mentioned cases of contemporary hate speech (with examples of online hate speech propagated by journalists of Polish State Television TVP). Stola was accused of slandering Poland. The new POLIN director would be selected by a committee vote.¹³⁶

In 2019, Jarosław Szarek, President of the National Remembrance Institute (IPN), at the request of Marcin Krzysztofik (chairman of the IPN department in Lublin), dismissed Grzegorz Kuprianowicz from the Lublin Commission in the IPN Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom. On 8 July 2018, during anniversary celebrations of the 1944 Sahrń massacre, historian Kuprianowicz, president of the Ukrainian Association in Poland, had declared in the presence of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko that on 10 March 1944 some 230–600 Ukrainian Orthodox civilians died in Sahrń at the hands of Home Army (Armia Krajowa) partisans as a retaliation for Ukrainian crimes on Polish civilians in the Wołyń / Volhynia region. Kuprianowicz was accused of offending the Polish nation. The Wołyń massacre had been recognized by the Polish parliament as a genocide in July 2016. Kuprianowicz was charged with insulting the Polish nation. Polish historians agree that the Sahrń massacre was the responsibility of the Home Army and the Bataliony Chłopskie (Farmers' Soldiers).¹³⁷

See also Israel.

PORTUGAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017.

¹³⁶ [“Dariusz Stola, Head of the POLIN Museum, in the Midst of a Political Storm”](#) (16 February 2019); [“Statement of Professor Dariusz Stola, Director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews”](#) (22 February 2019); Sławomir Grunberg and Others, [“Petition for Stola”](#) (no date [February 2019]).

¹³⁷ [“Grzegorz Kuprianowicz Dismissed from the Commission for the Protection of the Memory of Combat and Martyrdom”](#) (no date [2019]); [“Statement by the President of the Ukrainian society: Grzegorz Kuprianowicz”](#) (no date [2019]); Mirosław Filipowicz, personal communication (22 March and 4 April 2019).

QATAR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010.

ROMANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007–2008, 2010.

Randolph Braham (born Adolf Abraham) (1922–2018) was among the young Jewish refugees who became historians in their new country (in his case the United States). He specialized in the history of the Hungarian Holocaust.¹³⁸

RUSSIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1998, 2001, 2004–2006, 2008–2018.

On 3 July 2018, historian Yuri Dmitriev was charged with “violent acts of a sexual nature committed against a person under 14 years of age,” in what was widely seen as a trumped-up charge. [See also *NCH Annual Reports 2017–2018*.] This charge of sexual assault against his adopted daughter followed the earlier acquittal on child-pornography charges. On 18 December 2018, a new trial began behind closed doors.¹³⁹

On 18 March 2019, a court in Shali (near Grozny) sentenced historian Oyub Titiev to four years’ imprisonment for possession of 200 grams of marihuana. [See also *NCH Annual Report 2018*.] Titiev decided against appealing the sentence in order to retain his right to apply for a conditional release. On 1 April 2019, Titiev’s sentence entered into force. On 10 June 2019, the Shali City Court approved Titiev’s conditional release (release on parole) on 21 June 2019. In October 2018, Titiev had received the sixth Václav Havel Human Rights Prize of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Kelly Boyd, ed., *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* (London/Chicago 1999) 112–13.

¹³⁹ “[Yury A. Dmitriev](#),” *Wikipedia* (2 July 2018); “[Russian Stalin Historian Charged With Sexual Assault](#),” *RFE / RL* (3 July 2018); Halya Coynash, “[Russia Arrests Second Historian of Stalin’s Terror](#),” *Human Rights in Ukraine* (3 October 2018); PEN International, *Russia’s Strident Stifling of Free Speech, 2012–2018* (London: PEN International, 2018), 20; “[Historian of Stalin-Era Crimes in Court for Sexual Assault, his Second Trial this Year](#)” *RFE/RL News* (18 December 2018); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 485; Frontline Defenders, *Global Analysis 2018* (Blackrock: Front Line, the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, 2019), 23; EU Statement on Violations of the Rights of Human Rights Defenders in the Russian Federation (EU Doc. PC.DEL/397/18) (13 April 2018).

¹⁴⁰ PEN International, “[Oral Statement on Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly in Russia for the United Nations Human Rights Council 38th Special Session, Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association](#)” (18 June 2018); “[Václav Havel Human Rights Prize 2018 awarded to Oyub Titiev](#),” *PACE* (8 October 2018); Michel Forst, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, *World Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders* (December 2018), 427; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 481, 485; Frontline Defenders, *Global Analysis 2018* (Blackrock:

On 2 December 2018, Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky claimed to possess historical records that prove the authenticity of the Panfilov story [see *NCH Annual Report 2016*] in an article in the government newspaper *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, citing passages from wartime accounts declassified by the secret services in the spring of 2018.¹⁴¹

In the spring of 1968, Ludmila Alexeyeva (1927–2018), historian and editor of the Nauka publishing house (1959–1968), was dismissed and expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after she had protested against the unfair trial of dissidents Aleksandr Ginzburg, Yuri Galanskov and others. From 1968 to 1972 she helped produce the *Chronicle of Current Events* as an editor. She was frequently interrogated by the KGB and had to undergo several home searches. In 1976 she became a co-founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group (together with Yuri Orlov and Andrei Sakharov). From 1977 to 1993 she lived in exile in the United States. Alexeyeva eventually became president of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (1998–2004). In 2009, she received the Sakharov Prize of the European Parliament (on behalf of Memorial), in 2015 the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize of the European Parliament. She was a member of the Presidential Council for Human Rights.¹⁴²

See also Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, Poland.

RWANDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000–2017.

In June 2017, the United Nations (UN) International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) in Arusha granted Augustin Ndirabatswe's request for a review of his appeals judgment. His request was based on the grounds of "new information of an evidentiary nature" of relevance to the case. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) sentenced Ndirabatswe, a former planning minister in the government of former Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana, to 35 years' imprisonment in 2012 for genocide, incitement to commit genocide, and rape as a crime against

Front Line, the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, 2019), 23; "[Russia: Release Human Rights Defender Oyub Titiev, Urge UN Experts](#)" (Press release; 7 March 2019); Steven Derix, "Tsjetsjeniës laatste activist de cel in," *NRC Handelsblad* (20 March 2019), 14; "[Russia Human Rights: Chechnya Court Jails Memorial Activist](#)," *BBC News* (18 March 2019); "[Oyub Titiev Granted Parole](#)," *Frontline Defenders* ([June] 2019).

¹⁴¹ Matthew Luxmoore, "[Russian Minister Says Authenticity of War Legend Beyond Dispute, 'Amoral' To Dig Further](#)," *RFE/RL News* (3 December 2018).

¹⁴² S. P. de Boer, E. J. Driessen, & H. L. Verhaar, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Dissidents in the Soviet Union 1956–1975* (The Hague 1982), 12–13; *Index on Censorship* (2014 no. 1), 138–139.

humanity.

In 2014, the ICTR's appeals chamber had reduced his sentence to 30 years' imprisonment. The review of the appeals judgment, previously slated to begin on 24 September 2018, was adjourned until further notice.

In June 2018, an appeals court in Brussels, Belgium, ruled that the Belgian state was not responsible for the massacre of some two thousand ethnic Tutsis at Kigali's Ecole technique officielle (Official Technical School, ETO) during the 1994 genocide. The court said that the United Nations (UN) was responsible, given that the Belgian soldiers who evacuated the site and failed to protect the Rwandan civilians were serving as part of a UN force. The Rwandan National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (Commission nationale de lutte contre le génocide, CNLG) denounced this ruling as politically motivated.¹⁴³

On 15 September 2018, Victoire Ingabire [see *NCH Annual Reports 2011 and 2013*] received a presidential pardon.¹⁴⁴

See also Myanmar.

¹⁴³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 494.

¹⁴⁴ "[Victoire Ingabire: Rwanda Frees 2,000 People Including Opposition Figure](#)," *BBC News* (15 September 2018).

SAINT VINCENT

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014.

SÃO TOMÉ

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

SAUDI ARABIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2001, 2006, 2010–2011, 2013, 2017–2018.

On 24 June 2018, in the lead-up to the lifting of the driving ban, Hatoon Al-Fassi, an associate professor of women's history at King Saud University, Riyadh, human rights activist, and contributor to al-Riyadh newspaper, was detained in apparent relation to her women's rights activism, including her leadership in the movement to lift the ban on women driving. A few days earlier, on 19 June 2018, Al-Fassi had been put under a travel ban. The detailed circumstances surrounding her arrest remained unclear. She was not granted access to her lawyer or family and no information was given about her whereabouts. Since November 2018, Al-Fassi and nine other women's rights activists have reportedly been subjected to torture by electrocution and flogging, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

On 13 March 2019, Al-Fassi and the nine other activists appeared in a criminal court in a closed-door trial for the first time since their arrest. The charges were not made public; however, reports indicated that the ten were tried on charges for allegedly communicating with international organizations and foreign media and promoting women's rights. On 27 March 2019, following the second hearing, the court released three of the activists. On 3 April 2019, the remaining activists, including Al-Fassi, appeared in court and were apparently denied bail. On 2 May 2019, Al-Fassi and three other women's rights activists were temporarily released.

Al-Fassi was the author of *Sanawat fi 'Umr Al-Mar'ah Al-Saudiyyah* [Years in the Lives of Saudi Women] (2018), *Women in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Nabataea* (2007), and numerous articles and book chapters on women's history in the Arabian Peninsula. As a human rights activist, she was engaged in efforts to lift the ban on women driving. She was involved in initiatives to allow women's full participation in municipal elections, co-founding the "Baladi" campaign to empower women who wanted to participate. She led the campaign to include women in the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Assembly), resulting in the appointment in 2013, for the first time, of thirty women members. In 1993,

she founded the Sunday Forum, a monthly gathering of women with lectures on a wide range of issues. On 17 November 2018, the Middle East Studies Association of North America awarded al-Fassi the MESA Academic Freedom Award for 2018.¹⁴⁵

See also Egypt, Yemen.

SENEGAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017–2018.

SERBIA / KOSOVO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008–2018.

War crimes prosecutions remained hampered due to a lack of political will, adequate resources, and weak witness support mechanisms. Few high-ranking officials implicated in serious abuses committed in the war of 1991–1995 were held to account in Serbian courts. By August 2018, 11 war crimes cases were still at investigation stage and 19 were pending before Serbian courts. The Office of Serbia’s War Crimes Prosecutor issued two new indictments during the same period. In the first eight months of 2018, first instance courts delivered no judgments in war crimes cases. The appeals court acquitted six persons and returned one case to the first instance court for retrial. Since the establishment of the War Crimes Prosecutor in 2003, 44 final judgments have been issued, 74 people convicted, and 50 acquitted. The first trials in Serbia for war crimes in Srebrenica restarted in November 2017 after being plagued by delays. Eight Bosnian Serb former police officers resident in Serbia were charged with the killing in a warehouse of more than 1,300 Bosniak civilians from Srebrenica in July 1995. In June 2018, a witness quit the trial, stating he received threats despite having a protected identity.

In June 2018, Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz at the Mechanism for International Criminal

¹⁴⁵ Scholars at Risk, “[Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi Detained Over Women’s Rights Activism](#)” (19 July 2018); American Historical Association, “[Letter to King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud](#)” (Washington, 4 September 2018); Scholars at Risk, *Free to Think: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project* (New York: SAR, 2018), 17; Various academics, Letter to King Salman and Prince Mohammad bin Salman (6 November 2018); Human Rights Watch, “[Saudi Arabia: Detained Women Reported Tortured](#),” (20 November 2018); [MESA Academic Freedom Award: Hatoon al Fassi, 2018 Recipient](#) (16 November 2018); United Nations Special Procedures, [Letter about Saudi-Arabian Human Rights Defenders](#) (UA SAU 11/2018; 10 October 2018); “[Saudi Arabia Temporarily Frees Four Women Activists](#),” *BBC News* (3 May 2019); Scholars at Risk, “[Hatoon Al-Fassi, Saudi Arabia](#)” (24 June 2019); Scholars at Risk, “[Letter to His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud](#)” (25 June 2019); [NCH Campaign](#) (2018–2019).

Tribunals (MICT) in The Hague urged Serbia to officially acknowledge the crimes committed in Srebrenica in 1995 as genocide. In April 2018, the MICT sentenced Vojislav Seselj to ten years' imprisonment for inciting crimes through nationalist speeches in the Vojvodina, Serbia during the 1992 war. The Tribunal cleared Seselj of war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Seselj has already served his time, having been in custody in The Hague since 2003.¹⁴⁶

Kosovo

In March 2018, special prosecutor David Schwendiman at the Hague-based Specialist Chambers and Prosecutor's Office trying serious war crimes committed during the 1998–1999 conflict in Kosovo resigned his post. In May, Jack Smith, was appointed as the new special prosecutor. At the end of 2018, no indictments had been issued. The court was set to adjudicate cases investigated by the Special Investigative Task Force, prompted by a 2011 Council of Europe report accusing some Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members of abductions, beatings, summary executions, and the forced removal of human organs in Kosovo and Albania during and after the Kosovo war. Senior KLA fighters were expected to be indicted and stand trial. The court would operate under Kosovo laws, with 19 international judges.

By mid-June 2018, the European Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) ceased its executive functions in the Kosovo judiciary. By that time, mixed panels of EULEX and local judges had handed down four decisions related to war crimes. Formal investigations were underway in 33 cases and 374 cases were pending at a preliminary investigation stage. EULEX was involved in a total of 46 verdicts since its establishment in 2008. At the end of 2018, EULEX was set to hand over 900 unresolved cases to the local Special Prosecutor's Office, working with only two prosecutors on war crimes. The Human Rights Review Panel, an independent body set up in 2009 to review allegations of human rights violations by EULEX staff, ruled in six cases between January and September 2018 and found all inadmissible. Twenty-five cases were pending before the panel at the end of 2018.¹⁴⁷

SERBIA / MONTENEGRO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2007. *See* Montenegro and Serbia / Kosovo.

¹⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 506–507.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 509–510.

SEYCHELLES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

On 1 August 2018, the National Assembly approved a bill that would set up a seven-member Committee on Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity to provide the public with the opportunity to settle past political divisions and grievances that began with the 1977 coup d'état which made the Seychelles a one-party state until 1993.¹⁴⁸

SIERRA LEONE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2012, 2016.

SINGAPORE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2009–2011, 2015–2016, 2018.

The government maintained strict restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly through the Public Order Act, requiring a police permit for any “cause-related” assembly if it was held in a public place, or in a private venue if members of the general public were invited. The definition of what was treated as an assembly was extremely broad and those who failed to obtain the required permits faced criminal charges. Activist Jolovan Wham was prosecuted in 2018 for three counts of violating the Public Order Act for organizing two peaceful protests and a candlelight vigil. On 3 October 2018, performance artist Seelan Palay was convicted of violating the Public Order Act by walking from Hong Lim Park to parliament carrying a piece of art to commemorate the 32 years, since 1989, that political prisoner Chia Thye Poh (1941–) was detained under the Internal Security Act. Seelan was sentenced to two weeks in prison after refusing to pay a fine of S\$2,500 (US\$1,800).¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Laurence, “[Seychelles Approves First Committee on Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity](#),” *Seychelles News Agency* (2 August 2018).

¹⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 514.

SLOVAKIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013–2015, 2017.

SLOVENIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2018.

SOMALIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2003, 2006, 2012–2014.

In December 2017, Muse Bihi Abdi was sworn in as president of Somaliland. The Somaliland government arbitrarily arrested numerous journalists and critics—targeting people who spoke out on “controversial issues,” notably the ongoing border tensions with Puntland and unity with Somalia. In April 2018, Naima Ahmed Ibrahim (a popular poet), Mohamed Kayse Mohamud (a blogger), and Boqor Osman Aw-Mohamud (an outspoken traditional elder), were convicted under vague and overly broad criminal provisions for public criticism of government policies and public officials.¹⁵⁰

SOUTH AFRICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2004, 2006–2010, 2012–2018.

In December 2018, the Advertising Regulatory Board ordered fast-food outlet Chicken Licken to withdraw a commercial showing an African explorer conquering Europe in the 17th century. It said colonialism was “traumatic” for Africans and “not open for humorous exploitation.” The advert showed a young African, Big Mjohnana, leaving his village in 1650 and docking his boat in Holland in 1651 (one year before Jan van Riebeeck’s arrival in South Africa). A man called Sandile Cele had lodged a complaint with the board, arguing that the commercial made a “mockery of the struggles of the African people against the colonisation by the Europeans in general, and the persecutions suffered at the hands of the Dutch in particular.” Upholding the complaint, the board said: “While the commercial seeks to

¹⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 519.

turn the colonisation story on its head with Big John travelling to Europe, it is well-known that many Africans were in fact forced to travel to Europe in the course of the colonisation of Africa. They did not leave their countries and villages wilfully. They starved to death during those trips to Europe and arrived there under harsh and inhumane conditions.”¹⁵¹

In 2016, after nine years of litigation, the Department of Justice released to the nongovernmental organization [South African History Archives](#) (SAHA) the Victims Database of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), holding records of around 22,000 cases that came to the TRC. SAHA transformed the database into a format which can be searched for persons, sources, acts, perpetrators, witnesses and events; it became publicly available in May 2019.¹⁵²

See also Ghana, India, Malawi.

SOUTH SUDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2015–2018.

South Sudan did not make progress on establishing the hybrid court envisioned in the 2015 peace agreement, included in the revitalized agreement. It had yet to sign the memorandum of understanding with the African Union or promulgate legislation to establish the court. In May 2018, President Salva Kiir appointed General Gabriel Jok Riak as chief of defense forces of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). Riak was subject to targeted sanctions by the United Nations, European Union, and United States. In August 2018, Kiir announced an amnesty for Riek Machar and other rebel commanders, a move criticized as contravening international law prohibitions on amnesties for war crimes.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ “[South Africa’s Chicken Licken Colonialism of Europe Advert Banned](#),” *BBC News* (18 December 2018).

¹⁵² South African History Archive, [Press Release](#) (30 May 2019); International Council on Archives Human Rights Working Group, [Newsletter](#) (May 2019), 12.

¹⁵³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 540.

SPAIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999, 2002–2018.

In July 2015, the Defense Ministry blocked the declassification of archives dating from the Civil War (1936–1939) and subsequent Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), arguing that it was not a priority in times of crisis. The documents, dating from between 1931 and 1968 and stored in over 10,000 folders, had been classified under the 1968 Law of Official Secrets. Historians had had access to part of them in the 1980s but access was blocked again in 2010. In [September] 2018, the Commission for the Classification of Defense Documents approved a report that recommended that Defense Minister Margarita Robles authorize general access to pre-1968 documents regarded as confidential and kept in the General Military Archive in Ávila (which was one of eight historical archives). The commission's report concluded that the 1968 Official Secrets Act was not retroactive, meaning that no document prior to 28 April 1968, when the law came into force, was legally classified as secret and that, consequently, no declassification was necessary. The report added, however, that there was a provision in the historical heritage law that prevented the public from accessing documents whose release could threaten the security and defense of the state, even if they were not legally classified. In such circumstances, consultations could be authorized by the head of the department in charge of the archives (the defense minister).¹⁵⁴

In October 2018, sculptor and video artist Enrique Terneiro ([1969]–) was filmed painting a red dove and the words “Por la Libertad” (For Freedom) on the tomb of dictator General Francisco Franco (1892–1975). He shouted, “For freedom and the reconciliation of all Spaniards!” as he was grabbed by a security guard.¹⁵⁵

SRI LANKA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2004, 2008–2018.

The political crisis further slowed progress on ensuring truth and justice for grave rights violations during the 26-year-long civil war (1983–2009) between the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

¹⁵⁴ [“Franco-era Secrets to Remain Secret, Says Govt,”](#) *The Local* (25 June 2015); Miguel González, “Spanish Defense Ministry to Release Secret Documents on Civil War and Franco Dictatorship,” *El País* (19 September 2018).

¹⁵⁵ [“Why Franco’s Tomb Is a Headache for Spain’s New Government,”](#) *BBC News* (31 October 2018).

(LTTE) and government forces. President Maithripala Sirisena's sudden decision to appoint Mahinda Rajapaksa as prime minister raised fears about a return to past abusive practices and a further delay in transitional justice. Rajapaksa stepped down only after the Supreme Court ruled that the president's actions were illegal. After the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, instead of addressing allegations of serious violations by both sides, the Rajapaksa government had suppressed media, targeted rights activists, and continued to arbitrarily detain and torture perceived opponents. The new government that took office after Rajapaksa's electoral defeat in 2015, pledged at the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council to ensure accountability for conflict-related abuses. By 2018, however, while Sri Lanka had acted on some of the human rights-related undertakings, it failed to make much progress on transitional justice. Of the four mechanisms adopted at the UN Human Rights Council—an office on missing persons (OMP); a truth and reconciliation commission; reparations and non-recurrence; and a special court to ensure accountability through prosecutions—only the first had been established, three years later. The OMP published its interim report in September 2018, urging the government to provide interim relief to families of the missing while they waited for the investigations to be completed. The interim report importantly acknowledged that families of the disappeared were having difficulty trusting the OMP, given the government's long history of failed commissions, and called on the government to strengthen the OMP's authority and independence to work free from government interference. The OMP pledged to set up twelve regional offices throughout the country, and emphasized the need for redress, through a proposed Office for Reparations, to families of the disappeared. The government stated that it had drafted a bill on reparations for victims, under the terms of the UN Human Rights Council resolution. However, given the ongoing political uncertainty, it was unclear what future any of the transitional justice mechanisms would have.¹⁵⁶

See also United Kingdom.

SUDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2003, 2006–2018.

Amid an ongoing economic crisis, President Omar al-Bashir reshuffled the government twice in 2018 and the ruling National Congress Party endorsed him to run for another term in 2020. Sudan had made no meaningful attempt to provide accountability for past or current abuses in conflict zones or other serious human rights violations. It did not cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) cases

¹⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 543, 545.

on charges against the president and four other men, of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Darfur (2003–present). On 11 April 2019, al-Bashir was ousted in a military coup d'état.¹⁵⁷

SURINAME

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2004, 2009–2010, 2012–2013, 2015–2016, 2018.

See also Netherlands.

SWAZILAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011, 2013, 2016–2018.

SWEDEN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2017–2018.

SWITZERLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999–2000, 2004, 2007–2009, 2014, 2016–2018.

See Israel.

¹⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 549.

SYRIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2002, 2004–2018.

In 2015, archaeologist Ghazwan Yaghi (1970–) and his wife, university librarian Lamis Yaghi, went into exile in the Netherlands after three year’s work in difficult war circumstances (2011–2014) and one year’s unemployment (2014–2015). Yaghi, a specialist of Islamic archaeology during the Mamluk sultanate (1250–1517), had been a director of the History Museum in Damascus. After some uncertain years, he had received a one-year research fellowship from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research in 2019.¹⁵⁸

See also Lebanon.

¹⁵⁸ “Vluchteling: In Syrië wás hij iemand – hier heeft Ghazwan Yaghi een tijdelijk contract,” *NRC Handelsblad* (30–31 March 2019), W10.

TAIWAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2008–2010, 2012, 2016–2018.

On 30 December 2018, the Transitional Justice Commission said that it might be unable to review 60,567 classified political files from the Martial Law period (1949–1987) in the National Police Agency (NPA) and National Security Bureau (NSB) archives due to difficulties in the declassification process. The commission was gathering political files relevant to the suppression of democracy and freedom under martial law, which it hoped to cite in a report due in late 2020.

On 25 February 2019, the commission stated that a total of 1,056 people who were killed or unjustly convicted in the crackdown during and after the 2/28 Incident—28 February 1947 with the crackdown that continued until May 1947 leaving an estimated 18,000 to 28,000 people dead—were expected to be exonerated. The total exonerated so far was 3,831. [See also *NCH Annual Reports, 2008, 2012, and 2016–2017.*]¹⁵⁹

See also China.

TAJIKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017–2018.

TANZANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2016–2017.

See Myanmar, Rwanda, Uganda.

¹⁵⁹ Chen Yu-fu, “[Declassification Slowing Justice Process: Source](#),” *Taipei Times* (31 December 2018); “[Agency to Release Third Exonerations List](#),” *Taipei Times* (27 February 2019).

THAILAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1999, 2001–2002, 2005, 2007–2018.

Despite evidence showing that soldiers had been responsible for most casualties during the 2010 political confrontations with the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), or “Red Shirts,” that left at least 90 dead and more than 2,000 injured, no military personnel or officials from the government of former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva had been charged for killing and wounding civilians at the time. At the same time, numerous UDD leaders and supporters had been prosecuted on criminal charges related to the “Red Shirt” street protests in 2010.¹⁶⁰

Shortly before 6 April 2017, a bronze plaque next to a statue of King Chulalongkorn (1853–1910) mysteriously disappeared in Royal Plaza, Bangkok. It marked the end of the absolute monarchy after 1932 (with the inscription “Here on 24 June 1932 at dawn, the People’s Party proclaimed a constitution for the country’s advancement.”). On 6 April 2019, King Vajiralongkorn hosted a ceremony in the throne hall, giving his approval to a new constitution drafted by Thailand’s military rulers. The plaque had been replaced with a new plaque, saying: “To love and respect the Buddhist trinity, one’s own state, one’s own family, and to have a heart faithful to your monarch, will bring prosperity to the country.” Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha dismissed the theft as unimportant and warned not to organize protests about the plaque. One activist who turned up at Royal Plaza to protest was detained; an opposition politician, who posted that the plaque was a national asset and should be protected by law, was charged under the Computer Crimes Act. Six people were arrested for sharing Facebook posts concerning the removal of the plaque. At the end of 2017 they remained imprisoned, facing charges on multiple counts of violation of Article 112 of the Penal Code (the *lèse majesté* provision).¹⁶¹

TIMOR-LESTE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003–2013, 2015–2018.

¹⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 577.

¹⁶¹ Jonathan Head, “[The Mystery of the Missing Brass Plaque](#),” *BBC News* (20 April 2017); Amnesty International, *Report 2017/18: The State of the World’s Human Rights* (London: AI, 2018), 360; “[Thai Coronation Heralds an Unpredictable Reign](#),” *BBC News* (7 May 2019).

TOGO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2008–2013, 2017–2018.

TRINIDAD and TOBAGO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

TUNISIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2011–2018.

The authorities frequently attempted to impede the work of the Instance Vérité et Dignité (IVD; Truth and Dignity Commission) since its creation in 2013. The IVD was tasked with exposing decades of crimes committed between 1955 (the last year of French rule) and the 2011 uprising that overthrew Ben Ali. In December 2018, the IVD had revealed that it had uncovered 62,720 cases of abuse and held confidential hearings for more than 50,000 of these. The IVD report detailed that the President Beji Caid Essebsi (1926–) was allegedly responsible for crimes committed while serving as a minister in the regime of Habib Bourguiba. Essebsi had reportedly overseen mass arrests and show trials against Bourguiba's political opponents following an attempted military coup in 1962. In addition, the report alleged extensive corruption by former President Ben Ali, his extended family and wider network and human rights violations including enforced disappearances and torture committed under his rule. The report also included findings from interviews with 1,782 Tunisian resistance fighters of crimes committed by occupying French forces before the end of French rule in 1956. Furthermore, it listed government efforts to prevent the IVD accessing national archives to find evidence of past crimes, as well as pressure from a union of security service workers who rejected IVD efforts to refer members to trial. Essebsi had criticized the commission's work, stating in 2018 that he was "against settling scores of the past." Parliament undermined the process of transitional justice by voting not to allow the Truth and Dignity Commission to exercise its prerogative to extend its mandate by one year.¹⁶²

The Transitional Justice Law mandated the Instance Vérité et Dignité (IVD; Truth and Dignity Commission) to transfer serious crimes to specialized chambers to be established within the country's

¹⁶² Ruth Michaelson, "[Tunisian President Accused of Complicity in Torture](#)," *Guardian* (26 March 2019); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 585–586.

court system that would “have jurisdiction over widespread or systematic human rights violations, including deliberate killing, rape and sexual violence, torture, enforced disappearance, and execution without fair trial guarantees.” The IVD had referred at least 173 cases to this court system. On 29 May 2018, the first trial of past violations in a specialized chamber opened in the city of Gabes. It related to the forced disappearance of Kamel Matmati, an Islamist activist whom the police arrested in 1991. The commission transferred to the specialized courts 16 other cases of human rights violations, including cases of torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detentions. As of November 2018, no verdicts had been reached.¹⁶³

TURKEY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2000–2018.

In 2013, pianist and composer Fazıl Say was convicted of inciting hatred against Islam following tweets he made, including retweeting a verse from a poem by 11th-century poet Omar Khayyám (1048–1131) who attacked pious hypocrisy. Say was given a ten-month suspended prison sentence before being acquitted in 2016. In 2018, Say’s concerts were canceled in Turkey because of his public defense of secularism.¹⁶⁴

On 25 August 2018, police in Istanbul forcefully broke up a regular peaceful protest by the so-called Saturday Mothers remembering their relatives who disappeared during the violence of the 1990s. Officers used water cannon and tear gas and detained about 50 people. The Saturday Mothers have met in central Istanbul since 1995 and this was to be their 700th protest. The sit-in was banned by the authorities under a new security law because it had been publicized on social media accounts linked to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). All those detained were released after giving statements to the police. The disappearances that were the subject of the protests took place during the height of the PKK insurgency. Turkey never investigated what happened to those who disappeared after being detained. Police prevented the Saturday Mothers from holding their sit-ins for a decade between 1999 and 2009 but this was the first time in recent years that police had intervened. The ban on holding the vigil at the traditional location remained in effect at the end of 2018. A Saturday Mothers’ vigil in Diyarbakir was also banned, as were all public assemblies organized by the Diyarbakir branch of the Human Rights Association from September 2018 onward.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 585–586.

¹⁶⁴ Kaya Genç, “Turkey’s Unnatural Selection,” *Index on Censorship*, 47, no. 3 (autumn 2018), 8.

¹⁶⁵ “[Turkey Police Fire Tear Gas at Mothers’ Protest](#),” *BBC News* (25 August 2018); Human Rights Watch, *World*

In September 2018, it was reported that the chapter “Living Beings and the Environment” would take the place of “The Beginning of Life and Evolution” in the standard national textbooks for 15-year-olds from that month on.¹⁶⁶

On 11 January 2016, the Initiative of Academics for Peace issued a petition “We will not be party to this crime,” signed by 1128 scholars from 89 Turkish universities and by more than 300 scholars from abroad (later the number of signatories reached 2212). [See *NCH Annual Reports 2016–2017*.] It called on the government to end its military operations in southeastern Turkey, including in civilian areas, and to stop violence against civilian Kurds. Shortly after the publication of the appeal, a criminal investigation was opened into the initial signatories, including the following historians:

- Ayşe Gül Altınay: see below.
- Candan Badem: see *NCH Annual Report 2017*.
- Büşra Ersanlı: see *NCH Annual Reports 2012–2013* and *2018*.
- Ahmet Ersoya: see below.
- Çigdem Kafescioglu: see below.
- Muzaffer Kaya: see *NCH Annual Report 2017*.
- Turan Keskin: see *NCH Annual Report 2017*.
- Ramazan Kurt: see *NCH Annual Reports 2016–2017*.
- Noémi Lévy-Aksu: see below.
- Zübeyde Füsün Üstel: see below.

Academics for Peace (founded 2012) were at first accused of making propaganda for the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) although many of the signatories were neither Kurdish nor pro-PKK. After the coup attempt of 15 July 2016, they were called “Gülenist coupist.s”¹⁶⁷

In January 2019 Ahmet Ersoya, a historian at Bogazici University working on the connections between photography, print culture, and archival practices in the late Ottoman Empire, was scheduled to be tried on charges of membership of a terrorist organization for signing the 2016 peace petition, risking five to

Report 2019: Events of 2018 (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 591; Toon Beemsterboer, “Zelfs de Zaterdagmoeders mogen van Erdogan niet meer betogen,” *NRC Handelsblad* (28 November 2018), 7.

¹⁶⁶ “[Turkish Schools to Stop Teaching Evolution, Official Says](#),” *Guardian* (23 June 2017); Toon Beemsterboer, “Darwin raakt in ongenade in Turkije,” *NRC Handelsblad* (30 June 2017); Selim Girit, “[Are Turkey’s Schools Dropping Evolution and Teaching Jihad?](#)” *BBC News* (22 August 2017); Kaya Genç, “Turkey’s Unnatural Selection,” *Index on Censorship*, 47, no. 3 (autumn 2018), 8.

¹⁶⁷ Candam Badem, “[The Quest to Quell Opposition Leads to ‘Academocide’](#),” *University World News* (10 February 2017).

ten years' imprisonment. His wife Çigdem Kafescioglu, an urban historian, was charged with fifteen months' imprisonment for "conducting terrorist propaganda through the peace petition," but the punishment was suspended while she was put on probation for five years.¹⁶⁸

On 25 February 2019, the Istanbul Regional Appeals Court upheld the 15-month sentence of historian and political scientist (Zübeyde) Füsun Üstel, originally imposed on 4 April 2018 for signing the 2016 petition. Üstel was tried under charges of "conducting propaganda for a terrorist organisation" (article no. 7.2 of Anti-Terror Law no. 3713). She was the first academic to refuse the legal provision offered by the courts when prison sentences are less than two years. The provision involved a "statement of penitence" by the defendant and suspension of the pronouncement of judgment for a period of five years, during which the defendant was supposed to refrain from committing further "crimes." She was imprisoned on 8 May 2019.

Üstel, a retired professor from Galatasaray University in Istanbul, published a series of articles in Turkey-based and international journals of social sciences, mostly focusing on the history of Turkey, nationalism, and identity issues. Among her works are *Citizenship Education from the Constitutional Monarchy until Today* (in Turkish; Istanbul 2016, 7th edition) and *Turkish Homes* (in Turkish; Istanbul 2017, 4th edition).¹⁶⁹

On 21 May 2019, Ayşe Gül Altınay, professor of cultural anthropology and director of the Gender and Women's Studies Center at Sabancı University in Istanbul, was charged with "knowingly and willingly supporting a terrorist organization as a non-member" and sentenced to 25 months in prison for signing the 2016 petition. Since her prison term is over two years, it was not deferred. She appealed the sentence. Altınay's research and writing focused on militarism, nationalism, violence, memory, gender, and sexuality. It includes *The Grandchildren: The Hidden Legacy of Lost Armenians in Turkey* (2014, with Fethiye Çetin), *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence* (2016, with Andrea Petö), and *Women Mobilizing Memory* (co-edited with Maria José Contreras, Marianne Hirsch, Jean Howard, Banu Karaca, and Alisa Solomon).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Ahmet Ersoya, personal communication (17 January 2019).

¹⁶⁹ Emily Seymour, "[Turkish Academic Who Signed Peace Petition Set To Go To Prison for 15 Months](#)," *Index on Censorship* (26 March 2019); Research Institute on Turkey and Others, "[Open Letter in Support of Prof. Füsun Üstel and All Other Academics in Turkey Facing Imprisonment for Advocating Peace](#)" (12 March 2019); Brendan O'Malley, "[Relentless Prosecutions of Academics for Peace Gather Pace](#)," *University World News* (4 May 2019); Tansu Pişkin, "[Sentenced Academic Üstel: 'We are at Where Word Begins, Not Ends'](#)," *Bianet* (7 May 2019).

¹⁷⁰ Tansu Pişkin, "[25-Month Prison Sentence for One Academic](#)," *Bianet* (21 May 2019); Utrecht Forum for Memory Studies, "[Statement of Support for Ayşe Gül Altınay, Turkish Academic for Peace Sentenced to 25 Months in Prison](#)" ([May] 2019); "[The Memory Studies Association Stands in Solidarity with Memory Scholar Ayşe Gül Altınay!](#)" ([May] 2019); Mnemonics Network of Memory Studies, "[Statement of Support for Ayşe Gül Altınay, Turkish Academic for Peace Sentenced to 25 Months in Prison](#)" (Ghent [May] 2019); "[Another Academic for Peace Sentenced to 2 Years, 1 Month in Prison](#)," *Committee of Concerned Scientists* (30 May

On 13 June 2019, French-born Turkish historian Noémi Lévy-Aksu, specialized in the history of state security in the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey at Boğaziçi University (2010–2017), was sentenced to 30 months in prison for signing the 2016 petition on charges of “terrorist propaganda” (article 7.2 of the Turkish criminal code). She taught at the International Relations Department of the London School of Economics (September 2018–). She appealed the verdict. Already on 22 February 2017, the Council of Higher Education (Yüksek Eğitim Kurulu, YÖK) had canceled her work permit at Boğaziçi University. Besides her book *Ordre et désordres dans l’Istanbul ottomane* (2013), she published several articles and book chapters on policing and urban history in the late Ottoman Empire. She co-edited *The Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman Empire: The Aftermath of 1908* (2017) and currently works on a manuscript entitled *The Power of Discretion: Martial Law in the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*.¹⁷¹

See also Germany, Netherlands.

TURKMENISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2004, 2009, 2011–2012, 2015–2018.

RFE/RL reporter, Soltan Achilova, who has been assaulted numerous times in previous years, was attacked on multiple occasions. In May 2018, for example, plainclothed security agents threatened her and blocked her access to a public memorial event, which she had sought to photograph.¹⁷²

In July 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the twelve-year prison terms of five men sentenced in 2017 for studying the works of the Turkish Muslim theologian Said Nursi (1868–1960) a Muslim Kurdish scholar, Sufi teacher, and political leader. The men were charged with incitement, financing criminal activity, and related offenses.¹⁷³

Police harassed Batyr Batyrov, a history teacher who had filed official complaints about corruption in education. In August 2018, the Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights (TIHR), an exile group, reported

2019).

¹⁷¹ Hala Kodmani, “[Noémi Lévy-Aksu: ‘J’ai été condamnée en Turquie pour “propagande terroriste”](#),” *Libération* (17 June 2019); “[Noémi Lévy-Aksu: Resisting in the Academic Sphere](#)” *5Harfliler* (12 March 2017); Scholars at Risk, [Incident](#) (13 June 2019).

¹⁷² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 597.

¹⁷³ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 599.

that police issued death threats to Batyrov and his family if he did not stop writing complaints.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 598.

UGANDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2017.

In April 2018, International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors completed their case against alleged former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commander Dominic Ongwen, charged with 70 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Ongwen's defense began its case in September 2018. Two ICC warrants remained outstanding for the arrest of Joseph Kony, long-time LRA leader and Vincent Otti, who was presumed dead. The LRA remained active in central Africa, but there had been fewer media reports of killings and abductions.

On 30 August 2018, the International Crimes Division (ICD) of the High Court confirmed charges against alleged former LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo, in custody since his capture in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2009. The trial began in September 2018 but was quickly adjourned until November, when Kwoyelo pled not guilty to all 93 counts against him. Pre-trial sessions in the case against Jamil Mukulu, alleged leader of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), captured in Tanzania in April 2015, started at the ICD. Mukulu and 34 others were charged with terrorism, multiple murders, aggravated robbery, and crimes against humanity over several years.¹⁷⁵

UKRAINE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2009–2011, 2014–2018.

Justice for conflict-related abuses and crimes committed during the 2014 Maidan protests and mass disturbances in Odessa remained unaddressed several years later, despite numerous pledges from the authorities to ensure justice. Law enforcement failed to preserve evidence after the events and to prevent suspects from fleeing the country. In April 2018, appeals hearings began against the acquittal of 19 anti-Maidan activists who were on trial for offenses related to the 2 May 2014 Odessa mass disturbances, which pitted pro-Maidan and anti-Maidan groups against each other, and in which 48 people died and more than 200 were injured. At the end of 2018, no progress was made in the appeal proceedings. Criminal proceedings continued against former members of the Berkut riot police battalion, charged with killing and injuring protesters in the February 2014 Maidan protests. In April 2018, charges against a pro-Maidan protester, Ivan Bubenchik, for killing two police officers in February 2014 were dropped after the prosecutor general cited a 2014 law exempting protesters from prosecution for certain crimes

¹⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 604.

committed during the protests. Bubinchik remained under investigation for illegal use of weapons and endangering law enforcement.¹⁷⁶

In June 2018, Lviv's Memorial of Glory to Heroes Fallen in World War II was vandalized.¹⁷⁷

See also Poland.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2016.

UNITED KINGDOM

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998–2001, 2003–2004, 2006–2018.

In July 2018, students at the University of Manchester painted over a mural of a poem by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), the 1907 Nobel Prize in Literature, arguing that the writer “dehumanized people of color.” The poem *If*, written around 1895, had been painted on the wall of the university's newly refurbished students' union. But students painted over the verses, replacing them with the 1978 poem “Still I Rise” by American poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou (1928–2014). Sara Khan, the union's liberation and access officer, said that the decision to paint over the mural was “a statement on the reclamation of history by those who have been oppressed by the likes of Kipling for so many centuries, and continue to be to this day.” The act sparked a debate.¹⁷⁸

On 1 and 2 October 2018, the United Kingdom Black History Month website was brought down twice by hackers in what its editors believed to be a case of “cyber-racism.” The website included resources for schools and details of forthcoming events. Black History Month of 2018 attracted significant attention because of the Windrush anniversary (70 years since the arrival of Caribbean migrants on the Empire Windrush ship to the UK), but also because campaigners complained that a number of councils had scrapped the name Black History Month, describing it instead as a celebration of all ethnicities,

¹⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 607–608.

¹⁷⁷ Antony Kalashnikov, “[Soviet War Memorials in Eastern Europe Continue to Strain Relations with Russia](#),” *The Conversation* (20 August 2018).

¹⁷⁸ Frances Perraudin, “[Manchester University Students Paint over Rudyard Kipling Mural](#),” *Guardian* (19 July 2018).

leading to accusations of appropriation.¹⁷⁹

On 23 December 2018, researchers reported that a vast cache of material dating from 1939 until the 1980s relating to Britain's nuclear weapons and atomic energy programs had been unexpectedly withdrawn by the National Archives within a week at the instruction of the government's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.¹⁸⁰

In 2018 it was revealed that around 2008–2010 the Foreign Office destroyed 195 files from 1978–1980, when MI5 and SAS personnel advised Sri Lankan spies and commandos how to counter Tamil guerrillas. In January 2019, the *Morning Star* disclosed that in 2014–2015 (in the weeks after the Foreign Office apologized for burning files about Britain's abuse of Mau Mau anti-colonial activists in Kenya [see *NCH Annual Report 2013*]) diplomats shredded another 177 files from 1981–1985 when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) uprising in Sri Lanka started. Only lists of file names survived, many of them relating to arms sales and counter-insurgency support. One historian, Phil Miller, called it an act of "historical vandalism." In January 2019, he said that the Foreign Office intended to destroy 40 files on Sri Lanka from 1986–1987.¹⁸¹

On 5 June 2019, the video-sharing website YouTube announced that it would remove material glorifying the Nazis from its platform in an attempt to stop people being radicalized. In the process, however, it also deleted archival material related to Adolf Hitler uploaded by some history teachers to help educate future generations about the risks of fascism. Among them were Scott Allsop (with a channel featuring hundreds of historical clips from old documentaries) and Richard Jones-Nerzic. YouTube said that Allsop's and Jones-Nerzic's material had been reinstated after an appeal.¹⁸²

Northern Ireland

In August 2018, the police arrested Belfast journalists Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey for their work on *No Stone Unturned*. This award-winning documentary examined state collusion in the 1994 Loughinisland massacre, when members of the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force killed six civilians and wounded five others in a pub in County Down. More than a hundred officers turned up at the journalists'

¹⁷⁹ Haroon Siddique, "["Cyber-Racism": UK Black History Month Website Attacked](#)," *Guardian* (2 October 2018).

¹⁸⁰ Robert Booth, "[British Nuclear Archive Files Withdrawn without Explanation](#)," *Guardian* (23 December 2018).

¹⁸¹ "[Britain's Foreign Office Admits to Destroying Hundreds of Files Regarding Start of LTTE Uprising in Sri Lanka](#)," *Sunday Times* (21 January 2019), Phil Miller, "[UK Shredding Sri Lankan Skeletons in the Closet](#)," *JDS, (Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka)* (30 January 2019).

¹⁸² Jim Waterson, "[YouTube Blocks History Teachers Uploading Archive Videos of Hitler](#)," *Guardian* (6 June 2019).

homes accusing them of document theft, under the United Kingdom's Official Secrets Act. Charges were dropped in June 2019.¹⁸³

The British authorities still wanted access to the tapes (interviews given in 2001–2006) of Anthony McIntyre (a former Irish Republican Army [IRA] volunteer who had been imprisoned for the murder of a Ulster Volunteer Force [UVF] member in 1976 and who had a PhD in history) of his activities (his role during the so-called “Troubles” in Northern Ireland). [See *NCH Annual Reports 2012–2017*.] They served a subpoena on Boston College in the United States seeking copies of the interviews. To that end, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) issued an International Letter of Request (ILOR). McIntyre wanted to know if an American court dealing with the case received his affidavit denying involvement in alleged terrorist offenses under investigation.

On 22 October 2018, the High Court ruled that while the ILOR was carelessly composed, this was not due to bad faith. It also ruled that all the tapes should be held in secure storage and under seal at the Royal Courts of Justice pending a the final outcome of the legal challenge. In 2019, McIntyre was granted a United Kingdom Supreme Court hearing in an attempt to stop the PSNI getting hold of the tapes. The Supreme Court was expected to sit in early October 2019.¹⁸⁴

See also China, Egypt, Turkey.

UNITED STATES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2018.

In December 2017, the State Department Policy Planning Staff denied a request from the State Department Office of the Historian to renew the terms of three members of the Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation (known as the Historical Advisory Committee, or HAC): James McAllister, Thomas Zeiler, and Katherine Sibley. Made up of nine scholars of United States foreign relations, the HAC advises the State Department Office of the Historian on aspects of declassifying and publishing diplomatic papers and documents. No reasons were given for the denial. Concerned, therefore, that the denial of renewal requests was a result of “politicizing a committee of non-partisan, academic experts,” HAC member Robert McMahon, who represented the Society for Historians of

¹⁸³ Ryan McChrystal, “Failing to Face Up to the Past,” *Index on Censorship* (2019 no. 2), 48–49.

¹⁸⁴ Alan Erwin, “Ex-IRA Man Loses Battle to Stop Police Accessing Interview Tapes,” *Irish Times* (22 October 2018); Maya Rubin, “[Ex-IRA Man Takes Academic Freedom Case to the UK’s Supreme Court](#),” *Index on Censorship website* (28 June 2019); Ryan McChrystal, “Failing to Face Up to the Past,” *Index on Censorship* (2019 no. 2), 49.

American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), resigned from his post in June 2018.¹⁸⁵

When historian Manisha Sinha, the Draper Chair in American History at the University of Connecticut and author of *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (2018), compared President Donald Trump with President Andrew Johnson (served 1865–1869) in an op ed published by Cable News Network (CNN) with the headline, “What happened the last time a President chose America’s enemies over its friends,” she received death threats. A man was identified and charged with threatening to commit a crime and making harassing phone calls. In the article she had argued that Trump and Johnson had delusions of personal grandeur and a tainted ascent to the presidency in common.¹⁸⁶

On 29 August 2018, Rutgers University found that James Livingston, professor in its Department of History, violated its discrimination and harassment policy following a string of racially-charged posts made to his Facebook in June 2018. The university was also re-examining the case. On 20 August 2018, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) wrote to the university to reverse its decision and protect faculty members’ constitutional right to speak as private citizens on matters of public concern. It said that, in accordance with Supreme Court precedent, an employee’s speech was protected if he was speaking as a citizen, it involves matter of public concern, or the government lacked “adequate justification” for treating the employee differently than the general public. On 5 September 2018, the American Historical Association wrote to Rutgers University objecting “to the university investigating and considering sanctions against Professor Livingston for comments made wholly outside of the context of his university employment and extraneous to his role as teacher and historian.” It defended the right of historians to express their opinions as private citizens without fear of institutional discipline.¹⁸⁷

In 2018, there was an outcry after the International Congress on Medieval Studies—held in Kalamazoo and organized by the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University—rejected a number of panels proposed by the group [Medievalists of Color](#). An open letter, signed by more than 600 scholars, denounced the organizers for “a bias against, or lack of interest in, sessions that are self-critical of medieval studies, or focused on the politics of the field in the present, especially relative to issues of

¹⁸⁵ Seth Denbo, “[Request Denied: History Faces an Uncertain Future at the State Department](#),” *Perspectives on History* (27 August 2018).

¹⁸⁶ Manisha Sinha, “[What Happened the Last Time a President Chose America’s Enemies over Its Friends](#),” *CNN* (27 July 2018); Rick Shenkman, “[Manisha Sinha Got Death Threats after Writing an Article Comparing Donald Trump to Andrew Johnson](#),” *History News Network* (30 July 2018).

¹⁸⁷ Emily Rolen, “[Rutgers History Professor Calls Out ‘Caucasian A**holes,’ Resigns from White Race in Facebook Rant](#),” *Philly Voice* (5 June 2018); Christian Zapata & Ryan Stiesi, “[Rutgers Reexamines Decision on Racially Charged Facebook Posts Made by History Professor](#),” *Daily Targum* (3 September 2018); American Historical Association, “[Letter of AHA President Mary Beth Norton to Rutgers President Robert Barchi](#)” (10 September 2018).

decoloniality, globalization, and anti-racism.” The panels about race that were accepted, some scholars noted, were organized by white scholars.¹⁸⁸

In October 2018, the provost of Augsburg University, Minnesota, suspended its professor of history and medieval studies Phillip Adamo for using the N-word during a class discussion about a James Baldwin book, *The Fire Next Time*, in which the word appeared—and for sharing essays on the history of the word with students who complained to him about it. The suspension letter, dated January 2019, cited “issues” raised by students related to bias and discrimination, respect for students, teaching competence, and program leadership. The American Association of University Professors wrote a letter of protest arguing that the suspension “appeared to have been primarily based on classroom speech that was clearly protected by principles of academic freedom.”¹⁸⁹

On 14 January 2019, judge Michael Graffeo of the Jefferson County Circuit in Alabama, ruled that a 2017 state law barring the removal or alteration of historical monuments wrongly violated the free speech rights of local communities, especially in the mostly black city of Birmingham (70% of the population was black). The state law meant to prevent the removal of Confederate monuments from public property. The state had sued Birmingham after its officials had tried to remove an obelisk that was erected to honor Confederate veterans in a downtown park in 1905. Rather than toppling the stone marker, the city had built a wooden box around it in August 2017. The state intended to appeal the ruling.¹⁹⁰

On 17 January 2019, the Army published a long-awaited two-volume study of the United States war in Iraq (2003–2011) that criticized decisions of some of the most senior officers and outlined lessons from the conflict. Written by a team of army officers, it was commissioned in 2013 by General Ray Odierno, when he was serving as the Army chief of staff, and a draft was finished by June 2016. Publication of the history had been stymied, as senior officials worried about the study’s impact on the reputation of prominent officers and congressional support for the Army. The study, totaling more than 1,300 pages, was posted on the U.S. Army War College website, along with more than 1,000 declassified documents used in the research. It drew conclusions about the United States failure to train Iraqi forces so that they

¹⁸⁸ Jennifer Schuessler, “[Medieval Scholars Joust With White Nationalists. And One Another](#),” *New York Times* (5 May 2019); Steering Committee of the BABEL Working Group and Others, “[Open Letter to the Board of the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University and the Organizers of the International Congress on Medieval Studies](#)” (s.l. 2018); Tom Bartlett, “[Medieval History Goes to War With Itself](#),” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (28 June 2019).

¹⁸⁹ Colleen Flaherty, “[Professor Is Suspended for Using the N-word in Class in Discussion of Language from James Baldwin Essay](#),” *Inside HigherEd* (1 February 2019).

¹⁹⁰ Jay Reeves, “[Judge Overturns Alabama Law Preventing Removal of Confederate Monuments](#),” *Time* (15 January 2019).

could become self-reliant; the limitations of coalition warfare; and Washington's inability to deter Iran and Syria from giving sanctuary and support to militant groups.¹⁹¹

In January 2019, Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly blocked publication of an issue of the city-funded *Dearborn Historian* because it carried a ten-page cover story entitled "Henry Ford and 'The International Jew.'" The piece was about industrialist Henry Ford (1863–1947), to mark the 100th anniversary of Ford (who died in Dearborn) buying the *Dearborn Independent* weekly newspaper, which he used as a vehicle for his anti-Semitism. On 30 January 2019, O'Reilly also dismissed the magazine's editor Bill McGraw (who authored the piece). On 31 January, the Dearborn Historical Commission passed a (non-binding) resolution that supported the article and McGraw, and asked O'Reilly to allow the magazine to be mailed to subscribers. On 25 January 2019, the *Deadline Detroit* published the story, which spread far beyond the magazine's small circulation, with O'Reilly's order to suppress it further stoking interest.¹⁹²

On 11 February 2019, a judge from the Court of Appeals (Fourth Circuit) ruled that school officials of Charles County, Southern Maryland, had not violated the First Amendment rights of Caleigh Wood ([1998]–). An 11th-grade student at La Plata High School in 2014–2015, Wood had refused to complete a lesson of the world history curriculum on "The Muslim World" that she said had forced her to embrace Islam in conflict with her Christian faith—and the Constitution. The court ruled, however, that the curriculum did not endorse a particular religion "and did not compel Wood to profess any belief."¹⁹³

On 8 April 2019, two persons were arrested on charges of vandalism and ethnic intimidation because on 31 March 2019 they had vandalized The Unsung Founders Memorial dedicated since 2005 to slaves and African-American workers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the university police said. The suspects were identified through university police video surveillance footage. They had ties to a group called Heirs to the Confederacy. In August 2018, protesters had toppled a Confederate monument on the campus, called "Silent Sam," seen by many as an emblem of white supremacy. The statue was stored at an undisclosed location on campus.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Michael R. Gordon, "[Army Releases a Critical History of the War in Iraq](#)," *Wall Street Journal* (17 January 2019).

¹⁹² "[Dearborn Mayor Fires Author of Magazine Story about Ford's anti-Semitism](#)," *Deadline Detroit* (31 January 2019).

¹⁹³ Court of Appeals (4th Circuit), Caleigh Wood versus Board of Education of Charles County and Others: [Judgment](#) (2019); Ann Marimow, "[Christian Student Challenged a School History Lesson on Islam and Lost in Court](#)," *Washington Post* (13 February 2019).

¹⁹⁴ Mihir Zaveri, "[2 Arrested in Vandalism of Slave Memorial at University of North Carolina](#)," *New York Times* (8 April 2019).

See also Canada, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, New Zealand, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, United Kingdom, Yemen.

URUGUAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2013, 2015–2018.

UZBEKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2014, 2016.

VATICAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2015.

On 25 March 2019, the entire board of *Women Church World* (founded 2012; a monthly supplement in the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano*)—consisting of eleven women including founder Lucetta Scaraffia (1948–)—resigned citing in an open letter to Pope Francis a campaign to discredit them and put them “under the direct control of men.” Scaraffia declared that pressure on her staff had intensified after it had published reports about sexual abuse of nuns by other members of the clergy. She added that the daily’s new editor, Andrea Monda, had tried to control the supplement’s editorial line and bring in external collaborators. Monda denied this. Scaraffia was a historian at La Sapienza University in Rome and a journalist.¹⁹⁵

VENEZUELA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2003–2004, 2006, 2009–2010, 2012, 2014, 2017–2018.

Since former Attorney-General Luisa Ortega Díaz had been dismissed in August 2017, no official information had been available about prosecutions of officials implicated in human rights violations. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported in June 2018 that impunity for human rights abuses in Venezuela was “pervasive.” In July 2017, Ortega Díaz’s office was investigating nearly 2,000 cases of people injured during the 2017 crackdown. In more than half of the cases, prosecutors had evidence suggesting fundamental rights violations, according to official sources. The OHCHR reported that 357 security officers were under investigation for alleged extrajudicial killings during raids of the Operation Peoples’ Liberation (OLP; launched in 2015 by the government, supposedly to address rising security concerns). The OHCHR said that security forces suspected of extrajudicially killing protesters had in some cases been released, despite judicial detention orders, and that the prosecutors had issued at least 54 arrest warrants for security agents implicated in the killing of 46 people during protests. A trial, though, had started in only one case.¹⁹⁶

On 1 February 2018, agents of the Sebin intelligence service detained Enrique Aristeguieta Gramcko ([1933–]), a lawyer, historian, and former politician, in the middle of the night in Caracas. Aristeguieta

¹⁹⁵ “[Vatican Women Editors Resign from Women’s Magazine](#),” *BBC News* (26 March 2019); “[Lucetta Scaraffia](#)” *Wikipedia* (retrieved 26 March 2019).

¹⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 648–649.

Gramcko was active in two groups that criticized the Nicolás Maduro government: he was the president of the Great National Alliance (GAN) and a board member of Soy Venezuela. A widely respected figure, he was a member of the Junta Patriótica, a congressman, ambassador to the Caribbean, deputy minister of home affairs, governor of the Nueva Esparta state, and president of the Supreme Electoral Council.¹⁹⁷

VIETNAM

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2006, 2009–2013, 2016–2017.

In [March] 2019, historian Tran Duc Anh Son (1967–), a former director at a fine arts museum in Hue and a deputy director at the Danang Institute for Socio-Economic Development, was expelled from the Communist Party “for posting false information” and “violating a code that governs party members’ behavior” after two Facebook comments. The first was a comment on a cartoon, which contained a character saying: “Seventy-three years ago they corralled people to a rally to listen to the Declaration of Independence. Seventy-three years later they forbid people to gather to celebrate Independence Day.” This referred to a famous 1945 speech by Ho Chi Minh in which the future president declared Vietnam’s independence from France, and an oblique criticism of the Communist Party’s current leaders, who escalated repression of political dissidents. In September 2018, Son had written underneath the cartoon the question “Is this true?” The second comment was a question he left under a post featuring two articles in the state-run news media about the country’s education minister. The question was: “How have things become this bad?” The Facebook comments prompted a monthlong investigation by the Communist Party Central Committee of Danang.

Son was a specialist of Vietnam’s South China policies, defended the view that Vietnam had irrefutable claims to the disputed Paracel (Hoang Sa) and Spratly (Truong Sa) archipelagos in the South China Sea (East Vietnam Sea) that China claimed as its own, and criticized his government for not doing more to challenge Beijing’s territorial claims. China had controlled the Paracels since 1974, when it seized them from South Vietnam in a naval clash. It had bolstered its foothold in the Spratlys later through an island-building campaign. China sought to justify its claim to sovereignty over waters that encircle both archipelagos—represented by what they now call the nine-dash line—by citing maps from the 1940s and 1950s. Son’s evidence consisted of older maps: he and other Vietnamese historians argued that the Nguyen dynasty, which ruled Vietnam from 1802 to 1945, wielded clear administrative control over the Paracels in the 1850s, decades before imperial or post-revolutionary China showed any

¹⁹⁷ UN Watch, “[UN Watch Condemns Venezuela Arrest of 85-year-old Activist](#)” (Geneva, 2 February 2018).

interest in them. But Son also said that his government was reluctant to use the records he uncovered to challenge China (Vietnam's next-door neighbor and largest trading partner).¹⁹⁸

When journalist Bui Tin ([1928]–2018), deputy editor-in-chief of the Communist party newspaper Nhan Dan, defected to the West on a visit to Paris in September 1990, he became persona non grata and his role on 30 April 1975 (the day of the Communist victory) remained unmentioned in the country's histories. An army reporter and a senior lieutenant colonel with the North Vietnam army, Bui Tin had been the highest-ranking officer when his team was ushered into the room where the defeated president General Duong Van "Big" Minh was awaiting to transfer power. In November 1990, he wrote "A Petition of a Single, Ordinary Citizen" to the Communist Party, in which he criticized the economic and political situation inside the country. In 1995, his "Following Ho Chi Minh: Memoirs of a North Vietnamese colonel" was published. His death was not mentioned in the Vietnamese press.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Mike Ives, "[Vietnam's Communist Party Ousts Historian Who Criticized Its China Policy](#)," *New York Times* (13 March 2019); Mike Ives, "[A Defiant Map-Hunter Stakes Vietnam's Claims in the South China Sea](#)," *New York Times* (25 November 2017).

¹⁹⁹ "[Obituary: Bui Tin, the Vietnamese Reporter Scrubbed from the History Books](#)," *BBC News* (19 August 2018).

WESTERN SAHARA

See Morocco / Western Sahara.

YEMEN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2003, 2010, 2013–2016, 2018.

In September 2014, Houthi forces (members of a Northern Yemeni faction) and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh took control of the capital, Sanaa, and much of Yemen. On 26 March 2015, the Saudi-led coalition attacked Houthi-Saleh forces in support of Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi. This international armed conflict killed and injured thousands of Yemeni civilians. As of November 2018, 6,872 civilians had been killed and 10,768 wounded, the majority by the United States-supported Saudi Arabia-led coalition airstrikes, according to the Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The actual civilian casualties were likely much higher. Thousands more had been displaced by the fighting.

None of the warring parties carried out credible investigations into their forces' alleged laws-of-war violations. The coalition's Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) did not conduct credible investigations. JIAT failed to release full investigation reports or detailed information on their methodology, including how they determined which strikes to investigate, which state's forces participated in attacks they investigated, or what steps, if any, coalition states had taken to prosecute individuals responsible for war crimes. While JIAT had recommended that the coalition pay civilian victims some form of assistance in more than a dozen attacks, the coalition did not appear to have made any concrete progress toward creating a fair, effective redress or condolence payment system. The United States was not known to have conducted investigations into any alleged unlawful attacks in which its forces had taken part. In September 2018, despite attempts by the Saudi-led coalition to terminate the mandate, the UN Human Rights Council voted by a substantial margin to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts to conduct international investigations into violations and abuses in Yemen. Yemen has not joined the International Criminal Court.²⁰⁰

On 22 August 2018, a fire destroyed the archives of the Awqaf Ministry (in charge of religious "endowments" or properties) in the capital Sanaa. The government blamed the Iran-backed Houthi rebels of looting the ministry, saying the fire aimed to destroy documents on the Awqaf's properties so as to allow the militias to seize these properties.²⁰¹

In the civil war (2015–), many cultural sites were ravaged, archaeological relics lost, and antiquities

²⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Events of 2018* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 661, 667–668.

²⁰¹ "[Yemeni Government Condemns Houthis for Burning Awqaf Ministry Archive](#)," *Asharq al-Awsat* (26 August 2018).

taken from Yemen's museums. In 2019, culture minister Marwan Dammaj circulated a 290-page report in Arabic and English that detailed the looting at the Aden National Museum, the Taiz National Museum (damaged after shelling in 2016), and the National Museum of Zinjibar, and a catalog of 1,631 objects missing from the museums. The list included ivory figurines from the ancient Kingdom of Saba (the mythic realm of the Queen of Sheba); Roman-era golden coins and marble statuettes; brass finials; and Hebrew manuscripts. Mwatana, an independent Yemeni human rights group, cited Houthi forces in the looting of several museums, though it also accused Saudi air forces of bombing cultural sites where they believed Houthi combatants had taken shelter. In February 2019, the Malaysia-based Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization charged the Houthis with plundering manuscripts, historical texts and Islamic relics from the library of Zabid, Yemen's capital during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.²⁰²

²⁰² Tom Mashberg, "[Yemen Asks U.S. for Help to Curb Smuggling of Looted Ancient Artifacts](#)," *New York Times* (6 March 2019).

ZAMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2015.

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