

# HRWG ica

human rights working group  
international council on archives  
groupe de travail sur les droits de l'homme  
conseil international des archives

*February 20 is the World Day of Social Justice; February 21 is International Mother Language Day*

## News of January 2012

Compiled by Trudy Huskamp Peterson, Chair, HRWG

The following is number twenty-sixth in a series of brief discussions of the Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the archival holdings that relate to them.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.***(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.*

Quickly look at the text of Article 25. Notice that there are three ideas there: clause 1 states the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to have a social safety net, and clause 2 speaks to the social protection of mothers and children. Because the range of the issues in Article 25 is so broad, this month's essay will cover clause 1, and next month's essay will cover clause two.

Originally, the drafters of the UDHR had separate articles for food and housing, for medical care, on social security generally, and on the protection of motherhood. The right to adequate clothing was added at the urging of the Philippine delegate. But how did they get pushed together in one, complex article, particularly when Article 22 had already stated that everyone has a "right to social security"? Even the major chronicler of the UDHR, Johannes Morsink, finds it hard to explain the duplication and merger, saying only that the Commission merged these elements because it "was very eager to keep things short and to the point." (Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting and Intent*, pp. 191-210) With hindsight, they failed. Article 25, clause 1, has issues of concern to the World Food Organization, World Health Organization, International Labor Organization (unemployment and worker benefits), the High Commissioners for Refugees and on Human Rights, all national, regional and local governments, religious bodies, labor unions, and civil society organizations.

The very complexity of Article 25, clause 1, means that it has been interpreted by many additional treaties, declarations, Commission on Human Rights resolutions and general comments, and the “outcome documents” from international conferences. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued fact sheets on the right to adequate housing (fact sheet no. 21), harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and children (no. 23), and the right to health (no. 31) <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf>. The International Labor Organization’s program on the Global Extension of Social Security, a “global knowledge sharing platform” has much useful information <http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/ShowWiki.do?wid=9>. The Human Rights Library at the University of Minnesota has a study guide on the right to means for adequate health, with extracts of relevant treaties and conventions and useful links at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/studyguides/righttohealth.html>.

As one would expect, advocates for an enormous variety of issues use this portmanteau Article. They range from advocacy for help for persons with AIDS and security for those with disabilities to a man in Canada who cited the Article recently when arguing that a ban on keeping chickens in his city backyard violated his right to food security. During the 1948 drafting of Article 25 the delegate from New Zealand objected to the phrase “himself and of his family,” arguing that the right to social services did not come “only through the head of the family;” women’s rights advocates using Article 25 explain that heads of families can be male or female. Labor organizations use Article 25’s right to unemployment compensation to urge protections for migrant workers, while environmental activists use the right to health to protest the effects of dumping on toxic and dangerous products and wastes.

Given the sweep of Article 25’s first clause, it is hard to think of an archives that does NOT have records related to it. From firms to families, union to social services institutions, environmental agencies, courts and legislatures and international bodies: all have records that are pertinent to Article 25. Contemporary society is a massive creator of records on the social safety net—and the lack of it—and archives teem with these records.

**Human Rights Working Group News.** The Human Rights Working Group will hold an open meeting at the Quadrennial Congress of Archivists in Brisbane, Australia, in August. If you plan to come to the Congress, please plan to join us. The final Congress schedule will list the time and place.

### **International news.**

United Nations. Fifty photographs from the Lodz, Poland, State Archives are on display at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Taken by professional Jewish photographers who were asked by the Jewish council to document daily life in the ghetto, approximately 12,000 images survive. Almost all the persons photographed died in the ghetto or were killed in Nazi extermination camps. One of the survivors, Roman Kent, spoke at the opening of the exhibit, and the *Huffington Post* reported that he remarked “a photograph cannot capture the stench of a

dead body, the numbness of fingers from the freezing cold, the feeling of a parent who knows they will never see their child again, or having the will to live another day.” The exhibit was organized by the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, and was previously shown in Poland and Germany.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/martha-flumenbaum/at-the-united-nations-pic\\_b\\_1229920.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/martha-flumenbaum/at-the-united-nations-pic_b_1229920.html)

Bulgaria/Czech Republic/Germany/Slovakia. *Transitions Online* carried a lengthy feature article on secret police archives in the former Eastern European bloc countries. The author pointed out that the archives of the Stasi (former East German secret police) amount to 111 kilometers of material, including 43 kilometers of operative files on citizens, while Slovakia’s National Memory Institute and the Czech Security Services Archives together hold 18.2 kilometers for a 1989 population roughly equivalent to that of East Germany, a testament to the effectiveness of the Czechoslovakian secret police “lighting bonfires in the countryside, destroying untold reams of incriminating documents” in 1989. Bulgaria is beginning slowly to open its files, too.

<http://www.tol.org/client/article/22918-east-germany-stasi-communism-czech.html>

France/Rwanda. Two French judges, backed by technical experts, presented their report reconstructing the trajectory of the missile that shot down the plane carrying the Rwandan president on April 6, 1994, setting off the Rwandan genocide. They concluded that it is likely the missile was fired from the Rwandan military barracks. <http://www.rnw.nl/international-justice/article/rwanda%E2%80%99s-rpf-genocide-hook>; the report is at

[https://content12.wuala.com/rawcontent/O7QNpF0Oxx0mLPRA-s162YElwhjgHxVGFmXxDEMrCZq6CAbOOEGWKKH8J0xxhE56Xm7hwZwwZH7Cd9HkFFZKyb2OrLz\\_U01eM\\_AeeROYkJt1CfBwDkEQK5YktKbt6MBYrdb3exhYhOR9REOKmzs88uSRANITsirGFbMDw5CsWrwKA19BGckOii44LpDO8DbywOpnjErHa6hkwbaZo8v4JvnK9QYbOruFbXrGnM7Yq\\_TOWiUHzoa79cUyW47CjN4Z1hwdJYPOKQ2BOdDoTJs\\_H-sp-S6b06qIpnOwl2-JNY/Rapport-expertise-attentat-contre-habyarimana-6-4-1994.pdf](https://content12.wuala.com/rawcontent/O7QNpF0Oxx0mLPRA-s162YElwhjgHxVGFmXxDEMrCZq6CAbOOEGWKKH8J0xxhE56Xm7hwZwwZH7Cd9HkFFZKyb2OrLz_U01eM_AeeROYkJt1CfBwDkEQK5YktKbt6MBYrdb3exhYhOR9REOKmzs88uSRANITsirGFbMDw5CsWrwKA19BGckOii44LpDO8DbywOpnjErHa6hkwbaZo8v4JvnK9QYbOruFbXrGnM7Yq_TOWiUHzoa79cUyW47CjN4Z1hwdJYPOKQ2BOdDoTJs_H-sp-S6b06qIpnOwl2-JNY/Rapport-expertise-attentat-contre-habyarimana-6-4-1994.pdf)

Germany/Poland. In a strange series of events reported by *GlobalPost* quoting Polish media, two Germans and a Pole found three crates of documents relating to the Auschwitz death camp and smuggled them out of Poland. The current location of the crates and their contents is a mystery, but they were reported to contain “military service records and over 100 personnel files.” Polish prosecutors are investigating; if found and genuine, the records could be useful in prosecuting crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regimes on Polish territory.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/europe/germany/120117/auschwitz-documents-surface-then-vanish>

Ireland/ United Kingdom/United States. The legal dispute over access to the oral histories and related materials on the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland now held by Boston College continued. A lawsuit filed by the oral history interviewers to try to prevent access by the British prosecutor was dismissed. This has led, the *Irish Times* reported, to the leader of the Fianna Fail party calling on Ireland’s justice minister to explain “why exactly he agreed to donate documents from the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, the body appointed in 1997 to oversee the process of putting ‘beyond use’ weapons used in the Northern Ireland conflict, to Boston College.” The party leader believes the records should be in

Ireland. <http://www.irishcentral.com/news/New-fears-about-Boston-College-and-confidential-documents-they-hold-137269188.html>;

<http://www.boston.com/Boston/metrodesk/2012/01/federal-judge-dismisses-suit-that-sought-block-release-interviews-former-provisional-ira-members/udtlnFTF8AbWpaKkIK2kxK/index.html>; <http://irishecho.com/?p=69426>

Kuwait/Iraq/United States. Writing in *Jurist*, Douglas Cox analyzed the links between Iraq not returning Kuwait's archives that disappeared during Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion and the Iraqi records that the United States continues to hold. <http://jurist.org/forum/2012/01/douglas-cox-kuwait-archives.php>

Russia/Sweden. A 1991 memorandum from the Swedish Embassy in Moscow to the Swedish Foreign Ministry says that the KGB told the head of its "Special Archive" to stop a search for documents requested by researchers working for the first International Wallenberg Commission. In an interview with the *Associated Press*, the archivist, now retired, confirmed the story, saying the access situation "has grown worse, and even the files that were opened to the public in 1991-1992 were classified again later." <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2012-01-16/wallenberg-KGB-disappearance/52598090/1>

### **National news.**

Albania. Ethnic minorities in Albania announced they will file a lawsuit with the European Court of Human Rights because Albania's Constitutional Court ruled that "nationality" would not be included on census forms or on "official books documenting birth," the *Southeast European Times* reported.

[http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/12/30/feature-03](http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/12/30/feature-03)

Azerbaijan. Approximately 4000 pages of records of the Caucasian Muslims Board have been transferred from the Georgian Central State Archive to the Board's archives in Baku, Azerbaijan, the Azeri Press Agency reported. <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=163020>

Bangladesh. Bangladesh is prosecuting persons accused of crimes against humanity during the country's 1971 independence war and will set up a second tribunal to "expedite the trial process," *PTI* reported. During the nine month war "official figures" (presumably in records) estimate that 3 million people were killed, 200,000 women were raped, and "millions more" had to leave their homes. <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/bdesh-to-set-up-2nd-tribunal-to-speed-up-war-crimes-trial/947112.html>

Belarus. Internet service providers and Internet cafes are "now required to keep records of user's personal data, the time they spend online, and which websites they visit," *Transitions Online* reported. Belarusian companies are also required "to register under the .by domain in order to sell online in the country," according to *BelaPAN*. The media did not report which part of government will maintain the registry. [http://www.tol.org/client/article/22930-belarus-blacklists-websites-romania-looks-to-privatize-health-care.html?utm\\_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm\\_campaign=cfa7a20c7a-TOL\\_newsletter-1\\_13\\_2012&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.tol.org/client/article/22930-belarus-blacklists-websites-romania-looks-to-privatize-health-care.html?utm_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm_campaign=cfa7a20c7a-TOL_newsletter-1_13_2012&utm_medium=email)

Belgium. Belgian authorities seized 25 files from the offices of Catholic bishops in three cities as part of an investigation into child sexual abuse. According to the *New York Times*, a spokeswoman for the Federal Prosecution Services said it “wanted to look at the individual personal records of priests made by their superiors to see if, in these records that were kept by archbishops or bishops, there is anything useful.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/17/world/europe/belgian-officials-search-bishops-offices-in-abuse-inquiry.html? r=1>

China. In a blunt essay published in the *Washington Post* and other newspapers, historian Sergey Radchenko denounced the closure of archives in China, writing, “Historians of China face secrecy and restrictions everywhere as the key archives remain largely inaccessible, even though the Chinese archives law provides for the opening of official documents to the public after 30 years.” Meanwhile the Chinese government announced it is creating a “national online marriage database to fight bigamy,” which “will include marriages dating back to 1949.” This, reported *CNN*, raises concern because in December *Xinhua*, the state-run Chinese news agency, reported “that hackers gained access to the personal information of 6 million users of the China Software Developer Network.” Further, the *New York Times* reported that China will require all users of microblogs to register “their true identities” with the government.

[http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/01/chinas\\_lockdown\\_on\\_truth.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/01/chinas_lockdown_on_truth.html);

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/25/world/asia/china-marriage-database/index.html?iref=allsearch>;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/world/asia/china-expands-program-requiring-real-name-registration-online.html>

Colombia. Colombia passed Law 1448 to provide assistance and reparations to victims of the armed conflict. The law contains major provisions related to archives, from Article 23 which states there is a right to truth, to taking a census (Article 48) and establishing a registry of property presumed to have been forcibly abandoned (Article 76) and a registry of victims (Article 154). Article 142 establishes April 9 of each year as a day of remembrance and solidarity with victims, and Articles 144-148 establish a Center of Historical Memory with important archival responsibilities.

<http://www.centromemoria.gov.co/archivos/ley%20de%20vctimas%20-%20final.pdf>

Egypt. Al Jazeera published an opinion piece by Hussein Omar entitled, “Who should save Egypt's archives?” He wrote that in the National Archives of Egypt the “state security plays arbiter” on access to the records and “continues to viciously restrict access to the documents to all but a privileged few.” He argued that in the new Egyptian state, intellectuals and the public must reckon “with what Egypt has in the past, what it will become in the future, and the dreams and disappointments that the nation’s upheaval has unearthed.” To do that, preservation of and access to archives is necessary.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/01/2012121132641226409.html>

Germany. The law creating the Agency of the Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records (BStU) was passed by Germany’s lower house of parliament, the Bundestag, on December 29, 1991. At the end of this December *Deutsche Welle* published an interview with the Stasi director, reflecting on the work of the past 20 years. <http://www.dw->

[world.de/dw/article/0,,15635205,00.html](http://world.de/dw/article/0,,15635205,00.html)

Guatemala. José Efraín Ríos Montt, the former military dictator of Guatemala, appeared in court to face genocide charges relating to his 1982-1983 regime. In a statement on the case, the Washington Office on Latin America said, “ It is significant that the Guatemalan justice system has initiated a judicial process against Ríos Montt, especially in the context of nearly total impunity in Guatemala for past and current crimes and human rights violations. However, there is a troubling lack of transparency within the Defense Ministry and unwillingness to provide still-classified information from the military archives that could be relevant to these trials. In 2009, then-President Álvaro Colom called for the declassification of military documents from 1960-1996, and in 2011 the Declassification Commission released its decision regarding which documents could be declassified. Although over 11,000 documents were declassified, the process is incomplete, as there were almost no documents presented from the years 1980-1985, because according to the government these files were lost.”

[http://www.wola.org/commentary/former\\_guatemalan\\_dictator\\_to\\_face\\_court\\_for\\_genocide\\_during\\_civil\\_war](http://www.wola.org/commentary/former_guatemalan_dictator_to_face_court_for_genocide_during_civil_war)

Haiti. After the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, the records from the Palace of Justice were gathered and stored in “a wet room . . . on wooden shelves chewed by termites.” Now, reported *Haiti Libre*, the records are being preserved, arranged and described with the help of a project team organized by the United Nations to “strengthen the criminal justice system by improving access to records, more particularly records management.”

<http://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-4628-haiti-justice-the-archives-of-the-palace-of-justice-under-restoration.html>

Hungary. There was good news and bad news from Hungary. The Association of Hungarian Archivists informed the International Council on Archives that the government’s resolution on the preparation of a new law on the files of the former communist secret services, which had occasioned many letters of concern by archivists, was repealed. However, the Hungarian government terminated the independent Data Protection Commissioner and replaced it with an administrative agency. Three Hungarian non-governmental organizations wrote to the European Union Commissioner in charge of Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, expressing their concerns on a number of issues including the abolition of the Data Protection Commissioner, saying, “As part of the executive and due to its dependence on the Prime Minister, the new authority is likely to become insignificant.” <http://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Letter-to-Viviane-Reding-29-12-11.pdf>. Thanks to Arpad Tyekvicska, David Leitch, and Zsuzsa Zadori for this information.

Indonesia. The Indonesian human rights commission met with survivors of the anti-communist purges of 1965-1966 in which at least half a million people died. The commission said it has collected “testimonies from 350 people who had suffered abuses but that it was struggling to find stronger evidence, in the form of documents and photographs, before submitting a report to the attorney general,” according to a *New York Times* account. The International Center for Transitional Justice has also been collecting survivor testimonies, again demonstrating the importance of preserving the records of non-governmental organizations.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/world/asia/veil-of-silence-lifted-in-indonesia.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/world/asia/veil-of-silence-lifted-in-indonesia.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)

Myanmar. The government of Myanmar signed a peace agreement with the Chin National Front, which has battled the government for 23 years, and with the Karen National Union, which began a struggle for autonomy in 1948 at the time of then-Burma's independence. According to the *New York Times*, the government says it is "negotiating peace pacts with other "major ethnic rebel groups," pointing up the importance of preserving the official records of treaties and the negotiating files that provide the background information about the pacts.

<http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/6370-cnf-signs-cease-fire-agreement.html>;  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/13/world/asia/myanmar-signs-truce-with-ethnic-rebel-group.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/13/world/asia/myanmar-signs-truce-with-ethnic-rebel-group.html?_r=1)

Niger. Reuters reported this frightening story: "Arsonists set fire to part of Niger's Justice Ministry . . . destroying files used in anti-corruption investigations." The fire destroyed "paper archives dating back decades as well as information gathered from a hotline that has led to the investigation of around 20 judges." Some digital files were saved, and the Justice Ministry "will attempt to reconstruct the files." [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/world/africa/niger-arson-destroys-anti-corruption-files.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/world/africa/niger-arson-destroys-anti-corruption-files.html?_r=1); [chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com):  
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-niger-corruption-firetre8021a7-20120103.0,1550985.story>

Pakistan. Following the U.S. raid on Osama bin Laden's house in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and the killing of bin Laden, Pakistan formed a commission to investigate the U.S. operation. According to reports in *Pakistan Today* and *Dawn.com*, the Inquiry Commission on Abbottabad Operation retrieved around 187,000 documents from the bin Laden compound, including diaries, letters and "other important communication material." The Commission is having the items, most of which are in Arabic and "other languages" translated, and it has taken statements from "the heads of military and civil intelligence agencies, Director General Military Operations, Pakistan's Ambassador to Washington, present and former foreign minister and secretaries, and wives and children of Osama." The breadth of the documentation being assembled forcefully demonstrates the importance of preserving the records of investigating commissions.

<http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/09/abbottabad-commission-report-soon-justice-iqbal.html/>;  
<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/01/abbottabad-commission-finds-187000-documents-from-obl-compound/>

Slovakia. *Transitions Online* published a report on the so-called "Gorila file" that supposedly proves "widespread corruption" in the second government of Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda (2002-2006), including "buying of votes in parliament." The file, which is reportedly circulating on the Internet, is said to contain wiretaps by the Slovak Intelligence Service in an investigation of a financial group that tried to influence the methods of privatization in Slovakia.

[http://www.tol.org/client/article/22915-slovakia-corruption-dzurinda.html?utm\\_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm\\_campaign=5791427247-TOL\\_newsletter-1\\_6\\_2012&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.tol.org/client/article/22915-slovakia-corruption-dzurinda.html?utm_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm_campaign=5791427247-TOL_newsletter-1_6_2012&utm_medium=email)

Ukraine. The journal *Ab Imperio*, which focuses on post-Soviet issues, reported that the head of Ukraine's State Archival Service, Olga Ginzburg, says that Ukrainian archives are "too open and easily accessible." According to her, this situation contributes to misuse of history by some young historians. <http://abimperio.net/cgi-bin/aishow.pl?idlang=1&state=shown&idnumb=39>  
Thanks to Steve Barnes for this information.

United Kingdom. The Cattles Group, which specializes in personal loans and debt recovery, lost two backup tapes containing information about 1.4 million customers, *SearchSecurity.co.UK* reported. <http://searchsecurity.techtarget.co.uk/news/2240113549/Cattles-lost-backup-tapes-highlight-risk-of-unencrypted-data-storage>

More embarrassing than losing backup tapes, Brighton General Hospital's computer hard drives were offered on eBay after they were stolen. The hard drives had information "on tens of thousands of patients," said the *BBC*, and the Information Commissioner's Office proposed a fine of £375,000, which the hospital is challenging. <http://www.out-law.com/en/articles/2012/january-/nhs-trust-facing-375000-fine-over-theft-of-patient-data/>

Scotland. Scotland's Information Commissioner, in an interview with *Scotland on Sunday*, said the out-sourcing of government functions to trusts and private bodies may result in the loss of the public's right to know. He pointed to public-private partnerships that maintain school buildings, private firms that clean hospitals and private prisons: "What we lose out on is the fine detail, the state of maintenance at a particular school or the cleaning standard in a hospital. You want to know exactly what is happening in ward 7 or classroom 7a because it affects your child or your relative in the hospital." [http://www.scotsman.com/scotland-on-sunday/politics/scotland\\_s\\_foi\\_powers\\_falling\\_behind\\_in\\_uk\\_1\\_2043290](http://www.scotsman.com/scotland-on-sunday/politics/scotland_s_foi_powers_falling_behind_in_uk_1_2043290)

United States. The Social Security Administration maintains a Death Master File that lists the dates of birth and death, Social Security numbers, and addresses of most U.S. citizens who died during the past 75 years. Although the Death Master File has been available since 1980, some states (which provide the information to the Administration) now are limiting access to their information to federal officials only, which will reduce the publicly available data by nearly two-thirds. The reason for the new restrictions is the use by "criminals seeking personal information for use in scams," says an official of an "identity theft protection website." [http://www.insure.com/articles/lifeinsurance/ssa-limits-death-records.html?WT.qs\\_osrc=fxb-46806310](http://www.insure.com/articles/lifeinsurance/ssa-limits-death-records.html?WT.qs_osrc=fxb-46806310)

A new study looked at what would happen "if patients were encouraged not just to see their medical records but to take them home, study them and really own them." A report of the study in the *New York Times* said that 90 percent of the 38,000 patients surveyed "thought they would be more in control of their care if they saw the notes" made by their physicians. Doctors "were ambivalent about opening their records." [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/10/health/policy/project-puts-records-in-the-patients-hands.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/10/health/policy/project-puts-records-in-the-patients-hands.html?_r=1)

In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, two professors argue that after a certain period of time all criminal records should be "sealed." They looked at data "for more than 88,000 people who

had their first arrest in New York State in 1980, and tracking their subsequent criminal histories over the next 25 years, we estimate the ‘redemption time’—the time it takes for an individual’s likelihood of being arrested to be close to that of individuals with no criminal records—to be about 10 to 13 years.” Starting in May, Massachusetts will limit employers’ access to information about convictions to 5 years for misdemeanors and 10 years for felonies.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/10/opinion/paying-a-price-long-after-the-crime.html>

*Delaware.* A controversy in Delaware over the ability of one group to adequately document another’s experience has ramifications far beyond the state. The immediate question is whether the Delaware Historical Society, a predominantly white organization, is the appropriate group to tell the story of the African American community in the state. An African American activist, who opposed the Society establishing an African-American Heritage Center, said, "They can do the research and learn the history, but as far as feeling the essence of the pain from our experiences it is not possible," adding that while he could empathize with Jews, "I can’t really feel the essence of their pain like they do." <http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012-01-24/delaware-black-history/52766216/1>

*Florida.* A murder conviction was struck down and a retrial was ordered by an appeals court when it found that “almost no records of the trial still existed.” Apparently the court stenographer had deleted the record on the primary “memory disc” and the backup on a PC was destroyed by a computer “infection,” leaving only some pre-trial notes and the closing arguments that were on paper. *Techworld* commented, “The paper records that are usually made by stenography machines were apparently not made in full, which means that the legal recording process failed in three separate media.” <http://news.techworld.com/security/3327502/murder-retrial-ordered-after-court-records-destroyed-by-virus/>

*Michigan.* While clearing out a trailer seized from a bankrupt company that did vocational training, a work crew found cabinets, office equipment, files and computers containing “Social Security numbers, checks . . . medical prescriptions and everything.” The work crew called a local television station who contacted the court that declared the bankruptcy. A court official said he had not been aware that documents were in the trailer and that the documents would be shredded. <http://www.myfoxdetroit.com/dpp/news/local/stash-of-sensitive-documents-from-bankrupt-business-found-20120119-ms>

*New York.* Another television news reporter found “dozens” of police files in garbage outside New York City’s 40<sup>th</sup> Precinct station house, including “at least one domestic-violence report, stolen property records, criminal complaints and mug shots.” The police later retrieved them, according to the *New York*

*Post.com.* [http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/bronx/bronx\\_cops\\_in\\_file\\_flub\\_FtFy50i23GDupS14Ieki4M](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/bronx/bronx_cops_in_file_flub_FtFy50i23GDupS14Ieki4M)

*Texas.* Responding to an investigation into allegations that a psychiatrist at Austin State Hospital abused eight boys in his care over two decades, the state's Department of Family and Protective Services announced that it will begin keeping its abuse investigation files for 20 years.

<http://www.statesman.com/news/local/state-decides-to-keep-abuse-investigation-records-for-2099007.html>

## **Publication, conferences.**

*Human Rights Based Approaches to Development: Concepts, Evidence, and Policy* by Varun Gauri and Siri Gloppen is a new World Bank Policy Research Working Paper. [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2012/01/09/000158349\\_20120109120516/Rendered/PDF/WPS5938.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2012/01/09/000158349_20120109120516/Rendered/PDF/WPS5938.pdf)

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., will host a panel discussion on Friday, February 24, on “Archives in Wartime: From WWII to the Invasion of Iraq.” To RSVP or for questions, contact [HAPP@wilsoncenter.org](mailto:HAPP@wilsoncenter.org).

The Steering Committee of the American Political Science Association (APSA) Human Rights Section, the Council of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) Human Rights Research Committee, and the Executive Council of the International Studies Association (ISA) Human Rights Section will hold their second joint international conference on the theme “Protecting Human Rights: Duties and Responsibilities of States and Non-State Actors” on 18-19 June 2012 at the University of Glasgow in Glasgow, Scotland, hosted by the Glasgow Human Rights Network. For further information, contact [ResponsibilityConference@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:ResponsibilityConference@glasgow.ac.uk).

The International Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections Conference on the Future of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans Histories will be held at the Amsterdam Public Library 1-3 August 2012. For information see: [http://www.ihlia.nl/english/english/english\\_home/LGBT%20ALMS%202012%20Conference/Information](http://www.ihlia.nl/english/english/english_home/LGBT%20ALMS%202012%20Conference/Information)

The Oxford University Refugee Studies Centre’s 30th Anniversary Conference will take place on 6-7 December 2012 on the theme “Understanding Global Refugee Policy.” Abstracts of no more than 200 words should be submitted by 1 July 2012 to Heidi El-Megrissi at [trsc-conference@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:trsc-conference@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

**Please share news with us! [trudy@trudypeterson.com](mailto:trudy@trudypeterson.com) or [j.boel@UNESCO.org](mailto:j.boel@UNESCO.org)**

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