

NEWSLETTER

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JULY 2022

Flooded houses, dead trees, wells contaminated with salt water – the inhabitants of the Indonesian island of Pari have done virtually nothing to cause the climate crisis.

Nonetheless, they are the ones whose livelihoods are now threatened by rising sea levels, while industrialized countries and Western companies – those primarily responsible for climate change – continue to shy away from commitment to real solutions. In order to change this, four residents of Pari took legal action against the world’s largest cement corporation Holcim in Switzerland. They are demanding compensation for damages already incurred, as well as that Holcim significantly reduce its CO₂ emissions.

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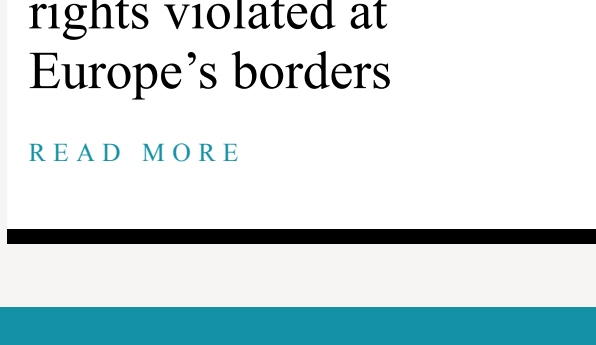
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Rising sea levels: Climate case against Holcim

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Brutal pushbacks: Child rights violated at Europe’s borders

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DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS!

The climate crisis is one of the most pressing problems of our time. This is why we are fighting for greater climate justice.

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INTERNATIONAL CRIMES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Time for reform: 20 years of the Code of Crimes against International Law in Germany

ECCHR has critically supported and helped shape the practice of international criminal law in Germany. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the introduction of the principle of universal jurisdiction, we recognize the important developments that the Code of Crimes against International Law has initiated. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement, for example, regarding the prosecution of powerful actors or cases which address sexual violence.

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BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



Rising sea levels: An island fights against its demise

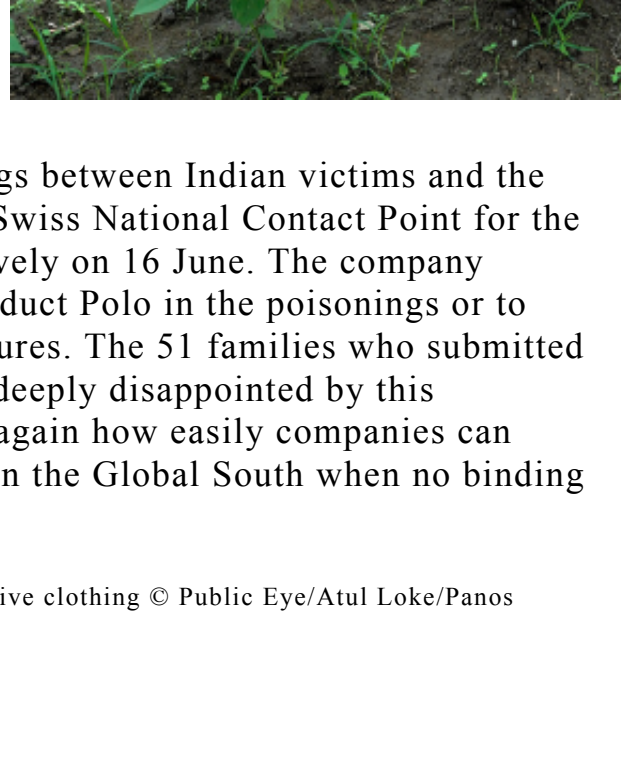
The highest point on the Indonesian island of Pari stands at 1.5 meters above sea level – for now. Climate change has caused seawater levels to rise steadily for years, leading to increasingly severe flooding that threatens infrastructure and biodiversity on the island. But the people of Pari do not want to simply accept the demise of their homeland. On 12 July, with the support of ECCHR and its partners, they submitted an arbitration request in Switzerland against one of the largest producers of climate-damaging greenhouse gases: the cement corporation Holcim.

The Indonesian island of Pari lies just above sea level © zvg

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Pesticide poisonings in India: Syngenta shirks its responsibility

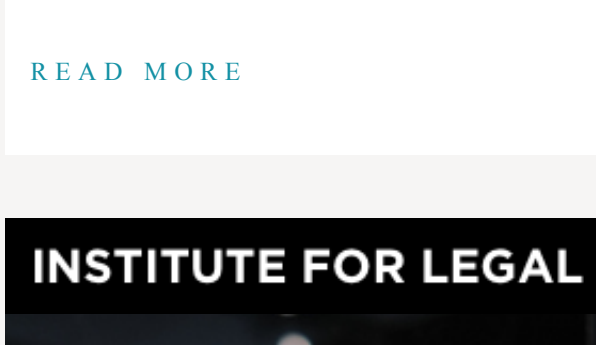


No restitution: mediation proceedings between Indian victims and the chemical company Syngenta at the Swiss National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines ended inconclusively on 16 June. The company refused to discuss the role of its product Polo in the poisonings or to introduce effective preventive measures. The 51 families who submitted a complaint in September 2020 are deeply disappointed by this development. The case shows once again how easily companies can evade their responsibility for harm in the Global South when no binding legal regulations are in place.

Indian farmer applies pesticide – without protective clothing © Public Eye/Atul Loke/Panos Pictures

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MIGRATION



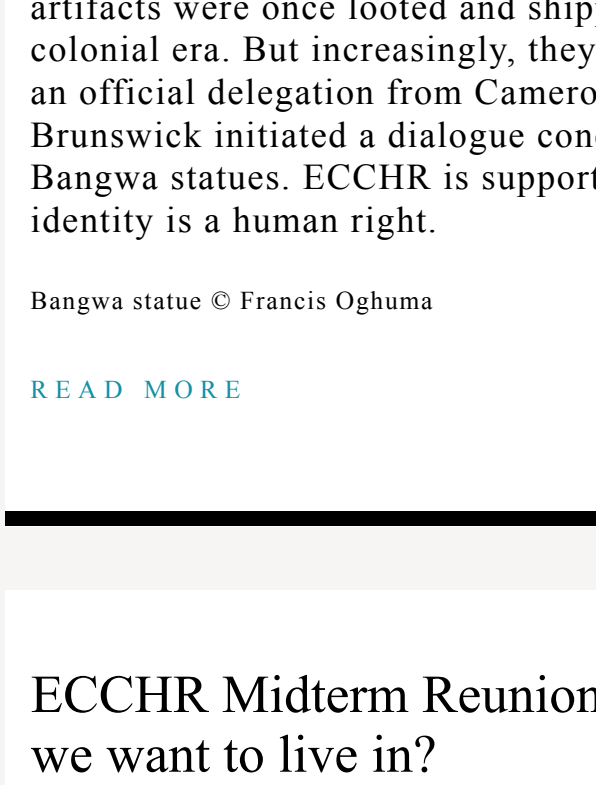
Violent pushbacks: Unaccompanied minor refugee sues Croatia and Slovenia

U.F. was eight years old when he was forced to flee from an armed attack on his home village in Myanmar. For years, he searched for a safe haven, but was repeatedly pushed back at European borders, often by force. On 1 July, with the support of ECCHR and [Blindspots](#), he submitted a complaint to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is the first complaint of its kind against Slovenia and Croatia, and was realized within the framework of the Advancing Child Rights Strategic Litigation (ACRiSL) project.

In search of safety © CRIN

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INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL INTERVENTION



Reparations and restitution: Cameroon demands the return of Bangwa statues

Whether still on display in glass cases, gathering dust in archival depositories or undergoing inspection by scientists, countless cultural artifacts were once looted and shipped off to Germany during the colonial era. But increasingly, they are being demanded back. On 9 July, an official delegation from Cameroon and museums in Cologne and Brunswick initiated a dialogue concerning the return of the so-called Bangwa statues. ECCHR is supporting the negotiations because cultural identity is a human right.

Bangwa statue © Francis Oghuma

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ECCHR Midterm Reunion: What kind of society do we want to live in?

At the end of June, almost 50 former trainees and staff gathered at ECCHR to celebrate the Midterm Alumn* Reunion together. Alongside the more casual conversations, the focus was on sharing knowledge and discussing societal and legal problems. Three alumn* organized a stimulating workshop entitled “Double standards: Russia’s war in Ukraine in a global context” with Berlin-based guests such as essayist Sinthujan Varatharajah. Another highlight was the discussion with well-known feminist Rita Segato at Südblock in Kreuzberg.

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ENFORCE HUMAN RIGHTS!

We use the law to hold irresponsible corporations to account. Support us in this work.

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PUBLICATIONS

Miriam Saage-Maaß

Ein überfälliger Schritt. Rechtsverbindliche Verantwortung von Unternehmen für Menschenrechte, in Vera Fischer et al. (eds.) *Grundrechte-Report 2022: Zur Lage der Bürger- und Menschenrechte in Deutschland*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, p. 29

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