

Section on Archives and Human Rights Book Launch (24 March 2021)

Today is the United Nations Day dedicated to the [Right to Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims](#) and ICA is pleased to announce the release of [Archives and Human Rights](#) edited by members of the [Section on Archives and Human Rights](#) (Jens Boel, Perrine Canavaggio and Antonio González Quintana)

This collective book examines why and how records can serve as evidence of human rights violations, in particular crimes against humanity, and help the fight against impunity. It shows the close relationship between archives and human rights which are crucial for the efficiency of the of the principles of the right to truth, justice and reparation, as well as a guarantee against revisionism.

Through a historical overview and topical case studies from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America written by experts, the book discusses how records can concretely support these principles. They are examples of their different uses especially in the countries in transition towards democracy: judicial, political, reparative, memorial, educative, historical. These examples also demonstrate how the perception of the role of the archivist has undergone a metamorphosis in recent decades, towards the idea that archivists can and must play an active role in defending basic human rights, first and foremost by enabling access to documentation on human rights violations.

The healing begins with the acknowledgment that painful chapters are essential parts of history; archives then play a crucial role by providing evidence. This book is both a tool and an inspiration to use archives in defence of human rights.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, explains in her foreword that archives documenting human rights violations are essential for the right to the truth. They are a tool for breaking cycles of violence and help building society's future. David Fricker, President of the ICA, writes in his preface that this book is an invaluable reference to inform our thinking in important areas, such as how archives can continue to advance a rights-based society for all. He emphasizes that all archivists can contribute to the development of societies that are just, inclusive and egalitarian.

The book is available for purchase via the [Routledge website](#) or an open access copy can be downloaded [here](#). The membership and the wider archival community can benefit from the experiences shared in this publication. We hope the book will serve as an inspiration not only for the entire profession but also for the general public on the value of archives and archivists for accountability, transparency and human rights.