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COUNTERING TRANSTATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Can Latin America and the Caribbean Trust China as a Business Partner?
Leland Lazarus and Evan Ellis – The Diplomat: 29 December 2021

A lack of due diligence, corruption, and a disregard for indigenous rights and the environment have characterized many Chinese infrastructure projects in the region.


South African inquiry points to systemic corruption during Zuma era
Alexander Winning – Reuters: 5 January 2022

A South African corruption inquiry pointed to systemic graft during former President Jacob Zuma’s tenure in the first part of its report published after more than three years of investigations involving more than 300 witnesses.


For more on this theme:

Tackling corruption, important step for ‘inclusive, sustainable development’

US sanctions Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik over corruption

U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption Reflects Global Enforcement

Libya orders arrest of second minister over corruption allegations

Laos adopts new measure to combat corruption: party expulsion

Indonesia corruption court jails executives at insurer for 20 years

Iraqi former deputy electricity minister sentenced to six years for corruption
https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/iraq/2022/01/05/iraqi-former-deputy-electricity-minister-sentenced-to-six-years-for-corruption/

Poverty, inequality and corruption: why Kazakhstan’s former leader is no longer untouchable
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/05/old-man-out-kazakhstan-discontent-to-change-leaders-legacy

Former South Korea president released from prison after corruption conviction pardoned
DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Role Of Corruption And Narcotics In The Thai Deep South Insurgency – Analysis
Murray Hunter – Eurasia Review: 1 January 2022
Institutional corruption and the narcotics trade within the Thai deep south are important dynamics of the ongoing insurgency. These two issues have often been neglected in most analyses of the regional conflict.

People Dragged From Homes, Executed as Colombian Rebels Fight for Control of Drug Trade
Erin Brady – Newsweek: 3 January 2022
Fighting between Colombian rebel groups has intensified, resulting in at least 16 deaths.

For more on this theme:

The Coming Middle East Narco Wars
https://www.newsweek.com/coming-middle-east-narco-wars-opinion-1661681

Amit Shah directs creation of call centre, canine squad, task forces to check narcotics abuse

The Deadly Link Between Social Media And Fentanyl Pills

Hezbollah drug trade: The dark web of drugs risks undoing economic, social progress amidst COVID

Iraq urged to ‘starve’ those profiting from rising drug trade

Drugs, violence and racism are creating a ‘cocktail of neglect’ in Marseille

India faces double drugs threat from Afghanistan, Myanmar

Niger Jails Two Journalists for Reporting about Hashish Trafficking

Record-breaking drug seizures point to pandemic narcotics boom
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

**GameChangers 2021: How Organized Crime Devoured the Amazon Rainforest**

Katie Jones, Maria Fernanda Ramírez and Juan Diego Cárdenas – InSight Crime: December 2021

The Amazon underwent record destruction in 2020. The rainforest lost an area the size of Belize, and the situation looks even bleaker in 2021. Deforestation reached record levels in Bolivia, Brazil and Peru. Colombia may break the trend, having reported moderate improvements in 2021.


**How can illegal timber trade in the Greater Mekong be stopped?**

Sheryl Lee Tian Tong – Mongabay: 30 December 2021

Over the past decade, the European Union has been entering into voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) with tropical timber-producing countries to fight forest crime. These bilateral trade agreements legally bind both sides to trade only in verified legal timber products. Evidence shows that VPAs help countries decrease illegal logging rates, especially illegal industrial timber destined for export markets. Within the Greater Mekong region, only Vietnam has signed a VPA.


*For more on this theme:*

- **Smugglers in India are exploiting an amnesty scheme that was meant to protect exotic animals**

- **‘More money than drugs or guns’: the illegal eel trade**

- **Hong Kong’s ban on ivory products comes into force, marking end of once-rampant industry**
  https://hongkongfp.com/2022/01/01/hong-kongs-ban-on-ivory-products-comes-into-force-marking-end-of-once-rampant-industry/

- **Zimparks Gets Tech to Monitor Pangolins**
  https://www.herald.co.zw/zimparks-gets-tech-to-monitor-pangolins/

- **Dual pressures of hunting, logging threaten wildlife in Myanmar, study shows**

- **Why deforestation in Brazil’s Amazon has soared to its highest level in 15 years**

- **How are Sensors Used in Conservation Efforts?**

- **What can world leaders do to make COP26 deforestation pledge a success?**
  https://news.trust.org/item/20211228235830-kkom9
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Smuggler and smuggled: The realities of human trafficking in Lebanon
Priyanka Navani – TRTWorld; 27 December 2021

At the heart of human smuggling is one unspoken practice: Not everyone whom smugglers take money from gets on the boat.

Horrors of Migrant Kidnapping in Libya
Jamal Jawhar – Asharq al-Awsat; 30 December 2021

All human smuggling routes in Libya are controlled by a large mafia. “Brokers” take migrants on rugged paths until they settle in Libya. On the way, if they fall into the grip of human-trafficking gangs, they are as good as dead.

For more on this theme:

Sex Trafficking: Humanizing the Data

Unraveling the World of Human Trafficking

Shadow payment system on rise among European people smugglers

Iraqi region hit by migrant deaths; smuggling big business
https://apnews.com/article/iraqi-kurds-seek-smugglers-despite-migrant-deaths-eb643df8dfda9f3ab546e55d8726e46

The Eagle's Nest: Migrants, Refugees Tread New Balkan Route
https://balkaninsight.com/2021/12/02/the-eagles-nest-migrants-refugees-tread-new-balkan-route/

Urgent action needed to halt trafficking of children in world's orphanages – report

Boat with 120 Rohingya refugees stranded off of Indonesia’s Aceh province

Traffickers are sending off child refugees to Britain
https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/traffickers-are-sending-off-child-refugees-to-britain-kdb58zqgh

New law to combat forced labor in China sparks enforcement debate

How law enforcement can use digital technology to intercept human trafficking
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

**Crusader Pushes for Internet Governance Fundraising**

*Daily News: 30 December 2021*

The Internet Society Tanzania pushed an agenda of fundraising to support schools of internet governance in United Nations member states during the recent 16th U.N. Internet Governance Forum.

https://allafrica.com/stories/202112310162.html

*For more on this theme:*

**(China, Global) China’s New AI Governance Initiatives Shouldn’t Be Ignored**

https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/01/04/china-s-new-ai-governance-initiatives-shouldn-t-be-ignored-pub-86127

**(Global) ICANN’s Accountability Mechanisms – in Name Only?**

https://circleid.com/posts/20211230-icannas-accountability-mechanisms-in-name-only

**(China) China’s draft regulation bans app providers from endangering national security**

https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202201/1245154.shtml

INTERNET FREEDOM

**Deluge of Digital Repression Threatens African Security**

*Nathaniel Allen and Catherine Lena Kelly – Africa Center for Strategic Studies: 4 January 2022*

African governments are using the pretext of security to restrict digital communications and citizens’ rights. In the process, they are inadvertently contributing to economic losses and greater instability.


*For more on this theme:*

**(Russia) Russia: Year of Doubling Down on Internet Censorship**


**(China) In China, Bragging About Your Wealth Can Get You Censored**


**(Thailand) Entrenching authoritarianism in Thailand**

https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/12/24/entrenching-authoritarianism-in-thailand/
PRIVACY

Americans Wary of Facebook TikTok; Want More Privacy, Fewer Ads
Vidhi Choudhary – The Street: 22 December 2021

Americans do not trust internet companies with their user information and want stringent privacy laws to curb social media platforms like Facebook from trailing their digital footprint, a new survey finds.


For more on this theme:

(Global) The Companies Benefiting From Fragmenting Internet Privacy Rules

(U.S.) Children, safety and the internet: How updating federal policy could protect kids online

(Global) Data privacy is already a challenge—and the metaverse could make it worse
https://news.northeastern.edu/2021/12/22/metaverse-privacy/

(Global) How Facebook And Google Will Shun Privacy In Web 3.0

CYBERCRIME

Top 10 cyber crime trends to watch for in 2022
Alkesh Sharma – The National: 28 December 2021

Industry experts expect cybercriminals to grow in sophistication and wreak more havoc across industries.


For more on this theme:

(North Korea) What Will North Korean Cybercrime Look Like in 2022?

(Global) In the Fight Against Cybercrime, Takedowns Are Only Temporary

(Global) Looking at IP Theft as a Cyber Criminal Offering
https://www.oodaloop.com/archive/2022/01/05/looking-at-ip-theft-as-a-cyber-criminal-offering/

(Global) Crypto cybercrime set to surge next year
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

How will cyber threats evolve in 2022? Here’s what experts say
Nitin Sreedhar – Mint: 20 December 2021

New predictions from cybersecurity companies point to a meteoric rise in ransomware due to cryptocurrencies and the threat to critical infrastructure.


For more on this theme:

(U.K.) Cyber-attack on UK’s Defence Academy caused ‘significant’ damage
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jan/02/cyber-attack-on-uk-s-defence-academy-caused-significant-damage

(Portugal) Portugal’s Impresa media outlets hit by hackers

(Belgium) Belgian military battles to restore systems after cyber attack
https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2021/12/22/belgian-military-battles-to-restore-systems-after-five-day-cyber-attack/

(Australia) Cyber-Attack Impacts Aussie Companies

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Agencies Still Developing Cybersecurity Policies for Critical Infrastructure
Joe Kuehne – BizTech: 20 December 2021

With the U.S. infrastructure bill signed into law, funding is now available for cybersecurity initiatives, but the federal government still has a long way to go in protecting critical infrastructure.

https://biztechmagazine.com/article/2021/12/agencies-still-developing-cybersecurity-policies-critical-infrastructure

For more on this theme:

(Global) Critical Infrastructure Is Under Attack: How Industry Can Secure OT Remote Operations Before It’s Too Late

(U.S.) PERSPECTIVE: A Smarter Grid to Help Protect Public Utilities from Cyberattacks

(U.S.) 3 Reasons Water Treatment Facilities Need Cybersecurity & 3 Strategies to Use
https://www.wwdmag.com/safety-security/3-reasons-water-treatment-facilities-need-cybersecurity-3-strategies-use
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

**UN investigators focus on ISIS terror camps in hunt for $50m war chest**
Nicky Harley – The National: 30 December 2021

United Nations investigators think they are close to finding ISIS’s $50 million war chest after uncovering leads in the terror group’s “inner workings” that point to camps housing its fighters.

[https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2021/12/30/un-investigators-focus-on-isis-terror-camps-in-hunt-for-50m-war-chest/](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2021/12/30/un-investigators-focus-on-isis-terror-camps-in-hunt-for-50m-war-chest/)

**Congo attacks show Islamic State’s expansion across Africa**

ISIS’s foothold across Africa is expanding amid a recent spate of gruesome attacks, and there are growing fears in Washington that the terror group, as well as other extremist outfits, will use the continent as a staging ground for future strikes against the West.


For more on this theme:

**The continuing war against Islamic State – comment**
https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-689915

**Sweden charges woman with allowing son to fight for ISIS**
https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2022/01/04/sweden-charges-woman-with-allowing-son-to-fight-for-isis/

**Fears over ISIS prisoners due for release in Germany**
https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2021/12/20/fears-over-isis-prisoners-due-for-release-in-germany/

**Persistent Terrorist Threats In The Philippines: Continuing Challenges In 2022**

**Analysts: Islamic State Poised for More Attacks in Syria in 2022**

**Follow the money: How to bring IS extremists to justice**

**A Fragile Partnership in Iraq Tries to Prevent IS Revival**
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

5 Terrorism Trends to Watch in 2022
Even if disparate extremist groups don’t overtly cooperate with each other, they can complement each other and aid shared goals.

Islamic extremists sidestep Facebook’s content police
Mark Scott – Politico: 19 December 2021
Despite Facebook’s claims that it would clamp down on violent hate speech, Politico discovered scores of groups on the social media site that support either ISIS or the Taliban.

For more on this theme:

Taliban Adding Suicide Bombers to Army Ranks to Bolster Defenses

The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan

The New Jihadists and the Taliban Model
https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/86049

Al-Qaeda Network in Brazil Designated as Global Terrorists

Former al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria seeks to soften its brand
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/02/syria-idlib-hts-qaeda-militants/

Ansaru reaffirms its allegiance to al Qaeda

Boko Haram Hostility Is Altering Livelihoods, Deforestation In Borno

Lebanon’s Hezbollah Leader Criticizes Saudi Arabia, Deepening Rift

Hezbollah’s inability to remove a judge has Lebanon in a standstill
https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2021/12/22/hezbollahs-inability-to-remove-a-judge-has-lebanon-in-a-standstill/

Hamas, Claiming Victory Over Israel, Is Stuck in Same Old Cycle
RADICALIZATION

Kurdish leaders say poverty 'biggest threat,' driving Syrians into arms of IS
Amberin Zaman – Al-Monitor: 27 December 2021

Offers of money by the Islamic State to join its ranks prove “irresistible” to those hit hard by Syria’s collapsed economy.

For more on this theme:

Kurdish Muslim Clerics Gather to Discuss Countering Radicalization
https://www.voanews.com/a/kurdish-muslim-clerics-gather-to-discuss-countering-radicalization/-6364511.html

UO organized seminar on ‘Radicalization of Youth & Role of Universities’
https://academiamag.com/uo-organized-seminar-on-radicalization-of-youth-role-of-universities/

U of W team working to help teachers identify radicalization in students

Gov’t puts on notice people radicalizing the youth in Tana Delta

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

China harvests masses of data on Western targets, documents show
Cate Cadell – The Washington Post: 31 December 2021

China is turning a major part of its internal internet-data surveillance network outward, mining Western social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to equip its government agencies, military and police with information on foreign targets, according to a Washington Post review of hundreds of Chinese bidding documents, contracts and company filings.

For more on this theme:

China showing Myanmar junta how to firewall the internet
https://asiatimes.com/2021/12/china-showing-myanmar-how-to-firewall-the-internet/

14 cybersecurity predictions for 2022 and beyond

Cyber Attacks an Expected Element of Military Strategy as Russia Deploys on the Ukraine Border
IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Sweden Launches Psychological Defense Agency To Counter Disinformation
Emma Woollacott – Forbes: 5 January 2022

Sweden has created a government agency dedicated to fighting disinformation, particularly from foreign governments such as China, Iran and Russia. The Swedish Psychological Defense Agency’s aim is to identify, analyze and respond to “inappropriate influences” and other misleading information.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/emmawoollacott/2022/01/05/sweden-launches-psychological-defense-agency-to-counter-disinformation/?sh=480e63c84874

For more on this theme:
Leveling-up with Brussels: The European Union’s Global Gateway Is Good News for Africa

China says apps that could influence public opinion require a security review
https://www.cnbc.com/2022/01/05/china-says-apps-that-influence-public-opinion-require-security-review.html

China is on the March in Central America
https://www.newsweek.com/china-march-central-america-opinion-1660723

Buying influence: How China manipulates Facebook and Twitter

Africans’ Reactions Mixed to Chinese Presence on Continent

Taiwan floats $200m fund to counter Chinese pressure on Lithuania
https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/1/6/taiwan-floats-200m-fund-to-counter-chinese-pressure-on-lithuania

Tech Becomes CCP’s New Frontier For Spreading Its Influence – Analysis

A Transatlantic Strategy to Check China’s Belt and Road Initiative

China’s expanding Central Asian footprint worries Russia

Russia shuts Memorial Human Rights Centre in ‘one-two punch’