

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Swiss authorities ask Lebanon to cooperate on central bank probe

Reuters: 19 January 2021

The Swiss attorney general's office has requested legal assistance from Lebanon in the context of a probe into "aggravated money laundering" and possible embezzlement tied to Lebanon's Central Bank.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/lebanon-crisis-cenbank-int/swiss-authorities-ask-lebanon-to-cooperate-on-central-bank-probe-idUSKBN29012T>

British Virgin Islands corruption inquiry launched

BBC: 19 January 2021

Long considered one of the world's most secretive financial jurisdictions, responsible for concealing hundreds of billions in illicit wealth coming in from abroad, the British Virgin Islands is now facing a wide-ranging probe into allegations of corruption within its own institutions and government.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55709515>

For more on this theme:

Supreme Court to render final verdict in ex-President Park's corruption case

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210114000112>

Armenian Government to Hire New Judges for Arrests and Trial of Corruption Cases

<https://massispost.com/2021/01/armenian-government-to-hire-new-judges-for-arrests-and-trial-of-corruption-cases/>

Young, female and fighting corruption, a Somali lawmaker defends her seat

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-election/young-female-and-fighting-corruption-a-somali-lawmaker-defends-her-seat-idUSKBN29NOUG>

Former Kyrgyz President's Relative Arrested On Corruption Charges

<https://www.rferl.org/a/former-kyrgyz-president-relative-arrested-corruption/31052509.html>

Rajasthan to set up special cell to act against corrupt officials

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/rajasthan-to-set-up-special-cell-to-act-against-corrupt-officials>

Uzbek Activist Claims Corruption In Distribution Of Compensation From Deadly Dam Accident

<https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbek-activist-claims-corruption-in-distribution-of-compensation-from-deadly-dam-accident/31050530.html>

Montenegrins say state administration is most corrupt institution

<https://www.intellinews.com/montenegrins-say-state-administration-is-most-corrupt-institution-200486/>

'Investigative journalists, whistleblowers play pivotal role in corruption fight'

<https://newsbook.com.mt/en/investigative-journalists-whistleblowers-play-pivotal-role-in-corruption-fight/>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

The wicked problem of drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere

Michael Sinclair – Brookings: 15 January 2021

How to address the ongoing threat of illegal drug use in the United States remains a persistent challenge.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/01/15/the-wicked-problem-of-drug-trafficking-in-the-western-hemisphere/>

In Mexico, women take the front lines as vigilantes

Armando Solis – The Associated Press: 16 January 2021

In Mexico's state of Michoacán, cartel violence has spiraled out of control for decades. In one town, a group of women have banded together to help defend their community and families from the increasing threat of violence, and they're making headlines for their bravery.

<https://apnews.com/article/mexico-11bf21a9a3cce149fb4b8bbc56366923>

For more on this theme:

Fiji finds narcotics bureau to control illegal drug trade

<https://menafn.com/1101418975/Fiji-finds-narcotics-bureau-to-control-illegal-drug-trade&source=30>

Crystal meth seizure off Sri Lankan coast indicates shift in drug trafficking

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/crystal-meth-seizure-off-sri-lankan-coast-indicates-shift-in-drug-trafficking/article33537019.ece>

Libya, North Africa Emerge As Cocaine Transit Hubs

<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/libya-north-africa-cocaine-transit/>

Colombian and Ecuadorian Indigenous communities live in fear as drug traffickers invade

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/colombian-and-ecuadorian-indigenous-communities-live-in-fear-as-drug-traffickers-invade/>

Cocaine production driving deforestation into Colombian national park

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/cocaine-production-driving-deforestation-into-colombian-national-park/>

Indigenous Cacataibo of Peru threatened by land grabbing and drug trade

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/indigenous-cacataibo-of-peru-threatened-by-land-grabbing-and-drug-trade/>

DEA 2020 Year in Review: Combatting Serious Drug-Related Threats During the Pandemic

<https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2021/01/14/dea-2020-year-review-combatting-serious-drug-related-threats-during>

Yaba smugglers aren't letting up

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2021/01/14/yaba-smugglers-aren-t-letting-up>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Trading Years for Wildlife: An investigation into wildlife crime from the perspectives of offenders in Namibia

Dominique Prinsloo, Sacha Riley-Smith and David Newton – TRAFFIC: January 2021

Wanting to provide for a family or the lack of financial security are cited as key motivators for people caught illegally trading wildlife in Namibia, according to a new report from TRAFFIC, a nongovernmental organization working on wildlife trade.

<https://www.traffic.org/site/assets/files/13405/namibia-offender-survey-2021-web.pdf>

Video: Romania's deadly fight against illegal logging

Frederick Gillingham – Mongabay: 20 January 2021

Romania's rich and ancient forests are in peril. Rangers and environmentalists who investigate and document these crimes face violence, intimidation and even death from the criminal networks responsible for illegal logging. New technology has become one of the most effective ways for activists to investigate and document environmental crimes.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/video-romania-deadly-fight-against-illegal-logging/>

For more on this theme:

Illegal Wildlife Trade Estimated Over \$7bn Annually, Says Report

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/01/19/illegal-wildlife-trade-estimated-over-7bn-annually-says-report/>

Crimes at sea: when we frame illegal fishers as human and drug smugglers, everyone loses

<https://theconversation.com/crimes-at-sea-when-we-frame-illegal-fishers-as-human-and-drug-smugglers-everyone-loses-152231>

Fight Money Launderers and Protect Wildlife

<https://www.finextra.com/blogposting/19783/fight-money-launderers-and-protect-wildlife>

Lessons from the swamps: turtle and orchid seizures inform hunt for smugglers

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/lessons-from-the-swamps-turtle-and-orchid-seizures-inform-hunt-for-smugglers/>

Ivory Is Still Sold on eBay, Even Though It's Illegal

<https://www.ecowatch.com/ebay-illegal-ivory-products-2649935488.html>

Urgent action needed to protect wild animal species in Cambodia: conservationist group

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/16/c_139672063.htm

Natura exec says Brazil not doing enough to stop illegal deforestation

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-natura-co-hldg-brazil-environment/natura-exec-says-brazil-not-doing-enough-to-stop-illegal-deforestation-idUSKBN29J23T>

Forest Defenders: A Panamanian Tribe Regains Control of Its Lands

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/forest-defenders-a-panamanian-tribe-regains-control-of-its-lands>

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Boats emerge from Sahara sand to transport migrants to Spain

Mosa'ab Elshamy – The Associated Press: 20 January 2021

As the coronavirus pandemic plunged many Africans into poverty, and with other routes choked off, migration to the Canary Islands jumped eightfold to the highest rate ever recorded.

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-africa-atlantic-ocean-smuggling-canary-islands-fd237e6acdf86d-4c36d87d6e52772bf3>

For more on this theme:

Report outlines “X-Factors” driving irregular migration

<https://asianpacificpost.com/article/9012-report-outlines-%E2%80%9Cx-factors%E2%80%9D-driving-irregular-migration.html>

Irregular Migration to the EU Falls by 13%

<https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2021/01/331862/irregular-migration-to-the-eu-falls-by-13/>

International leaders join UAE at migration and development summit, call for cooperation on COVID recovery partnerships

<https://menafrn.com/1101452325/International-leaders-join-UAE-at-migration-and-development-summit-call-for-cooperation-on-COVID-recovery-partnerships>

Human trafficking cases in Thailand hit decade low due to COVID-19

<https://www.reuters.com/article/thailand-trafficking/human-trafficking-cases-in-thailand-hit-decade-low-due-to-covid-19-idUSL8N2JTOD4>

‘Fiji hub for human trafficking in the Pacific’

<https://www.fijitimes.com/fiji-hub-for-human-trafficking-in-the-pacific/>

Lost and never found: Hundreds of children, more girls than boys, go missing every year not to be found

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/01/15/lost-and-never-found-hundreds-of-children-more-girls-than-boys-go-missing-every-year-not-to-be-found>

Human Smuggling Thrives Between Costa Rica and Nicaragua

<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/human-smuggling-costa-rica-nicaragua/>

Migrants Are Shunning People Smugglers and Going it Alone on TikTok

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/epdmkm/migrants-are-shunning-people-smugglers-and-going-it-alone-on-tiktok>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

Amnesty: Facebook Risks Yielding to Turkish Censorship

David Klein – Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: 20 January 2021

Amnesty International has criticized Facebook for caving in to what the nongovernmental organization considers a draconian set of amendments to Turkey's internet laws.

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/13677-amnesty-facebook-risks-yielding-to-turkish-censorship>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Brave browser adds peer-to-peer IPFS protocol to combat censorship

<https://techxplore.com/news/2021-01-brave-browser-peer-to-peer-ipfs-protocol.html>

(China, Hong Kong) As Beijing Continues To Creep Into Hong Kong, Internet Censorship Begins

<https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20210115/09244146063/as-beijing-continues-to-creep-into-hong-kong-internet-censorship-begins.shtml>

(Uganda) Uganda election internet shutdown reversed, social media still barred

<https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/01/uganda-election-internet-shutdown-reversed-social-media-still-barred/>

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

India asks WhatsApp to withdraw changes in privacy policy

The Hindu: 19 January 2021

WhatsApp is battling mistrust globally after it updated its privacy policy to let it share some user data with parent Facebook and other group firms, and the backlash risks thwarting its ambitions in its biggest market, India.

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/internet/india-asks-whatsapp-to-withdraw-changes-to-privacy-policy/article33608260.ece>

For more on this theme:

(Africa) African users won't dump WhatsApp even with a Facebook privacy fear

<https://qz.com/africa/1958387/africans-wont-dump-whatsapp-for-telegram-over-facebook-privacy/>

(Global) Deploying AI-powered cybersecurity directly on drones

<https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2021/01/19/ai-powered-cybersecurity-directly-on-drones/>

(U.S.) Addressing telehealth's cybersecurity risk will be an industry-wide problem

<https://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/addressing-telehealths-cybersecurity-risk-will-be-industry-wide-problem>

(Global) These are the top cybersecurity challenges of 2021

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/top-cybersecurity-challenges-of-2021/>

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Africa's Evolving Cyber Threats

Nathaniel Allen – Africa Center for Strategic Studies: 19 January 2021

African governments face a fast-evolving array of digital threats from espionage, critical infrastructure sabotage, organized crime and combat innovation.

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-evolving-cyber-threats/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Cybersecurity firm Malwarebytes was hacked by 'Dark Halo,' the same group that breached SolarWinds last year

<https://www.businessinsider.com/cybersecurity-firm-malwarebytes-was-breached-by-solarwinds-hackers-2021-1>

(U.K.) 70% of UK finance industry hit with cyber-attacks in 2020

<https://sports.yahoo.com/70-percent-uk-finance-industry-hit-with-cyberattacks-in-2020-000851797.html>

(U.S.) CISA Warns of Cloud Attacks Exploiting Poor Cyber-Hygiene

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/cisa-warns-of-cloud-attacks-poor/>

CYBER CRIME

New coalition aims to combat growing wave of ransomware attacks

Maggie Miller – The Hill: 17 January 2021

A new coalition of cyber security and tech groups aims to produce recommendations that will help governments and the private sector tackle the scourge of ransomware attacks.

<https://thehill.com/policy/cybersecurity/534544-new-coalition-aims-to-combat-growing-wave-of-ransomware-attacks>

For more on this theme:

(Global) 2020: Cybercrime's Perfect Storm

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/2020-cybercrimes-perfect-storm>

(Wales) Young cyber crime fighters to take part in challenge final

<https://www.wales247.co.uk/young-cyber-crime-fighters-to-take-part-in-challenge-final/>

(ASEAN) ASEAN needs to enhance cross-border cooperation on cybercrime

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/asean-needs-to-enhance-cross-border-cooperation-on-cybercrime/>

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Threat actors' dangerous and rising interest in the global energy industry

The Blueliv Team – Security Boulevard: 12 January 2021

The global energy sector has become more connected, innovative and efficient than ever before. However, this interconnectivity brings with it vulnerability to attacks.

<https://securityboulevard.com/2021/01/threat-actors-dangerous-and-rising-interest-in-the-global-energy-industry/>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) U.S. National Cybersecurity Plan Promises to Safeguard Maritime Sector

<https://www.tripwire.com/state-of-security/security-data-protection/cyber-security/us-national-cybersecurity-plan-safeguard-maritime-sector/>

(U.S.) CISA launches new effort to develop actionable metrics to quantify cyber risk

<https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/94353-cisa-launches-new-effort-to-develop-actionable-metrics-to-quantify-cyber-risk>

(U.S.) Improving Your Security Posture with the Pipeline Cybersecurity Initiative

<https://www.tripwire.com/state-of-security/featured/improving-your-security-posture-pipeline-cybersecurity-initiative/>

CYBER EXERCISES AND TRAINING

Cyber Valhalla: Air Force trains offensive warriors with unclassified exercise

Mark Pomerleau – C4ISRNet: 9 January 2021

The U.S. Air Force's 341st Cyberspace Operations Squadron has deployed the Persistent Cyber Training Environment to help design an unclassified exercise to train airmen on offensive cyber operations.

<https://www.defensenews.com/cyber/2021/01/08/cyber-valhalla-air-force-trains-offensive-warriors-with-unclassified-exercise/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Why cybersecurity training is imperative in post-Covid world

<https://techobserver.in/2021/01/11/why-cybersecurity-training-is-imperative-in-post-covid-world/>

(U.S.) Pentagon's weapon tester pushes for better assessments of offensive cyber tools

<https://www.c4isrnet.com/cyber/2021/01/14/pentagons-weapon-tester-pushes-for-better-assessments-of-offensive-cyber-tools/>

(Global) Is MDR Cybersecurity Training an Oxymoron?

<https://securityboulevard.com/2021/01/is-mdr-cybersecurity-training-an-oxymoron/>

(U.K.) Quarter of Orgs Don't Offer Cybersecurity Training Due to Lack of Budget

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/quarter-businesses-cybersecurity/>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Islamic State terrorists in India, worldwide using advanced secure messaging platform Threema

NE Now News: 15 January 2021

ISIS terrorists in India and abroad are using Threema, an advanced messaging system, to communicate with their counterparts across the globe without being traced and without leaving any digital footprint.

<https://nenow.in/top-news/islamic-state-terrorists-in-india-worldwide-using-advanced-secure-messaging-platform-threema.html>

Resurgence Of Islamic State In Middle East: Need For Structural Reforms In Region – OpEd

Zahra Niazi – Eurasia Review: 16 January 2021

The military defeat of ISIS has put the group on the ropes, but it is not to be counted out yet. The long-term elimination of movements like ISIS necessitates more than military action – it requires defeating their narratives as well.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/16012021-resurgence-of-islamic-state-in-middle-east-need-for-structural-reforms-in-region-oped/>

For more on this theme:

Easily Reproducible – The Structure of Islamic State Videos

<https://gnet-research.org/2021/01/04/easily-reproducible-the-structure-of-islamic-state-videos/>

IS replication in Indonesia and counterterrorism after the Sigi attack

<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/01/09/is-replication-in-indonesia-and-counterterrorism-after-the-sigi-attack/>

Albania races to rescue children from jihadist camp

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55435069>

Did Islamic State make comeback to opposition areas in countryside of Aleppo?

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/01/syria-is-aleppo-idlib-terrorism.html>

Pakistan Arrests Suspected Islamic State ‘Fundraiser’

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/pakistan-arrests-suspected-islamic-state-fundraiser>

Malaysia’s coronavirus lockdowns a ‘blessing in disguise’ for reducing Isis threat: counterterrorism chief

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3117788/malysias-coronavirus-lockdowns-blessing-disguise-reducing-isis>

Islamic State Overruns Nigerian Base, Thousands Forced to Flee

<https://sofrep.com/news/islamic-state-overruns-nigerian-base-thousands-forced-to-flee/>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Why Somali clan elders could hold the key to opening dialogue with Al-Shabaab

Mohammed Ibrahim Shire – The Conversation: 19 January 2021

The al-Qaida-affiliated al-Shabaab insurgent group and the Somali government have remained locked in a violent stalemate for years. Dialogue might be the answer, but how do you establish direct negotiation with a group that maintains uncompromising demands?

<https://theconversation.com/why-somali-clan-elders-could-hold-the-key-to-opening-dialogue-with-al-shabaab-152759>

Boko Haram's Pan-Nigerian Affiliate System after the Kankara Kidnapping: A Microcosm of Islamic State's 'External Provinces'

Jacob Zenn – The Jamestown Foundation: 15 January 2021

Boko Haram has developed an “affiliate system” with groups of bandits similar to that of ISIS and its external provinces. These external provinces are loyal to ISIS leaders, ideology, and goals, but have a large amount of autonomy to conduct day-to-day insurgencies and only coordinate with Islamic State leadership for high-profile operations, media campaigns, funding, or trainings.

<https://jamestown.org/program/boko-harams-pan-nigerian-affiliate-system-after-the-kankara-kidnapping-a-microcosm-of-islamic-states-external-provinces/>

For more on this theme:

Taliban See Ghani as 'Obstacle' to Afghan Peace

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/taliban-see-ghani-obstacle-afghan-peace>

US sanctions Egypt's HASM, targets ISIS-affiliate

<https://theArabWeekly.com/us-sanctions-egypts-hasm-targets-isis-affiliate>

Terrorism in Pakistan has declined, but the underlying roots of extremism remain

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/01/15/terrorism-in-pakistan-has-declined-but-the-underlying-roots-of-extremism-remain/>

Sahel treasure trove: Informal gold trade fuelling Islamist insurgencies

<https://www.theafricareport.com/58290/sahel-treasure-trove-informal-gold-trade-fuelling-islamist-insurgencies/>

EU to partner with Mozambique in curbing rising insurgency in Cabo Delgado province

<https://www.africanews.com/2021/01/20/eu-to-partner-with-mozambique-in-curbing-rising-insurgency-in-cabo-delgado-province/>

How Iran serves as 'a key geographic hub for Al-Qaeda'

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1793761/middle-east>

RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Root Causes of Violent Extremism in Africa: Understanding Multi-Disciplinary Factors

Leif Rosenberger – The Street: 19 January 2021

This paper focuses on historical, political, economic, social, psychological and military root causes of violent extremism in Africa. It also addresses Africa's decision to shift its attention and resources to fighting COVID-19. It explains how this pivot gave violent extremists the freedom to exploit new opportunities.

<https://www.thestreet.com/economonitor/news/root-causes-of-violent-extremism-in-africa-understanding-multi-disciplinary-factors>

For more on this theme:

Islamic clerics speak out against radicalization

<https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/islamic-clerics-speak-out-against-radicalisation/>

Prison unit for UK's most dangerous terrorists could be radicalising inmates even more

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/terrorist-prisoners-separation-centres-radicalise-frankland-b1780957.html>

Far-Right Extremism in Slovakia: Hate, Guns and Friends from Russia

<https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/20/far-right-extremism-in-slovakia/>

The EU's recent steps to combat online extremism

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/the-eus-recent-steps-to-combat-online-extremism/>

How Boko Haram recruit children in Northern Nigeria

<https://punchng.com/how-boko-haram-recruit-children-in-northern-nigeria/>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES

Afghan officials skeptical of Tehran's offer to send Iran-led militia to fight Islamic State

Ali M. Latifi – Al-Monitor: 5 January 2021

A recent offer for Afghanistan to use Iranian-backed Shiite militias in the fight against ISIS is viewed by some Afghan lawmakers and experts as a threat to Afghanistan's volatile security.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/01/iran-afghanistan-zarif-fighters-syria-fatemiyoun-mashhad.html>

For more on this theme:

The Biden administration inherits a rapidly deteriorating Libya

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/01/19/the-biden-administration-inherits-a-rapidly-deteriorating-libya/>