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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

*Corruption costs $1 trillion in tax revenue globally: IMF*

*Rodrigo Campos – Reuters: 4 April 2019*

The International Monetary Fund published a report that shows a crackdown on corruption could generate about $1 trillion in tax revenues annually across the world. In addition to increasing government revenue, fighting corruption can also reduce waste and lift test scores among public school students, while also improving public trust in the government.


*Report: Construction and Real Estate Carry Greatest Corruption Risk*

*Aisha Kehoe Down – Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: 10 April 2019*

The global construction and real estate industries are rife with compliance threats, especially in emerging markets where government corruption can taint infrastructure projects, according to a new report.


Full report:

*Corruption Challenges Index 2019: Top corruption danger spots for business in 2019*


For more on this theme:

*France Can Offer Justice to Corruption Victims*


*Corruption in the Maltese government and police: more robust and effective action needed*


*Anti-corruption Compliance: How Effective Programs Spot Issues Early*


*The power of citizens to confront corruption in Costa Rica*

https://voices.transparency.org/the-power-of-citizens-to-confront-big-business-and-fight-corruption-72846f0325ec

*ICC to join hands with Interpol to tackle corruption*


*As Global Democracy Stumbles, Corruption Flourishes*

https://www.law.com/corpncounsel/2019/04/01/as-global-democracy-stumbles-corruption-flourishes/
DRUG TRAFFICKING

How Do Illegal Drugs Cross The U.S.-Mexico Border?
National Public Radio (NPR): 6 April 2019

NPR’s Michel Martin talks to Gil Kerlikowske, former commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, about how illicit drugs end up in the United States.

Sweden’s Zero-Tolerance Drug Policy Questioned As Cocaine Use Hits Record High
David Nikel – Forbes: 5 April 2019

Is Sweden’s zero-tolerance approach to drug crimes contributing to a rise in fatal overdoses related to cocaine use? A report by national broadcaster SVT suggests the tough government policy is partly to blame.

For more on this theme:

Sri Lanka destroys cocaine, to resume capital punishment

A ‘really important piece of evidence’ shows how opioids keep Americans out of the workforce

A Death Foretold: Colombia’s Crop Substitution Program
https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/a-death-foretold-colombias-crop-substitution-program/

Los Angeles Set to Reduce or Expunge 50,000 Marijuana Convictions
https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/los-angeles-marijuana-convictions-816796/

Nigeria: Drug Trafficking - Govt Reads Riot Act to Airlines
https://allafrica.com/stories/201904110689.html

Poppy Cultivation and Potential Opium Production in Afghanistan
https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/poppy-cultivation-potential-opium-production-afghanistan/

Ecuador Continues to Struggle Against Narco Flights

The United States’ ‘War on Drugs’ Really Did Make Things Worse, New Research Finds
https://www.sciencealert.com/us-war-on-drugs-from-south-america-might-have-unintentionally-made-things-even-worse

Drug Gangs Corrupt Panama’s Shipping Industry

Heroin use is shooting up in South Africa
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/heroin-use-is-shooting-up-in-south-africa
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

China’s Voracious Appetite for Timber Stokes Fury in Russia and Beyond

Twenty years ago, China heavily restricted logging in its own forests. But its appetite for timber has only grown stronger. Chinese demand is stripping forests around the globe, often illegally.

Scant amounts of DNA reveal conservation clues
Stanford University – Science Daily: 10 April 2019

Scientists have been using genetics to study wild animals for several years now. However, a new method may make studying as well as conserving wild species quicker, easier and cost-effective by deriving information from animal sources containing extremely low-quality DNA — including feces and cooked meat.
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190410083108.htm

For more on this theme:
Defending Myanmar’s Remaining Environmental Treasures

U.N. Events Highlight Shark Conservation Efforts, Progress

Apusan forest’s illegal logging is death warrant for rare animals

Illegal Mining May Collapse Colombia’s Cerro Mono Ecosystem

Tree sleuths are using DNA tests and machine vision to crack timber crimes
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01035-7

Illicit global trade of counterfeit goods is national security threat
https://thehill.com/opinion/international/438057-illicit-global-trade-of-counterfeit-goods-is-national-security-threat

Countering the illegal wildlife trade in ASEAN: speech by Andrew Beirne

Fish Bladders Mean Big Business for Chinese and Mexican Smugglers

Japan’s new rules for curbing ivory trade won’t work, many experts say

This British Orchid Is Under Guard in a Secret Location
https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/ladys-slipper-orchid-in-england
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Troubled Countries Can't Keep People From Leaving
Eliza Willis and Janet Seiz – The Atlantic: 9 April 2019

El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are completely incapable of stopping the massive outflow of migrants headed to the United States. And cutting off U.S. aid to those countries may just make the problem worse.


Sex traffickers use social isolation and manufactured conflict to control child victims
Lynne Finney – Illicit Trade: 8 April 2019

Rutgers University researchers have studied the connection that is established between youngsters sold for sex and the criminals responsible. The findings should make it simpler for law enforcement and others to recognize victims and help them reenter society. Nearly 1 million youths are sex-trafficking victims globally.


For more on this theme:

Why Central American aid cuts could mean more migration, not less

Migration Should Happen Out Of Aspiration, Not Desperation –EU
https://www.independent.ng/migration-should-happen-out-of-aspiration-not-desperation-eu/

EU Trust Fund for Africa: €115.5 million to enhance security, migrant protection and job creation in the Sahel region

Ethiopia Opens Migration Agency at Ethiopian-Kenyan Border

Developing Local Economy To Curb Wanton Migration
https://leadership.ng/2019/04/04/developing-local-economy-to-curb-wanton-migration/

Programme Seeks to Smoothen Migrants' Reintegration by Tackling Stigma

Why We Must Use The Rome Statute To Prosecute Terrorists For Human Trafficking

Trafficked: How the Opioid Epidemic Drives Sexual Exploitation in Vermont
https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/trafficked/Content?oid=27058132
INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Breaking the internet: new regulations imperil global network
Rob Lever – Japan Today: 12 April 2019

New regulations and filters around the world imperil the promise of a global network.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Mark Zuckerberg: The Internet needs new rules. Let's start in these four areas.
(Europe, Russia) Council of Europe at the Russian Internet Governance Forum
(Global) Rise of the ‘splinternet’: Experts warn the world wide web will break up and fragment as governments set their own rules to filter and restrict content

INTERNET FREEDOM

You were warned and you didn’t do enough: UK preps Big Internet content laws
Kieren McCarthy – The Register: 8 April 2019

New regulations being considered by the United Kingdom would have social media companies facing huge fines if they fail to live up to their "duty of care" to internet users.
https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/04/08/social_media_explanation/

For more on this theme:
(Russia) Kremlin Moves Toward Control of Internet, Raising Censorship Fears
(China) GitHub Has Become A Haven For China’s Censored Internet Users
https://www.npr.org/2019/04/10/709490855/github-has-become-a-haven-for-chinas-censored-internet-users
(Egypt, Venezuela) Venezuela Goes Offline and Egypt Silences Opposition
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Do You Know What You’ve Given Up?

In a series of articles, The New York Times looks at what privacy means in the age of the internet. This article questions whether we even know the extent of how much privacy we have given up based on our lifestyle choices.

For more on this theme:
(South Korea) Big Brother Arrives on South Korea’s Internet
https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/big-brother-arrives-on-south-koreas-internet/
(China) Feeling Safe in the Surveillance State
(U.S., Global) How Capitalism Betrayed Privacy

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

Cybersecurity across Europe: the European Commission’s approach
SCITECH Europa: 5 April 2019

Despina Spanou, the European Commission’s cyber security director, discusses how the commission is working to enhance cyber defenses across Europe.
https://www.scitecheuropa.eu/european-cybersecurity/94049/

For more on this theme:
(Australia) Australia is vulnerable to a catastrophic cyber attack, but the Coalition has a poor cyber security track record
(Cyprus) Building Infrastructures: Reviewing Cypriot Cybersecurity Practices
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

How a new public-private partnership will fill cybersecurity gaps for the FBI and CIA
Macy Bayern – TechRepublic: 9 April 2019

Major corporations are signing on to a new public-private initiative that aims to build the country’s cybersecurity talent pipeline. The Cybersecurity Talent Initiative will offer recent graduates an opportunity to gain experience working for cyber defense programs in the government and commercial sectors.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) National Guard looks to industry for weekend cyber warriors
(India) Maharashtra cyber crime unit feted for fighting piracy

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

New APT group TajMahal operates as a ‘full-blown spying network,’ Kaspersky says
Jeff Stone – CyberScoop: 10 April 2019

The TajMahal cyber-espionage campaign uses previously unseen malicious tools. Technically sophisticated and rare, this malware uses new techniques that can steal documents sent to print and files burned to a CD. The malware isn’t linked to any known threat actor.
https://www.cyberscoop.com/tajmahal-new-apt-kaspersky/

For more on this theme:
(Ukraine) Ukrainian cyber police announces special operation ‘Pirates’
(U.S., India) US, India join hands to combat online piracy, protect cross-border innovation
https://www.televisionpost.com/us-india-join-hands-to-combat-online-piracy-protect-cross-border-innovation/
(China, U.S.) America's Overt Payback for China's Covert Espionage
https://hermannherald.com/americas-overt-payback-for-chinas-covert-espionage/27135/
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Pakistan: Cyber security policy to be launched soon
Gulf News: 10 April 2019

Pakistan wants to close the vast gap between the number of available information technology jobs and the number of graduates in the field — there are currently 25,000 graduates a year and only a few thousand jobs.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Lawmakers Want to Fund Cyber Upgrades for State and Local Governments

(Global) Fortinet Continues Commitment to Close the Cyber Skills Gap Through NSE Institute Program

COMBATING TERRORISM AND CYBER CRIME

Cybercrime groups continue to flourish on Facebook
Taylor Hatmaker – TechCrunch: 5 April 2019

Forgers, identity thieves, spammers and scammers have been using Facebook to hawk their services, even after a crackdown last year, according to a new report. Talos, Cisco’s cybersecurity research division, says it found dozens of Facebook groups that were “shady (at best) and illegal (at worst).”

https://techcrunch.com/2019/04/05/talos-facebook-cybercrime-groups/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Cyber crime warning as experts say hackers deliberately target hospitals

(U.K.) England and Wales Police Get Dedicated Cybercrime Units

(Global) Poppy Gustafsson: ‘The war on cybercrime needs AI’
https://techhq.com/2019/04/poppy-gustafsson-the-war-on-cybercrime-needs-ai/
INFORMATION SHARING

FBI’s cyber challenge exceeds its bandwidth
Derek B. Johnson – GCN: 5 April 2019

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation is looking for extra funds to expand its capacity to share cyber information in a timely and effective manner.
https://gcn.com/articles/2019/04/05/fbi-cyber-challenges.aspx

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) DHS-led agency works to visualize, share cyber-risk information
https://searchsecurity.techtarget.com/feature/DHS-led-agency-works-to-visualize-share-cyber-risk-information

(Global) SWIFT Details Critical Factors for Effective Cyber Defence
https://www.regulationasia.com/swift-details-critical-factors-for-effective-cyber-defence/

(Global) How threat intelligence sharing can improve the security posture of whole industries

CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

90% of ICS ‘damaged’ by cyberattacks in last two years
TechHQ: 5 April 2019

According to a survey by the Ponemon Institute, 9 out of 10 critical infrastructure security professionals say they have experienced cyber attacks in the past two years. Of the respondents, 80% cited lack of visibility into the attack surface as the No. 1 issue in their inability to prevent business-impacting cyber attacks.

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) How the Energy Department Tackles Cyberthreats

(Global) Mysterious safety-tampering malware infects a second critical infrastructure site

(NATO) The world’s largest cyber exercise in Estonia brings allies together
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS

**Cash-rich Islamic State may have stashed up to $300 million in hopes of fighting on**

Yigal Chazan – *Business Insider*: 7 April 2019

No longer forced to administer a territory, ISIS has great flexibility with its remaining cash reserves — estimated to be as much as $300 million.


**ISIS launches ‘Operation Vengeance for Sham’ in several countries**

*Al-Masdar News*: 10 April 2019

ISIS launched a campaign in retaliation for the blow suffered in Syria. These operations were accompanied by a media campaign in the regions where ISIS has a presence. Retaliatory attacks are known to have been carried out in Syria, Iraq, the Sinai Peninsula, Libya, Somalia and West Africa.

https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-launches-operation-vengeance-for-sham-in-several-countries/

For more on this theme:

**ISIS militant who allegedly let girl die of thirst faces trial in landmark case**


**‘Defeated’ ISIS still found lurking in shadows in Iraq**


**Islamic State Plans Next Move After Loss of ‘Caliphate’**


**Islamic State releases first combat video from Mali**


**Inside the Fall of the Islamic State**


**Belgian ISIS fighter confesses to group’s use of chemical weapons, chlorine**

http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/06b999b3-63c9-4e80-98f5-37b63d5af0e

**Islamic State: the ‘caliphate’ is off the map for now, but will evolve in dangerous ways**


**The Philippines in the sights of IS**


**‘Deradicalized’ are sending money to ISIS smugglers**

https://www.weeklyblitz.net/news/deradicalized-are-sending-money-to-isis-smugglers/
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al Qaeda and the Islamic State Will Be the Winners of the Libyan Civil War
Emily Estelle – Critical Threats: 11 April 2019

Casualties from the battle for Libya's capital have mounted in the past decade, and al-Qaida and ISIS are exploiting the renewed chaos.


Taliban declare start of spring offensive amid talks with US

The Taliban announced its annual spring offensive, even while they are in peace talks with the United States and ahead of planned meetings with Afghan representatives later this month.

https://www.apnews.com/1700580b853b4dfb9a72185e2a011133

For more on this theme:

Designating IRGC as terrorists strikes a major blow to Iran

Continued Fighting Between Islamic State and AQAP Complicates Security in al-Bayda

Will al-Qaeda capitalize on IS losses at Iraqi-Syrian border?

India: Islamist Terrorism Contained, Not Terminated – Analysis

Hamas's Well-Established Presence in Germany
https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Hamass-well-established-presence-in-Germany-586521

UN Reveals Number Of Children Recruited By Boko Haram

Al-Shabaab leadership wrangles tearing it from within

Can Lebanese government afford to take action against Hezbollah?
https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/can-lebanese-government-afford-to-take-action-against-hezbollah-25698
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

**Egypt’s Prisons Are Becoming Recruiting Grounds for the Islamic State**  
*Amy Woodyatt – Foreign Policy: 8 April 2019*

Horrific human-rights abuses, coupled with record-high detainment, have put Egyptian prisons on the radar for radicalization.  

**Do Violent Videos Radicalize People?**  
*Robert Hackett – Fortune: 8 April 2019*

Using machine learning algorithms to identify and sort messages and videos, Columbia University Professor Tamar Mitts was able to study whether extreme violence in videos was helpful or harmful to ISIS recruiting efforts.  

For more on this theme:

- **How Social Innovation Can Fight Terrorism**  
  https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_social_innovation_can_fight-terrorism

- **Back to the Future: The Return of Violent Far-Right Terrorism in the Age of Lone Wolves**  

- **De-radicalisation Programme: Army graduate 152 ex-insurgents in Gombe State**  

- **How moderate Islam in Indonesia counters the religious intolerance of Islamist extremists**  

- **Study finds similarities between radicalization of Tree of Life and New Zealand shooters**  

- **Assessing Islamist Radicalization in Canada New MLI Report**  

- **Nigeria: De-Radicalization Boko Haram Inmates Excited Over Western Education, As 157 Sat for WAEC**  
  https://allafrica.com/stories/201904080677.html

- **Soft Power: A Mentor Program To Fight Terrorism In Kenya**  
FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Europol counter-terror conference focuses on threat posed by extremists returning from conflict zones
Matúš Tóth – Illicit Trade: 9 April 2019

Hundreds of experts gathered at Europol’s headquarters in The Hague for a conference on terrorism and extremist propaganda.

Treason Laws Must Be Updated To Deal With Fighters Returning From Islamic State
Nikita Malik – Forbes: 8 April 2019

Stripping the citizenship of ISIS fighters is highly controversial. The author argues that a better way to deal with foreign fighters would be to update the United Kingdom’s treason laws and then try the fighters in a court of law.

For more on this theme:

The Islamic State’s refugees are facing a humanitarian calamity
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the-islamic-states-refugees-are-facing-a-humanitarian-calami-ty/2019/04/02/e5e1ca42-54aa-11e9-aa83-504f086bf5d6_story.html

Chechen leader Kadyrov vows to repatriate all ISIS children
http://www.rudaw.net/english/world/310320191

Stockholm takes new approach to returned Isis fighters
https://www.thelocal.se/20190330/stockholm-takes-new-approach-to-returning-isis-fighters

Why are there so few Islamic State recruits from Israel?
http://gppreview.com/2019/04/01/islamic-state-recruits-israel/

Indonesia Verifying Citizenship Of Islamic State Families Stranded In Syria

Islamic State: The women and children no one wants

Germany brings home ‘Islamic State’ children from Iraq

Should thousands of ISIS fighters and their families be allowed to return home?
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/should-thousands-of-isis-fighters-and-their-families-be-allowed-to-return-home

Austria wants Islamic State fighters to be tried in U.N.: style tribunals
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

DEALING WITH DISASTERS

For some river towns, flood protection is simply too costly  
Most communities on rivers in the United States have some sort of flood protection. But a few places simply can’t afford to do anything about their riverbanks. Massive damage can occur when the floods inevitably come.
https://www.apnews.com/b51a9eb8d6d946e3a1bb86022f53d98b

For more on this theme:
Winning recovery disaster in itself: Corruption, inertia in absence of oversight, leadership have engulfed flood relief efforts
https://www.dominionpost.com/2019/04/04/Winning Recovery Disaster in Itself: Corruption, Inertia in Absence of Oversight, Leadership Have Engulfed Flood Relief Efforts/
Rethinking Disaster Preparedness in Southern Africa After Cyclone Idai
How natural disasters can increase inequality
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/making-sense/how-natural-disasters-can-increase-inequality
Living with natural disasters – how to change Indonesia’s culture of passive resignation
Natural Disasters Are Fueling The Rise Of Resilient Infrastructure
Preventing disaster from striking Australia’s economy
https://www.policyforum.net/preventing-disaster-from-striking-australias-economy/