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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

US Watchdog Accuses Kosovo Politicians of Corruption Links
Perparim Isufi – Balkan Insight: 20 April 2022
Freedom House, a watchdog organization in Washington, D.C., alleges that two political leaders in Kosovo, ex-President Hashim Thaci and ex-Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, “have links to organized crime and high-level corruption.”

Journalists have a vital role in war against corruption: USAID Executive Director
Bala Chauhan – The New Indian Express: 15 April 2022
The U.S. Agency for International Development is creating a Defamation Defense Fund so that journalists have access to insurance and can withstand the financial pressures they face in doing their work.

For more on this theme:
Latin America: The anti-bribery and anti-corruption review

Peruvian Ruling Party Hit by New Corruption Scandal

Vietnam’s new conglomerates in crosshairs of corruption crackdown

Liberia: U.S. State Department Human Rights Report Emphasizes Corruption in the Judiciary

Corruption watchdog urged to speed up probe into MP’s suspected land holdings

How Anti-Corruption Agencies Can Curb Illicit Financial Flows To Education Sector – ICPC

Digitalisation has dealt a big blow to corruption — Dr. Bawumia

Australia PM vows to seek anti-corruption watchdog
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Hidden in bananas and tea, cocaine departs Ecuador port by the ton
Agence France-Presse: 21 April 2022

Trying to prevent drug traffickers from hiding cocaine in cargo containers at Ecuador’s main port of Guayaquil is becoming an increasingly expensive headache for police and exporters.


Hong Kong – East Asia’s Entry Point for Mexican Methamphetamine?
Scott Mistler-Ferguson – InSight Crime: 15 April 2022

A rising tide of methamphetamine arriving by air and sea points to an undeniable reality: Hong Kong has become firmly planted as the gateway to East Asia for Mexico’s methamphetamine trade.


For more on this theme:

WVU researchers create model that detects drug trafficking on social media
https://www.wdtyv.com/2022/04/07/wvu-researchers-create-model-that-detects-drug-trafficking-social-media/

São Paulo’s ‘Crackland’ Drug Market Finds New Real Estate

Captive to Captagon: How This Narcotic Became Scourge of Middle East
https://www.dailysignal.com/2022/04/12/captive-to-captagon-how-a-narcotic-has-become-scourge-of-middle-east/

Is the Taliban’s Halt of Poppy Production Too Good To Be True?

Sanctions Against Ireland’s Top Drug Trafficker May End ‘Super Cartel’ Allegations

SWJ El Centro Book Review – Drug Wars and Covert Netherworlds: The Transformation of Mexico’s Narco Cartels

US Indictment of Honduran Ex-President Spells Out 20 Years of Drug Ties

Haiti Resurfaces as Transit Hub for US-Bound Cocaine

Sonora: Growing Air Corridor for Synthetic Drugs on US-Mexico Border
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

In media coverage of wildlife crime, ‘feedback loops’ entrench biases: Study
Abhaya Raj Joshi – Mongabay: 18 April 2022

A study on the reliability of media coverage of the illegal wildlife trade in Nepal has found that media reports cover a small fraction of seizures and focus mostly on large, charismatic species. The researchers say wildlife reporting creates “feedback loops” that may reinforce biases and can further entrench official responses to such crime.

Amid illegal Amazon gold mining, Indigenous land defenders get reinforcements
Joseph Lee – Grist: 19 April 2022

Experts say the mines lead to murder, deforestation, pollution and other crimes against Indigenous people in Brazil.

For more on this theme:

Trafficking of Contagion
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/trafficking-contagion-environmental-crime-biological-threats-mekong/

Scientists use 3D printing to help save embattled coral reefs

Why the media is critical to Africa’s conservation movement
https://www.newtimes.co.rw/opinions/why-media-critical-africas-conservation-movement

Teaming up to tackle smuggling: Time for a global response
https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/teaming-up-to-tackle-smuggling-time-for-a-global-response/2497055/

Illegal mining, abuses surge on Brazil indigenous land: report

Brazil Targets Illegal Gold Mines in the Amazon

More than half of activists killed in 2021 were land, environment defenders
https://news.mongabay.com/2022/04/more-than-half-of-activists-killed-in-2021-were-land-environment-defenders/

Illegal fishing and physical violence: Life aboard China’s ‘devil vessels’ revealed in new report
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Tech-Governance: MoS Rajeev Chandrashekar speaks on Open Internet, Cyber Security & more
NewsOnAir: April 2022

In an exclusive conversation with Prasar Bharati, Minister of State for Electronics and Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar talked about tech governance related to the Open Internet, India’s AatmaNirbhar internet, cybersecurity and the need for new laws.


For more on this theme:
(India) Central government to introduce new data governance framework, says Rajeev Chandrasekhar

(Global) Chris Dixon thinks web3 is the future of the internet — is it?

(Global) Cyberspace and the Future of International Law and Politics

INTERNET FREEDOM

How Russia makes laws to support networked authoritarianism
Tanya Lokot – Global Voices: 15 April 2022

Russian legislation is creating an alternative reality of the internet.

https://globalvoices.org/2022/04/15/how-russia-makes-laws-to-support-networked-authoritarianism/

For more on this theme:
(Russia, China) TikTok created an alternate universe just for Russia

(China) China internet censors scramble as lockdown frustration sparks ‘creative’ wave of dissent
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/20/china-internet-censors-scramble-as-lockdown-frustration-sparks-creative-wave-of-dissent

(Russia) Russian teacher rejected Kremlin propaganda, then paid the price
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

NATO launches cyber wargame amid looming Russian threats
Ines Kagubare – The Hill: 19 April 2022

As the West braces for Russian cyberattacks amid the war in Ukraine, NATO’s Communication and Information Agency is beginning its annual Locked Shields cyber-defense simulation.


For more on this theme:

(Africa) Africa Can Connect to World through Blockchain & Internet Tech
https://www.coinspeaker.com/africa-connect-world-blockchain/

(Global) AI ethics for children: digital natives on how to protect future generations

(China) Web3 tech helps banned books on piracy site Library Genesis slip through the Great Firewall’s cracks, but for how long?

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Funky Pigeon suspends orders after cyber-attack
The Guardian: 19 April 2022

Online greeting card and gift company says no customer payment data is at risk.
https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/apr/19/funky-pigeon-suspends-orders-cyber-attack-greetings- card-gifts

For more on this theme:

(India) Oil India suffers cyber attack, receives Rs 57 crore ransom demand

(Russia) Currency.com Evades Russian DDoS Cyber Attack

(Spain) Spanish FA report cyber attack to police after email accounts, private texts stolen

(Iran, Global) Pro-Iranian group targets Airports Authority site with cyberattack
https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-704748

(Germany) Deutsche Windtechnik hit by cyber attack
CYBERCRIME

It Was a Good Month for Fighting Cybercrime. Don’t Get Comfortable
Lily Hay Newman – Wired: 20 April 2022

Even as police and tech companies get better at shutting down illicit operations, cybercrime is worse than ever.
https://www.wired.com/story/raidforums-zloader-hydra-fight-cybercrime/

For more on this theme:
(North Korea) U.N. panel coordinator urges stepped up focus on North Korea cyber crime

(Global) Escalation of Cybercrime-As-A-Service Has Major Ramifications
https://ceoworld.biz/2022/04/18/escalation-of-cybercrime-as-a-service-has-major-ramifications/

(Global) Cybercrime Is Escalating From Bank Heists to Market Manipulation
https://www.barrons.com/articles/cybercrime-is-escalating-from-bank-heists-to-market-manipulation-cybersecurity-51650399783

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

UK joins international partners to issue advice on latest Russian cyber threat
U.K. National Cyber Security Centre: April 2022
An overview of Russian cyber threats to critical infrastructure and mitigation guidance for all organizations.
https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/uk-joins-international-partners-to-issue-advice-on-latest-russian-cyber-threat-

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Cybersecuring the Pipeline
https://www.lawfareblog.com/cybersecuring-pipeline

(U.S.) Water Systems: At Greatest Risk from the Russian Cyber Threat?

(U.S., Global) Russian State-Sponsored and Criminal Cyber Threats to Critical Infrastructure

(Global) New malware could allow ‘low-skill’ hackers to disrupt critical infrastructure
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

In New Audio Message, ISIS Spokesperson Abu Omar al-Muhajir Calls for Attacks in the West
Flashpoint: 19 April 2022

On April 17, ISIS’s official spokesperson, Abu Omar al-Muhajir, released his second audio message since assuming his role. The message began with a congratulatory note on the holy month of Ramadan then, quickly became bellicose. Given the context in which the message was released, and the language it contains, the threat posed by ISIS followers may be elevated.


Think-tank warns of ISIS’ expansion to Central Asia; potentially reach Russia, China
ANI: 19 April 2022

A Canadian think tank has warned of a greater threat as Islamist terrorist groups from Syria and Iraq relocate and turn their focus toward Central Asian states, taking advantage of their raw materials and strategic locations.


For more on this theme:

Ex-Captive Testifies About Brutal Treatment at Islamic State Group’s Hands

Former Hostages Unmask Islamic State ‘Beatle’ at US Trial

Islamic State ‘Beatle’ Case Goes to Jury in Virginia

Nigeria Becomes Country With Most Islamic State Attacks, Overtakes Iraq – Report

The Emerging IS Threat in Pakistan
https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/the-emerging-is-threat-in-pakistan/

ISKP’s Continued Interest in India
https://jamestown.org/program/iskps-continued-interest-in-india/

Jury Convicts ISIS ‘Beatle’ for Role in Hostage-Taking Scheme that Resulted in the Deaths of American, British and Japanese Citizens
https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/jury-convicts-isis-beatle-role-hostage-taking-scheme-resulted-deaths-american-british-and
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

ISIS and Al-Qaeda Condemn Muslims Fighting in Russo-Ukrainian War
Romany Shaker – The National Interest: 18 April 2022

The reactions of al-Qaeda and ISIS supporters to the war in Ukraine were almost identical: They viewed it as a helpful development for Muslims and jihadis, advising Muslims to not get involved in wars of “crusaders.”


Are Nigeria’s bandits a new Boko Haram cell or rival ‘terrorists’?
Yusuf Anka – Al Jazeera: 19 April 2022

In northwestern Nigeria, evidence suggests bandits are becoming collaborators with, and rivals to, Boko Haram factions.

https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/19/are-nigerias-bandits-a-new-boko-haram-cell-or-rival

For more on this theme:

The Taliban Hard-Liners Are Winning

Afghanistan: The Taliban cannot govern alone

How to Protect the Hope for Girls’ Education in Afghanistan
https://www.cfr.org/blog/how-protect-hope-girls-education-afghanistan

A New Report Sheds Lights on Renewed Efforts to Free ‘Lady Al-Qaeda’
https://thedispatch.com/p/a-new-report-sheds-lights-on-renewed?s=r

How Iran Built Hezbollah Into a Top Cyber Power

Eight Months Later, A Look At The Taliban's Broken Promises
https://www.npr.org/2022/04/11/1092016683/eight-months-later-a-look-at-the-talibans-broken-promises

Afghanistan Regains Its Crown as Terror Central
https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/20/afghanistan-taliban-terrorism-jihad-control/

An eye-opening portrait of bin Laden, drawn from his personal files

Shabaab claims mortar attack as Somalia’s new parliament meets
CONFLICT AND CRIME

Crime, conflict and corruption
Prem Mahadevan and Alastair Nelson – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: 14 April 2022

This paper explains why Nampula, the third-largest city in Mozambique, became a hub for contraband smuggling, especially of illicit environmental commodities.
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/crime-conflict-corruption-nampula/

For more on this theme:
The Crime Paradox: Illicit markets, violence and instability in Nigeria
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/crime-illicit-markets-violence-instability-nigeria/
The price of civil war: A survey of Somalia’s arms markets
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/somalia-arms-trafficking/

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

War Sets Back the Global Recovery
International Monetary Fund: April 2022

The war in Ukraine has triggered economic damage that will contribute to a significant slowdown in global growth in 2022 and add to inflation. Fuel and food prices have increased rapidly, hitting vulnerable populations in low-income countries hardest.

For more on this theme:
What the ruthless new commander of Russia’s military in Ukraine signals for the war

Syrian fighters who fought against Islamic State sign up to fight alongside Russian troops in Ukraine: Report

Women This Week: Reports of Sexual Violence Increase in Ukraine
https://www.cfr.org/blog/women-week-reports-sexual-violence-increase-ukraine

U.S. is taking ‘a close look’ at whether to label Russia a state sponsor of terrorism. Here’s what that means

Zelenskyy: Troops inflict ‘deliberate terror’
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-business-bulgaria-europe-humanitarian-assistance-d0c-9d752295a93aaa0527b8049feee9

Sinking Of Russia’s Flagship Navy Vessel A ‘Huge Psychological Boost’ For Ukraine
https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-moskva-sinking-analysis-ukraine/31805559.html
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

**Ukraine: The Dangers in Russia's New Offensive**

**How to Achieve Accountability for Atrocities in Ukraine**
https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/04/how-achieve-accountability-atrocities-ukraine

**Protecting Civilians in Ukraine Now — and After the War**

Russia's strategic campaign in Ukraine has four elements — and it goes way beyond air strikes

Putin thought Ukraine war was a missile to Nato. It may be a boomerang
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/15/putin-thought-ukraine-war-was-a-missile-to-nato-it-may-be-a-boomerang

**Going Nordic: What NATO membership would mean for Finland and Sweden**

Genocide in Ukraine: Putin just gave his tacit approval for more war crimes

**Putin’s Generation Z: Kremlin pro-war propaganda targets young Russians**
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-generation-z-kremlin-pro-war-propaganda-targets-young-russians/

**How Putin's Russia embraced fascism while preaching anti-fascism**

**The Ukrainian invasion: Implications for Putin’s power**
https://www.aljazeera.net/en/analyses/ukrainian-invasion-implications-putin%E2%80%99s-power

**War in Ukraine threatens geopolitical balance in the Arctic**

**Indonesia Is A Fence Sitter On The Russia-Ukraine Crisis – Analysis**

**Ukraine: Russian Forces' Trail of Death in Bucha**

**Hunger And The Humanitarian Fallout From The War In Ukraine — Analysis**
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russia's Leadership Not Highly Popular Before Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine Crisis Is Bad News For China's Economy – Analysis

Russia's Military: Failure on an Awesome Scale
https://cepa.org/russias-military-failure-on-an-awesome-scale/

Why Russians Swallow Propaganda
https://cepa.org/why-russians-swallow-propaganda/

China looks to learn from Russian failures in Ukraine
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-europe-china-xi-jinping-taiwan-e9f50d985c38c487aba918d-088099f9a

The CCP's Ukraine War Propaganda
https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/the-ccps-ukraine-war-propaganda/

The OSCE Report on War Crimes in Ukraine: Key Takeaways
https://www.justsecurity.org/81143/the-osce-report-on-war-crimes-in-ukraine-key-takeaways/

Disinformation Campaigns Skewing Young People's View of War in Ukraine

Iran Capitalizes On Central Asian Vacuum Created By The Ukraine War – Analysis

The Ukraine War And Its Bearing On China – Analysis

The Russian Defense Industry: A Distressed Brand – Analysis
https://www.eurasiareview.com/16042022-the-russian-defense-industry-a-distressed-brand-analysis/

Ukraine's Military Industry Should Not Be Underestimated – Analysis
https://www.eurasiareview.com/14042022-ukraines-military-industry-should-not-be-underestimated-analysis/

The digital Middle East: Another front in Russia's information war
https://www.mei.edu/publications/digital-middle-east-another-front-russias-information-war

China and India are saving Russia from economic collapse
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

‘Liberation for all’: Ukrainian resistance, anti-imperialism, and global solidarity
https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/ukraine-anti-imperialism-and-global-solidarity

Is Negotiating with Putin even possible at this point?
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/is-negotiating-with-putin-even-possible-at-this-point

A breakdown of the Good, the Bad and the Ugly from Russia’s War in Ukraine

The Last Chapter in Putin’s War
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column/fine-print/the-last-chapter-in-putins-war

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s New Role in Ukraine

After Bucha, the West Must Revisit Its Assumptions
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/86929

What Russia’s War in Ukraine Means for Europe
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/86587

Policy, Guns and Money: Indonesian views on Ukraine conflict, Russian disinformation and digital development

War in Ukraine is changing relations in the Middle East

Justice may have to be sacrificed to end the war in Ukraine

The United Nations refugee agency says 4,869,019 Ukrainians had left the country since Russia invaded – as it happened
https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2022/apr/17/russia-ukraine-war-russian-deadline-for-mariupol-defenders-to-surrender-or-die-passes-live

The Fickle, Failing Friendships of Vladimir Putin
https://cepa.org/the-fickle-failing-friendships-of-vladimir-putin/

Ukraine After the War
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-04-21/ukraine-after-war

Russia’s propaganda machine is so powerful that many Russians don’t even realize they’re in a disinformation bubble
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

For Russian diplomats, disinformation is part of the job
https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-covid-technology-health-business-628cf047adf9fde93c0d-7f820e46f8e4

How I Am Using Psychology to Persuade Russians of the Truth About Ukraine
https://time.com/6168314/psychology-persuade-russians-truth-ukraine/

Interview: ‘Do you realize there is also a price to pay for silence?’

Russia's cyberattacks in Ukraine have been tame so far, but experts warn things may escalate and target the US

Can Russia and the West Avoid a Major Cyber Escalation?