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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

**Mongolia Must Do More To Fight Corruption After Protests: Minister**  
Khaliun Bayartsogt and Oliver Hotham – Agence France-Presse (AFP): 30 December 2022

Mongolia must do more to tackle corruption in the wake of claims that officials stole billions of dollars’ worth of coal, the country’s justice minister said after thousands angered by the scandal took to the streets.


**Belarus Corruption Watch: How companies in Central Asia help Belarus bypass Western sanctions**  
bne IntelliNews: 3 January 2022

Belarus’ Investigative Centre revealed how private companies in Central Asia, often set up by former Belarusian government officials, help customers circumvent EU sanctions.


*For more on this theme:*

**Putin’s Russia: How propaganda bolsters corruption**  
https://www.ecpmf.eu/putins-russia-how-propaganda-bolsters-corruption/

**Crypto was meant to solve financial corruption. The FTX scandal shows it’s got worse**  

**Wagner Group head named ‘person of the year’ for corruption**  

**European Gas Deals at Risk as Qatar Corruption Scandal Deepens**  

**Former Uzbek Prosecutor-General Jailed For Corruption Released On Parole**  
https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-prosecutor-corruption-parole/32210706.html

**A court in Myanmar again finds Aung San Suu Kyi guilty of corruption**  

**US Sanctions Russian Corruption in Guatemala’s Mining Sector**  

**Iraq’s Top Court Holds Political Forces Responsible for Widespread Corruption**  
DRUG TRAFFICKING

GameChangers 2022: How the Chapitos Became Hyper-Capitalist Narcos
Chris Dalby – InSight Crime: 263 December 2022

The Chapitos are winning the internal war for the Sinaloa Cartel. It’s not the same group that
El Chapo once ran. The Chapitos may only control part of the territory and criminal economies
their father oversaw, but they do so with their own capitalist flair.


Global Drug Conspiracy Used Binance To Launder Millions In Crypto,
DEA Investigation Finds
Thomas Brewster – Forbes: 19 December 2022

A methamphetamine and cocaine gang operating across across Australia, Europe, Mexico and
the United States used the world’s biggest cryptocurrency exchange, Binance, to launder tens of
millions in drug proceeds, according to an ongoing investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement
Administration.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2022/12/19/mexican-drug-gang-money-laundering-over-bi-
nance-crypto-exchange/?sh=2cc7941e54a5

For more on this theme:
‘Asia’s El Chapo’ extradited to Australia to face drug trafficking charges
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/asias-el-chapo-extradited-australia-face-drug-traffick-
ing-charges-2022-12-22/

Cocaine Trade Grows in East and Southern Africa

Coinbase vulnerable to drug trafficking, money laundering and fraud, regulators say

Captagon War: Violent New Drug Trade Setting the Middle East on Fire

Drug trade booms in Afghanistan under the Taliban: Report

Ecuador Reports 400% Rise In Drug Trafficking Via Shipping Containers

How a cocaine-smuggling cartel infiltrated the world’s biggest shipping company
est-shipping-company.shtml

A Fruit Company Found Cocaine In Its Banana Shipment. This Dutch Town
Paid the Price
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-12-22/cocaine-is-flooding-into-europe-and-it-s-terroriz-
ing-cities#xj4y7vzkg
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Ghana fishing: Abuse, corruption and death on Chinese vessels
George Wright & Thomas Naadi – BBC: 4 January 2022

The United Kingdom-based Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) says at least 90% of the industrial trawlers operating in Ghana are owned by Chinese corporations in violation of Ghanaian laws on ownership of vessels fishing under the local flag. A substantial proportion of these vessels have engaged in illegal practices, EJF says.

Butterfly farming is rescuing Kenya’s forests
Bob Koigi – Fair Planet: 20 December 2022

Deforestation was on the rise on Kenya’s coastline since logging was the primary method of income for surrounding communities. An organization has diverted these destructive efforts by providing a financial incentive, turning loggers into butterfly farmers and protectors of the forest.
https://www.fairplanet.org/story/butterfly-farming-is-rescuing-kenyas-forests/

For more on this theme:

A Plan to Push Back Against China’s Fishing Practices
https://warontherocks.com/2022/12/a-plan-to-push-back-against-chinas-fishing-practices/

Podcast: How reporters uncovered a massive illegal shark finning operation

Colombia’s Environment and Native People, Victims of Illegal Gold Mining

How Ghana is Utilising Satellite Technology to Combat Illegal Mining
https://africanews.space/how-ghana-is-utilising-satellite-technology-to-combat-illegal-mining/

Colombia’s oil theft soars, leaving trail of environmental harm

Poachers target hippos for giant teeth in place of ivory

Mexico dismantles illegal fishing cartels killing off rare vaquita porpoise

Here’s why the list of the world’s most endangered species keeps growing
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/01/endangered-species-climate-change/

Unplanned, unscientific & illegal mining pose threat to resources and cause ecological imbalance: Dr. Owais
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Robust internet governance for India
TV Ramachandran: 21 December 2022

The Personal Data Protection Bill and the IT Act can act as deterrents and come into effect primarily after a crime has been committed. How can India ensure that it doesn’t end up merely closing the stable doors after the horse has bolted?
https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/robust-internet-governance-for-india/2921066/

For more on this theme:
(China, Global) What China’s Algorithm Registry Reveals about AI Governance

(Africa) ICYMI, December 2022: Wireless trillions and ICANN in Africa

(Global) Cyber Sovereignty: In Search of Definitions, Exploring Implications
https://www.orfonline.org/research/cyber-sovereignty/

INTERNET FREEDOM

China enforces cyberspace censorship rules to suppress information flow
ANI: 21 December 2022

People are venting their frustration over the Chinese Communist Party’s censorship of content that goes against the party’s image. There were huge protests in November and December. China has issued regulations for makers to stop updating or improving apps.

For more on this theme:
(Iran) International Consequences of Internet Restrictions in Iran
https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2022/12/sharareh-abdolhoseinzadeh-iran-internet-censorship/

(Global) How Blockchain Can Fix Tor Project’s Biggest Flaws And Create A Truly Free Internet

(Nigeria) Nigeria ranks among countries with least Internet censorship

(Asia) As governments across Asia fight for control over the internet and big tech, citizens on social media face rising online crackdowns
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-03/social-media-crackdown-asia/101820820
CYBER STATECRAFT AND STRATEGY

**Advancing Cyber And Information Security Cooperation In ASEAN — Analysis**
Muhammad Faizal Bin Abdul Rahman – Eurasia Review: 4 January 2022

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has launched a Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy to address evolving threats.


*For more on this theme:*

- **(EU, ASEAN) The Uneasy Road to an ASEAN-EU Digital Partnership**

- **(U.S., Africa) After the US-Africa Leaders Summit, the US must ensure accountability and strengthen coordination**
  https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/12/23/after-the-summit-the-us-must-ensure-accountability-and-strengthen-coordination/

- **(Ghana) Learning from Ghana’s Multistakeholder Approach to Cyber Security**
  https://africacenter.org/spotlight/ghana-multistakeholder-cyber-security/

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

**Guardian hit by serious IT incident believed to be ransomware attack**
Jim Waterson – The Guardian: 21 December 2022

The incident has hit parts of media company’s technology infrastructure, with staff told to work from home.

https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/dec/21/guardian-hit-by-serious-it-incident-believed-to-be-ransomware-attack

*For more on this theme:*

- **(U.S.) Los Angeles Housing Authority Hit By Ransomware Attack**

- **(Canada) Ransomware group LockBit apologizes saying ‘partner’ was behind SickKids attack**

- **(Portugal) Cyber-attack threatens release of Port of Lisbon data**

- **(Germany) German multinational industrial engineering and steel production company ThyssenKrupp AG was the target of a cyberattack.**
  https://securityaffairs.co/139870/hacking/thyssenkrupp-targeted-cyberattack.html
CYBERCRIME

5 Trends Shaping The Future Of Cybercrime Threat Intelligence
David Carmiel – Forbes: 19 December 2022

Cyber threats are evolving faster than ever, and the cybercrime underground has become an organized ecosystem. In 2021, ransomware activity increased significantly. To effectively combat these threats, it’s essential for cybersecurity professionals to stay up to date on the latest trends.


For more on this theme:
(Global) A Perfect Storm: 7 Reasons Global Attacks Will Soar in 2023
https://securityintelligence.com/articles/7-reasons-global-attacks-will-soar-2023/

(Global) Cybercrime (and Security) Predictions for 2023

(Global) Top 12 cyber crime trends to watch for in 2023

(Global) Why we need global rules to crack down on cybercrime

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Meaningful Protection: A Regulatory Proposal And Roadmap To Protecting Healthcare And Other Critical Infrastructure
Ed Gaudet – Forbes: 21 December 2022

With cyberattacks affecting safety across the health care industry in the United States, it’s time to implement incentives that drive the adoption of methods and technologies to protect patients.


For more on this theme:
(Global) The Need to Protect Critical Infrastructure with Cybersecurity for IoT and OT

(U.K.) Protecting critical infrastructure from cybersecurity threat — a UK perspective

(Russia, Ukraine) Ukraine: Russian Hackers’ Focus Is Civilian Infrastructure
https://www.bankinfosecurity.com/ukraine-russian-hackers-focus-civilian-infrastructure-a-20831

(U.S.) Pentagon Paves Road Map for Zero Trust by 2027
https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2022/12/23/pentagon-paves-road-map-for-zero-trust-by-2027
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

West warned of potential ISIS return next year
Laura O’Callaghan – The National: 27 December 2022
The Islamic State group continues to pose a significant threat almost four years after its last holdouts in Syria were defeated, according to experts. The terror group’s influence has been significantly reduced, but it still has thousands of fighters loyal to the caliphate.

As Lebanon Collapses, Islamic State Recruiters Prey on Youth
Nicole Di Ilio – Voice of America: 20 December 2022
As Lebanon’s economy collapses, young men from the country’s impoverished north are joining the Islamic State group in growing numbers. It’s not just poverty or the extreme ideology driving them into the hands of the militants.

For more on this theme:
Islamic State Khorasan’s Transnational Capabilities Are Limited
https://inkstickmedia.com/islamic-state-khorasans-transnational-capabilities-are-limited/

Counter Terrorism Operations Squeeze Islamic State Despite Elusive Leadership

Kurdish Forces: Deadly ISIS Assault Targeting Syria Prison ‘Thwarted’
https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/4064846/kurdish-forces-deadly-isis-assault-targeting-syria-prison-thwarted

Iraqi Officials Blame Islamic State Remnants for Spate of Deadly Attacks

Islamic State Claims Attack on Police in Suez Canal City

Nearly 700 Islamic State Operatives Killed in 2022, US Says

The Islamic State is Cautiously Optimistic about a New Turkish Operation in Syria

Salafi-Jihadi Global Tracker: Islamic State Affiliates Pledge to New Leader
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

7 Terrorism Trends to Watch in 2023
Bridget Johnson – Homeland Security Today: 2 January 2023
The hodgepodge of extremist threats requires unraveling some key areas of concern — from copycats to critical infrastructure.
https://www.hstoday.us/featured/7-terrorism-trends-to-watch-in-2023/

For more on this theme:
Jihadist Spillover to Coastal West Africa: Implications for Regional Stability.

Online Platforms as Gendered Sites: Why We Should Pay Attention to Women-Only Forums
https://gnet-research.org/2022/11/26/online-platforms-as-gendered-sites-why-we-should-pay-attention-to-women-only-forums/

Counterterrorism Yearbook 2022

How Climate Change Helps Violent Nonstate Actors
https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/12/14/how-climate-change-helps-violent-nonstate-actors-pub-88637

Terrorist Resources, Proclivity for Attacks, and an Effective Counterterrorism Framework
https://www.orfonline.org/research/terrorist-resources-proclivity-for-attacks/

The contested world of deradicalization programs
https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-contested-world-of-deradicalization-programs/

A Comparative Study of Non-State Violent Drone Use in the Middle East

The Underestimated Insurgency, Continued: Salafi-Jihadi Capabilities and Opportunities in Africa

Once a terrorist, always a terrorist? Study examines the UN’s terrorist list

Warning Terrorist Threat Spreading to Increasing Number of Countries, Security Council Presidential Statement Stresses Need for Comprehensive, Consistent Counter-Strategy

Explainer: The Jihadi Threat in 2022
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/explainer-jihadi-threat-2022
CRIME AND CONFLICT

How organized crime plays key role in Ukrainian conflict
John P Ruehl – Asia Times: 20 December 2022

Despite the risks, the Kremlin will continue these policies so long as sanctions remain in place.
https://asiatimes.com/2022/12/how-organized-crime-plays-key-role-in-ukrainian-conflict/

For more on this theme:

What Ukraine can learn from the Khmer Rouge trial
https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/24/what-ukraine-can-learn-from-the-khmer-rouge-trial

Supporting International Accountability for Ukraine
https://www.brookings.edu/research/supporting-international-accountability-for-ukraine/

Evidence of Russian crimes mounts as war in Ukraine drags on

Climate change and conflicts: a threat multiplier

Public Statement by Chair of Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Year Ahead — Does International Law Still Matter in Ukraine?

The State of Child Soldiers in 2023

War and crime: The conflicts with which we are entering 2023
https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/war-and-crime-the-conflicts-with-which-we-are-entering-2023-2314968-2022-12-29

UN Diplomats Negotiate First Steps to Try Russia for Crimes of Aggression

United Kingdom Takes A Stance Against Corruption And Other Crimes

Colombia’s armed conflict moving to cities: report

Ukraine: Russians Pillage Kherson Cultural Institutions
https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/20/ukraine-russians-pillage-kherson-cultural-institutions

Is gold’s share in financing West African conflicts misjudged?

Serbia: Major War Crime Cases Launched, But Trials Move Slowly
CRIME AND CONFLICT

In Addressing Russia's Attacks on Zaporizhzhia, Look to Africa

Ethiopian victims of war sue the state

New Indonesian Military Chief Downplays Extent of Papua Conflict

Governing the Ungovernable. Consolidating the Libyan State Amidst Emerging Criminal Networks

Authorities commence criminal procedure against Latvian for taking part in Russian aggression

Russia-Ukraine war: Russia accused of demolishing Mariupol theatre ‘to hide war crimes’ — as it happened

In Liberated Town After Town, Evidence Emerges of Russian War Crimes in Ukraine

Coming Debates to Advance New Treaty on Crimes Against Humanity Will Require Skillful Leadership
https://www.justsecurity.org/84496/coming-debates-to-advance-new-treaty-on-crimes-against-humanity-will-require-skillful-leadership/

The hunt for Putin's war rapists: How a British-led team are tracking Russian perpetrators

Proposals to Seize Russian Assets to Rebuild Ukraine
https://www.brookings.edu/research/proposals-to-seize-russian-assets-to-rebuild-ukraine/

Congress just passed a big change to war crimes law. Here’s what it means for Ukraine and beyond.

Analysis: Nearly 1,700 Journalists Killed Over Past 20 Years
https://www.voanews.com/a/analysis-nearly-1-700-journalists-killed-over-past-20-years/6897874.html
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Russia plans to ‘exhaust’ Ukraine with prolonged attacks — Zelensky
Matt Murphy – BBC: 4 January 2023

Ukraine’s president says that Russia is planning a protracted campaign of drone attacks in a bid to demoralize his nation.

For more on this theme:

IntelBrief: Russia’s Influence on its Southern Flank Eroding Sharply
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2022-december-21/

Nukes, Negotiations, and Lessons From the War in Ukraine

Ukraine’s Long-Term Road to Recovery
https://warontherocks.com/2022/12/ukraines-long-term-road-to-recovery/

2022 Cyber Review: The Year the Ukraine War Shocked the World

Putin, Xi vow closer ties as Russia bombards Ukraine again

War against Ukraine has left Russia isolated and struggling — with more tumult ahead

Russia Rules Out Peace Talks With Ukraine, Says It Won’t Give Up

Ukraine conflict casts shadow on Russia as it enters 2023

Ukraine defense chief warns of new Russian mobilization

Sanctions on Russia Over Ukraine
https://www.brookings.edu/research/sanctions-on-russia-over-ukraine/

Russia-Ukraine war: A conflict of huge miscalculations
https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/russia-ukraine-war-conflict-huge-miscalculations

Europe’s big question: What a diminished Russia will do next

Ex-Russian Commander Credits Ukraine’s Success to Kremlin’s Sloppiness
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine’s growing veteran community will shape the country’s future

Death from above: How drone warfare is shaping the battlefield in Ukraine
https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/death-from-above-how-drone-warfare-is-shaping-the-battlefield-in-ukraine-1.6215125

Russia’s war lacks strategy, only aim is to bring suffering — analysis
https://www.jpost.com/international/article-726406

Russia’s Wagner militia is openly and angrily feuding with its main military over the faltering invasion of Ukraine

Forced to fight your own people: How Russia is weaponizing passports
https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-citizenship-war-russia-weaponize-passport-passportization-mobilization-draft/

Nationalism and the Russo – Ukrainian War
https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/nationalism-and-the-russo-ukrainian-war/

Russia Vs. Ukraine: What Does Victory Look Like? — Analysis

The war in Ukraine has been a disaster for Russia — and nothing suggests a change of course in 2023

A Year of Victory
https://cepa.org/article/a-year-of-victory/

Ukraine — What Will 2023 Bring?
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-what-will-2023-bring/

Putin’s End-of-Year Message — Embrace the Forever War
https://cepa.org/article/putins-end-of-year-message-embrace-the-forever-war/

Ukraine War: Why The Optimists May Be Correct — Analysis

Putin’s Choice on Ukraine
https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/putins-choice-on-ukraine/

Putin is preparing for a long war
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putin-is-preparing-for-a-long-war/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Russia's Wartime Cyber Operations in Ukraine: Military Impacts, Influences, and Implications

Uneven Snows: Why Winter Will Hurt Russia’s Military Far More Than Ukraine’s

Russia Is Using Telegram to Spread Disinformation About the Ukraine War

#RussiansCollapsing: Many Speculate Russia’s Loss, but Putin Won’t Take It As Is

No Water’s Edge: Russia’s Information War and Regime Security
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/01/04/no-water-s-edge-russia-s-information-war-and-regime-security-pub-88644

EU Defense and the War in Ukraine
https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/12/21/eu-defense-and-war-in-ukraine-pub-88680

What the Russian Invasion Reveals About the Future of Cyber Warfare

Will Russia launch a winter offensive in Ukraine?

With Crimea in play, Russia’s war against Ukraine might be on a path to humiliation
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-20/crimea-russia-ukraine-war-2023/101787366

Putin Nearly Won Ukraine War Before Military Plans Fell Apart: Danish Intel

2022 Review: Russia’s invasion has united Ukraine

Morocco Breaks Africa's Neutrality with Arms for Ukraine — Reports
https://cepa.org/article/morocco-breaks-africas-neutrality-with-arms-for-ukraine/

The Cost of War: Russian Economy Faces a Decade of Regress
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88664

The Emerging Russo-Iranian Entente — Analysis

Ukraine marks a turning point for cyberwarfare