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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Corruption Is a Growing Threat to Africa’s Precarious Economies
Lisa Vives – InDepthNews: 12 June 2023
Declining profits from oil and gas production may no longer be sufficient to cover up weaknesses in African economies, including surging food prices, food insecurity and corruption.
https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/the-world/africa/6238-corruption-is-a-growing-threat-to-africa-s-precarious-economies

Arresting Corruption in Tunisia
Majed Karoui – Carnegie: 1 June 2023
The recent campaign against corruption in Tunisia has spiraled into a crackdown on Kais Saied’s political opposition and sparked controversy about the rule of law.
https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/89869

For more on this theme:

Meloni’s top man in EU parliament settles corruption case with prosecutors

South Africa’s ruling party expels former top official accused of corruption

Government Corruption Exposed After Mexican Journalist Was Abducted

Riad Salameh is Now the Face of Lebanon’s Corruption Problem
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/lebanon-watch/riad-salameh-now-face-lebanon%E2%80%99s-corruption-problem-206546

Corruption in Hong Kong soccer league meets its match

Ukraine: EU Anti-corruption Initiative and Ministry for Restoration launch Integrity Support Group

Argentine judge dismisses long-running corruption case against vice president
https://apnews.com/article/cristina-kirchner-corruption-casanello-trial-7f91ded6e47dde819e9215cbfd3942c

Mongolia embroiled in a major corruption scandal over the allocation of educational loans
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Can the US disrupt Syria's lucrative Captagon drug empire?
Paul Iddon – The New Arab: 8 June 2023
The Biden administration is set to unveil a new interagency strategy to combat the Syrian regime’s multibillion-dollar drug trade.
https://www.newarab.com/analysis/can-us-disrupt-syrias-lucrative-captagon-drug-empire

The plant at the root of Iran’s meth market
Laura Adal and Sarah Fares – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: 9 June 2023
Having long hosted Western Asia’s largest methamphetamine market, Iran for decades has employed an aggressive multimillion-dollar campaign to curb the trade. The discovery, however, of the ephedra plant in neighboring Afghanistan — a source of ephedrine, a key ingredient for the drug — threatens to undermine Tehran’s efforts.
https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/iran-meth-ephedra-plant-afghanistan-ephedrine/

For more on this theme:
Jordan Intercepts Drug-Laden Drone From Syria
https://themedialine.org/headlines/jordan-intercepts-drug-laden-drone-from-syria/

How Influx Of Drugs In North-East India From Myanmar Has Become A Huge Menace

Chiapas Bleeds as CJNG, Sinaloa Cartel Fight for Guatemala Trafficking Routes

Narco-Subs: A Game of Hide-and-Seek

The Taliban’s Successful Opium Ban is Bad for Afghans and the World

Why Manipur’s civil war is being linked to the narcotics trade
https://scroll.in/article/1050773/poppy-in-the-hills-why-manipurs-civil-war-is-being-linked-to-narcotics-trade

International drugs ring smuggled cocaine in surfboards

Cocaine Seizures Spike in Sweden as Traffickers Seek Secondary Routes

Drug syndicate hid meth in Canadian maple syrup, canola oil bound for Down Under, authorities say
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Brazil’s indigenous infant mortality rate linked to illegal mining
Ashima Sharma – Mining Technology: 8 June 2023

The infant mortality rate in Brazil’s largest reservation, Yanomami, has increased by 16% since 2022, spurred by mercury contamination from mining activities.

Illegal fishing is now a bigger threat to the ocean than piracy – here’s why it matters
ClientEarth Communications: 8 June 2023

Despite a growing set of rules designed to regulate and manage the exploitation of the ocean, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is rampant. It represents as much as 20% of the global catch and the annual loss to the global economy as these fish “leak” from the system is estimated at $26 billion to $50 billion.

For more on this theme:

The Role of AI in Wildlife Conservation: Tracking, Monitoring, and Analysis

Report: Alarming Levels of Wildlife Trafficking in Southeast Asia Seas

Succulents: South Africa’s New Plant Poaching Pandemic

Can satellite imagery fight illegal logging in Mexico?

Forest behind bars: Logging network operating out of Cambodian prison in the Cardamoms

Forest conservation efforts in Peru are failing across the board, study says
https://news.mongabay.com/2023/05/forest-conservation-efforts-in-peru-are-failing-across-the-board-study-says/

Indonesia eyes enrolling more ports in fight against illegal fishing

How disappearing ships could hold the clue to stopping illegal fishing

Protesters clash with soldiers at Ghana gold mining town
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Multilateral internet: Unplugged and somewhat slightly dazed
Julian Ringhof – European Council of Foreign Relations: 7 June 2023
To prevent the web from splintering into regional nets, the EU should safeguard the principles of current internet governance while becoming more open to inclusive reform.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Is artificial intelligence about to be regulated?

(Global) Fragment or Not Fragment – Is This the Question? Will the “One World-One Internet” Survive Today’s Geopolitical Stress Tests?
https://circleid.com/posts/20230606-fragment-or-not-fragment-is-this-the-question-will-one-world-one-internet-survive-todays-geopolitical-stress-tests

(Global) What AI Governance Can Learn From Crypto’s Decentralization Ethos
https://www.coindesk.com/consensus-magazine/2023/06/02/what-ai-governance-can-learn-from-cryptos-decentralization-ethos/

INTERNET FREEDOM

US sanctions Iranian firm over internet censorship
Al-Monitor: 2 June 2023
The U.S. Treasury Department announced sanctions targeting an Iranian company accused of supporting internet censorship.

For more on this theme:
(Africa) 5 African countries pledged to uphold free internet in 2021 but broke that promise
https://technext24.com/2023/06/02/african-countries-stopping-the-internet/

(Senegal) Senegal’s internet shutdown threatens business losses
https://african.business/2023/06/technology-information/senegals-internet-shutdown-threatens-business-losses

(Guinea) Internet blackout in Guinea fuels suspicions of junta role

(Global) Satellite Internet Technology: A Solution to Internet Censorship and Surveillance?
CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING
Africa Data Centres Strengthening Internet Connectivity by Harnessing the Power of IXPs
Justice Godfrey Okamgba – TechEconomy: 11 June 2023
Africa Data Centres, in partnership with Internet Exchange Point of Nigeria and Workonline Communications Group, organized an exclusive peering workshop for industry stakeholders.

For more on this theme:
(Asia-Pacific) Australia’s opportunity to help close the Pacific’s digital divide
(Namibia) Namibia embraces e-governance for a modern future
(Africa) Africa Can Enhance Governance Structures With Blockchain, Says Jassy Kabanihiza Ebwanyu
(India) India: Back To The Future: India’s Proposed Digital Governance Framework

CYBERATTACKS
Cybercrime gang hits BA, Boots and BBC with ultimatum after mass hack
Alex Hern – The Guardian: 7 June 2023
The Russian-speaking Clop group demands ransom negotiations after stealing data from thousands of staffers.

For more on this theme:
(Switzerland) Swiss Government Targeted by Series of Cyber-Attacks
(Germany) Cyberattack on German university takes ‘entire IT infrastructure’ offline
https://therecord.media/ransomware-attack-kaiserslautern-university-applied-sciences-germany
(Martinique) Caribbean island of Martinique dealing with cyberattack that disrupted government services
https://therecord.media/martinique-dealing-with-cyberattack-that-disrupted-government-services-france
(Germany) War in Ukraine Prompts Hike in Cyber Attacks on German Businesses
CYBERCRIME

How Global Information Sharing Can Help Stop Cybercrime
Michael Daniel – Harvard Business Review: 8 June 2023

While reliable statistics are difficult to come by, estimates of the global cost of cybercrime range as high as tens of trillions of dollars annually. Regardless of the precise figure, cybercrime clearly drains significant resources from the global economy and poses a substantial threat to security and prosperity.

https://hbr.org/2023/06/how-global-information-sharing-can-help-stop-cybercrime

For more on this theme:
(Global) Global Alert: Cyber Crime Threatens 80% of Employees

(Global) Combating the cyber heists that are costing the global economy

(Global) Asylum Ambuscade: A Cybercrime Group with Espionage Ambitions

(Global) The Complexities of Hacking: Exploring the thin line between cybercrime and ethical hacking

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Experts call for overhaul of ‘outdated’ critical infrastructure cyber policy
Alexandra Kelley – Nextgov: 7 June 2023

A new report analyzes the U.S. government’s approach to infrastructure cybersecurity.


For more on this theme:
(Global) Dark Web Threats Target Energy Industry as Cybercrime Tactics Shift

(Global) 10 notable critical infrastructure cybersecurity initiatives in 2023

(U.S., China) Americans should prepare for cyber sabotage from Chinese hackers, US official warns
https://www.reuters.com/world/americans-should-prepare-cyber-sabotage-chinese-hackers-us-official-warns-2023-06-12/
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

The Growing Threat of the Islamic State in Afghanistan and South Asia
Abdul Sayed and Tore Refslund Hamming – United States Institute of Peace: 7 June 2023

Since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan, the threat posed by terrorism in the region has grown. The primary threat, however, is neither the Taliban nor their close ally al-Qaeda, but the Islamic State group’s regional affiliate.


Syrian Kurds Launch New Attempt to Prosecute Captured IS Foreign Fighters
Jeff Seldin – Voice of America: 15 June 2023

Trials of thousands of foreign Islamic State group fighters imprisoned in Syria are set to begin within a “few days,” local authorities said.

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/06/11/syria-islamic-state-foreign-fighters-trials-to-begin/

For more on this theme:

Islamic State claims responsibility for Afghanistan mosque blast
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-afghanistan-mosque-blast-2023-06-09/

Blinken: Islamic State Fight ‘Not Yet Done’

Terrorist Designation of ISIS General Directorate of Provinces Leaders
https://www.state.gov/terrorist-designation-of-isis-general-directorate-of-provinces-leaders/

SDF hands over dozens of ISIS terrorists to Iraq

Islamic State leader for Southeast Asia killed in Marawi

Iraq urges countries to repatriate their citizens from camp housing families of extremist IS group
https://apnews.com/article/iraq-syria-alhol-islamic-state-c0e0aa1364389f91f5dfe21f2e06fc

Islamic State 'still a threat,' says Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister

IS-K Leader in Afghanistan Reported Dead
https://www.voanews.com/a/is-k-leader-in-afghanistan-reported-dead-/7130444.html

Fursan al-Tarjuma Carries the Torch of Islamic State’s Media Jihad
https://gnet-research.org/2023/06/05/fursan-al-tarjuma-carries-the-torch-of-islamic-states-media-jihad/
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Al Qaeda leaders are prominently serving in Taliban government
Bill Roggio – The Long War Journal: 11 June 2023

Among the al-Qaida members serving in the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan” are two provincial governors, the deputy director of the general directorate of intelligence and a training director in the ministry of defense.

Has Indonesia’s deradicalisation program done enough to combat terrorism?
William Frangia – The Strategist: 14 June 2023

An increasing number of Indonesian prisoners convicted of terrorism-related offenses are completing their prison terms. The success of these programs will determine the future security of Southeast Asia.
https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/has-indonesias-deradicalisation-program-done-enough-to-combat-terrorism/

For more on this theme:

Al-Qaeda releases new video of ‘seriously ill’ UN worker abducted in Yemen

Iran and Taliban readying for war: What’s different this time?
https://www.mei.edu/events/iran-and-taliban-readying-war-whats-different-time

Taliban in Focus: A 6-Month Forecast
https://greydynamics.com/taliban-in-focus-a-6-month-forecast/

Afghanistan: Link Of Taliban With Al-Qaeda Strong, Terrorists’ Free Movement Raises Threats In The Region

Islamic Jihad Begins Military Summer Camp for Palestinian Youth

Al Qaeda actively operating training camps in 5 Afghan provinces

Analysis: Shabaab takes advantage of slowed counter-offensive

The Taliban Are Who We Thought They Were
https://www.thebulwark.com/the-taliban-are-who-we-thought-they-were/
CRIME AND CONFLICT

Russian war crimes investigations must drive a stronger commitment to justice in all conflicts
Shivangi Seth – The Strategist: 13 June 2023

The international community’s efforts to enforce accountability for Russia’s illegal war in Ukraine are vital to achieve justice for Ukrainians.

For more on this theme:

Questions of Definition: Conflict in the West African Sahel and IHL
https://lieber.westpoint.edu/questions-definition-conflict-west-african-sahel-ihl/

Tracking the Evolution of Conflict: Barometers for Interstate and Civil Conflict

Sudan: Attacks based on ethnicity may amount to war crimes

War crimes committed through cyberspace must not escape international justice, says Estonian president
https://therecord.media/war-crimes-cyberspace-cycon-estonia-president-alar-karis

Police believe Ukraine war has triggered a crime wave … in rural England

Ethiopia rejects ‘ethnic cleansing’ accusation in western Tigray

Artificial Intelligence and the Unintentional Erasure of War Crimes Evidence on Social Media

Gendered impact of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on women and girls

ICC: the never-ending nightmare of Darfur’s victims

The ICC’s 2022 Gender Persecution Policy in Context: An Important Next Step Forward
CRIME AND CONFLICT

For more on this theme:

Afghanistan: Taliban’s cruel attacks in Panjshir province amount to war crime of collective punishment – new report

Canada, Netherlands take Syria to court on torture claims

Ukraine dam blast ‘probably a war crime,’ but not clear-cut. Here’s why

Nepal: Maoist child combatants file case against PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal, former PM Bhattarai alleging “war crimes”

3 Takeaways From UNICEF Report on Child Recruitment in Colombia

How Grenades Became a Common Part of Venezuela’s Criminal Arsenal

Switzerland convicts Liberian warlord in landmark case

DRC, ICC to strengthen cooperation in fight against war crimes impunity
https://www.africanews.com/2023/06/02/drc-icc-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-fight-against-war-crimes-impunity/

Ukraine ‘Azov regiment’ prisoners of war go on trial in Russia

The dam has burst: How Russia’s war on Ukraine could make ecocide an international crime
https://ectr.eu/article/the-dam-has-burst-how-russias-war-on-ukraine-could-make-ecocide-an-international-crime/
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine’s Zelenskyy confirms that an offensive against Russia is underway
Greg Myre – NPR: 10 June 2023

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy gave his first formal confirmation of the long-awaited action.
https://www.npr.org/2023/06/10/1181512637/zelenskyy-ukraine-counteroffensive

For more on this theme:

Ukraine’s Counteroffensive Offers Golden Opportunity to Overcome Its History

IntelBrief: Ukraine’s Counteroffensive Will Determine the Future Shape of the Conflict
https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-june-14/

A North-South Corridor on Putin’s Dime: Why Russia Is Bankrolling Iran’s Infrastructure
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89973

Why Putin Will Never Agree to De-escalate

A New Potemkin Vote in Occupied Ukraine
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89944

How Putin’s War Became Russia’s War
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/how-putins-war-became-russias-war

Ukraine’s counteroffensive and economic scenarios for Russia

Sacrificing Art for War: The Handover of Russia’s Trinity Icon
https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89928

Envisioning a Long-Term Security Arrangement for Ukraine
https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/08/envisioning-long-term-security-arrangement-for-ukraine-pub-89909

For a Future Peaceful Russia, Engage its Exiles Now

15 Months on, Ukrainians Remain United on Freedom, Rule of Law
https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/06/15-months-ukrainians-remain-united-freedom-rule-law

Russian parliament backs army recruitment of criminals for Ukraine conflict
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-parliament-is-expected-back-army-recruitment-criminals-ukraine-conflict-2023-06-14/

Ukraine war: Russia moves to take direct control of Wagner Group
RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

France accuses Russia of faking websites to sow confusion and disinformation about Ukraine war

Does China have the chops to play peacemaker in the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

Russia Turns To Kamikaze Drones To Slow Ukrainian Advance

The Russia-Ukraine War is ASEAN's Latest Political Headache

Russia's failing Ukraine invasion is exposing Putin's many weaknesses

Why Ukrainian NATO membership would actually be good for Russia

Beyond the counteroffensive: 84% of Ukrainians are ready for a long war
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/beyond-the-counteroffensive-84-of-ukrainians-are-ready-for-a-long-war/

Ukraine's counteroffensive will likely create new reintegration challenges

Ukraine Mulls an Election Under Shellfire
https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-mulls-an-election-under-shellfire/

Aftershock: Ukraine Can Win the War but Lose the Peace
https://cepa.org/article/aftershock-ukraine-can-win-the-war-but-lose-the-peace/

Ukraine's Counteroffensive Is Underway: Be Patient
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-counteroffensive-is-underway-be-patient/

Ukraine's Counteroffensive Has to Succeed
https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-counteroffensive-has-to-succeed/

Iran's Mohajer-6 Drones May Tilt the Battlefield Balance in Ukraine
https://jamestown.org/program/more-options-more-lethality-mohajer-6-enters-russias-strike-package-in-ukraine/
Russia/Ukraine

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**Occupying More of Ukraine Will Bring More Problems for Russia**
https://jamestown.org/program/occupying-more-of-ukraine-will-bring-more-problems-for-russia/

**Ukraine Needs to Secure Its Maritime Future: 'Mosquito Fleet' Provides a Viable Strategy**
https://jamestown.org/program/ukraine-needs-to-secure-its-maritime-future-mosquito-fleet-provides-a-viable-strategy/

**The Counteroffensive, the Dam and the Proliferation of ‘Peace Plans’**

**Russia-Ukraine war sending shockwaves into cyber-ecosystem**
https://www.theregister.com/2023/06/13/russiaukraine_war_sending_shockwaves_into/

**FLASHPOINT UKRAINE: Can African Leaders Be the Catalysts to Ending Russia's War in Ukraine?**

**Russia's improved weaponry and tactics pose challenges to Ukraine's counteroffensive**

**Putin admits Russia doesn't have enough weapons and drones**

**Bad Company: Wagner Group And Prigozhin At Crossroads In Ukraine – Analysis**

**Ukraine's long war and the importance of patience**

**Russians Are Split over Benefits of Military Action in Ukraine**
https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/russians-are-split-over-benefits-military-action-ukraine

**The Postwar Reconstruction of Ukraine**
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/postwar-reconstruction-ukraine

**War and the Weaponisation of Law against Russian Citizens**

**Warmer welcome: Ways to engage with African solutions to the Russia-Ukraine war**