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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Costa Rica moves on massive public corruption investigation
Costa Rican authorities executed dozens of searches and arrests in June as part of a sprawling public corruption investigation centered on the awarding of road construction and maintenance contracts.
https://apnews.com/article/caribbean-costa-rica-business-0da8240b936cc5fc0222de3c1c3353ba

Healthcare Is A Corruption Hotspot In The European Union, New Report Shows
Deb Gordon – Forbes: 16 June 2021
A new survey by Transparency International has found that 29% of European Union residents used well-connected friends or family to receive medical care during the pandemic. At least 6% of people paid bribes to access health care.

Full Report:
Global Corruption Barometer EU: People worried about unchecked abuses of power

For more on this theme:
South Africa Seeks Interpol's Help In Gupta Family Corruption Case

Peru: Govt passes bill to strengthen transparency and prevent corruption

Biden Says Ukraine Has Work to Do on Corruption to Get Into NATO

Inside South Africa's rhino crisis: “If you lose the war on corruption, you lose the war on everything”

Saudi Arabia Detains 136 People in Latest Anti-Corruption Drive

Investigating Venezuelan corruption, this prosecutor was jailed after targeting the bosses

Technology in the fight against corruption
https://www.financierworldwide.com/technology-in-the-fight-against-corruption
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Asia-Pacific Drug Trade Thriving as Gangs Make Billions in Profits, UN Says
Vijitra Duangdee – Voice of America: 10 June 2021

Asia’s drug lords have established new manufacturing hubs and maritime trafficking routes to ramp up the supply of methamphetamine across the Asia-Pacific, the United Nations crime agency said.


Hezbollah’s Multipurpose Drug Trade
Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg – Arab News: 16 June 2021

Law enforcement agencies around the world have uncovered the extensive drug trafficking operations of Hezbollah. The main objective of its involvement in the narcotics trade is financial, to fund its expanding activities in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon. However, more recently, there appears to be another motive: to undercut the social cohesion of its adversaries. That also means Iran’s adversaries.

https://www.arabnews.com/node/1877971

For more on this theme:

Wife of “El Chapo” Pleads Guilty to Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering

Illegal drugs trade goes digital for pandemic

Europe’s drug trade ‘remarkably resilient’ to pandemic disruption

Cartel enforcers employed ‘rampant violence’ to control Tijuana drug trade for CJNG

The Youngest Traffickers: How Drug Cartels Exploit Children
https://thecrimereport.org/2021/06/10/the-youngest-traffickers-how-drug-cartels-exploit-children/

Atlantic Entrance to Panama Canal Awash with Cocaine

Enough fentanyl to kill San Francisco: the new wave of the opioid crisis sweeping California

Drug Trafficking Networks Recruiting Smugglers on Facebook, Social Media
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

China-Backed SEZs Linked to Southeast Asia’s Illegal Wildlife Trade
Sebastian Strangio – The Diplomat: 15 June 2021
A combination of loose state jurisdictions and proximity to China’s economy facilitate the illegal wildlife trade.
https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/china-backed-sezs-linked-to-southeast-asias-illegal-wildlife-trade/

Brazil: Indigenous communities reel from illegal gold mining
Sam Cowie – Al Jazeera: 14 June 2021
Spike in violence linked to illegal mining activities prompts Indigenous communities to demand protection.

For more on this theme:
To Help Stop Illegal Fishing, Governments Should Leverage Port State Measures Treaty Tools

UN Highlights Illegal Fishing With “Fight IUU Day”

Conservation activists suing Indonesian zoo could inspire global action on endangered species trade

We’re clamping down on the ivory trade, but is it too late for elephants?
https://www.independent.co.uk/world/ivory-trade-poaching-conservation-elephants-b1857473.html

CSI, but for parrots: Study applies criminological tool CRAAVED to wildlife trade

Research documents extent of wildlife trade in Wuhan’s markets

Black Gold: Illegal Logging For Charcoal Wipe Out Rare Trees In Northern Uganda

In Peru, officials play a losing game of whack-a-mole with illegal miners

Researchers investigate mining-related deforestation in the Amazon
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

How avocados are connected to influx of migrants from Michoacán to border cities like Tijuana
Salvador Rivera – KXAN: 10 June 2021

There’s been a rise in the number of migrants from the state of Michoacán arriving in border cities like Tijuana, according to José María García, director of a shelter in the Mexican border city. García blames organized crime for forcing people to be displaced and flee.


For more on this theme:

Romania urged to effectively prosecute human traffickers and ensure access to compensation for their victims

Bangladesh trafficking gang lured girls using TikTok: Police

Involving the education system in Serbia in the detection of child trafficking

Covid-19 made poor more vulnerable to child trafficking, say NGOs

RAF’s new drone ‘could search Channel for people smugglers’
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/06/04/rafs-new-drone-could-search-channel-people-smugglers-say-defence/

Moving on: Exploring onward migration of refugees and migrants from East Africa

Fact check: Is sea rescue a pull factor for refugees?

Human Trafficking Poses ‘Strategic Threat’ to U.S. National Security: Report
ORGANIZED CRIME

Wildlife trafficking: a new frontier for organised financial crime
John Basquill – Global Trade Review: 15 June 2021

Pressure is growing on financial institutions to toughen their approach to environmental crime. G7 leaders are vowing to crack down on the illicit fund flows supporting wildlife trafficking, and campaign groups are warning that the activity has morphed from a conservation issue to a financial crime concern.


For more on this theme:

The Telegram Conundrum: Criminals Exploit Messaging App’s Privacy Protection Policy

How an app to decrypt criminal messages was born ‘over a few beers’ with the FBI
https://gcn.com/articles/2021/06/14/an0m-app-trap.aspx

Myanmar Border Gun Seizures Stoke Fears of Illicit Post-Coup Arms Trade

Report: Organized Crime Prevalent in “Tow Truck Wars”
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Russia, U.S. and other countries reach new agreement against cyber hacking, even as attacks continue
Ellen Nakashima and Joseph Marks – The Washington Post: 13 June 2021

Russia and the United States, along with 23 other countries, recently reaffirmed that states should not hack each other’s critical infrastructure in peacetime or shelter cybercriminals who conduct attacks on other countries. But Russia, which was among the states originally agreeing to the norms at the United Nations, has violated them repeatedly over the years.


For more on this theme:
(U.K., Global) UK tells UN that nation-states should retaliate against cyber badness with no warning
https://www.theregister.com/2021/06/11/uk_ungge_cyber_norms_submission/

(Global) A Brief Primer on International Law and Cyberspace
https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/06/14/brief-primer-on-international-law-and-cyberspace-pub-84763

(Global) The Sixth United Nations GGE and International Law in Cyberspace

INTERNET FREEDOM

Nigeria suspends Twitter operations, says platform ‘undermines its corporate existence’
Tage Kene-Okafor – TechCrunch: 4 June 2021

The Nigerian government recently announced its decision to suspend the operations of social media platform Twitter in the country.


For more on this theme:
(Russia) Opinion: Russia prepares to test its new censorship tool on Google. Tech giants should not give in

(U.S., Hong Kong, China) U.S. Bill Allocates $30 Million To Help Hong Kong Bypass China’s Great Firewall Internet Restrictions
SECURITY

Data Breach Report Emphasizes Cybersecurity's Human Element
Drew Robb – Society for Human Resource Management: 15 June 2021

For all the millions of dollars an organization might spend on security technology, its employees’ decisions and actions do the most to keep the company safe, according to the annual Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) White House Warns Business Leaders To Increase Cybersecurity Against Ransomware Attacks
https://www.forbes.com/sites/edwardsegal/2021/06/04/white-house-warns-business-leaders-to-increase-cybersecurity-against-ransomware-attacks/?sh=42f82d926f56


(GLOBAL) More internet security for many, not for Central Asians
https://advox.globalvoices.org/2021/06/12/more-internet-security-for-many-not-for-central-asians/

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Deloitte Shares Cyber Threat Data With State, Local Agencies; Srini Subramanian Quoted
Carol Collins – Executive Biz: 11 June 2021

State and local government agencies that belong to the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, the federally backed organization that shares cybersecurity tools and intelligence, can now get insights from other industries, including the financial, health and utility sectors, through a new partnership between the center and the consulting firm Deloitte.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) White House Official Briefed State AGs on Private-Sector Role Battling Ransomware

(U.S.) States Should Be Encouraged to Form Public-Private Partnerships for Federal Broadband Funds
**CYBERCRIME**

*Authorities Seized The Largest Stolen Login Marketplace On The Dark Web*

Lee Mathews – Forbes: 11 June 2021

The U.S. Department of Justice announced this month that Slilpp, an infamous dark web marketplace where stolen credentials and identities are bought and sold, had been seized.


*For more on this theme:*

**(U.S.) US Recovers $2.3 Million Paid as Ransom in Pipeline Cyberattack**


**(U.K.) UK promises tougher line on cyber crime**


**(New Zealand) Dealing with cyber crime: Some NZ businesses ‘feel they have no choice but to pay’**


**CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES**

*Hackers Target State-Run Voice of Vietnam After Reports Critical of Popular Livestreamer*

Radio Free Asia: 15 June 2021

A state-run news outlet in Vietnam was hacked a day after it published two reports critical of a YouTuber famous for exposing fraud among the country’s celebrities, local media reported.


*For more on this theme:*

**(Puerto Rico) Puerto Rico faces blackout after cyberattack, fire**


**(U.S.) UMass Lowell to remain closed Wednesday amid probe into possible cybersecurity incident**


PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

France Arrests ‘High-Ranking’ Islamic State Fighter in Mali
Agence France-Presse: 16 June 2021
French forces in Mali have captured a man they describe as a “high-ranking fighter of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara,” the French military said.

For more on this theme:

Dagestani Leadership Struggles With Countering Islamic State’s Propaganda Offensive
https://jamestown.org/program/dagestani-leadership-struggles-with-countering-islamic-states-propaganda-offensive/

Islamic State claims responsibility for attack on mine-clearing workers in Afghanistan: Monitoring group

Egyptian officials say IS militants abduct 5 people in Sinai
https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-africa-middle-east-egypt-786aea08ec-7c37268ed8f533f016da7c

Singaporean woman detained under security act for supporting ISIS

Iraq keeps focus on terror funding
https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/05/iraq-keeps-focus-terror-funding

Afghan IS group claims sticky bomb attacks in western Kabul
https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-kabul-race-and-ethnicity-8a084cd6115da37f03e259cf-5d85440c

Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) Razes Down Military Formation In Kwamdi Village, Borno State

Iraq Finds Remains of 123 People in IS Mass Grave

Children of Islamic State committed no crime. Why are they being punished?

Long legal battle awaits four Kerala women who joined ISIS
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

EU Rules on One-Hour Removal of Online Terrorist Content Enter into Force
*Homeland Security Today: 8 June 2021*

The European Union has adopted a new regulation that is designed to crack down on the dissemination of terrorist content online.


**Analysis: Ivory Coast witnesses surge in jihadist activity**
*Caleb Weiss – FDD’s Long War Journal: 16 June 2021*

Since late March, northern Côte d’Ivoire, also known as Ivory Coast, has been subject to a substantial increase in jihadist attacks, including the country’s first known instances of improvised explosive devices. This trend proves a worrying development as jihadist violence in the Sahel, especially in Mali and Burkina Faso, continues to spread southward, threatening the littoral West African states.


_For more on this theme:_

**Can Hezbollah Survive Nasrallah?**  

**Will Benin be next to see Islamist attacks?**  
[https://africanarguments.org/2021/06/will-benin-be-next-to-see-islamist-attacks-2/](https://africanarguments.org/2021/06/will-benin-be-next-to-see-islamist-attacks-2/)

**Al Qaeda figure tied to kidnappings reported killed in Mali**  

**‘US to keep pressure on IS, Al Qaeda in Afghanistan’**  

**Suicide bomber kills at least 15 at Somalia military site**  
[https://apnews.com/article/somalia-suicide-bomber-2d3c682a38b8bb75eb1cd3dbc89f26810](https://apnews.com/article/somalia-suicide-bomber-2d3c682a38b8bb75eb1cd3dbc89f26810)

**Nigeria’s Boko Haram confirms chief’s death, urges loyalty**  

**Boko Haram Recruited Spies, Weapon Smugglers With N5,000 — Zulum**  

**Nasrallah says Hezbollah ready to turn to Iran to solve Lebanon energy woes**  
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

**Countering Terrorist Narratives & Strategic Communications: Lessons Learned For Tackling Far-Right Terrorism**
*The Soufan Center: 17 June 2021*

In addition to efforts to degrade ISIS and al-Qaida and deny them control over territory and resources, policymakers and practitioners turned to understanding the strategic communications of such groups and the narratives they used to successfully radicalize and mobilize supporters. Far-right terrorists are now doing the same.


For more on this theme:

**Counter-radicalization effort challenged by technological development**

**Terrorism, radicalisation gravest threats facing world: Rajnath Singh**

**We’re intervening too late to stop child radicalization**

IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

**How Iraq’s Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi turned into an Iranian foreign policy instrument**
*Paul Iddon – Arab News: 15 June 2021*

For Iran, proxy attacks by Iraqi militias are a way for it “to pressure the U.S. over its (Iran’s) nuclear program and sanctions.”

[https://www.arabnews.com/node/1875936/middle-east](https://www.arabnews.com/node/1875936/middle-east)

For more on this theme:

**Iraq’s ‘Hezbollah Brigades’ Militia Digs Tunnels East of Raqqa, Sets Up New Camp**

**‘It was our children they killed’**

**Macron pitches Biden on plan to get foreign fighters out of Libya**

**Chinese Security Firms Spread along the African Belt and Road**
IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

The FBI and DOJ Compare Ransomware Attacks to Terrorism, Adopts Coordinated Approach
Alicia Hope – CPO Magazine: 14 June 2021

The U.S. Department of Justice elevated the priority of ransomware attacks, comparing them to terrorist attacks in the wake of the massive cyberattack on Colonial Pipeline.


For more on this theme:

Fiona Hill says Russia's hackers 'already declared war' on the US and want to prove they're a 'major cyber force'
https://www.businessinsider.com/fiona-hill-russia-already-declared-war-us-in-information-sphere-2021-6

Ransomware's suspected Russian roots point to a long detente between the Kremlin and hackers

U.K. Cyber Chief Warns of Increasing Threat of Ransomware and State Espionage

Ransomware: Russia told to tackle cyber criminals operating from within its borders

Critical entities targeted in suspected Chinese cyber spying

Increasing Nation-State Cyber Aggression Prompts Urgent Calls for Reinforcement

Italy forms cybersecurity agency to counter Russian ‘interference’
https://www.wionews.com/world/italy-forms-cybersecurity-agency-to-counter-russian-interference-390826

German intelligence warns of Iran’s growing cyber attack capabilities
https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/german-intelligence-warns-of-iran-s-growing-cyber-attack-capabilities-1.1241981
IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION WARFARE

Foreign Disinformation Feeds US Domestic Terrorism, Official Warns
Jeff Seldin – Voice of America: 17 June 2021

Newly unveiled efforts to combat a growing domestic terrorism threat in the United States will have to find a way to overcome a major obstacle: carefully crafted campaigns by foreign countries and terrorist groups to incite violence.
https://www.voanews.com/usa/foreign-disinformation-feeds-us-domestic-terrorism-official-warns

For more on this theme:
How recent disinformation campaigns tied to Russia, Pakistan blended fake engagement with real life
What is disinformation — and how can you fight it?
https://www.dw.com/en/what-is-disinformation-and-how-can-you-fight-it/a-57865536
Exclusive: Iran Steps up Efforts to Sow Discord Inside the U.S.
https://time.com/6071615/iran-disinformation-united-states/
Germany and France gear up to fight foreign interference ahead of elections
DOD intelligence officials ‘revamp’ efforts to combat Russian and Chinese influence campaigns
Shifting Focus, NATO Views China as a Global Security Challenge
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/14/world/europe/biden-nato-china-russia.html
NATO Sees No Return To ‘Business As Usual’ With Russia
https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-russia-relations/31307254.html