

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Setbacks and Progress: Costa Rica's Fight Against Corruption

Tico Times: 29 June 2023

According to the Capacity to Combat Corruption Index of the Americas Society/Council of the Americas and Control Risks, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay have been leading the charge in the fight against corruption in the region. However, the report highlights a setback in the region's overall progress, marking a decrease in the average score for the first time since 2020.

<https://ticotimes.net/2023/06/29/setbacks-and-progress-costa-ricas-fight-against-corruption>

Corruption is a Global Problem for Development. To Fight It, We All Have a Role to Play

Ousmane Diagana – Modern Diplomacy: 2 July 2023

If we are to achieve success over the challenges of our time, there is one scourge we cannot fail to confront: corruption.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/07/02/corruption-is-a-global-problem-for-development-to-fight-it-we-all-have-a-role-to-play/>

For more on this theme:

Perpetuating Corruption: The System Undermining the 2023 Guatemala Elections

<https://insightcrime.org/investigations/perpetuating-corruption-undermining-2023-guatemala-elections/>

Ukrainians concerned about corruption as donors pledge billions to rebuild the country

<https://www.euronews.com/2023/06/29/ukrainians-worried-about-corruption-as-donors-pledge-billions-to-rebuild-the-country>

'Grave misconduct': Gladys Berejikian corruption report should put all public officials on notice

<https://theconversation.com/grave-misconduct-gladys-berejikian-corruption-report-should-put-all-public-officials-on-notice-208668>

Anti-graft training in Vientiane is latest effort to counter Laos corruption

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/corruption-training-06222023154434.html>

Theft and Corruption Hinder Venezuela's Oil Industry

<https://insightcrime.org/news/theft-and-corruption-hinder-venezuelas-oil-industry/>

Ashes on their foreheads: Forest fires in Kazakhstan expose pervasive corruption and government's fake promises

<https://globalvoices.org/2023/06/22/ashes-on-their-foreheads-forest-fires-in-kazakhstan-expose-pervasive-corruption-and-governments-fake-promises/>

Iraq is not fated to live with corruption

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/editorial/2023/06/27/iraq-corruption/>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Myanmar Junta's Drug Trafficking Links

Rajeev Bhattacharyya – The Diplomat: 29 June 2023

Efforts by the former National League for Democracy government to check drug trafficking through enhanced surveillance seem to have been abandoned after the coup.

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/06/myanmar-juntas-drug-trafficking-links/>

Interview: Policing one of the world's 'biggest drug trafficking corridors'

United Nations News: 29 June 2023

A cross-border collaboration between law enforcement agencies in countries in Southeast Asia supported by the U.N. in Thailand is helping tackle organized crime.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138182>

For more on this theme:

Exclusive: Experts warn lethal opioid 'Pyro' which is 10 times stronger than fentanyl threatens to flood the streets of Britain after sweeping the US and killing teenagers

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12194383/Opioid-Pyro-wreak-havoc-UK-sweeping-US.html>

Nigeria: Youths appetite for drug abuse growing — Dr Otorkpa

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/06/nigeria-youths-appetite-for-drug-abuse-growing-dr-otorkpa/>

In Brief: The Captagon Trade

<https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/in-brief-the-captagon-trade/>

Syria: New Captagon drug trade link to top officials found

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-66002450>

Podcast: UN boosts fight against drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle

<https://news.un.org/en/audio/2023/06/1138077>

Stigma and discrimination of drug users in Afghanistan

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1q/k1qudggws6>

United States, Mexico, and Canada Unite to Combat Opioid Epidemic

<https://complyadvantage.com/insights/united-states-mexico-and-canada-unite-to-combat-opioid-epidemic/>

UN: deaths by IEDs and drug trafficking have skyrocketed in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan

<https://www.jurist.org/news/2023/06/un-deaths-by-ieds-and-drug-trafficking-has-skyrocketed-in-taliban-ruled-afghanistan/#>

Belgium struggles to combat booming drug trade in port city of Antwerp

<https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/focus/20230626-belgium-struggles-to-combat-booming-drug-trade-in-port-city-of-antwerp>

A knowledge-based approach to tackling Afghanistan's drug abuse crisis

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138067>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Better Information Sharing Could Improve Fight Against Illegal Fishing, GAO Says

Bridget Johnson – Homeland Security Today: 30 June 2023

National Marine Fisheries Service officials express concern about the length of time it takes to obtain information through the United States Customs and Border Protection's interagency Commercial Targeting and Analysis Center.

<https://www.hstoday.us/featured/better-information-sharing-could-improve-fight-against-illegal-fishing-gao-says/>

Most wildlife crimes in Europe go unpunished or undetected, WWF report reveals

Mared Gwyn Jones – Euronews: 5 July 2023

A new report has been released that provides the most comprehensive picture to date on the state of wildlife crime in Europe.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/most-wildlife-crimes-europe-unpunished-090312174.html>

For more on this theme:

Fingerprinting Wood to Curb Illegal Deforestation

<https://eos.org/articles/fingerprinting-wood-to-curb-illegal-deforestation>

World's most remote robot automates Amazon reforestation project

<https://www.roboticstomorrow.com/story/2023/06/worlds-most-remote-robot-automates-amazon-reforestation-project/20709/>

Despite billions tied to clean supply chains, China's Cofco still turns to deforesters

<https://news.mongabay.com/2023/06/despite-billions-tied-to-clean-supply-chains-chinas-cofco-still-turns-to-deforesters/>

No new mining operations on Yanomami land after raids and deaths

<https://news.mongabay.com/2023/06/no-new-mining-operations-on-yanomami-land-after-raids-and-deaths/>

Amazon Gold Miners Flout Artisanal Label With Outsized Operations

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/amazon-gold-miners-flout-artisanal-175644101.html>

China, South Korea Reach Deal to Curb China's Illegal-Fishing Fleet

<https://maritime-executive.com/article/china-south-korea-reach-deal-to-curb-china-s-illegal-fishing-fleet>

Tackling Illicit Fishing At Sea and Ports Before It Ends Up on Your Plate

<https://www.gao.gov/blog/tackling-illicit-fishing-sea-and-ports-it-ends-your-plate>

Victory in the Amazon: Hyundai stops supply of diggers to illegal gold miners destroying Indigenous Lands

<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/victory-in-the-amazon-hyundai-stops-supply-of-diggers-to-illegal-gold-miners-destroying-indigenous-lands/>

Progress Against IUU Fishing

<https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/progress-against-iuu-fishing/>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

How a Free and Open Internet Can Check China's Ambitions and Advance American Values

Bradley A. Smith, Greg Walden and Loretta Sanchez – DC Journal: 22 June 2023

The United States has led the world for 30 years in advancing a free and open internet.

<https://dcjournal.com/how-a-free-and-open-internet-can-check-chinas-ambitions-and-advance-american-values/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Exploring Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence

<https://techpolicy.press/exploring-global-governance-of-artificial-intelligence/>

(Global) India-US ties will reshape global Internet landscape

<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/india-us-ties-will-reshape-global-internet-landscape-1230433.html>

(Global) Starlink's Disruptive Potential on Global Internet Governance and Regulation

<https://anyuakmedia.com/starlinks-disruptive-potential-on-global-internet-governance-and-regulation/>

INTERNET FREEDOM

How North Koreans access the real internet

Carl Samson – NextShark: 4 July 2023

While modern society has known North Korea for its isolationist policies, the so-called hermit kingdom is not completely cut off from the rest of the world.

<https://news.yahoo.com/north-koreans-access-real-internet-221708337.html>

For more on this theme:

(India) How Much Internet Shutdowns Cost India

<https://www.rediff.com/news/report/how-much-internet-shutdowns-cost-india/20230627.htm>

(Russia) Russia's digital scramble to control the 'coup' narrative

<https://www.codastory.com/newsletters/russia-coup-internet-shutdown/>

(France) France's Proposed Web Blocking Law: A Threat to Internet Freedom, Warns Mozilla Foundation

<https://circleid.com/posts/20230630-frances-proposed-web-blocking-law-a-threat-to-internet-freedom-warns-mozilla-foundation>

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

Cyber Capacity Building for Secure Digital Financial Inclusion: A Critical Analysis of Prevailing Approaches

Nanjira Sambuli and Aditi Bawa – Carnegie: 26 June 2023

Bolstering cybersecurity has become an increased priority in the financial sector. Maintaining a secure cyberspace for the financial system has implications for digital financial inclusion, particularly among vulnerable populations.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/26/cyber-capacity-building-for-secure-digital-financial-inclusion-critical-analysis-of-prevailing-approaches-pub-90027>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Microsoft's Media Literacy Program Aims to Empower Internet Users and Combat Online Misinformation

<https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2023-06-13/microsofts-media-literacy-program-aims-to-empower-internet-users-and-combat-online-misinformation>

(Australia) The Australian government wants to fight online misinformation. Here's why it's so difficult

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-27/misinformation-disinformation-australia-proposed-laws-crack-down/102524764>

(U.S.) Schrödinger's Hacking Law And Cyber Burnout: Capacity Building in U.S. Cybersecurity

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/schrodingers-hacking-law-and-cyber-burnout-capacity-building-us-cybersecurity>

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Digital diplomacy: Council sets out priority actions for stronger EU action in global digital affairs

European Council: 26 June 2023

The European Council says the EU must take a “Team Europe” approach to protect its strategic interests and promote its human-centric approach to digital transition.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/06/26/digital-diplomacy-council-sets-out-priority-actions-for-stronger-eu-action-in-global-digital-affairs/>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) The U.S. Looks to Direct Cyber Engagement to Reestablish Its Leadership Position

<https://www.oodaloop.com/archive/2023/06/16/the-u-s-looks-to-direct-cyber-engagement-to-reestablish-its-leadership-position/>

(ASEAN) ASEAN's Digital Future: Promising but not Without Difficult Challenges

<https://thegeopolitics.com/aseans-digital-future-promising-but-not-without-difficult-challenges/>

(Australia) Australia appoints first cyber security coordinator

<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/australia-appoints-first-cyber-security-coordinator-597268>

CYBERCRIME

The rise and fall of the Conti ransomware group

Jack Meegan-Vickers – Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: 27 June 2023

On February 25, 2022, a message appeared on a darknet website run by the cybercriminal syndicate known as Conti. The message pledged allegiance and support for the invasion of Ukraine announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin. This short and simple show of support for Russia was the beginning of the end of one of the most prolific ransomware groups in recent years.

<https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/conti-ransomware-group-cybercrime/>

For more on this theme:

(South Africa) South Africa on the verge of becoming ‘cybercrime capital of Africa’

<https://www.news24.com/news24/tech-and-trends/news/south-africa-on-the-verge-of-becoming-cyber-crime-capital-of-africa-20230621>

(Global) Cybercriminals return to business as usual in a post-pandemic world

<https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2023/06/16/post-pandemic-threat-landscape/>

(Global) To pay or not to pay? Ransomware attacks are the new kidnapping

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/to-pay-or-not-to-pay-ransomware-attacks-are-the-new-kidnapping/>

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

The Weakest Link: Securing Critical Undersea Infrastructure in ASEAN

Lucas Snarski – The Diplomat: 23 June 2023

The lack of a regional plan for securing vital infrastructure leaves Southeast Asian nations vulnerable to disruptions.

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/06/the-weakest-link-securing-critical-undersea-infrastructure-in-asean/>

For more on this theme:

(Europe) Cyberattacks on renewables: Europe power sector’s dread in chaos of war

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/cyberattacks-renewables-europe-power-sectors-dread-chaos-war-2023-06-15/>

(Canada) Russia-aligned hackers pose threat to Canada energy sector — spy agency

<https://news.yahoo.com/russia-aligned-hackers-pose-threat-193506299.html>

(Global) Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Smart Grid Cybersecurity

<https://www.analyticsinsight.net/artificial-intelligence-to-enhance-smart-grid-cybersecurity/>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Salafi-Jihadi Movement Update Special Edition: ISIS Expands Support and Attack Zones Along the Euphrates River

Brian Carter and Andie Parry – Critical Threats: 30 June 2023

The Islamic State group has coerced greater support from the population and expanded attack zones along both banks of the Euphrates River, which could allow it to rebuild sophisticated military capabilities.

<https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/salafi-jihadi-movement-weekly-update-special-edition-isis-expands-support-and-attack-zones-along-the-euphrates-river>

Wagner's African clients left to pick up the pieces as ISIS profits

Thomas Harding – The National: 30 June 2023

The Wagner Group convinced African countries that their mercenaries could introduce stability, but their brutal campaign has driven angry populations into the arms of the Islamic State group, leading analysts said.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/weekend/2023/06/30/wagners-african-clients-left-to-pick-up-the-pieces-as-isis-profits/>

For more on this theme:

Netherlands and Belgium join international probe into crimes against Yazidis in Syria and Iraq

<https://news.yahoo.com/netherlands-belgium-join-international-probe-112450508.html>

Syrian Kurds Seek International Support for Islamic State Group Trials

<https://www.voanews.com/a/tv-syria-is-trials---omer-web-mp4/7152209.html>

How Daesh is exploiting Sudan's instability, threatening regional security

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2328941/middle-east>

Exclusive: Islamists wield hidden hand in Sudan conflict, military sources say

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/islamists-wield-hidden-hand-sudan-conflict-military-sources-say-2023-06-28/>

IntelBrief: Uganda School Attack Shows Jihadists' Continued Reach

<https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2023-june-23/>

ISIS plot to carry out large-scale atrocity in the UK using British terrorists is uncovered by Iraqi intelligence after they carried out raid against fanatics in a desert hideout

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12244847/Baghdads-counter-terror-officer-says-Britain-based-jihadis-planning-carry-atrocity.html>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

A Rejuvenated Iran-Al-Qaeda Link Poses New Security Threats

Yaakov Lappin – JNS.org: 29 June 2023

Despite the many military blows that jihadist entities have absorbed over the years – the Islamic State group and al-Qaida – both have been able to survive and create new threats because their ideology cannot be bombed out of existence.

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2023/06/29/a-rejuvenated-iran-al-qaeda-link-poses-new-security-threats/>

Why schoolchildren are regularly being targeted by terrorist groups in many countries

Brian J. Phillips – The Conversation: 3 July 2023

Why would a group carry out an attack killing schoolchildren? These are happening more frequently and tend to be carried out by particular types of groups.

<https://phys.org/news/2023-07-schoolchildren-regularly-terrorist-groups-countries.html>

For more on this theme:

UN Counter-Terrorism Week: Preventing violent extremism

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138002>

Understanding Love Jihad: Historical Context, Impact, and Strategies of Dissemination

<https://gnet-research.org/2023/06/21/understanding-love-jihad-historical-context-impact-and-strategies-of-dissemination/>

Jihadi Blowback: The Wagner Group's Hidden Downside

<https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/jihadi-blowback-the-wagner-groups-hidden-downside/>

Russian Paramilitary Wagner Group Activities In Mali, The Sahel Risk Bolstering Jihadi Groups As The Company's Abuses Against Civilians Compound

<https://www.memri.org/jttm/russian-paramilitary-wagner-group-activities-mali-sahel-risk-bolstering-jihadi-groups-0>

Sub-Saharan Africa may soon replace Mena as world's least peaceful region, experts say

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/2023/06/28/sub-saharan-africa-may-soon-replace-mena-as-worlds-least-peaceful-region-experts-say/>

Role Of Europe In War Against Terrorism — OpEd

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/23062023-role-of-europe-in-war-against-terrorism-oped/>

Jamaatul Ansar: A Terrorism Threat in Bangladesh Before the 2024 Elections?

<https://jamestown.org/program/jamaatul-ansar-a-terrorism-threat-in-bangladesh-before-the-2024-elections/>

Tackling the growing threat of terrorism in Africa

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2326221>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Wagner mutiny could push a weak Russia closer to Iran

Emil Avdaliani – Stimson: 5 July 2023

A weaker Russia needs Iran more; on the other hand, a weaker Russia threatens both countries' authoritarian model of governance.

<https://www.stimson.org/2023/wagner-mutiny-could-push-a-weak-russia-closer-to-iran/>

For more on this theme:

Russia says it stopped Ukrainian drone attack on Moscow, Kyiv does not claim responsibility

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/russia-says-it-stopped-ukrainian-drone-attack-on-moscow-kyiv-does-not-claim-responsibility>

Ukraine warns Russia might attack the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. How worried should we be?

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/05/europe/zaporizhzhia-nuclear-disaster-threat-explainer-intl/index.html>

What Wagner Group's armed rebellion could mean for Russia's endgame in Ukraine

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wagner-groups-armed-rebellion-russias-endgame-ukraine/story?id=100169872>

Russia is accused of 'ecocide' in Ukraine. But what does that mean?

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/02/world/ukraine-ecocide-dam-collapse-crime-climate-intl-cmd/index.html>

NATO readies military plans to defend against bruised but unbowed Russia

<https://apnews.com/article/nato-russia-military-plans-ukraine-war-70b7eb3d6b5cb9c9cb-90c445a0bf1548>

Ukraine war corrosive for Vladimir Putin — CIA boss

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66076564>

What happens if Russia blocks the Ukraine grain deal?

<https://www.dw.com/en/what-happens-if-russia-blocks-the-ukraine-grain-deal/a-65994255>

Russians' Support for Peace Talks With Ukraine Grows After Unrest, Poll Shows

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-06-29/russians-support-for-peace-talks-up-after-unrest-poll-shows>

Ian Explains: What the war in Ukraine looks like inside Russia

<https://www.gzeromedia.com/ian-explains/what-the-war-in-ukraine-looks-like-inside-russia>

Africa's Ukraine-Russia mediation needed a clearer AU footprint

<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africas-ukraine-russia-mediation-needed-a-clearer-au-footprint>

Ukraine war: Russia eyes Chechens and convicts to fill gaps left by Wagner

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/europe/article/3226594/ukraine-war-russia-eyes-chechens-and-convicts-fill-gaps-left-wagner>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Inside Ukraine's tech push to counter Russian 'suicide' drone threat

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/inside-ukraines-tech-push-counter-russian-suicide-drone-threat-2023-07-05/>

Ukraine says 'particularly fruitful' few days in counteroffensive

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/5/ukraine-says-particularly-fruitful-few-days-in-counteroffensive>

Analysis: What changes can be expected in Russia in response to the Wagner rebellion?

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/analysis-what-changes-can-be-expected-in-russia-in-response-to-the-wagner-rebellion>

Is Putin stronger or weaker after the failed Wagner rebellion?

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2023/07/01/is-putin-stronger-or-weaker-after-the-failed-wagner-rebellion/>

Why Putin should worry his propaganda machine broke down

<https://www.politico.eu/article/vladimir-putin-wagner-yevgeny-prigozhin-russia-ukraine-war-propaganda/>

Only Russia's Military Defeat Can Kill the Cult of Putin

<https://cepa.org/article/only-russias-military-defeat-can-kill-the-cult-of-putin/>

Russia Policy: Don't Be Afraid of the Dark

<https://cepa.org/article/russia-policy-dont-be-afraid-of-the-dark/>

Wagner's Barbarians at the Gates

<https://cepa.org/article/wagners-barbarians-at-the-gates/>

Ukraine's Counteroffensive Makes Slow but Steady Progress Amid Challenges

<https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-counteroffensive-makes-slow-but-steady-progress-amid-challenges/>

Is Ukraine's war strategy behind schedule? Four Russian vulnerabilities and three ways Ukraine is exploiting them

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-04/war-russia-is-ukraine-military-strategy-on-track/102554712>

Wagner attempting to recruit new soldiers online despite Russia's crackdown

<https://inews.co.uk/news/wagner-attempting-recruit-new-soldiers-online-russia-crackdown-2457180>

After Wagner's mutiny, Russia's military is now fighting with war bloggers because they won't celebrate its few wins the way they want

<https://www.businessinsider.com/russias-military-now-fighting-war-bloggers-after-wagner-group-mutiny-2023-7>

Prigozhin Mutiny Further Distances Central Asia From Russia

<https://jamestown.org/program/prigozhin-mutiny-further-distances-central-asia-from-russia/>

Uzbekistan's Snap Presidential Elections Will Seal Its Future Trajectory

<https://jamestown.org/program/uzbekistans-snap-presidential-elections-will-seal-its-future-trajectory/>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Russian Think Tanks Enable the Kremlin's Dangerous Delusions

<https://jamestown.org/program/russian-think-tanks-enable-the-kremlins-dangerous-delusions/>

Failures of Putin Regime Distort Russian Political Perspectives

<https://jamestown.org/program/failures-of-putin-regime-distort-russian-political-perspectives/>

Band-Aid Politics. How the Kremlin is Dealing With the Fallout from Prigozhin's Mutiny

<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90120>

Is Russia Really Becoming China's Vassal?

<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90135>

Judy Asks: Is Ukraine's NATO Membership Realistic?

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/90137>

A Ukrainian Pollster on the Personal and Professional Challenges of Wartime

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2023/07/06/ukrainian-pollster-on-personal-and-professional-challenges-of-war-time-pub-90124>