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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Guatemalan anti-corruption prosecutor flees country after sacking
Al Jazeera: 24 July 2021

Guatemalan anti-corruption prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval fled the country early July 24, hours after being sacked in a move that sparked international outrage.


For more on this theme:

Commission: Pandemic increased risk of corruption in Italy

Accountants, lawyers being recruited by crime bosses: corruption watchdog

Pandemic, penalties aside, bribes go on at China hospitals

Despite Outrage, Guatemala Continues to Bulldoze Anti-Corruption Edifice

New UK sanctions against individuals involved in corruption around the world

Former French minister Rachida Dati charged with corruption in Ghosn case

El Salvador seeks arrest of former president for corruption
https://apnews.com/article/caribbean-arrests-el-salvador-1d641b58823dc3115730ee35ac3d70d4

UK slaps anti-corruption sanctions on former Nineveh governor
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/220720213

Anti-corruption agency summons Seoul education chief in power abuse probe

Political corruption makes it more likely we’ll cheat at the checkout
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jul/25/government-corruption-more-likely-we-cheat-at-tills

A Landmark Fraud And Corruption Trial Opens At The Vatican

Central America’s Private Sector Plays a Big Role in Corruption, Too
https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29836/to-tackle-corruption-honduras-guatemala-and-el-salvador-private-sectors-are-key
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Red Flag Indicators: for wildlife and timber trafficking in containerized sea cargo
Monica Zavagli – TRAFFIC: July 2021

The global maritime shipping industry is being exploited by illegal wildlife traffickers, with some shipping companies not even aware they are being misused, according to a new report jointly published by the World Wildlife Fund and the illegal-wildlife watchdog, TRAFFIC.


Illegal gold mining on Colombia’s rivers rising: UN
Deutsche Welle: 28 July 2021

The illegal activity has caused major environmental damage in Colombia, one of the world’s most biodiverse countries. Officials say the spike in mining is also deeply concerning “because it has ties to organized crime.”


For more on this theme:

UK government seeks to extend protection of ivory-bearing animals

If we’re serious about saving Africa’s elephants, we need to be creative
https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/opinion/elephants-rewilding-howletts-wildlife-park-b1886102.html

Repeating mistakes: why the plan to protect the world’s wildlife falls short

‘Laundering machine’: Furniture giant Ikea implicated in logging protected Siberian forests

Illegal gold miners threaten fragile way of life, deep in Amazon rainforest

France, South Pacific nations to combat ‘predatory’ fishing as China extends reach

UN gets tough vs wildlife trafficking

How Uganda Plays a Key Role In Global Illicit Wildlife Trade
https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/how-uganda-plays-a-key-role-in-global-illicit-wildlife-trade
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

U.K. and France Agree to Increase Resources and Deploy Surveillance Technology to Tackle Illegal Immigration

*Homeland Security Today:* 22 July 2021

United Kingdom Home Secretary Priti Patel and French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin have signed an agreement to strengthen U.K.-French joint cooperation to tackle illegal immigration across the English Channel.


*For more on this theme:*

**Renewed Warnings and New Legislation on Forced Labor in Global Supply Chains**


**The Case for Perpetrator Accountability to Combat Human Trafficking**

https://www.cfr.org/blog/case-perpetrator-accountability-combat-human-trafficking

**Interpol nets 286 in global operation against human trafficking**


**Government must up its efforts to prevent human trafficking, stakeholders say**


**Agency urges stronger fight against human trafficking**


**Financial Services’ Role in Anti-Trafficking, Human Rights, and ESG is at Turning Point**

https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/financial-services-role-in-anti-3236827/

**Citizens Urged to Help in Fight Against Human Trafficking**


**UNODC initiates project to combat human trafficking**


**People smuggler ordered to pay £3,000 to bereaved families of 39 migrants**


**People smugglers offering migrants ‘money back’ guarantees to cross Channel**


**European Governments Brace for Post-Lockdown Migrant Surge**

ORGANIZED CRIME AND MONEY LAUNDERING

Mexico's avocado boom benefits rural farmers — but also organized crime
Leigh Thelmadatter – Mexico News Daily: 28 July 2021

The avocado’s explosive success as an export is breaking decades of uneasy detente between growers and narcos.


For more on this theme:

New self-defense militia appears in Chiapas, Mexico to fight organized crime

Nicaragua Elites and Organized Crime: Introduction
https://insightcrime.org/investigations/nicaragua-elites-organized-crime-introduction/

EU calls for biometric-focused innovation to combat organized crime and border security

Unraveling the Web of Elites Connected to Organized Crime
https://insightcrime.org/the-organization/impact-elites-organized-crime-nicaragua-investigation/

Honduran Armed Forces in the Fight Against Crime

The last refuge of the criminal: Encrypted smartphones

Colombia, Ecuador Committed to the Fight against Transnational Crime

Emerging Europe, Newest EU Members Still Weak On Fighting Money Laundering

How the EU is stepping up to fight money laundering
https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/564678-how-the-eu-is-stepping-up-to-fight-money-laundering?rl=1

India is considering a phased roll-out of a central bank digital currency

After Operation Ironside, AFP says international criminals are adapting their business models
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

SECURITY

**Why cybersecurity is critical today more than ever**
*Hudson Kuteesa – The New Times: 26 July 2021*

The dominant technology since the mid-20th century is the computer. Now, if you want to be an advanced economy, you need to base it on the dominant technology.

https://www.newtimes.co.rw/technology/why-cybersecurity-critical-today-more-ever

*For more on this theme:*

**(China, Global) After Didi Fiasco, China Imposes Cybersecurity Reviews on Foreign IPOs**
https://www.lawfareblog.com/after-didi-fiasco-china-imposes-cybersecurity-reviews-foreign-ivos

**(Canada) As cyberattacks skyrocket, Canada needs to work with — and not hinder — cybersecurity experts**

**(U.S., Global) Artificial Intelligence: Next Frontier Is Cybersecurity**
https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/artificial-intelligence-next-frontier-is-cybersecurity/

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

**Estonia’s Cyber Range to use standalone 5G network**
*The Baltic Times: 23 July 2021*

Andri Rebane, director of the cyber policy department at the Estonian Ministry of Defense, said that not only does the 5G extension to the Cyber Range provide improved cyber defense exercises, it also offers better research and development facility to keep up with the increasing need for secure innovative solutions for defense purposes.

https://www.baltictimes.com/estonia_s_cyber_range_to_use_standalone_5g_network/

*For more on this theme:*

**(U.S.) CISA Launching Joint Cyber Planning Office ‘Shortly’**

**(India) BharatNet Will Pave Way for Mobile Internet in Rural India**
https://telecomtalk.info/bharatnet-will-pave-way-for-mobile-internet/454987/
CYBERCRIME

The world’s top ransomware gangs have created a cybercrime “cartel”

Dan Patterson – CBS News: 22 July 2021

Several of the largest Russian ransomware cybercriminal gangs have partnered up and are sharing hacking techniques, purloined data-breach information, malware code and technology infrastructure.


For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Why making companies disclose ransomware payouts may be a good idea

(India) 18 cyber forensic labs commissioned in India

(U.S., China) How the U.S. Is Spearheading Efforts to Thwart Chinese Cybercrime
https://time.com/6082665/us-tackles-chinese-cybercrime/

CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Ports mostly back to operations after Transnet cyberattack, but force majeure still in place

FIN24: 29 July 2021

South Africa’s ports are mostly back to normal, according to the government, after the recent cyberattack on state-owned Transnet’s information technology system led to chaos and disruptions at the country’s key container terminal.


For more on this theme:

(Russia, Global) A favorite target of Russian hackers, the Olympics are on guard

(U.S.) ‘Holy moly!’: Inside Texas’ fight against a ransomware hack
https://apnews.com/article/technology-government-and-politics-business-texas-hacking-772675a2a7a095ef6e5c9a72fa8ca847

(New Zealand) Fear patient data may have been stolen from Auckland DHBs
https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/125843932/fear-patient-data-may-have-been-stolen-from-auckland-dhbs

(Angola) Angola’s major public bank resumes partial operation after cyber attack
PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Cyber attacks expose the vulnerability of South Africa’s ports
Denys Reva – Institute for Security Studies: 29 July 2021

A joint effort is needed to prevent the unprecedented attack on Transnet’s port operating systems becoming the new normal.

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) Biden signs an executive order aimed at protecting critical American infrastructure from cyberattacks.
(U.S.) What Will It Take to Defend Drinking Water from Cyber Attacks?
https://www.govtech.com/security/what-will-it-take-to-defend-drinking-water-from-cyber-attacks
(India) India Plans More Power Islands to Counter Cyber, Terror Threat

CYBER EXERCISES AND TRAINING

16 Strategies To Ensure A Phishing Exercise Has A Strong And Lasting Impact
Forbes: 23 July 2021

What do companies need to do to ensure that a phishing exercise leads to positive cyber-behavior changes among the team?

For more on this theme:
(U.S.) National Guard units across the nation complete Cyber Shield
https://www.army.mil/article/248795/national_guard_units_across_the_nation_complete_cyber_shield
(U.S.) VanHerck: SPACECOM ‘Critical’ to Latest High-Tech Exercise, but Hurdles Remain
(U.S.) How agencies can level up their cybersecurity training
https://www.federaltimes.com/thought-leadership/2021/07/26/how-agencies-can-level-up-their-cybersecurity-training/
Islamic State Resilient as Ever in Iraq, Syria
Jeff Seldin – Voice of America: 26 July 2021

Intelligence agencies studying the fate of the Islamic State in Iraq fear the terror group is not going anywhere. The assessment is one of the key findings in a report released by the United Nations’ sanctions monitoring team, which warns that despite setbacks, ISIS is poised to be a problem for some time to come in Iraq and neighboring Syria.

For more on this theme:
ISIS risk in Europe ‘significantly’ reduced, says EU counter-terrorism coordinator

The Iraqi Spies Who Helped Defeat ISIS

Morocco Faces Complicated Return Of Former ISIS Fighters

Security forces arrest ISIS ‘Emir of Baghdad’
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/190720213

Nearly 300 ISIS-affiliated people leave al-Hol camp in Rojava
https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/15072021

Islamic State group claims responsibility for deadly suicide bombing near Baghdad

Kosovo Repatriates 11 Citizens From Islamic State Camps In Syria
https://www.rferl.org/a/kosovo-islamic-state-camps-/31364421.html

North Macedonia Repatriates Four Suspected Islamic State Fighters, Families
https://www.rferl.org/a/north-macedonia-islamic-state-repatriation/31365674.html

Belgium takes back mothers and children from Syria jihadist camps

The ISIS Files: The System of Zakat and Charities Under the Islamic State
https://isisfiles.gwu.edu/downloads/bz60cw269?locale=en

The Islamic State’s Web Jihadi Magazine Dabiq and Rumiyah. More than just Propaganda
http://www.ict.org.il/Article/2706/The_Islamic_State_Web_Jihadi_Magazine#gsc.tab=0
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

With Groups Fueled by Drones and Gold, Terror in Africa Tops Concerns in UN Report

The “most striking development” in international terrorism during the first half of this year has been “the emergence of Africa as the region most affected by terrorism” in terms of casualties and successful growth of terror groups, according to a report to the United Nations Security Council assessing recent al-Qaeda and ISIS activity.


Could kidnapping for ransom open the door to terrorism in Benin?
Michaël Matongbada – Institute for Security Studies: 27 July 2021

The government must nip the problem in the bud before violent extremists use abduction to their advantage.

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/could-kidnapping-for-ransom-open-the-door-to-terrorism-in-benin

For more on this theme:

Learning the Lessons of Boko Haram’s Rise and Resilience | Opinion

U.S. designates al Qaeda financial facilitator based in Turkey

Twelve Years of Terror: A Timeline Of The Boko Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram Fighters Pledging Allegiance With ISWAP

What Does a Taliban Government Mean for the Rest of South Asia?

Iran’s Tricky Balancing Act in Afghanistan

Facebook and tech giants to target attacker manifestos, far-right militias in database

Hezbollah Commander Killed Following Apparent Airstrikes In Syria
https://www.the961.com/hezbollah-irgc-officials-die-syria/

Canada vows to resettle Afghan interpreters, citing threat from Taliban
RADICALIZATION

**Violent Extremism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons From the Rise of Boko Haram**

Adu Bulama Bukarti – Tony Blair Institute for Global Change: 23 July 2021

Boko Haram’s leaders took direct inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda, according to a landmark Tony Blair Institute report on stopping extremism. The report calls for action to tackle the ideology spread by Islamist extremists if terror groups such as those on the rise in Africa are to be defeated.


*For more on this theme:*

**Turkey serving as vessel for radical Islamists - U.N. report**


**Langata Women’s Prison unveil detention facility for terror convicts**


IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

**Pro-Iranian Militia Commander Threatens Attacks Against US Forces Unless They Leave Iraq**

Edward Yeranian – Voice of America: 24 July 2021

The commander of Iraq’s pro-Iranian “resistance” forces has threatened to mount more attacks on United States forces inside the country if they don’t withdraw. The threat by Khais al Khazali coincided with a drone attack overnight that targeted U.S. forces in Kurdistan.


*For more on this theme:*

**Iran Has Abandoned Its Own People to Support Terrorists Abroad | Opinion**


**Iran Faces Growing Challenges to Its Iraqi Ambitions**


**China to expand size of its Private Military Companies in Central Asia**


**Will Russian forces really leave Libya?**

[https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/will-russian-forces-really-leave-libya/](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/will-russian-forces-really-leave-libya/)
IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

Why CISA's China Cyberattack Playbook Is Worthy of Your Attention
Maria Korolov – DataCenter Knowledge: 27 July 2021

The advisory outlines the tactics, techniques and procedures China's state-sponsored cybercriminals use to breach networks.


For more on this theme:

Norway says cyber attack on parliament carried out from China

Israel's Prime Minister Wants to Create Global Cyber Network Shield

U.S. Fights Cyber Attacks by Blacklisting, Sanctioning Russian Tech Firms

Facebook says it disrupted Iranian hacking campaign tied to Tortoiseshell gang

US offers up to $10 million reward for information on cyberattacks against critical infrastructure by foreign states

Biden Goes After China's Cyber Attackers

CISA releases alert, analysis on Chinese cyber operations

Chinese state-backed hacking: time to level the playing field and breach the Great Firewall

Foreign actors will seek to interfere in next Canada election - spy agency

New Zealand, China Clash Over Hacking Claims
https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/new-zealand-china-clash-over-hacking-claims

China is the world's biggest digital adversary