

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Ukraine sacks army recruitment chiefs in anti-graft shakeup

Dan Peleschuk – Reuters: 11 August 2023

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a review revealed signs of professional abuse ranging from illegal enrichment to transporting draft-eligible men across the border.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-fire-all-regional-military-recruitment-chiefs-zelenskiy-2023-08-11/>

Can Guatemala and Ecuador's upcoming elections cast light on corruption hidden in the darkness?

Jessica Ludwig – George W. Bush Institute: 16 August 2023

In both Ecuador and Guatemala, where corrupt actors with entrenched financial interests cling to power, shadows hover over this year's elections.

<https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/can-guatemala-and-ecuadors-upcoming-elections-cast-light-on-corruption-hidden-in-the-darkness>

For more on this theme:

West Indies' Samuels found guilty of anti-corruption code breach

<https://www.reuters.com/sports/cricket/west-indies-samuels-found-guilty-anti-corruption-code-breach-2023-08-16/>

Iran Arrests 9 Bahais Over Corruption Charges: Ministry

<https://www.barrons.com/news/iran-arrests-9-bahais-over-corruption-charges-ministry-6d0ae53>

Corrupt Officials Key to Trafficking Networks in Venezuela

<https://insightcrime.org/news/corrupt-officials-key-to-trafficking-networks-in-venezuela/>

US, UK, Canada sanction Lebanon's central bank ex-governor over alleged corruption

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us-sanctions-ex-governor-lebanons-central-bank-over-alleged-corruption-2023-08-10/>

Corruption, China's Weapon of Choice to Snatch Lithium in Latin America

<https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/corruption-chinas-weapon-of-choice-to-snatch-lithium-in-latin-america/>

Chile: Boric enacts bill protecting whistleblowers in corruption cases

<https://en.mercopress.com/2023/08/11/chile-boric-enacts-bill-protecting-whistleblowers-in-corruption-cases>

How much corruption is too much?

<https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2023/08/15/how-much-corruption-is-too-much>

Corruption, social norms, and behaviour change in Nigeria

<https://tribuneonlineng.com/corruption-social-norms-and-behaviour-change-in-nigeria/>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

How corruption and gang warfare transformed Ecuador

Tara John – CNN: 11 August 2023

Ecuadorians are in the middle of a bloody turf war as rival criminal groups mete out often public shows of violence, battling to control drug-trafficking routes that cross the nation.

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/11/americas/ecuador-assassination-criminal-groups-explainer-intl-latam/index.html>

This Drone Full of Meth Shows Syria's Narco Traffickers Are Diversifying

Mohammed Rasool – VICE: 15 August 2023

After Jordanian border police shot down a drone carrying crystal meth, experts say it shows smugglers are no longer just focused on captagon.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/ak3jej/jordan-syria-drone-crystal-meth-captagon>

For more on this theme:

Drug-related killings add to instability in Syria's south

<https://asiatimes.com/2023/08/drug-related-killings-add-to-instability-in-syrias-south/>

The Balkan Drug Route: A Snapshot from the Courtroom

<https://balkaninsight.com/2023/08/10/the-balkan-drug-route-a-snapshot-from-the-courtroom/>

'This isn't some random dude with a duffel bag': To catch fentanyl traffickers, feds dig into crypto markets

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/05/politics/fentanyl-cryptocurrency-cartels-federal-agents-catch-up/index.html>

Has Narco-Money Once Again Infiltrated Political Campaigns in Colombia?

<https://insightcrime.org/news/has-narco-money-once-again-infiltrated-political-campaigns-colombia/>

Cocaine cartels encroach on Unification Church's Paraguayan paradise

<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/paraguay-drugs-unification-church/>

Rotterdam's Largest Cocaine Seizure as Efforts Expand to Stop Smuggling

<https://maritime-executive.com/article/rotterdam-s-largest-cocaine-seizure-as-efforts-expand-to-stop-smuggling>

White House asks Congress for more money to fight fentanyl overdoses

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/white-house-fentanyl-overdoses-rcna99283>

'You have to sacrifice your life': the drug runners of Colombia's rainforests

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/aug/15/indigenous-drug-runners-colombia-brazil-sacrifice-your-life->

Uruguay's Homegrown Crime Groups Likely to Stay Local, Study Says

<https://insightcrime.org/news/uruguay-examines-studies-microtrafficking-and-violence/>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

How can we use AI to combat wildlife crime?

Lionel Hachemin – IFAW: 14 August 2023

Wildlife trafficking is the world's fourth-most common criminal activity after drug, human and weapons trafficking. Artificial intelligence presents a potential solution.

<https://www.ifaw.org/international/journal/ai-combat-wildlife-crime>

Romania to pay farmers to leave trees standing

Louise Guillot – Politico: 10 August 2023

The European Commission approved a state aid plan allowing Romania to pay foresters to not cut down trees.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/romania-to-pay-farmers-to-leave-trees-standing/>

For more on this theme:

This dog is helping Maine biologists protect turtles from illegal pet market

<https://thecounty.me/2023/08/05/news/this-dog-is-helping-maine-biologists-protect-turtles-from-illegal-pet-market/>

Illegal wildlife trade 'thriving' in virtual world; NParks monitoring marketplaces

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/want-to-buy-real-tiger-skin-teeth-and-claws-man-posts-on-whatsapp>

New farmers foundation supports deforestation-free products in Indonesia

<https://news.mongabay.com/2023/08/new-farmers-foundation-supports-deforestation-free-products-in-indonesia/>

Insight: Amazon rainforest gold mining is poisoning scores of threatened species

<https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/amazon-rainforest-gold-mining-is-poisoning-scores-threatened-species-2023-08-05/>

Illegal mining of rare earth metals surges in northern Myanmar

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rare-earth-08082023151043.html>

Brazil Keeps Up Fight Against Illegal Mining in Yanomami Indigenous Land

<https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/brazil-keeps-up-fight-against-illegal-mining-in-yanomami-indigenous-land/>

The illegal trade of shark fin is thriving in South America

<https://theworld.org/stories/2023-08-09/illegal-trade-shark-fin-thriving-south-america>

Illegal Timber Traffickers Are Exploiting Once-Untouched Forest Around the Peru-Colombia-Brazil Border

<https://www.financecolombia.com/illegal-timber-traffickers-are-exploiting-once-untouched-forest-around-the-peru-colombia-brazil-border/>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

The Lawfare Podcast: Can We Build a Trustworthy Future Web?

Benjamin Wittes, Rose Jackson and Camille François – Lawfare: 10 August 2023

What are the challenges to scaling trust and safety to new information ecosystems?

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-lawfare-podcast-can-we-build-a-trustworthy-future-web>

For more on this theme:

(Africa) Cyber governance in Africa is weak. Taking the Malabo Convention seriously would be a good start

<https://theconversation.com/cyber-governance-in-africa-is-weak-taking-the-malabo-convention-seriously-would-be-a-good-start-209384>

(Global) Human Rights and the Digital Domain Primer – Part 4

<https://circleid.com/posts/20230807-human-rights-and-the-digital-domain-primer-part-3>

(EU, China) The tech standards that shape the future: How Europeans should respond to China's rising influence

<https://ecfr.eu/article/the-tech-standards-that-shape-the-future-how-europeans-should-respond-to-chinas-rising-influence/>

INTERNET FREEDOM

Jeopardizing Digital Rights in Jordan

Abdullah Jbour – Carnegie: 15 August 2023

Jordan's controversial new cybercrime law, now ratified by the king, may have serious consequences for freedom of expression, political participation and the digital economy.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90374>

For more on this theme:

(China) LinkedIn Shuts Down InCareer, Its App for China

<https://www.voanews.com/a/linkedin-shuts-down-incareer-its-app-for-china/7217419.html>

(Iran) The Implications of Internet Censorship on Iran's Digital Economy

<https://irannewsupdate.com/news/economy/the-implications-of-internet-censorship-on-irans-digital-economy/>

(Russia) Russia Slams Reddit with First-Ever Fine for Illegal Content

<https://www.gizchina.com/2023/08/15/russia-slams-reddit-with-first-ever-fine-for-illegal-content/>

(Russia) Apple caves to the Kremlin, for a minute

<https://www.codastory.com/newsletters/russia-censorship-apple/>

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Getting regulation right to improve Australia's cybersecurity

Rajiv Shah – The Strategist: 15 August 2023

Poor cybersecurity is a risk to our interconnected digital systems, while improved security is an opportunity to build trust by enabling further digital transformation.

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/getting-regulation-right-to-improve-australias-cybersecurity/>

For more on this theme:

(Nepal) Govt approves National Cyber Security Policy 2023

<https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/govt-approves-national-cyber-security-policy-2023/>

(Global) Amit Shah Says Global Cooperation Is Now Essential for Cybersecurity

<https://www.fairobserver.com/world-news/amit-shah-says-global-cooperation-is-now-essential-for-cybersecurity/>

(India) India's digital transformation: A deep dive into Data Protection Act

<https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/blog/indias-digital-transformation-a-deep-dive-into-data-protection-act/102786525>

CYBERATTACKS

LifeLabs could pay at least \$4.9M in proposed class-action settlement over cyberattack

CBC News: 11 August 2023

LifeLabs could pay up to \$9.8 million to settle the lawsuit arising from a 2019 incident that compromised patient data.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/lifelabs-class-action-cyberattack-settlement-1.6934135>

For more on this theme:

(Global) EvilProxy Cyberattack Flood Targets Execs via Microsoft 365

<https://www.darkreading.com/cloud/evilproxy-cyberattack-flood-execs-microsoft-365>

(Bangladesh, India) Some web services restored in Bangladesh amid fears of cyberattack

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/some-web-services-restored-in-bangladesh-amid-fears-of-cyberattack/2968872>

(South Africa) Southern African power generator targeted with DroxiDat malware

<https://therecord.media/southern-africa-utility-targeted-cyberattack>

(Germany, Iran) Charming Kitten Targets Iranian Dissidents with Advanced Cyber Attacks

<https://thehackernews.com/2023/08/charming-kitten-targets-iranian.html>

CYBERCRIME

AI-Driven Security: A Proactive Approach to Combatting Cybercrime in the Digital Era

Satya Machiraju – *Express Computer*: 16 August 2023

As organizations rely more and more on technology, they become more vulnerable to attacks.

<https://www.expresscomputer.in/artificial-intelligence-ai/ai-driven-security-a-proactive-approach-to-combatting-cybercrime-in-the-digital-era/102348/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Hacktivists fund their operations using common cybercrime tactics

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/hacktivists-fund-their-operations-using-common-cybercrime-tactics/>

(Global) “If cybercrime was a country, it would be the world’s third-largest economy after the U.S. and China”

<https://www.businessleader.co.uk/interview-raluca-saceanu-ceo-smarttech247/>

(Global) Unveiling the secrets of Dark Web marketplaces: Efforts in combating cybercrime

<https://ciosea.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/blog/unveiling-the-secrets-of-dark-web-marketplaces-efforts-in-combating-cybercrime/102707888>

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

“The Taiwan Scenario” and Cyberattacks on Civilian Critical Infrastructures

Daniel Pereira – *OODALoop*: 15 August 2023

“The broad calculus for China’s decision-making will likely involve weighing the relative military advantage gained from cyberattacks on critical infrastructure against the probability that such attacks would provoke a harsh U.S. response or expand the conflict,” says James A. Lewis, director of the Strategic Technologies Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<https://www.oodaloo.com/archive/2023/08/15/the-taiwan-scenario-and-cyberattacks-on-civilian-critical-infrastructures/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) How do chemical manufacturers avoid the nightmare cyberattack scenario?

<https://technative.io/chemical-manufacturers-avoid-nightmare-cyberattack/>

(U.S., China) Laying Down the Law Under the Sea: Analyzing the US and Chinese Submarine Cable Governance Regimes

<https://jamestown.org/program/laying-down-the-law-under-the-sea-analyzing-the-us-and-chinese-submarine-cable-governance-regimes/>

(U.S.) The Emerging Opportunities And Threats Of AI For Critical Infrastructure — Interview With Martin Stanley, CISA

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/cognitiveworld/2023/08/04/the-emerging-opportunities-and-threats-of-ai-for-critical-infrastructureinterview-with-martin-stanley-cisa/>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

ISIS still poses serious threat with thousands of fighters in Middle East, UN says

The National: 15 August 2023

Members of the terrorist group include more than 3,500 Iraqis and about 2,000 citizens of 70 other countries, according to United Nations reports.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/2023/08/15/isis-still-poses-serious-threat-with-thousands-of-fighters-in-middle-east-un-says/>

ISIS deploys cryptocurrency, NATO-grade weapons to revive its reign of terror

Mukul Sharma – WION: 13 August 2023

The Islamic State group is reported to be using regional versions of cryptocurrency, including so-called stablecoins, and is increasingly relying on virtual assets for international funds transfers, according to a United Nations report.

<https://www.wionews.com/world/explained-isis-deploys-cryptocurrency-nato-grade-weapons-to-revive-its-reign-of-terror-625052>

For more on this theme:

Islamic State claims responsibility for attack on bus that kills 23 Syrian troops

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/attack-bus-kills-23-syrian-troops-war-monitor-2023-08-11/>

Suqur al-Sham's Allegiances in Question After US Killing of Abd-al-Hadi Mahmud al-Haji Ali in Syria

<https://jamestown.org/program/suqur-al-shams-allegiances-in-question-after-us-killing-of-abd-al-hadi-mahmud-al-haji-ali-in-syria/>

Why it's time to repatriate IS foreign fighters

<https://mei.edu/publications/why-its-time-repatriate-foreign-fighters>

The Australian government has a duty to repatriate children born in IS-held territory in Syria

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jul/23/the-australian-government-has-a-duty-to-repatriate-children-born-in-is-held-territory-in-syria>

Daesh shows signs of division over propaganda strategy

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-36/Opinion/Daesh-shows-signs-of-division-over-propaganda-strategy-29932>

Al Qaeda and ISIS start resurfacing in Bangladesh

<https://myvoice.opindia.com/2023/08/al-qaeda-and-isis-start-resurfacing-in-bangladesh/>

Where is ISIS today?

<https://www.tpr.org/2023-08-04/where-is-isis-today>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Middle East groups learn lessons from the Ukraine War

Pierre Bousset – GIS: 15 August 2023

Islamist militias are analyzing the war in Ukraine for tactics, signaling a strategic shift for armed groups in the Middle East.

<https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/islamist-militias-ukraine/>

For more on this theme:

Lebanon's Hezbollah leader urges Muslims to 'punish' Quran desecrators if governments fail to do so

<https://apnews.com/article/iraq-ashoura-nasrallah-quran-lebanon-1ffdf478e8d0b5324a0cb3afcd-c0af3b>

Why International Leverage Has Failed With the Taliban

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/why-international-leverage-has-failed-with-the-taliban>

Is Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Merging Into al-Qaida?

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/07/is-tehreek-e-taliban-pakistan-merging-into-al-qaida/>

Why the Taliban's opium ban will probably fail

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2023-08/why-talibans-opium-ban-will-probably-fail>

Coup in Niger puts U.S. efforts to thwart terrorism in Africa's Sahel region at risk

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/coup-in-niger-puts-u-s-efforts-to-thwart-terrorism-in-africas-sahel-region-at-risk>

Terrorism: What's behind surge in arrests of under-18s?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-66365312>

Terrorists are using fraud to fund their activities — the UK government needs to act urgently

<https://theconversation.com/terrorists-are-using-fraud-to-fund-their-activities-the-uk-government-needs-to-act-urgently-208758>

The crisis in West Africa could bring terrorism back to Europe's streets

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/07/31/the-crisis-in-north-africa-may-bring-terrorism-to-europe/>

Hezbollah in Latin America: An Update

<https://greydynamics.com/hezbollah-in-latin-america-an-update/>

The Problem with Designating the Wagner Group as a Terrorist Organization

<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/the-problem-with-designating-the-wagner-group-as-a-terrorist-organization/>

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb launches propaganda campaign targeting Morocco

<https://www.atalayar.com/en/articulo/politics/qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghreb-launches-propaganda-campaign-targeting-morocco/20230807175446189261.html>

Niger coup: Wagner taking advantage of instability – Antony Blinken

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-66436797>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

How Russia's Military Bloggers Shape the Course of Putin's War

Donald N. Jensen and Angela Howard – United States Institute of Peace; 10 August 2023

Their “soft” immunity ensures a platform for powerful hardline voices to lobby for an even more aggressive approach to the war on Ukraine.

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/08/how-russias-military-bloggers-shape-course-putins-war>

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Nothing Seems to Deter Russian Aggression Like NATO Membership

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/08/17/nothing-seems-to-deter-russian-aggression-like-nato-membership-pub-90398>

Prigozhin's Mutiny Shatters Illusion of Powerful Media Empire

<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90372>

Russia faces 'great dilemma' as Ukraine puts Moscow on the defensive

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/10/ukraine-puts-russia-on-the-defensive-at-sea-strikes-logistics>

Ukraine's Slow-Moving Counteroffensive: The Russian Response (Part Two)

<https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-slow-moving-counteroffensive-the-russian-response-part-two/>

Belarus Remains a Persistent Vector of Russia's Hybrid Campaign Against the West

<https://jamestown.org/program/belarus-remains-a-persistent-vector-of-russias-hybrid-campaign-against-the-west/>

Hard Georgian Lessons for Ending the War in Ukraine

<https://jamestown.org/program/hard-georgian-lessons-for-ending-the-war-in-ukraine/>

Inside Russia's attempts to hack Ukrainian military operations

<https://www.npr.org/2023/08/10/1193167328/russia-hack-ukraine-military>

Ukraine says Saudi talks were 'breakthrough', Kyiv has more to offer Africa than Russia

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-says-saudi-talks-were-breakthrough-kyiv-has-more-offer-africa-than-2023-08-10/>

Ukraine claims it has retaken key village from Russians as counteroffensive grinds on

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-russia-war-urozhaine-counteroffensive/>

Ukraine strikes back against Russia as world's first drone war escalates

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-strikes-back-against-russia-as-worlds-first-drone-war-escalates/>

Ukraine's vibrant tech ecosystem is a secret weapon in the war with Russia

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-vibrant-tech-ecosystem-is-a-secret-weapon-in-the-war-with-russia/>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme

Winter is coming: Is Ukraine's power grid ready for new Russian attacks?

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/winter-is-coming-is-ukraines-power-grid-ready-for-new-russian-attacks/>

Why Putin's Russia cannot accept its borders

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/why-putins-russia-cannot-accept-its-borders/>

Why Ukraine can still win

<https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/inq2/ukraine-war-russia-victory-optimism-sea-drones-20230813.html>

Russia: New school history books seek to justify Ukraine war

<https://www.dw.com/en/russia-ukraine-war-history-school-books/a-66498211>

The Ukrainians Forced to Flee to Russia

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/08/21/the-ukrainians-forced-to-flee-to-russia>

Ukraine War: Russia's Weaponisation of Food

<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/ukraine-war-russias-weaponisation-of-food/>

Russia is committing grave acts of ecocide in Ukraine — and the results will harm the whole world

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/aug/16/russia-ecocide-ukraine-world-war-crimes>

Challenges after Russian Withdrawals in Ukraine

<https://newlinesinstitute.org/ukraine/challenges-after-russian-withdrawals-in-ukraine/>

On The Front Line: Ukraine's Counteroffensive Yields Small Gains

<https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-counteroffensive-yields-small-gains/32542070.html>

Russia's 'elections' in occupied Ukraine are a charade

<https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-elections-ukraine-vladimir-putin-are-a-charade/>

Jonathan Littell: 'Nothing Will Change In Russia Until It's Defeated In Ukraine'

<https://www.rferl.org/a/interview-jonathan-littell-journalist-russia-defeat-ukraine/32549338.html>

The Decline in Russian Economy: Emerging Challenges Amidst the Russia-Ukraine War

<https://thegeopolitics.com/the-decline-in-russian-economy-emerging-challenges-amidst-the-russia-ukraine-war/>

How Russia is Using Online Video Games to Promote the War in Ukraine

<https://www.justsecurity.org/87566/how-russia-is-using-online-video-games-to-promote-the-war-in-ukraine/>

The Baltic response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/baltic-response-russia-s-invasion-ukraine>

A Game Of Drones In The Russia-Ukraine War

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/11082023-a-game-of-drones-in-the-russia-ukraine-war-analysis/>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Wagner Group Licks Its Wounds In Belarus

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/12082023-wagner-group-licks-its-wounds-in-belarus-analysis/>

Were the Jeddah Peace Talks a Real Step Toward Peace?

<https://cepa.org/article/were-the-jeddah-peace-talks-a-real-step-toward-peace/>

BRICS Summit And ICC Warrant Against Putin

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/16082023-brics-summit-and-icc-warrant-against-putin-analysis/>

Navigating Russia's Strategic Moves In West Africa: Unraveling Geopolitical Dynamics

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/16082023-navigating-russias-strategic-moves-in-west-africa-unraveling-geopolitical-dynamics-analysis/>

Russian Factory Is Using Underage Workers To Assemble Iranian 'Suicide' Drones Destined For Ukraine

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/13082023-russian-factory-is-using-underage-workers-to-assemble-iranian-suicide-drones-destined-for-ukraine-analysis/>