

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Perceived Corruption Reduces Trust in Tax Systems, Survey Shows

Tim Shaw – Reuters: 18 September 2023

The latest biennial survey conducted by three financial professional organizations shows that across the globe, concerns over how tax revenue is spent diminishes overall trust in tax authorities and governments.

<https://tax.thomsonreuters.com/news/perceived-corruption-reduces-trust-in-tax-systems-survey-shows/>

For more on this theme:

Corruption accusations continue to plague top Zelenskiy aides

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/graft-accusations-dog-top-zelenskiy-aides-2023-09-19/>

Security Force Corruption Scandal Rocks Brazil's Biggest Amazon State

<https://insightcrime.org/news/corruption-further-hurdle-defending-brazilian-amazon/>

Gabon's new strongman threatens business leaders over corruption

<https://www.africanews.com/2023/09/01/gabons-new-strongman-threatens-business-leaders-over-corruption/>

Corruption, budget cuts and politicization break down Russia's space muscle

<https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-09-03/corruption-budget-cuts-and-politicization-break-down-russias-space-muscle.html>

Vietnam Stock Market Performance Shows Success of Anti-corruption Reforms

<https://thegeopolitics.com/vietnam-stock-market-performance-shows-success-of-anti-corruption-reforms/>

Activists: Anwar has broken promises to repeal Malaysia's restrictive laws, end corruption

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/malaysian/dissent-concerns-09062023141252.html>

Fraud and corruption against government: Large gaps remain in Government's understanding of risks

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/127/public-accounts-committee/news/197302/fraud-and-corruption-against-government-large-gaps-remain-in-governments-understanding-of-risks/>

Corruption Is an Existential Threat to Ukraine, and Ukrainians Know It

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/10/opinion/ukraine-war-corruption.html>

Malaysian Youth Party Defects From Ruling Coalition Over Corruption Cases

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/malaysian-youth-party-defects-from-ruling-coalition-over-corruption-cases/>

UN agency urges corruption focus in the food sector

<https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2023/09/un-agency-urges-corruption-focus-in-food-sector/>

Russian spaceport visited by North Korea's Kim has a history of corruption and construction delays

<https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/russian-spaceport-visited-kim-troubled-history-blighted-corruption-103148032>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Inside a drug lab: Trafficking rings import chemists to teach ‘cooks’ how to disguise cocaine

Patricia Peiró – El País: 18 September 2023

International cartels are increasingly using specialists who are capable of impregnating narcotics into anything from canned oil to clothing.

<https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-09-18/inside-a-drug-lab-trafficking-rings-import-chemists-to-teach-cooks-how-to-disguise-cocaine.html>

The wild, green shrub in Afghanistan that is dividing drug experts

Lucy Cormack – The Sydney Morning Herald: 16 September 2023

A disputed United Nations report suggests growth of the country’s methamphetamine trade has not been fueled by precursor chemicals, but by the ephedra plant.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/middle-east/the-wild-green-shrub-in-afghanistan-that-is-dividing-drug-experts-20230810-p5dvnk.html>

For more on this theme:

Son of drug kingpin El Chapo pleads not guilty to US trafficking charges

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/19/son-of-drug-kingpin-el-chapo-pleads-not-guilty-to-us-trafficking-charges>

The Global threat of Narco-Terrorism

<https://www.dailynews.lk/2023/09/07/featured/110144/the-global-threat-of-narco-terrorism/>

In Combating Drug Trafficking, Knowing the Enemy Is the First Step

<https://thewire.in/security/in-combating-drug-trafficking-knowing-the-enemy-is-the-first-step>

Von der Leyen vows EU strategy to combat drug trafficking

<https://www.politico.eu/article/ursula-von-der-leyen-eu-strategy-combat-drug-trafficking/>

China Shies Away from Coalition Against Synthetic Drugs

<https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/china-shies-away-from-coalition-against-synthetic-drugs/>

Demystifying the synthetic drug menace: India’s struggles and strategies

<https://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/demystifying-synthetic-drug-menace-indias-struggles-and-strategies>

Fake drugs, real impact: Western Asia’s counterfeit medicine epidemic

<https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/western-asia-counterfeit-medicine/>

The new U.S. plan to target xylazine-laced fentanyl

<https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/penn-ldi-new-us-plan-target-xylazine-laced-fentanyl>

Four drug traffickers in Marseille tried for torturing a child “freelance” dealer

<https://www.euronews.com/2023/09/08/four-drug-traffickers-in-marseille-tried-for-torturing-a-child-freelance-dealer>

Signal: Mexico enlists UN help to tackle drug trafficking in Port of Manzanillo

<https://www.ship-technology.com/deals-dashboards/mexico-enlists-un-help-to-tackle-drug-trafficking-in-port-of-manzanillo/>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Animal CSI: Forensics comes for the wildlife trade

Amber Dance – Knowable Magazine: 19 September 2023

Scientists are using the latest in DNA fingerprinting to combat the multibillion-dollar business of trafficking plants and animals.

<https://knowablemagazine.org/article/living-world/2023/animal-forensics-wildlife-trade>

Illegal gold mining and livestock trafficking fuel terrorism in Côte d'Ivoire

Ecofin Agency: 19 September 2023

The Institute for Security Studies' report outlines the links between those illegal activities and terrorism.

<https://www.ecofinagency.com/public-management/1909-44868-illegal-gold-mining-and-livestock-trafficking-fuel-terrorism-in-cote-divoire-iss>

Full article:

Côte d'Ivoire must cut ties between terrorists and illicit markets

<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/cote-divoire-must-cut-ties-between-terrorists-and-illicit-markets>

For more on this theme:

Exposing Australia's online trade in pest plants: Researchers find thousands of illegal advertisements

<https://phys.org/news/2023-09-exposing-australia-online-pest-thousands.html>

Romanian NGOs urge EU Commission to enforce moratorium to protect local forests

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/romanian-ngos-urge-eu-commission-to-enforce-moratorium-to-protect-local-forests/>

If the EU wants to protect the climate, it has to protect the human rights defenders

<https://www.euronews.com/2023/09/13/if-the-eu-wants-to-protect-the-climate-it-has-to-protect-the-human-rights-defenders>

Troops dislodge 11,500 illegal miners from Venezuelan reserve

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230910-troops-dislodge-11-500-illegal-miners-from-venezuelan-reserve>

How illegal mining gangs in South Africa feeding China's demand for stainless steel scar the land

<https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/long-reads/article/3233679/how-illegal-mining-gangs-south-africa-feeding-chinas-demand-stainless-steel-scar-land>

Chinese company releases 50 Lao villagers accused of illegal gold mining

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/mining-gold-09112023160223.html>

Taiwan taking steps to curb illegal fishing

<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2023/09/09/2003805974>

Norway rolls out global monitoring to combat illegal fishing

<https://fiskerforum.com/norway-rolls-out-global-monitoring-to-combat-illegal-fishing/>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Governments race to regulate AI tools

Reuters: 19 September 2023

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT are complicating governments' efforts to agree on laws governing the use of the technology.

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/governments-race-regulate-ai-tools-2023-09-19/>

For more on this theme:

(China, Global) China Wants to Run Your Internet

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/25/china-wants-to-run-your-internet/>

(Global) The Bumpy Road Toward Global AI Governance

<https://www.noemamag.com/the-bumpy-road-toward-global-ai-governance/>

INTERNET FREEDOM

How new tech is helping people circumvent digital authoritarianism

Tate Ryan-Mosley – MIT Technology Review: 18 September 2023

From Iran to China to Russia, there's an escalating cat-and-mouse game between the censors and those trying to evade them.

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/09/18/1079668/the-censorship-arms-race/>

For more on this theme:

(Africa) Internet access restricted in 20 African nations during elections since 2015

<https://www.techradar.com/computing/cyber-security/internet-access-restricted-in-20-african-nations-during-elections-since-2015>

(Russia) Russia inches closer to Chinese-style great firewall

<https://cybernews.com/news/russia-china-great-firewall/>

(Russia) Google Bard AI won't answer questions about Putin asked in Russian

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2392386-google-bard-ai-wont-answer-questions-about-putin-asked-in-russian/>

(EU) Who in the EU gets to decide what can or cannot be said online?

<https://www.euronews.com/2023/09/14/who-in-the-eu-gets-to-decide-what-can-or-cannot-be-said-online>

CYBER STRATEGY AND RISKS

Digital Public Infrastructure: The story of India's digital revolution

R. S. Sharma – Indian Express: 19 September 2023

India's approach is a testament to the country's commitment to leveraging technology for a greater, more digitally inclusive, good.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/digital-india-vision-department-of-telecom-pm-wani-upi-8945834/>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) A Review of NIST's Draft Cybersecurity Framework 2.0

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/a-review-of-nist-s-draft-cybersecurity-framework-2.0>

(U.S.) Defense Dept. Releases 2023 Cyber Strategy Summary

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/defense-dept.-releases-2023-cyber-strategy-summary>

(Global) What Will Mechanisms for Cybersecurity Aid Look Like?

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/what-will-mechanisms-for-cybersecurity-aid-look-like>

CYBERATTACKS

Press Freedom Group Battles Ongoing Cyberattack

Liam Scott – Voice of America: 14 September 2023

The International Press Institute thinks the attack is in retaliation for its recent report on similar ones against independent media in Hungary.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/press-freedom-group-battles-ongoing-cyberattack-/7268960.html>

For more on this theme:

(Canada) Canada blames border checkpoint outages on cyberattack

<https://therecord.media/canada-border-checkpoint-outages-ddos-attack-russia>

(Colombia) More than 50 Colombian state, private entities hit by cyberattack – Petro

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/more-than-50-colombian-state-private-entities-hit-by-cyberattack-petro-2023-09-18/>

(Kuwait) Kuwait's finance ministry says cyber attack hits one of its systems

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/kuwait-finance-ministry-says-cyber-attack-hits-one-its-systems-2023-09-18/>

(U.S.) Casino giant Caesars Entertainment hit by cyberattack, joining rival MGM Resorts as victim of data breach

<https://fortune.com/2023/09/15/caesars-entertainment-cyberattack-mgm-resorts-data-breach/>

(U.S.) Clorox says last month's cyberattack is still disrupting production

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/18/clorox-says-last-months-cyberattack-is-still-disrupting-production.html>

(UK) UK police officers' data stolen in cyberattack on ID supplier

<https://techcrunch.com/2023/09/18/uk-police-officers-data-stolen-cyberattack-digital-id/>

CYBERCRIME

Report: Increase in Chinese-Language Malware Could ‘Challenge’ Russian Dominance of Cybercrime

Masood Farivar – Voice of America: 20 September 2023

For decades, Russian and eastern European hackers have dominated the cybercrime underworld. These days they may face a challenge from a new contender – China.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/report-increase-in-chinese-language-malware-could-challenge-russian-dominance-of-cybercrime-/7276841.html>

For more on this theme:

(South Africa) Digital evidence – a step forward for South Africa

<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/digital-evidence-a-step-forward-for-south-africa>

(Global) The International Criminal Court Will Now Prosecute Cyberwar Crimes

<https://www.wired.com/story/icc-cyberwar-crimes/>

(Global) Cybercrime Ecosystem Industrializes Ransom Attacks, So Why Not Ban Payments?

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stewartroom/2023/09/14/cybercrime-ecosystem-industrialises-ransom-attacks-so-why-not-ban-payments/?sh=59d223902ffc>

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

DoD: China’s ICS Cyber Onslaught Aimed at Gaining Kinetic Warfare Advantage

Tara Seals – Dark Reading: 15 September 2023

Escalating incursions into military base infrastructure, telecom networks, utilities and more signal that Beijing is laying groundwork for mass disruption.

<https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/dod-china-ics-cyber-onslaught-kinetic-warfare-advantage>

For more on this theme:

(Israel) ‘Israel’s’ railroad network targeted by cyberattack: Israeli media

<https://english.almayadeen.net/news/technology/israels-railroad-network-targeted-by-cyberattack:-israeli-me>

(U.S.) DHS Issues Recommendations to Harmonize Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Entities

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/09/19/dhs-issues-recommendations-harmonize-cyber-incident-reporting-critical>

(U.S.) US is making headway on securing cyber infrastructure, commission says

<https://www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/us-securing-cyber-infrastructure/694226/>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Islamic State Khorasan Within Taliban-Ruled Afghanistan: Dynamics and Synergies with Allies and Enemies

Noellynn Slaughter – Homeland Security Today: 17 September 2023

Although the Islamic State group’s “caliphate” has been crippled, the ideology continues to perpetuate itself beyond its original territory.

<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/islamic-state-khorasan-within-taliban-ruled-afghanistan-dynamics-and-synergies-with-allies-and-enemies/>

Iraq steps up repatriations from Islamic State camp in Syria, hoping to reduce militant threats

Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Bassem Mroue – The Associated Press: 15 September 2023

The camp in northeastern Syria houses tens of thousands of people, mostly wives and children of Islamic State group fighters but also supporters of the militant group.

<https://apnews.com/article/syria-iraq-repatriation-islamic-state-c0b80ba80e2af09b109c38bbd2f54b24>

For more on this theme:

Iraq Sentences IS Member to Death Over Pilgrim Bombing

<https://www.voanews.com/a/iraq-sentences-is-member-to-death-over-pilgrim-bombing-/7269445.html>

ISWAP Terrorists Slaughter Member For Allegedly Diverting Funds For Personal Use

<https://saharareporters.com/2023/09/20/iswap-terrorists-slaughter-member-allegedly-diverting-funds-personal-use>

Tough Task For Afghan Taliban To Tackle ISKP – OpEd

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/12092023-tough-task-for-afghan-taliban-to-tackle-iskp-oped/>

Brief: Indonesia Reins in Islamic State Remnants

<https://jamestown.org/program/brief-indonesia-reins-in-islamic-state-remnants/>

A Brief Biography of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi: The Islamic State’s Second Caliph

<https://www.meforum.org/64807/a-brief-biography-of-abu-ibrahim-al-hashimi-al>

Kyrgyzstan Faces Challenges In Repatriating Islamic State Women, Children From Syrian Camps

<https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-islamic-state-repatriation/32583046.html>

Islamic State in Northern Iraq Weakened but Still Dangerous, Say Militia Commanders

<https://themedialine.org/by-region/islamic-state-in-northern-iraq-weakened-but-still-dangerous-say-militia-commanders/>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Taliban Sell Afghanistan's Mines Despite Sanctions

Akmal Dawi – Voice of America: 7 September 2023

The Taliban, facing international sanctions and a dire economic outlook at home, have intensified efforts to leverage Afghanistan's vast natural resources.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-sell-afghanistan-s-mines-despite-sanctions/7257190.html>

Risk of laundering and terrorism in Kenya surges with the region's cryptocurrency boom

Chinedu Okafor – Business Insider Africa: 10 September 2023

The increasing usage of cryptocurrencies has alarmed Kenyan officials, who warn that trading in cryptocurrency may increase the danger of money laundering and the funding of terrorism.

<https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/markets/risk-of-laundering-and-terrorism-in-kenya-surges-with-the-regions-cryptocurrency-boom/9nsmw4h>

For more on this theme:

Rivalry among Boko Haram factions compounds violence in northern Nigeria

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/9/8/rivalry-among-boko-haram-factions-compounds-violence-in-northern-nigeria>

Brief: Russian Wagner Group Faces Increasing Attacks From Sahelian Jihadists Amid Coup Fallout

<https://jamestown.org/program/brief-russian-wagner-group-face-increasing-attacks-from-sahelian-jihadists-amid-coup-fallout/>

As Violent Extremism Evolves, Local Partners are Key in Finding Solutions

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/09/violent-extremism-evolves-local-partners-are-key-finding-solutions>

The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism Still Hangs Over Us

<https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column/cipher-brief-expert-view/the-threat-of-nuclear-terrorism-still-hangs-over-us>

Al-Qaeda Issues Call for Revenge Against Nordic Countries Following Quran Burnings

<https://jamestown.org/program/al-qaeda-issues-call-for-revenge-against-nordic-countries-following-quran-burnings/>

The Evolution of an al-Qaeda Affiliate: Unmasking Notorious Uzbek Leader Abdul Aziz Domla of Katibat al-Tawhid wal Jihad

<https://www.hstoday.us/featured/the-evolution-of-an-al-qaeda-affiliate-unmasking-notorious-uzbek-leader-abdul-aziz-domla-of-katibat-al-tawhid-wal-jihad/>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

Ukraine's drone strikes are a window into the future of warfare

Mark Jacobsen – Atlantic Council: 14 September 2023

The Ukrainians are now innovating at a breathtaking pace. Three trends will make these attacks more frequent and successful.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/ukraines-drone-strikes-are-a-window-into-the-future-of-warfare/>

For more on this theme:

With Russia distracted in Ukraine, Azerbaijan launches attack on Armenian enclave

<https://www.wunc.org/2023-09-19/with-russia-distracted-in-ukraine-azerbaijan-launches-attack-on-armenian-enclave>

In Ukraine, the focus is the fighting, but are negotiations possible?

<https://www.npr.org/2023/09/14/1199304673/in-ukraine-the-focus-is-the-fighting-but-are-negotiations-possible>

Exclusive: EU to ask China at UN to push Russia towards 'just peace' in Ukraine

<https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-ask-china-un-push-russia-towards-just-peace-ukraine-2023-09-20/>

Revealed: how Russia deliberately targeted Kherson's hospitals

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/20/revealed-how-russia-deliberately-targeted-kherson-hospitals>

War in Ukraine: Is the counter-offensive making progress?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66796358>

Ukraine calls for return of 'abducted' children as more arrive in Belarus

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/20/ukraine-calls-for-return-of-abducted-children-as-more-arrive-in-belarus>

Zelenskyy: Russia is weaponizing food, energy and children in its war against Ukraine

<https://www.wpbfb.com/article/russia-weaponizing-food-energy-children-ukraine-war/45210465#>

Russian Influence Fades in the Multi-Aligned South Caucasus

<https://jamestown.org/program/russian-influence-fades-in-the-multi-aligned-south-caucasus/>

Ukraine's New Defense Minister Has Difficult Road Ahead

<https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-new-defense-minister-has-difficult-road-ahead/>

Moscow Tries to Bolster Military Forces While Avoiding Overt Mobilization

<https://jamestown.org/program/moscow-tries-to-bolster-military-forces-while-avoiding-overt-mobilization/>

Russia is making a 'very costly' tactical mistake that means its second line of defense will be easier to penetrate, analysts say

<https://www.businessinsider.com/tactical-mistake-russia-ukraine-war-defensive-lines-2023-9>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Ukraine war: reports suggest that Russia has been deliberately targeting journalists — which is a war crime

<https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-reports-suggest-that-russia-has-been-deliberately-targeting-journalists-which-is-a-war-crime-213663>

The mastermind of Russia's treacherous defenses in Ukraine appears to be in a kind of faraway 'exile' as the line is being breached

<https://www.businessinsider.com/surovikin-mastermind-russia-treacherous-defenses-ukraine-exile-afri-ca-2023-9>

Russia, China, and the Ukraine War: Tensions in the 'No Limits' Relationship

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/russia-china-and-the-ukraine-war-tensions-in-the-no-limits-relationship/>

Ukraine War Will Derail the 2024 Election in Ukraine, But Not in Russia

<https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-war-will-derail-2024-election-ukraine-not-russia-1826837>

Like Ukraine, Georgia Is Caught Between Russia and the EU

<https://www.newsweek.com/like-ukraine-georgia-caught-between-russia-eu-1826733>

Can Russia's Frozen Assets Be Used to Rebuild Ukraine?

<https://www.voanews.com/a/can-russia-s-frozen-assets-be-used-to-rebuild-ukraine-/7269759.html>

Poland stops sending weapons to Ukraine amid grain fight, Warsaw says

<https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-stops-arming-ukraine-amid-grain-fight/>

The West fears a closer Russia and North Korea. China may not

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/15/china/china-kim-putin-summit-russia-north-korea-intl-hnk/index.html>

Putin's Next Run for President Will Be Different

<https://cepa.org/article/putins-next-run-for-president-will-be-different/>

There Can Be No Peace With Russia

<https://cepa.org/article/there-can-be-no-peace-with-russia/>

Ukraine Has No Time to Waste in the Race to Reform

<https://cepa.org/article/ukraine-has-no-time-to-waste-in-the-race-to-reform/>

Russia's Elections Become Ever-More Futile

<https://cepa.org/article/russias-elections-become-ever-more-futile/>

Russia — Darkness Before a Brighter Dawn?

<https://cepa.org/article/russia-darkness-before-a-brighter-dawn/>

Zelensky tells United Nations: Russia is committing genocide in Ukraine

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/zelensky-tells-united-nations-russia-is-committing-genocide-in-ukraine/>

RUSSIA/UKRAINE

For more on this theme:

Putin Is Betting On a New Class of Asset Owners to Shore Up His Regime

<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90543>

The Wagner Rebellion and the Stability of the Russian State

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/wagner-rebellion-and-stability-russian-state>

Russian Schools in a Time of War: A Lesson in Indoctrination

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/russian-schools-time-war-lesson-indoctrination>