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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

How African countries tackle corruption
Gwendolin Hilse – Deutsche Welle: 1 December 2021
From establishing special commissions to mounting public billboards, Africa has made strides in tackling corruption. Deutsche Welle correspondents in Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe report on the battle.


Malawi Police Arrest Former Government Officials on Corruption and Fraud Charges
Lameck Masina – Voice of America: 8 December 2021
Two former cabinet ministers and a former reserve bank governor are arrested in Malawi over the sale of a state-owned bank. The government says the actions are aimed at cleaning up corruption. The opposition Democratic Progressive Party says they are political persecution.


For more on this theme:

Austria’s ex-chancellor Kurz quits politics after corruption scandal

Cyprus’ desperately needs an independent Anti-Corruption Authority
https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/12/05/cyprus-desperately-needs-an-independent-anti-corruption-authority/

Combatting corruption is key to creating a sustainable path of future growth for South Africa

Can fight against corruption be won?
https://www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh/can-fight-against-corruption-be-won/

Corruption probe launched at Bosnia’s biggest pharmaceuticals manufacturer

Congo Investigation a Chance to Fight Corruption
https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/02/congo-investigation-chance-fight-corruption#

Statement by the UNDP Administrator: International Anti-Corruption Day 2021, 9 December
DRUG TRAFFICKING

On Syria’s ruins, a drug empire flourishes

After a decade of bloody civil war that has decimated the population, destroyed much of the country’s infrastructure and ruined the economy, Syria’s Assad government has turned to the lucrative dirty business of narcotics dealing.


The Taliban’s War On Drugs
Bradley Devlin – The American Conservative: 2 December 2021

Will the reemergent Taliban prohibit growing opium poppy like they did in 2000?
https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-talibans-war-on-drugs/

For more on this theme:

Belgian Port City Grapples With a Flood of Cocaine
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/04/world/europe/belgium-antwerp-cocaine.html

Ireland Seizures Highlight Growing Role in Cocaine Trade

Families in Rosario, Argentina, Paint Homes to Avoid Attacks

By tackling both supply and demand, our strategy will reduce the misery of drugs
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/06/tackling-supply-demand-strategy-misery-drugs

Instagram’s algorithm directly connects teens to ‘drug dealers selling everything from opioids to party drugs,’ researchers say

‘More than Mafia dolls’: Mexican author highlights role of drug traffickers’ wives in new book

Courier, postal cargo favourite modes of drug trafficking: DRI

Colombia’s Gulf Clan: The Capture of a Kingpin and the Future of Colombia’s Cartels

Cancer Causing Drug & Animal Dewormer Found Cut Into Cocaine Bound For Australia
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Environmental Crime, A Global Security Issue
Manesh Samtani – Regulation Asia: 2 December 2021
Interpol’s Rory Corcoran says environmental crime is funding global terrorism and criminal organizations, while also affecting the sustainability agenda.

Cameroon Deploys Military to Assist Rangers as Poaching Increases
Moki Edwin Kindzeka – Voice of America: 6 December 2021
Cameroon has deployed its military to help rangers crack down on poachers on the eastern border with the Central African Republic. Cameroon wildlife officials say poaching is again increasing after pandemic restrictions saw a drop in animals being killed.

For more on this theme:
Colombia launches strategy to tackle environmental crimes
https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/colombia-launches-strategy-tackle-environmental-crimes-2021-12-06/
Following the wildlife traffickers’ money
https://mg.co.za/environment/2021-12-03-following-the-wildlife-traffickers-money/
Financial Action Task Force High-Level Conference 2021 — Leipzig, Germany
Singapore’s thriving online bird trade needs system to ensure legality
Chinese boats spotted illegally hauling tuna in Indian Ocean
Why Robots Are Set to Win the Fight for Fish
Indonesia ranks high on legal wildlife trade, but experts warn it masks illegal trade
Illegal wildlife trade: Is there a better way to solve this problem?
Smugglers using government amnesty scheme as a new tool for exotic wildlife trade
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Modern slavery is far from abolished
Martina Schwikowski and Mouhamadou Kane – Deutsche Welle: 2 December 2021

Despite international efforts to abolish slavery, it is alive in certain parts of the world. Global warming and the COVID-19 pandemic are not helping matters.

https://www.dw.com/en/modern-slavery-is-far-from-abolished/a-59990800

DHS leading fight against human trafficking, White House report shows
Liz Carey – Homeland Preparedness News: 7 December 2021

According to a report released by the White House, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is leading the Biden administration’s efforts to combat human trafficking.


For more on this theme:
Treasury Details Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is far from abolished

Aligning anti-trafficking programs with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Infographic: The Hotspots Of Modern Slavery
https://www.ibtimes.com/infographic-hotspots-modern-slavery-3350596

Modern slavery can be hidden behind even the most innocent businesses
https://www.cityam.com/modern-slavery-businesses-britain-global-supply-chain/

Australian fast fashion giant to keep factories secret despite modern slavery concerns

Exploiting the vulnerable: Alleged beatings and modern slavery in Nepali restaurant trade

UN expert: Contemporary forms of slavery exist in Sri Lanka
https://apnews.com/article/business-race-and-ethnicity-united-nations-sri-lanka-slavery-132373e5687de9419c41abee4874179c
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Internet Governance Forum promotes inclusive digital future for all
United Nations News: 7 December 2021
Leveraging the power of the internet while tackling the risks of cyberspace is the focus of a U.N. meeting on internet governance.

For more on this theme:
(European Union) Council of Europe at Internet Governance Forum 2021

(Global) ICC at IGF2021: Keep the internet whole

(India, Global) PM Modi congratulated India IGF efforts towards defining the roadmap of Internet Governance

INTERNET FREEDOM

Artificial Intelligence Works to Outsmart Governments' Internet Censorship
Julie Taboh – Voice of America: 7 December 2021
Two computer scientists at the University of Maryland have developed an artificial intelligence system that can detect and evade internet censorship in repressive countries.

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) How Biden can make his internet freedom agenda a success
https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/how-biden-can-make-his-internet-freedom-agenda-a-success/

(Russia) Russia Blocks Tor Browser’s Main Website in Censorship Push

(U.S., Global) White House to fund tech to evade censorship and increase privacy
https://www.reuters.com/technology/white-house-fund-tech-evade-censorship-increase-privacy-2021-12-08/

(China) Beijing Silenced Peng Shuai in 20 Minutes, Then Spent Weeks on Damage Control
**CYBERSECURITY**

Is the UK government’s new IoT cybersecurity bill fit for purpose?
Carly Page – TechCrunch: 4 December 2021

Security experts find flaws with how the United Kingdom plans to secure internet of things devices.
https://techcrunch.com/2021/12/04/uk-internet-of-things-cybersecurity-bill/

For more on this theme:

(U.K.) Adapting higher education to address the cybersecurity skills shortage
https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2021/12/07/cybersecurity-higher-education/

(Global) What Microsoft’s shift to passwordless means for cybersecurity
https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/96623-what-microsofts-shift-to-passwordless-means-for-cybersecurity

(Turkey) Turkey's cyber fortress fights digital threats around-the-clock

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**CYBERCRIME**

Cybercrime predictions for 2022: Deepfakes, cryptocurrencies, and misinformation
Maya Horowitz – Big Think: 4 December 2021

While cybercriminals continue to leverage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, they will also find new opportunities for attacks such as deepfakes, cryptocurrency and mobile wallets.
https://bigthink.com/the-future/cybercrime-2022/

For more on this theme:

(Global) Update On Evolving Cybercrime Tactics
https://securityboulevard.com/2021/12/update-on-evolving-cybercrime-tactics/

(U.S.) US Military Fights Against Ransomware: Cyber Crime is Massive in the Country, Needing More to Fight Against It

(Russia, Global) Google sues alleged Russian cyber criminals

(Global) The Evolving Technology of Cybercrime
https://securityboulevard.com/2021/12/the-evolving-technology-of-cybercrime/

(Global) Cybercrime supply chain: Fueling the rise in ransomware
https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2021/12/06/cybercrime-supply-chain/
CYBERATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Cyber-Attack on Planned Parenthood
Sarah Coble – InfoSecurity Magazine: 2 December 2021
A cyberattack on Planned Parenthood Los Angeles exposed patients’ personal information.

For more on this theme:
(U.K.) Spar cyber attack hits more than 300 convenience stores

(U.S., Canada) Canadian man facing federal charges related to Alaska cyber attack

(U.K., Global) Lloyd’s of London: Cyber Insurance Will Not Cover Cyber Attacks Attributable to Nation-States

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Chinese Ransomware Attacks Major Energy Network! Potentially Shutting Down Power for 3 Million Homes
Teejay Boris – Tech Times: 8 December 2021
Chinese ransomware hackers attacked the network of CS Energy, which powers 3 million households in Australia.

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Preparing for and Preventing an Inevitable Cyber Attack

(U.S.) Why Cybersecurity Risk for the Water Industry Is So High
https://www.channelfutures.com/from-the-industry/why-cybersecurity-risk-for-the-water-industry-is-so-high

(U.S.) Cybersecurity: Federal Actions Urgently Needed to Better Protect the Nation’s Critical Infrastructure

(Cuba, U.S.) FBI: Cuba ransomware group hit 49 critical infrastructure organizations
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

US officials say humanitarian effort in Syria is another means to counter ISIS
Barbara Starr – CNN: 3 December 2021
United States special operations forces in northeastern Syria have been quietly providing medical care to communities without health services after years of war. The visits are done in partnership with the Syrian Defense Forces, which operate alongside the U.S. in a yearslong effort to root out ISIS fighters.

ISIL committed war crimes at Mosul prison, UN investigation finds
Al Jazeera: 3 December 2021
The head of a United Nations team investigating Islamic State group’s atrocities in Iraq has said the armed group’s fighters committed crimes against humanity at a prison in the northern city of Mosul, where at least 1,000 mostly Shia Muslim prisoners were systematically killed seven years ago.

For more on this theme:
Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service topples ISIS cell it says was responsible for assassinations in 6 provinces
https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/26532-Iraqi-Counter-Terrorism-Service-topples-ISIS-cell-it-says-was-responsible-for-assassinations-in-6-provinces

Rojava hands over ISIS-affiliated girls to Swiss delegation
https://www.rudaw.net/english/world/06122021

Isis-K escalates terror attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan in show of resistance against Taliban

Global Coalition against ISIS: Morocco Co-Chairs Africa Focus Group

Iraq repatriates 100 ISIL fighters from Syria’s Kurdish forces

Mumbai: Two persons accused of radicalising youths to join ISIS plead guilty before special NIA court
TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

The Taliban are losing the fight against Islamic State
Oved Lobel – The Strategist: 6 December 2021

On paper, the Taliban have every advantage against Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate; in practice, there’s no evidence their take-no-prisoners campaign has affected the group to any great extent.

https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-taliban-are-losing-the-fight-against-islamic-state/

20 Years After 9/11, Al-Qaida Retains a Deadly Relevance in Malaysia
Rueben Dass and Jasminder Singh – The Diplomat: 2 December 2021

Despite al-Qaida’s apparent dormancy, Malaysian authorities can’t afford to underestimate the potential threat.


For more on this theme:
Yazidi genocide: landmark guilty verdict for IS jihadi could transform how atrocities are brought to justice
https://theconversation.com/yazidi-genocide-landmark-guilty-verdict-for-is-jihadi-could-transform-how-atrocities-are-brought-to-justice-173043

WATCH: House Oversight subcommittee hearing on Al-Qaida, ISIS and other militant groups

UN Human Rights Chief Makes First Visit to Burkina Faso

Jihadist attacks flow into littoral West Africa

Burkina Faso’s 1.3M Displaced People Increasingly Fall Victim to Terrorists

Boko Haram escapees now confronted by uncertain future

India highlights link between Al-Qaeda-ISIL-LeT-Jaish

The emergence of Jemaah Islamiyah’s political front
https://www.todayonline.com/commentary/emergence-jemaah-islamiyahs-political-front
IRREGULAR WARFARE: PROXY FORCES AND PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS

How Mosul’s liberators became occupiers
Judit Neurink – Al Monitor: 1 December 2021

Civilians in the Iraqi city of Mosul complain about the power of the militias that freed them from ISIS but turned to occupier later on.

For more on this theme:
Iran-Hezbollah help Hamas, Islamic Jihad trounce Israel with propaganda – exclusive

Mercenaries and private military security: Africa’s thin grey line

Russia’s Influence in the Central African Republic

Africa cannot afford a situation where governments’ employment of mercenaries becomes the norm

IRREGULAR WARFARE: INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

China’s approach to global economic governance
Jue Wang and Michael Sampson – Chatham House: 6 December 2021

Beijing is using multilateral and bilateral approaches to influence reforms in global institutions.
https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/12/chinas-approach-global-economic-governance

For more on this theme:
Here we go again: Russia’s energy ‘diplomacy’ in Moldova
https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/12/here-we-go-again-russias-energy-diplomacy-moldova

Six Things You Need To Know About Why Russia’s Threat to Ukraine Matters

Is China Stacking the Technology Deck by Setting International Standards?
https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/is-china-stacking-the-technology-deck-by-setting-international-standards/

NATO Must Adapt to an Era of Hybrid Threats
https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/85900
IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

SecDef Austin ‘very concerned’ about Russian aggression toward Ukraine
Valerie Insinna – Breaking Defense: 4 December 2021

“They’ve invaded before, and as we look at the numbers of forces that are in the border region, as we look at some of the things that are occurring in the information space, as we look at what’s going on in the cyber domain, it really raises our concern,” U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.


For more on this theme:

The fight against China’s ideology requires a free and open internet

Report says Russian hackers haven’t eased spying efforts
https://apnews.com/article/technology-russia-europe-hacking-espionage-5bd6870ed-49985634187827c5506c42

Ransomware attacks soar, hackers set to become more aggressive — Canada spy agency

Ransomware attack on Australian utility claimed by Russian-speaking criminals
https://www.reuters.com/technology/ransomware-attack-australian-utility-claimed-by-russian-speaking-espionage-2021-12-08/

Cybersecurity company says Chinese hackers targeting Southeast Asian nations

Microsoft seizes domains used by Chinese cyber espionage group
https://siliconangle.com/2021/12/06/microsoft-seizes-domains-used-chinese-cyber-espionage-group/

Twitter shuts propaganda accounts in six countries