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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

What people think: corruption in the Middle East & North Africa
Transparency International: 11 December 2019

Nine years after the death of a Tunisian street vendor sparked the Arab uprisings, a new survey suggests a major catalyst of the protests has yet to be addressed. Corruption is still rife across much of the Middle East and continues to grow, according to Transparency International.


Full report:
Global Corruption Barometer – Middle East and North Africa 2019: Citizens’ views and opinions of corruption

For more on this theme:
Models for Successful MENA Anti-corruption Strategies
https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/models-for-successful-mena-anti-corruption-strategies/

Iraq struggles with corruption as massive protests rage

A verdict on justice in a land of impunity
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/philippines-verdict-impunity

Former Viktor Orban Ally Exposes Corruption That Rots Hungary

This digital platform fights corruption by bypassing the officials demanding bribes

UNECA: Africa’s Land Sector Most Corrupt
https://www.voanews.com/africa/uneca-africas-land-sector-most-corrupt

EU lags behind US in combating corruption
https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/eu-affairs/83362/eu-lags-behind-us-in-combatting-corruption/

Is Kenya’s Government Fighting Corruption or Just Conducting Political Theatrics?

Former PMs Among Those Convicted in Algeria for Corruption

Anti-corruption movement a watershed moment in India
DRUG TRAFFICKING

Architect of Mexico’s War on Cartels Is Accused of Taking Bribes From One

Mexico’s former security minister has been arrested in the United States on charges of cocaine trafficking and accepting millions in bribes to help the Sinaloa cartel traffic drugs. Genaro García Luna, who was also the country’s head of federal police in his role as security minister, is accused of allowing the cartel of Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman to operate in Mexico in exchange for those bribes, in an indictment unveiled December 10.


Could Mexico’s Version of the Marine Corps Crush the Cartels?
Caleb Larson – The National Interest: 7 December 2019

Despite the relatively small size of the Mexican Naval Infantry, it is often the organization most entrusted with combating drug trafficking.


For more on this theme:
The impact of designating Mexican cartels a ‘foreign terrorist organization’
https://www.foxnews.com/world/mexican-cartels-foreign-terrorist-organization-impact

Sri Lanka seeks long term support to combat drug trafficking

Wave of Murders Hits Small Coca-Producing Town in Northern Colombia

Obscure state regulations gave birth to the opioid crisis

“Meth was my meal. I would smoke meth until I passed out and when I woke up, I would look for it again.”

Europe becomes cocaine exporter as countries overflow with drug

The routes of cocaine
https://www.talkingdrugs.org/the-routes-of-cocaine

Strait ‘soft target’ for drug traffickers

Philippine authorities ‘getting away with murder’ in drug war
TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Southeast Asia’s modern-day plague
The ASEAN Post: 6 December 2019

Several species and subspecies have gone extinct in the last 100 years. Others remain missing, and most of Southeast Asia’s large-bodied animals are now threatened with extinction. Deforestation and the wildlife trade have left smaller-bodied species decimated as well. Southeast Asia has to decide if preserving its irreplaceable and unique wildlife is a priority — or the losses will continue to mount.

https://theaseanpost.com/article/southeast-asias-modern-day-plague

Cross-border cooperation crucial to conserve wildlife
Mia Signs – Asia Times: 12 December 2019

Dozens, or possibly hundreds, of cross-border trafficking incidents put a strain on political relations and make combating and prosecuting cases of wildlife trafficking extremely difficult. Cross-border cooperation is the only way to overcome these obstacles.


For more on this theme:

Japan targets seafood poachers with plan for ‘proof of origin’

Lawless Ocean: The Link Between Human Rights Abuses and Overfishing
https://e360.yale.edu/features/lawless-ocean-the-link-between-human-rights-abuses-and-overfishing

Could farming endangered animals save them?
http://geographical.co.uk/nature/wildlife/item/3514-could-farming-endangered-animals-such-as-pangolins-save-them

Illicit Mining: Threats to U.S. National Security and International Human Rights

Indian government policies have turned country into major gold smuggling hub, NGO warns

Malaysia’s newly launched enforcement operation showing promising results to protect wildlife

DNA barcoding plugs routes of illegal wildlife trade

Myanmar to establish school for forest rangers
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

**Woman sues major hotel chains alleging they failed to stop sex trafficking at their properties**
*Chris Boyette – CNN: 11 December 2019*

A dozen hotel chains across the U.S. have been accused of profiting from sex trafficking by ignoring obvious signs of exploitation in their rooms, CNN reported. Hotel brands owned by Hilton, Intercontinental and Best Western are among a number of leading global chains accused.


**Funding for North Africa: EU package to address migration issues**
*Government Europa: 12 December 2019*

The European Union — via the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, North Africa Window — adopted four new migration-related actions totaling 147.7 million euros. The money will support Morocco in tackling human smuggling and irregular migration; improve the living conditions in Libyan communities and protect refugees and vulnerable migrants stranded in Libya through voluntary returns; and offer opportunities for labor migration and mobility in North Africa.

https://www.governmenteuropa.eu/funding-for-north-africa-eu/95766/

For more on this theme:

**Why Europe's immigration policies are not converging**
https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europablog/2019/12/03/why-europes-immigration-policies-are-not-converging/

**Increased Investment in Youth Can Stop Irregular Migration – Minister**
https://www.sports247.ng/increased-investment-in-youth-can-stop-irregular-migration-minister/

**What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to detention in Libya? A microlevel study of the determinants of detention**

**Niger: Ex-smugglers complain about a downturn in business**

**Human smugglers, government in cat-and-mouse game as Pinoys still find golden pot abroad**

**Taking on traffickers at the world’s largest refugee site**

**Using technology to stop human trafficking**
MONEY LAUNDERING

Europe’s Finance Chiefs to Call for Anti-Money Laundering Agency
Alexander Weber – Bloomberg: 2 December 2019

Europe’s finance ministers called on the European Commission to evaluate whether to move forward with establishing a European Union-level agency. The ministers also agreed on a strategy to tackle money laundering that funds terrorism.


For more on this theme:

Narcos at heart of $1.35 billion NZ money laundering industry

For Banks, Data Privacy and Anti-Money Laundering Don’t Have to Be Incompatible

International Efforts to Combat Guatemalan Money Laundering Schemes Nets High-Profile Arrest and Guilty Plea
https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/international-efforts-to-combat-82362/

Kuwait keen on combating money laundering, funding terrorism - official
https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2838277#

Will US Court Case Shine Light on Colombia’s Corrupt Emerald Industry?

Abdulla Yameen: Maldives ex-leader convicted of money laundering

Swiss revamp antiquated money laundering, terrorism reporting system

Regulators want tougher anti-money laundering laws

Bitcoin money laundering is a classically dumb crime

Asian Development Bank beefs up fight against money-laundering

How The EU Is Cracking Down On Golden Passports And Targeting Money Laundering

Why is the UK a haven for money laundering?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv2x8qZI4o4
PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

(Global) Eight norms for stability in cyberspace
Joseph S. Nye – Australian Strategic Policy Institute: 6 December 2019
To fulfill the dream of a free and open internet for all, Harvard Professor Joseph Nye suggests eight norms that could be codified in order to return the stability of cyberspace.

For more on this theme:

(Global) Guterres underscores UN role in achieving a free, secure Internet

(Global) Can New Norms of Behavior Extend the Rules-Based Order Into Cyberspace?

(Global) What kind of internet do we want? (Let’s not ask Facebook)
https://www.wired.co.uk/article/facebook-internet-force-for-good

(Global) Fear of domination may split internet
https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/analysis/ideas/4259414-5373486-mihneu/index.html

INTERNET FREEDOM

Iran’s internet freedom is on life support
Daniel Van Boom – CNET: 8 December 2019
After widespread internet shutdowns, Iran’s government is angling for more control. Wanting to follow in the footsteps of China and Russia, Iran’s president has indicated he wants a state-controlled intranet instead of relying on the internet.

For more on this theme:

(Ethiopia) U.N. expert urges Ethiopia to stop shutting down internet
https://apnews.com/2f2ff9235b4fa28e6fd877c649b6bd24

(India) Internet shutdowns are becoming second-nature to the world’s largest democracy

(Algeria) Will Algeria disrupt internet access as election day nears?
https://globalvoices.org/2019/12/09/will-algeria-disrupt-internet-access-as-election-day-nears/
PRIVACY AND SECURITY

On Data Privacy, India Charts Its Own Path

India has proposed its first major law on the use and control of its citizens' personal data. It’s a controversial piece of legislation that would restrict how companies can manage sensitive information while giving government authorities broad powers to access it.


For more on this theme:
(Global) Why Biometric Security is the Future
https://www.visualcapitalist.com/biometric-security-is-the-future/

(U.S., Global) Protecting Internet Communication Privacy in the Workplace

(Australia) Australia moves to police digital platforms and reform media regulation

CYBER STATECRAFT DEVELOPMENT

Chinese Regime Deploys Cyber Weapon to Hijack Hong Kong Protest Forum
Eva Fu – The Epoch Times: 9 December 2019

China is deeply opposed to the ongoing pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong. To combat these protests, the government launched an offensive cyber campaign against LIHKG — a local social media forum — where activists organize and coordinate protests.


For more on this theme:
(ASEAN) How are ASEAN countries leading the digital transformation wave
https://www.information-age.com/asean-countries-digital-transformation-wave-123486370/

(Europe) Dealing with digital dominance
https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/medialse/2019/12/05/dealing-with-digital-dominance/

(NATO, Australia) NATO and Australia discuss cyber defence cooperation

(Australia) Cybersecurity: how are we doing?
https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/cybersecurity-how-are-we-doing/
CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

New ransomware attacks target your NAS devices, backup storage
Charlie Osborne – ZDNet: 6 December 2019

A recent threat report found that ransomware attacks are targeting organizations’ network-attached storage and backup storage devices.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Ask the Experts: What are the biggest cyber security threats for 2020?

(Iran) Iran Communications Minister Admits ‘Massive Cyber-Attack By Foreign State’

(Global) 8 Questions you should ask when hiring a Certified Ethical Hacker
https://blog.eccouncil.org/8-questions-you-should-ask-when-hiring-a-certified-ethical-hacker/

(Global) Amazon’s Blink Smart Security Cameras Vulnerable to Attacks

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CYBER PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Fearing ‘cyber 9/11,’ national security council stresses unified emergency response from agencies
Jory Heckman – Federal News Network: 12 December 2019

The U.S. National Infrastructure Advisory Council warned in a draft report that cyber threats need to be confronted with dire urgency. The report pointed to the grave risks posed to society’s most critical sectors from bad actors, including Russia, China and Iran, and the inability of private industry to fend off sophisticated attacks on their own.

For more on this theme:
(Global) Is Space Critical Infrastructure?
https://www.oodaloop.com/archive/2019/12/02/is-space-critical-infrastructure/

(Global) How to Cyber Security: Software is critical infrastructure

(U.S.) Legislation to protect electric grid from cyberattacks added to massive defense bill

(India) How a nuclear plant got hacked

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COMBATING TERRORISM AND CYBER CRIME

How Panasonic is using internet honeypots to improve IoT device security
Danny Palmer – ZDNet: 9 December 2019

Electronics manufacturer Panasonic recently described how it boosted its internet of things security by connecting appliances to internet honeypots. The company said it’s using two specially developed honeypot sites to lure cyber criminals into attacking its connected refrigerators and other kitchen products to learn their methods.


For more on this theme:
(East Africa) What’s been done to fight cybercrime in East Africa
https://theconversation.com/whats-been-done-to-fight-cybercrime-in-east-africa-127240

(Global) Inside the mind of a hacker
https://www.itpro.co.uk/security/hacking/354310/inside-the-mind-of-a-hacker

(India) 48 Government Sites Hacked In 2019: Here Is How The Centre Is Planning To Tackle Cyber Crimes
https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/343580

NOTEWORTHY PODCASTS

The Lawfare Podcast: Cybersecurity Futures
Jen Patja Howell – Lawfare: 7 December 2019

A new report from the Atlantic Council argues that “visualizing and describing the evolution of cyber capabilities and strategic competition require envisioning multiple futures,” and the report sets out to do exactly that. This week’s podcast focuses on this topic, with multiple experts weighing in.

https://www.lawfareblog.com/lawfare-podcast-cybersecurity-futures

For more on this theme:
(U.S., Global) Cyber Work podcast write-up: How to become a cybersecurity analyst
https://securityboulevard.com/2019/12/cyber-work-podcast-write-up-how-to-become-a-cybersecurity-analyst/

(Global) Cognitive biases in security decision-making | Cyber Work Podcast

(Global) Cyber Security Today – Three email password scams to watch out for

(Global) If you didn’t ask for it don’t install it.
PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS

ISIS is nearing defeat in Afghanistan, officials say
Jared Keller – Task & Purpose: 7 December 2019

Sustained U.S. and Afghan operations combating the Afghanistan branch of the Islamic State has led to the near-collapse of the jihadist group in eastern Afghanistan – helping clear a hurdle for an American withdrawal from the country.

https://taskandpurpose.com/isis-defeat-afghanistan

UN experts: Libya is new focus of Islamic State extremists

Caught in a civil war driven by foreign interference, Libya may become a hotbed for ISIS activity, a report by a panel of United Nations experts says.

https://apnews.com/42781e22e53c093f9e5e4c1b1589198a

For more on this theme:

Islamic State claims responsibility for military camp attack in Niger: statement

ISIS' strength is in the body, not the head
https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/12/opinion/isis-strength-is-in-the-body-not-the-head/?_=760006

ISIL is not dead, it just moved to Africa

Isis 'not defeated' and terrorism threat growing, warns head of UK military
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/isis-defeated-uk-military-london-bridge-attack-terrorism-usman-khan-a9234896.html

Visiting Imprisoned ISIS Fighters
https://www.npr.org/2019/12/08/786039731/visiting-imprisoned-isis-fighters

If Iran Falls, ISIS May Rise Again
https://www.newsweek.com/if-iran-falls-isis-may-rise-1475818

The 'new beginning' of ISIS: how the militant group is using Iraq's blind spot to rise again
https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/the-new-beginning-of-isis-how-the-militant-group-is-using-iraq-s-blind-spot-to-rise-again-1.948971

FOREIGN FIGHTERS

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Why European Countries Are Reluctant To Repatriate Citizens Who Are ISIS Fighters
The U.S. continues to pressure Europe to repatriate its ISIS fighters. The conditions for the fighters and their families are dire, and something needs to change. But Europe is between a rock and hard place, with recent attacks reminding its citizens that repatriation and/or rehabilitation don’t always work.

Tunnels, knives and riots: This Syrian camp holding thousands of Isis wives is at breaking point
Richard Hall – Independent: 9 December 2019
Al Hol camp for ISIS members and their families – made up largely of women and children – is busting at the seams. The situation is untenable and a new “terror state” is taking over the camp.

For more on this theme:
The women of Islamic State are not demons and must be brought home

Graphic Truth: Where are ISIS’ foreign fighters from?
https://www.gzeromedia.com/graphic-truth-where-are-isis-foreign-fighters-from

EU calls for return of children of foreign terrorist fighters being held in north-east Syria

Report: China, Russia worried about militants’ return from Syria

Returning Home: Evaluating Statelessness among Former Jihadists
https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/12/returning-home-evaluating-statelessness-among-former-jihadists/

New Finland Leader: ‘Silent Blessing’ Given to Bring Home ISIS Children

Russia is not taking repatriation of ISIS fighter wives, children seriously: activist
https://www.rudaw.net/english/interview/071220191

Rehabilitating the Islamic State’s Women and Children Returnees in Kazakhstan
The Syria Effect: Al-Qaeda Fractures – Analysis
Charles Lister – The Hudson Institute: 11 December 2019

Al-Qaeda still flourishes despite being beaten back years ago. It has expanded operations and recruited thousands more fighters. But the movement has become much more decentralized over the last decade.
https://www.hudson.org/research/15533-the-syria-effect-al-qaeda-fractures

For more on this theme:
Why Germany hasn't banned Hezbollah outright

Terrorism in the United States: key facts, patterns and trends

Investigating — and Stopping — the Lone Terrorist
https://thecrimereport.org/2019/12/05/751629/

Somali security forces kill 5 al Shabaab fighters to end hotel siege

Taming al Shabaab: Lessons from Ethiopia

Al-Shabaab recruiting youths in Kenya’s remote village, smuggling them to Somalia

Boko Haram Insurgency: Can It Be Stopped?

U.S. envoy to Afghanistan announces ‘pause’ in Taliban peace talks after attack on air base

Shooting in the Dark; Afghanistan’s Endless War Pits Brother Against Brother

Analysis: Taliban continues to lie about presence of foreign fighters in Afghanistan

Before Sri Lanka’s Easter Attacks, Muslims’ Warnings About Terrorism Went Unheeded
Terrorism & Counterterrorism in 2019: The Year in Review
Colin P. Clarke – Foreign Policy Research Institute: 11 December 2019
This overview of 2019 shows it was a year of highs and lows for counterterrorism forces around
the world.

How has Mauritania managed to stave off terror attacks?
Hassane Koné – Institute for Security Studies: 6 December 2019
Mauritania has successfully shunned terrorism for the last eight years — not a single attack has
taken place since December 2011. How did they make this happen, and what lessons can be
applied to other counterterrorism efforts around the world?
https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-has-mauritania-managed-to-stave-off-terror-attacks

For more on this theme:
India's diplomacy to counter terror: Multilateral forums need regional success first
https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-diplomacy-to-counter-terror-multilateral-forums-need-re-
gional-success-first-58194/
Belgium expands terrorism database to beef up prisoner surveillance
https://www.brusselstimes.com/bei
Cohesive resistance strategy needed to fight terror groups
https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001353021/cohesive-resistance-strategy-needed-to-fight-ter-
ror-groups

WHITE NATIONALIST TERRORISM
Racially and ethnically motivated terrorism
Isaac Kfir – Asia & The Pacific Policy Society: 13 December 2019
One of the major challenges with addressing any form of terrorism is correctly describing it.
A new category — racially and ethnically motivated terrorism — may provide a more workable
starting point when considering extremist acts, the author writes.
https://www.policyforum.net/racially-and-ethnically-motivated-terrorism/

For more on this theme:
With Rise of Far-Right Extremists, N.Y.P.D. Creates Special Unit
No Place for Right-Wing Extremists in Ranks, German Army Says
Unmasking the Alt-Right: Real-World Implications of a Virtual Movement
https://www.mironline.ca/unmasking-the-alt-right-real-world-implications-of-a-virtual-movement/
RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

**Why a War on Extremism in Indonesia May Create More Problems Than It Solves**
*Erin Cook – The Diplomat: 5 December 2019*

While Indonesia certainly is susceptible to extremism and growing terrorist movements, the reactions of the government may cause more problems than anything.

https://thediplomat.com/2019/12/why-a-war-on-extremism-in-indonesia-may-create-more-problems-than-it-solves/

**Radicalisation rising, Terrorist incident declining: Bangladesh Police study**
*News Services Division – All India Radio: 11 December 2019*

The number of terrorist incidents has come down significantly in the last three years, but the threat of radicalization is on the rise, according to research by the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.


*For more on this theme:*

- **How to support the families of people at risk of radicalization**

- **India, EU Conduct ‘Investigating ISIS Networks’ Workshop; Share Best Practices On Combating Terrorism, Radicalisation**

- **Can You Deprogramme a Terrorist?**
  https://trinidadexpress.com/opinion/columnists/can-you-deprogramme-a-terrorist/article_e124643c-13c3-11ea-a96e-43fcdcc0bfd9.html

- **How to rehabilitate a terrorist**
  https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/12/05/how-to-rehabilitate-a-terrorist

- **A support system for radicalization**

- **Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel**
  https://africacenter.org/publication/responding-rise-violent-extremism-sahel/

- **Intolerance and extremism has made parts of Middle East ‘playgrounds for thugs’, UAE official warns**
  https://www.thenational.ae/uae/intolerance-and-extremism-has-made-parts-of-middle-east-playgrounds-for-thugs-uae-official-warns-1.950659

- **The Cure For Ultraviolence**

- **Countering radicalization of youth through sports**
  https://hivisasa.com/posts/31420034-countering-radicalization-of-youth-through-sports
IRREGULAR WARFARE

China’s ‘palate democracy’ may not be to Africa’s taste
Peter Fabricius – Institute for Security Studies: 5 December 2019

China has lessons worth learning, but governance without elections isn’t one of them. Earlier this month, Professor Fang Ning, deputy director of the Institute of Political Science at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, coined the expression “palate democracy” to characterize China’s political system.

https://issafrica.org/iss-today/chinas-palate-democracy-may-not-be-to-africas-taste

How China’s debt trap diplomacy works and what it means
TRT World: 13 December 2019

Beijing is accused of luring developing or underdeveloped countries to borrow money for infrastructure projects and later controlling them if countries fail to pay off their loans in time. Africa expert Muhammed Tandogan, who also holds a Ph.D. in international relations from Istanbul Medeniyet University, told TRT World that China’s impact in Africa has been increasing at an alarming rate.


For more on this theme:

Engaging the public to counter foreign interference

Georgia’s growing soft power
https://www.euractiv.com/section/eastern-europe/opinion/georgias-growing-soft-power/

The WhatsApp Crisis: Cracks in Iran’s Soft Power Strategy

China Spent Billions On Soft Power In Asia, Can’t Stop Sinophobia: Study

Japan is a soft power superpower
https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/12/01/commentary/japan-commentary/japan-soft-power-superpower/#.XfN8gUxFxfE

How Digital Currency Could Be China’s Ultimate Soft-Power Tool

Saudi Arabia is Recruiting Social Media Influencers in a Bid for Soft Power

East Asia Watch: China’s tough talk threatens to thwart soft power drive
https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/chinas-tough-talk-threatens-to-thwart-soft-power-drive

EU’s ‘soft strengths’ are enough to face China
https://euobserver.com/opinion/146735
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