

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Peru ouster throws nation's anti-corruption drive into doubt

The Associated Press: 12 November 2020

The unexpected impeachment of Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra has likely put on hold the country's best chance of making a dent in the endemic corruption. Amid a devastating pandemic and recession, Peruvians brace for more instability.

<https://apnews.com/article/peru-ouster-anti-corruption-doubt-cabb1a8f95b6475508fecfcae7fdcf87>

Zimbabwean journalist denied bail for alleging corruption

Farai Mutsaka – The Associated Press: 12 November 2020

A Zimbabwean magistrate has denied bail to an investigative journalist who has been in detention for more than a week for alleging corruption in the country's prosecuting agency.

<https://apnews.com/867682389639616ccad5048fe72efacd>

For more on this theme:

Report: Most Financial Crime and Corruption Journalists Face Threats

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/13347-report-most-financial-crime-and-corruption-journalists-face-threats>

Linking Mnangagwa Family To Corrupt Individuals Is Attacking The “System” – Mutsvangwa

<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/linking-mnangagwa-family-to-corrupt-individuals-is-attacking-the-system-mutsvangwa/>

Kuwait anti-corruption body to investigate resignations in Finance Ministry

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20201030-kuwait-anti-corruption-body-to-investigate-resignations-in-finance-ministry/>

Former Venezuelan treasurer charged with accepting millions in Miami corruption case

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/article246791877.html>

World Justice Project 2020: Pakistan slips down in absence of corruption, rule of law index

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/737464-world-justice-project-2020-pakistan-slips-down-in-absence-of-corruption-rule-of-law-index>

Analysts: Philippine President Talks Big but Underperforms in Combating Graft

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/Duterte-corruption-11032020155421.html>

South Africa to arrest ruling party leader for corruption

<https://apnews.com/article/africa-arrests-south-africa-jacob-zuma-345f3bec5045db7e8d3ff898ce19c343>

Ramaphosa to answer questions on corruption and social cohesion in National Assembly

<https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/ramaphosa-to-answer-questions-on-corruption-and-social-cohesion-in-national-assembly-20201112>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Number of Small Fishing Vessels Smuggling Illegal Drugs Has Tripled

Joshua Rapp Learn – Smithsonian Magazine: 12 November 2020

According to a September study in the journal *Fish and Fisheries*, the use of small fishing vessels to smuggle illegal drugs is on the rise as traffickers take advantage of porous borders and the relatively murky laws governing international waters. The use of small vessels has tripled in the past eight years to represent about 15% of the global retail value of illegal drugs.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/number-small-fishing-vessels-smuggling-illegal-drugs-has-tripled-180976157/>

Chinese ‘cartels’ quietly operating in Mexico, aiding US drug crisis

Hollie McKay – Fox News: 12 November 2020

The next U.S. administration will have to counter the increasing presence of Chinese drug lords in Mexico seeking to traffic deadly drugs across the border.

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/chinese-cartels-mexico-us-drug-crisis>

For more on this theme:

Honduras Proves Fertile Ground for Coca

<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/coca-crops-flourish-honduras/>

Mexico’s Poppy Farmers in Increasingly Dire Straits

<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/mexico-poppy-farmers-dire-straits/>

Drug smuggling, abuse on the rise in Iraq

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/11/iraq-security-drug-crystal-iran.html>

DoD Works with International Partners to Halt Illicit Drug Flow

<http://www.militaryspot.com/news/dod-works-international-partners-halt-illicit-drug-flow>

Small hope for justice in Mexico’s deadly “war on drugs”

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/small-hope-justice-mexicos-deadly-war-on-drugs>

DoD Report: America’s New Ally in the War on Drugs is Mexico

<https://sofrep.com/news/dod-report-americas-new-ally-in-the-war-on-drugs-is-mexico/>

Kenya: How Covid-19 Restrictions Have Disrupted Drugs Trade

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202011110539.html>

South-East European States ‘Focused on Drugs, Neglecting Other Crimes’

<https://balkaninsight.com/2020/11/06/south-east-european-states-focused-on-drugs-neglecting-other-crimes/>

Inside the FBI takedown of the mastermind behind website offering drugs, guns and murders for hire

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ross-ulbricht-dread-pirate-roberts-silk-road-fbi/>

England’s COVID-19 lockdown feared fuelling child trafficking by drug gangs

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-coronavirus-slavery-drugs-trf-idUSKBN27M1N2>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

Wildlife crime underworld rampant, with shockingly low conviction rates, warns report

Jane Dalton – The Independent: 6 November 2020

The third annual report on wildlife crime by the Wildlife and Countryside Link, an umbrella group of 57 organizations, says many wildlife crimes go unwitnessed or unreported and unpunished. And crime remains rampant.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/wildlife-crime-cyber-online-hunting-trap-poison-animals-hare-coursing-wcl-report-b1594839.html>

For more on this theme:

Bushmeat hunting: The greatest threat to Africa's wildlife?

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/10/bushmeat-hunting-the-greatest-threat-to-africas-wildlife/>

Hong Kong needs tougher laws to tackle wildlife crime say researchers

<https://phys.org/news/2020-10-hong-kong-tougher-laws-tackle.html>

Demand for sand is rising, and illicit traders are moving in

<https://www.securingsindustry.com/electronics-and-industrial/demand-for-sand-is-rising-and-illicit-traders-are-moving-in/s105/a12537/#.X6TMfUxFw2w>

Wildlife crime convictions climb in Kenya — but poaching kingpins evade justice

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kenya-wildlife-poachers-illegal-b1588761.html>

Gangs in Latin America use bribery, secret routes to smuggle jaguar parts to China: report

<https://www.reuters.com/article/latam-jaguars/gangs-in-latin-america-use-bribery-secret-routes-to-smuggle-jaguar-parts-to-china-report-idUSL8N2HP6SP>

China's mixed messages on wildlife trade since COVID-19

<https://enactfrica.org/enact-observer/chinas-mixed-messages-spell-danger-for-wildlife>

The 21st Century Threat to Wildlife is “Cyberpoaching”

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/21st-century-threat-wildlife-cyberpoaching/>

Chinese demand and domestic instability are wiping out Senegal's last forests

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/11/chinese-demand-and-domestic-instability-are-wiping-out-senegals-last-forests/>

Naming and Shaming China over the Environment

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/special/china-environment-abuse/>

Migrants further imperil Africa's endangered wildlife

<https://www.fairplanet.org/story/migrants-further-imperil-africa-s-endangered-wildlife/>

Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru join forces to combat illegal fishing

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/11/06/chile-colombia-ecuador-and-peru-join-forces-to-combat-illegal-fishing>

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

How AI can help combat slavery and free 40 million victims

William Dixon and David Balson – World Economic Forum: 12 November 2020

Criminals are adept at using the latest technologies to evade detection. This has driven the cyber security community to adopt technologies such as artificial intelligence in the fight against modern slavery.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/how-ai-can-help-combat-modern-slavery>

For more on this theme:

Trafficked in Thailand: The Results of Poverty in Myanmar

<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/trafficked-in-thailand-the-results-of-poverty-in-myanmar/>

Top Cryptocurrency Exchanges Come Together to Combat Human Trafficking

<https://www.cryptoground.com/a/top-cryptocurrency-exchanges-come-together-to-combat-human-trafficking>

Revealed: The Iranian human smugglers luring migrants to UK

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1756621/world>

ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime in the fisheries sector threatens a sustainable ocean economy

Emma Witbooi, Kamal-Deen Ali, Mas Achmad Santosa, Gail Hurley, Yunus Husein, Sarika Maharaj, Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood, Inés Arroyo Quiroz and Omar Salas – Nature: 11 November 2020

This article focuses on how organized crime in the fisheries sector impedes the realization of a sustainable ocean economy. It examines the types of fisheries crimes and the practical measures that can be taken to counter them.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2913-5>

For more on this theme:

Lucrative Fake Medicine Trade In ASEAN

<https://theaseanpost.com/article/lucrative-fake-medicine-trade-asean>

Fighting Illicit Trade With Artificial Intelligence

<https://www.securityinformed.com/insights/fighting-illicit-trade-ai-co-1593180901-ga.1604574845.html>

Italy Arrests Dozens of Suspected Nigerian Mafia Members

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/13348-italy-arrests-dozens-of-suspected-nigerian-mafia-members>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET FREEDOM

How social media regulations are silencing dissent in Africa

Tafi Mhaka – Al Jazeera: 12 November 2020

Social media regulations in Africa are not fighting hate speech and disinformation. Instead, they effectively impede progressive public discourse and the universal right to assemble peacefully.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/11/12/how-social-media-regulations-are-silencing-dissent-in-africa/>

For more on this theme:

(Vietnam) Facebook touts free speech. In Vietnam, it's aiding in censorship

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-10-22/facebook-censorship-suppress-dissent-vietnam>

(Africa) Africa internet: Where and how are governments blocking it?

<https://news.yahoo.com/africa-internet-where-governments-blocking-123904959.html>

(China) A brief experiment in a more open Chinese web

<https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/a-brief-experiment-in-a-more-open-chinese-web/>

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Cyber Security Becoming a Critical Component Of National Security

Khushhal Kaushik – Entrepreneur: 11 November 2020

Given that defense and security initiatives are mostly conceptualized and led at the level of the national governments, they inevitably and organically become a critical component of national security, and this is especially true in India.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/359459>

For more on this theme:

(Global) Will Big Data's Cybersecurity Advancements Be Enough To Protect Itself?

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/10/30/will-big-datas-cybersecurity-advancements-be-enough-to-protect-itself/>

(Bangladesh) Draft of data privacy and localization law is prepared: Palak

<https://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/draft-of-data-privacy-and-localization-law-is-prepared-palak/60084>

(U.S.) Starting Dec. 1, Cybersecurity Is No Longer Optional

<https://breakingdefense.com/2020/11/starting-dec-1-cybersecurity-is-no-longer-optional/>

CYBER STATECRAFT

Australia's Cyber Security Strategy

Tom Uren – Royal United Services Institute: 11 November 2020

Australia's cyber security strategy has been updated and has a remarkably different vision than its 2016 predecessor.

<https://rusi.org/commentary/australia-cyber-security-strategy>

For more on this theme:

(Israel, Iran) Recent ransomware wave targeting Israel linked to Iranian threat actors

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/recent-ransomware-wave-targeting-israel-linked-to-iranian-threat-actors/>

(Taiwan, China) WHO says faces 'onslaught' of cyberattacks as Taiwan complains of censorship

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-who-taiwan/who-says-faces-onslaught-of-cyberattacks-as-taiwan-complains-of-censorship-idUSL1N2HY139>

(U.K., Global) Focus On Cyber Defence Rather Than Cyber Attack – Former NCSC Head

<https://www.silicon.co.uk/e-regulation/governance/focus-on-cyber-defence-ncsc-boss-348905>

CYBER ATTACKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

Suspected North Korean hackers who targeted job applicants prove more ambitious than first believed

Tim Starks – CyberScoop: 6 November 2020

Operation North Star, a possible North Korean state-sponsored cyber espionage campaign, went beyond targeting South Korea to include Australia, India, Israel and Russia, McAfee said in a recent report.

<https://www.cyberscoop.com/north-korean-hacking-lazarus-job-applicants/>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) CISA begins work on national network of cyber technical institutes

<https://www.fedscoop.com/cisa-cyber-technical-institutes/>

(Brazil) Brazil's court system under massive RansomExx ransomware attack

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/brazils-court-system-under-massive-ransomexx-ransomware-attack>

(Global) Compal, the second-largest laptop manufacturer in the world, hit by ransomware

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/compal-the-second-largest-laptop-manufacturer-in-the-world-hit-by-ransomware/>

(U.S.) Cyberattack on U. of Vermont hospital IT network delays chemotherapy, mammogram appointments

<https://www.cyberscoop.com/vermont-hospital-cyberattack-chemotherapy/>

CYBER CRIME

Hacker-for-hire group targeting South Asian organizations, research says

Shannon Vavra – CyberScoop: 12 November 2020

There's a new hack-for-hire shop which BlackBerry calls "CostaRicto." It isn't exactly clear who the hackers are, but given that their targets tend to be focused in South Asia, BlackBerry researchers suggest they also may be based in that region. The disparate targeting and characteristics of their tool set suggest they are working on behalf of clients.

<https://www.cyberscoop.com/hackers-for-hire-mercenary-south-asia-blackberry/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) How Cyber-Criminals 'Get in the Game' and What it Means to Defend Against Them

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/blogs/criminals-game-defend/>

(Global) Ransomware attacks grow more menacing during the pandemic, creating headaches in health sector

<https://www.cyberscoop.com/health-care-ransomware-coronavirus-ryuk/>

(Vietnam) Vietnamese hacking group OceanLotus uses imitation news sites to spread malware

<https://www.cyberscoop.com/vietnam-hacking-oceanlotus-apt32-fake-news/>

MASS SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Europe is adopting stricter rules on surveillance tech

Patrick Howell O'Neill – MIT Technology Review: 9 November 2020

Negotiators from the European Council and the Parliament have signed off on new export rules that restrict the sale of cyber-surveillance goods to worldwide regimes that repress human rights.

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/11/09/1011837/europe-is-adopting-stricter-rules-on-surveillance-tech/>

For more on this theme:

(India) India's personal data privacy law triggers surveillance fears

<https://www.dw.com/en/indias-personal-data-privacy-law-triggers-surveillance-fears/a-55564949>

(China) China Now Has The Ability to Track Internet Users Who 'Scale The Wall'

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/track-10302020125006.html>

(China) How China's Control of Information is a Cyber Weakness

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/how-chinas-control-information-cyber-weakness>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Indians and Central Asians Are the New Face of the Islamic State

Raffaello Pantucci – Foreign Policy: 8 October 2020

Terrorists from India, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were never at the forefront of global jihad – now they are. ISIS and its affiliates are an increasing presence and threat across Central Asia and India.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/08/isis-indian-kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-uzbekistan-central-asians-are-the-new-face-of-islamic-state/>

With Village Beheadings, Islamic State Intensifies Attacks in Mozambique

Declan Walsh – The New York Times: 11 November 2020

The beheadings of more than 50 people in northern Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province have been linked to ISIS affiliates. The attacks are the latest in a series of gruesome attacks carried out in the gas-rich Cabo Delgado province since 2017 by an armed group that pledged allegiance to ISIS last year. Little is known about the group that calls itself al-Shabab, although it has no reported links to the organization of the same name operating in Somalia.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/world/middleeast/Mozambique-ISIS-beheading.html>

For more on this theme:

Islamic State resurfaces with attacks in Iraq's Diyala province

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/11/iraq-diyala-terrorism-isis-sectarianism.html>

Security Forces Launch Operation against ISIS in Iraq's Diyala

<https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2596941/security-forces-launch-operation-against-isis-iraq-s-diyala>

Islamic State's South African Fighters in Mozambique: The Thulsie Twins Case

<https://jamestown.org/program/islamic-states-south-african-fighters-in-mozambique-the-thulsie-twins-case/>

Islamic State's expanding terror footprint, Taliban's growing ambitions make peace in Afghanistan elusive

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/islamic-states-expanding-terror-footprint-talibans-growing-ambitions-make-peace-in-afghanistan-elusive-8977891.html>

Europol's Counter-Terrorism Centre helps Spain bust cell recruiting minors into Islamic State

<https://www.eureporter.co/frontpage/2020/11/02/europols-counter-terrorism-centre-helps-spain-bust-cell-recruiting-minors-into-islamic-state/>

Iraq's camp closures to leave 100,000 homeless amid coronavirus pandemic, aid group warns

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraq-camp-closure-aid-group-nrc/2020/11/09/6489ef7a-225c-11eb-9c4a-0dc6242c4814_story.html

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

UN votes to crack down on Somalia's al-Shabab extremists

Edith M. Lederer – The Associated Press: 13 November 2020

The U.N. Security Council reaffirms the arms embargo on Somalia that bans the resale or transfer of weapons or military equipment supplied to Somalia to avoid use by al-Shabaab militants.

<https://apnews.com/70670a4fdc2c8f135ba15d7640f53bcd>

Deadly Kabul Attacks Expose Possible Divisions Within The Taliban

Frud Bezhan – Gandhara: 7 November 2020

The Taliban agreed to stop bombing urban centers under a landmark peace deal signed with the United States in February 2020. It largely kept that deal until recently. A spate of militant attacks in Afghanistan's capital may show that there are deep divisions in the Taliban fighting against the more moderate group considering peace.

<https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/deadly-kabul-attacks-expose-possible-divisions-within-the-taliban/30935514.html>

For more on this theme:

Islamist terrorism: Germany is home to more than 600 agitators

<https://www.dw.com/en/islamist-terrorism-germany/a-55499856>

Jihadist terrorism in the EU since 2015

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/11/06/jihadist-terrorism-in-the-eu-since-2015/>

Counter-terrorism in Africa must adapt to new realities

<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/counter-terrorism-in-africa-must-adapt-to-new-realities>

Philippine Forces Kill Suspect in 2016 Abu Sayyaf Abduction of Indonesians

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/ph-militant-killed-11092020133641.html>

Indonesian Police Arrest Jemaah Islamiyah, JAD Militant Suspects in 'Pre-emptive' Raids

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/militants-caught-11092020161646.html>

Algeria Eyes Cross-Border Missions as Fear of Militant Spillover Grows

<https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/algeria-eyes-cross-border-missions-fear-militant-spillover-grows>

Austria: Police raid Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas-linked targets

<https://www.dw.com/en/austria-police-raid-muslim-brotherhood-hamas-linked-targets/a-55542480>

The impact of explosive weapons on children in Somalia

<https://aoav.org.uk/2020/the-impact-of-explosive-weapons-on-children-in-somalia/>

Veteran Al Qaeda leader killed in western Afghanistan

<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2020/11/veteran-al-qaeda-leader-killed-in-western-afghanistan.php>

RADICALIZATION AND MESSAGING

Jihadist Networks Dig In on Social Media Across Central Asia

Kumar Bekbolotov, Robert Muggah and Rafal Rohozinski – Foreign Policy: 11 November 2020

Almost 500 extremist channels on Telegram, VKontakte and other networks spread propaganda and vie for recruits. Most of them have ties to ISIS, and many are aimed at Central Asia.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/11/online-extremism-central-asia-islamic-state-terrorism/>

For more on this theme:

Launch of the Lexicon on Radicalization and Violent Extremism in the G5 Sahel Region

<https://mr.usembassy.gov/launch-of-the-lexicon-on-radicalization-and-violent-extremism-in-the-g5-sahel-region/>

India keen to step up cooperation with France to take on radicalisation

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/india-keen-to-step-up-cooperation-with-france-to-take-on-radicalisation-909641.html>

Terror attack in Nice: Radicalisation returns to the spotlight

<https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/perspective/20201030-terror-attack-in-nice-radicalisation-returns-to-the-spotlight>

Ex- intelligence chief says ‘thousands’ of radicalised youth in France

<https://the arabweekly.com/ex-intelligence-chief-says-thousands-radicalised-youth-france>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

Australian Politician With China Ties Charged Under Law Banning Foreign Interference

Radio Free Asia: 9 November 2020

Authorities in Australia have brought the country’s first prosecution against a person for colluding with a foreign government to interfere in its political life. The accused is reportedly tied to China’s United Front outreach and influence program.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/charged-11092020101151.html>

For more on this theme:

U.S. urges partners to counter China’s foreign meddling

<https://share.america.gov/u-s-urges-partners-to-counter-chinas-foreign-meddling/>

How to protect troops from an assault in the cognitive domain

<https://www.c4isrnet.com/opinion/2020/11/04/how-to-protect-troops-from-an-assault-in-the-cognitive-domain/>

Behind China’s threat to support insurgency in India

<https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/behind-chinas-threat-to-support-insurgency-in-india/>

China’s Shiny New Press Card Means Total State Control of Media: Journalists

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/press-11112020092314.html>