

**7 April 2024**

**HOW THE KINAHAN CARTEL CONTINUE TO EVADE SANCTIONS AND LIVE LIFE OF LUXURY**

On 7 April, the Sunday Times carried an article on the Irish-origin crime cartel, which has adapted its business model over the past 2 years. It has reverted to being a typical criminal organisation in an effort to circumvent the wide-sweeping sanctions announced by the US Treasury in April 2022. The findings of a long-running investigation by The Sunday Times, with open-source support from Bellingcat, shows that the strategy is multifaceted.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/how-kinahan-cartel-continue-evade-sanctions-luxury-66w30jmf3>

**METH HIDDEN IN MATS FROM SOUTH AFRICA LINKED TO CHINESE MILLION-DOLLAR MONEY LAUNDERING GANG IN AUSTRALIA**

On 7 April, the Daily Maverick in South Africa reported on methamphetamine hidden in mats from South Africa and discovered in Australia. A suspect in the case targeting a money laundering gang that was funnelling funds to China has been connected to a Chinese-linked money laundering gang.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-04-07-meth-from-sa-linked-to-chinese-money-laundering-gang-in-oz/>

**UNCREWED VESSELS THREATEN AFRICA'S MARITIME SECURITY**

On 5 April, Defence Web said that maritime drone deployment in offensive operations in the Black and Red Seas provides a glimpse of the future of naval warfare. It says that an uncrewed surface vessel (USV), or maritime drone, is a remote-controlled pilotless boat that can operate at sea. Variations are already being used for surveillance, monitoring ports and offshore oil and gas facilities, detecting marine pollution, and oceanographic surveys. It warns that features that make uncrewed vessels attractive and innovative for conventional navies also make them appealing to non-state actors.

<https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/abandon-ship-uncrewed-vessels-threaten-africas-maritime-security/>

**DYSFUNCTION AND DIVISION DARKEN THE WTO'S 30-YEAR DREAM OF FREE TRADE**

On 7 April, an article from the Observer marked the upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Trade Organisation. It says that any enthusiasm for groundbreaking trade liberalisation deals disappeared decades ago and has been replaced by covert – and often overt – protectionism.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/07/dysfunction-and-division-darken-the-wtos-30-year-dream-of-free-trade>

#### **THE SYNTHETIC SILK ROAD: TRACING CHINA'S GREY-MARKET PRECURSOR CHEMICAL TRADE**

On 5 April, an article from Insight Crime is concerned with Chinese chemicals which are the chemical precursors for fentanyl, among many other synthetic drugs. Those ingredients are sold in large quantities from China to criminal operators in places like Mexico, where fentanyl is produced clandestinely in massive amounts. It is then laced into counterfeit pills or kept in powdered form, before being trafficked in considerable quantities north to the US, where tens of thousands of people overdose on the drug per year.

<https://insightcrime.org/investigations/synthetic-silk-road-tracing-china-grey-market-precursor-chemical-trade/>

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