

17 April 2024

### **SOUTH-EAST ASIA'S PLASTIC TIDAL WAVE: IMPORTED TRASH SWAMPS REGION**

On 17 April, Nikkei Asia carried an article saying that from Indonesia to Myanmar, China's 2018 import ban fed an already critical domestic waste problem. Although home to less than 9% of the world's population, ASEAN countries received 17% of the world's plastic waste imports from 2017 to 2021. From 2016 to 2018 alone, the region saw plastic waste imports grow by 171%, to 2.26 million tonnes, with often illicitly imported plastics. 6 of the world's top 10 biggest contributors to oceanic plastic pollution were in South-East Asia in 2021.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/Southeast-Asia-s-plastic-tidal-wave-Imported-trash-swamps-region>

### **FOREIGN BRIBERY - AUSTRALIA RAISES THE BAR WITH NEW LAWS**

On 2 April, an article from Minter Ellison said that the Federal Parliament has expanded the scope of Australia's foreign bribery offence – and asks if one's organisation ready for the new 'failure to prevent' bribery offences?

<https://www.minterellison.com/articles/australia-raises-the-bar-with-new-foreign-bribery-laws>

### **AUSTRALIA: SERIOUS FINANCIAL CRIME TASKFORCE CRACKS DOWN ON FALSE INVOICING ARRANGEMENTS**

On 9 April, Nyman Gibson Miralis reported that the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce (SFCT) has intensified its efforts against false invoicing and other illegal financial arrangements. This proactive stance aims to curtail tax crimes and ensure a level playing field for businesses adhering to the law. Those involved in false invoicing schemes may be able to mitigate potential penalties by self-reporting transgressions to the SFCT. The SFCT is an Australian Tax Office-led joint-agency taskforce was established in 2015. It brings together the knowledge, resources and experience of relevant law enforcement and regulatory agencies to identify and address the most serious and complex forms of financial crime.

<https://ngm.com.au/false-invoicing/>

See also –

<https://www.ato.gov.au/about-ato/tax-avoidance/the-fight-against-tax-crime/our-focus/serious-financial-crime-taskforce>

### **US: DOJ TO OFFER SOME EXECUTIVES IMMUNITY UNDER WHISTLEBLOWER PILOT PROGRAM**

On 16 April, the Wall Street Journal reported that the policy for executives involved in wrongdoing comes as prosecutors develop a separate financial award program for other whistleblowers. The Justice Department's criminal division will give immunity to executives who provide information about corporate misconduct they themselves were involved in, according to details of a pilot program.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/justice-department-to-offer-some-execs-immunity-under-whistleblower-pilot-program-dd7e2f55>

### **US AND CHINA TO COOPERATE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DIRTY MONEY**

On 16 April, the Wall Street Journal reported that officials from the 2 countries will meet regularly and provide information on enforcement actions each is taking. It is said that the countries have found some common ground amid increasing geopolitical and economic tensions between them. A new agreement will allow US Treasury officials and their counterparts at the China central bank, to meet regularly. The countries plan to share best practices and provide information on enforcement actions each is taking, with the goal of closing financial system loopholes.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-china-to-cooperate-in-the-fight-against-dirty-money-1edb9a25>

### **ISLE OF MAN AMENDS 1 ENTRY ON DRC SANCTIONS LIST**

On 16 April, the Isle of Man advised that the existing entry for the NATIONAL AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION had been amended.

<https://www.gov.im/news/2024/apr/16/financial-sanctions-democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea/>

### **SPAIN: 16 YEARS IN PRISON FOR "QUEEN OF COCA" WHO TRAFFICKED THROUGH PANAMA**

On 16 April, Critica reported that Spaniard Ana Maria Cameno (aka the 'queen of coca', to 16 years in prison and a fine of €21 million for leading a cocaine distribution network in the country and laundering millions of euros of profits in Panama. She was arrested in 2014.

<https://www.critica.com.pa/sucesos/16-anos-de-prision-para-reina-de-la-coca-trafficaba-por-panama-668632>

### **EUROPEAN COURT RULES DRUG KINGPIN PABLO ESCOBAR'S NAME CANNOT BE TRADEMARKED**

On 17 April, Al Jazeera reported that the EU General Court in Luxembourg ruled that the name is associated with "drug trafficking and narco-terrorism and with the crimes and suffering resulting" from them, and should not be given protection under intellectual property laws. The application was

filed by Escobar Inc was founded in Puerto Rico by Pablo Escobar’s brother Roberto de Jesus Escobar Gaviria.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/17/european-court-rules-drug-kingpin-pablo-escobars-name-cant-be-trademarked>

<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2024-04/cp240067en.pdf>

### **NEW LEAK: “SWAZI SECRETS”**

On 17 April, ICIJ released information about the tiny southern African kingdom of Eswatini — once known as Swaziland. It says that a leak from inside the Eswatini FIU reveals how the king’s broken promises and his inner circle have enabled suspicious money to flow through the landlocked country and beyond. One thing highlighted is how a “special economic zone” — touted as a way to repair the country’s tattered economy — became a ghost town home to 2 “phantom” gold refineries channelling millions of dollars to Dubai.

<https://www.icij.org/investigations/swazi-secrets>

### **TACKLING THE SALE OF ILLICIT PESTICIDES ON E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS**

On 17 April, the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade published this report which identifies the scale of trade of illicit pesticides on e-commerce platforms and the vulnerabilities that expose platforms to illicit traders. The primary objective of the report is to examine the structural vulnerabilities in the operations of e-commerce platforms that can be exploited by criminals to sell illicit pesticides online. It goes on to present examples of listings of illicit pesticides found on major ecommerce platforms worldwide. It found that major e-commerce platforms worldwide sell illicit pesticides, in circumvention of national regulatory controls.



<https://www.tracit.org/tackling-the-sale-of-illicit-pesticides-on-e-commerce-platforms.html>

## **WAGNER GROUP POST-PRIGOZHIN: NEW NAME, BUSINESS AS USUAL**

On 17 April, Eurasia Review published this analysis.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/17042024-wagner-group-post-prigozhin-new-name-business-as-usual-analysis/>

## **UK: THE NEW OFFICE FOR TRADE SANCTIONS IMPLEMENTATION (OTSI) – WHY CRIMINAL RISKS LIE AHEAD FOR BUSINESS**

On 17 April, an article from Corker Bining said that, in December, the UK Government announced the creation of the Office for Trade Sanctions Implementation (OTSI). Its stated focus is the civil enforcement of trade sanctions. However, it also signals an increased risk of criminal investigation and prosecution for those who fall foul of the UK's framework of trade controls. The article describes this framework and outlines some points of practice arising from criminal proceedings in the past decade. It then explains why OTSI represents an increased criminal risk for business, not just in terms of enforcement but also adverse publicity.

<https://corkerbinning.com/the-new-office-for-trade-sanctions-implementation-otsi-why-criminal-risks-lie-ahead-for-business/>

## **UK: 2 MEN HAVE BEEN CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH A GAMBLING INVESTMENT SCAM WHICH IS ALLEGED TO HAVE DEFRAUDED VICTIMS OUT OF MORE THAN £5 MILLION**

On 9 April, a news release from the Kent Police said that in 2017-21 at least 130 investors from both the UK and abroad were persuaded to put money into a complex online betting process called Apex Algorithms.

<https://www.kent.police.uk/news/kent/latest/policing-news/suspects-charged-over-5million-gambling-investment-scam/>

## **RUSSIA IMPORTS HUNDREDS OF FIREARMS FROM THE EU MONTHLY, BYPASSING SANCTIONS**

On 5 April, The Insider reported that it had discovered that, in February alone, Russian importers smuggled in nearly 1,000 firearms.

<https://theins.ru/en/news/270574>

## **SOLOMON ISLANDS PM HAS MILLIONS IN PROPERTY, RAISING QUESTIONS AROUND WEALTH**

On 9 April, an article from OCCRP said that the Prime Minister of the Pacific Island nation has recently gone on a home-building spree, constructing 8 valuable new houses in and around the capital city of Honiara. It says that a relatively low salary hasn't stopped Sogavare and his wife,

Emmy, from securing large loans and massively increasing their real estate wealth over the past several years.

<https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/solomon-islands-pm-has-millions-in-property-raising-questions-around-wealth>

#### **THE EU ATALANTA NAVAL FORCE WARNS THAT PAYING OF RANSOMS COULD JUST LEAD TO MORE PIRACY OFF SOMALIA**

On 17 April, Insurance Marine News reported that the force had warned that the decision of a Bangladeshi company to pay a ransom to free the hijacked *Abdullah* and its 23 crew could lead to further attacks on merchant shipping.

<https://insurancemarineneews.com/insurance-marine-news/atalanta-warns-that-paying-of-ransoms-could-just-lead-to-more-piracy-off-somalia/>

#### **CYBER SECURITY THREATS TO THE MARITIME SECTOR**

On 17 April, a Commentary from War on the Rocks says that it is no secret that ports and maritime shipping are among the hottest new targets for cyber attacks. The maritime transportation system is very lucrative for criminal ransomware; with attacks up 350% over 2022, and the average ransom pricing out at just over \$3.2 million. It says that addressing cyber security threats to the maritime sector requires more than standards and long-term industrial base investments.

<https://warontherocks.com/2024/04/the-rising-ransomware-tide-chinese-spy-cranes-and-the-biden-executive-order-on-maritime-cyber-security>

#### **CANADA DESIGNATES 2 INDIVIDUALS AND 4 ENTITIES IN RESPONSE TO SUDAN WAR**

On 17 April, the Global Sanctions blog reported that Canada has designated individuals and entities linked to the RSF and SAF, the 2 groups involved in the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

<https://globalsanctions.co.uk/2024/04/canada-designates-individuals-entities-in-response-to-sudan-war/>

#### **FinCEN RENEWS REAL ESTATE GEOGRAPHIC TARGETING ORDERS (GTO)**

On 17 April, FinCEN announced that it had renewed the GTO that require US title insurance companies to identify the natural persons behind shell companies used in non-financed purchases of residential real estate. The renewal is to 15 October.

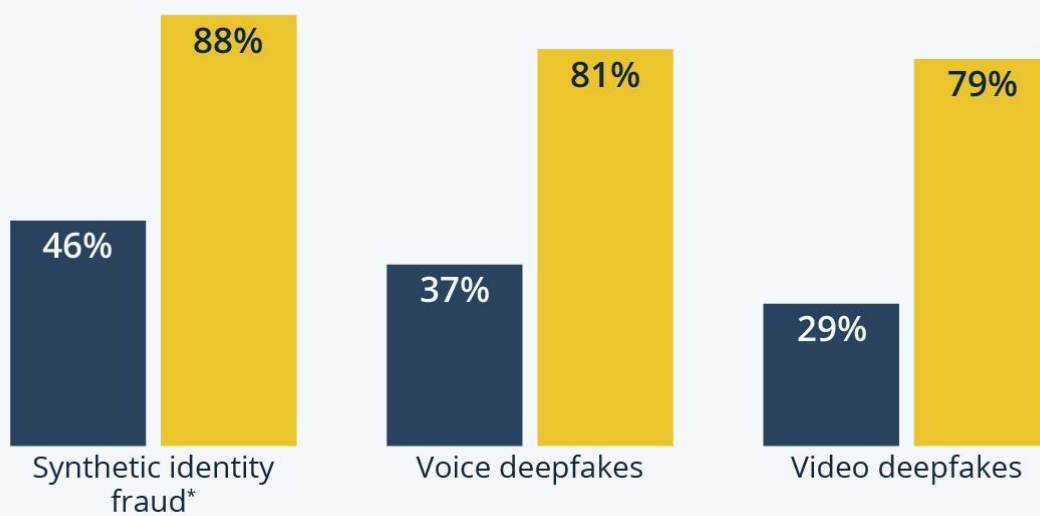
<https://www.fincen.gov/news/news-releases/fincen-renews-real-estate-geographic-targeting-orders>

# The Rise of Technology-Assisted Identity Fraud



Share of experts with the following experiences/views on advanced methods of identity fraud

■ Already experienced it   ■ See it as a genuine threat



\* Combination of real and fake ID information  
1,069 fraud detection/prevention experts in the financial services, technology, telecoms and aviation sectors in eight countries surveyed Dec. 2022 - Jan. 2023  
Source: Regula



statista

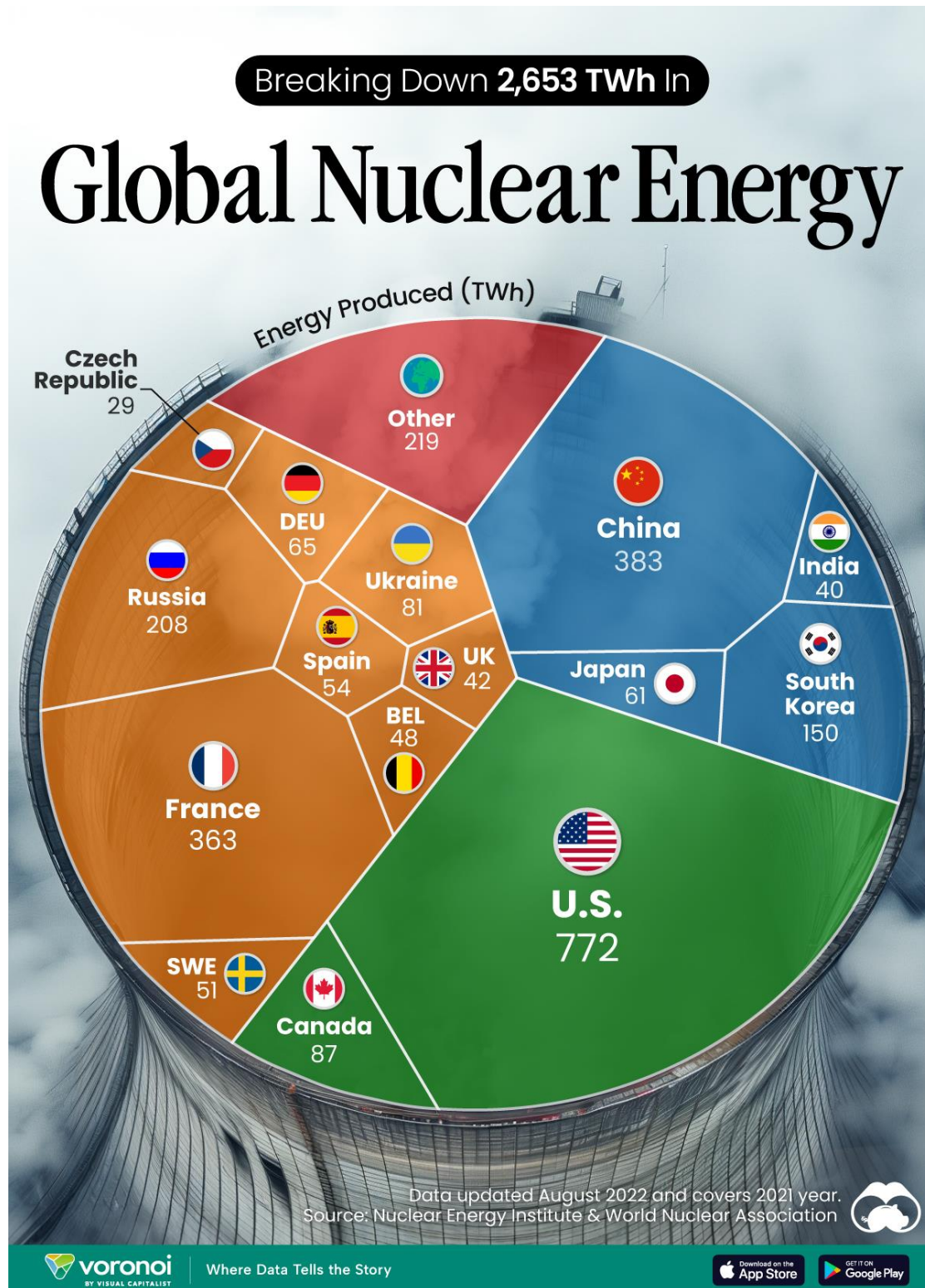
<https://www.statista.com/chart/32108/experiences-views-of-experts-on-advanced-identity-fraud-methods>

## PODCAST: FORMER ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS REFLECT ON THE LAST DECADE OF ANTI-BRIBERY ENFORCEMENT AND ITS FUTURE

In the latest TRACE podcast, a lively presentation at the 2024 TRACE Forum featuring former enforcement officials, Charles Duross, Partner, Morrison Foerster, David Last, Partner, Cleary Gottlieb, and Mark Mendelsohn, Partner, Paul Weiss. Speaking with TRACE President, Alexandra Wrage, they discuss their time as Chiefs of the FCPA Unit and their experiences navigating

heightened scrutiny and shifting resources, and then they offer their perspectives on what lies ahead.

<https://www.traceinternational.org/resources-podcast>



<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/the-worlds-biggest-nuclear-energy-producers/>

### **US: NEW VENEZUELA-RELATED SANCTIONS GENERAL LICENSE AND ASSOCIATED FAQ**

On 17 April, OFAC advised that it had issued General License 44 (Authorizing the Wind Down of Transactions Related to Oil or Gas Sector Operations in Venezuela) as well as an updated version of FAQ related to the suspension of certain US sanctions with respect to Venezuela on 18 October 2023.

<https://ofac.treasury.gov/media/932826/download?inline>

<https://ofac.treasury.gov/media/932821/download?inline>

### **US: DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) PLAN TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLICIT TRADE IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

On 17 April, Bass Berry & Sims published a post saying that the announcement comes as DHS has been urged, especially by the textile industry, to more proactively and fully enforce the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), including adding parties to the UFLPA Entity List. It explained that Products imported from parties on the UFLPA Entity List are presumed to be made in whole or in part with forced labour and thus are blocked from entering the US unless the importer can rebut the presumption with clear and convincing evidence.

<https://www.bassberrygovcontrade.com/enforcement-uflpa>

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