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CT News and Information Updating and Connecting Our Partners in the Region

DOJ, Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism

In this edition, we report on Kosovo's recent conviction of an FTF and the United States' conviction of a woman financing the Somalia-based terrorist group al-Shabab. We also provide an overview of a report on how states are implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1624, on fighting incitement to commit terrorism. Lastly, we discuss Anom devices and Operation Trojan Shield, the largest ever law enforcement operation to combat criminals' use of encrypted electronic communications.

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Foreign Terrorist Fighter Convicted in Kosovo Following Fourth Retrial

On May 13, 2022, a Pristina Court Special Department panel found defendant Leunis Frangu guilty of participating in a terrorist organization, sentencing him to three years in prison. According to the indictment, Frangu traveled to Syria in 2014 where he supported ISIS.

The verdict in this case came after several retrials ordered by the appeals court. During the previous trials, the trial court found that, although the witnesses' testimonies established that Frangu engaged in military-type activities in Syria, the evidence was not sufficient to establish which military formation he participated in. Therefore, the trial court held it could not convict him of participating in a terrorist organization. The appeals court reversed the trial court, reasoning that the defendant illegally participated in foreign wars and that the essential law was violated.

Supporting this case, OPDAT and the FBI helped Kosovo prosecutors locate and obtain Frangu's ISIS enrollment form through international legal assistance channels. The enrollment form was found among items which had been seized by the coalition forces—a rich source of valuable evidence used by terrorism prosecutors around the globe.

Source: [Herën e katërt shpallet fajtor i akuzuari për pjesëmarrje në luftërat e Sirisë, dënohet me tri vite burgim](#)

Dutch Woman Convicted in the United States for Participation in Terror Financing Ring

On May 3, a jury in the United States convicted Dutch national Fahria Hassan on charges of financing the Somalia-based terrorist group al-Shabaab.

The evidence presented at trial demonstrated that Hassan, along with a group of women from more than a dozen countries, ran a terrorist financing ring for over three years. Specifically, she raised money in the Netherlands under the false pretense that it was being collected for charitable purposes. Hassan and other members of the conspiracy moved the collected funds via money transmitters and used online chatrooms to coordinate payments. Members of al-Shabab used the money to finance safehouses and purchases of trucks and weaponry to support their terrorist activities.

Hassan was found guilty of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization and now faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison. Her sentence will be pronounced in July. Two other members of the conspiracy were convicted six years ago, receiving sentences of 11- and 12-years' imprisonment.

Source: [Jury Convicts Dutch National for Participation in Terror Financing Ring](#)

United Nations: Global Survey of the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005) by Member States

UN Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005) calls on all States to prohibit incitement to commit terrorist acts and to undertake measures to prevent and counter such incitement. Recently, a global survey was conducted to assess States' implementation of UNSCR 1624, the results of which were published by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). The survey also considers two related Security Council resolutions—Resolution 2178 (2014) and Resolution 2354 (2017)—that encourage States to address the global threat of foreign terrorist fighters by, among other things, developing programs to counter violent extremism and the terrorist narratives spread by the ISIS, Al-Qaida, and other terrorist groups.

According to CTED, States have made notable headway “on prohibiting incitement to commit acts of terrorism and

taking related steps to prevent incitement to commit acts of terrorism, to counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and to counter terrorist narratives.” As of March 1, 2021, 112 States included terrorist incitement as a distinct criminal charge in their national legislation, which represents significant progress compared with only 76 States in 2015. In Southeast Europe six out of nine States have adopted legislation to prohibit terrorist incitement, whereas the remaining three states have generic prohibitions on the incitement of criminal conduct.

While recognizing these important accomplishments, CTED also emphasizes that States must ensure that all measures they undertake in countering incitement to commit terrorist acts are compliant with their obligations under international human rights law. In this regard, CTED underlines the importance of defining with precision the scope of the criminal offense of incitement of terrorist acts. CTED recommends “that the offence should expressly include both a subjective element (intent that a terrorist act be committed as a result) and an objective element (creation of a danger that this will in fact happen).” In its report, CTED also counsels that any problems with the underlying

definition of terrorism or terrorist acts will have a negative impact also on the offence of incitement. CTED notes that several states in Western Europe and North America criminalize terrorist “apologie”—that is, the justification or glorification of terrorist acts—which has been criticized by the UN human rights mechanisms for being overly broad and possibly violating freedom of speech by “allowing for punishment of expression that does not create an objective risk of incitement.” Problems with vague and overbroad definitions of the incitement offense have been recorded in all other subregions as well, including Southeast Europe.

CTED further notes a significant increase in the number of communications aimed at inciting terrorism or violence

conducive to terrorism—including on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance—even as States have invested substantial efforts to counter such communications. Meanwhile, the number of attacks conducted by individuals affiliated with such movements and narratives rose by 320 per cent over the previous five years. This indicates that preventing and countering the spread of these narratives is “a new and growing challenge for Member States.”

Source: [Global survey of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1624 \(2005\) by Member States](#)

Operation Trojan Shield: Largest Ever Operation Against Illegal Use of Encrypted Apps

Criminals thought they were talking and texting on secure, encrypted devices. In reality, their communications were being sent to law enforcement as part of an unprecedented effort to combat the use of encrypted apps for illegal purposes. This undercover operation, known as Operation Trojan Shield, went public last year. Now, prosecutors around the world are using the seized communications to pursue criminal networks, their leaders, and the corrupt officials who support them.

Operation Trojan Shield was launched in 2018, the product of creative thinking by US and Australian law enforcement. The operation centered around specially programmed devices known as “Anom” devices. Anom was a messaging application installed on Android cellular phones. The Anom devices were marketed as being secure, encrypted, and impossible for law enforcement to access. Criminals purchased the devices—paying as much as \$2,000 for a six-month contract—thinking they could use the devices to discuss their illegal activities without risk of getting caught. Unbeknownst to them, their Anom communications were being sent to a server that American and Australian law enforcement could access. As a result, law enforcement collected a massive amount of compelling and reliable evidence of criminal activity.

At its peak in May 2021, there were over 11,000 devices with Anom installed around the world. They were used by approximately 300 criminal syndicates in over 100 countries. An estimated 90% of Anom users were engaged in criminal activity. Media sources also report that Anom communications revealed troubling links between criminal networks and public officials.

Through Anom, police were able to read millions of messages describing murder conspiracies, drug trafficking, and other criminal plots. Commenting on these messages, an Australian Federal Police commissioner stated, “All they talk about is drugs, violence, hits on each other, [and] innocent people who are going to be murdered.”

Operation Trojan Shield finally went overt on June 8, 2021, when law enforcement in 16 countries executed numerous

search warrants and arrested over 800 suspects thanks to evidence from the Anom devices. Law enforcement also seized eight tons of cocaine, 250 guns, and the equivalent of more than \$48 million in various currencies and cryptocurrencies. Around the world, 9,000 police officers were involved.



The success of Operation Trojan Shield continues to grow as state authorities follow the evidence, make arrests, and pursue prosecutions. This March, for example, the United States extradited a man from the Netherlands who is accused of distributing the Anom devices to organized criminal networks.

Operation Trojan Shield was the “biggest ever law enforcement operation against encrypted communication,” according to Europol. Now, the world watches to see how prosecutors make use of the Trojan Shield evidence.

Sources: [Europol: 800 Criminals Arrested](#)
[Reuters: Spy Phones ‘in Gangsters’ Back Pockets Betray Hundreds to Police](#)