

# TraCCC UPDATES

TERRORISM, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND CORRUPTION CENTER

October, 2014

## STATE DEPT GRANT: "TIME TO TAKE ACTION"

We are delighted to announce that TraCCC has been awarded a grant of \$368,000 by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) of the Department of State, under the \$10 million initiative, announced by President Obama in 2013, to combat international trafficking in wildlife. TraCCC's grant proposal, entitled "Time to Take Action" aims to analyze the transnational criminal networks that are responsible for the catastrophic surge in rhino poaching from South Africa in recent years, and to support South African authorities and law enforcement globally in directing their efforts against transnational horn smuggling networks at their most vulnerable points.

The project will operate from 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2015 and will focus on the following activities:

1. Building an end-to-end geospatial map of the transnational supply chains moving rhino horn, identifying syndicate leaders, trade routes, financiers, and vulnerable nodes in their logistical operations that authorities can disrupt globally;
2. Creating a database with South African colleagues to track smuggling networks and monitor changes for law enforcement as networks adapt or new actors emerge;
3. Writing and publicizing analyses of the "convergence" of rhino horn trafficking networks with traffickers of people and narcotics;
4. Pinpointing legal authorities that can be used to seize assets, maximize penalties, and raise awareness with law enforcement agencies about those legal options;
5. Assisting South African authorities to develop global law enforcement partnerships.



Photo Courtesy of Peace Parks Foundation

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Nov. 6:** Dr. Claudia Paz y Paz, Guatemala's first female attorney general will discuss organized crime and corruption in Central America.

**Date TBA:** Gretchen Peters, TraCCC Senior Fellow on Transnational Crime will discuss her recent trip to Gabon and her assessment of their struggles with wildlife crime

[http://traccc.gmu.edu/  
events/upcoming-  
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School of Policy, Government,  
and International Affairs

The Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC) is the first center in the United States devoted to understanding the links between terrorism, transnational crime and corruption, and to teaching, researching, training and helping to formulate policy on these critical issues. TraCCC is a research center within the school of Public Policy at George Mason University. [www.traccc.gmu.edu](http://www.traccc.gmu.edu)

## TraCCC Meeting with Funders on Elephant and Rhino Horn Poaching in Africa

On September 19, TraCCC met with a number of prominent wildlife donors working in South Africa, Mozambique and Gabon, as well as officials from the Africa Division of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss TraCCC's methodology, political obstacles in South Africa that have delayed TraCCC's rhino project from becoming operational, and ways to move forward.

TraCCC Director Louise Shelley and Gretchen Peters, TraCCC Senior Fellow on Transnational Crime, briefed the group on the team of experts that TraCCC had assembled to work on the project in South Africa, including former IRS and Treasury agents with decades of experience tracking and recovering illicit monies, a former U.S. federal prosecutor who led the case against the Cali cartel and GMU experts in cyber-security and wildlife conservation from the GMU department of Computer Science and the GMU Smithsonian Conservation School. At this point the project funding from the South African side has been suspended, pending a decision by the South African government to provide a "mandate" for the project. In the meantime, TraCCC has received funding from the U.S. State Department that will allow TraCCC staff to conduct research on the supply chains that feed the rhino horn trade, and work with South African partners to build capacity (See above for details)

Gretchen also described her plans to travel to Gabon in the next weeks, with funding from Woodtiger Foundation, in order to complete a rapid assessment of the transnational crime networks responsible for the slaughter of forest elephants in Gabon. Her meetings in Gabon are being organized by Dr. Lee White, director of Gabon's National Park Service, with personal support from Gabon's President Ali Bongo Ondimba. Following her trip, Gretchen will prepare a written assessment of the current situation, and a proposal on ways that Gabon might fight the poaching problem at the transnational level.



Photo courtesy of Kasey Kinnard

**Participants: TraCCC, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Peace Parks Foundation, Chissano Foundation, WILD Foundation, Woodtiger Foundation, Wildcat Foundation**

## Book Launch: Dirty Entanglements

On September 15 TraCCC hosted a book launch for Dr. Shelley's latest book "*Dirty Entanglements: Corruption, Crime and Terrorism*" which was published in September by Cambridge University Press. Dr. Shelley explained to the audience of 50+ that the book was written for an international audience, not just for American readers. She gathered the material during travels on five continents, and had intellectual contributors—sources, experts, readers, and editors—from around the globe.

The main purpose of the book is to get away from stovepipe thinking and understand the security threat presented by the interaction of three factors – crime, corruption and terrorism. Dr Shelley used a physics analogy, saying that policy – makers need to look at crime, corruption and terrorism as a "three body problem"—one in which all three forces interact, with results that are unpredictable. The term "entanglement" also comes from the physics concept that when systems get "entangled" they enter into a temporary physical reaction that changes all of them. Since 9/11 there has been a growing understanding of the links between terrorism and crime, but the critical role of corruption in the equation is understudied and underrated.

The first chapter of the book analyzes the six most deadly terrorist attacks of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and shows that crime and corruption played an integral part in facilitating them all, despite the diversity of locales and perpetrators. Dr Shelley noted that the intersection between crime and terrorism has grown over the past decade, as the authorities, in the wake of 9/11, have been successful in cutting many sources of funding to terrorists. As a result, terrorist groups have turned to crime to finance their activities, and terrorism has become a "business" promoting instability, in part, because they can make more money in unstable environments. The Hamas tunnels in Gaza are a good example of the profit to be gained from instability. They harbor one of the largest smuggling operations in the world, and are rebuilt after every conflict because of their profitability.

The first section of the book provides the framework to understand the logic of the crime-corruption-terrorism relationship, while the second part examines the business model of terrorism. It focuses on the interactions of crime corruption and terrorism in both the legitimate and illegitimate economies, and looks at the business strategies pursued by terrorists. It examines in detail three areas of business: the drug trade, least policed activities, (counterfeits, cigarettes, antiques, etc.) and trade in WMD (weapons of mass destruction.)

Issues raised during the question period included:

**Q:** Do analysts overestimate the ability of ISIS to provide services to the population?

**A:** Improved service delivery by government entities is an essential element of any anti-terrorist strategy. The abysmal quality of government services in many communities, enables terrorist organizations to raise hopes that they will provide improved services, and provides a legitimizing cover for them, even if they don't deliver.

**Q:** What is the role of trafficking in stolen art and antiques?

**A:** The art world is in denial about the importance of the role of looted cultural artifacts in financing terrorism. This was evident at a recent Maastricht Art Fair – a major European art show where stolen antiques were offered for sale with no questions asked.

**Q:** Aren't we blaming the victim by citing the role of corruption and other government misdeeds?

**A:** The goal is not to blame the victim but to show how governments can be more effective in fighting terrorism.

**Q:** What is the role of "the blundering state", (i.e. government misdeeds that alienate the population) in encouraging terrorism?

**A:** This is indeed a serious problem in many countries. It is discussed in chapter 1, in reference to the attacks in São Paulo and Beslan, where the many who died in the terrorist attacks were killed by security forces. This problem is also discussed more extensively in the conclusion.

**Q:** The "Whole of Society Approach" is too big. What can realistically be done?

**A:** There are lots of concrete measures outlined in the book. We need many different components of society working together including citizens, businesses, governments, and multilateral organizations. The experience of Columbia where different groups worked together to bring the state back is illustrative of this "whole of society approach."

