

Codebook

ENACT incident monitoring project

October 2017

Introduction

The ENACT incident monitoring project is an effort to systematically record incidents of organised crime in Africa to strengthen the empirical evidence base of its scale and impact. This is a working document that will be updated regularly along with project developments.

Transnational organised crime (TOC) activities occur along both spatial and temporal dimensions, which are by nature designed to be secretive. TOC is typically organised or planned in a location separate from where the crime is committed. Additionally, such crimes normally have multiple illegal elements. This makes measuring the scale and impact of TOC extremely complicated.

The pilot phase of this project (January to July 2017) focused on incidents of wildlife-related TOC that occurred in 10 countries in Southern Africa between 2000 and 2016. The purpose of the pilot was to test the methodology on a specific region and sub-theme of TOC before expanding its focus.

At ENACT's first data-focused workshop, held in Cape Town on 3 – 6 July 2017, the results of the pilot project were reviewed and expert input was given, which helped inform a new approach. The updated methodology guides Phase 2 of the project and is explained below. This phase, which began on 24 July 2017, focuses on drugs and wildlife crime in East and Southern Africa.

Methodological overview

The approach of the TOC incident monitoring study (specifically the focus on incidents or criminal events) was inspired by leading open-source conflict data projects, notably the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

Using media-monitoring platforms such as Nexis.com and BBC Monitoring, these projects rely on human researchers or coders to source articles and generate data on conflict events. Taking as a point of departure these projects' focus on event, location, and date, the TOC Incident Monitoring project replaced the focus on conflict events with a focus on incidents of *organised crime*.

This codebook describes the methodology used by the project. It details how articles are retrieved by way of a keyword search string using the media monitoring platform Nexis.com, explains the variables under study and describes how *incidents* are generated.



Searching, coding, cross-checking and analysis for the ENACT Incident Monitoring Project is managed and led by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and carried out by individual coders who focus on specific countries.

Geographical coverage/location

In Southern Africa, four countries are being covered extensively first. These are:

Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa

Six others in Southern Africa will be covered once the first four are completed, namely:

Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

In East Africa, three countries are being covered extensively first. These are:

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

Six others in East Africa will be covered once the first three are completed, namely:

Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.

Timeframe

The timeframe chosen for the pilot phase of the project was 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2016. Upon review of the results of the pilot period, the Phase 2 will cover the period 1 January 2008 to 31 October 2017.

This revised period was selected to coincide with the surge in poaching in Africa which occurred around 2008.¹ Further, because a number of media companies were not registered with the Nexis.com site before 2008/9, it was anticipated that online media monitoring of incidents of wildlife and crime in Africa before this year would be significantly more difficult.

Search string and search process

The coders use two identical search strings for every country. They are entered into the 'power search' bar of Nexis.com, which is described as a platform for 'strategic news and business research'.² This platform excludes social media and other non-news websites. The site employs standards for journalistic credibility that helps the project to maintain a threshold for quality, although also limiting the breadth of media coverage.

The first search string was designed to search for incidents related to drugs:

[Country name] AND drug bust OR drug traffic* OR drug smuggl* OR illegal drug* OR narcotics

The second search string was designed to find incidents related to wildlife crime:

[Country name] AND wildlife crime OR wildlife traffic* OR poaching OR illicit trad* OR smuggl*

After running the previous search strings, it became apparent that there is an overwhelming volume of activity for South Africa and the number of articles that discuss the wildlife trafficking crisis in general. Thus a more specific search string is since used:

South Africa AND wildlife crime OR wildlife traffic* OR poaching OR illicit trad* abalone OR ivory OR rhino OR lion

Searches are performed in monthly or weekly batches (e.g. January 2017 or 1 January 2017 – 7 January 2017).

Coders read articles and save those that meet the inclusion criteria in a Word Document.



Inclusion criteria

For the article to be included it must have three pieces of information: 1) *a precise/sub-national location*, 2) *a date* and 3) *a crime stage*. It also must be related to the country in your search string. In other words, incidents in Hong Kong are coded so long as they mention the country in your search string as the origin of the product or the key actors involved.

Google Form

If an article matches this inclusion criteria, it is then analysed for the information it contains, which is then entered into a Google Form, according to a set list of questions and answer options. Google Form allows for easy aggregating of entries and the ability to download input into an Excel format for cross-checking, cleaning and analysis.

Variables measured on Google Form

After a search is performed and coders have identified the articles that meet the inclusion criteria, they enter the relevant information into a Google Form.³ The variables collected are:

LOCATION (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 1-3)

Location is coded first at the country level, then at provincial, municipal, and city/village level. Coders take care to accurately type in country, province and town names.

Each event is geo-referenced using longitude and latitude coordinates, as recorded on geonames.org. These are added at the cross-checking and verification phase.

DATE (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 4-6)

The date of the incident is recorded first by year, then date, in a pre-defined format that ensures consistency. The date precision describes the accuracy of an article in listing the date of the incident. For example, a seizure of a given quantity of illegal product occurred *this week* or *last week*. The date recorded is the first Monday of the week listed. If only the month is given, the 15th of the month is recorded. When no date is given, the date of the source article is used.

NATURE OF ACTIVITY (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 7-13)

The key pieces of information related to the incident itself are recorded across five variables: 1) activity type (drugs, wildlife or both) 2) name of the specific product involved, 3) corresponding quantities, 4) crime stage and 5) weapon type.

Activity type can be either drugs or wildlife or both.

For any mention of *drugs*, coders select one of the following options:

- a. Cannabis
- b. Cocaine
- c. Ecstasy
- d. Heroin
- e. Methamphetamine
- f. Counterfeit medications
- g. Unknown
- h. Mixed
- i. Other



Following that, coders enter the quantity of the mentioned drug in kilograms, if possible.

For any mention of *wildlife goods*, coders select one of the following:

- a. Cat species
- b. Elephant/ivory
- c. Rhino
- d. Rhino mixed with other
- e. Antelope species (impala etc.)
- f. Fish
- g. Pangolin
- h. Mixed (non-rhino)
- i. Other
- j. Unknown

Similarly, the quantity of the animal product is noted – again, in kilogram if possible. If full horns are mentioned, coders calculate the kg volume on the basis that an average rhino horn is 3.5 kg and an elephant tusk is 4 kg.^{4,5}

Crime stages were adapted from A Lavorgna's typology of crime script analysis, which divides stages of the wildlife (and drug) crime process along different points in the chain.⁶

The crime stages used in this study for both wildlife and drugs are:

- a. **Conspiracy/intention/planning.** *Example: poacher snare found, plans for drug smuggling found.*
- b. **Poaching/harvesting.** *Example: rhino poached, drugs being grown/harvested.*
- c. **Mixing/processing.** *Example: drugs being mixed in a lab, rhino horn being processed into jewellery.*
- d. **Possession (under 5 kg - wildlife and drugs).** *Example: individual found with a few 'rolls' or other low-scale amount of drugs.*
- e. **Possession (over 5 kg - wildlife and drugs)** *Example: group or individual found with larger amount.*
- f. **Transportation/smuggling/trafficking.** *Example: individual found at airport¹ or sea port with drugs or rhino horn in his bag.*
- g. **Retail market.** *Example: abalone sold in restaurant or online or drugs sold on the street or elsewhere.*

The second component is the coder's confidence regarding the article's mention of the crime stage. Coders log a '1' if the article suggests or implies the particular crime stage, or a '2' if the article explicitly mentions the crime stage.

Possession is divided into two options: under 5 kg and over 5 kg. This allows coders to distinguish between small-scale possession of drugs and wildlife products. With respect to the possession of illegal drugs, the limit that can be carried for *personal use* varies widely across drug type and country, from 100 g for some substances to 1 kg for others. When it comes to wildlife products, the distinction between under and over 5 kg helps indicate the scale of the possession.

¹ As a rule of thumb, all airport incidents are coded as smuggling/trafficking.

Some of the guiding definitions of what constitutes poaching, possession and smuggling are derived from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Crime Classification Guide. Examples include:

- Trading or possession of protected species: unlawful trade or possession of specimens of protected or prohibited wild fauna or flora species⁷
- Poaching: illegal hunting, fishing or gathering of wild fauna and fauna or the unlawful hunting, fishing, collection or otherwise taking of wild fauna or flora⁸
- Smuggling of goods: acts consisting of customs fraud and the movement of goods across a customs frontier in any clandestine manner⁹

‘Weapon type’ refers to the weapon used in the wildlife crime or violent drug incident, and ‘classification’ is based on the UNODC classification of firearms.¹⁰ Coders select one of the following: firearm (shotgun), firearm (rifle), firearm (machine gun), firearm (other), poison or chemical, knife, arson or explosives, other or not mentioned.

ORIGIN AND DESTINATION (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 14-15)

Coders are asked to code the country of origin of the goods involved in the crime, as well as the final destination of goods, whenever mentioned in the news article. For example, in an incident that mentions a smuggling incident in South Africa en route to Vietnam, ‘South Africa’ is noted in the country of origin variable, and ‘Vietnam’ is noted in the destination variable.

ACTORS (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 16-19)

Variables related to the actors of the incident are covered in four questions (16-19). ‘Actors’ in the pilot refers to suspected perpetrators of the crime. They are recorded as primary and secondary actors, where ‘primary’ refers to the main/dominant actor and ‘secondary’, the supporting actors. For each primary and secondary, coders identify them as either individual or group, with a number of second-tier options:

- Individual (select one): National/resident OR foreign OR unknown
- Group (select one): National/resident OR foreign OR mixed (national/resident and foreign) OR unknown

The definition of ‘group’ used in the project is three or more people. This is in keeping with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which defines an organised criminal group conducting a serious crime as having the following characteristics: being carried out by a group of three or more persons that was not randomly formed; existing for a period of time; acting in concert with the aim of committing at least one crime that is punishable by at least four years’ incarceration; in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.¹¹

An actor is ‘national or resident’ if he or she is a national or resident of the country where the crime occurred and is ‘foreign’ if a national of a country other than the country where the crime occurred.

The nationalities of primary and secondary actors are recorded where possible in the format ‘South Africa’, rather than ‘South African’.

If actors are mentioned in the article, coders record their names in full. If multiple names are mentioned, these are all listed and separated by commas.

STATE RESPONSE (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 20-25)

The nature of the state response to the incident is recorded across four variables: 1) type of responding actor, 2) whether the response involved an arrest and/or seizure, 3) whether violence against a perpetrating actor was carried out by a responding actor and 4) if the article mentioned the actor in relation to a court case.

Responding actor choices are: police (normal), police (special investigative mission; narcotics or wildlife), customs officer, park ranger, unknown and other.



Coders are asked to record if the incident was part of a sting operation (e.g. a set of coordinated arrests). If yes, coders record the date and source article(s) title where the other connected incidents are mentioned.

‘Arrest and seizure’ refers to incidents where illicit goods are seized and suspected perpetrator is arrested. ‘Seizure’ alone refers to incidents where goods were seized but no arrest was made, and ‘other’ if another response was described.

The coder records whether the incidents, as reported, involved violence against an actor. For example, in many countries in Southern Africa, poachers face violent responses from police and private security companies. Options here include: injury/violence against actor mentioned, killing of actor, and no violence mentioned.

The coder also records if court cases are mentioned in the article. This is a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ binary which provides an indication of the number of media articles mentioning court cases. More information on the nature of the court case can be found in the ‘summary notes’ variable, the final question on the Google Form.

SOURCING (GOOGLE FORM QUESTIONS 26-29)

The core source of information used in the project is media (special investigative journalism, broadcast journalism and daily news reports). Each search string includes all global news sources that contain the search string items, and each country has a specific subset of local news sources to supplement the general source.

Coders record the following: the source article title and the source article company in the format *The Herald (South Africa)* for local newspapers and papers with multiple companies of the same name. Coders list large foreign newswires in the format ‘Xinhua or AFP’, with no country in brackets afterwards.

Coders record whether the source was African, meaning an African media company, or ‘international’. This refers to foreign media and large news agencies.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION (GOOGLE FORM QUESTION 30)

The last variable records the short description of the full incidents. Coders fill in three to six sentences of relevant and qualitative information on the full incident. This is also the place where *additional not covered* in the list of variables is found.

Verification

Country-specific supplemental searches are carried out using key word searches to gather reputable NGO, multilateral and government-led qualitative studies on the topics of wildlife and drug crime.

An intention with the supplemental searches is to identify relevant non-media derived data sources on wildlife crime and drug crime in the different countries, and also to serve as a means of verification of the media-based data.

Coders cross-check each other’s work to ensure consistency across coding styles and serve as another means of checking and verification.



NOTES

¹ A Huebschle, *A game of horns: international trade in rhino horn*, 2016,16,

pubman.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc...5/.../2016_IMPRSDiss_Huebschle.pdf

² Nexis Overview, <https://www.lexisnexis.com/bis-userinformation/docs/nexis-overview.pdf>.

³ Google Forms, *TOC Incident Monitoring – phase 2, 2017*, https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15PqGWdf-MYuvN1udqGfm4OtdpnWpaOi5iNhm_SrAnxA/viewform?edit_requested=true.

⁴ Poaching Facts, Buyers of Rhino Horn, 2017, www.poachingfacts.com/faces-of-the-poachers/buyers-of-rhino-horn/.

⁵ Born Free, Ivory Crisis, www.bornfree.org.uk/campaigns/elephants/campaign-action/ivory-trade/ivory-crisis/

⁶ Lavorgna's 6 stages of wildlife crime are: 0) preparatory activities antecedent to the commission of wildlife trafficking, 1) poaching/harvesting of product 2) Intermediate passage through local middlemen/the domestic market, 3) Passage through local transit networks linked to the international market, 4) Intermediate passage through local/domestic market in foreign country and 5) distribution of animal/plant/product. A Lavorgna, *Wildlife trafficking in the internet age*, *Crime Science*, 2014, 3:5.

⁷ UNODC, *International Crime Classification for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) Version 1*, 2015, 90.

⁸ *Ibid*, 90.

⁹ *Ibid*, 77.

¹⁰ UNODC, *Classification*, www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Firearms/Firearms_classification.pdf.

¹¹ UNODC, *UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, Article 2(a), 5, 2000, www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf.