How COVID-19 has affected terrorist groups, organized crime groups, cartels, and gangs in specific regions

MEXICO

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected three major dimensions in cartels and gangs: disruptions in drug supply chains, increases in violence and new opportunities for legitimacy as cartels provide aid to local populations.

DUNCAN WOOD, MEXICO INSTITUTE

LATIN AMERICA

Challenges to organized crime include supply chain disruptions leading to scarcity of precursor chemicals used in processing of illicit drugs, and difficulties in moving illicit cash between countries. New opportunities include emergency government spending with little oversight, and price gauging and fraud in sale of medical supplies.

MICHAEL KUGELMAN, ASIA PROGRAM

SOUTH ASIA

COVID-19 poses small challenges to the Taliban, but also large opportunities for creating useful propaganda and offering citizens resources to combat the virus to gain legitimacy and support.

ERIC L. OLSON, SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
THE MIDDLE EAST

Violent non-state actors, such as ISIS, see the virus as an opportunity to escalate their actions because governments are distracted.

MARINA OTTAWAY, MIDDLE EAST PROGRAM

EASTERN EUROPE

Organized crime groups are rich in cash and in times of crisis, small businesses may become indebted to crime organizations in order to stay afloat.

Challenges to these groups include increases in cybercrimes, disruption of supply chains, and difficulties to launder money.

LOUISE SHELLEY, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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