C4ADS
innovation for peace

Annual Report

20
24

Contents

About C4ADS

We are C4ADS

A nonpartisan nonprofit with a mission to detect, disrupt, and defeat transnational illicit networks and malign threat networks.

Here's how we see it:

Where others see a collection of states, we see an interconnected set of systems. We focus on the underlying threats to global security: the illicit and malign networks that operate across borders to destabilize communities, prevent development, and devastate the environment. Illicit networks are not neatly bound to any single activity or place. To track them, we combine the brainpower of a think tank, the innovation of a tech startup, and the reach of investigative journalism. Our hybrid nature enables us to disrupt the status quo, push the boundaries of what is possible outside government, and build a community of innovation and action.

Our Tech Partners

Palantir   aws   WINDWARD

ADS-B Exchange   wire|screen   planet.
World's largest co-op of unfiltered flight data

bright data   FIVECAST

Letter from the Executive Director

C4ADS is dedicated to addressing the world's toughest security challenges. From the genocide in Sudan to the destruction of our oceans and forests to the rapid rise of Chinese military power, C4ADS leads efforts for meaningful change. Across our six programs, we produce analysis, data, and technology that connect and coordinate government, private sector, and civil society actors to create scalable, global solutions.

Where others focus on geopolitics, we focus on the sub-state networks that operationalize conflict, corruption, and crime. By targeting the logistics behind global issues—the financial networks, supply chains, and business models—we strike at illicit actors where it hurts most: their operations and finances. In partnership with others, we support government enforcement and regulation, help the private sector reduce risk and drive reform, and support media and civil society to advocate for policy change at the highest levels.

In the past year alone, C4ADS contributed to 3,245 media stories and supported 284 organizations, and over 100 enforcement actions, including sanctions, seizures, indictments, and prosecutions.

To us, impact means real action. We know we're succeeding when we see arrests, seizures, and indictments—but even more so when we see systemic change. When criminals change their methods because the cost of doing business has become too high, and when governments, businesses, and civil society coordinate to close the gaps and limit the reach of illicit networks, we know we're making a difference. By dismantling one network and one illicit system at a time, C4ADS is working to create a safer, more secure, and more prosperous world for all.

But we cannot do this alone. You, the reader, have a crucial role to play. To make a lasting global impact, we need partnerships and unrestricted donor funding. Join us in our mission and make a difference. Spread the word, and consider supporting C4ADS as your charity of choice, both through your time and philanthropy.

Sincerely,

Varun

Varun Vira
Executive Director

Our Path Forward

C4ADS has a vision to become one of the most impactful analytical global security organizations in the world. In this volatile environment, we will adapt while staying true to our core. We will develop new partnerships in emerging threat areas while strengthening the independent capacity of existing partners. We will invest in our innovative edge while maintaining excellence in our core capabilities. We will address transgressions against human and environmental security while upholding global security.

We address critical intelligence gaps by providing actionable, relevant, and timely outputs.

We integrate data and technology to amplify our analysis and empower our partners.

We are leaders in mobilizing partner coalitions toward impact.
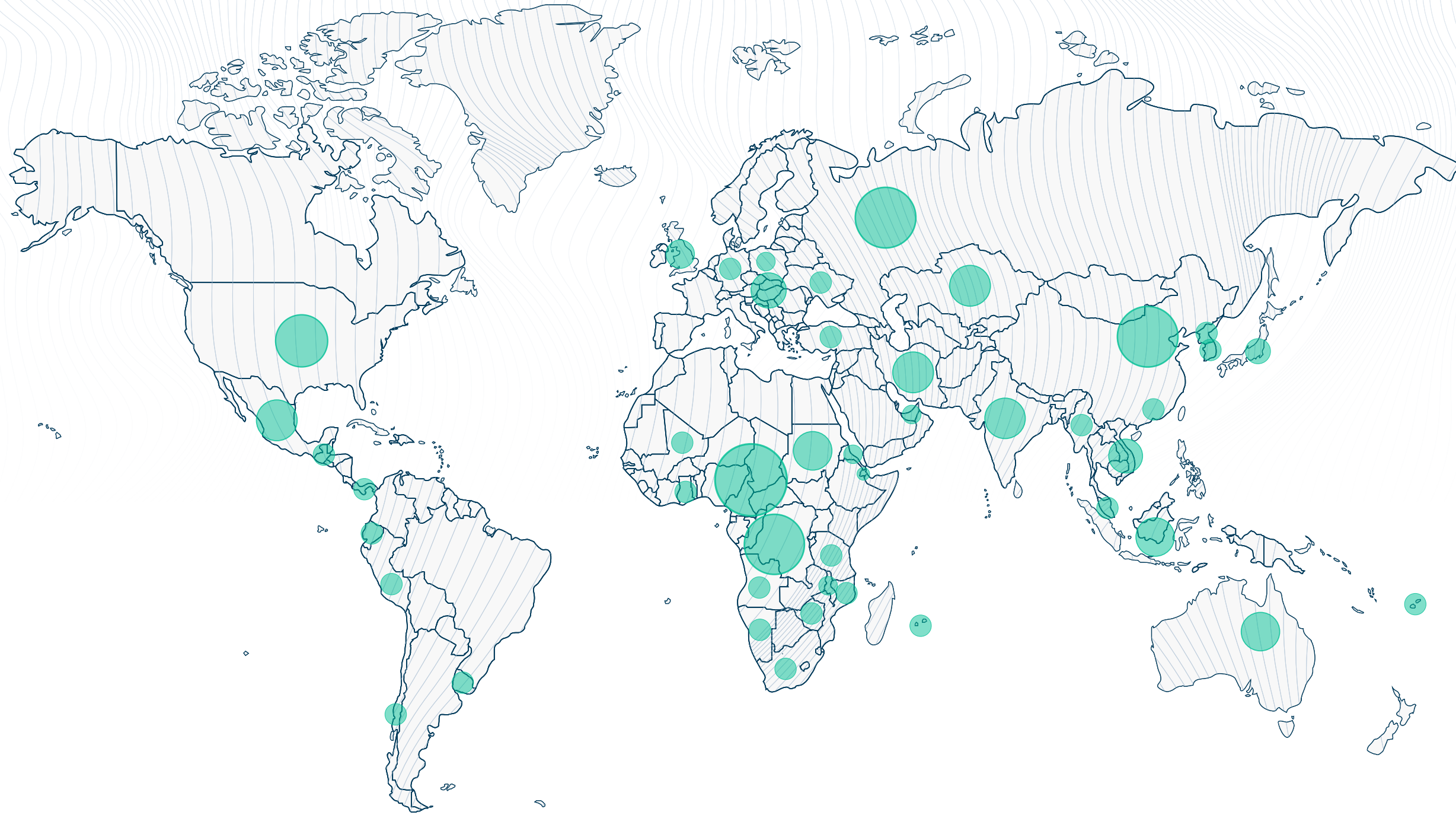
The Data and Technology Landscape

Today's information practitioners now recognize the unique value of publicly available information (PAI). Our ability to creatively forage high-value datasets gives our analysts the edge in understanding an increasingly complex web of illicit networks. To maintain our edge, we will seek out and drive new innovations to ensure we can stay one step ahead.

The Impact Landscape

Governments are hungry for fast-moving data and evidence they can use to dismantle threats. The private sector is seeking solutions for comprehensive risk management beyond what traditional due diligence can provide. Civil society is bursting with ideas but stymied by limited funding and decentralization. As a partner to all, we pledge to allocate our resources strategically and responsibly to catalyze coordinated action towards real change.

Threat Adversary Landscape

Corrupt, illicit, and malign networks are evolving in regions like Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, much of the national security enterprise remains focused on great power competition with Russia and China. C4ADS recognizes that global security cannot be achieved without appreciating the complexity of the overall system. As regional instability and conflict continue to thrive, we will continue to explore the convergence of these threats.

Our Work

Investigating the Network of On-and Offshore Enablers Supporting IUU Fishing

China, Uruguay, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Angola, Mauritania, Ghana

Enhancing Civil Society's Ability to Investigate Corruption and Promote Transparency

Panama

Transparency for Critical Minerals Supply Chains

Indonesia, Laos

Enhancing Local Investigations into Corruption and Illicit Activity in Natural Resource Supply Chains

Cameroon, Chad, CAR, Republic of the Congo, DRC, Zimbabwe

Building Data-Driven Decision Making to Protect Wildlife

Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa

Revealing the Connections between Foreign-Owned Mines and Wildlife Trafficking Routes

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Investigating Transnational Wildlife Trafficking Networks and Fostering Coordination

Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, DRC, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, India, China, USA, Mexico

Defending Freedom of Expression and Security in Hong Kong

Hong Kong

Forced Labor and Human Rights Violations in the Uyghur Region

China

Untangling the Shadow Network of China's Dark Oil Fleet

China

Countering Proliferation and Malign State Influence

Russia, China, Iran, North Korea

Integrating Data and Technology to Enhance Anti-Corruption Efforts

Eastern Europe

Illicit Dual-Use Flows to Russia

Turkey, India, Germany, Poland, UAE, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, US, UK, Kazakhstan

Arms Trafficking

Guatemala, Sudan, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Russia, North Korea

Tracking and Disrupting Illicit Russian Private Military Companies

Cameroon, Sudan, CAR, Ukraine

Atrocity Monitoring & Prevention

Sudan, Mali, Ukraine

Asset Recovery, including Targeting Assets of Corrupt Actors

Eritrea, Sudan, UAE, Europe

Investigating China's Naval Grey Zone Activities

Djibouti, Fiji, Australia, Samoa

Myanmar's Junta Procurement Networks

Myanmar

Our Reach

In 2024, C4ADS was cited an average of 28 times per day

10,588
online and in-print mentions.

22%
increase in mentions by news outlets worldwide since 2023.

63 Collaborative Investigations with Journalists

In 2024, C4ADS engaged with investigative journalists worldwide, contributing to dozens of top stories and documentaries, bringing public light to the drivers of conflict, corruption, and environmental degradation.

The New York Times   BBC   The Washington Post   Al Jazeera

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.   REUTERS   FT FINANCIAL TIMES   POLITICO

Media Spotlight

BBC
'Italian' purees in UK supermarkets likely to contain Chinese forced-labour tomatoes
1 December 2024
Mike Rudin & Sarah Buckley
BBC Eye Investigations

FINANCIAL TIMES
China's advanced machine tool exports to Russia soar after Ukraine invasion
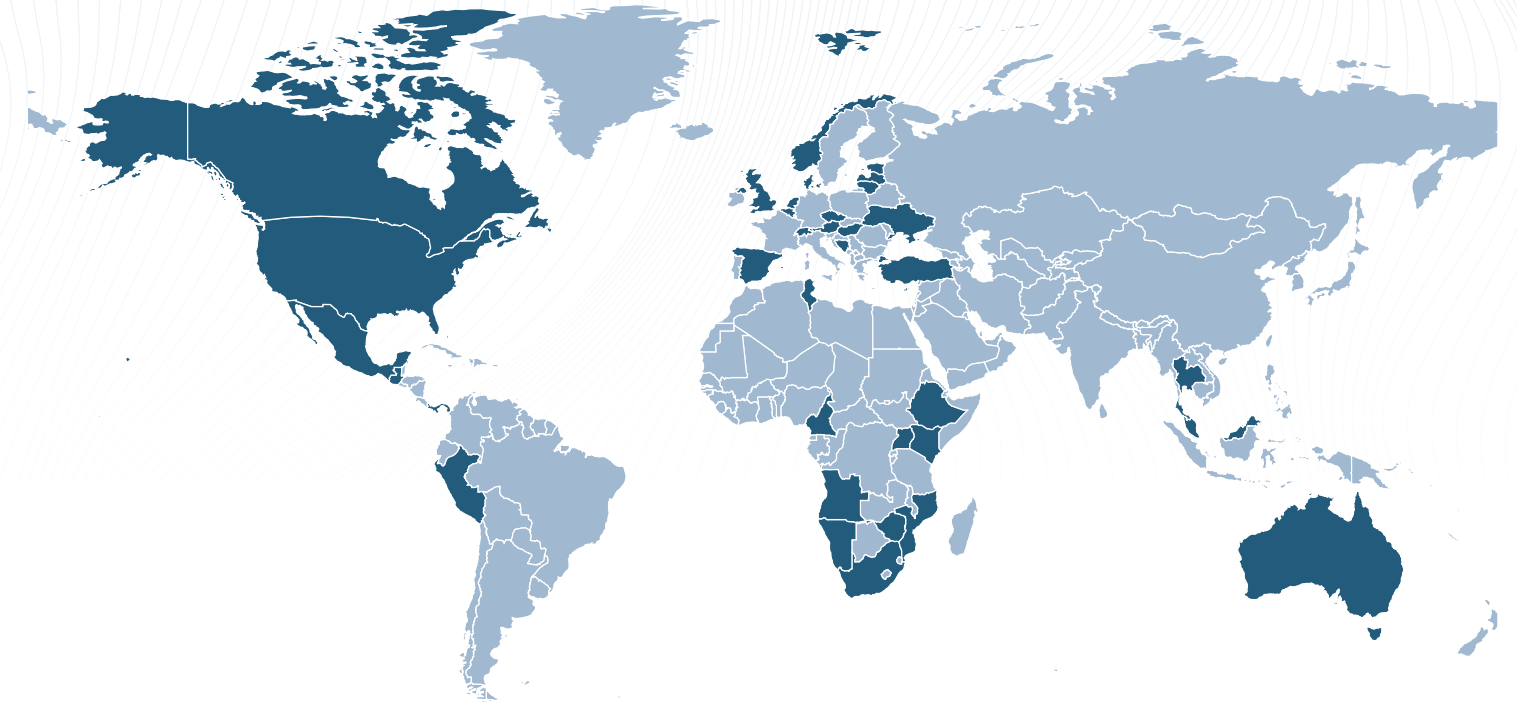Chinese suppliers now dominate trade in 'computer numerical control' devices vital to Moscow's military industries
Computer numerical control tools can make complex components from metal with a high degree of precision © Andrey Armyagov Alamy

The Washington Post
Russia and North Korea's military deal formalizes a bustling arms trade
Russian trade data shows how cash-strapped Pyongyang is transporting shipping containers to munitions-hungry Moscow to help it sustain its war against Ukraine.
June 22, 2024

Our Travel This Year

On our way to integrate with partners, conduct workshops, and connect with fellow practitioners, C4ADS took 72 trips to 41 countries this year, spending a total of 399 days in the field.

Get Connected

Join our thousands of connected insiders who receive our newsletter and social media updates.

Inside Innovation Newsletter   @c4ads   @c4ads   @c4ads.org

Sign up for Inside Innovation, our monthly newsletter at **www.c4ads.org/contact**, and get regular updates on our work.
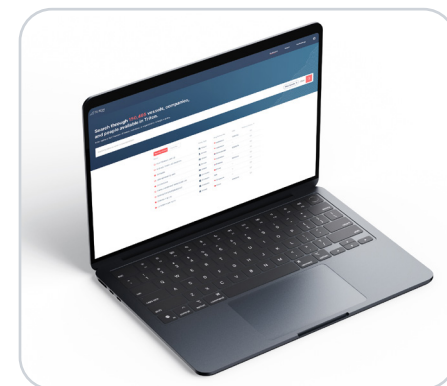
Our Software & Data

Our data scientists and software engineers serve as a force multiplier, enhancing the speed and impact of our analysis. We develop new tools to collect, structure, and analyze billions of lines of data, and apply our programming skills to creating tools and platforms which empower global conflict analysis.

Arion

Built upon data from years of cutting-edge maritime monitoring, Arion is a central repository of knowledge on North Korean maritime sanctions that gives partners a head start on investigations and sanctions compliance. This year, we onboarded nearly 200 intelligence analysts, law enforcement officers, policy advisors, journalists, and academics from the United States, UK, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and others.
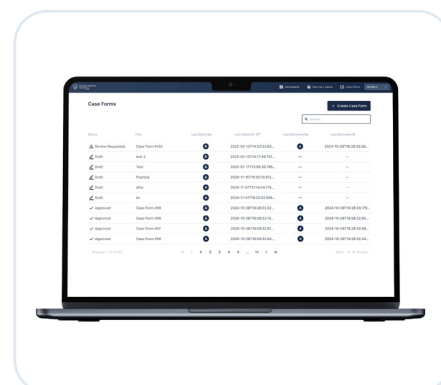

Triton

Powered by a one-of-a-kind vessel ownership database with over 150,000 entities, Triton fuses registries from around the world to find linkages between industrial fishing vessels and the companies that profit from their activities. The platform features advanced search and filtering, interactive network maps, and links to S&P Global, Global Fishing Watch, and Skylight. In 2024, we celebrated the full launch of the platform, optimized our data ingestion and coverage, provided free access to over 800 individual users, and presented Triton at more than ten conferences worldwide.
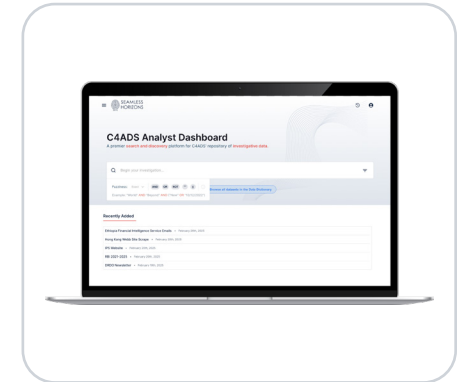
Wildlife Defense Platform

The Wildlife Defense Platform (WDP) allows frontline counter-wildlife trafficking partners to effortlessly sift through, visualize, and analyze data on seizures and court cases. This year, we launched Version 2.0 of the platform, which integrated a data-input feature, reducing reliance on costly third-party applications.

Seamless Horizons [Beta]

As one of the largest repositories of publicly available information, Seamless Horizons is built from hundreds of carefully cleaned, integrated, and modeled data sources from all over the world, including corporate & trade data, property & asset data, and screening lists. Users can easily search through structured, unstructured, and modeled data and view information about the data sources connected to the query, map asset ownership, and identify linkages.

370+
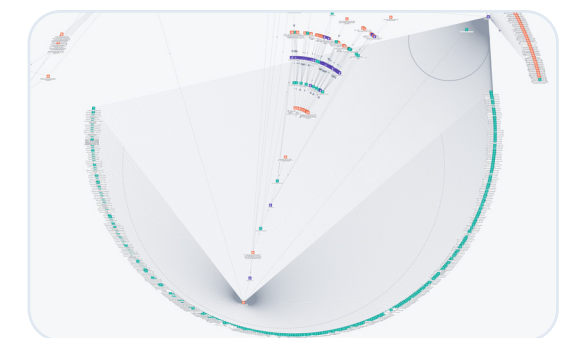organizations onboarded to C4ADS software platforms.

900+
sources providing visibility into hard-to reach areas of illicit activity.

2B+
searchable records, including corporate, trade, judicial, and property registries.

Our Data Science Program

Embedding data engineers within each analytical team ensures we are constantly pushing the bounds of what's possible with publicly available information. In 2024, C4ADS data engineers collected, cleaned, and structured datasets from over 72 jurisdictions and 43 languages, enabling analysts to find millions more links among the 2.8 billion entities in our total data holdings.

Human Security

Our Human Security Program targets perpetrators' financial and trade networks to raise the cost of forced labor and human trafficking, atrocity crimes, and other human rights abuses. Collaborating closely with affected communities, we contribute to legislation, regulation, and sanctions to deter human rights abusers from continuing their crimes.

Congress issued a letter to DHS to expand the UFLPA Entity List to cover gold mining companies, which it did not previously cover. DHS ultimately sanctioned five of the mining companies we identified.

Addressing Uyghur Forced Labor in China

Forced labor and ethnic cleansing programs targeting Uyghur and other Turkic communities in China have implications reaching far beyond the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Publishing an update on our 2023 *Fractured Veins* report, we exposed even more connections between XUAR mining companies and U.S. entities, and uncovered over 400 companies worldwide sourcing gold produced by Uyghur forced labor.

Another report, *Side Effects*, revealed how the global pharmaceutical industry relies on XUAR inputs despite anti-forced labor legislation. We documented pharmaceutical companies seizing Uyghur land and forcing Uyghurs into labor and assimilation programs. And by using Chinese records and trade data, we mapped how a range of pharmaceuticals link back to XUAR.

Multiple XUAR-linked pharmaceutical entities named by our reporting are now on the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) Entity List—the first pharmaceutical companies to be added.

Fighting for Freedom From Government Oppression in Myanmar and Hong Kong

Beijing has tightened its grip on Hong Kong in recent years, impacting national security, human rights, and the commercial environment alike. C4ADS' Human Security Program collected thousands of rows of data related to export-controlled electronics, Russian and Iranian influence, and links back to the former Syrian regime. C4ADS was a data partner to Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong's July 22nd publication, *Beneath the Harbor*, which identified several new instances of likely sanctions evasion and illicit trade activity.

Human Security analysts also kept a close eye on dual-use imports to Myanmar, where the military has relied on back-alley trade with global entities to support its violent campaign of terror against its own population. In *Faulty Transmission*, a joint investigation by C4ADS and Justice for Myanmar, C4ADS explored the foreign entities that provide the Myanmar military junta with its fleet of specialized military trucks.
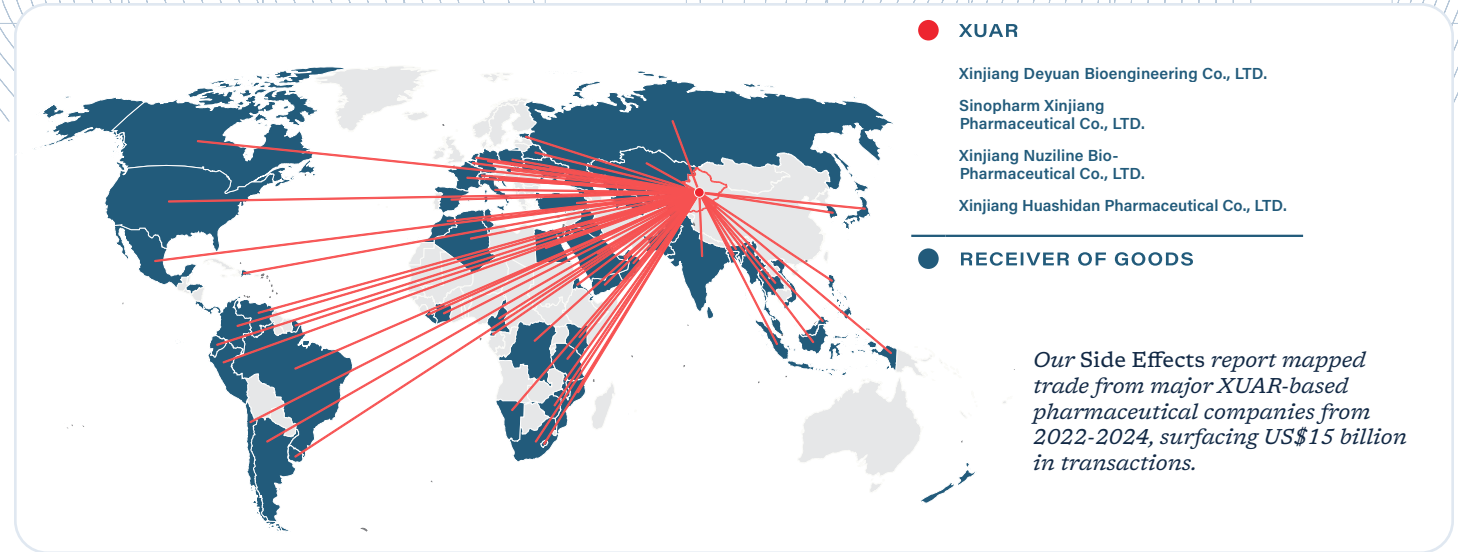
Commerce's BIS sanctioned multiple Hong Kong companies named in the C4ADS-CFHK report.

The New York Times

With Smugglers and Front Companies, China Is Skirting American A.I. Bans

The U.S. is trying to stop China from getting Nvidia microchips to advance its military. The private sector is fighting back.

C4ADS partnered with The New York Times to identify 12 state-affiliated entities in China purchasing restricted Nvidia AI chips.

XUAR
- Xinjiang Deyuan Bioengineering Co., LTD.
- Sinopharm Xinjiang Pharmaceutical Co., LTD.
- Xinjiang Nuziline Bio-Pharmaceutical Co., LTD.
- Xinjiang Huashidan Pharmaceutical Co., LTD.

RECEIVER OF GOODS

Our Side Effects *report mapped trade from major XUAR-based pharmaceutical companies from 2022-2024, surfacing US$15 billion in transactions.*

Partnership in Action

This year, Human Security analysts trained dozens of civil society partners on our human rights & supply chain analysis methodologies. We developed relationships with participants at the Oslo Freedom Forum, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Hong Kong diaspora research & advocacy organizations, and nearly every global Uyghur Rights organization. We briefed members of the IC, embassies, and the Departments of State, Treasury, and Commerce on the risks of pharmaceuticals connected to Uyghur forced labor. We held multiple live roundtables bringing together key actors in the fight against government oppression in Hong Kong and convened Burmese civil society groups in exile to establish a bold vision for Myanmar's future.

We contributed to the development of a Congressional Critical Minerals Policy Working Group, which has since leveraged C4ADS expertise to inform its policy decision making and sanctions list additions.

C4ADS Human Security analysts reuniting with our former intern in Thailand.

"Their commitment to transparency and civil society is unmatched and deeply appreciated."

–U.S.-based Hong Kong democracy advocate

"[C4ADS is] highlighting major enforcement gaps. No one has time or manpower for this kind of analysis, so I think it does punch above its weight."

–Feedback from US IC stakeholder

Natural Resource Security

Our Natural Resource Security Program uncovers illicit activity within supply chains and maps the networks that supply them to promote the sustainable use of global natural resources. We provide actionable intelligence on illegal and unregulated mining, logging, and fishing to directly enable supply chain de-risking and enforcement against bad actors.

Targeting Foreign Influence in Africa's Natural Resource Sectors

While most recently in the headlines for its ties to war crimes in Ukraine, Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner has long been under scrutiny for its Kremlin-backed mining and security expansion into Africa. In our report *Unearthed*, we found that Wagner's mining operations in Sudan and the Central African Republic have gotten a boost from access to global financial and transportation systems. We delved into leaked documents from former leader Yevgeny Prigozhin's internal network, trade data, and maritime intelligence tools and explored the global financial, transportation, logistics networks, and local intermediaries that were indispensable to Wagner's early extractive operations.

PMC Wagner is not the only illicit actor causing chaos in Africa's natural resource sectors. In 2024, we supported the publication of seven deep-dive investigations published by journalists across Africa. Three articles from the DRC explored the human impacts of critical mineral mining, including on protected areas and community forests. Several journalists who participated in a C4ADS training on data-driven investigations in 2023 produced another exposé. We guided them through on-the-ground investigations, interviews, and satellite imagery to build upon an investigation we produced on a bad-acting Chinese iron ore mine in Cameroon.

Our minerals work has been used in U.S. federal law enforcement investigations to counter the financial and logistical ties enabling the Wagner Group.

'We want a say in transition mining' – DRC communities

Communities living on and working land in the Democratic Republic of the Congo say they are not informed about mining permits for energy transition minerals. Jonas Kiriko speaks to them

A headline from an article by a Data Cameroon fellow, Jonas Kiriko, supported and trained by C4ADS.

"We bring in C4ADS data analysts to build capacity at the start of (our fellowships for data journalism) and support our fellows in data collection and analysis."

-Paul-Joël Kamtchang, Publishing Director of Data Cameroon

Partnership in Action

In 2024, our analysts supported citizen-led investigations of illegal fishing in Mexico, built the analytical capabilities of regional fishery management organizations around the world, and conducted PAI trainings for journalists investigating natural resource corruption in Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, and Zimbabwe.

C4ADS organized two week-long training sessions for journalists alongside Data Cameroon, one of our long-term local partners. These sessions were followed by eight months of mentorship and the publication of investigative articles, one of which was named by the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) as among the "best investigative stories in French in 2024." They sent us a note saying, "We also share this success with you and thank you for this amazing partnership with C4ADS since now three years."
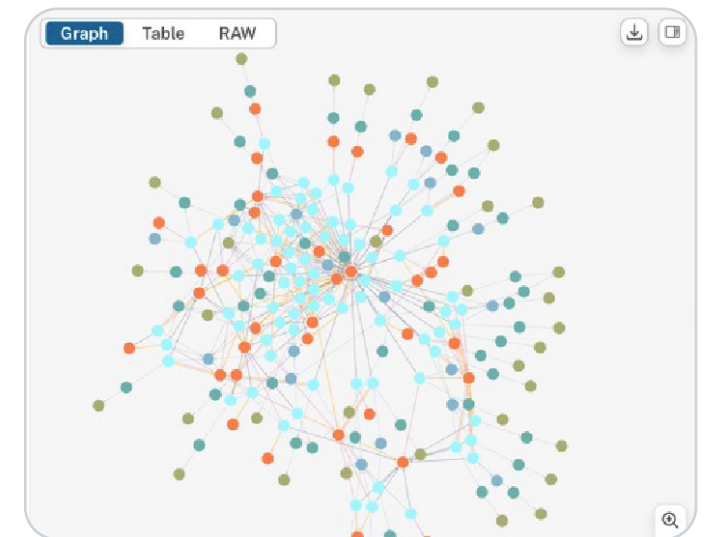

Members of our Natural Resources team contributed to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's regional data analysis training summit in Fiji.

Tech-Enabled IUU Fishing Analysis

Data gaps in the IUU fishing problem set are as numerous as the fish in the sea. Beyond building out the ownership networks of over 40,000 fishing vessels for our platform, Triton, in 2024, our analysts and data analysts worked together to develop an innovative graph database to uncover previously elusive patterns of risky behavior among global squid fishing vessels at scale. Using this graph database, we can now integrate real-time port data, insurance information, ownership details, and vessel activity data to reveal new risk indicators for more effective—and faster—targeting.

As a member of the Joint Analytical Cell, we contribute to targeted fisheries' intelligence reports and push for stronger beneficial ownership transparency around the world.
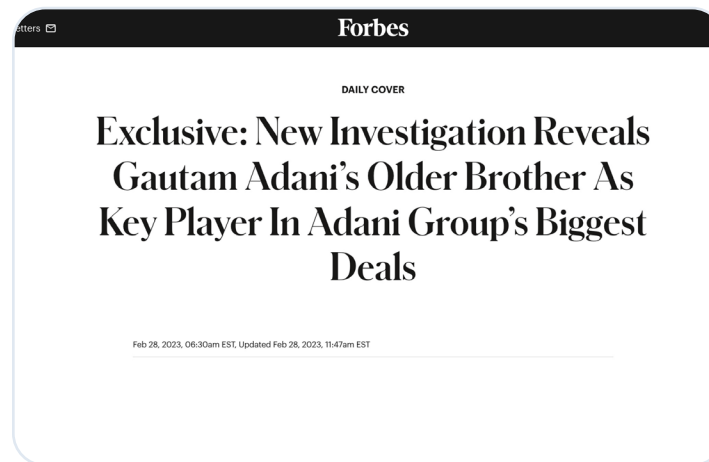
Organized Crime and Corruption

Our Organized Crime and Corruption (OCC) Program uncovers the networks at the heart of kleptocratic regimes and transnational crime, providing tools and information to governments and the financial sector to disrupt these illicit networks and uphold the rule of law. We provide a powerful check on official abuse through anti-money laundering and asset tracing investigations, leading to media exposés, arrests, seizures, sanctions, and asset forfeitures.

Exposing the Illicit Networks That Exploit the UAE Property Market

The Dubai property market is a haven for international kleptocrats and organized criminals, from narcotics traffickers to Russian oligarchs. C4ADS has worked to collect, curate, and expand our Dubai Property Database to 833,000 Dubai property control records, revealing even more secrets hidden in Dubai's luxury real estate market. Our analysts significantly expanded the reach of our flagship 2022 Dubai Property project The 2024 "Dubai Unlocked" consortium brought together an even larger network of journalists—72 outlets from 70 countries—to facilitate wider investigative reporting on how illicit networks exploit Dubai to conceal and launder their ill-gotten wealth.

The collaborative investigations enabled by our Dubai Property Database led to the arrest of two Singaporean money launderers and the asset freezing of a fraudster with hidden assets in Dubai.

In 2024, the OCC Program integrated 150,000 Politically Exposed Person (PEP) asset declarations from across 22 priority countries into C4ADS Horizons. This enhanced tool enables users to search PEP data against 2+ billion public records, providing our anti-corruption partners with the ability to investigate both declared and undeclared PEP assets.

Forbes

DAILY COVER

Exclusive: New Investigation Reveals Gautam Adani's Older Brother As Key Player In Adani Group's Biggest Deals

Feb 28, 2023, 06:30am EST, Updated Feb 28, 2023, 11:47am EST

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

tp EXCLUSIVE

As a trafficker pursued dreams of soccer glory, investigators closed in

A couple of the media investigations supported by our analysts.

Partnership in Action

In 2024, our analysts facilitated PAI workshops to enhance the financial investigative skills of anti-corruption practitioners in Europe and Latin America. We trained prosecutors, financial investigators, investigative journalists, civil society organizations, and law enforcement officials on how to conduct investigations with politically-exposed person (PEP) data, social media analysis, satellite imagery, and more. To ensure our training could be immediately turned into action, analysts also onboarded participants to our PEP environment within Seamless Horizons, which they built by integrating 150,000 PEP asset declarations from across 22 priority countries. The PEP environment enables users to search PEP data against 2+ billion public records, providing our anti-corruption partners with the ability to investigate both declared and undeclared PEP assets.
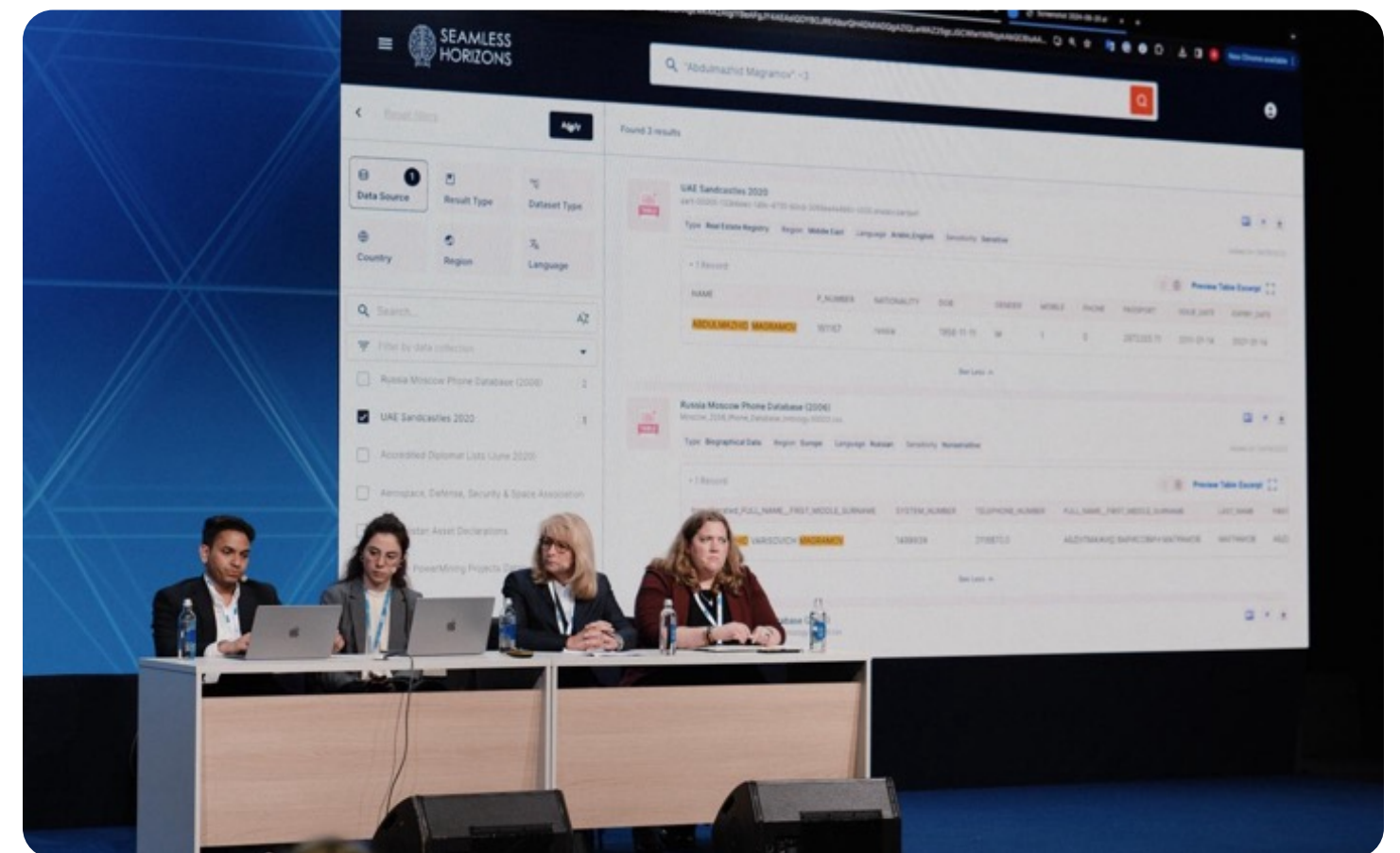
Law enforcement training participants built an investigation against a local corrupt politician, leading to an arrest within weeks.

Presenting our investigative toolkit for examining global PEPs at the 2024 International Anti-Corruption Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania.

"The training, knowledge and skills that you transferred to our investigators was crucial for our anti-corruption processes!"

-Feedback from the head of an anti-corruption office in Europe

"Cutting edge in anti-corruption efforts."

-Praise from anti-money laundering training participants in Cyprus

Wildlife Crimes

Our Wildlife Crimes Program builds the frontline capacity of counter-wildlife trafficking and counter-poaching stakeholders to disrupt and dismantle the networks perpetrating the illicit trade. The Wildlife Crimes Program targets trafficking networks through the interdiction of tons of illicit wildlife products and the arrests and sentencings of wildlife trafficking kingpins.

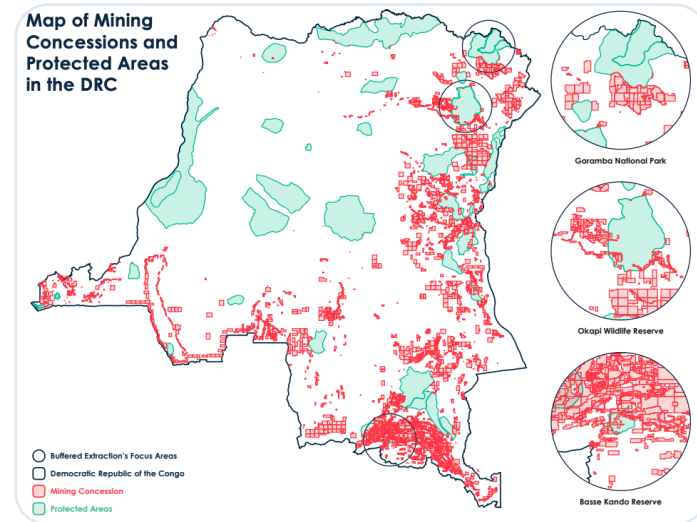## Activating New Possibilities for Wildlife Data Analysis

Our Wildlife Crimes Program develops custom data management systems for partner organizations working cases of wildlife trafficking and poaching. These data tools eliminate reliance on external data processing and give partners in-house capacity. The tools are deployed locally, enabling law enforcement to structure and standardize sensitive data and pass it to analysts through interactive dashboards.

In 2024, visitors from 125 countries visited the Wildlife Seizure Dashboard, and it has been widely used by academic institutions and media outlets to report on wildlife trafficking and model future wildlife trends.

For systems-level analysis, publicly reported seizure data is one of the best sources to identify global patterns in wildlife trafficking. The C4ADS Wildlife Seizure Dashboard is a publicly available repository of collected, cleaned, and unified seizure records going back over 12 years, with 7,600+ instances updated daily. In 2024, we paired data from the dashboard with local reporting and investigative case studies to understand how ivory and rhino horn trafficking networks across Africa and Asia have adapted since the pandemic upended their trafficking patterns. The resulting report, *Intercepted*, analyzed eight years and over 3,000 ivory and rhino horn seizures. Conservatively, the seizures analyzed represent the deaths of nearly 14,000 elephants and 1,100 rhinos.

Protecting Wildlife Preserves in the DRC from Exploitative Foreign Mining

As global demand for critical metals like cobalt, copper, and gold rises, Chinese enterprises are encroaching on protected areas in countries like the DRC. In our report, *Buffered Extraction*, we investigate the rise in Chinese mining activity in the DRC and show how their track record of environmental harm and securitization activity poses a threat to invaluable pockets of biodiversity while undermining the DRC's already fragile political state. Politico, the Global Investigative Journalism Network, Laundry News and other media outlets reported on the launch of *Buffered Extraction*.

Map of Mining Concessions and Protected Areas in the DRC from our report, Buffered Extraction.

Partnership in Action

Through over a decade of concerted effort, the Wildlife Crimes Program has developed high-trust relationships with organizations at the frontlines of countering wildlife poaching and trafficking. In 2024, we brought our partners together to encourage cross-border collaboration. First, we held national training programs in Namibia, Mozambique, and Angola. These programs developed the skills of prosecutors, law enforcement, and conservation authorities to harness sensitive data alongside publicly available information.

100% of attendees said our workshop helped them build connections with regional stakeholders and that they would recommend the workshop to a colleague.
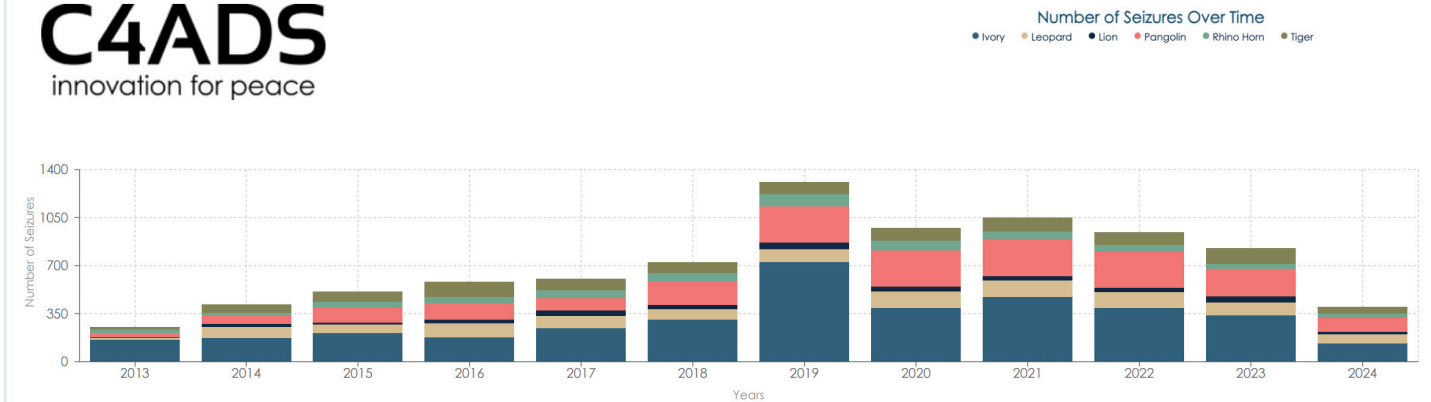
C4ADS later brought together representatives from each of these countries for a workshop to build a collective understanding of regional wildlife and timber trafficking methods and trends, to identify areas for international cooperation, and to share best practices, lessons learned, and innovations.

Facilitating training programs in wildlife trafficking hotspots, including Malaysia (top) and Angola (bottom).

C4ADS Wildlife Seizure Dashboard

"On the first day of use, we successfully identified a suspect we had been searching for in [another country], who is the new middleman in the rhino horn trade. This breakthrough has enabled us to make assumptions about new [foreign] buyers and identify missing pieces from [national] syndicates."

-Regional counter-wildlife trafficking stakeholder using C4ADS data tools

"[The data tool provided by C4ADS] will prove extremely valuable when communicating about persons of interest with our local team and counterparts from other countries and will save our small team valuable time. We plan to implement it immediately in our efforts against plant and rhino traffickers with international links."

-Regional counter-wildlife trafficking stakeholder

Conflict-Affected States

Our Conflicted-Affected States (CAS) Program reduces the human cost and the threat to international security posed by wars, insurgencies, and gray-zone conflicts. We work to halt the financial flows, arms trade, and other resources propping up conflict actors and irregular threat networks and to support democratic transition for fledgling civilian-led governments.

Countering the Networks Sustaining the Russian War Machine

Despite trade restrictions, Russia continues to procure tech from countries that claim to support Ukraine. Key components—like machine tools that automate the manufacturing of critical defense equipment—are still flooding into Russia despite Western sanctions. In 2024, we worked to uncover shifts in Russia-oriented supply chains of foreign machine tools since Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. After analyzing trade data, corporate records, public procurement records, court filings, and news reports, we published a report series, *Putting the Pieces Together* and *War Machine*. We then convened stakeholders from finance and government to develop specific due diligence and enforcement measures. Our contributions to coverage and investigations by Politico, BBC Russia, the Financial Times, and The Washington Post exposed China's and Taiwan's involvement in this illicit trade scheme.

C4ADS also provided in-depth analytical and data support for a report by the American Enterprise Institute's Chris Miller on the impact of semiconductor sanctions on Russia. The report highlighted enforcement challenges around semiconductor export controls. It also underscored the importance of supply chain integrity and international coordination in addressing vulnerabilities in the global trade system that Russia exploits to sustain its illegal actions against Ukraine.

FINANCIAL TIMES

US COMPANIES TECH MARKETS CLIMATE OPINION LEX WORK & CAREERS LIFE & ARTS HTSI

War in Ukraine   + Add to myFT

Russia scours China for second-hand machine tools

Shadowy buyers for Moscow's defence industry source old western-made machinery

Russia's President Vladimir Putin visits Uralvagonzavod, the country's main tank factory in the Urals © Alexander Kazakov/Pool/AFP via Getty Images

We contributed to over 30 sanctions designations on critical nodes that supplied Russia's war machine in 2024, including the disruption of networks that provided a combined $50 million+ of controlled electronics, technology, and military equipment to Russia.

We helped bring 22 OFAC sanctions designations against 26 illicit networks and actors in Sudan, Singapore, Israel, the UAE, and Egypt who were involved in wartime atrocities, illegal mining, conflict financing, and money laundering.

Partnership in Action

In 2024, CAS analysts conducted PAI training for civil society organizations and journalists in Guatemala and provided over 21 training modules supporting Sudanese investigative journalists in their analytic capacity.

100% of attendees said our workshop helped them build connections with regional stakeholders and that they would recommend the workshop to a colleague.

Building Civilian-Lead Resolutions to the Sudan Conflict

Bringing together leading members of Sudan's civil society, its civilian-led government in exile, Sudanese lawyers, humanitarian aid experts, members of the British government, and investigative journalists, our peacebuilding workshops with partner organizations like Chatham House helped strengthen real-time strategic litigation efforts targeting the warring parties in Sudan. Stateside, we helped law enforcement partners take direct action against six individuals associated with illicit and malign activity in numerous conflict-affected states.

C4ADS also supported nine independent investigative organizations based in Sudan this year, providing them with analytic mentorship on a biweekly basis, access to critical data and data analysis tools, satellite imagery, investigative support, and publication support.
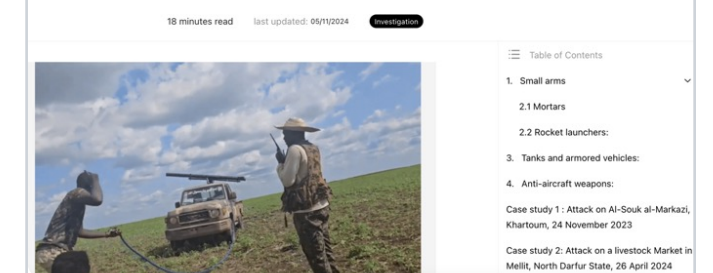
" **This was the most substantive discussion on Sudan that I have attended since the outbreak of the war (and indeed longer).**"

-Feedback from workshop participant and Sudan expert

C4ADS colleagues speaking at a workshop aimed at strengthening accountability efforts for war crimes conducted by the warring parties.

A C4ADS analyst delivering training for strategic litigation of Sudanese warring parties.

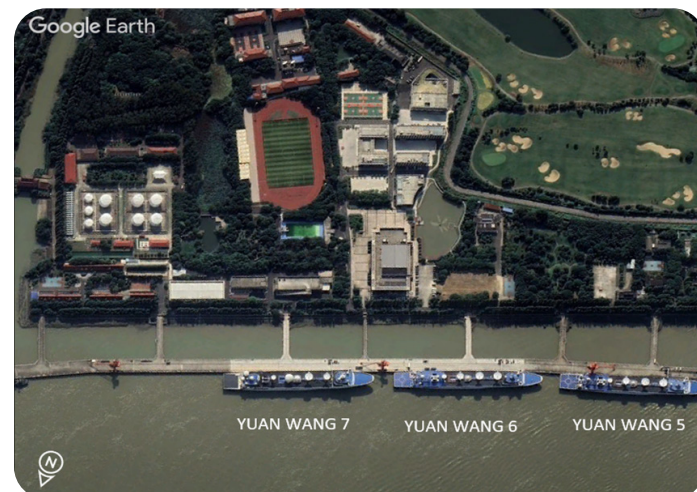*C4ADS supported Human Rights Hub in its investigation of indiscriminate attacks on civilians over three months.*

State-Sponsored Threats

Our State-Sponsored Threats (SST) Program disrupts the ability of hostile states to evade sanctions, procure lethal technology, and threaten the rules-based international order. We directly support the enforcement, compliance, and advancement of sanctions and other listings to close the global trade and logistics ties of hostile states.

Shedding Light on the "Gray Zone"

State-level threat actors use a diverse array of tactics to avoid detection while expanding their global reach and influence. C4ADS' unique ability to work jointly with partner governments, industry stakeholders, and journalists alike helps illuminate these illicit techniques and bridge the information divide between enforcement bodies, industry, and the public. Leveraging our unparalleled access to internal Russian trade data, our investigative and data support to media partners this year highlighted North Korea's support for Russia's sustained invasion of Ukraine. The SST program also worked to publicly unearth a major Chinese semiconductor manufacturer with California ties and a history of providing support to sanctioned Russian entities.

Our investigations resulted in the sanctioning of six additional entities linked to the Sahara Thunder network, including an Iranian logistics company critical to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' operations.

YUAN WANG 7   YUAN WANG 6   YUAN WANG 5

Guarding the Seas with Advanced Technology

The SST program stands as an "eye in the sky," closely monitoring hotspots of maritime-based illicit activity and high-risk vessels. We incorporate the most advanced remote sensing technology commercially available, including our best-in-class satellite, tasking through providers like Planet, Maxar, Airbus, and Satellogic, plus AI-powered Automatic Identification System tracking through our partnership with Windward. Our team maintains and shares our best-in-class maritime domain analysis, working closely with national flag registries and helping regulators improve their screening processes. This year, SST analysts were invited to the Registry Information Sharing Compact group meeting in Valletta, Malta, where we deepened our relationships with national flag registries and other observers.

Our behind the scenes support to the U.S. Department of State helped support updates to international flag registries, audits of registries, and screening process improvements.

"Your products continue to be (great) for our office, bureau, and department. They no doubt have led to direct action by our foreign partners. We are seriously grateful for your work."

-Praise from U.S. Department of State partner

Partnership in Action

In 2024, our analysts traveled the world to work hand-in-hand with governments, multinational companies, and international governmental organizations looking to uphold regional and global security with upgraded data coverage and superior signals analysis. In Tunisia, we provided onsite sanctions compliance training to top maritime and aviation industry stakeholders. In Singapore, we presented our maritime domain awareness methodologies at the 23rd annual Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercise, joining 21 Indo-Pacific allies as a nonmilitary participant.

We supported OFAC and the U.S. Department of State in sanctioning the Iranian company Sahara Thunder, a key player in Russia's wartime drone production.

The State-Sponsored Threats team participating in the 23rd annual SEACAT exercise in Singapore.

Explore our Data-Enabled Training

C4ADS provides mission-aligned external organizations with the tradecraft and data they need to replicate our workflows and master the PAI environment. We support the development of analytical teams across diverse organizations, from civil society and law enforcement groups to private-sector partners that fight sanctions evasion. We pair tradecraft and methodological training with access to high-value C4ADS data to supercharge trainees' ability to target illicit and malign actors and activity.

100%
of anonymous survey respondents indicated that they would recommend C4ADS training to a colleague.

20+
actionable datasets were provided with training packages.

4
new training modules and dozens of new cases and interactive components were developed and launched this year.

9
countries were visited by C4ADS for training engagements this year.

450+
individuals and organizations were trained by C4ADS this year.

Training partners in what they need to know

Regional Modules
Tailored to navigating the challenging data environments of Iran, Russia, China, and more.

Core Modules
Equipping participants to lead state-of-the-art investigations using PAI.

Special & Emerging Topics
Advising organizations on sanctions compliance and due diligence in an ever-changing global landscape.

Learning in Action

C4ADS delivered sanctions compliance workshops in partnership with CRDF Global, Sandia National Labs, and the American Chamber of Commerce. The workshops served as a strong foundation for aviation and maritime industry stakeholders navigating complex sanctions risks. Our analysts also supported sessions on the foundations of U.S. sanctions frameworks related to the Russian defense sector and practical guidance on how the Department of the Treasury applies secondary sanctions to non-U.S. entities.

The sessions allowed legal experts and the compliance community to share challenges and tips for conducting due diligence on clients who are part of complex supply chains and receive resources and tools to conduct investigations.

C4ADS leading an in-country workshop.

Leading a group of maritime and aviation industry practitioners and leaders in a series of interactive trainings.

"Every lecturer is very professional, kind, and energetic. Their explanations were clear, and they answered our questions industriously."
  -Feedback from training participant

"I am so glad you shared this resource with this audience–it has been incredibly useful. We've started using it alongside our other tools, and we appreciate its efficiency."
  -Feedback from training participant

"This year's training resulted in [a] huge success as it also helped our senior managers understand potential benefits of integrating PAI analysis into our research initiatives."
  -Feedback from training participant

"This was the most engaged I saw any audience in any of our events this year."
  -Feedback from donor at the U.S. Department of State

Our Culture

At C4ADS, our first priority is to develop our people into future global security leaders. Our team-members are creative problem solvers who come to us from a wide spectrum of disciplines and backgrounds. To ensure the most effective and innovative workforce possible, we foster a culture of respect, excellence, and mutual support. Our employee-driven resource groups play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment where everyone has the chance to thrive. Our Leadership Advisory Group ensures that staff-level employees have a formal channel to contribute to the organization's strategic direction. By empowering our people, C4ADS harnesses the collective expertise and perspectives needed to effectively tackle the complex challenges of disrupting and defeating illicit networks on a global scale.

C4ADS team-members exploring the world while pursuing our mission.

Our Internship Program

The C4ADS internship program offers unparalleled access to cutting-edge technology combined with the freedom to innovate. Emphasizing autonomy, our program allows interns to deploy advanced analytical tools, shape program strategies, and take on significant individual analytical responsibilities. We seek out applicants who display creativity and initiative.

This year, we are proud to launch partnerships with Parami University and the Kyiv School of Economics, where we will welcome one promising student per year from each university to join our internship program.

2125
Total Applicants

1%
Acceptance Rate

22
Languages Spoken

"I came to C4ADS eager to gain practical experience investigating potential rights abuses and within a week had already been assigned my first investigation. My favorite aspect of working at C4ADS has been the consistent effort by leadership at every level to "empower down," not only by equipping analysts with the creative license they need to take novel and innovative approaches to investigations but also by allowing interns to take on responsibilities with which interns are rarely entrusted. Some of my most impactful learning experiences have been helping to deliver briefings alongside my team to Congressional staff, collaborating regularly with a C4ADS consultant on my analysis, and hosting a shadowing session for visiting post-doc fellows."

-Kobe Spells, C4ADS Investigative Analyst Intern, Conflict-Affected States

Where We Go Next

C4ADS alumni move on to do great things at schools and companies like the London School of Economics, HSBC, and Georgetown Law.

"My colleagues and mentors at C4ADS gave me the tools and encouragement to find my niche on the team and really excel in doing what I enjoy. My tenure at C4 was a time of both personal and career growth, pushing me to be more creative and a lifelong learner."
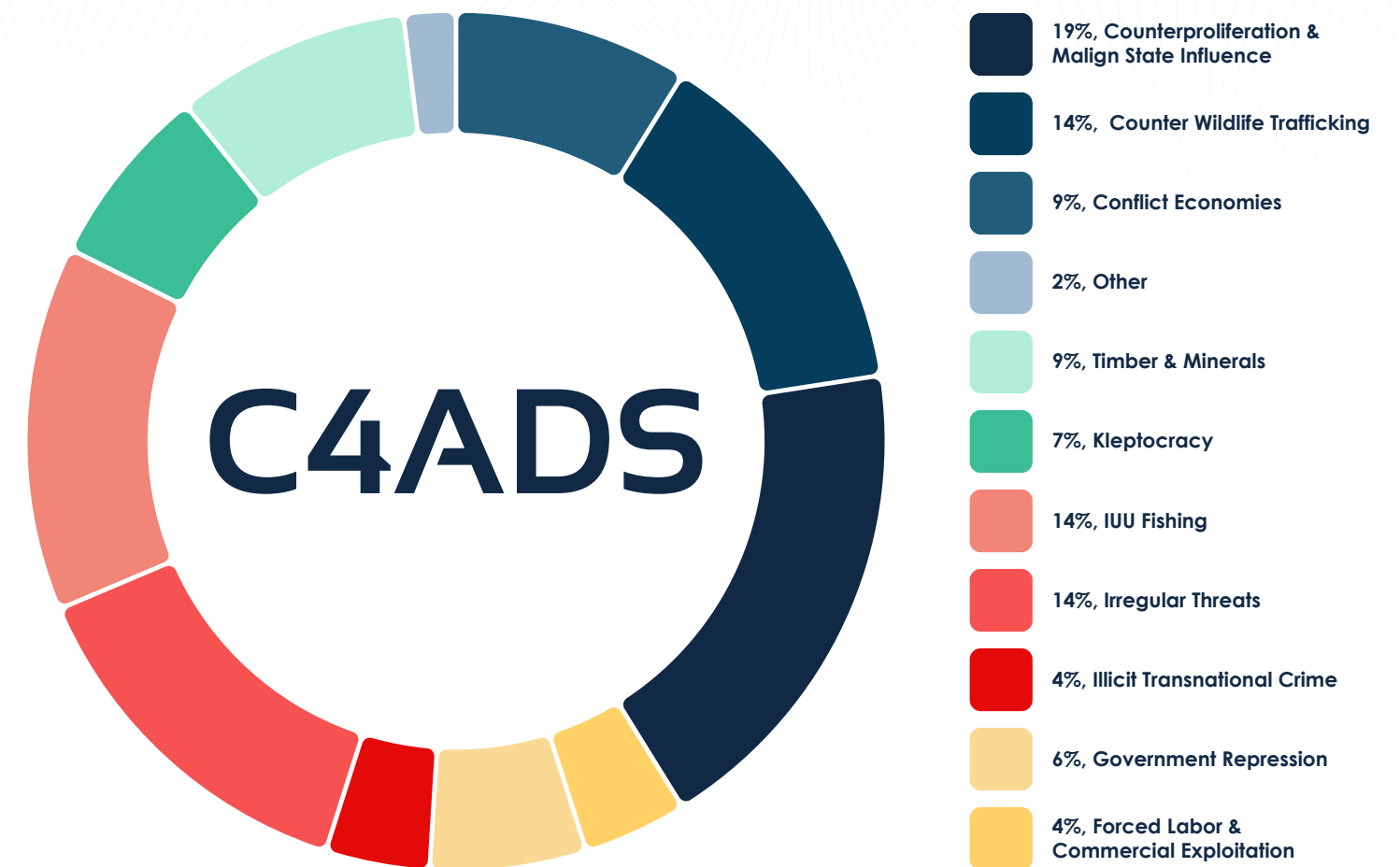
-Laboni Bayen, C4ADS Alumnus

"C4ADS was an incredible experience that significantly sharpened my analytical skills and understanding of publicly available information. From developing new techniques to detect risk in supply chains to briefing senior officials in the U.S. and U.K. governments, there are few organizations that could have provided the same level of growth or opportunity. I know I'll continue to rely on the cutting-edge analysis and technology produced by C4ADS."

-Jack Freed, C4ADS Alumnus

Financials

C4ADS is audited annually and regularly achieves the highest rating available for financial management. As a result of this performance, we are classified by U.S. government standards as a low-risk grantee. We focus our funds toward mission impact across all the domains we cover.

Expenditures by Line of Effort

- 19%, Counterproliferation & Malign State Influence
- 14%, Counter Wildlife Trafficking
- 9%, Conflict Economies
- 2%, Other
- 9%, Timber & Minerals
- 7%, Kleptocracy
- 14%, IUU Fishing
- 14%, Irregular Threats
- 4%, Illicit Transnational Crime
- 6%, Government Repression
- 4%, Forced Labor & Commercial Exploitation

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides essential guidance and oversight to C4ADS in support of our mission. Our Board of Directors is committed to the long-term sustainment of C4ADS, our mission, and our culture. Their leadership ensures that we remain mission-focused. Under their oversight, C4ADS is professionally, ethically, and transparently governed.

The Board of Directors is composed of 10 voting members and a nonvoting executive director who is responsible for the strategic direction, leadership, and daily management of C4ADS. These board members selflessly donate their time, money, advice, and connections to support "Innovation for Peace."

HON. APRIL FOLEY
Chair of the Board
April H. Foley is a former US Ambassador to Hungary and former First Vice President of the Export Import Bank of the United States. She served as an executive for PepsiCo for 17 years.

JOHN CALLERY, SSA
Member of the Board
John Callery is a Special Agent in Charge (SES) with the US Department of Justice with over 30 years of law enforcement field experience.

JOE D'CRUZ
Member of the Board
Joe D'Cruz is the Founder and Managing Director of Catalyze Dallas, a business incubator that helps companies unleash the potential of their investments in innovation. A committed and ethical leader, with a strong background in technology and business management, Joe will be instrumental in growing C4ADS' influence and further work.

SERGEY KANAREYKIN
Member of the Board
Sergey Kanareykin is an entrepreneur and technologist, and the former Chief Technical Officer of C4ADS. Sergey has over 15 years of experience in software development, early stage technology investments, and startup management.

EILEEN PARISE
Member of the Board
Dr. Eileen Parise is a Senior Vice President and Chief Growth Officer at Nathan Associates, Inc. Dr. Parise spent 8 years working as a contractor to the Pentagon for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, J-3, Deputy Directorate for Information Operations (DDIO), and she was a presidential appointee during the Clinton Administration and the Bush Administration.

JOHN PEARCE
Member of the Board
John Pearce is VP of Cyber Operations at SOC, LLC with over 30 years of experience within the defense and intelligence communities.

LTG DAVID FRIDOVICH
Member of the Board
Lieutenant General David P. Fridovich is a former Deputy Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command and senior Green Beret with more than 37 years of service in the U.S. Army.

NEWTON HOWARD, PHD
Member of the Board
Dr. Newton Howard was the founder and first chairman of C4ADS and is currently CEO of Ni2o, a leader in the field of brain-computer interface. He is director of the Computational Neurosciences Lab at Oxford, the Synthetic Intelligence Lab at MIT, and a professor at Georgetown University.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
Member of the Board
Christopher Johnson is the Chief of Staff at Guggenheim Partners, a global investment and advisory firm, with over $325 billion in assets under management. Christopher is an accomplished executive with expertise in leadership, operations, and strategic planning.

ARCHIE RAVISHANKAR
Member of the Board
Archie Ravishankar is the Founder and CEO of Cogni, a cutting-edge digital banking platform. As a young entrepreneur and leader in digital banking, Archie brings a dynamic approach to problem solving and deep understanding of how illicit actors exploit licit vectors. He will be valuable as C4ADS works to expand support to an evolving financial sector.

Donate

Donations are critical to fueling innovation and staying ahead of criminal actors as they evolve.

TOP 1%
of nonprofits

C4ADS has been recognized for the highest standards in nonprofit financial transparency and performance. We have a four-star rating on Charity Navigator and a platinum rating on GuideStar, putting us in the top 1% of nonprofits.

Become Part of the Action

C4ADS is a 501(c)(3) public charity, tax ID number: 73-1681366. If you would like to support our work, there are several ways you can contribute to C4ADS. Donations to C4ADS are tax deductible.

Online

Donations can be made by credit card on our website at **https://c4ads.org/take-action**

By Check

Please make a check payable to The Center for Advanced Defense Studies, Inc. and mail to C4ADS at:
1201 Eye St NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005

Charity Navigator
◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

Platinum Transparency 2024
Candid.

C4ADS
innovation for peace

C4ADS

innovation for peace

A nonpartisan nonprofit with a mission to detect, disrupt, and defeat transnational illicit networks and malign threat networks.