

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

This workshop will explore the link between organised crime and official corruption, one that is much more significant than is generally realised. It is customary to treat organised crime and official corruption as distinct crime problems. This fails to take account of the very direct connection between the two. Whether it is the Mafia in Sicily, Italy and the United States, the Triads in China, the Yakuza in Japan, the so-called Russian Mafiya, the Colombian drug cartels, or any of the other regional organised criminal groups that exist in every part of the world today, it must be recognised that one of their most powerful weapons is the ability to corrupt governments and legitimate business.

While organised crime groups traditionally establish themselves through such criminal conduct as drug smuggling, prostitution, gambling, extortion and dealing in stolen goods, a far larger proportion of their power and wealth derives from their ability to influence and control legitimate businesses and government at the local, provincial and even national levels. This is almost universally accomplished through corruption, albeit reinforced by a propensity for violence. Indeed, this combination of weapons has permitted organised crime to control entire industries in certain cities and regions.

In order to break the hold which organised crime has developed on so many aspects of our daily commerce, we must first address their ability to corrupt the very government institutions upon which we rely for our protection from such criminals.

This workshop will present actual case examples from various parts of the world to demonstrate this thesis. From Russia, the emergence of the Russian Mafiya and its connection to the looting of Russian assets and natural resources which continues today. From Africa, the struggle against organised crime in developing nations. From Asia, the Triads and their influence on public institutions and private enterprise. From the United States and particularly New York City, the story of the recent successes achieved in removing the influence of organised crime from certain core public industries and markets. From South and Central America, the drug cartels and the threat of narco-terrorism.

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Panelists:

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