

ICAIE Calls on Canada to Implement a Threat Convergence Framework to Safeguard its National Security

Converging Security Threats Imperiling Canada's National Security including Cross-Border Illicit Economies, Money Laundering, and Strategic Corruption

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Speaking at the Vancouver International Security Summit (VISS), 25-26 November 2024, David M. Luna, Executive Director, International Coalition Against Illicit Economies (ICAIE), and a former U.S. diplomat and national security official, underscored the growing concerns

shared by the United States related to the deadly illegal fentanyl trade, organized crime's booming illicit economies, [money laundering](#) flows, strategic corruption and political interference by China, Iran, other authoritarian regimes, and other cross-border security vectors in Canada, harming both American and Canadian markets and communities.

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Participating this week at the VISS opening plenary session on November 25 on “Foreign Threats”, Luna further emphasized that at this critical point in time, Canada remains unprepared to confront today's threat convergence harms and illicit threat networks that are penetrating Canadian industries and infiltrating governance structures. “Action beats reaction every time!” Luna stated that Canada is not only increasingly serving as a hot zone for production and distribution of fentanyl and

other illicit commodities, but as an exporter of fentanyl and contraband and as a money laundering safe haven for a potpourri of bad actors and sinister great power competition



ICAIE at VISS24

adversaries. Later that day during the VISS 2024 gathering, President-elect Donald J. Trump in an official statement released on Truth Social said he would impose a 25% tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico until they clamped down on drugs, particularly fentanyl.



In addition to harming communities in both countries, illicit activities have had a disrupting and destabilizing impact on Canadian political, governance, security, and business structures. Similar to other parts of the globe – in a threat convergence world – criminals and threat networks operating in the U.S. and Canada help fuel a multi-trillion dollar illegal economy. This includes the smuggling and trafficking of narcotics, opioids, weapons, humans, counterfeit and pirated goods; illegal tobacco and alcohol products; illegally harvested timber, wildlife and fish; pillaged oil, gold, natural resources and precious minerals; and other contraband commodities.

As the Cullen Commission and numerous recent news reports have indicated, Canadian banks have laundered tens of billions of dollars over the years for drug cartels, terrorist financiers, kleptocrats, oligarchs, and other criminals and rogue syndicates. In October 2024, Canadian TD Bank agreed to pay \$3 billion to settle charges with the U.S. Government that it had failed to properly monitor money laundering by the drug cartels, and other criminal organizations. Last week, a former senior RCMP official said that contraband cigarettes are considered to be more profitable than cocaine in Canada and that such revenues generate profits for organized crime groups that help fuel their other illegal activities across the country. From theft in trade secrets and classified government intelligence to the sale of encrypted technologies to the criminal underworld, to serving as a haven for kleptocratic stolen funds, a more permissive illicit climate in Canada has enabled an ecosystem of criminality and corruption to thrive.

“Canadian policy makers at the municipal, provincial and federal levels need to recognize the scale of today’s interconnected illicit threats in Canada and take urgent action against the significant harms being done daily by kleptocrats, criminals, terrorist networks and [malign influence](#) enablers before communities degrade further into normalized patterns of insecurity, violence, and criminality.”

In November 2023, the International Coalition Against Illicit Economies (ICAIE), a national security non-governmental organization based in Washington, DC, released a new report entitled, “The Growing Harms of Cross-Border [Illicit Trade](#) Vectors and Threat Convergence to Canada’s National Security”, co-authored by Calvin Chrustie and David M. Luna.

The 2023 ICAIE policy brief and recommendations highlight the increasing national security threats, inclusive of economic ones, posed by illicit trade vectors emanating from within Canada and externally. Such threats have raised heightened awareness among public safety, security

and intelligence communities on domestic and foreign illicit activities within Canada, including transnational organized crime and other foreign malign influence activities.

Across Canada, criminal networks continue to profit handsomely from an array of illicit activities that are endangering the health and safety of its citizens, and are imperiling the country's national security, threatening global peace, and financing greater insecurity around the world through the criminality of Mexican cartels, Chinese Triads, Iranian-backed illicit finance networks, and other state-sponsored malign influence.

In outlining the report's policy recommendations, ICAIE emphasizes that to effectively fight illicit trade, critical stakeholders must adopt holistic, all-of-society approaches, cross-border cooperation and information-sharing, and more dynamic public-private partnerships. This will strengthen seamless coordination across sectors and enhance disruptions of converging security threats, as well as enhance the ability to tackle cross-border illicit trade and related threat finance and money laundering.

In Vancouver, ICAIE recommended that Canada strengthen international cooperation with the United States, the Five Eyes (FVEYs), and trusted law enforcement networks. Luna said that Canada must develop a national security strategy that addresses the converging threats posed by organized crime, illicit trade, money laundering, strategic corruption and malign influence operations, including greater more dynamic cross-border information-sharing and joint law enforcement operations on illicit activities in Canada. ICAIE stressed that greater political will was needed in Ottawa to allocate the necessary resources, authorities, and capacities to innovate new enforcement and security actions that are required to disrupt and dismantle the illicit threat networks harming Canada's national security. ICAIE also commended the organizers and partners working to make VISS 2024 a success, and committed to be a supporting sponsor in 2025.

ICAIE brings together diverse champions across sectors and communities, including governments and prominent organizations from the private sector and civil society to mobilize energies to combat cross-border illicit threats that endanger U.S. national security, global supply chains, and peace.

Learn more at: <https://icaie.com/>

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