

IP House and Digital Citizens Alliance Expose How Global Piracy Networks Operate as Organized Crime Syndicates

"Organized. Piracy. Crime." reveals how digital piracy has evolved into a sophisticated, cross-border criminal ecosystem.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, April 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- IP House and the Digital Citizens Alliance (DCA) today announced the release of new



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Jan van Voorn, CEO, IP House

Citizens Alliance (DCA) today announced the release of new research exposing the growing convergence between global piracy networks and organized crime. The report, "Organized. Piracy. Crime.: How Global Piracy Networks Became Organized Crime Syndicates – And What Needs to be Done About It," provides the most comprehensive analysis to date of how large-scale digital piracy has evolved into a multibillion-dollar criminal enterprise.

Drawing on interviews with international law enforcement agencies, analysis of criminal cases, and global survey data, the report is a culmination of a six-month investigation that details, in the most comprehensive means to date, how piracy operations transformed from isolated copyright violations into sophisticated, profit-driven networks that mirror traditional organized crime syndicates in both structure and activity.

"Piracy networks are no longer just distributing stolen content—they are operating as diversified criminal enterprises," said Jan van Voorn, CEO of IP House. "These operations are sophisticated, profit-driven, and deeply embedded in broader illicit economies. Failing to treat them as serious criminal enterprises creates critical vulnerabilities across global enforcement efforts, harming consumers worldwide."

"Americans are increasingly targeted for harm by organized criminal networks that have diversified – drug traffickers are now piracy operators and piracy operators are now money launders," said Tom Galvin, executive director of the Digital Citizens Alliance. "These sophisticated criminal enterprises all-too-often operate in the comfort of countries that won't bring them to justice. These criminals pose a threat to U.S. economic and national security. If other countries won't address the problem, U.S. policymakers must."

The report finds that modern piracy networks are:

- Digital, decentralized, and borderless, operating across multiple jurisdictions simultaneously
- Highly organized and commercialized, generating significant revenue through advertising, subscriptions, piracy-as-a-service models, and other illicit trade
- Increasingly interconnected with broader criminal activity, including trafficking of drugs, humans, and weapons, illegal gambling and fraud, money laundering, and in some cases, terrorism financing

In multiple documented cases, authorities uncovered piracy operations linked to large-scale criminal enterprises. A European investigation dismantled a network generating an estimated \$3.5 billion annually, seizing not only illicit proceeds but also drugs and weapons. In Spain, law enforcement operations revealed piracy networks involved in cryptocurrency mining, property fraud, drug trafficking, and industrial-scale money laundering. In Italy, organized crime groups have actively moved into piracy due to its high margins and relatively low risk profile.

The findings also highlight a significant awareness gap. While a majority of survey respondents in countries heavily affected by piracy—such as Brazil, India, and the Philippines—recognize the connection between piracy and organized crime, fewer respondents in countries such as the United States and Spain make that link. This disconnect has allowed piracy networks to scale rapidly, exploiting differences in legal frameworks, enforcement capabilities, and policy priorities across jurisdictions.

As a global intellectual property protection and enforcement company, IP House's expertise served as the investigative foundation of the report, which calls for a coordinated response to global piracy to adequately address the issue, including:

- Stronger cross-border enforcement mechanisms
- Expanded legal tools, including site-blocking and enhanced criminal guidelines, to disrupt and dismantle overseas operators
- Greater alignment between public and private sector efforts
- Increased recognition of piracy as a form of organized crime

Decades ago, U.S. policymakers responded to the rise of traditional organized crime with new legal frameworks and enforcement tools. The report suggests that a similar shift is now required to address the modern reality of organized digital piracy.

"As piracy networks continue to evolve and expand into other forms of criminal activity, the need

for a coordinated, intelligence-led response has never been more urgent,” said Jan van Voorn. “IP House is proud to partner with DCA to bring these dangers to light.”

[Read the full report here.](#)

About IP House

IP House is a global one-stop-shop intellectual property protection and enforcement company delivering end-to-end solutions across online and offline environments. The company combines advanced data intelligence with investigative and field capabilities to identify, analyze, and disrupt IP infringement and fraudulent activity across digital platforms and physical supply chains.

Working with rights holders, industry associations, law enforcement, and legal partners, IP House supports the full enforcement lifecycle, from monitoring and intelligence gathering to investigations, evidence development, and coordinated enforcement actions. Its integrated approach enables clients to address complex, cross-border infringement at scale while protecting brand integrity, content value, and consumer safety. [Learn more about IP House.](#)

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About Digital Citizens Alliance

The Digital Citizens Alliance is a nonprofit, 501(c)(6) organization that is a consumer-oriented coalition focused on educating the public and policymakers on the threats that consumers face on the Internet. Digital Citizens wants to create a dialogue on the importance for Internet stakeholders—individuals, government, and industry—to make the Web a safer place. Based in Washington, DC, the Digital Citizens Alliance counts among its supporters: private citizens, the health, pharmaceutical, and creative industries, as well as online safety experts and other communities focused on Internet safety. [Learn more about Digital Citizens Alliance.](#)

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