



Impact Report

2023



THE SENTRY

Our Impact this Year

Corruption lies at the heart of nearly every armed conflict.

Warlords use various forms of corrupt schemes to finance their armies. Autocratic regimes use the proceeds of corruption to fund their heavy-handed repression and protect the profitable status quo. Corruption increases economic inequality, hollows out public services, and enriches criminal and terrorist networks. It destroys the rule of law, accelerates the illicit use of natural resources, and shatters peace processes by creating warped incentive structures.

Dirty money is at the heart of the problem, but for The Sentry, it is also part of the solution.

Our investigations follow the money connected to war criminals and profiteers as it is laundered through the global financial system. We uncover the evidence and make sure those responsible are held to account by providing governments, banks, and law enforcement with the information needed to take concrete action against the people profiting from mass atrocities.

Taking a comprehensive approach—combining hard-hitting investigations with targeted policy engagement and public advocacy—our work aims to dismantle the bloody business-as-usual of corrupt networks and kleptocratic systems.

In 2023, The Sentry's years-long efforts investigating the Wagner Group in the Central African Republic exposed the group's blueprint for state capture across the region. Our reporting, combined with a targeted advocacy campaign, has helped kick-start real efforts aimed at dismantling Wagner's predatory network in Africa.

The Sentry also helped cut off major streams of conflict financing in Myanmar and Sudan.

In partnership with Justice for Myanmar, we shared evidence with the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union on a network of companies linked to Myanmar's military junta, including arms importers and manufacturers, many of whom have since been sanctioned. The Sentry also worked closely with the US, UK, and Canada to stop the import of jet fuel, directly impacting the junta's ability to conduct deadly airstrikes against its own citizens.

When civil war broke out in Sudan in April, The Sentry used its public profile to advocate for financial consequences for the warlords who are, yet again, causing enormous pain for the Sudanese people and putting the country on the brink of another genocide in Darfur. As a result of our advocacy, in coalition with like-minded organizations, both the US and the UK have announced several rounds of sanctions on individuals and companies responsible for funding the war, and the US revamped its diplomatic strategy.

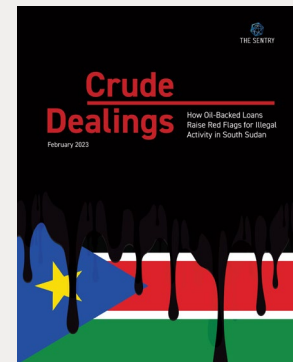
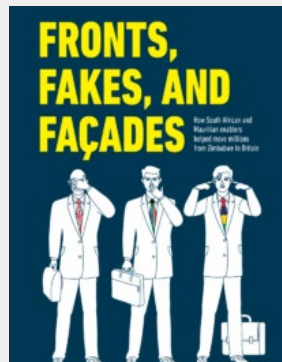
At its core, The Sentry's work is designed to fundamentally upend corrupt systems and reverse the warped financial incentives that lie at the root of so much suffering worldwide. Such systemic change takes time, but our impact this year shows that in the short run, too, our model of financial investigations and targeted advocacy can make a big difference by cutting off the funds needed to do harm.

Investigations

Evidence brought forward by The Sentry's investigations provides governments, financial institutions, and law enforcement with the information they need to cut off illicit financial flows, block transactions, impose sanctions, and pursue criminal charges against the predatory actors profiting from mass atrocities.

In 2023, The Sentry published major investigative reports covering issues from the Wagner Group's bloody business model in Africa to corruption at the highest levels in Zimbabwe. Our Libya program, launched in the last year, published its first strategy brief outlining a rapid, ongoing surge in corruption, looting, and organized crime threatening the country's fragile peace.

Based on these investigations, The Sentry delivered **25** dossiers of evidentiary material, **more than 100** briefings, and screening data on **129** individuals and entities to government departments, law enforcement agencies, banks, and other private sector actors around the world.



Spotlight Investigation

In 2023, The Sentry's years-long efforts on the Wagner Group demonstrated how the different elements of our strategy—investigations, policy engagement, and public advocacy—combine to drive impact.

Our team has been covering Wagner's activities in Africa for years, long before the group became a household name. In 2021, in a collaboration with CNN, our team first published evidence of [Wagner's direct involvement in human rights violations in the Central African Republic](#). Last year, shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we made the case in [TIME Magazine](#) that the Wagner Group's Africa operations are a means for the Kremlin to evade Western sanctions. More recently, our team has laid out the case for taking stronger action against the Wagner Group by [designating it as a foreign terrorist organization](#).

The Sentry's latest report, "[Architects of Terror: The Wagner Group's Blueprint for State Capture in the Central African Republic](#)," published in June, was a major investigation into Wagner's tactics of extreme violence and natural resource plundering in the Central African Republic. Our investigation found that Wagner and its government allies perpetrated widespread, systematic, and well-planned campaigns of mass killing, torture, and rape to gain control over the country's economy and state apparatus. In turn, Wagner has been able to increase its profits and its ability to fund wars and expand criminal business operations around the world.

The report was cited widely worldwide, across print, online, and broadcast media in at least 15 different languages, including the [BBC](#), [The New York Times](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Le Monde](#), and a prime time segment on [NBC Nightly News](#). The Sentry co-founders George Clooney and John Prendergast also wrote an op-ed in [The Economist](#) outlining how to create measures of accountability and blunt the Wagner Group's expansion.

Following the publication of our investigation, The Sentry was asked to provide evidence and testimony about Wagner to the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as the Council of Europe. Following our recommendation, the UK has now designated [Wagner as a terrorist organization](#). Moreover, soon after we shared the evidence, both the [US](#) and [UK](#) announced new sanctions against a network of Wagner companies and individuals "responsible for violence and instability across Africa."



Policy Engagement

Our policy work focused on using and improving existing sanctions programs across the globe, advocating for new sanctions regimes, and pushing for new legislation. We worked with national and regional law enforcement agencies to advocate for the use and improvement of existing laws and regulations, and we shared data and analysis with banks and financial institutions, strengthening the ability of both the public and private sectors to tackle corruption and money laundering linked to conflict.

In the past year, we have advocated for governments to take steps to improve corporate transparency and close major anti-money laundering loopholes, including through the Economic Crime Plan in the UK and the Corporate Transparency Act in the US. Our UK team worked to ensure that the UK government's latest Anti-Corruption Plan will have an international focus that recognizes the links between corruption and conflict. And The Sentry, in coalition with other NGOs, successfully advocated for a ban on the trade in Russian diamonds in the EU, UK, Canada, and Japan.

In a series of banking roundtables with representatives from major banks and other financial institutions, including Citi, Standard Chartered, HSBC, Société Générale, Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan, Barclays, and Stripe, The Sentry continued to provide intelligence and analysis to help enforce sanctions and combat financial crime.

Combined, these measures significantly reduce illicit financial flows into offshore bank accounts, extravagant real estate, and luxury assets such as yachts or expensive art—making it harder for kleptocratic regimes to launder their ill-gotten gains and severely limiting their ability to loot with impunity.

Partnerships

To deliver sustainable impact, The Sentry builds partnerships with banks and financial institutions, government agencies, NGOs, and civil society organizations.

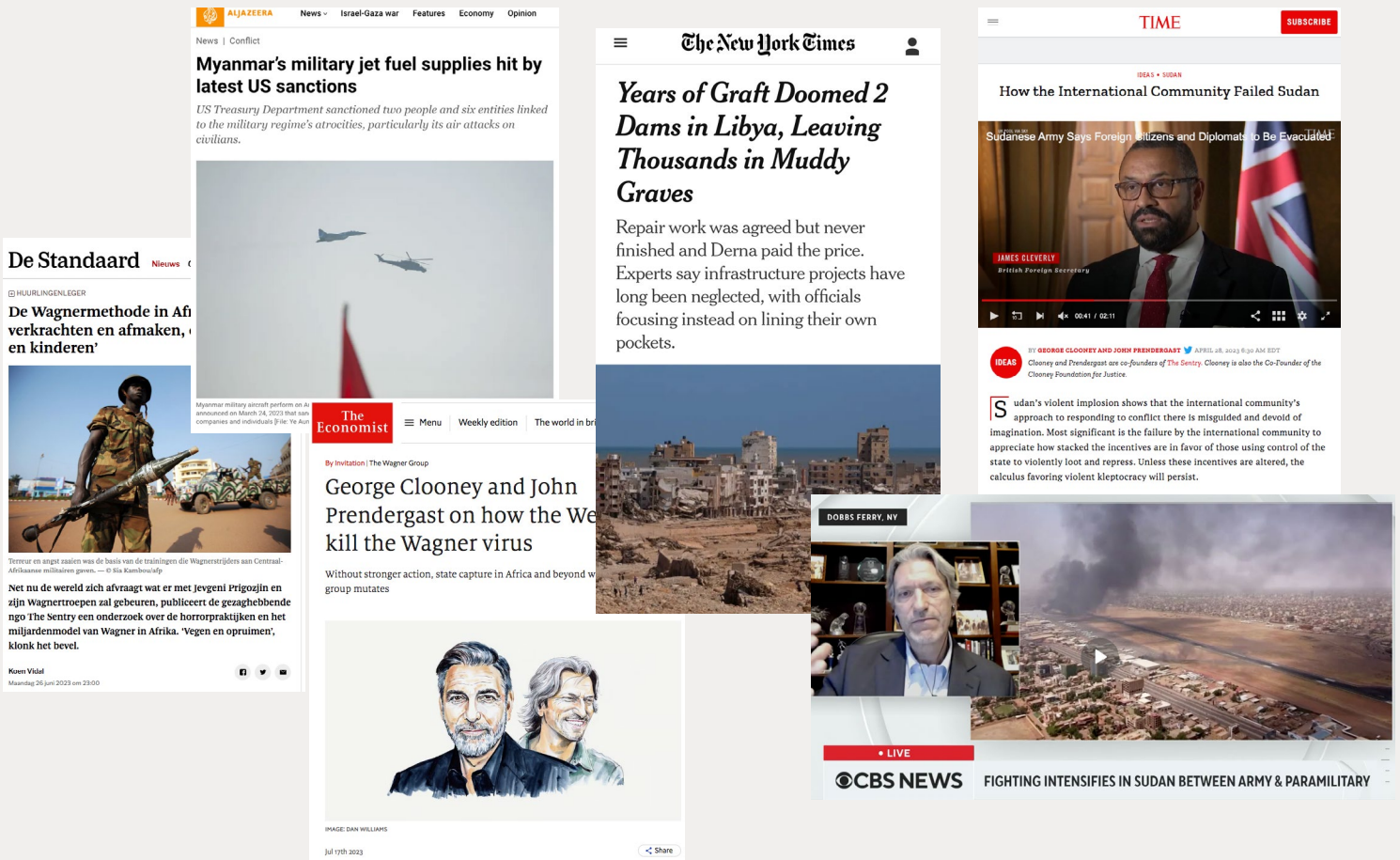
This year, The Sentry partnered with the South African non-profit Open Secrets on a [joint investigative report](#) exposing how corruption enablers in South Africa and Mauritius helped funnel millions of dollars from Zimbabwe to the UK. Using false invoices and offshore shell companies to move these suspect funds across four countries made it possible for Kudakwashe Tagwirei, a Zimbabwean presidential advisor and business tycoon, to hide his purchase of nickel and gold mines in Zimbabwe. Tagwirei was sanctioned for corruption by the US in 2020 and the UK in 2021, following earlier reporting by The Sentry.

Through our continued data sharing partnerships with [Castellum.AI](#) and [Moody's Analytics](#), two global providers of financial data, The Sentry presented screening data on more than 100 individuals and entities to banks and investors around the world, with data on an additional 300 lined up to be shared in the next few months. While sanctions and legal action can often take years to materialize, this model of real-time sharing of incriminating evidence and other data surfaced by our investigations makes it possible for our investigations to achieve immediate impact in the form of frozen accounts and blocked transactions.

Public Advocacy

The Sentry actively uses its public profile and partnerships with some of the world's most influential media outlets to raise public awareness of the role of corruption in fueling conflict, as well as to shape policy thinking on the tools that public and private institutions can deploy to take action and create meaningful change.

In 2023, investigations and policy analysis by The Sentry appeared in **more than 200** news articles, interviews, op-eds, and special features across national and international media outlets, in addition to being syndicated in an additional **18,000** news pieces in **more than 25 languages** worldwide.



Targeted Network Sanctions

Evidence or recommendations from The Sentry contributed to sanctions designations on **23** individuals and **32** companies in 2023. Many of these entities are now subject to sanctions across the US, UK, and EU, making it much harder for them to bypass individual measures. The list includes:

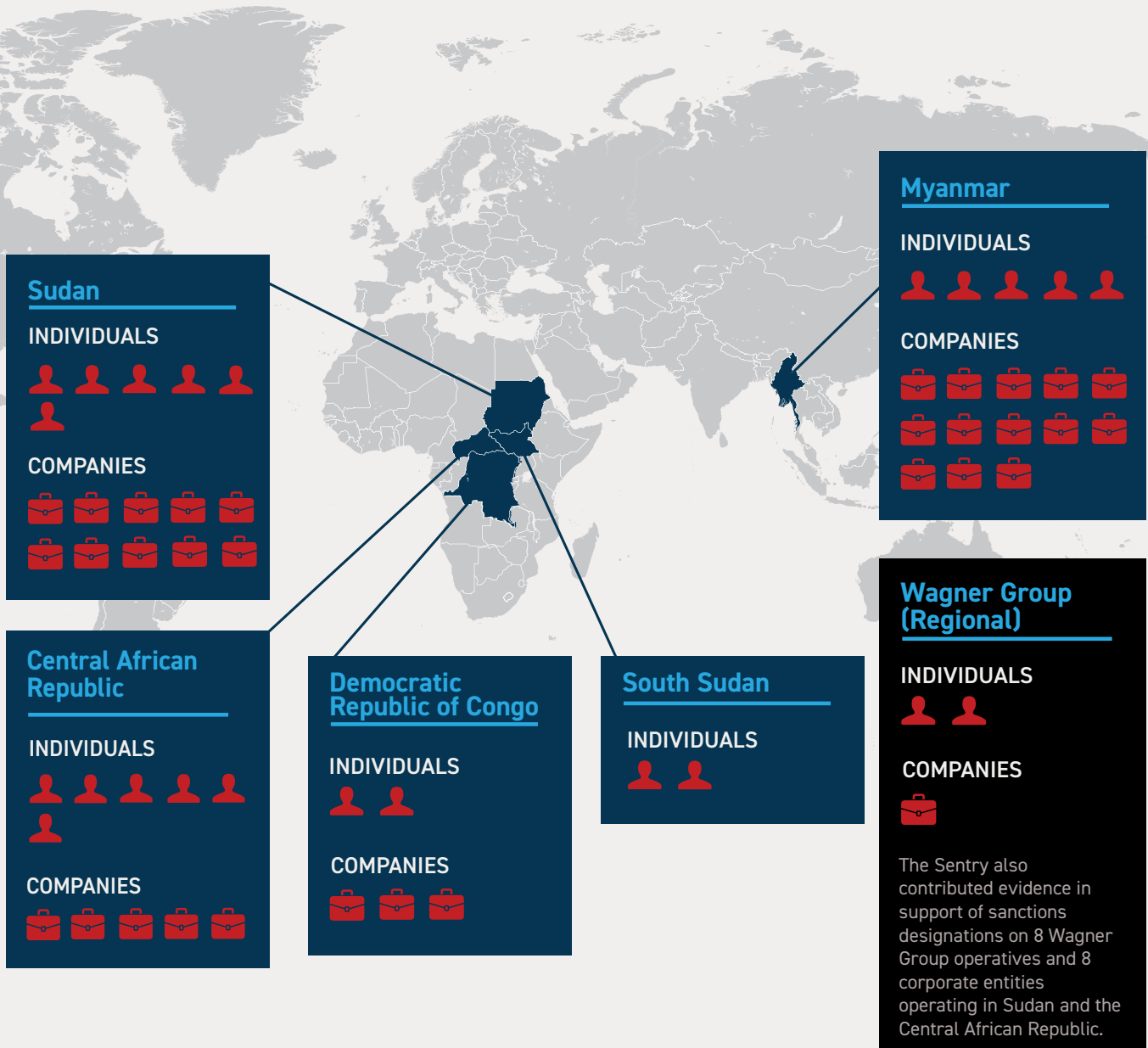
- **Vitalii Viktorovitch Perfilev**, the head of the Wagner Group in the Central African Republic, and **Konstantin Aleksandrovitch Pikalov**, known as Yevgeny Prigozhin's right hand man.
- **M-Invest and Meroe Gold Co. Ltd**, two front companies for the Wagner Group's operations in Sudan, and their Russian directors.
- **Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo**, a high-ranking commander in the Rapid Support Forces, a major paramilitary force in Sudan, and the brother of the group's leader Hemedti . The US and the UK have also imposed sanctions on companies responsible for funding the war on both sides.
- **Hwang Kil Su and Pak Hwa Song**, two North Korean nationals operating a scheme in the Democratic Republic of Congo designed to evade international sanctions on North Korea .
- **Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise**, the Myanmar state oil and gas company that was the largest source of foreign currency for the junta. This important step severely limits the regime's ability to purchase weapons to perpetrate atrocities against the people of Myanmar.

“Through sanctions, we are cutting off key financial flows to the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces, depriving them of resources needed to pay soldiers, rearm, resupply, and wage war in Sudan.”

-Janet Yellen, Secretary of the Treasury

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Thank You

The Sentry's work is made possible thanks to the generous support of our close partners and donors. We are grateful for their continued investment in our mission.



...and many generous individual donors.

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Learn more at www.thesentry.org.

