



CENTER FOR FISCAL
TRANSPARENCY AND
PUBLIC INTEGRITY

POLICY BRIEF: **THE ORGANIZED CRIME RESILIENCE INITIATIVE (OCRI)**

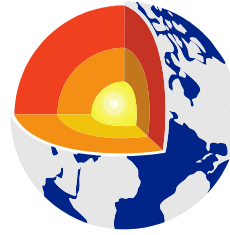
Three Years After the Organized Crime Symposium: Assessing
Implementation of Sixteen Policy Recommendations

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Executive Summary & Core Context



On 24–25 October 2023, the Shehu Musa Yar'adua Centre in Abuja hosted one of the most substantive policy convenings on Organized Crime held in Nigeria. Bringing together more than 350 participants from law enforcement, civil society, academia, and the policy community, the symposium examined the structures, drivers, and consequences of organized crime across Africa. Deliberations culminated in the adoption of **sixteen practical recommendations** intended to strengthen prevention, coordination, accountability, and institutional resilience.

Nearly three years later, as CeFTPI advances the **Organized Crime Resilience Initiative (OCRI)**, this 2026 policy brief evaluates the convening-to-implementation gap. While the original consensus remains highly relevant, progress has been severely constrained by political economy barriers, administrative inertia, and entrenched networks resisting reform. This document establishes a strategic roadmap for translating policy dialogue into measurable reform priorities.

Executive Action Matrix

The following matrix bridges the gap between the 2023 findings and the urgent, actionable mandates required for the 2026 operational cycle:

2023 Thematic Pillar	Implementation Status (As of 2026)	Root Cause of Deficit	2026 Strategic Priority Action
Strategic Approach	Non-kinetic models underdeveloped; military deployments expanded.	Over-reliance on enforcement-only infrastructure.	Pilot community-led social resilience and prevention models.
Inter-Agency Coordination	No public evidence of the proposed Information Fusion Centre.	Institutional fragmentation; lack of dedicated funding.	Establish a phased, multi-agency pilot framework for intelligence-sharing.

2023 Thematic Pillar	Implementation Status (As of 2026)	Root Cause of Deficit	2026 Strategic Priority Action
Institutional Integrity	Accountability gaps; politically influenced appointments persist.	Weak institutional incentives; resistance from status quo networks.	Enforce merit-based appointment criteria and transparent plea bargain reviews.
Enabler Accountability	Limited public enforcement against senior facilitators of illicit flows.	High public sector corruption; weak beneficial ownership tracking.	Deploy data analytics to target illicit political financing and PEP financial footprints.
Financial Transparency	FATF Grey List exit achieved, but driven primarily by external pressure.	Lack of a sustained, internally anchored domestic reform agenda.	Embed FATF compliance metrics into domestic statutory accountability mechanisms.

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Comprehensive Implementation Assessment

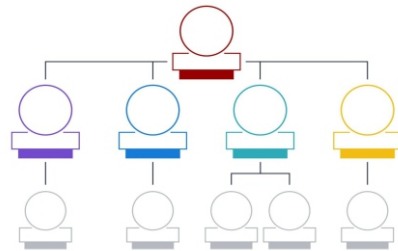
Strategic Approach: Kinetic vs. Non-Kinetic Imbalance

The symposium explicitly recommended a reduced reliance on militarized responses and urged a stronger emphasis on strategic dialogue, prevention, and non-kinetic interventions. Despite this consensus, military deployments in affected regions have continued to expand, while alternative policy approaches remain underdeveloped and inconsistently applied. True security cannot be achieved through enforcement alone; it requires a whole-of-society response incorporating research, community engagement, and social resilience.



Inter-Agency Coordination: The Missing Fusion Centre

The proposed Information Fusion Centre represented one of the most operationally specific recommendations of the 2023 symposium. It was envisioned as a centralized node to eliminate coordination gaps and institutional fragmentation. To date, there is no clear public evidence that such a center has been established, funded, or piloted as a formal inter-agency mechanism.

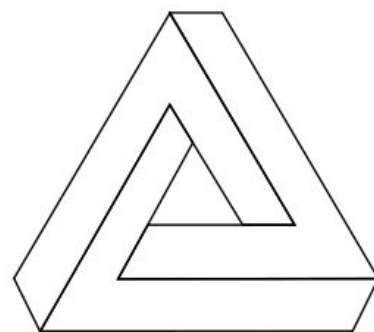


Institutional Integrity and Enforcement Credibility

Participants called for a fundamental shift toward merit-based appointments and a credible, transparent approach to the use of plea bargains in high-profile corruption, money laundering, and organized crime cases. However, deep concerns remain regarding politically influenced appointments, weak institutional incentives, high public sector corruption, and accountability outcomes that fail to deter serious offending.

Case Study Focus: The FATF Grey List Paradox

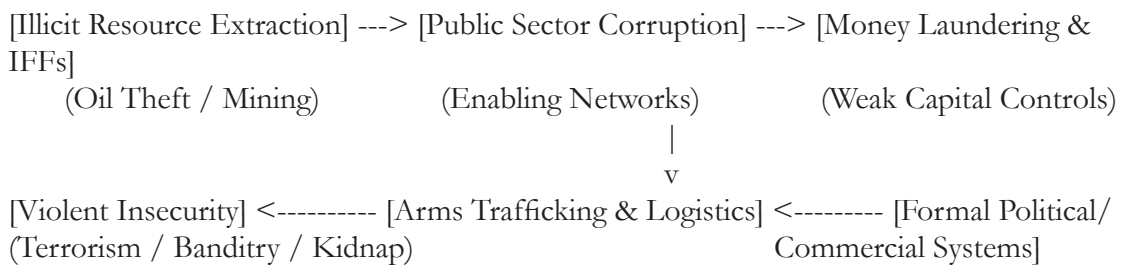
Nigeria's recent exit from the FATF Grey List stands as an indication of progress in financial regulatory compliance. However, analysis reveals that this progress was influenced substantially by external compliance pressure rather than by a sustained domestic reform agenda anchored in the 2023 recommendations. Consequently, while technical compliance has improved, the internal systems required to deter domestic public sector corruption and illicit political financing remain weak.



3 The Convergence of Organized Crime and Insecurity

Organized criminal networks in Africa do not operate in isolation; they actively exploit governance deficits, porous borders, and regulatory weaknesses. Terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, banditry, and illegal mining have increasingly intersected with organized criminal networks.

These violent criminal economies are sustained through a highly interconnected logistical and financial pipeline:



This convergence demonstrates that isolated security operations are fundamentally insufficient. Responses must move beyond localized enforcement to aggressively dismantle the financial, logistical, and governance systems that launder criminal proceeds and sustain violent economies.

4 Systemic Barriers to Progress

- **Absence of a Formal Implementation Framework:** Future follow-up to the 2023 recommendations is severely hindered by the lack of a clearer implementation timeline, designated institutional roles, performance indicators, and structured monitoring mechanisms. Without this framework, shared policy commitments cannot be converted into sequenced action.
- **Political Economy Constraints and Active Resistance:** Several critical recommendations—particularly those relating to oil theft, illegal mining, illicit financial flows, illicit political financing, money laundering, merit-based appointments, and enforcement integrity—directly challenge entrenched interests. Their limited implementation reflects not only administrative inertia but also active resistance from powerful networks that benefit from the status quo.

- **Weak Financial Transparency and Political Finance Controls:** Inadequate oversight of campaign finance, beneficial ownership, public procurement, politically exposed persons (PEPs), and suspicious transaction reporting creates highly permissive channels. These weaknesses allow illicit proceeds to easily enter formal political, commercial, and financial systems, severely reducing the deterrent effect of existing anti-corruption frameworks.

5 From Analysis to Accountability: The 2026 Strategic Mandate

Policy convenings are only effective when consensus-building is directly followed by structured engagement, implementation support, and periodic review. The mandate of OCRI is to bridge the gap between abstract recommendations and measurable reform priorities.

Central Theme: Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Integration

Money laundering and its links to other forms of organized crime constitute the central theme of OCRI's work. By focusing on the financial lifeblood of criminal networks, OCRI will target the intersection of illicit financial flows, public sector corruption, oil theft, illegal mining, kidnapping for ransom, terrorism financing, asset recovery, and enforcement accountability.

Proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2026 Institutional Accountability

To support evidence-based policy and measure progress over time, OCRI proposes the adoption of the following quantifiable benchmarks for responsible public institutions:

1. **Framework Finalization:** Design and ratify a multi-agency memorandum of understanding (MoU) to pilot the Information Fusion Centre's operational layout.
2. **Transparency in Asset Recovery:** Establish a public-facing, updated digital registry tracking high-profile asset recoveries and the specific outcomes of negotiated plea bargains.
3. **Beneficial Ownership Enforcement:** Achieve data integration between corporate registries, public procurement portals, and political campaign financial disclosures to identify politically exposed enablers.
4. **Non-Kinetic Resource Allocation:** Increase the proportion of budgetary allocations dedicated to community-based prevention, local resilience, and cross-border civil society research collaborations.



Conclusion

And Call to Action



The contributions of the more than 350 participants who engaged in the 2023 symposium remain highly valuable, providing an enduring operational roadmap for research, advocacy, and institutional reform. However, organized crime continues to thrive where institutions face coordination gaps, resource constraints, and limited mechanisms for sustained follow-through.

The Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity calls on governments, public institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, the private sector, and citizens to immediately recommit to the implementation of these priorities. Sustained engagement, data-driven policymaking, and collective, structured action are essential to protect communities, strengthen public integrity, and build institutions capable of responding to the evolving threats of organized criminal networks.

Appendix:

The 2023 Sixteen Policy Recommendations Reference Guide

(To maintain absolute transparency and ensure institutional ownership, the baseline recommendations adopted at the 2023 Abuja Symposium are summarized below to serve as the foundation for all 2026 monitoring and evaluation activities.)

- **Pillar 1: Strategic & Non-Kinetic Reorientation**
 1. Transition primary state responses from enforcement-only and militarized deployments to non-kinetic, dialogue-driven interventions.
 2. Implement a whole-of-society prevention framework embedding academic research and social resilience into national security strategies.
 3. Formally integrate local communities in conflict-affected areas into local governance and prevention strategies.

- **Pillar 2: Institutional Coordination & Intelligence-Sharing**
 4. Establish, fund, and pilot an inter-agency Information Fusion Centre to serve as a centralized hub for intelligence-sharing.
 5. Harmonize cross-border data systems and technological tools to detect and disrupt regional criminal networks.
 6. Standardize operational coordination and eliminate institutional fragmentation across overlapping law enforcement agencies.

- **Pillar 3: Public Sector Integrity & Meritocracy**
 7. Mandate strict merit-based appointment processes within anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies to eliminate political influence.
 8. Reform the statutory use of plea bargains in high-profile corruption, money laundering, and organized crime cases to ensure credible deterrence.
 9. Introduce transparent institutional incentives and robust internal oversight mechanisms to combat high public sector corruption.

- **Pillar 4: Enabler Accountability & Financial Transparency**
 10. Launch transparent, sustained enforcement actions targeting senior facilitators and politically exposed enablers of organized crime.

11. Strengthen political finance controls and implement rigorous oversight of campaign financing to prevent the entry of criminal proceeds.
 12. Enforce comprehensive beneficial ownership disclosures across all public procurement and commercial licensing systems.
 13. Broaden suspicious transaction reporting mandates to aggressively disrupt channels laundering the proceeds of oil theft and illegal mining.
- **Pillar 5: Addressing Convergent & Transnational Threats**
 14. Align domestic anti-money laundering controls with external FATF standards through an internally driven reform agenda rather than external pressure alone.
 15. Formulate specialized, target-specific task forces to dismantle the financial and logistical pipelines connecting illegal mining and banditry.
 16. Develop a binding, multi-agency monitoring and evaluation implementation framework equipped with clear timelines and institutional milestones