



Report 2/2020



PERMANENT MONITORING AND ANALYSIS BODY  
ON THE RISK OF INFILTRATION  
IN THE ECONOMY  
FROM MAFIA-TYPE ORGANISED CRIME

## Report 2

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## 1. Preamble: working method

Following the first report <sup>1</sup> which provided a general insight, national and international, on the criminal phenomena at the time of Covid-19 in the lockdown period and traced possible dynamics that could be caused with the progressive reopening of activities, the second Report of the **Permanent Monitoring and Analysis Body for the Infiltration Risk in the Economy from Mafia-Type Organized Crime** (hereinafter referred to as the **Permanent Monitoring and Analysis Body**)<sup>2</sup> kept on its vocation to share the information available to all the police forces to intercept the symptoms and criminal trends in a preventive and investigative contrasting perspective. The objective is to constantly provide the national public security authority with the most up-to-date picture, in an unprecedented social and economic scenario, so as to anticipate any initiative of expansion, market alteration, pollution of the economic fabric, and conditioning of public decision-making processes for the award of contracts by organized crime.

From a methodological point of view, the second Report concentrates on specific criminal areas, identified for their relevance, for the nature of the protected assets or, in any case, for their strategic importance in the budgets of organized crime. These subject areas have been identified as belonging to the specializations of the various police forces, which have provided a valuable contribution in the subjects in which they have the best specialized know-how.

In particular, following the order of the paragraphs:

- The **Anti-Mafia Investigative Department (DIA)** has carried out an in-depth analysis of the evolutionary dynamics of the *'Ndrangheta* and an analysis of the Suspicious Transactional Reports (STRs).
- **Guardia di Finanza**, in addition to providing a contribution in the context of STRs, has prepared an updated overview in the area of economic and financial crime and counterfeiting of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- the **Criminal Analysis Service at the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police** in addition to tackling the issue of gender-based violence based on data received from Interforces, has deepened its work, also thanks to the pieces of

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<sup>1</sup> Issued on 23 April 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Established by a Decree of the Head of Police, General Director of Public Security, on April 8, 2020, integrated by a subsequent Decree of April 17, 2020. The participants from the Monitoring and Analysis Body, chaired by the Prefect Vittorio Rizzi, Deputy General Director of Public Security and Central Director of the Criminal Police, are: Col. of Carabinieri Corps **Marco Aquilio**; Brigadier General of the Guardia di Finanza **Giuseppe Arbore**; Brigadier General of the Carabinieri Corps **Antonio Basilicata** magistrate **Ernesto Caggiano**, for the Department of Prison Administration; Superior Director of the State Police **Nunzia Ciardi**; Senior Director of the State Police **Stefano Delfini**; First Leader of the State Police **Marco Garofalo**; First Leader of the State Police **Elisabetta Mancini**; First Leader of the State Police **Anna Maria Russitto**; Brigadier General of the Carabinieri Corps **Riccardo Sciuto**; Brigadier General of Carabinieri Corps **Giuseppe Spina**.

information provided by DIA and Guardia di Finanza in the fields of usury and purchase of non-performing loans by organized crime.

- **Carabinieri Corps** has informed the issue of illegal waste disposal and the protection of the artistic heritage.
- **Central Anti-Crime Directorate of the State Police** tackled the criminal phenomena related to illegal immigration, gambling, and betting.
- **Central Directorate for Drug Services** has worked on an update related to drug trafficking, at national and international level.
- **Postal Police Service** operated in the field of cybercrime, and tackled specifically online child pornography, critical infrastructure attacks and illegal activities on the dark web.
- the **Prison Administration Department** updated the relevant information on the prisons system.

Completing the framework by subject area, the Criminal Analysis Service has provided an analysis of the general trend of crime by crime category, updating the data of the first Report, as of May 10, 2020: these statistics, referring to such a recent period and an emergency context, clearly show constantly evolving indices and unconsolidated scenarios.

The national panorama is enriched at an international level by the extensive information provided by **International Police Cooperation Service (SCIP) at the Central Directorate of Criminal Police**, which consists of a network of 44 experts for foreign security, and by the Reports of International Police Cooperation Agencies, **Interpol**, which brings together the police forces of 194 states around the world<sup>3</sup> and **Europol**, which provides support to the countries of the European Union, collaborating with other states and international organizations as well.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the appendix that closes the Report contains a summary of the contributions made by opinion makers during the hearing. The Chairman of the Monitoring and Analysis Body has, in fact, the power to invite to the works the highest representatives of the public and private administrations who can provide information and analysis on the issues of interest, a combination of knowledge and perspectives which translates into a valuable enrichment for the work of the police forces.

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<sup>3</sup> April 2020 Global Assessment Report 2/2020 Anchors in the storm INTERPOL and policing in the face of COVID-19 pandemic

<sup>4</sup> Monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on serious and organised crime and terrorism in the EU a month on UPDATE 5 (27 APRIL 2020); Monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on serious and organised crime and terrorism in the EU Focus on the trade in illicit tobacco products UPDATE 6 (5 MAY 2020); Monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on serious and organised crime and terrorism in the EU Focus on the criminal use of companies for COVID-19 related criminality, and migrant smuggling UPDATE 7 (20 MAY 2020)

## 2. Abstract

The most dangerous entry gate into the economy from the organized crime are the financial markets, a risk represented by the purchase of non-performing loans of companies given up by banks and financial intermediaries - which nowadays amounts to around 550 billion euros. This is a danger that, although it was already present before the pandemic, is dramatically increasing in the era of COVID-19 and places the classic crime of usury at an outdated era and at a reality which is today residual compared to the projection of the organized crime business and their volumes (v.par. #5 Usury and new financial dynamics of the organised crime in the field of non-performing loans) (v. par. [#5. L'usura e le nuove dinamiche finanziarie della criminalità organizzata in materia di crediti deteriorati.](#))

This is one of the most important alerts emerging from the second report of the Permanent Monitoring and Analysis Body, which stressed the flexibility of mafia organisation, and especially *'Ndrangheta*, in diversifying the sectors of interest to maximize profits, as emerged *in nuce* of the lockdown phase.

While speculation in the financial markets offers the greatest profit margins, with the possibility of laundering drug money, buying credit positions with companies and, in perspective, property assets in corporate structures, the range of illicit business of organized crime varies from tourism and catering to services, from the health sector to the waste sector, from gambling and betting to the management of sports facilities and gyms, food distribution and trade, road transport, manufacturing, energy, real estate, trade and car rental. (v. par. #3 *'Ndrangheta* and organised crime dynamics) (v. oltre par. [#3. 'Ndrangheta e dinamiche criminalità organizzata](#)).

This vitality is also testified by the information flows coming from the prisons system, which does not suffer any setbacks in spite of the pandemic, both on the internal and external contacts belonging to the *cosca* clans (clans with strong family ties) of *'Ndrangheta* and *Camorra*; also the credits of money to the prisoners remained unchanged, meaning a constant and unchanged support of the sodalists in prison in order to ensure their loyalty and silence. (see par. # 14 Signs from the prison system and investigation evidences related to crime dynamics) (v. par. [#14. Segnali dal mondo carcerario ed evidenze investigative relative alle dinamiche criminali](#)).

The in-depth investigations of Guardia di Finanza on the Suspicious Transactions Reports (STRs), besides having highlighted anomalous withdrawals of large amounts of money - apparently motivated by the lack of trust in the financial system - are focusing on preventing and fighting:

- the illicit misappropriation of public money aimed at supporting families, businesses and the health system.
- anti-competitive and speculative practices on personal protective equipment (PPE) and health products, including and notably in public procurement procedures (see par. #4 Economic-financial crime with particular reference to STRs )(v. par. [#4. Criminalità economico-finanziaria con particolare riferimento alle SOS \(Segnalazioni di Operazioni Sospette\)](#)).

A criminal phenomenon connected to the exponential increase of the demand during the pandemic - which, links Italy to the rest of the world, as underlined by the SCIP (see par. # 16. From the world: international news on criminal activities post Covid-19) [#16. Dal mondo: notizie internazionali sulla criminalità post Covid-19](#) is, in fact, the unjustified increase of the sales prices of the PPEs, their counterfeiting and sale in official markets and in the dark web (see par. # 6. PPE Counterfeit) (v. par. [#6. Contraffazione DP](#)).

Since the 2000s, in parallel with the strong expansion of the legal sector of gambling and betting, organized crime's interest in the gambling sector has been affirmed as an elective channel to launder dirty money, both through the physical network of the gambling rooms, taken over and registered under the name of a front-runner, and through online gaming and betting on sporting events, so-called match-fixing (see par #8 Gambling and betting) (v. par. [#8. Giochi e scommesse](#)).

It is a sector subject to strict control by all the police forces, the DIA and specialized offices distributed throughout the national territory, such as the State Police Units for Gambling and Bets.

If the home stay has kept the remunerative potential of online and remote gaming unchanged, the resumption of activities could encourage a sudden increase in fixed-line betting, also due to the severe economic crisis that could lead many users to the illusory search for easy profits, thus feeding a varied range of ludopathies.

On the other hand, the restart of official sports competitions could give life to episodes of corruption and sports fraud, an area where operates the Sports Betting Information Unit (UISS), set up at the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police, and which analyses the insights of police investigations on anomalous betting reports sent by the Customs Agency.

The business of aiding and abetting illegal immigration, which constitutes another highly profitable element in the budgets of organized crime, quickly adapted in the lockdown period with an increase in land routes (on maritime ones) and migratory flows from the central Mediterranean through the Greek land border. The SCIP also

reports the persistence, albeit to a limited extent, of the viability of the western route, through which migrants from Central African regions go to Europe, passing through Morocco and the Spanish enclaves there (Ceuta and Melilla).

From a forward-looking point of view, the continued closure of the borders and the strengthening of police controls within the Schengen area are also likely to increase the demand for brokerage services for the smuggling of migrants through the acquisition of forged documents, especially on dark web platforms. (see par. #9 Smuggling of migrants) (v. par. [#9. Traffico di migranti](#)).

The online market also represented fertile ground for the illicit trafficking of works of art: the specialized departments of Carabinieri Corps reported, in fact, that the lockdown phase led to a decrease in predatory crimes, including for the works of art but has favoured the illegal trade of cultural goods on the web (see par #10 Protection of cultural heritage) (v. par. [#10. Tutela del patrimonio culturale](#)).

The Central Directorate of Drugs Services has updated the complex and fluid scenario of national and international drug trafficking previously outlined in the first Report (see par. 11 ), pointing out the concealment of drugs in medical containers, the increased use of sailing ships and offshore vessels for transportation, storage of stocks awaiting the reopening of trade. SCIP has enriched the information by signalling a lower cost of raw materials for drug-producing countries, due to the reduction of the demand, obliging the criminal organizations to review their strategic assets to keep profits unaltered.

Another common thread that unites the experiences of all the police forces in the world at the time of the pandemic, is the increase and diversification of cyber-attacks, both on private individuals and companies, and, above all, the raising of the risk threshold for critical infrastructures, represented primarily by hospitals engaged in the treatment of patients for Covid-19. The National Anti-Cybercrime Centre for the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (CNAIPIC) managed by the Postal Police has activated a specific alert protocol, the so-called "*Covid-Rosso*" (Red-Covid), for the recognition and consequent early warning of threats and attacks, more directly connected to health infrastructures, which since the beginning of the pandemic has recorded and averted 40 threats (see par. #13 Cybercrime: cyber-attacks to critical infrastructure and on line child pornography) (v. par. [#13. Cyber crime: gli attacchi informatici alle infrastrutture critiche e la pedopornografia on line](#)).

The document confirms the trend already recorded in the first Report for a sharp decrease in crime throughout the national territory from 1 March to 10 May 2020 (see



par. General trend of the criminal activity in Italy) (v. par. [#15. Andamento generale della delittuosità in Italia](#)).

As far as crimes against property are concerned, the general decrease in Italy of all criminal offences, although with different percentages, is counterbalanced by the SCIP's report of an increase in home robberies in some countries, such as Albania and Argentina, as well as the emergence of new types of fraud linked to the Covid emergency, a trend already recorded in the first Report.

Crimes against the person also decreased (- 56% murders just to highlight the most serious crime). The document reports an in-depth analysis on domestic violence - where the decrease of denunciations, however, corresponds to a surge of calls to the public utility number 1522 (see par. # 12. Domestic violence) - and on-line child pornography, where despite the dangers associated with the stay of minors and adults at home, the Postal Police recorded only a slight increase in crimes in the first four months of the year (#13 Cyber crime: attacks to critical infrastructure and on line child pornography) [#13. Cyber crime: gli attacchi informatici alle infrastrutture critiche e la pedopornografia on line](#)

As for environmental crimes, only a slight increase in the illicit combustion of waste is reported (# 7 Environmental Crime) [#7. Reati ambientali](#) and confirmed internationally also by the SCIP, which records an increase of arson in several countries.



### 3. 'The 'Ndrangheta and the organised crime dynamics

*"But the mafia loan shark is different from the "normal" money lender, who requires guarantees, private deeds. The mobster is not going to require any of these, he intends to get rich. He would practice lower interests, which sometimes are more competitive than those offered by the banks. The ultimate goal is to take over the business. After a year or two of agony, rest assured that he will succeed in the money laundering process. The objective of the head of the mafia-type organisation is not to get rich but to have a room full of euros and get them out through money laundering"* Nicola Gratteri, Prosecutor of the Republic in Catanzaro.

*"Mafias have always transformed social and economic hardships into opportunities...Born (the mafia-type organisations editor's note), partly as a phenomenon of social control, over time they have turned into service agencies, this due to the fact that the social and economic fabric is porous"* Antonio Nicaso, journalist, mafia historian.

*"Highlights of the Italian investigator abilities include the global approach adopted with respect to the mafia assets through a proportional verification between the amount of incomes and the licit and illicit wealth and the criminal past. This mechanism is unknown to the experiences of our European partners and translates into a difficulty in attacking illicit assets abroad."* Filippo Spiezia, magistrate, and Deputy-President of Eurojust, the European agency coordinating the fight against crime.

Excerpted from *il Quotidiano del sud – l'altra voce dell'Italia* dated May 7, 2020.

The 'Ndrangheta, makes use of its huge financial resources deriving from various illegal activities so to be able to significantly influence the economic trend of the realities which it aims to infiltrate, this is also possible due to an adaptability that allows the clans to seize the opportunities offered from various economic or social situations.

#### **This criminal "conduct" was strongly expected in this pandemic emergency.**

It should be borne in mind that one of the first effects that the lockdown will have on the territory will be the creation of new segments of poverty, made up of those economic subjects who had previously guaranteed a balanced standard of living. After two months of inactivity, they are taking off according to the new rules dictated by the need to contain the pandemic, which significantly limit the services offered and therefore their earnings. This is the case of **catering** and all those services related to **tourism**, which will be impacted in the upcoming summer season. In this scenario, Calabrian factions have proven to be skilled in creating consensus especially among those people seeking social redemption, who in precarious living conditions, were already pushed to take sides. Rather than aligning with the State - whose responses are sometimes untimely because harnessed by time and bureaucratic mechanisms - the latter prefer to align with the 'Ndrangheta which, on the other hand shows an apparent efficiency, assisting and distributing wealth. Adding to this the natural propensity of the mafia clans to bribe officials, the coming months are expected to bear clear challenges for local administrators, who are very exposed in their position. It therefore seems appropriate that the latter be put in the best administrative and

economic conditions to contain the intrusive clan thrusts, at a political and social level.

On a more general level, the *'Ndrangheta* will try to infiltrate into the mechanisms of economic recovery, **even beyond national borders**.

In the short term, the partnerships will have the opportunity to consolidate the capitalisations, especially in the Calabrian territories, supporting families in the lockdown phase.

The initial assistance will turn into money donations to stranded economic operators with the aim, then, of acquiring the business, thus, converting it into **a money laundering instrument**.

Economic difficulties include a liquidity crisis deriving from the need to face ordinary management costs, the payment of wages and, finally, taxes, whose deadlines are only postponed for now.

All this exposes entrepreneur to the **risk of usury**, just another form of territorial control.

In the long run, on the other hand, the *'Ndrangheta* will try to make itself available to operate substantial **liquidity grafts**, this entails a risk of having it emerge as a **"parallel banking system"**, operating abroad as well.

This will lead to the exclusion of many competitors from the markets and the strengthening in certain economic sectors - such as the cement cycle - where the *'ndrina* aims to monopolize the activities.

The projection abroad of the *'Ndrangheta* activity is mainly based on its reference business: **the international drug trafficking**.

Although there has been a general decrease in traffic due to the restrictions on transport ordered by the various governments, the Calabrian *cosca* clans (clans with strong family ties) have not renounced to complete already agreed deals.



*The arrest of a member of the Molè association for the 530 kilograms of cocaine seized at the port of Gioia Tauro is emblematic in this regard.*

*Even more recent is the news, released on April 24 by the press, about the criminal prosecution brought by the prosecutor's office in Duisburg (scene of the famous massacre of August 2007) against 14 people responsible for possession of 680 kilos of cocaine, criminal association, money laundering, fraud, tax evasion and violation of the law on firearms. Among these there would be 5 affiliates of the *'Ndrangheta*.*

Therefore, soon, a **resumption of trafficking through new routes and unprecedented triangular trade agreements** is predicted, which will serve the drug trade for the fragments accumulated during this period in South America.

With specific reference to the national context, the overcoming of the so-called "*Phase 2*" and the start of the so-called "*Phase 3*" will force certain economic operators to partial immobility in producing consequences in the medium and long term.

Taking the example of **catering activities** or **travel agencies** and **tourist-hotel structures** (whose companies often represent a first form of colonisation of the '*ndrina* abroad), they will be severely compromised during the summer season and socialising will likely be very limited. Many surveys have been conducted on how the '*Ndrangheta* has for some time oriented its aims on such economic sector, they have acquired a know-how and a competitive advantage that could consolidate, even more, the position of the *cosca* clans (clans with strong family ties) in such a strategic field to the national economy.

Furthermore, **the trade in luxury goods, manufacturing industries, mining activities and those related to the cement cycle, construction, real estate activities, trade and car rental** appear to be at risk due to the lack of liquidity.

Sports facilities and gyms management services have attracted, in recent years and even more in the period right after the emergency, the attention of those clans whose purpose is to identify stranded entrepreneurs and take over their companies. The ultimate purpose is to take roots in the sports sector, which for many tough environments represents the only friendly arena where people socialise and opportunities to create consensus among the population are made possible.

Sports clubs, and especially the minor football categories, are struggling with missing profits due to the suspension of competitive activities. **This could favour the infiltration of criminal factions**, especially considering that, in the past, evidence of such compromises has occurred.

It is also necessary to keep the attention high towards **lotteries, bets and casinos**, sectors in which the '*Ndrangheta* has a strong know-how.

Alongside the sectors affected by the lockdown, a strengthening of the '*Ndrangheta* in the **production chain of staple goods** is not to be excluded. As a matter of fact, such sector has remained active and there are reasons to foresee an increase in demand. In particular, reference is made to the transport sector, the agri-food chain, as well as the entire healthcare industry.

This last sector will probably be more exposed to the infiltration of the *cosca* clans (clans with strong family ties). It is known, in fact, how Calabrian factions have long understood the attractiveness of the **healthcare sector** which benefits from substantial resources and is able to guarantee assistance and social control among the population.



*Last year, in March and September, the Local Health Authorities of the Provinces Reggio Calabria and Catanzaro were dissolved due to mafia infiltrations. The Local Health Authority of Reggio Calabria – under administrative management in 2008 and with missing budgets from 2013 to 2018 - represents a strategic structure for the territory having over all of the 97 municipalities of the province. In this context, the cases of delays and omissions in adopting disciplinary measures or in suspending employees convicted of mafia-type associations took on particular significance. Furthermore, kinship relationships and frequent visits were recorded involving employees of the Healthcare authority and representatives, including top-level members, of local organized crime.*

*The Local Healthcare Authority has repeatedly made use of direct procurement procedures, assigning waste disposal services to a company that was sanctioned with anti-mafia disqualifications, or ben linen laundering and rental services to company that was found to have partners and employees who had family ties with 'Ndrangheta subjects.*

*As regards the Local Health Authority of the Province of Catanzaro – having jurisdiction over 20 municipalities and a turnover for the year 2018 of approximately 600 million euros - investigative activities have revealed how two company groups attributable to a local cosca clan (clan with strong family ties) had imposed a substantial monopoly regime in the field of private ambulance services replacing public service, and in more other fields of the healthcare sector, in general.*

Moreover, direct tender procedures and the so-called "**Artificial division of a unified contract value**" are widely used advantaging companies with disqualifying sanctions or bans in the white list.

In this regard, the monitoring activities are carried out by the **Central Procurement Observatory (OCAP)** operating at the **Anti-Mafia Investigative Department** and by the **Central Interforce Group** operating at the **Central Directorate of the Criminal Police**.

Based on the above, the healthcare system, especially in Calabria, clearly represents a considerable exposed pole of social and economic interest for the *cosca* clans (clans with strong family links) and their purposes.

Likewise, the restructuring and expansion works of **Elderly Health Residences**, which are expected in the view of a possible second outbreak of the contagion, could attract the clans which benefit from the award of the related contracts or other contracts on the supply of healthcare materials.

Moreover, the interest of the *cosca* clans (clans with strong family links) may turn to the **healthcare waste disposal** sector, which increased its production during the coronavirus emergency, as well as on the **funeral and cemetery service** sector.

#### 4. Economic-financial crime with particular reference to STRs (Suspicious Transaction Reports)

Based on the work conducted by the **Guardia di Finanza**, being an **economic-financial police force**, it is possible to assume that different sectors of the economy, also in light of the huge public resources that will be put into circulation, can offer significant opportunities for the organized crime, with possible infiltrations into the legitimate economy and the risk of an increase in usury, money laundering and reinvestment of illicit proceeds, and for the economic crime to produce illicit wealth by exploiting the current emergency.

A surge in criminal dynamics aimed at taking advantage of government measures that envisage, *inter alia*, the provision of public subsidies for families and businesses and at exploiting the unfavourable and weakened economic condition experienced by most of the Italian operators / entrepreneurs, is largely expected.

In this regard, the decisions taken at European level aimed, in particular, at making the constraints set on State aid less rigid, and offer to the possibility of supporting companies and small businesses with grants and local subsidies provided for by the European Commission to companies having a turnover of up to € 800.000, state guarantees in the form of bank loans, public and private loans with subsidized interest rates and direct bank loans, as well as greater flexibility aimed at guaranteeing short-term credits for exports.

The corporate support policies adopted by the Italian government with the two main measures "*Cura Italia*" and "Liquidity", aim to immediately reduce the impact of the consumption crisis, preserve the supply chain and ensure participation in the international production chains, as well as to mitigate the impact on employment. In addition, the financing of the Earnings Supplement Fund aims to support those operating in areas suffering the greatest impact from the healthcare block. Such areas include considerable exposed production chains (refined petroleum products, automotive, energy, tourism, catering).

The Government's commitment in this direction was confirmed with the "*Decreto Rilancio*" (Relaunching Decree) of May, which introduced, in addition to the extended bonuses and aid, new support measures for workers, families and businesses. Among others, the following are worth mentioning: the extension of the earnings supplement funds for reasons related to Covid, NASpI (monthly unemployment allowance for subordinate employees whose employment relationship was involuntarily terminated) or DIS-COLL (unemployment treatment for "coordinated and continuous" project-based collaborators, research or PhD students in separate administration); a simplification of the transmission and processing of CIG (redundancy fund) applications; the allocation of new non-refundable economic

resources for businesses and VAT subjects; safeguards for show business and sports workers; the provision of bonuses on building renovations; for babysitting; for holidays as support for the tourism sector; the suspension of tax payments.

The **Unione Petrolifera** (oil union association) has reported how the increase in tax warehouses and **fuel stations**, in recent years, has exposed the oil sector to **infiltration by crime**, also due to the use of cash to pay for fuel at roadside stations, a contributing factor to money laundering.

However, this sector has experienced a sharp drop in barrel prices in the last period which in turn has led to significant losses linked, among other things, to the reduction of circulation with private means of transport during the lockdown. In particular, last March a loss of liquidity equal to 4 billion was registered in just 15 days.

On the other hand, in March, fuel consumption had a decrease on a national scale of about 44% compared to March 2019, while in April the decrease was 63% compared to April 2019. In May the consumption is expected to reach March values. In the first four months of 2020, consumption was 28% lower than in the same period of 2019.

Italy has on its national territory 21,000 fuel stations, which are managed by many small or medium entrepreneurs. Most of them is managing not more than 30 stations. Based on the above, an **excessively high distribution** on the territory if compared to other similar countries of the European Union, represents a **risk factor** for infiltrations in this sector.

Furthermore, such fragmentation does not facilitate the relevant inspections to be performed by the competent authorities; also considering their very complex nature.

In conclusion, the reduction of tourist movements next summer will weaken the sector making it further vulnerable to crime infiltrations. In this sense, awareness raising activities were addressed to the members of the U.P. (dedicated offices) so to verify on the field whether “forced” extraordinary operations are conducted for the purchase of entire warehouse or station assets by non-transparent subjects.

The U.P. proposed to conclude a paper of “**legal procedures**” with the Ministry of the Interior - Department of Public Security aimed at establishing a preventive verification procedure to be carried out on the subjects involved in the transfer of ownership or in the management of company processes, in order to prevent any form of criminal infiltration, as well as favouring the maximum efforts towards the digitalization of transport documents (letters of intent, in particular) and monitoring the intra-community trade in lubricants.

This objective is considered highly strategic for the purpose of preventing organized crime attempts to infiltrations.

The considerable change of the macroeconomic scenario compared to what was expected - as stated in the Economic and Financial Document 2020 - would lead to a 8% drop in GDP, with the increase in the net debt of the Public Administration to 10.4% of GDP. In the same document, for 2021, growth is estimated at only 4.7%, while public debt could reach 155.7% of GDP this year. The overall support for the economy would be 4.5% of GDP, adding the State guarantee intervention for about 40% of the GDP value.

However, regarding the loans to companies guaranteed by the State: *“the banks will be called upon to assess - both when granting the loan and during the monitoring phase of the loan - that the funds are actually destined to supply the funding needed to meet operating costs or to carry out verifiable industrial and production restructuring plans”*<sup>5</sup>.

The current emergency will also entail the need to monitor the recipients of the government's measures, with particular regard to the financial boost received by subjects that are part of multinational groups based in blacklisted countries or that are entertaining with the latter commercial relationships, or even triangular trade arrangements.

The emergency measures adopted by the government also include those measures aimed at streamlining the procurement procedures for goods and services strictly connected to the ongoing epidemiological emergency.

For example, in art. 2, paragraph 1 of Ordinance no. 639/2020 of the Head of Civil Protection Department, an exemption to the procedure set out in art. 35, paragraph 18, of the Procurement Code (approved with Legislative Decree no. 50/2016) provides, *“in order to allow the acquisition of homogeneous and similar goods and services, characterized by regularity, to be renewed periodically within the emergency period”*, the possibility to pay the supplier an advance payment of up to 50% of the price as per the contract value despite no bank or insurance guarantees are provided therein or even to a greater extent, if needed, provided that adequate reasons are put forward. These provisions are applicable as well for the urgent procurement procedures provided for by art. 32, paragraph 8, of the Procurement Code (pursuant to art. 91, of Legislative Decree no. 18/2020).

The main provision (i.e., art. 35, paragraph 18 of the Procurement Code, as amended by art. 91 of Legislative Decree no. 18/2020), on the other hand, provides that, based on the ordinary procedure, the advanced payment (by 20%) of the contract value shall be subject to a bank or insurance guarantee in an amount equal to the advanced payment,

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<sup>5</sup> Hearing of the Head of the Banking and Financial Supervision Department of the Bank of Italy on 15 April 2020. Initiatives of the Banking System Liquidity Task Force in the health emergency.



increased by the legal interest rate applied to the recovery period required for the advanced payment, according to the contract performance time-frame.

Regarding the public procurement area, upsurge in the phenomena of financial and insurance abusiveness is expected in the light of the provisions set by article 93, paragraph 1 of the aforementioned Code (according to which the offer shall be accompanied by a guarantee, called "provisional guarantee"), as well as subsequently by art. 103 (which similarly requires a guarantee or warranty at the time of signing the contract).

This is a dangerous type of offence perpetrated by subjects which are not authorized to carry out activities reserved, as provided by law, to authorized operators, both in the financial / banking sector and in the insurance sector. As a matter of fact, they must be registered, after checking the necessary requirements, in specific public registers and constantly be monitored and supervised by the competent authorities.

The most critical aspect connected to the above-mentioned abusive phenomena concerns the use of the internet, in which fictitious entity sites offering insurance products, guarantee policies and similar instruments are widely made available to unscrupulous individuals who make an abusive use of them, especially, with purposes related to participation in open public procedures launched by local authorities and public administrations.

Regarding the financial flows analysed with the "**Suspicious Transaction Report**" tool, it is worth highlighting the results reported on the cash withdrawals, especially of big amounts, which were motivated by customers, in light of the of the current health emergency, due to a lack of trust in the financial system.

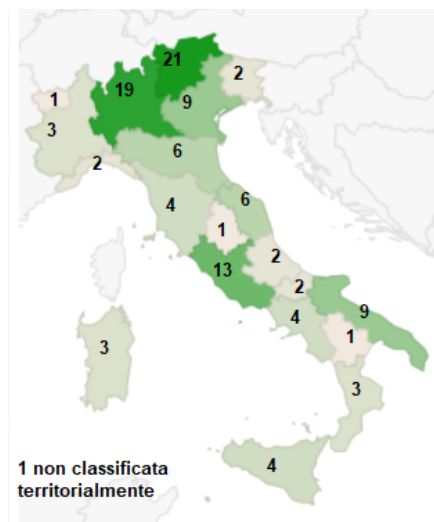
To this first aspect, which presents itself as a novelty compared to the past, is added the fact that the Guardia di Finanza is paying close attention to the examination of the reports produced by the financial system in order to prevent and repress the possible cases of:

- a) undue receipt, fraud, and misappropriation of public resources, dedicated to help families and businesses, as well as to strengthen the National Health Service and research.
- b) anti-competitive practices, hoarding and / or speculative pricing manoeuvres, committed by taking advantage of the increased demand, on the private and public market, for personal protective equipment, biocidal and electromedical agents.
- c) any form of offence, also attributable to crimes against the Public Administration, in public procedures aimed at procuring healthcare supplies.

To date, 116 total reports conducts associated with Covid were received, out of which 48 pertaining to the phenomena connected to the supplies of individual protection and 68 to the cash withdrawal operations referred to above.

Of the aforementioned 48 reports, over 85% (41) are subject detailed investigations by the Departments of the Guardia di Finanza, while the analysis of the 68 reports concerning the cash withdrawals did not allow *prima facie* to detect objective and subjective profiles such as to envisage the commission of criminal offences and, thus, deepen the investigations.

Graphical representation of the territorial distribution of the aforementioned reports and their type.



Type of phenomenon	SOS
COVID – AWARDED PROCEDURES OF CALLS FOR PUBLIC TENDER	6
COVID – TRADING WITH FOREIGN ENTITIES	16
COVID – FRAUDS	26
COVID – CASH WITHDRAWALS	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>

## 5. Usury and new financial dynamics of the organised crime in the field of non-performing loans.

### The phenomenon

Usury is a crime provided for by art. 644 of the Criminal Code which punishes anyone who gets himself or promises, in any form whatsoever for himself or for others, interests or other usurious advantages, in return for a provision of money or other benefits.

An interest rate charged for a loan is considered usurer if it exceeds the so-called "threshold rate", recorded every three months by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and published in the Official Journal. It is calculated by increasing the average overall effective rate by 50% (AOER) based on the various types of credit transactions.

From a phenomenological point of view, usury presents itself as a "submerged" crime, since often the relationship between the author and the victim is fuelled by feelings of fear, silence and psychological conditioning: the victim actually surrenders himself to the moneylender, initially considered as the only source of salvation to cope with a crisis situation.

The phenomenon has a strong "social impact", often affecting the weakest social strata.

It has a significant impact on the **perception of security** since the criminal manifestations connected to it are sometimes characterized by strong aggressiveness.

It also generates harmful effects on the economy, mortifying the private economic initiative (in particular those of smaller companies), creating a relationship of dependence on the criminal world and offering the underworld spaces of illicit enrichment, reinvestment, money laundering and infiltration in the legitimate economy.

Among the conditions that favour the inclusion in the usury circuit there can sometimes be "over-indebtedness", which can result either from the inability to manage one's own business or from the overestimation of one's income capacity, and from unforeseeable factors, as in the case of the current pandemic phase, which entails a shrink in revenue or an increase in expenditure.

Usury is, in fact, a **complex criminal manifestation** that can take different forms: it is practiced by professionals, entrepreneurs and traders as a collateral speculative activity compared to other forms of lawful investment; it can also be one of the

instruments to enter into the vital ganglia of civil society by mafia-type organized crime to pursue higher profit.

In this regard, it should be noted that this crime represents one of the "**anti-mafia spy crimes**" and a very relevant indicator of the activities of criminal groups and mafia control in the area.

In particular, the most pervasive method of infiltration to the legitimate economy is achieved through the granting of money loans to owners of small-medium businesses in difficulty (the basis of the economy structure for many urban centres) by the criminal partnerships that aim to take over the ownership or management of the weakest businesses, transforming them into a tool for laundering and re-using illicit capital.

This *modus operandi*, which also includes the use of extortion, could be functional in the acquisition of entrepreneurial activities in the territories of origin and in the projection areas.

It is, however, a criminal conduct that appears "**obsolete**", in the new economic-financial dimension of the criminal organizations, and "**residual**" as evidenced by the reduced number of reports present in the database of the Police Forces (as indicated below in the commentary on the relevant data), only partially justified by the difficulty for the victims to report this type of crime.

### **The new financial dimension of organized crime**

The criminal activity carried out by **mafia-type organizations** is, in fact, incessant and **constantly evolving**; criminal partnerships have already shown remarkable **ability to adapt** to changing circumstances in order to take advantage of every favourable opportunity to derive undue profit from them.

In this perspective, it should be noted that the new way of acquiring companies in crisis, taking advantage of the current unfavourable economic situation, makes usury appear to be an outdated tool and replaced by others that are more subtle and very refined.

The liquidity crisis of companies and the economic difficulties that have affected many households in the recent emergency phase and in the current moment of reopening after the lockdown, constitute conditions that could favour structured activities of criminal organizations through **the use of refined and complex financial instruments** which allow (also through the purchase of **non-performing**

loans from banks and the involvement of **compliant investment funds**) to take possession of entrepreneurial **assets** with particular interest in the **tourism, catering and trade sectors**.

In the period from 2008 to 2016, there was, in the context of the national banking system, a significant increase in the amount of the so-called non-performing loans in banks' balance sheets, mainly due to the exceptional recession that hit the Italian economy between 2008 and 2014. The Bank of Italy distinguishes three subclasses of the non - performing loans:

- *“Bad Loans”* which consist of exposures to subjects in a state of insolvency or in substantially comparable situations.
- *“Unlikely To Pay – UTP”*, which consist of exposures (other than those classified under bad loans) for which the bank considers, without the use of actions such as the enforcement of guarantees, unlikely that the debtor will fully meet his contractual obligations ;
- *“Past Due Loans”*, which consist of exposures (other than those classified as bad loans or unlikely to pay) which have expired or exceeded the credit limits for more than 90 days and above a predefined materiality threshold.

In December 2016, the non-performing loans from Italian banks, net of depreciations, amounted to 173 billion euros in Italy<sup>6</sup>.

The actions taken, at national and European level, to reduce the impact of non-performing exposures on the overall loan, in order to protect savings and the economy, have led, starting from 2016, to a **significant development of the secondary market of the "NPLs"**.

Among the measures taken at the European Union level to bring the consistency of NPLs within physiological levels, the following are particularly relevant:

- *“Guidance to banks on non-performing loans”* issued by the ECB in March 2017, which contain recommendations and define the measures, processes, and best practices that banks should adopt in managing non-performing activities. In short, banks are required to adopt an NPL management strategy, defined on the basis of a self-analysis of their management skills, the environmental context and the characteristics of non-performing portfolios, accompanied by the preparation of short and medium -long term operational plans containing precise indications on the timing and methods of recovering bad debts;

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<sup>6</sup> Source: [https://www.bancaditalia.it/media/il\\_nostro\\_punto\\_di\\_vista/](https://www.bancaditalia.it/media/il_nostro_punto_di_vista/) *I crediti deteriorati (Non-Performing Loans - NPLs) del sistema bancario italiano. (Non-Performing loans in the Italian banking system)*

- “Action plan to tackle non-performing loans in Europe” of the European Council, approved on 11 July 2017, which, in order to reduce the stocks of non-performing loans and prevent their occurrence in the future, outlined a framework of complementary interventions to be carried out in four areas: supervision, structural reform of insolvency regimes and credit recovery, development of secondary markets for non-performing activities and promotion of the restructuring of the banking system;
- **The Addendum to Guidance to banks on non-performing loans**, published in March 2018, specified the expectations of the European Supervisory Authority for minimum provisioning levels for exposures starting from April 1, 2018, setting a "calendar provisioning". More specifically, the ECB required banks to fully write down the new unsecured non-performing loans within 2 years from the time they have been classified as such and secured loans within 7 years.
- The **Regulation (UE) 630/2019**, which, amends the Regulation (EU) 575/2013 ("Capital Requirements Regulation - CRR"), established a prudential treatment for non-performing exposures deriving from loans disbursed starting from April 26, 2019, requiring banks to deduct from their own funds non-performing loans, not sufficiently covered by provisions or other adjustments. The aim of the provision is to encourage banks to implement a proactive and a timely management of non-performing exposures that allows to reach certain percentages of "capital coverage" of new flows of non-performing loans, within set timescales that are independent from those of the debt recovery procedures.

From 2016 to 2018, Italian banks eliminated bad loans for a total gross amount of **138 billion euros** from their balance sheets, almost exclusively through the **sale of non-performing loans on the market**.

**The negative impact foreseen on our economy due to the emergency situation caused by the COVID-19 epidemic** makes it likely that the level of these operations may even **increase in the coming years**.

In this context, it is presumable that criminal organizations can enter in the market of non-performing loans, **using front-runners, cover companies and taking advantage of some "gaps" offered by the market and regulations**. In a simplified explanation, these categories of crime could:

- buy *single name credits*, single non-performing loans, not in bulk, as so to avoid that the purchase of credits could constitute an activity of "granting loans in any form" which would fall within the scope of the Consolidated

Banking Act;

- **infiltration in the so called sector of *servicing***, i.e. the services of management, collection and recovery of loans, on behalf of investors who have bought them from banks, taking advantage of the presence of a few large operators who, due to the rapid increase of loans to be managed, are induced to outsource part of their activities;
- **purchase non-performing loans directly through debt collection companies**, which can act without being subject to the stringent discipline established by the Consolidated Banking Act for financial intermediaries, in a more simplified regulatory framework which, apart from compliance with anti-money laundering obligations, provides, as the only safeguard against organized crime, possession of the **Public Security** license pursuant to art. 115 of the Unified Text of the Law on Public Security (T.U.L.P.S);
- **invest in the purchase of bonds, called Asset Backed Securities (ABS)**, issued by special entities having a special purpose, set up pursuant to law no. 130 of 1999, by banks and financial intermediaries for the securitization of NPLs, also having the possibility, as bondholders, to participate in financing operations of insolvent debtors or to purchase assets pledged as collateral for non-performing loans.

### Statistical analysis

The analysis of the statistical data extrapolated from the Investigation System<sup>7</sup> shows that cases of usury, recorded in Italy in **2019**, were 181 with a **decrease** of 4.2% compared to 2018: 117 of these (equal to 64.6% of the total) concerned only the regions of Campania, Sicily, Lazio, Lombardy and Piedmont.

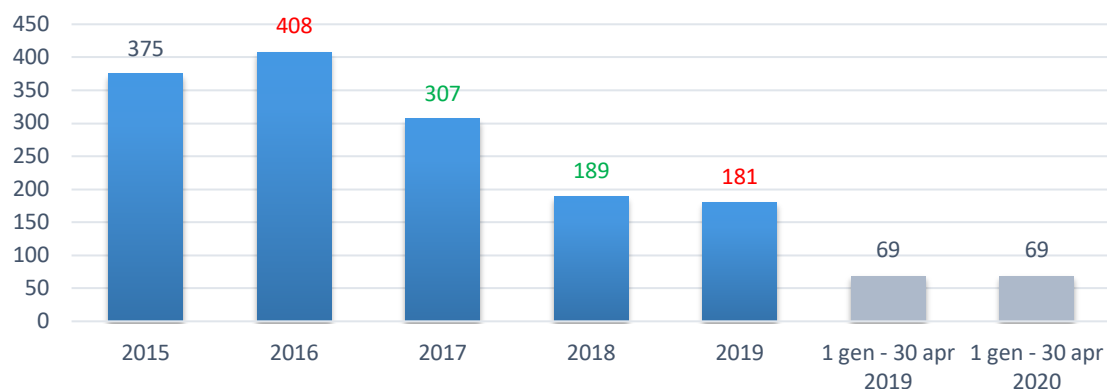
In the first 4 months of 2020, 69 episodes were recorded, an unchanged number if compared with the same period of 2019.

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<sup>7</sup> Operational data extracted on 22 May 2020.

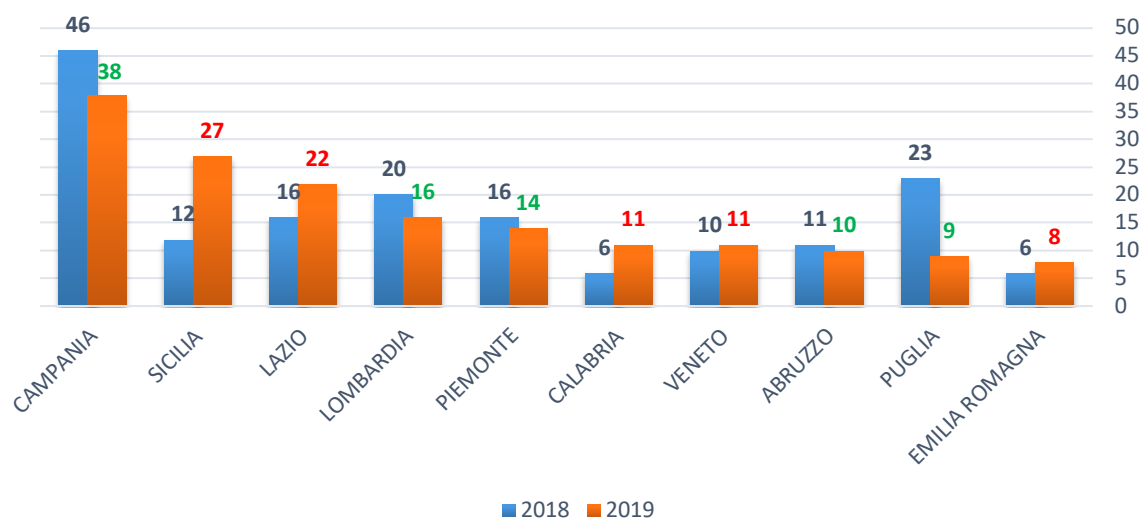


### Italy Crimes committed



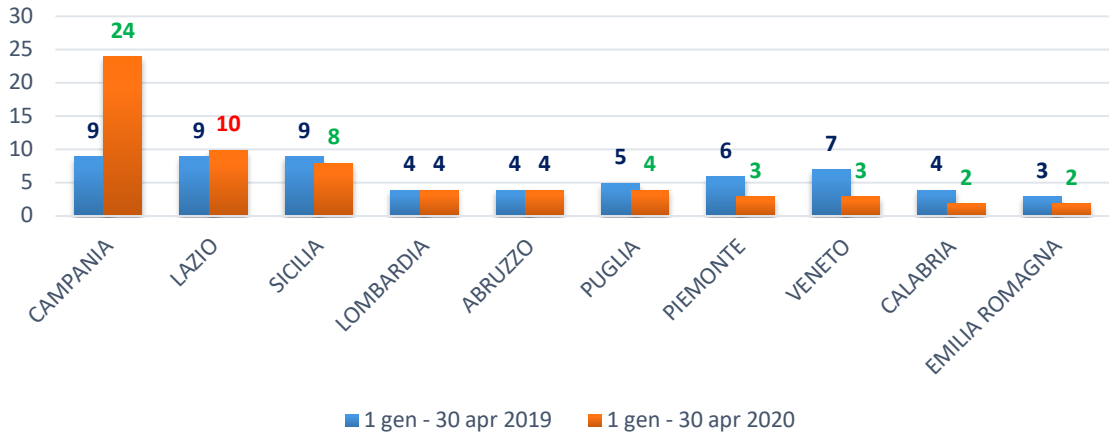
The highest number of cases was recorded in Campania (38 cases; -17%), followed by Sicily (27; + 125%), Lazio (22; + 38%), Lombardy (16; -20%) and from Piedmont (14; -13%).

### First 10 regions Crimes committed



In the first quarter of 2020, 24 episodes were recorded in Campania (+ 167%), 10 in Lazio (+ 11%), 8 in Sicily (-11%), 4 in Lombardy and Abruzzo, unchanged if compared to the previous period of reference and 4 in Apulia (-20%).

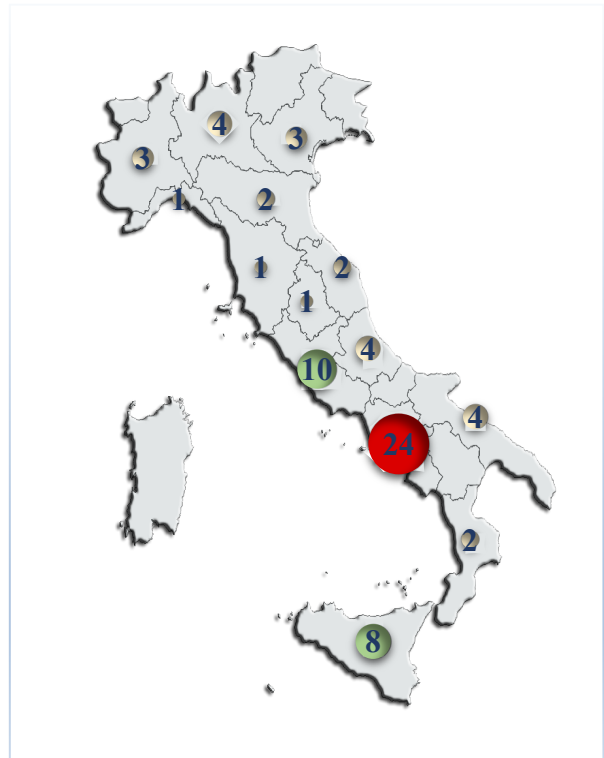
**Crimes committed  
1 Jan. - 30 Apr 2019/2020**



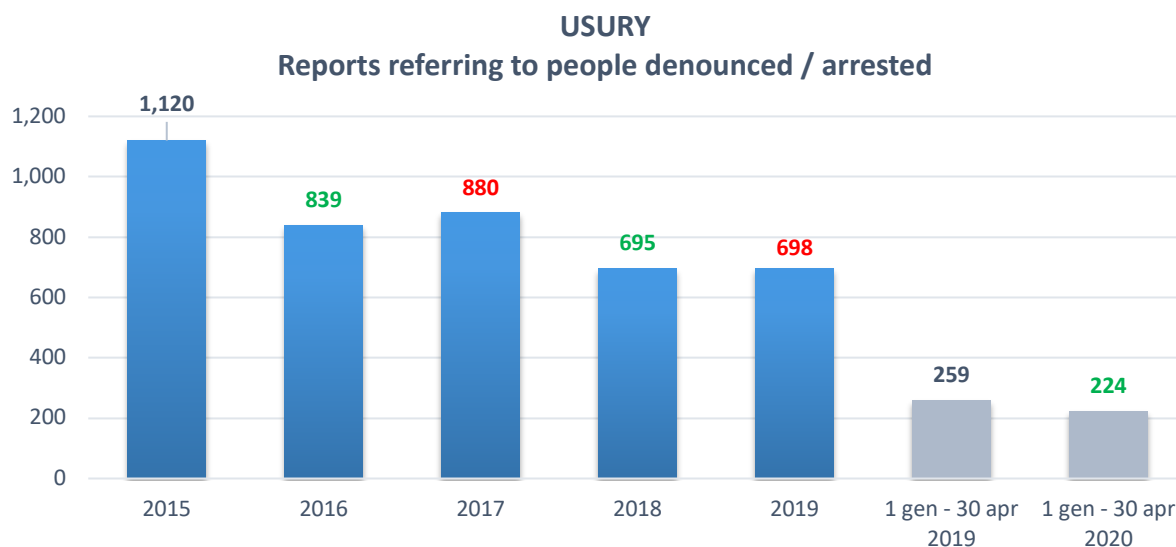
**Crimes committed  
Year 2019**



**Crimes committed  
1 Jan. - 30 Apr 2020**



Regarding the incisive **action to combat** this specific criminal phenomenon, by the Police Forces, in Italy, in **2019**, **698 reports** were reported, referring to people denounced/ arrested (+ 0.43% compared to 2018). In the first quarter of 2020 there were 224 reports (-13.5%) compared to the same period in 2019.



## 6. Counterfeit of PPE

The epidemiological emergency from Covid-19 demanded immediately social and economic attention on the protection measures to be adopted to prevent, contain and cope with the spread of the infection.

Furthermore, the containment measures imposed by the government have led to a **restructuring of the production plan** of many companies, or new supply strategies for materials highly in demand on the market.

Afterwards, a new *“window”* was added, provided for in article 15 of Legislative Decree 18/2020, which allows, under certain conditions, to produce, import and release surgical masks and personal protective equipment on the market, specifically as per the current provisions, subject to authorization from the Higher Institute of Health and National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work, respectively.

In this context, characterized by a high market demand, it is easy to guess how **illicit acts, of all kinds, have emerged and are proliferating.**



*In this regard, since the beginning of the epidemic, the Guardia di Finanza has seized approximately 4.1 million masks and personal protective equipment, as well as more than 615 thousand packs of sanitizers and an additional 54 thousand litres still to be bottled, detected during the marketing stage, both for retail and wholesale.*

*About 440 subjects have been reported to the Judicial Authority for crimes of speculative manoeuvring on goods (art. 501-bis c.c.), fraudulent trading (art. 515 C.C) and sale of industrial products with false trademarks (art. 517 C.C) and there have been high administrative charges against 81 subjects.*

With regard, in particular, to the infringements found, most of them initially concerned **the non-justified increase in sales prices.**

With the adoption of the aforementioned Decree no. 18/2020, the prevention and contrast action has been oriented primarily to the **verification of product safety requirements**, with the verification of product certification documentation and compliance with the procedures, ordinary and by way of exception, provided for individual sectors, for the marketing of medical devices and personal protective equipment, from which emerges a **massive placing on the market of products for which:**

- the normal procedure for CE marking has not been applied, provided for by Legislative Decree no. 46/1997, in the case of medical devices and by Legislative Decree no. 475/1992 regarding the so-called personal protective equipment (PPE);
- authorisation has not been obtained by way of derogation from the Institutes referred to in Article 15 of Legislative Decree on 17 March 2020, specifically from the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work and the Higher Institute of Health.

Regarding the second aspect, which is more critical, attention is being given to investigations, which, up to now, have allowed findings of an increasing circulation of **fake and/or unusable** "certifications of compliance", aimed at attesting the quality and above all, the compliance of such products.

This aspect has been confirmed, to date, in the operational experience, where the use of the following documents has been observed in several investigations:

- **entire false documents**, as they unlawfully reproduce the letterhead and / or the logo and / or the name of actually existing Institutes
- **original documents**, but null and void for the purposes of the aforementioned Regulation.

Lastly, particular attention has been paid to monitoring the *dark web* market since the beginning of the epidemiological phase, as regards the **mask and pharmaceutical** sector.

The analysis was carried out by analysing the deals on the two, currently, major black markets of the dark web such as *White House Market* and *Empire Market*.

Another **13 minor** online markets have also been identified, in English language and whose nationality is neither known nor declared, characterized by a smaller and often, hardly reliable number of sellers.

As regards the **mask** and **pharmaceutical** sectors related to the current epidemiological emergency, a **lower number of advertisements**, compared to the overall number of offers to sell illegal goods, was observed.

In particular, offers of surgical or FFP2/FFP3 type masks come from **foreign black markets** with market prices dating back to the period before the adoption of the regulated price and apparently unattractive to the general consumer audience due to the fact that payments for purchases are regulated in **bitcoins**. Nevertheless, purchase possibilities are also reported for thousands of pieces.

Amongst the pharmaceuticals on sale, **chloroquine** is the one which prevails, the anti-malarial drug whose use has been advertised in the United States and whose availability of supply may be due to the existence of anti-malarial stocks.

Besides the drugs, there are a number of advertisements regarding the availability of vaccines whose effectiveness is clearly fraudulent in view of the ongoing experimentation.

## 7. Environmental crime

The high cost of **waste cycle** management has long led part of the business industry to use **transnational channels for disposal**, where, however, **the risk of criminal infiltration** is higher, especially due to the **lack uniform regulations for each Country** (*often allowing maximization of profits in exchange of limited criminal consequences, so-called High profit-Low risk*), the easiness of **access into the bureaucratic mechanisms of certain foreign markets** through corrupt conduct and the absence of customs controls for intra-community movements.

Following the spread of the health emergency, the containment measures led to a **significant increase in sorted municipal solid waste** (due to the longer period of home stay) and a slight decrease in industrial waste. This situation, albeit of a temporary nature, makes the number of treatment or recycling plants not commensurate with real needs, at a time when the limitations imposed in foreign countries on the acceptance of waste make its export even more difficult. This led to a further increase in operating costs and the consequent use of illegal channels and alternative forms of illegal disposal such as bindery and burning waste, as well as **attempts to award contracts, including small amounts, awarded at local level, with the subsequent "expulsion" of honest entrepreneurs.**

**However, in this regard, the activities of the specialized departments of the Carabinieri Corps do not, at the moment, give solid results, considering that the lockdown phase represented an obstacle also to the relational circuit dedicated to illicit interests.**

A separate discussion should be addressed to **health waste** and the management of **extra-hospital waste** produced by Covid-19 positive patients: the Higher Institute of Health (I.S.S.), at the request of the Ministry of Health, recently published the guidelines for the proper allocation of urban waste to the public collection service and provide, in summary:

- to implement the sorting of municipal waste between waste from virus-positive and non-virus-positive households. In the former case, waste is treated in the same way as hazardous medical waste presenting an infectious risk<sup>8</sup>.
- to continue processing waste through the procedures existing in the various regions and, where waste incineration plants are in place, to give priority to incineration, in order to keep waste manipulation to a minimum.
- To adopt of all precautions to ensure high levels of safety for workers in the sector, as well as the protection of public health and the environment.

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<sup>8</sup> Decree of the President of the Republic 254/2003.

On this point, the Regions' ordinances have been aligned with the guidelines of the governing body.

Based on the above, **the interest of criminal groups** in the specific sector is to be considered **mainly low**, because of these two reasons:

- the reduced supply chain for the disposal of such waste, in addition to reducing the possibility of offences being committed, makes the activity less cost-effective.
- the percentage of incidence of this type of waste compared to the other chains is significantly low.

Nevertheless, it must surely matter - and this was recalled by the Chief Prosecutor of Palermo, Francesco Lo Voi, during the meeting in videoconference with the Permanent Monitoring and Analysis Body - how much **interest** is placed by the mafia-type organized crime in the **health sector**.

For this reason, even if only to a small extent, it is believed that this **sector** may still be **appealing** to criminal groups, which always looking for new forms of profit, particularly, through the award of public contracts or the signing of contracts with hospital facilities.

In this framework, the numerous protocols signed in recent years - *in line with the Resolution of the Council of the European Union of 29 April 2004 (2004 / C116 / 07)* - which also includes **audits by the Prefectures** and respective **Anti-mafia Interforce Groups** may be, at the moment, a first operational instrument to immediately conduct anti-mafia controls in public contracts, contracts and sub-contracts below the threshold, eventually to be reorganized for *ex post* assessments in order not to compromise the need of a rapid "restart".



## 8. Gaming and betting

The public gaming sector, starting from the 2000s, has been characterized by a strong expansion, mainly due to the policies of expansion of the offer pursued by the legislator and to the increasingly marked diffusion of remote gambling, showing an increase of the overall collection of money which went from 47.5 billion in 2008 to 84.3 billion in 2014, to reach 110 billion euros in 2019, guaranteeing significant tax revenue, which has reached, in the last year, just over 10,000 million euros.

**The online** gaming grows exponentially, which between 2016 and 2018, went from 21.3 to 31.4 billion euros of money played and in 2019 it would amount to around **36.4 billion euros**. This means that, in the world of legitimate gaming, about 30% now come from **online gaming**.

In the first quarter of 2020, revenues in this sector amounted to €3,268 million (-€672 million, or -17.1%), with a significant decline that was affected by the total closure of the games from 21 March, due to the measures taken by the Government to deal with the health emergency. In particular, the revenues from the lottery registered a decrease of -400 million euros (equal to -19.8%).

Gaming products of the national public system are offered through two different channels:

- a) the physical sales network, which are distributed in over 214,000 points throughout the territory.
- b) The online channel (approximately 380 sites offering gaming products attributable to economic entities legally operating on the market).

According to data, relating to 2018, provided by the Customs and Monopolies Agency, there are: 33,450 points of sale for number games, 203 bingo halls, 34,354 lottery receptions, 61,726 lottery points of sale in the territory. The points of sale for the horse-based game are divided into 34 racecourses, 2,959 shops, 3,359 points, 609 collection points, while for the sports-based game, there are: 3,127 shops, 4,793 points, 2,453 collection points and a sports agency.

On the other hand, the sales network for the sector of the entertainment devices is composed of 4,979 *Vlt* rooms, in which are located 56,967 *Vlt*, and 62,894 establishments with *New Slot*, inside which 263,322 *Slots* are installed.

In the recent years, the gaming sector has returned to being one of the main areas of interest for criminal organizations, including the mafia type, which increasingly detect numerous "betting points" in the areas of their influence and discourage free competition, achieving control of the related economic activities.

The various judicial investigations confirm that the **attempts of mafia organizations to infiltrate the so-called traditional sectors of entrepreneurship** (large

infrastructural works, construction, distribution and commerce of fruit, vegetables and food products in general, road transportation) and in the sectors of "alternative energy" (for example, that of wind power, for *Cosa Nostra* and '*Ndrangheta*, or that of waste management, as was the case with the so-called "land of fires" for *Camorra*) are gradually increasing precisely in the **gaming and betting sector** and parallelly in the management of slot machines, **online sports betting and "match-fixing" of sporting events** (so-called "*combine*").

The economic importance of legal gaming, in particular online gambling, drew the constant attention of the legislator who, over time, has intervened to regulate the sector through the issue of administrative and criminal laws aimed at contrasting the spread of irregular or illegal gambling and the infiltration of organized crime, as well as to protect the interests of the tax authorities and consumers, especially minors.

In relation to the latter, scientific evidence is more and more proving how access to legal gaming systems, even in illicit forms of gambling, can give rise to forms of real dependence (*pathological* gambling) or to risk behaviours (*problematic* gambling) that commonly lead to ludopathy, using a recently coined word.

Recent investigations also show that exponents of *Cosa Nostra* in Palermo, the '*Ndrangheta* in Reggio Calabria and the *Sacra Corona* in Apulia invest illegal capital in the acquisition and / or opening of DTC (Data Transmission Centres), using foreign bookmakers, to circumvent the current legislation on this matter. More generally, however, the phenomenon of illegal online gambling, also due to regulations that are not always linear, is widespread throughout the national territory.

The *gambling sector* is creating dangerous welds between the criminal organizations that are starting *to speak*, finding fertile ground in the current corporate structures of the sector's companies that, through the various *Masters* and *Country managers*, allow a transversally action with respect to the individual regional and national territory compared to the international one.

In this way, organized crime - common or of mafia origin - shows its invasive capacity beyond traditional contexts, assuming entrepreneurial and modern connotations, with delocalized characteristics and with typical traits connected to the globalization of the licit or illicit market.

The investments made by mafia criminals in this sector were mainly based on the **acquisition of gambling halls**, subsequently registered on behalf of front-runners, the inclusion of one or more sodalists, as persons in charge or with other representation tasks within the companies holding the management of the activities, as well as the creation of **monopolistic regimes** by imposing, with extortion methods, their own equipment to the owners of public businesses.

Criminal organizations, also taking advantage of the legitimate commercial activities, offer the opportunity to play on illegal websites, increasing cash profits

and providing for the so-called laundering of the capital from other criminal activities.

A particular phenomenon, subject of investigative attention by the specialized units of the **State Police**, is that of match-fixing which has reached concerning levels of expansion throughout the territory of the European Union, so much as to mobilize the Community institutions in a joint action aimed at curbing this phenomenon. It is a pact made illicitly in sports and consists of keeping a secret and illegal agreement between members of different teams, in order to obtain a favourable result for both or to the damage of opposing teams (or athletes), distorting the normal random and unpredictable course of events associated with the very idea of sports competition.

The picture that emerges is not that of a simple dishonesty on the part of players and coaches, but that of the operation of a network at international level - facilitated by the "globalization" of betting through the internet - able to hook the unfaithful players willing to fix the games and make their desire for easy profits a reality..

Worrying and worthy of attention, also from a preventive point of view, is the fact that illicit mechanisms can attract the attention of individuals and groups, typical expression of organized crime, interested in investing without risk and in multiplying the cash capital at their disposal.

Betting on "rigged" football matches, in fact, represents a source of huge profits for those who organise or participate in such illegal activity, and direct proceeds from the manipulation of the results of matches by teams, sometimes unknown even from distant countries.

The commercial consequences of the extended lockdown world wide, especially in Asian countries (where the main operating bookmakers on the network are located), has generated an undoubted moment of **crisis in the betting sector connected to sporting events**.

As noted, the suspension of all sporting competitions, at professional and amateur level, and the postponement of some events of global importance (the Tokyo Olympic Games and the European Football Championships) have also greatly affected the international betting market.

Particularly affected is the *Official system on fixed network* which has suffered the harsh consequences of recent closings, like all other public and retail businesses.

The forced home stay for ordinary users has instead kept the remunerative potential of **online and remote gambling** unchanged.

The gradual reopening could also favour a sudden **return to betting on the fixed network**, supported by a moment of serious and persistent economic crisis that could direct many users towards the illusory search for easy earnings, which would greatly fuel the varied forms of compulsive gambling.

On the Community side, the Interpol General Secretariat in Lyon, through the Interpol Match-Fixing Task Force (IMFTF) has reported that several international criminal organizations, currently being identified, are taking advantage of the current restrictive measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic to draw profit from the betting and sports industry.

Due to the cancellation or postponement of sports competitions and matches worldwide, these organizations continue to acquire bets on **fake or non-existent sports events** through bookmakers from Eastern Europe, Asia, and South America.

Several sports federations have confirmed that some games have never been played. Despite the restrictions due to the current pandemic situation from Covid-19 in some countries sports competitions are still allowed and in one case there was a sporting event between two geographically distant teams, which took place in a period in which the local authorities banned or advised against traveling.

There have been documented cases of sporting events, the so called "ghost"<sup>9</sup> or "fake"<sup>10</sup> or "friendly"<sup>11</sup>, suitably organized with the aim of exploiting the betting sector.

In some circumstances, some events were first advertised through websites and social profiles created a few days before the competition and subsequently cancelled. A well thought scam, implemented in order to conceal the friendly spirit of the races, not to compromise their interest, and acquire a greater number of bets for live events.

Once the location and the match is established, false promotional activities start on social networks and in blogs, then a "data scout" proposes to cover the match and provides the data to allow the betting companies to fix the odds of the match, but in reality, the "data scout" will simply insert data on a non-existent event.

In the Asian betting market, a particular form of gambling called *Asian Handicap*<sup>12</sup> was found to maximize profits.

On the other hand, the existence of any match-fixing of friendly matches is being verified as there has been a sudden interest in acquiring bets on such events that concern areas like football, tennis, basketball, cricket and electronic sports.

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<sup>9</sup> Games never played despite appearances (for example, offer on the betting markets, confirmations on the website, discussions on social networks and in blogs, etc.);

<sup>10</sup> Matches that actually took place but in a different way from how they were advertised (for example, compositions of different teams, predetermined result, etc.);

<sup>11</sup> (Also known as exhibition matches or promotional competitions) - often non-competitive matches whose reward and impact on the player's or team's ranking is zero or extremely small. Unlike Ghost and False games which have a clear corruption and fraud component, Friendly matches are not necessarily organized for a criminal purpose. However, caution is still required as the risk of corruption is high.

<sup>12</sup> The "Asian Handicap" is a type of bet (mainly used in football) in which the teams are assigned a handicap based on their characteristics, so that a stronger team will have to win with a greater number of goals to make those who betted on it.

Among the *modus operandi* it has been found that some representatives of the criminal organizations approach athletes or players, also via social networks, to bribe them in order to make illegal bets on fixed matches.

Interpol is collaborating with the National Central Bureaus (NCB), sports associations and intelligence companies to acquire information. As a member of Interpol the **State Police**, through its structures on the territory composed of **Gambling and Betting Police Units**, has launched deep targeted investigations to acquire any feedback in relation to the activities of collecting bets and gambling by organized crime. In the same context, the **Central Anti-Crime Directorate at the State Police** gave impetus to a synergistic action aimed at implementing predictive analysis and refining contrast strategies in relation to future evolutionary scenarios of criminal systems of mafia-type.

In particular, preliminary investigations are underway to verify the existence of any *combine* (match-fixing) on sports events, even minor ones, which are still taking place in countries little affected by the pandemic, that represent substantial references for all the bookmakers of the telematic platforms and for individual bettors in relation to possible play on specific events or phases of the same event, even in areas of lesser media relevance or with reference to disciplines or meetings of a lesser category.

It should be noted that **episodes of bribery or sports fraud - which may be more frequent in those categories where the athletes' fees are lower or not paid regularly - could experience a forthcoming revival with the restart of official competitions.**

The economic crisis **affecting the world of sport** in this period, **in particular professional and amateur football, could expose the less remunerated categories (especially in Serie C and Serie D) to the risk of dangerous corruption.**

The monitoring and preventive activities with respect to the infiltration of organized crime in the world of sport are underway and continue to be treated with particular attention for possible evolutionary dynamics, by the State Police, Carabinieri, Guardia di Finanza, Anti-Mafia Investigative Department operating in the framework of the **Sports Betting Investigation Group**, set up at the **Criminal Analysis Service in the Central Directorate of Criminal Police.**

This Group reports the results of the investigations carried out on anomalous betting reports received in particular from the Customs and Monopolies Agency to the **Sports Betting Information Unit**, chaired by the **Deputy General Director of Public Security, Central Director of the Criminal Police Prefect Vittorio Rizzi.**

Reports concerning sports events held abroad are also conveyed through information exchange platforms managed by the **International Police Cooperation Service of the Central Directorate.** Moreover, all the information elements coming directly from the world of sport (Coni, FIGC) as well as from the Office for Sport of the Prime Minister's Office are taken in deeper analysis at the Information Unit.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Italian Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe set up a national delegation in April which will take part in the next meetings of the Monitoring Group on the implementation of the *Convention on the manipulation of sports competitions* (Macolin Convention signed in 2014 and entered into force last September 2019). This national delegation is composed of representatives of the Office for Sport at the Prime Minister's Office, the Central Directorate of Criminal Police-Sports Betting Information Unit, the Customs and Monopolies Agency and the National Olympic Committee.



*On May 12, 2020, Guardia di Finanza executed, in Sicily and in other regions of central-northern Italy, a remand in custody for 91 subjects (46 in prison and 45 under house arrest) attributable to the mafia partnership of Cosa Nostra in the district of Palermo, Resuttana, **responsible for various mafia-type criminal association** aimed, among others at extortion, trafficking of drugs, fraudulent transfer of values, money laundering and re-use of illicit capital, **abusive exercise of gambling and bets.***

*At the same time, a **measure on preventive seizure** was executed for **22 economic activities** (betting centres and **gambling rooms**, active cooperatives in shipbuilding and trading of precious goods, coffee production and marketing companies, food trade and raw materials and food packaging), **13 racehorses, 8 buildings, motor vehicles and active balances of financial relationships**, for a total estimated value of around **15 million euros.***

The investigations, resulting from previous findings and developed also through the exploitation of the statements of various collaborators of justice, from the analysis of assets evidence and anomalous financial movements, as well as through the use of telephone tapping, have made it possible to reconstruct the criminal rise of a mafia family in Palermo engaged in money laundering operations and the reuse of large criminal proceeds in many economic sectors in Sicily and Lombardy.

The investigation further confirmed the **markable entrepreneurial vocation** of organized crime, as well as its ability to "renovate within the tradition" which can represent a **dangerous threat** in the period of serious economic crisis that our country is experiencing.

## 9. Smuggling of migrants

**Aiding and abetting illegal immigration** is now one of the **most profitable criminal businesses**, alongside drug trafficking and counterfeiting on a global scale, which is also managed by branched transnational criminal holding companies.

A characterizing factor of the phenomenon is the fact that the dynamics of irregular flows vary over time, according to different areas of crisis, the origin of the migrants, law enforcement activities developed by the States of transit and destination, among which the changed international structure of search, rescue and reception of migrants and refugees cannot be overlooked, and recently also depending on the different migration policies adopted by some countries<sup>13</sup>.

All this makes the reference framework rather fluid and changeable, subject to significant variations, albeit with a fairly short time reference, that highlights the considerable adaptability of transnational criminal organisations, active in North Africa, Greece and Turkey - from where the flows of migrants set off toward Italy - able to capitalize, using the tools available to them, all the available information, in order to adjust their business: from the size of the vessels, to the amount of food on board and the choice of the spot where to launch the rescue signal, based on the retreat or approaching of Italian or community intervention equipment at sea.

In the last three months (March-April-May) there has been evidence of a **rising trend in the use of land routes** rather than maritime routes.

In fact, the networks of traffickers, reportedly understood in international cooperation contexts, have resumed the use of **heavy goods vehicles and freight trains** to move migrants across borders, taking advantage of the free movement of goods: mass migratory movements have re-emerged and could be consolidated depending on the duration of the border and movement restrictions due to Covid-19.

In this regard, it is clearly evident, also by means of **social media analysis and the monitoring of open sources**, how the Turkish authorities facilitated last March the attempts of large groups of migrants to cross the land border with Greece.

On the other hand, small boats are increasingly being used to cross river boundaries, as stricter controls have been implemented at border crossing points and blockades in many countries to restrict free movement by traditional means (cars).

In this context, contrary to the 2019 figure, during the first 4 months of monitoring, a **significant increase in departures was recorded, coming from the Central Mediterranean route**, presumably due to the changed structure of maritime rescue

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<sup>13</sup> During the last migratory events recorded in 2020, on national territory, numerous illegal migrants were noted, on boats, wearing protection masks provided by transnational criminal organizations during the health emergency that is affecting Europe and in particular Italy.

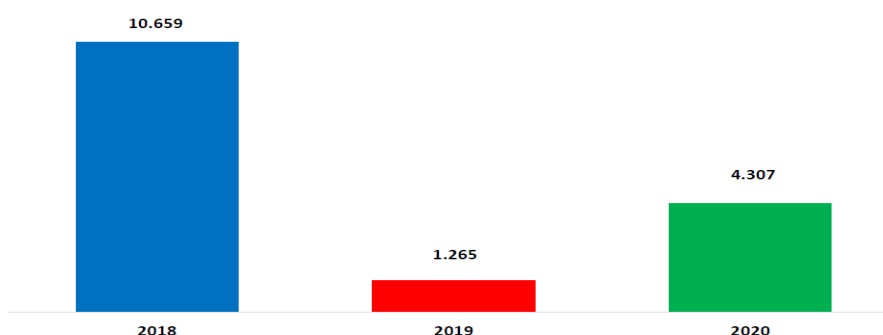


activities, which brought once more the NGOs together, as well as the partial reopening of ports, while almost a total zeroing of the flow along the Balkan sea route<sup>14</sup>, also known as the Eastern Mediterranean route, has been observed.

This trend is not particularly alarming in terms of numbers, but it assumes a peculiar demonstrative value as regards the **endurance of consolidated channels of illegal migratory flows**, never completely drained and always able to reactivate themselves at the presence of specific social, economic and conflicting phenomenology.

In particular, migrant smuggling activities along the **central Mediterranean route increased significantly** until mid-April, compared to the same period last year; among other things, the so-called "mother ship" or support boat method which enables a large number of migrants to approach the coasts, who are then preparing to disembark on their own or using small "makeshift" boats without being discovered - and above all without being subjected to controls or the planned health quarantine - could be reconfirmed.

Il grafico illustra la situazione relativa al numero dei migranti sbarcati a decorrere dal 1 gennaio 2020 al 19 maggio 2020\* comparati con i dati riferiti allo stesso periodo degli anni 2018 e 2019



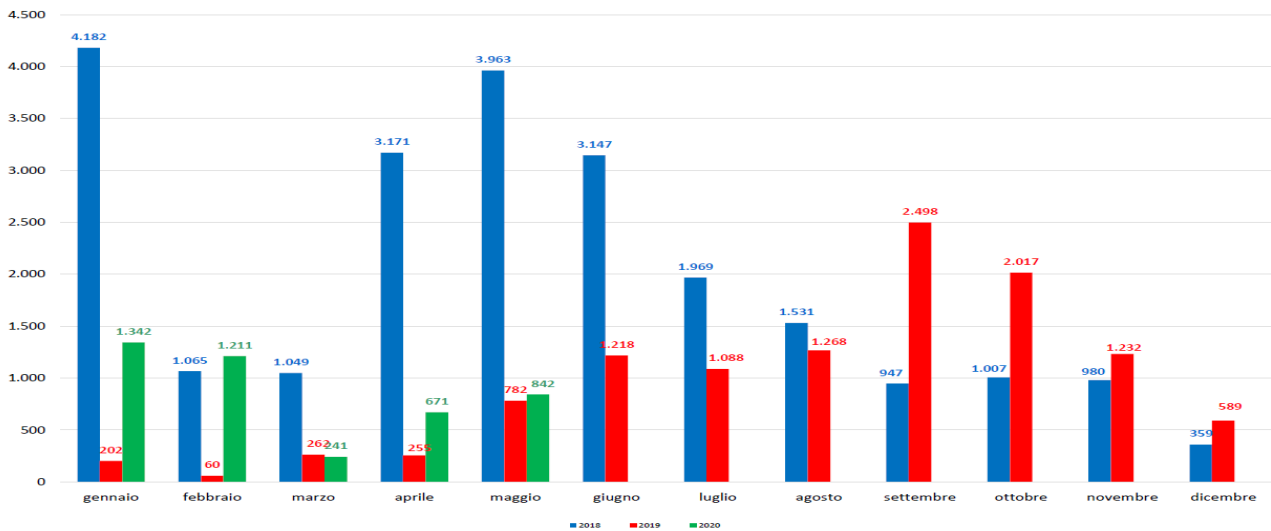
\* The data refer to landing events detected by 8:00 a.m. on the reporting day.

Source: Department of Public Security. The data are subject to subsequent consolidation.

<sup>14</sup> The so-called maritime "Balkan route" is a route that starts from the eastern Mediterranean and leads to Italy; the coastal formation of Apulia and Calabria, the numerous maritime areas overlooking the Ionian coast, the extent of the territory involved and the subsequent difficulty, for both sea and land, to carry out security controls, have favoured, especially in the last two years, the arrival of migrants from Turkey or Greece, in sailing ships, yachts and inflatable boats steered by Russian-speaking skippers, most likely recruited on the Black Sea.

Comparazione migranti sbarcati negli anni 2018/2019/2020

2018:23.370      2019:11.471      2020:4.307\*



\* The data refer to landing events detected by 8:00 a.m. on the reporting day.

Source: Department of Public Security. The data are subject to subsequent consolidation.

From a purely predictive point of view, **the smugglers**, by constantly checking the borders along the North African route, **are able to adjust their operational strategies**.

The eventual epidemic spread of Covid-19 virus in the areas of North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, where temporary reception and detention centres for irregular migrants are still in place, could represent a **strong incentive factor** for migrants themselves to attempt, in an extreme way, to reach the final stage of their journey.

These events could also trigger an increase in demand for the services of "aiding and abetting" or "facilitating" for secondary movements (in the Balkan region and towards north from Greece, to cross the Channel).

The closure of the borders and the reinforcement of police controls inside the Schengen area also **increases demand for intermediation services**, for the purpose of smuggling migrants requiring forged documents, and will probably also increase the use of social media and services on the web (including, in the deep web) to facilitate the execution of these services.

## 10. Protection of cultural heritage

As regards **cultural heritage**, the sectors most exposed to the attention of criminal associations are **archaeology and antiques**.

The investigative activities carried out by the **specialized departments of the Carabinieri Corps** in recent years, have highlighted, in general, the tendency of criminals to **prioritize goods and relics of lesser value**, also because of the rapid commercialization at low risk (coins, books and archival documents, furniture, weapons and philatelic goods, in addition to the archaeological goods subject to clandestine excavations).

Reports show that **forging** is expanding, in particular relating to **contemporary artworks**.

All illicit activities related to cultural and artistic assets are mostly the prerogative of **organized associations with transnational projects** that are well structured and able to reach every corner of the planet, partly thanks to the involvement of industry professionals.

From an operational point of view, in recent years, the situation has highlighted how the contraction of revenues and high out-of-pocket expenses have led to the closure of most of the commercial activities in the sector, consequently leading to the **exponential increase in the number of virtual e-commerce platforms that deal with cultural goods**.

The trade of cultural goods, today, is carried out through:

- the matching, in addition to the classic antique shop (which can be reduced in size or transferred to decentralised and less expensive premises), with dedicated sites or online shops;
- the direct transition to online commerce, thus eliminating expenses for rent and utility payments.

Such renewed criminal operating methods have driven the **specialized departments of the Carabinieri Corps** to associate the traditional investigations with in-depth *cyber-patrolling* activities, which have allowed, in the last five years, through the exploration of the web, to recover over 11,000 objects of artistic and cultural value and the blocking of numerous dedicated sites.

The health emergency in place, if on the one hand has recorded a sharp drop in theft of cultural goods in line with the overall trend of crime in Italy, on the other hand, is showing an **increase in the activities of online marketing**, a place where historical gallerists can easily match supply and demand.

The decrease in predatory offences also in this sector against an increase in supply, confirms the increase in the use of the web in the *lockdown* phase has also facilitated the **attempt to sell cultural assets**, that had, until then, been set aside.

In this context, the spreading of "remote" delinquency is, however, being performed in a context where law enforcement activity has already been intensified.



*On 9 May this year, the Carabinieri sent a 50-year-old man to Bologna for "receiving stolen goods". Following a house search, he was found in possession of 53 archival documents dating back to the 18th century, drawn up by Italian State bodies and military corps. The investigation had been launched following the sale of the documents on online sites, taking advantage of the increased use of the web.*

## 11. Trafficking of narcotic substances

The fight against the trans-national trafficking of narcotic substances towards the national territory coincides, in the majority of cases, with the action of fight against the autochthonous mafia-type organisations and, more recently, foreign ones, regardless of their geographical location. For these associations, **drug trafficking** remains "the principal wealth multiplier", considering that its profits are by far, the most important among those generated by any other human activity, legal or illegal.

The fight against drug trafficking remains decisive, both for the indispensability of containing the diffusion of narcotics, which has repercussions on health and public order, and because it diminishes the strength and efficiency - as well, the wealth - of the criminal organizations and of the entire complex chain revolving around them.

The results acquired by the **Central Directorate for Anti-drug Services**, also through its network of Security Experts, confirm a global scenario of a **significant decline in trafficking** in the first quarter of 2020, due to the containment measures adopted by various Governments, following the pandemic and the major difficulties in finding precursors from China.

However, there has recently been a slight upturn in transfers of *hashish, marijuana* and, in relation to Mexico and Venezuela, and also of *cocaine*<sup>15</sup>.

In any case, there is evidence of:

- Organisations' attempts to use means of transport for substances that reduce the risk of interception or limit its possible consequences; these include:
  - hiding in containers of medical supplies or staple goods.
  - the increased in the use of sailing ships and offshore vessels.
  - in some circumstances, more frequent but less voluminous transportation.
- the use of encrypted messaging communication methods.

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<sup>15</sup> Elements:

- 5145 kg of hashish intercepted by the Senegalese M.M., aboard a sailing ship, on April 28th, this year;
- 250 kg of hashish and 646 kg of marijuana intercepted by Guardia di Finanza, at the same date, aboard a boat off the coast of Apulia;
- Santo Domingo reports a drastic reduction in cocaine trafficking in the Caribbean caused by the risk of an American naval commando banning traffic towards the USA, in April. In the case of the Dominican Republic, this caused a greater influx of marijuana from the Haitian land border;
- Venezuela reports increased seizures of cocaine in territorial waters for operations conducted by the same US naval commando, threatened in the area;
- Mexico reports an increase in trafficking, due to the penetrating action of the Cartels (aimed, as will be seen later, at increasing their consensus towards large sections of the population).

- the presence of blocked drugs in border areas or European storage areas is awaiting the resumption of trade.

With regard to **prices**, the trend confirms an **increase in costs**, which indicates increased risks and difficulties in obtaining supplies of substances and precursors from producing countries.

## 12. Domestic violence

The trend of crimes relating to gender-based violence, from 1 March to 10 May 2020, was compared with the same period of the previous year, in order to monitor the trend of the phenomenon in the period characterized by the evolution of the epidemiological crisis from Covid-19.

The restrictive measures adopted by the Government have, in fact, led to forced and prolonged cohabitation of families which, in difficult circumstances, may have led to a greater exposure of the so-called, vulnerable victims to criminal conduct due to domestic violence.

As highlighted in the following analysis, the crimes committed in this context show a general decrease, but, on the other hand, there has been an increase in calls to the anti-violence number **1522** of the Department for Equal Opportunities, created to support and help women victims of violence. The high number of requests for help received in the dedicated number suggests that the situations of forced cohabitation, the feeling of loneliness and confusion linked to the difficulty of women to turn to the police force, have been able to find a valid point of reference in the helpline of the aforementioned Department and that therefore, it is not exclusively an indication of the increase in the number of crime.

An awareness raising action on this sensitive issue was also promoted by the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior, which, with a special memorandum<sup>16</sup> of the Chief of Police - Director General of Public Security, urged the General Commands and branch offices to enhance, among other things, the compliance with the first intervention procedures for the protection of women victims of violence.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE CENTRAL DIRECTORATE OF CRIMINAL POLICE**

The object of this analysis, **carried out by the Criminal Analysis Service of the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police**, are the so-called spy crimes of gender violence: persecutory acts (art. 612 *bis* penal code), abuse against family members and cohabitants (art. 572 Criminal Code) and sexual violence (art. 609 *bis, ter* and *octies* Criminal Code).

In the graphic representation below, it is clear that in the first weeks of March, that coincide with the beginning of the lockdown period - when the first adopted

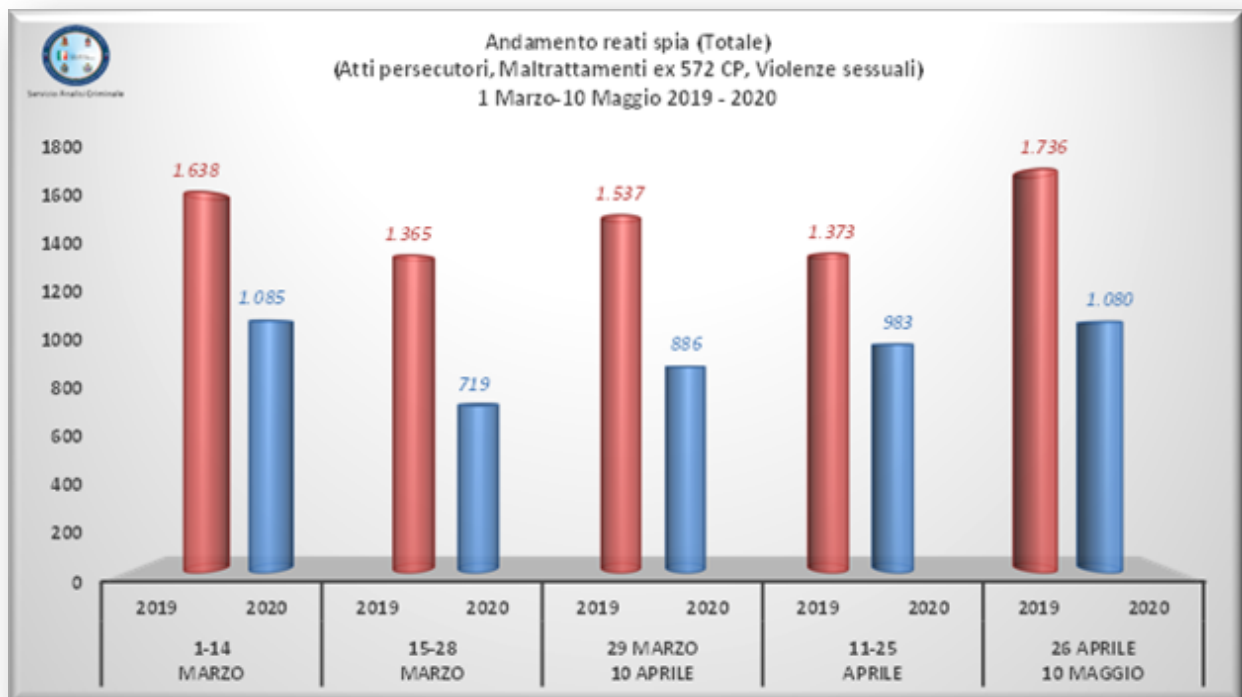
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<sup>16</sup> Memorandum MI-123-U-C-3-2-2020 dated 27 March 2020 concerning "Gender-based violence and domestic violence. Awareness-raising actions"

containment measures were more restrictive - the trend in the number of offences committed immediately decreased from 1,085 to 719.

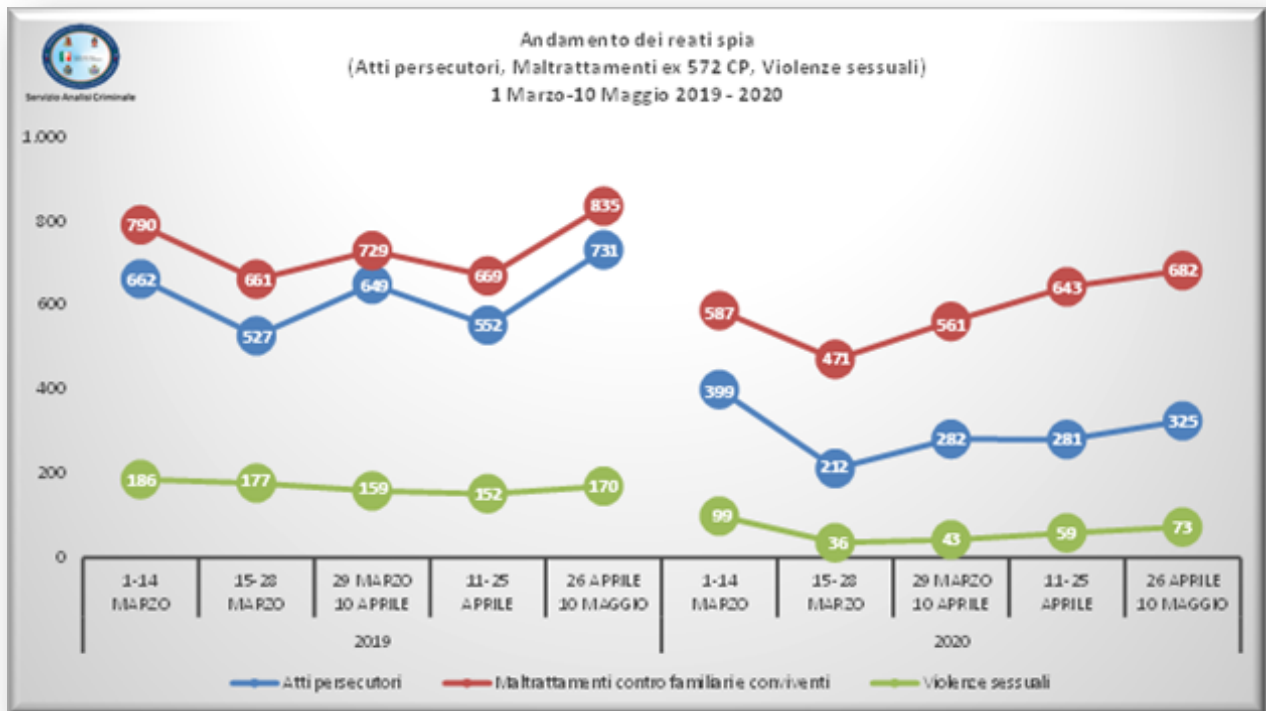
Since the end of March, there has been a steady gradual increase in the number of offences, from 886 to 1,080 on 10 May 2020, as the restrictive measures have been progressively relaxed.

However, it should be noted that during the period referred to, all the above mentioned offences recorded a significant decrease compared to the same period in 2019; in particular, from 26 April to 10 May, 2020, the number decreased from 1,736 in 2019 to 1,080.



The graph below compares the trend of the three offences under review, revealing the broadly similar trend of the various offences which, after an initial decrease in March, are progressively increasing. The offence that is most significantly increased is the *abuse of family members and cohabitants*.






**The Criminal Analysis Service** of the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police<sup>17</sup> carries out a detailed and in-depth study of **murders**, including those with **female victims**.

The monitoring of murders committed in Italy during the period under review, with particular reference to those committed against women, also takes into account the family-affective context in which the event took place and the ties between victim and perpetrator.

As shown in the table below, in the period 1 March - 10 May 2020, the number of murders decreased substantially compared to the same period in 2019 (35 compared to 80). In the same period of time, there was a decrease in the number of female victims from 30 to 16, also in the family-affective context (from 23 to 15).

The same decreasing trend can be observed for women killed in the family-affective context by partners or ex-partners, where numbers show a decrease from 18 to 9 cases.

<sup>17</sup> The analysis of the data extracted from the Interforce Data Bank is compared with the information coming from the local offices of the police forces; it is, therefore, possible to reconstruct the dynamics, the reason, the context in which the event took place and the eventual relations of kinship or sentimental relations that bound the subjects involved. This activity allows to elaborate a particular perspective on the subject of the so-called femicide which, albeit not having legal value, since it does not refer to a specific crime in our system, constitutes a criminological category which indicates all the acts of violence, up to murder, committed against a woman.

 <b>Omicidi volontari consumati in Italia</b> (fonte D.C.P.C. - dati operativi)			
	1 Mar - 10 Mag 2019	1 Mar - 10 Mag 2020	Var %
<b>Omicidi commessi</b>	<i>80</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>-56,25%</i>
...di cui con vittime di sesso femminile	<i>30</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>-46,67%</i>
...di cui in ambito familiare/affettivo	<i>34</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>-38,24%</i>
...di cui con vittime di sesso femminile	<i>23</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>-34,78%</i>
(...di cui da partner/ex partner)	<i>18</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>-50,00%</i>

## DATA RELATING TO CALLS TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE NUMBER 1522

In order to support and help women victims of gender-based violence, in 2006 the **Department for Equal Opportunities** activated the public service number **1522**, with the aim of developing a broad action system for the detection and combating of the phenomenon of intra- and extra-family **violence against women**.

With the evolution of the emergency situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the *helpline* was subject of a dedicated and intense information campaign carried out with the participation of well-known celebrities from the show business.

A study carried out by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)<sup>18</sup> revealed that the use of the *helpline* in the period between March 1 and April 16, 2020, has registered a

<sup>18</sup> The integrated system for the collection and processing of data on gender-based violence provided for in the National Plan against sexual violence and gender-based violence, provides that the Department for Equal Opportunities provide data from 1522 for them to process and disseminate. The document "*Gender Violence at the time of Covid-19: Calls to the 1522 helpline*" was released on 13 May 2020. <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/242841>

**surge in telephone calls** (5031 calls, with an increase of 73% compared to the same period in 2019)<sup>19</sup>.

There were 2,013 victims who generically asked for help, while there were 1,543 requests from women who were subjected to violence.

The in-depth analysis of data on the phenomenon of gender violence carried out by **ISTAT** also shows that 72.8% of women do not report the crime suffered, and that in 93.4% of cases, violence takes place at home.

The use of **1522** also consisted of general calls aimed at manifesting other situations of distress or requests for information on the service or on the presence of anti-violence centres active at a local level.

The attention paid to women victims of violence and the awareness raising activities on such sensitive issue conducted on various levels also led to an agreement signed between the Department for Equal Opportunities and the Order of Pharmacists, Federfarma and Assofarm, in support of women during the emergency, aimed at identifying the pharmacy as a key information service for access to 1522.

As it was the case in Italy, many media campaigns have been launched in other European countries, such as Spain, where the Government, with the help of pharmacies, has advertised the "*Mascarilla 19*" initiative, which allows women to ask for help from the police using coded language. France has borrowed the same support system.

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<sup>19</sup> Requests to the respective Spanish emergency number, 016, also increased by 30.7% from 14 March to 15 April 2020 compared to the same period of the previous year and, at the same time, the number of complaints made during that period have marked a decrease.

### 13. Cybercrime: cyber-attacks to critical infrastructure and online child pornography

*"...cybercriminals identify medical institutions as most vulnerable targets to conduct their dangerous activity. I believe that any attacks on hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic are on par with terrorist incidents"*  
Eugene Kaspersky founder and CEO of the Kaspersky Lab group, specialised in cybersecurity.  
From *la Repubblica – Affari e Finanza*, dated 3 May

"Among the most significant criminal phenomena that emerged in this period of epidemic and investigated by the postal police, there is certainly the "telework fraud". The *modus operandi* is rather proven: *"We offer remote employment contracts advertised through specialized platforms, ads on the network or on social networks - says an investigator - but in fact the real purpose is to have personal data sent so to clone them."* Actually, those names are used to open current accounts for gambling and other illegal activities.

From *IL SECOLO XIX*, dated May 6, 2020

In general, in the last two months, the **National Anti-Cybercrime Centre for the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (CNAIPIC)** has issued a growing number of security alerts: from 5328 in January, in fact, it has passed to 7080 in March and at 7602 in April. The increase appears even more considerable also in the comparison with the same data for the year 2019, when 6824 alerts were issued in March and 6170 alerts in April.

As a preliminary reminder, alerts are issued both in relation to potential *threats and vulnerabilities* (detected in the prevention activity), and in relation to actual *attacks* having a criminal nature (criminal offences). It is worth mentioning that the analysis of the specific crime phenomenology has provided evidence vulnerabilities and threats are in an increasing trend: the statistical data recorded in January, equal to 5009 alerts, in fact increased, in the following months, due to the Covid-19 emergency, reaching 7060 alert numbers in March and 7276 alerts in April.

As for confirmed attacks, the statistics made it possible to register 319 cases in January, 484 in February, a significant decrease in March (with just 20 cases) and, finally, a significant rise in April, with 326 cases.

The statistical data shown offer clear evidence of an **increase in the criminal strategies** developed according to the planning of said events, which was not followed up, by virtue of the preventive action put in place, by a corresponding increase in concrete episodes of cyber-attack.

With a view to pursuing this fundamental, effective, preventive action, it was decided to raise the level of intervention due to the scenario resulting from the ongoing epidemiological emergency: in fact, in this changed context, major events have involved some of the most important health structures, including the major

hospitals committed to tackling the epidemic, which were subject to attack and cyber-extortion campaigns, aimed at hindering the reception and treatment of patients, through the injection of sophisticated computer viruses. Consequences included requests for payment of huge ransoms, mostly in cryptocurrencies, as a condition for the restoration of the operation of the IT structure supporting the provision of the service health.

For this reason and in order to provide an adequate response, aimed at prevention, the CNAIPIC (National Anti-Cybercrime Centre for the Protection of Critical Infrastructures) has activated a specific so-called alert protocol "*Covid-Rosso*" (Red Covid), serving to recognise and launch *early warnings* of threats and attacks targeting health infrastructures (hospitals, health administrations, pharmaceutical system, etc.).

The applied protocol provides for the establishment of a branched information network which, in synergy with the corresponding local operational units (activated in the various **Postal and Communications Police Departments**), allows to promptly reach the contact points of the country's health institutions, and therefore to issue timely alerts in the event of threats and / or attacks.

Limiting the analysis to the most relevant threats and attacks, from the beginning of February, the CNAIPIC has registered **58 serious and concrete threats** connected somehow to the epidemic. Such threats consisted mainly of abusive accesses using stolen credentials, ransomware, DDoS attacks, phishing campaigns, undermining of websites, illicit tracing, malware, to commit fraud and extortion activities. Of these threats, 40 were attributable to the aforementioned "*Covid-Rosso*" (Red-Covid) protocol, as they directly referred to health infrastructures operating in various hospitals in the country (which currently are under investigation); while in one case investigation activities were initiated for a cyber-dependent crime related to a false fundraising, spread via the internet, with usurpation of the name of a national public administration primarily involved in the management of the ongoing epidemic.

### **Types of attacks**

As mentioned above, the analysis of this specific criminal phenomenology has allowed us to determine the main ways in which the criminal activities in focus are achieved or attempted.

More in detail:

**DDoS campaigns**, which consist in causing the paralysis of a web service, rendered no longer operational through massive requests (interactions) addressed to a specific server.

In this context, the well-known "*I.N.P.S. case*" is quite explanatory: the specific evidence acquired, in fact, made it possible to link this type of attack on the systems, with the difficulties in accessing the site of the aforementioned Institute, during the so-called click day of the 1st of April. In the first phase of the pandemic this attack prevented users from completing the applications for the disbursement of the economic benefits granted by the Government to support income of self-employed and subordinate workers.

Based also on the analysis of the data attributable to the European experience (where there was however a slight increase in the number of DDoS attacks, somehow related to the ongoing health emergency), it is possible to envisage, with margins of reasonable reliability, an upward forecast of events in focus, at least in the short and medium term: due to the significant increase in the number of people working at home remotely, the band (which basically expresses the amount of information data that can be transferred, through a connection in a given period of time) is, in fact, exploited to the limits and this facilitates the improvement of the DDoS attacks and the consequent "*extortion campaigns*" against organizations and critical functions or services (in Europe, for example, Croatia has reported a DDoS attack against an authentication server of a university network that allowed students to continue studying remotely despite the ongoing epidemiological emergency).

*Ransomware campaigns*, malware that acts by encrypting the data present in the attacked system and in the systems connected to it.

As explained above, the action of contrast and prevention implemented by CNAIPIC, against this type of attack, proved to be effective due to the setting up, from the first days of the health emergency, of the described network of contact points of all health structures of the Regions and Provinces: through the timely issuance of all *security alerts* and all information relating to the undermining indicators made available for the various threats, an effective increase in the security systems of the field has been achieved, with a consequent increase in the prevention of *infections*.

Specifically, since the beginning of the epidemic there have been **8 major ransomware** threats potentially harmful to critical infrastructures, of which **4** directed specifically to hospitals and healthcare facilities of primary importance for the fight against the SARS - CoV-2 epidemic: thanks to the contrast and prevention strategies implemented by CNAIPIC, none of these threats has resulted in a concrete case of ransomware infection in healthcare facilities.

The usual analysis of the data obtained from the European experience, which is of outmost importance for the drafting of a complete and effective prevention strategy, offered different results from those produced by the Italian situation.

With the beginning of the health emergency, Europol has received numerous requests for assistance on investigations related to ransomware attacks; hospitals and

other health facilities have been subject to attacks across the Union. Specifically, on 13 March 2020, the Brno University Hospital, the second largest hospital in the Czech Republic which houses one of the largest Covid-19 testing facilities in the country, had to cancel some medical and surgical interventions and relocate patients to other hospitals, due to the operational block caused by a targeted attack.

The study of specific evidence has revealed that: a) the most recurrent nationalities of the perpetrators of the attacks remain the same as in the period prior to the pandemic and include various Eastern European countries with a prevalence of Ukraine and Moldova; b) the period of time between the infection and the activation of the ransomware is shorter; c) the latency time of the attacks, which are launched as soon as possible, decreases as soon as the infection in the target system takes place; d) the ransoms requested, in relation to the events that occurred during the time of the epidemiological emergency phase, are individually considered to be of modest amounts.

Due to the increase in the number of ransomware attacks, somehow related to the current health emergency (recorded with particular reference to the various countries of the Union), it is possible to envisage, with margins of reasonable reliability, an upward forecast of events in focus in Italy as well and at least in the short and medium term

### **Direct intrusion campaigns into critical systems**

The necessary adoption of smart working processes, both within the Public Administration and in the private sector, entails, in addition to the undoubted virtuosities, an inevitable relapse in terms of widening the corporate cyber perimeter, and for this reason a greater exposure to external hostile actions.

During the period of the pandemic, the dark web saw an increase in the supply of data packets and credentials resulting from data breaches to various services, especially through the violation of RDP (Remote Desktop Protocol), i.e. the protocol used for home connections to smart working systems that, in this way, become the target of computer intrusion through the use of credentials obtained through brute force attacks, i.e. as a result of phishing campaigns, and thus, allowing the attacker to access the domains of companies and public administration.

With a view to a suitable action of prevention and containment of the events, the CNAIPIC, having acquired the reports concerning the compromises of databases, has promptly conveyed the information on each threat to the Companies, Ministries, Cert, Critical Infrastructures and to the subjects operating in the health sector, sharing all the appropriate evidence to prepare adequate protection measures.

## Prevention and fight against child pornography

The health emergency in place and the consequent need to contain the spread of the virus, which has also been achieved through the suspension of school activities "with presence", has inevitably required an increase of the level of attention towards criminal phenomena related to the sexual exploitation of children online. The increase in the free time available, not only for children, but also for many adults (interested in suspending their work or called to work in smart working mode), combined with the unavoidable increase in the use of computer systems are, in fact, potentially useful factors to determine an increase in crimes of child pornography on the Internet and sexual blackmail against minors.

The impact of these factors contribute to the potential increase in particular crime scenarios and it appears even more significant when considering that they are found, in the light of the current pandemic, in large segments of the population, resident in different and large areas of the planet: likewise, the participation in pedophile communities is characterized, as proven by investigative experience, by its transnational effectiveness. It is a consequence, in fact, of the prolongation of the *lockdown* all around the world, which inevitably contributes to raising the level of such specific risk.

For this reason, since the beginning of the pandemic spread of the Sars-Cov-2 virus, the Postal and Communications Police, with the use of all its local units (coordinated through the strategic action ensured by the National Centre for Online Child Pornography Contrast - C.N.C.P.O.), has:

- intensified the monitoring of the network, with the aim of preventing an increase in crimes related to the sexual exploitation of children online.
- strengthened the connection for investigations in international cooperation channels, between the police and the judiciary, a fundamental strategic prerequisite for disrupting online communities of pedophiles.
- raised the collaboration level with the most popular social networks in Italy, with a view to achieving synergy in the fight against the improper use of the Internet by minors, by defining preferential channels of communication and management of criminally relevant cases.
- increased the commitment efforts in identifying an increasing number of sites containing child pornography material, to be included in the *black list*, managed by the C.N.C.P.O., whose access is blocked in different ways, depending on the location of the servers used, to the active internet users in Italy (as of April 30 this year, 2,373 sites were on the *black list*).



All this, in an attempt to adapt the response, also from the point of view of prevention, to the changing needs related to the health emergency in place.

The analysis of the statistical data, which illustrate the trend of the specific criminal phenomenology, confirms the successful outcome of the action carried out so far: in the first 4 months of the current year, in fact, compared to the same period of the two preceding years, there was only a slight increase in the examined cases demanding an intervention in terms of repression of the criminal conduct.

## 14. Signs from the prison system and investigation evidence related to crime dynamics

The analyses of the information coming from the prison system, prepared by the **Ministry of Justice- Prison Administration Department**, concerning **internal contacts (written correspondence and social relations)** between prisoners related to mafia type organized crime, shows that in 2019, those belonging to the *cosca* (clans with strong family ties) *'Ndrangheta* and members of the *Camorra* clans, intensified compared to the previous year, going from 46% to 52% of the total percentage.

During the first quarter of 2020, the figures remains stable, standing at 45%.

The **connections between the two criminal organizations, 'Ndrangheta and Camorra**, dating back in time <sup>20</sup>, would also be confirmed by judicial police activities.



*As part of the operation called "Akhua", conducted by Carabinieri Corps on February 4, 2020 in the provinces of Rome, Naples, Varese, Reggio Calabria, Cagliari, Oristano, Trento and in Spain, 33 subjects were remanded in custody, for various reasons, among which mafia association aimed at trafficking and possession of narcotic substances and abusive access to an IT or telematic system.*

*The investigations conducted between November 2016 and October 2018 have documented the close synergies (a kind of agreement on "mutual assistance") in the sector of national and international drug trafficking of two criminal partnerships, identifying their top-down relations, associates and pushers.*

*The first group was dedicated to the illegal trafficking of narcotic substances (cocaine, hashish, and marijuana) on the Rome-Cagliari route and was led by two contiguous subjects to the Bellocco 'ndrina' (Ndrangheta clans) operating in Rosarno (RC). The second (connected to the previous one) appeared to be led by two brothers, sons of a prominent exponent of the Licciardi clan, active in the district of Naples, Secondigliano, (dedicated to the sale of narcotic substances in the districts of the north-east area of the capital city).*

*The drug supply channels from South America were also identified (again through the aforementioned 'ndrina) and it was possible to quantify the business volume of the aforementioned illegal traffic in approximately 5,000,000 euros per year.*

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<sup>20</sup> It should be emphasized that on 10 May 2016 the Anti-Crime Division of Rome, Police Headquarters, executed the asset seizure decree no. 46/2016 M.P., in relation to 9 subjects, including **members of 'Ndrangheta, Camorra and the well-known Sinti Casamonica family.**

In addition, in 2010, Guardia di Finanza dismantled an organization, composed of members of the **'Barbaro** di Plati (RC) and **La Torre** di Caserta clans, dedicated to international drug trafficking, as part of the "Tamanaco" operation, which involved the provinces of Reggio Calabria, Caserta, Frosinone, Turin, Pisa and Monza Brianza.

*Simultaneously with the remanded in custody, a preventive measure of seizure, for confiscation purposes, was executed on movable and immovable property for about 1,000,000 euros.*

The flow of **external contacts** (written correspondence and visual / telephone interviews with entitled family members), held by the prisoners of *'Ndrangheta* in 2019, mainly concerned the regions of **Calabria, Lombardy, Piedmont, Lazio, Emilia Romagna and Campania.**

In the first 4 months of 2020, a decrease in contacts was identified in Calabria, while an increase was noted in **Lombardy, Piedmont, Lazio and Emilia Romagna**, proving the **multiple interests of the organization in different territories.**



Their **vocation** seems to be confirmed by **investigative evidence** <sup>21</sup>.

*In this regard, it is worth mentioning the maxi operation called **Rinascita-Scott**, when on 19 December 2019, 334 subjects were remanded in custody by Carabinieri Corps in Vibo Valentia and in various regions of the national territory (**Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Liguria, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Lazio, Sicily, Apulia, Campania and Basilicata**) as well as in Germany, Switzerland and Bulgaria.*

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<sup>21</sup>In January 2019, 14 people were remanded in custody by Carabinieri Corps in Aosta, Turin and Reggio Calabria, belonging to a "local" branch of *'Ndrangheta*, active in Aosta and surrounding areas led by the "Nirta-Scalzone" *cosca* (clans with strong family ties) operating in San Luca (RC).

In June 2019, the State Police, as part of the "*Grimilde*" operation, executed remanded in custody and house arrest against 15 people who were thought to belong to the **Grande Aracri** family in Cutro (KR), in the provinces of Bologna, Reggio Emilia, Piacenza and Parma.

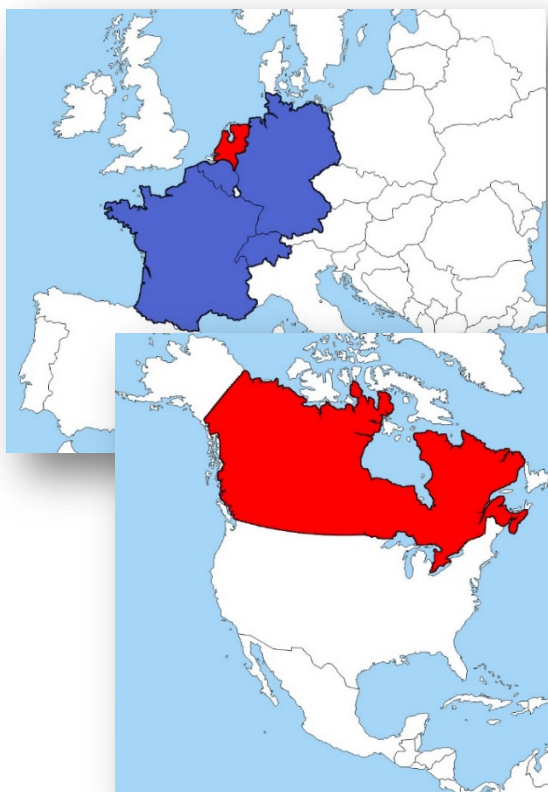
On 5th of November 2019 Carabinieri Corps executed, in Turin, Milan, Catania, Reggio Calabria, Mantua, Pavia and Forli-Cesena, preventive measures against 48 people, held responsible, for various reasons, for association in mafia-type crime, illicit possession of weapons, money laundering with proceeds of crime, aiding and abetting of fugitives, external collaboration in mafia-type associations, drug trafficking. The investigations made it possible to reconstruct the organization chart of the premises of *'Ndrangheta* in Volpiano (TO) and San Giusto Canavese (TO), operating in the provinces of Turin, Reggio Calabria as well as in Spain and Brazil.

The operation made it possible to unravel all the 'Ndrangheta organizations belonging to the powerful cosca (clan with strong family ties) of **Mancuso** of Limbadi (VV), operating in the Vibonese area, throughout the **national territory and abroad**.

The 'Ndrangheta's **inclination to infiltrate into extra regional contexts** is also certified by the seizure of assets carried out by the police and the DIA in 2019<sup>22</sup>.

More recently, on March 3, 2020, the DIA executed a seizure measure in the provinces of Milan and Lecco against a member of the **Barbaro - Papalia** cosca (clan with strong family ties), seizing assets for a total of 360,000 euros. On 9 March 2020, the Carabinieri Corps executed a seizure measure in the province of Turin against a member of the **Crea** cosca, seizing assets for a total of € 515,000. Finally, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2019, the State Police executed a seizure of 120,000,000 euros against members of the Calabrian families **Morabito, Scriva, Mollica, Ligato and Velonà**, in the Province of Rome.

## International situation



**Internationally**, the contacts of the members of the **Calabrian organizations** with free subjects mainly concerned **Switzerland, Germany, Holland, France, Belgium and Canada** during 2019.

In the first four months of the current year, there was a clear decrease in the external correspondence held with Switzerland (decreased by half), Germany and France.

On the other hand, there was an increase in direct correspondences with the **Netherlands**.

The 'Ndrangheta' **ability to root its illicit interests internationally**, creating **synergies with other organizations**, in order to expand its

<sup>22</sup>In 2019 assets for a total value of € 643,915,001.00 were seized, of which € 418,862,947.00, equal to 65.05% in regions other than Calabria, among which the top positions also include Lazio, Piedmont, Lombardy and Emilia Romagna (Source of the Central Directorate of Criminal Police, unconsolidated data).

networks of influence and make the most of globalization processes, is well known.



*Emblematic, in this sense, is the sentence of the High Court of Justice of Ontario, which in February 28, 2019, against a member of the "Ursino" cosca (clan with strong family ties), who was sentenced to 11 and a half years of imprisonment for drug trafficking. This court decision recognized the existence of 'Ndrangheta projections in Canada.*

*Among the main judicial police operations involving the activities of the cosca (clans with strong family ties) abroad, the 'Ndrangheta European Connection<sup>23</sup> is worth mentioning.*

The investigative activity has also evidenced a **growing interest** by affiliates of the 'Ndrangheta in **territorial areas of Eastern Europe**, also through passages in Northern Europe countries.

With reference to **cash credits**, received by prisoners under a special regime and **exits for purchase of supplementary food** in 2019, based on a estimations, the first trimester of 2020 provided significant data showing a **constant and unchanged support of the sodalists** in prison, ensuring their loyalty and silence (discourage dissociative and / or collaborative choices) while for the high level leaders an adequate treatment was guaranteed **to reaffirm their own status even in the situation of a long-term restrictive regime**, so to increase the perception of their **undisputable and the permanent criminal influence**, thus enhancing their economic power.

The conspicuous flow of money indicates that currently, in the emergency period, credits are sent by family members and/or lawyers by money orders and/or bank transfers, while credits can usually be made by depositing cash at the interview offices, which means that the flow of money is not traced.

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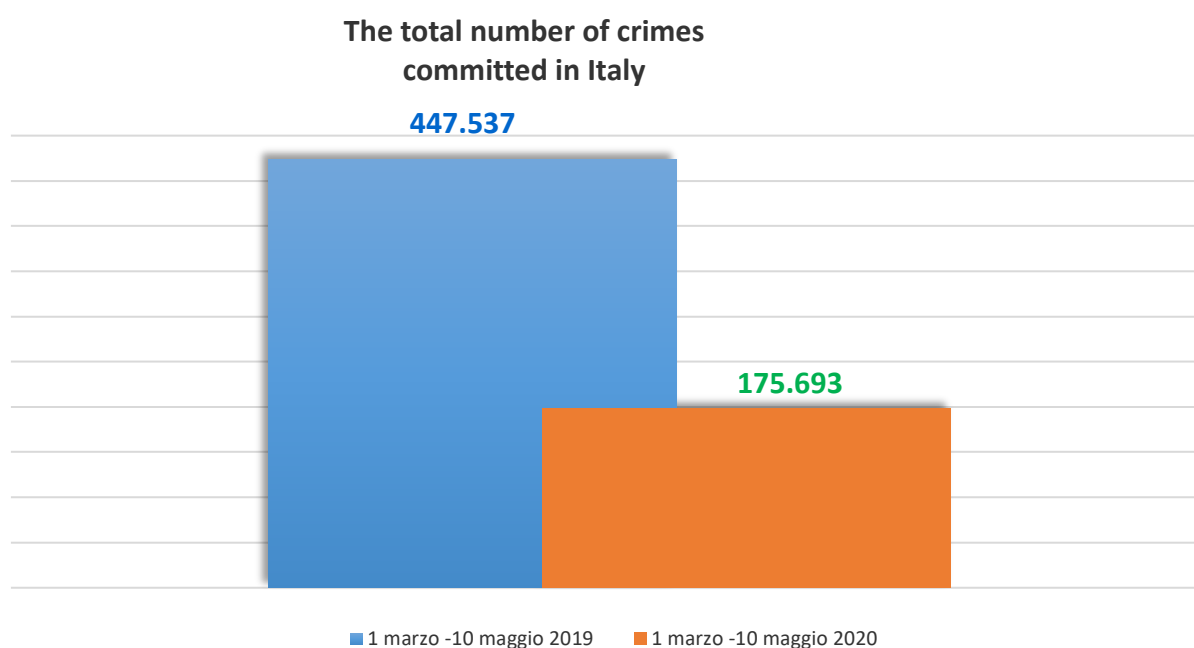
<sup>23</sup> On December 5, 2018 in Reggio Calabria and Germany, Belgium and Holland, the State Police and Guardia di Finanza, with the collaboration of various police from foreign states, executed preventive measures against 90 people, heading some leading *cosca* (clans with strong family ties) including the "Ierinò", "Vottari" and "Pelle" *cosca* clans, held responsible, among other crimes, of criminal mafia-type association, associations aimed at national and international drug trafficking between South America, the Italy and north-western Europe.

In the future, **provisions** should be made for the **traceability of credits** with the exclusive use of traceable and verifiable payment methods.

## 15. General trend of the criminal activity in Italy

The lockdown in Italy, following the Covid-19 pandemic, represents an unprecedented and exceptional event in a country that has always been characterized by an absolute freedom of movement.

These restrictive measures obviously influenced the **general trend of the criminal activity** which shows, in the analysis covering the period from 1 March to 10 May 2020, a clear **decrease** in the trend on the national territory (-61%), recording 447,537 crimes committed in 2019 and 175,693 in 2020<sup>24</sup>.



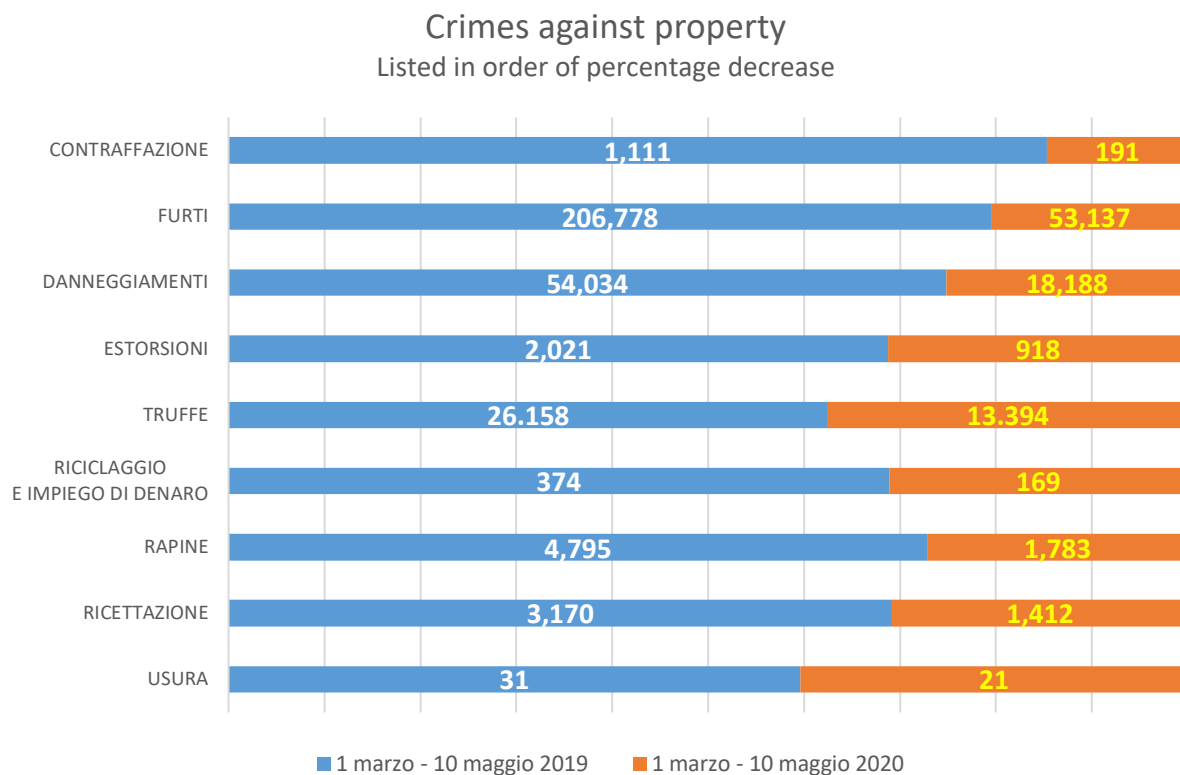
These are purely operational data (not consolidated and subject to change) which, however, may provide some indications on the trend of crime in our country in this exceptional period.

### Crimes against property

The data as below, covering the period March 1 - May 10, 2020 show a **decrease** in the crimes against property rates, compared to the same period of 2019:

<sup>24</sup> Operative data from SDI/SSD (not consolidated) extracted on May 12, 2020.

- **Counterfeit** from 1.111 to 191 (-83 %);
- **Thefts** from 206.778 to 53.137 (-74 %);
- **Damages** from 54.034 to 18.188 (-66 %);
- **Extorsion** from 2.021 to 918 (-55 %);
- **Fraud** from 26.158 to 13.394 (-48 %);
- **Money laundering and re-use of proceeds of crime** from 374 to 169 (-55 %);
- **Robbery** from 4.795 to 1.783 (-63 %)
- **Receiving of stolen goods** from 3.170 to 1.412 (-55 %);
- **Usury** from 31 to 21 (-32 %).



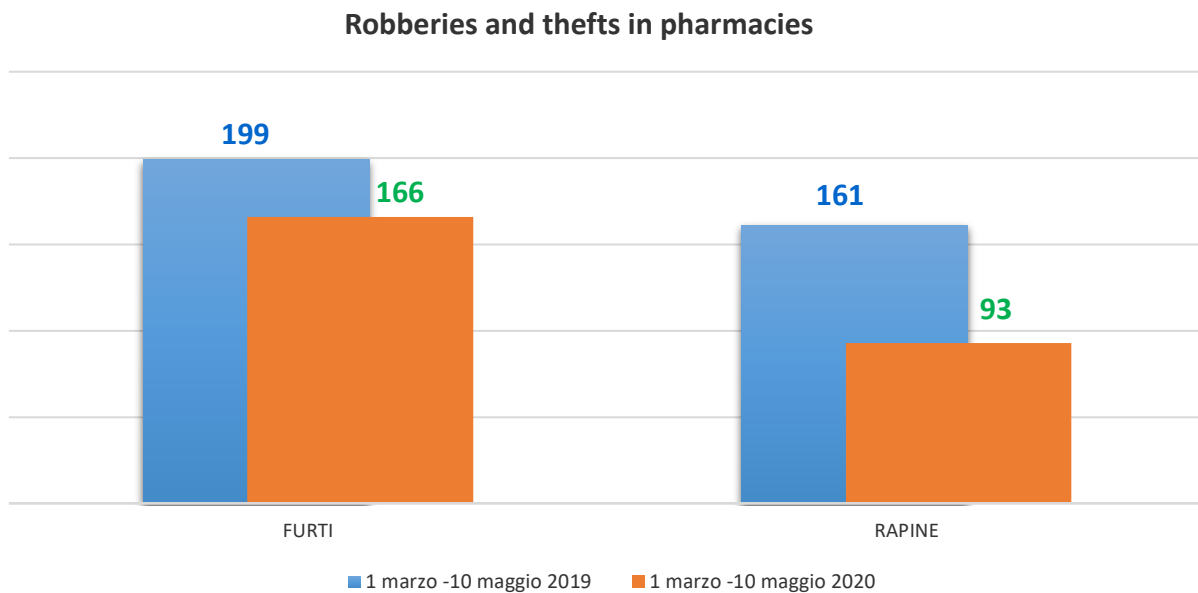
More specifically, the data analysis <sup>25</sup> shows a more **significant decrease** in some crimes such as *robberies in post offices* and *in banks* (with a decrease in both of the latter of about -80%) and *in thefts in general* (-74%, -76% of which committed at domiciles, -78% on parked cars, -68% in shopping malls), and a **less significant**

<sup>25</sup> Operational data source SDI/SSD (not consolidated) extracted on 12 May 2020.



**decrease** in other crimes such as *robberies in general* (-63%, - 61% of which in *shopping malls*, -58% at *domiciles*).

Specifically, the data examination related to **thefts and robberies in pharmacies** <sup>26</sup> committed in **Italy**, from 1 March to 10 May 2020, compared with the same period of 2019, highlights a significant **decrease** in the number of thefts (-16,6%), which went from 199 to 166, even the robberies are constantly decreasing (-42.2%) from 161 to 93.



Thefts and robberies are concentrated on commercial activities that have never suspended their activities, such as pharmacies, taking advantage of the possibility of hiding behind a mask and the scarce presence of citizens in the street.

Despite a general **decrease** in fraud (-61%), there is a significant number of attempted or committed crimes in which the perpetrators take advantage of the current emergency situation.

They are, in particular, performed by some traders, including through well-known e-commerce platforms, dishonest business practices, **scams and fraud on the market**, with the sale of health products (personal protective masks, detergents and latex gloves, etc.) at excessive prices or prices that do not correspond to standards.

<sup>26</sup> Operational data source SDI/SSD (not consolidated) extracted on 12 May 2020.





*In recent days, some fraud attempts by cybercriminals have been reported on the web.*

*In particular, on some social platforms, the **Nespresso** logo is being illicitly used to deceive users and acquire personal data for illicit purposes with the falsely promising to offer a coffee machine and coffee pods as a gift once they register on the website.*

*In addition, in this period in which many people make use of online purchases, the Postal Police reported an attempt to **smishing** which consists of sending an SMS requesting the payment of 2 euros and the entry of one's own data and those of the credit card to "unlock" a parcel being shipped. Furthermore, it was recently recorded that a message was sent on the messaging platforms proposing a virtual gift card worth 250 euros, which would be made available by the Swedish company **Ikea** in order to boost the consumption of families economically proven by the lockdown, with the aim of stealing the users' credit card data.*

### **Crimes against the person**

Below, with reference to the period from 1 March to 10 May 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, the data relating to crimes against the person are reported, all in **decrease** <sup>27</sup>:

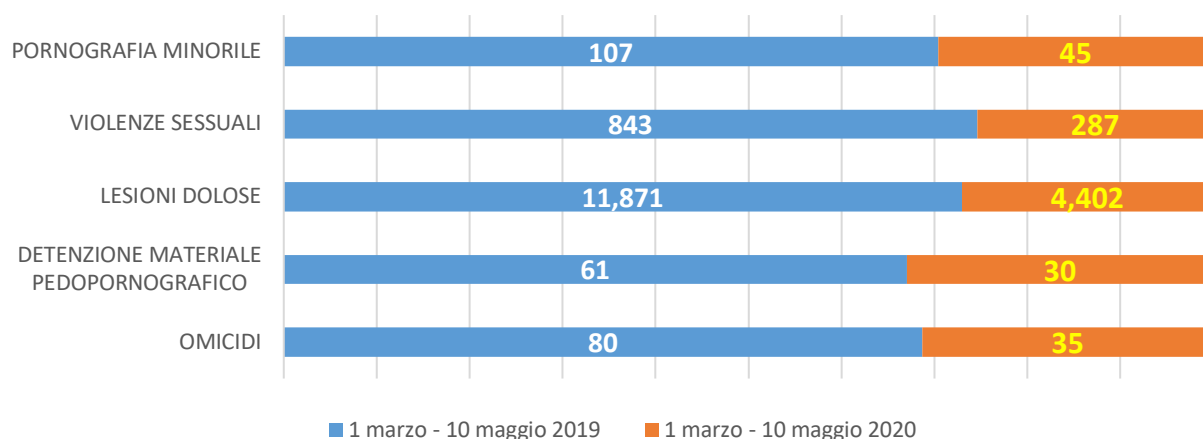
- **child pornography** from 107 to 45 (**-58%**);
- **sexual violence** from 843 to 287 (**-66%**);
- **wounding** from 11.871 to 4.402 (**-63%**);
- **possession of child pornography materials** from 61 to 30 (**-51%**);
- **manslaughter** from 80 to 35 (**-56%**);

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<sup>27</sup> Operational data source: SDI/SSD (non consolidated) extracted on 12 may 2020.

## Crimes against the person

listed in percentage decrease



## Crimes related to narcotics

Below, with reference to the period from 1 March to 10 May 2020 compared with the same period in 2019<sup>28</sup>, the data relating to drug offences are shown, all of which are **decreasing**:

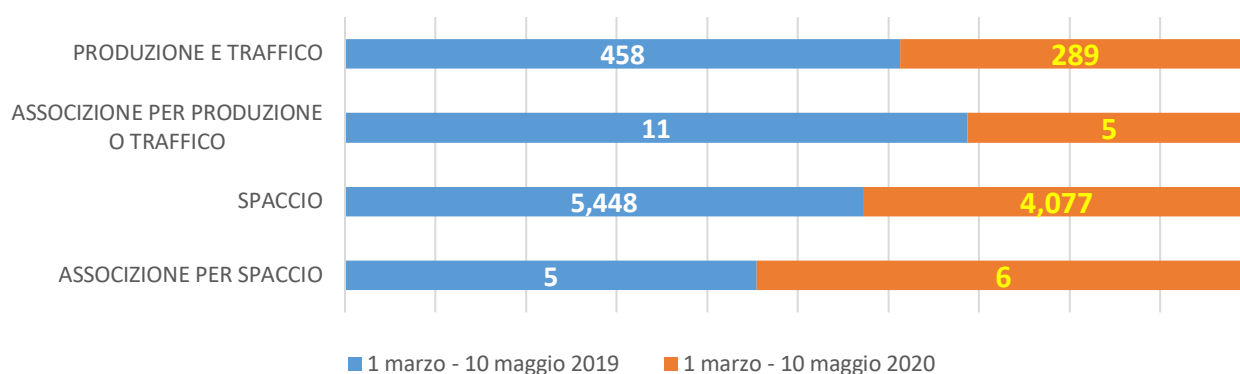
- **drug crimes** from 7.850 to 5.670 (-28%);

from which:

- production and trafficking from 458 to 289 (-37%);
- association for production or trafficking of narcotics from 11 to 5 (-55%);
- drug - dealing from 5.448 to 4.077 (-25%);
- association to drug dealing from 5 to 6 (+20%).

## Crimes related to narcotics

listed based on reduction percentage



<sup>28</sup> Operational data source: SDI/SSD (non consolidated) extracted on 12 May 2020.

It is worth noting that, with reference to drug offences, as a result of restrictions on freedom of movement, new forms of drug trafficking have sometimes taken place through unusual channels and crime is further implementing the use of telematic communication tools that are difficult for investigative bodies to attack. In some cases, for example, drug dealers have pretended to be drivers for the distribution of food to deliver drugs, with door-to-door service (sometimes using delivery apps and also using electronic payment methods) or, again, through the use of car sharing. In addition, before the complete closure of the public parks, there were cases of drug sales by drug dealers posing as runners or ordinary citizens walking their pets.

## Environmental crimes

As far as the environment sector is concerned, the mafias, taking advantage of the administrative and bureaucratic simplifications related to the emergency, will tend, as previously reported, to extend control in the **construction and waste sector**.

The waste sector deserves particular attention, given the increase of about 30% of the differentiated collection of waste, due to the increase of consumption because of the long hours at home accompanied by the suspension of numerous industrial chains that would recover such waste.

In this context, the specialized departments of **Carabinieri Corps** are carrying out specific investigations on the waste management cycle with particular attention to special and sanitary ones.

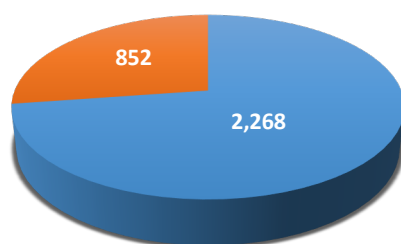
Below, with reference to the period from 1 March to 10 May 2020 compared with the same period in 2019<sup>29</sup>, the data relating to certain environmental crimes are shown below, all of which are **decreasing**:

- **air pollution** from 51 to 9 (**-82,4%**);
- **activity organized for the illegal trafficking of waste** from 24 to 7 (**-70,8%**);
- **illegal trafficking of waste** from 20 to 9 (**-55%**);
- **illegal combustion of waste** from 167 to 181 (**+8,4%**).

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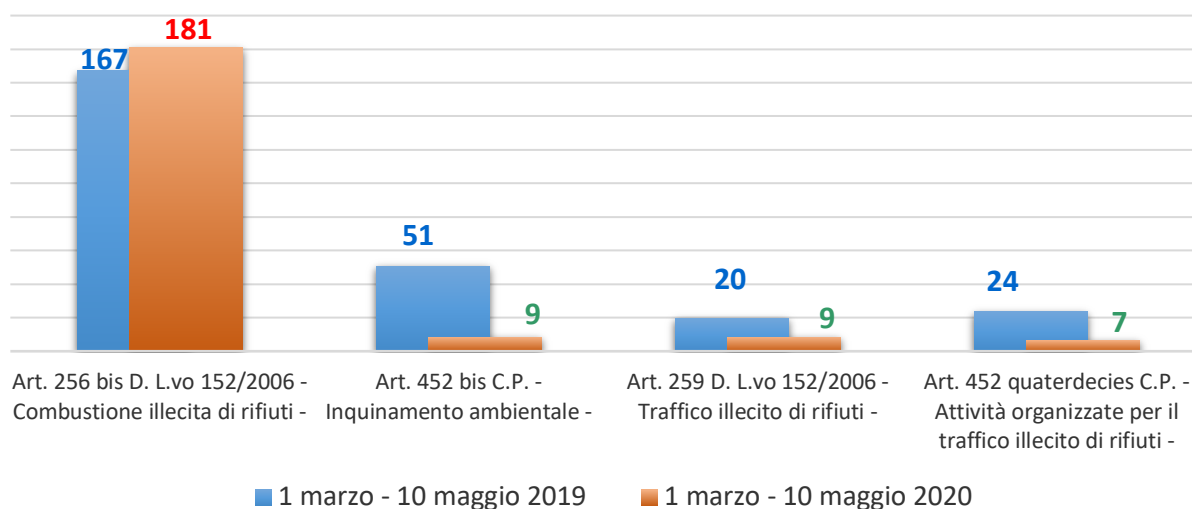
<sup>29</sup> Operational data source SDI/SSD (non consolidated) extracted as of 12 May 2020

### Crimes committed due to violations of environmental norms



■ 1 marzo - 10 maggio 2019    ■ 1 marzo - 10 maggio 2020

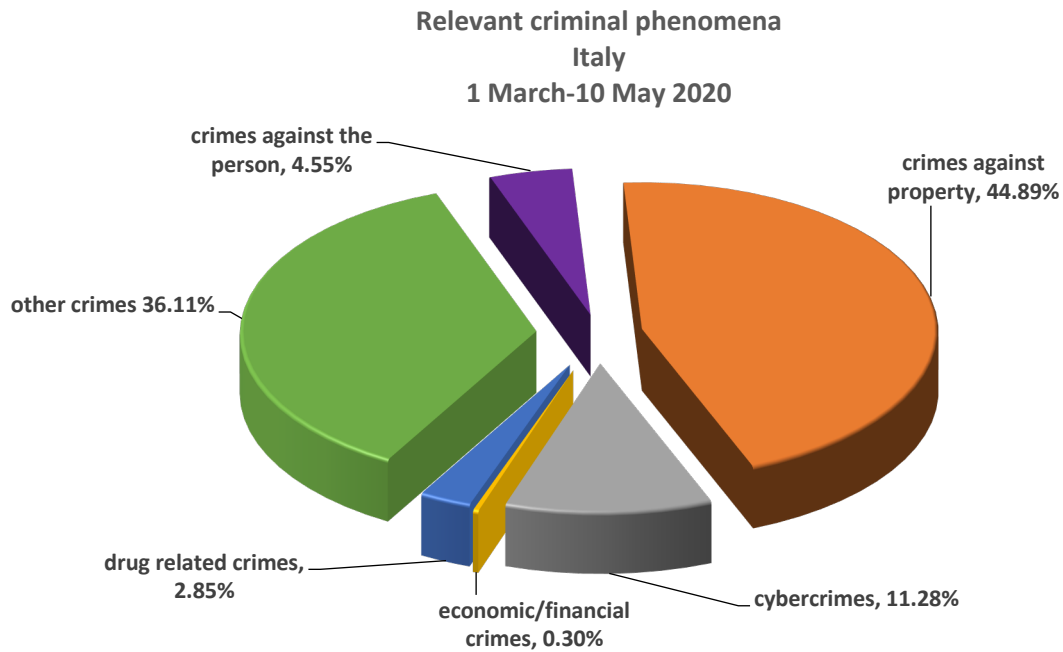
### Crimes committed due to violations of environmental norms



In general, there has been a **significant drop in the so-called predatory crimes**, which affect citizens' perception on security; the attention of the police forces, in addition to comply with the provisions on the limitation of movement, was particularly oriented towards the protection of all commercial activities that remained operational such as small and large-scale distribution, pharmacies, tobacconists and newsstands or in the monitoring of organized crime which has always been characterized by great ability to adapt to changes in the socio-economic

context and could benefit from the current emergency situation and the following reopening phase.

The following graph shows the specific weight of the macro-categories of crime in relation to their impact on the total in the period 1 March - 10 May 2020.



## 16. From the world: international news on the criminal activities post Covid-19

The analysis of the information obtained from the Network of Security Experts confirms the general reduction in crimes, equal to at least 30-35%.

As far as **criminal offences against property** are concerned, greater control of the territory by the police force, often supported by armed forces crews, contributes to the deterrent effect.

The figure, however, is not homogeneous: while the thefts are mainly consumed at the expense of closed shops, some countries (Albania, Argentina) recorded an increase in homes robberies.



*In Australia, a sharp decline in crimes against property is confirmed showing, however, a particular trend of reports of robberies committed to home-delivery carriers of food and goods, especially in the most remote areas of the continent. A phenomenon which was considered as totally insignificant before the lockdown.*

*In Chile, several merchants have decided to look after their properties by spending the night inside the business premises, triggering strong controversy with the security authorities.*

The phenomenon that most characterizes the post-Covid period is the intensification of frauds: in person, by telephone or internet, in all the examined countries, the consumption of frauds is widespread and growing, with particular regard to conduct in damage of elderly people or concerning the alleged sale of health or pharmaceutical products, on which speculative activities are no less relevant.



*In Canada, the RCMP - Royal Canadian Mounted Police received, from March 6 to May 1, 739 reports of fraud attempts, of which 178 were successful, for an estimated damage of about \$ 1.2 million.*

*In the UK, online shopping and online auction fraud increased 40% more than in the pre-lockdown period. The fraud mainly consists of the sale of fake, counterfeit or never delivered goods (in the latter case, these are mainly protective equipment and Covid kit tests).*

*The Russian authorities are particularly active in combating fraud and counterfeiting of medical materials. In April, 7 people were arrested and a batch of 287 FAZA-5NR lung devices worth over 200 million rubles (2.5 million euros) was seized, which apparently was*

*made in 1999-2000 having no certification, registration documentation or other documentation attesting the legality of its origin.*



INTERPOL

EUROPOL

*Interpol reiterated that between March and April the masks continued to be the most heavily scammed healthcare product.*

*In Istanbul, Turkey, on March 24, about a million of masks were seized and five people were arrested due to lack of adequate authorizations and who produced them in unhealthy conditions.*

*In India, the police dismantled an underground production factory and seized more than 27,000 counterfeit masks in the areas of Bengaluru and Kerala. The perpetrators would have already sold around 75,000 units to several state hospitals and institutions.*

*In Thailand, on March 2, 2020, the police searched a factory in Saraburi province selling masks that were already used as new. Six workers were caught fixing used masks, the latter were first ironed and then folded into boxes to look new and unused.*

*As for drug fraud, the Cameroonian authorities seized fake chloroquine tablets from around 300 pharmacies and hospitals as people rushed to purchase the anti-malaria drug believing that it could block the spread of the virus.*

*Following the danger reported by the World Health Organization in early March 2020 on the circulation of counterfeit anti-malaria drugs in neighbouring Chad and Nigeria, hundreds of Cameroon doctors and nurses complained that patients were not responding to medical treatment, thus questioning the quality of the supply of chloroquine. In fact, an accredited laboratory found that most of what was administered as chloroquine was a mixture of chalk and water.*

*Two pharmaceutical companies in Cameroon have been shut down and seven staff members who have been making counterfeit drugs in the western city of Bafoussam have been arrested, despite the authorities said part of the fake chloroquine had been imported from Nigeria. The Cameroonian army intercepted a boat from Nigeria with 100,000 false chloroquine tablets on board.*

*In Iran, more than 300 people died and another 1,000 were seriously injured after consuming contraband alcohol, mistakenly believing it could protect them from the virus. Europol refers the Spanish Interior Ministry's report on the clandestine sales of medical equipment on the dark web, such as FFP2 and FFP3 masks, Covid-19 test, drugs and digital thermometers.*

*The sales of medical devices, in particular those made in European countries, would be made by alleged legitimate companies, but traded by the same outside the envisaged government controls.*

*Shipments are conducted worldwide, by sending conventional parcels, upon payment in bitcoin, bank transfers or PayPal.*

An increase in usury and extortion crimes, in clear connection with the need for liquidity by ever wider fringes of the population, is being witnessed.



*In Bulgaria, to deal with the usury phenomenon, the government has introduced the possibility of providing interest-free loans for entrepreneurs and companies and loans of up to 4,500 BGN (approximately € 2,300) for the unemployed.*

*In Canada, the media reported cases of homeowners offering discounts to rental people in exchange for sexual services.*

Regarding **criminal offences against the person**, the prevailing figure indicates a slight decrease in family abuse (around -10%) compared to the strong reduction in other types of criminal offences.

However, there are contrasting signs, coming from countries where the lockdown period was characterized by an increase in reports of domestic violence.



*In the United States, criminal offences related to domestic violence have increased by an average of 10 to 30%, and parallelly have increased the calls for family quarrels or heated arguments between neighbours (the Baltimore Police Department has, for example, reported the emblematic case of 362 calls in two weeks for breach of the peace due to "too loud music"). An increase in violent crime in general (Houston + 19.3%) and murders was registered particularly in large cities such as New York (+ 35%). In Detroit, a city where Covid particularly affected police officers (14% of the police force in quarantine), the murders increased by 67% and the wounding increased by 37%.*

On the other hand, the conduct showed in various states (Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden) by subjects who, claiming to be infected, deliberately coughing in the police officers' faces, is quite new, so as to push the authorities to introduce new types of crime.

The framework relating to exploitation crimes (sexual, occupational) is more diversified, as it is linked to different legislations.



*In Australia, despite having suspended operating licenses for clubs and prostitution houses, which are legal in many states, due to the application of measures against Covid-19, the growing number of temporary residence visa holders and the changed economic conditions have fuelled the illegal exploitation and supply.*





INTERPOL

EUROPOL

*Australia has reported an increase in domestic violence against women and children, probably attributable to isolation and stress from COVID-19. Moreover, several suspected suicides were reported.*

*In France, a plan has been launched to assist victims of domestic abuse during the crisis from Covid-19: 20,000 hotel reservations are expected to be paid, and a contribution of 1 million euros was made available for organizations fighting domestic abuse as well as the creation of assistance points in supermarkets and pharmacies across the country.*

The general reduction in mobility has certainly made the trafficking of **narcotic substances** more difficult, however, after a first phase of stagnation, criminal organizations have identified alternative distribution channels capable of allowing the resumption of illicit trade.

In this regard, the trend, which was already mentioned in the report of March, showing a more frequent use of boats and vessels for the transport of large quantities of narcotic substance seems confirmed.



*In Spain, in the Alboran Sea off Ibiza, the last 26 of March, the Spanish and French police authorities seized two vessels, in which 5.3 and 4 tons of cannabis resin were concealed, respectively.*

*In Canada, the last 7 of April, the CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency) blocked a shipment from Mexico containing 106 kg of methamphetamine, hidden inside a container.*

*In Italy, the last 28 of April, off the coast of Monopoli, personnel from the Guardia di Finanza seized, upon intervention of the D.I.A. Operational Centre of Bari, about 900 kg of narcotic substances (650 kg of marijuana and 250 kg of hashish) concealed inside two boats steered by repeat offenders from Bari coming from the Balkan countries.*

With regard to transport by land, there is a general preference for the use of light means of transport (cars, trucks) where it is possible to hide average quantities of narcotic substance, and simulate the transport of pharmaceutical substances or health products related to the spread of the pandemic.



*In Jordan, the Army on the border with Syria arrested a man while trying to introduce into the Kingdom narcotic pills known as Captagon (so-called Isis drug): border control allowed to find in a hidden compartment of the vehicle on which the man was travelling about 463,000 drug pills.*

*In Peru, the DIRANDRO (Dirección Antidrogas) of the Policía Nacional has seized more than a kilo of cocaine camouflaged in a pack of surgical masks bound for Hong Kong. A week earlier, the police seized, in a warehouse of the Talma company in the port of Callao, 40 boxes of disposable masks that were to be shipped to China concealing packages with cocaine.*

One of the most recurrent retail systems observed in many countries (Albania, Argentina, Chile, Netherlands, Dominican Republic, Spain) is the one using riders, real or disguised one, being among the few who are able to move around empty cities without raising suspicion.

In producing countries, the reduction in demand has led to a lower cost of raw materials, with the consequent need for criminal organizations to review their strategic assets to maintain profit.



*In Peru, the prices of the coca leaf and cocaine derivatives have fallen by up to 46% due to low demand from the cartels. Exception is made for the province of La Convención, the cocaine production and transit area, where the price increased by 60%, also due to the reduction of controls applied by government authorities.*

*In China, the reduced (and, in some cases, zero) production of the precursor substances caused by the epidemic crisis that spread in January 2020, combined with the increased attention and monitoring capacity expressed by the Chinese control authorities since May 2019, has resulted in the need to create an inversion and use the existing structures for the illicit production of the chemical / pharmaceutical substances which now are the most requested by the international market. Thus, a prompt response was given to the growing demand for antiviral drugs such as, for example, remdesivir and chloroquine, producing understandable risks to public health and a contamination of the legitimate economy.*



*In Greece, in the Elefsina area of the Attica region, 11 tons of antiseptic gel were seized in a warehouse in April attributable to leading members of Roma ethnic criminal groups, which were very active in drug trafficking. The authorities did not exclude the possibility that such healthcare products were intended for sale on the "black market".*

In the meantime, criminal organizations have launched innovative "loyalty" processes with local populations in order to gain greater control of the territory and to protect their trafficking.



*Taking advantage of the spread of Covid-19 at a national level, the Mexican Cartels have effectively conquered large rural areas of the territory, replacing the Central Government in assisting the poorest and most exposed populations to contagion. The strategy of providing economic and especially food support (strongly adopted by the Gulf / Sinaloa Cartel and GJNG) is based on the urge to win the trust of the poorest groups among the population, to have the opportunity of being able to work with cheap labour and therefore benefit from the support and the "goodwill" of the civilian population.*

In importing countries, the reduced availability of drugs on the market, caused by restrictions on mobility, has inevitably produced an increase in prices.



*In Argentina, the price of cocaine went from \$ 2,500 per kilo at the border (price already increased since before the pandemic) to \$ 4,900 per kilo in the Federal Capital (Buenos Aires). A further consequence of this phase is the increase in the retail cost of 70% for cocaine and 100% for marijuana.*

*In Greece, in the main retail places of Athens, there was an increase in the price of the drug (from 1,500 to 2,000 euros for a kilo of cannabis from Albania, an increase of 10 euros for a gram of cocaine and 5 euros for one gram of heroin).*



INTERPOL



*At the end of March and in the first week of April 2020, three drug seizures were carried out off the Spanish coast, for a total value of about 330,500,000 dollars: two seizures of hashish smuggled between Morocco and Spain, the third seizure, of about 3 tons of cocaine, was carried out on board a ship from a secret port in the Americas.*

*The Maritime Analysis and Operation Center (MAOC) has detected the abnormal value of the operation, given also the situation caused by the pandemic, assuming that while law enforcement agencies have been hijacked to manage the health crisis, criminal organizations have taken advantage of it to move large quantities of drugs and increase their available stocks.*

*On April 2, 2020, police in Spain arrested two individuals in Alicante who had disguised themselves as Uber Eats drivers to deal drugs. The couple delivered cocaine and cannabis by bike hiding the drug in the usual home delivery backpack.*

*In Honduras, the use of healthcare vehicles for the transport of cannabis during the Covid-19 pandemic was discovered. Perpetrators were convinced that such vehicles would not be controlled by the police. The Honduran authorities have drafted and issued a purple notice to alert INTERPOL member countries on this modus operandi.*

*Toronto, Canada is currently experiencing the highest monthly drug overdose rate since March 2019. There is a suspicion that these deaths are due to a mix of illicit substances and substances contaminated with toxic ingredients that are not of ordinary use.*

*Europol reports the operation of the UK border Force which intercepted a shipment of cocaine worth over 1 million pounds in a batch of protective masks in a van registered in Poland while trying to enter the UK through the tunnel of the Channel. The driver, a 34-year-old Polish citizen, was arrested.*

As regards **economic and financial crimes**, the pre-existing conditions of economic hardship in some countries were exacerbated by the pandemic crisis, this, encouraging the use of parallel channels for the supply of cash.



*In Argentina, local authorities continue their monitoring activity to detect possible financial speculation and money laundering activities, mainly with US dollars for exchange in the so-called blue market (the illegal market, as opposed to the green market, the official exchange), serving to the increasing need to dollarize capitals at the present time and especially in the period that will follow the Covid-19 health emergency, which is expected to see a skyrocketing inflation. The illegal exchange rate, which as of March 20, 2020 was equal to 1 Euro = 82 Pesos, is currently equal to 1 Euro = 125/127 pesos, with a variation of 54.88%, while the current official exchange rate is equal at 1 Euro = 72.9 pesos.*

In other countries, reduced mobility and the closure of commercial activities has increased the difficulty of criminal organizations in carrying out money laundering operations.



*In China, the coronavirus epidemic had repercussions on one of the most consolidated money laundering systems adopted before the pandemic, consisting in transferring the Chinese currency abroad, using the drug precursors' trafficking channels. The system required that a Chinese citizen interested in converting, for example, yuan into dollars to be transferred to the United States, would purchase precursor chemicals (e.g. used to produce methamphetamine or fentanyl) from a factory / laboratory designated by the*

organized crime group, which in turn would proceed to ship the purchased precursors in Mexico, where the same were converted into narcotic drugs, introduced illegally to the United States and sold in dollars. Once the transaction was completed, the broker would return to a relative or other trusted person of the investor dollars in cash for an amount equal to the amount initially used to pay the precursors (net of their mediation fee). This system came into crisis with the explosion of the epidemiological crisis which blocked (or, anyway, greatly reduced) the main production centre of the chemicals used as drug precursors, based in Wuhan.



INTERPOL

EUROPOL

United States Authorities have issued an Orange Notice<sup>30</sup> to alert police forces of all Interpol member countries on fake financial packages that governments would offer citizens to mitigate the negative impact of Covid-19 on the economy. Frauds make use of robocalls and spread SMS on different platforms to reach potential victims.

Another large sector of activity where criminal organizations find increasingly interested when laundering illicit profits is the sector related to online betting. Such registered increase has already been reported in the March report.

The suspension of sports activities, on which betting activities used to be focused alerting law enforcement agencies and government authorities of various countries due to the placing on the market of huge flows of money from criminal organizations, has brought an increase in the development of virtual betting forms.



In Australia, the increase in bets related to video games and e-sports games brought the establishment of a new federal agency, the SIA - Sport Integrity Australia, which is operating since 1 July 2020 and whose appointed director is David SHARPE, former AFP - Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner, with extended experience in the organised crime sector.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the economies of the countries where there is a greater criminal infiltration of the economic sphere do not appear to be affected by financial difficulties.

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<sup>30</sup> The orange notices are the orange notes entered in the Interpol database in which the attention of the various States is drawn to warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.





*In Mexico, the immense interests and profits of Mexican criminal factions (in particular the historic cartels of Sinaloa and Jalisco Nueva Generacion) will not be particularly affected, from a financial point of view, by the effects of the government provisions for the prevention of the spread of Covid- 19. The growing independence that public and municipal entities have assumed over the years, especially since the 1990s, has made some regions real strongholds of organized crime. 72% of Mexican municipalities are infiltrated while 8% are totally feudalized. In some states the percentage is higher than the national average. In Guerrero, 62 municipalities out of 81 (equal to 76% of the total municipalities) have criminal groups conducting daily operations. The police forces, mainly the municipal and state ones, are no longer only corrupt but are often organic to organized crime. 78% of the activities that support the Mexican Gross Domestic Product are infiltrated by the money of drug traffickers who invest in all kinds of legal activities: mining, tourism, agriculture, oil, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.*

The measures taken by countries to support entrepreneurial activities (such as the provision of immediate funding instruments that are guaranteed by the state) that aimed at preventing companies from falling into the hands of organized crime, which is actually ready to take over from the state by providing usurious financing or attempting real “climb” for the command of the companies, could instead constitute an opportunity for fraudulent conduct.



*In Switzerland, with a provision dated March 25 (“Covid-19 ordinance on joint guarantees”), the government has allocated funds of CHF 32 billion to stem the economic consequences of the spread of the virus, 20 billion of which are committed to guaranteeing and facilitating the rapid granting of credits for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. This provision provides for aid that SMEs can immediately request from banks, without bureaucratic formalities, thanks to loans guaranteed by the Confederation, which are repayable in five years. At the beginning of May, the increased risk of mafia infiltrations in Swiss companies in crisis was highlighted in the media.*

Regarding the examination of **cybercrimes**, the lockdown period has almost inevitably led to the conversion of criminal offences that were previously committed in a "direct" manner into criminal offences committed using the internet.



*In Argentina, the comparison between the April 2019 and April 2020 data shows that while last year the most reported cybercrime was calumny (16.55%), followed by online extortion (15.17%), threats ( 14.48%), fraud (13.79%), identity theft (11.03%) and phishing*

(9.65%), in 2020, in the mandatory quarantine period imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic, a significant increase was registered in crimes such as online extortion, fraud and phishing, in the following percentages: online extortion 20.42% (+5.25), phishing 16.53% (+9.88), fraud 14, 89% (+1.1), cyberbullying 14.89% (+8.69). The 2020 data also shows that in 51.84% of cases the crime is of an economic nature (extortion, fraud, phishing) compared to 38.13% of the same period in 2019.

In Chile, NovaRed Chile's cybersecurity experts reported a 40% increase in cybercrime in the last weeks of April, with special regard to phishing activities, corresponding to 90% of complaints and marking an 83% increase compared to April 2019. At the beginning of April, Chile's CSIRT Emergency Response Team identified 12 sites that falsely claimed to be national banks, detecting phishing campaigns having as object the blocking fake bank accounts, fake emails from supermarkets for anniversary events and offers during the health emergency, malware in electronic invoices, fake smishing (SMS) from streaming services for the collection of government grants. Cybercriminals adapt their scams daily and manage to send very convincing messages. In some cases, on the same day when the government announced the issuance of emergency financial aid, malware and phishing messages appeared in messaging apps and on social networks. This practice made use of the anxiety and special attention paid by the population to such situation to induce web users to click and download the messages on the various platforms without weighing the authenticity of their content.

In addition to the "traditional" crimes, the period under analysis also registered the emergence of new conduct to the detriment of governmental and institutional bodies, made easier by the need for public offices to continue their activity "remotely" through the Internet and the greater ease of penetration of criminal actions.



In Canada, in the Province of Ontario, some attacks were perpetrated on school sites with the intention of disturbing online lessons, probably for extortion purposes or as a form of protest towards the imposition of social distancing.

In Germany, especially in North Rhine-Westphalia and other German states, several cases of duplication of the institutional websites created for the granting of subsidies to companies in crisis have been detected. Such duplication had the purpose of obtaining information from companies wishing to apply and submit, on their own behalf, ordinary requests on official websites, thus fraudulently obtaining access to such grants.



INTERPOL



Zeus Sphinx malware, mainly inactive for the past three years, has returned to infecting computer systems with the ongoing pandemic. The malware is shared via e-mails in which

*the government would offer financial support to victims for the economic damage caused by COVID-19. The attachments to the email would seem to be official forms to be filled out, these are however infected with malware which makes it possible to fraudulently use the personal information provided by the victim. Currently, the malware is mainly widespread in Australia, Canada and the United States, but the operational capacity of this computer virus is likely to extend with the spread of state aid to support the economy worldwide.*

*A recent Purple Notice warns member countries of a new Windows malware, called Coronavirus, designed to destroy the computer's operating system (while not aiming for financial profit). On April 5, 2020, the US National Central Bureau Interpol in Washington issued an orange notice to warn INTERPOL member countries of a series of new modus operandi used by criminals seeking to steal personal identification information and / or unknowingly install malware via infected links. U.S. authorities have identified criminals simulating legitimate emails sent by organizations and service providers informing their customers of the consequences of COVID-19 on their sectors. The Orange Notice refers to fraudulent emails that would come from hospitals to warn recipients that they have been in contact with a person with COVID-19, inviting them to fill out an attached form. Moreover, it provides descriptions of scams and cyber-attacks made with e-mails addressed to companies that provide PPE and in which an urgent order infecting the PC is being attached.*

*Cybercrime has the advantage of being able to increase its operations quickly and exponentially, managing to maximize profit and damage for the victims.*

*Europol reports the news of over 500,000 Zoom accounts sold on the dark web and in hacker forums.*

*These are operations carried out through cyber-attacks using the "Credential Stuffing" method in which the login to Zoom is attempted using accounts that were fraudulently acquired in previous data breaches. Successful accesses are placed in special lists and sold to other hackers.*

*Cyble security intelligence firm reported to Bleeping Computer (a computer support site) that, around April 1, 2020, several free Zoom accounts published on hacker forums with email addresses and password combinations had started to be detected.*

*Cyble intervened by buying a large number of accounts in block (about 530,000 credentials) in order to protect customers from the potential violation: the information included the victim's e-mail address, password, personal video conference URL and their HostKey.*

The conduct examined does not spare child pornography crimes, which are also facilitated by the easy availability of adolescents and minors online, who are more present than in the past due to the interruption of school activities.





*In the Netherlands, the violation of Snapchat accounts, mostly used by young people, was reported for the search for photographs, erotic or sexually explicit games and the subsequent extortion against account holders. For now, these attacks seem to be concentrated in the area of North Holland, but it seems likely that they will also extend to the rest of the country.*



INTERPOL

EUROPOL

*Eurpol reports that in the United Kingdom, where lockdown was imposed on March 24, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) reported that during the week of April 9-15, 2020, Childline held 363 counseling sessions in which the children reported that they had experiences of physical, sexual abuse or emotional abandonment: about a fifth compared to the week between 2 and 8 April. In fact, the Agency had to close Childline's night service for the first time ever and experience a 30% drop in volunteer hours due to self-isolation at home for the assistants.*

As regards **environmental crimes**, the month of April was characterized by an increase in arson in several countries.



*In the Dominican Republic, at the end of April, the largest landfill in the country was set on fire in several places simultaneously. The fire, still ongoing, caused a constant toxic cloud that reached for several days also the capital 29 km away from the above-mentioned spot.*

In the countries rich in raw materials, the pressing economic needs of the poor groups of the population have produced an increase in the use of abusive extraction of resources, often having negative environmental consequences.

*In Ghana, the lockdown has not been applied to the areas where the mines are located and where GALAMSEY was already widespread. The GALAMSEY refers to the illegal extraction of gold with severe soil destruction methodologies.*



*In Mexico, episodes of drilling of gas pipelines and the related theft of fuel were reported to be committed by the so-called huachicoleros (oil thieves), often linked to drug cartels and which have recently been joined by armed groups of the population. They operate by building houses near the holes and practicing extraction out in the open or even in public places, such as in cemeteries. The increase in the parties involved has caused real territorial struggles between rival clans, eager to grab a slice of the substantial revenues. According to 2019 data, this practice would have caused the state to lose about 60,000 barrels of gasoline per day, for an estimated value of over \$ 7 billion in a year.*



*In Peru, in April, a police operation led to the seizure and the destruction of various machinery used for the illegal extraction of up to a kilo a day of gold was completed in the Madre de Dios region. One gram of gold is marketed for 180 soles (€ 49). In this specific case, the use of illicit machinery caused widespread environmental damage for about 200 hectares, contaminating the large river that flows in the Madre de Dios region due to the pouring of significant quantities of mercury.*



INTERPOL

EUROPOL

*From February to March 2020, a series of illegal transport activities of medical waste sent to an illegal landfill were detected in India. Repeated shipments and the necessary involvement of multiple subjects (for the collection, transport, and disposal of waste) lay the ground for the almost certain involvement of organized crime in the illegal business.*

*Also in India, several hospitals (at least 11 in the state of Tamil Nadu) were sanctioned for violating the rules on the disposal of biomedical waste and for dumping untreated waste into the sewers in March 2020.*

*In China, although the number of incinerators used for medical waste has not been made public, experts believe it has remained substantially unchanged over the past decade.*

*The masks and other protective equipment used by infected patients and medical personnel should be sterilized and incinerated at high temperatures in special implants. In Wuhan, 200 tons of medical waste was produced on February 24 alone, four times the amount that the city's only dedicated facility can handle every day.*

*In particular, disposable masks are made of plastic and a thin metal strip and often are not properly disposed. Across Asia, they are scattered on paths and roads. Environmental groups*

*have found thousands of masks scattered on beaches and trails in Hong Kong, where they pose a threat not only to human health but to all marine fauna and birds.*

With reference to the **trafficking of migrants**, the lockdown, the closure of the borders and the limitation of the movements have led to a general reduction of the phenomenon on all the routes operated.



*In Bulgaria, in the early months of 2020, the migration crisis on the border between Greece and Turkey led to an increase in controls by Bulgaria along the whole land border with the two countries. During the month of March, there was an 84.4% decrease in the number of third country nationals arrested on entry, and a 71.4% decrease on exit, compared to March 2019.*

*In Greece, after the increase in flows recorded in March 2020, due to the migratory pressure that in the first days of the month has strongly affected the land border with Turkey (Evros region) and the coasts of the North Eastern Aegean islands, in April, the phenomenon of irregular entries was effectively eliminated thanks also to the massive border control implemented by the Greek authorities, with the help of the European Agency, Frontex.*

In the Mediterranean area the viability of the western route remains active, albeit to a lesser extent. This route is operated by migrants who from Central African regions go to Europe, passing through Morocco and the Spanish enclaves present there (Ceuta and Melilla).

At the same time, in many countries with high emigration flow (mostly in North Africa, Central America, Asia) significant flows of return of emigrants have been noted. The lack of work and economic resources made them unable to continue their stay in the destination country.



*In Morocco, alongside the traditional outgoing migration flow to Europe, another phenomenon with the return of irregular Moroccan citizens from Spain has emerged marking an inverted trend: the fear of the pandemic, the state of emergency and the rapid spread of the virus in Spain, unemployment and the pressure on drug traffickers forced several Moroccans to return to their country, having to pay, according to qualified sources, 60,000 dirhams (about 5,600 euros) to the organizers of the operation, more than double the previously charged prices. The efforts of the Gendarmerie Royale and the local authorities are focusing on containing and contrasting the entry of compatriots who, from a purely sanitary point of*

*view, would represent a further problem for the monitoring and contrast of the ongoing pandemic.*

*It seems likely that, with the resumption of economic activities and the reopening of borders, hundreds of thousands of immigrants will try once more to return to the host country.*

*An examination of the information concerning **terrorism** shows that the worsening economic conditions of most countries have accentuated the subversive pressures of extremist movements which, fanning the flames of popular dissatisfaction, seek to spread ideological propaganda.*



*In Australia, the online monitoring activities carried out by the AFP allowed identifying the publication of an invitation to carry out global ransomware attacks on law enforcement and other institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic by a branch of the anarchist organization "Anonymous", and the offering of training services for potential followers to hack and blackmail their ideological opponents..*

*In France, exponents of the extreme left movements and of the "Gilets jaunes" have made repeated appeals to civil disobedience against confinement measures and there has been a great activism of the 'ultra-gauche' (radical left) with episodes of sabotage to the communication networks, in particular to transmission antennas and optical fibre, as well as a call to sympathizers for direct action against these networks and banking agencies, giving rise to fears about the opening to the 5G system, scheduled for next July. At the same time, solitary jihadist terrorist attacks continue to cause concern: on 4 April 2020 in Romans-sur-Isère, a municipality south of Lyon, a Sudanese asylum seeker killed two passers-by and injured five others with a knife ; on April 27, 2020 in Paris, in the suburban district of Colombes, a French citizen of North African origin, in contact with a terrorist organization, struck and wounded two police officers at a roadblock. Both solitary attackers were radicalized and with an extremely fragile psychological profile.*

*In Greece, after an initial phase in which the promotion of solidarity initiatives in favour of the categories most at risk was largely supported, the anarchist team resumed its activism by carrying out actions to damage symbolic objectives: on 10 and 15 April, in Thessaloniki, a car from a private security firm and two cars from the ELTA shipping company of the Hellenic Post group were set on fire; on April 15, in Thessaloniki, a low explosive device placed at the entrance to the law firm of Anna Efthimiou, a member of Parliament of centre-right party, Nea Demokratia, was blown up; Molotov cocktails were launched in Athens on April 18 against the headquarters of SKAI Greece.*

*In the Netherlands, 27 cases of attacks on telephone towers and various attacks on employees of telephone companies have occurred since the beginning of April. Three suspects have been*

arrested. Protests have occurred in the city centre of The Hague regarding measures taken by the government for the Coronavirus emergency and also for the 5G roll out.



*In Russia, three Special Forces operations took place in April, targeting militants that were about to implement their criminal plans with the use of improvised explosive devices (IED).*

Moreover, some other factors shall be taken into consideration when tackling these issues such as the return of the veterans of the Caliphate, the adoption of prison deflation measures by many countries to counter the spread of the virus, the persistence of conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan and in other unstable areas where the danger of further widening the terrorist threat to neighbouring countries is now emerging.



*In Bosnia, the security risk remains high also in light of the forthcoming repatriation of an additional 102 Bosnian guerrillas (and their family members), which were detained in prisons managed by the Syrian Democratic Forces (Sdf). The investigative and judicial findings show that Bosnia is not only one of the main places of origin of the jihadist volunteers but that there is a complete organization for the recruitment, training, support and facilitation of the movements of Islamic extremists in all over Europe.*

*In Canada, following the increase in self-injurious acts and acts of violence and threats against prison officers, the Minister of Public Security required to ease the early and / or release of prisoners, with consequent benefit also from some members of organized crime.*

*In Jordan, there has been an increase in web propaganda activities indicating the epidemic as an 'ally of Jihad' sent by Allah to scourge the infidels.*

*In its recent newsletter, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) launched a call to arms for its soldiers to seize the opportunity of the epidemic to increase efforts towards global jihad, in particular to target those states that are weakened from the pandemic and where affiliated insurgents are already active. This also since the main countries that contribute to the anti-ISIS alliances, in some war zones, have withdrawn their troops to avoid contagion, including the United States in Iraq and France in Sahel.*

*In Poland, on 16 April, the Border Police, following an input from the Internal Security Agency - A.B.W., arrested a Lebanese citizen suspected of organizing a terrorist network aimed at carrying out attacks in various European countries. The subject, who allegedly had family ties to some ISIS terrorists who had fought and lost their lives in Syria and Iraq, also allegedly provided financial support to some members of the aforementioned terrorist organizations.*





INTERPOL



*Between 15 and 22 March 2020, INTERPOL coordinated the SIMBA II operation, bringing together the INTERPOL member countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to strengthen their counter-terrorism action.*

*Five people have been arrested in the Democratic Republic of Congo using INTERPOL's SLTD (Stolen and Lost Travel Documents) database, including a subject wanted in Europe for involvement with regional organized crime groups. Some other names reported by the screening of the SIMBA II operation included fugitives wanted in Central Asia and the Middle East. This confirms that international criminal mobility is continuing despite the travel restrictions imposed by the global pandemic, a circumstance that requires maintaining reinforced border control.*

Finally, as regards **hate crimes**, in the period under review, many states (Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, Holland, United States) have registered episodes of intolerance that occurred mainly towards the Chinese community, whose representatives are accused of being plague spreader of the pandemic virus.



*In Britain, hate crime against the Chinese increased considerably during the coronavirus epidemic. According to data released by British police forces, the number of hate crimes against the Chinese community in the period of the pandemic emergency is about three times higher than in the same period of 2019. At least 267 **hate crimes** were recorded during the Covid-19 crisis, including assaults, robberies, harassment, insults.*



*In the Netherlands, the radio broadcast of a piece of music based on an offensive word play on the Chinese community produced a widespread success. This event resulted in attacks to a 24-year-old Dutch student of Chinese origin by a group of students in her dormitory of Tilburg. At the same time, there have been numerous episodes of intolerance towards people of Asian origin, from the soiling of the rooms inhabited by a group of Chinese students in a dormitory of the University of Wageningen to the diffusion on the social networks of videos of attacks against people of Chinese origin. The Japanese school in Amsterdam has warned parents not to bring their children to playgrounds and other places frequented by local children due to a series of violent bullying episodes against Japanese children.*

A peculiar situation was recorded in Poland, where the feeling of intolerance was directed against medical and nursing staff. It is not technically a matter of hate crimes but of crimes that are based on feelings of aversion towards a specific category of individuals, who in such specific case carry out a certain profession.



*In Poland, doctors and healthcare workers, initially seen as benefactors for their efforts and who were largely thanked and received public applause, were subsequently targeted by real hate campaigns as elements at risk for the spread of the sickness. This phenomenon became that spread to induce the Doctors' Trade Union of Poland to ask the Minister of Justice and the Police to set up special units at the prosecutor's offices to combat crimes against healthcare personnel. The most serious effect of this climate of persecution was registered in Kielce, where the head of gynaecology of the local Hospital took his own life since on returning from abroad he was found positive after being accused, in a campaign of hatred, of not properly observing the quarantine.*



INTERPOL

EUROPOL

*On March 27, the FBI warned law enforcement agencies across the United States that hate crimes against people of Asian origins could increase due to the spread of coronavirus. According to the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, in February, an Asian woman with a protective mask was kicked and punched at a subway station in New York and racist attacks on Asian-Americans were reported to have risen to about 100 per day.*