■ Combatting rhino poaching

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Sector: Conservation

Theme: Sustainability, wildlife conservation

Geography: Africa

Context: international gunrunning networks led by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) have leveraged porous borders and lax, corrupt governance to funnel thousands of high-caliber hunting rifles from Europe and the U.S into Africa for rhino and other game poaching. 8,000 rhinos have been killed over the last 10 years.

Challenge: Tracking and tracing the arms pipeline through the supply line – from their foreign manufacture and export to their local importation, sale, and distribution— was beyond the scope and timeline of the mission. The focus was to uncover the power dynamics within countries from open-source intelligence.
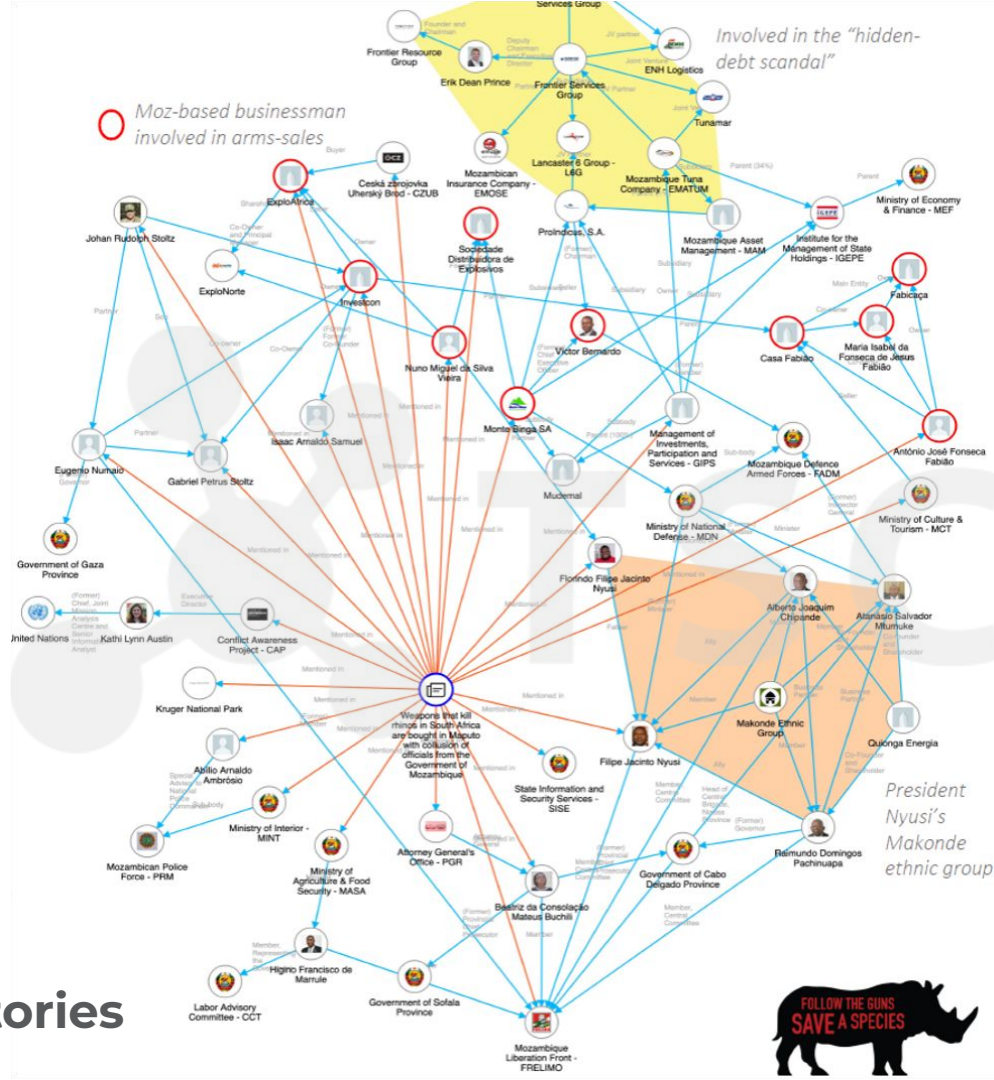
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Solution: local language data-mining and modelling technologies applied to various open and dark networks and link analysis to uncover the power dynamics in the gunrunning network – from business elites, government officials, police, safari operators, arms dealers, middlemen, to local "poaching bosses"
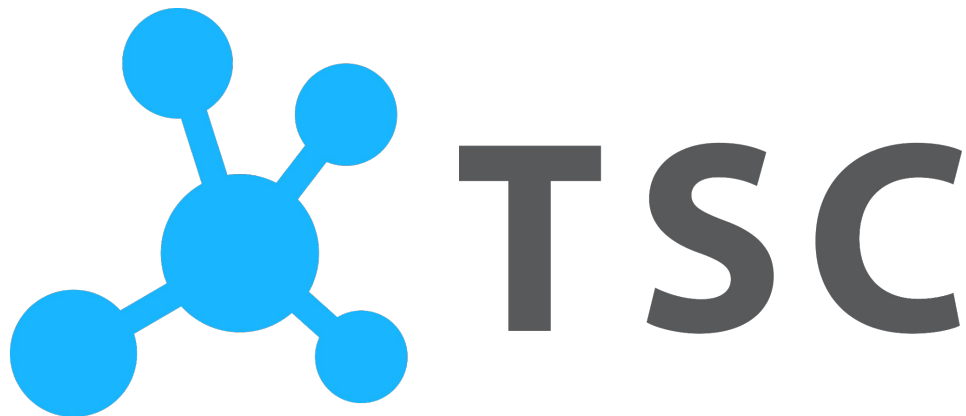
Results: high-level network view of the key 'influencers' complete, modelling various points of entry into the TCO network, allowed instant visibility of some of the hidden links to institutional actors. However, the poaching continues.

With thanks to the amazing work of:

Link analysis of gun-running syndicate links to rhino poaching (intentionally low resolution)

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Reach out to info@tsc.ai to learn more.