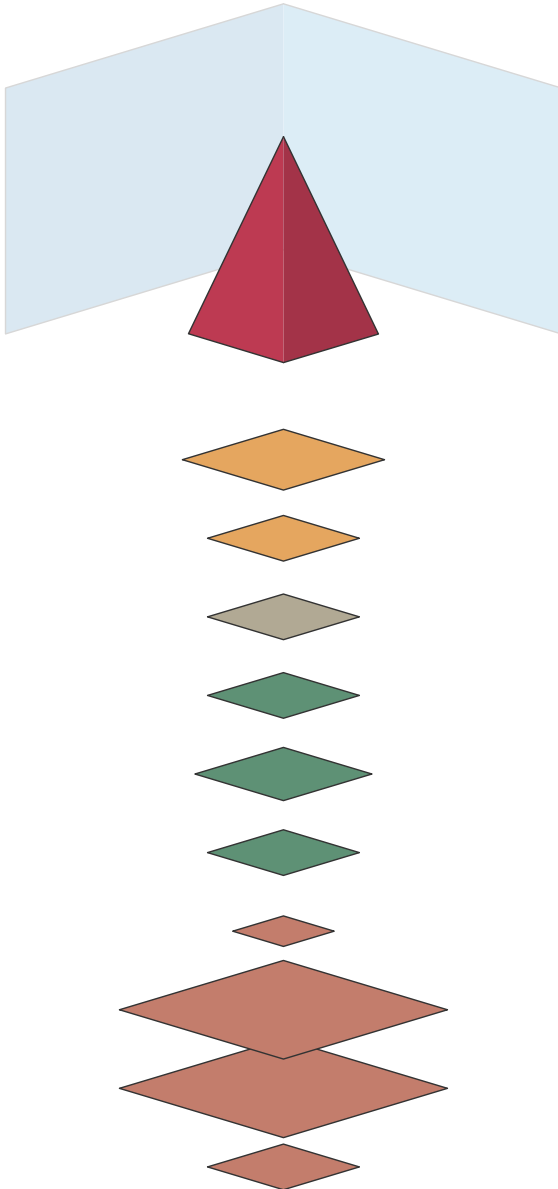




# ARGENTINA



## 4.38 CRIMINALITY SCORE

125<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries  
23<sup>rd</sup> of 35 American countries  
10<sup>th</sup> of 12 South American countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.75**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00
HEROIN TRADE	2.00
COCAINE TRADE	6.50
CANNABIS TRADE	6.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.00



### CRIMINAL ACTORS **5.00**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	5.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00



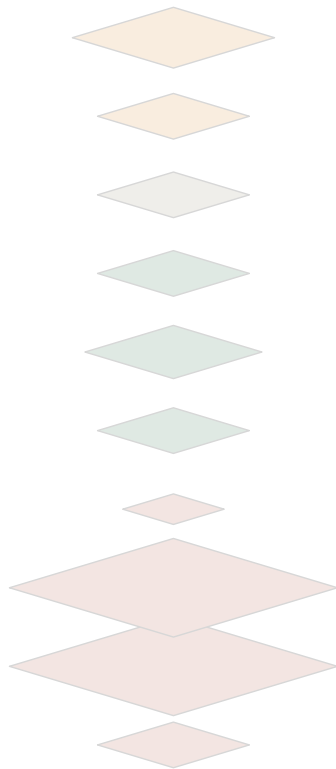
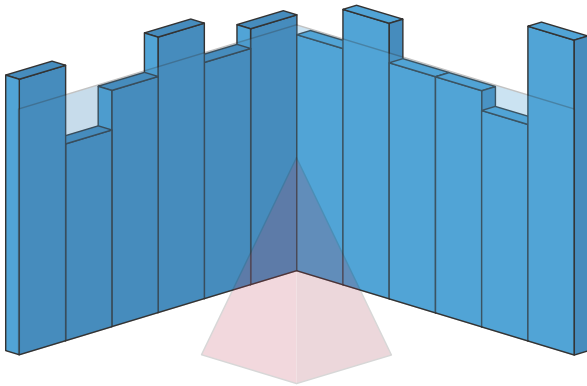
## 6.33 RESILIENCE SCORE

31<sup>st</sup> of 193 countries  
5<sup>th</sup> of 35 American countries  
3<sup>rd</sup> of 12 South American countries





# ARGENTINA



6.33

## RESILIENCE SCORE

31<sup>st</sup> of 193 countries

5<sup>th</sup> of 35 American countries

3<sup>rd</sup> of 12 South American countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.00
PREVENTION	5.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	8.00



4.38

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

125<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries

23<sup>rd</sup> of 35 American countries

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**CRIMINAL MARKETS**

3.75



**CRIMINAL ACTORS**

5.00



# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

There is significant demand for sexual exploitation of women in Argentina, which characterizes a fairly large human trafficking market. Victims are mostly female, and from disadvantaged parts of the country. Forced labour is also common in Argentina and affects women, men and children in sizeable numbers. Argentinian groups and foreign actors, mostly from Latin America but also from China, reportedly traffic victims primarily from Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic.

Although there is a human smuggling market in Argentina, it is comparably small in size. Notably, the Chinese mafia is allegedly involved in the smuggling of irregular migrants into Argentina.

### TRADE

Argentina's small domestic arms market has recently grown because of a ban on arms imports in Paraguay. Arguably, the country's strategic location in combination with direct sea links to Europe, and its porous borders might explain why organized crime groups are testing Argentina as a possible link in the trafficking of arms. Allegedly, parts shipped from Europe and the United States are assembled in Argentina and the weapons are then smuggled through Paraguay and sold to Brazilian criminal organizations, including the First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital – PCC) and the Red Command (Comando Vermelho). It appears, therefore, that weapons transiting Argentina or originating in the country are sold mostly in Latin America.

### ENVIRONMENT

While there is no evidence to suggest organized criminal groups engage in illegal logging in Argentina, hundreds of thousands of hectares of wetlands in the country's Parana Delta have been deliberately, and in many cases illegally, set on fire as a means of preparing the land for agricultural practices. Furthermore, although reliable data on illicit fauna crimes is lacking, preliminary studies suggest that Argentina is a source and transit country for exotic species, originating predominantly in Bolivia, Paraguay and Chile, and trafficked to the European Union – mostly Spain, Italy and Malta – or the Middle East. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing also seems to be an issue, as a lack of regulations and control in the South Atlantic facilitates poaching along the boundary of Argentina's exclusive economic zone, mostly by foreign fleets. Although gasoline theft from a state-owned company has been recorded, and

allegations have been made against various oil companies of illegally handling fracking waste, non-renewable resource crimes are generally limited across the country.

### DRUGS

Cannabis is the most prevalent drug in Argentina and its use is reportedly on the rise. The country appears to be mostly a destination for cannabis, with most of the product trafficked from Paraguay. Cannabis is also trafficked through Argentina destined for Chile. Cannabis arrives by truck, with the porous border and the substantial network of roads that converge in large cities, being used to evade authorities. Nevertheless, domestic cultivation of cannabis increased in 2020, primarily in the coastal areas of the country. Corruption, especially within the police force, appears to be associated with the cannabis market. Drug-related violence in the country is suspected to be primarily related to the cannabis and cocaine trades.

Cocaine is the second most consumed drug in the country, with consumption reportedly tripling since 2010. Argentina is reported to have one of the highest cocaine consumption rate in the Western Hemisphere. Official information suggests that Argentina is both a destination and transit point, with the Argentine–Bolivian border serving as the primary route for cocaine trafficked through the country's north-west regions. Drugs are predominantly transported by plane, using 'bombardment' drops, or by land. Local cocaine production is minimal. Besides Argentinian nationals, foreign actors from Europe and Colombia are involved in cocaine trafficking to and through Argentina. Cocaine is often trafficked through the ports of Rosario and Buenos Aires either directly to Europe, or to Europe via Africa.

Synthetic drugs, especially Ecstasy, are also quite popular in Argentina, with consumption rising by more than 200% since 2010. Nevertheless, synthetic drugs are considerably less prevalent than cannabis and cocaine. Seizure data suggests that methamphetamine is often imported from Mexico, whereas Ecstasy comes predominantly from the United States. There are indications of domestic Ecstasy production, but the generated quantities would not be enough to satisfy demand in Argentina. Even though drugs generally are a concerning issue in Argentina, the country's heroin consumption, and by extension, heroin trafficking, is low.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

Although loose criminal networks operate in cities such as Rosario and Buenos Aires, especially in the retail sale of drugs, they are not large entities. Nevertheless, criminal networks appear to be the most prominent criminal actor

types in Argentina. Transnational criminal groups based in other South American countries operate in Argentina as well. Notably, Mexican and Colombian cartels are linked to growing violence in Argentina's drug trade, while Chinese mafia groups are active in human smuggling, and Brazilian groups in arms trafficking. Evidence suggests that domestic groups, more specifically the Loza and Castedo clans, have ties with transnational actors, although their cooperation is still relatively small scale. Such criminal links are evident in the northern regions of the country, as well as in the cities of Rosario and Buenos Aires.

Although state-embedded actors are not generally directly involved in criminal organizations, corruption in Argentina is considered to be pervasive, in particular within local police forces. Money laundering is also believed to involve high-level politicians, and many of the family clans that are increasing in strength in the country benefit from connections to the political elite. While Argentina is not usually associated with the traditional organized criminal

groups operating in other countries in Latin America, there has been a growth in recent years of family clans akin to mafia-style groups operating in the organized criminal space in Argentina, mostly within the drug and arms trafficking markets. Such groups are locally based and have strong control over specific neighbourhoods. They are part of the communities, gaining the respect of their members by occasionally investing in their communities in ways the state is unable or unwilling to. Clans are usually led by older members of the family, and operate across the country, although many are concentrated in Rosario, Cordoba, Buenos Aires and smaller cities in Argentina's northern regions. There are several prominent clans in Argentina, namely the Los Monos, Cantero, Bassi, Funes, Camino, Torres, Castedo and Loza. Although mafia-style groups have no control over the prison system, some groups have successfully infiltrated various security and political institutions, thwarting justice for long periods of time.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The former Argentinian government took a strong stance on organized crime, but the current administration has lost momentum and has been criticized for it. Argentina is among the more stable developing countries in the world, but trust in the authorities is low. Additionally, with the COVID-19 pandemic, authorities, including law enforcement, have shifted their focus to humanitarian assistance, which has prevented them from efficiently enforcing regulations and controlling strategic hubs. High-level political figures are allegedly involved in corruption and money laundering. Anti-corruption bodies exist, but have been questioned because of political influence over their work. Nevertheless, the democratic process is considered independent from political influence.

Argentina is party to most international treaties and conventions pertaining to organized crime. The country cooperates well with neighbouring countries as well as with European states, Spain in particular, in the area of countering organized crime. Although extradition treaties with partners are in force, there have not been any cases of extradition from Argentina related to organized crime in the five years leading up to December 2020. In line with the country's international commitments to tackling organized crime, Argentina's legislative framework is able to adequately respond to current threats, although implementation of the legal framework is lacking.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

A unit dedicated to countering organized crime exists within Argentina's judicial system, but it is difficult to assess its capacity to carry out its assignments, as political interference in judicial proceedings is common. Furthermore, there have been dozens of recent cases of corruption involving members of the judiciary. Argentina's prisons are overcrowded, and reports indicate inhumane living conditions, food deficiencies, poor building management and substandard hygiene control within facilities. Reportedly, certain family clan leaders have managed to run their organizations from within the prison system, which further challenges the penal system. Overall, the entire judiciary is considered inefficient and corrupt.

The situation is similar in the security sector, where corruption is rampant and public trust in law enforcement agencies low. The Federal Police and its special units are the main actors tasked with tackling organized crime. Their efforts are aided by the Federal Intelligence Agency. Despite the existence of these enforcement agencies in Argentina, authorities struggle to effectively control the borders, especially in the north-west, which are most vulnerable to trafficking. Information suggests that the Argentine-Bolivian border is the main route for cocaine, while cannabis is trafficked primarily through the Argentine-Paraguayan border. The ports of Buenos Aires and Rosario are also vulnerable and are used to ship illicit substances to Europe.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Argentina has anti-money-laundering legislation, but a general anti-money-laundering/combating the financing of terrorism strategy is lacking, making the risk of money laundering extremely high. In broad terms, legitimate business operates free from criminal activity in the country. Land and property rights are upheld and there are no specific sectors of the economy controlled by organized crime, although instances of extortion rackets have been recorded. Doing business, however, is somewhat difficult because aspects of the state's economic regulatory capacity are burdensome.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

A legislative mechanism guides the prevention and prosecuting of human trafficking, as well as victim assistance in Argentina. In line with this, the Office for the Rescue and Accompaniment of Persons Damaged by the Crime of Human Trafficking was established, responsible for the psychological, social, medical and legal assistance of victims. Overall, the government has a fairly robust framework in place to provide support to victims of trafficking. In addition, a national witness protection agency within the ranks of the Ministry of Justice provides protection to witnesses and defendants in criminal cases. The government has reportedly implemented more than half of the provisions in its 2018–2020 national anti-human trafficking action plan. Notably, no specific budget was allocated for the plan, which raises concerns as to whether or not authorities can fund the programme. Additionally, no efforts in labour exploitation prevention were reported in 2019. Several awareness campaigns were carried out in cooperation with NGOs, schools and universities. Conversely, the anti-drug trafficking campaign announced in 2016 failed to develop into a structured plan. Thus, the results of this campaign cannot be considered substantial. Argentina performs rather well in rankings of press freedom on a global scale, yet defamation suits have been used against journalists who have been over-critical of government. These suits have mostly been used to financially strangle the targeted employee or outlet that employs them. Furthermore, while journalists have not been targeted by organized crime, reporters have been victimized by police officers during street protests.

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