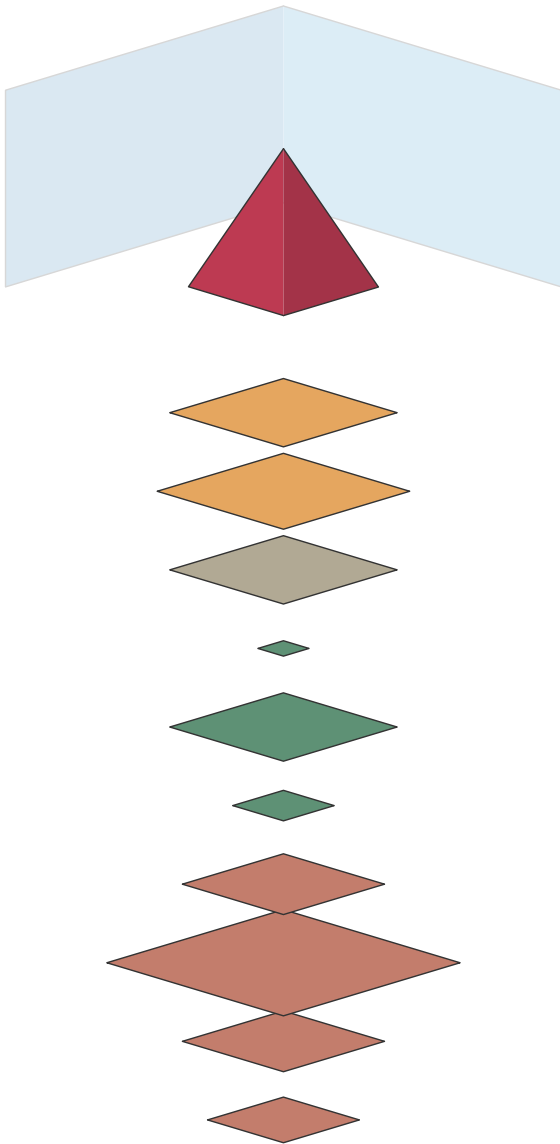


 **BAHAMAS**



 **3.79**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

154th of 193 countries
27th of 35 American countries
7th of 13 Caribbean countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **3.95**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.50
FLORA CRIMES	1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00
HEROIN TRADE	4.00
COCAINE TRADE	7.00
CANNABIS TRADE	4.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **3.63**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	2.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	3.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00

 **5.21**
RESILIENCE SCORE

76th of 193 countries
14th of 35 American countries
6th of 13 Caribbean countries

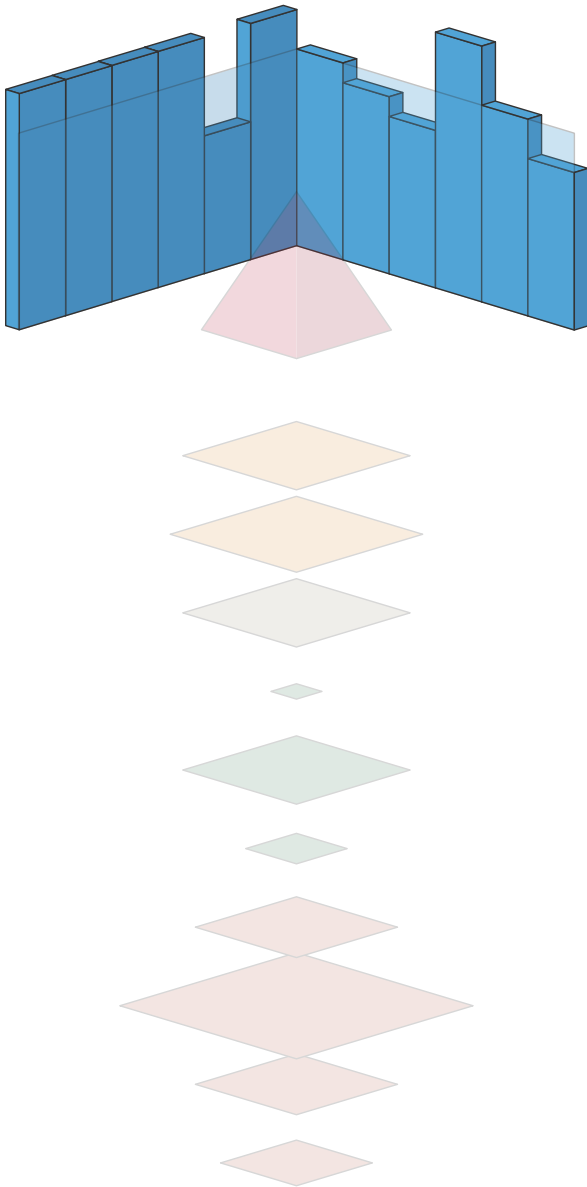


Funding provided by the United States Government.



ENACT is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Institute for Security Studies and INTERPOL, in affiliation with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

 **BAHAMAS**





 **5.21**
RESILIENCE SCORE

76th of 193 countries
14th of 35 American countries
6th of 13 Caribbean countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	6.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.50
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.00

 **3.79**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	3.95
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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Reportedly, both locals and foreign nationals are forced into exploitation in The Bahamas, while citizens are also victimized abroad. Evidence suggests that migrant workers on the island, predominantly from Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are lured to the country with promises of employment through various advertisement channels, but often fall victim to human traffickers upon arrival. Most commonly, victims are exploited in domestic servitude, prostitution and other sectors requiring low-skilled labour. Women appear to be most vulnerable to trafficking, as well as migrant children, irregular migrants and displaced people from the region. Additionally, depending on their parents' nationalities, children born in The Bahamas may not be eligible for Bahamian citizenship or documentation, which increases their risk of becoming victims of trafficking. Notably, state-embedded actors have been reported to be involved in human trafficking.

Long-standing human smuggling routes transiting through the Bahamas are used by regional migrants as well as those coming from other parts of the world. The Bahamas is part of the route taken by migrants trying to reach the US via Florida. Many migrants go to the far north-west corner of Grand Bahama Island and pay smugglers to take them by boat to Palm Beach County in Florida, a journey of around 95 kilometres. The well-established northward passage and other maritime routes in the southern Bahamas are commonly used for human smuggling. These entry points span an enormous distance of more than 300 nautical miles, from the Turks and Caicos Islands to Cay Lobos. The sheer size of the corridor allows relatively easy evasion of authorities that operate in the south. The Bahamas, as a result, has become a clear transit country for human smuggling. Bahamian transporters have been accused of smuggling nationals from China, Haiti and some African nations into the US. Both foreign and domestic actors are involved in human smuggling, often working with Jamaicans and other island nationals to improve their chances of evading authorities.

TRADE

Reports suggest that arms and ammunition trafficking in The Bahamas is moderate. The country is predominantly a destination market, with the United States playing a central role in the illegal trans-shipment of weapons. Although there is little indication to suggest arms trafficking is increasing, the illegal market influences other forms of criminality in that guns are a significant factor driving violence in The

Bahamas. Available information suggests criminal networks engage in both arms and drug trafficking.

ENVIRONMENT

While there is no indication of a flora crimes market in The Bahamas, the country appears to be a source of illegal wildlife trafficked abroad. Allegedly, illegal queen conch from the Bahamian black market is bought and smuggled to the United States and France. The most significant environmental threat, however, is illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, perpetrated mostly by commercial fishing fleets from the Dominican Republic. Commercial fishing of sharks in Bahamian waters has also recently been raised as an issue in local politics. Furthermore, many species, particularly exotic birds and iguanas, are endangered because of the illegal pet trade in the country. There is little evidence to suggest that a non-renewable resource crimes market exists in The Bahamas, however, the island nation was part of an illegal gold smuggling route originating in Venezuela, which suggests vulnerability.

DRUGS

Seizures of heroin are rare in The Bahamas and local consumption is low. Nevertheless, the local heroin market is fairly large compared to other eastern Caribbean states. It is unclear whether heroin transits the country towards larger consumer markets. The Bahamas has had a long history of cocaine transiting its territories, with cocaine shipments continuing to move through as the eastern Caribbean route has re-emerged in recent years. The drug passes through the archipelago on its way to North America and Europe through the 'Medusa' route - from the Gulf of Mexico via The Bahamas and to North America and Spain in containerized shipments. Although attractive to cartels from Colombia and Venezuela that control the cocaine market, The Bahamas is neither a significant cocaine-producing country, nor a considerable consumer market. Some drugs destined for North America remain in The Bahamas as payment to collaborators for facilitation of the illicit drug trade. To an extent, this has contributed to an increase in local use and a subsequent surge in cocaine and crack cocaine abuse.

Cannabis is grown in the wild in The Bahamas to satisfy mainly domestic demand. Cannabis is arguably the most prevalent illicit drug in the country, with individuals as well as loose networks running the market and selling cannabis to local, at-risk communities. Conversely, the synthetic drug trade is limited and relatively small. However, local demand, generated mostly by tourists, exists and is on the rise. Currently, synthetic drugs are trafficked mainly in mail, making the market manageable, although traffickers

may shift their modus operandi to reduce seizures of the goods they smuggle.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The influence of foreign criminal actors in The Bahamas, mainly cocaine traffickers, has been a significant, recurrent theme for the last forty years. There are Colombian crime syndicates operating within the island's territories, including Los Urabeños, Oficina de Envigado, Los Pachencas and the Clan del Oriente. Meanwhile Mexican mafias and the Italian 'Ndrangheta are thought to be the leading organizations using The Bahamas as a trans-shipment point for cocaine trafficking. There is moderate interaction between local and foreign criminal actors. Notably, foreign actors use fishing vessels as a central element in the trafficking of drugs between South America, The Bahamas and North America. Evidently, foreign actors control the heroin trade and human trafficking as well as the cocaine business in the country. Local gangs, are an integral part of the criminal

landscape in The Bahamas. These entities predominantly attract young people, as youth unemployment is high in the country. The influence of these gangs is rather limited as they are involved in the distribution of cannabis and cocaine to tourists and locals. Nevertheless, ties between gangs and foreign actors are well established. An escalation in violence and even homicide has been seen as local rivalries for turf emerge.

In recent years, the state has had to take action and prosecute individual police officers, prison officers, and other government officials accused of abuses of power and corruption. Evidence, however, that the government exerts control over criminal markets is weak. It is more likely that corrupt officials (mainly in law enforcement and immigration) exert influence rather than it being a state-led enterprise. Similarly, although criminal networks are present in The Bahamas, their impact over the local population is limited.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Bahamas is among the more stable countries in the world, with authorities respecting political rights and civil liberties. Nevertheless, criminality has been present on the government's agenda. Despite reforms in the criminal justice system, improved social justice and efforts to reintegrate offenders in society, the nation still faces unacceptable levels of criminal activity. Although corruption perceptions are moderate in global and regional comparisons, and oversight is in place to reduce state corruption, the foundations of these measures are not robust, and the oversight mechanisms are stagnating. The current government has failed to deliver on its anti-corruption campaign agenda and the culture and circumstances that lead to corruption have remained unaddressed.

The Bahamas is party to all relevant international treaties and conventions pertaining to organized crime. There is significant engagement with, and information received from, bi-lateral and multilateral actors, which has heightened response capacity. Interpol's National Central Bureau (NCB) in the Caribbean is the Bahamas' primary police platform for sharing global data associated with regional crime. Generally, law enforcement agencies collaborate well with their counterparts, notably in human trafficking and money laundering. The Bahamian legislative framework is well-prepared to respond to contemporary trafficking threats. In addition, amendments to the country's criminal

code were implemented in 2014, targeting gangs and organized crime in general.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Besides the Special Prosecutorial Unit on Trafficking in Persons, there are no judicial units tasked with tackling organized crime specifically. Nevertheless, the Bahamian justice sector makes use of support from the US in the development of better mechanisms that would allow authorities to effectively investigate and prosecute criminal groups. Efforts are also made to increase the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services' capacity to provide a safe and secure environment for inmates as well as rehabilitative services to former inmates. The long-term effects of these programmes are yet to yield results as currently The Bahamas remains among the countries with the highest incarceration rate in the world. Overcrowding is a major issue, prison conditions arguably violate human rights and recidivism rates remain high. The Royal Bahamas Police comprise a vast number of divisions and special branches throughout the archipelago, including a drug enforcement unit and a trafficking in persons unit. Legislation was passed in 2019, to establish the national crime intelligence agency, but it is not yet operational. Locally, law enforcement authorities are generally distrusted. There are allegations of corruption and abuse of authority against the police force that are under investigation, but the overall weaknesses of the system, such as corruption, are not as glaring nor

problematic as those found in other regional forces. The complex geography of the Bahamas – an archipelago of 700 islands and islets – impedes comprehensive monitoring, and creates a significant challenge for those tackling drug trafficking and irregular migration. Border control is extremely difficult and staffing levels are nowhere near adequate. Its vulnerability to criminal flows is largely due to its proximity to the US, where cocaine is in high demand.

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ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Banks as well as offshore companies in the Bahamas have for long been tied to numerous cases of grand corruption and organized crime. The country's secrecy laws allow information on offshore accounts to be divulged only by order of the Supreme Court of the Bahamas, which means the country is still a preferred tax haven. That being said, Bahamian authorities have made substantial efforts to strengthen known anti-money laundering vulnerabilities, including measures to enhance international cooperation, initiating a supervision mechanism for non-banking financial institutions and strengthening its legislation on beneficial ownership. There is an operational financial intelligence unit in the country, tasked with obtaining and analyzing information on suspicious transactions. Although The Bahamas is no longer on the EU's tax blacklist, the country's performance in combating financial crime is of concern, especially in regard to enforcing its anti-money laundering mechanisms. The Bahamian economy is heavily reliant on offshore banking and tourism, with money often laundered through the acquisition of real estate, the purchase of precious metals or stones and also through financial service companies.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Authorities maintain serious and sustained victim protection efforts and are fully compliant with minimum requirements for the elimination of modern slavery. Alongside victim support and witness protection programmes, the government has partnered with civil society to implement multifaceted substance abuse intervention aimed at adults and at-risk juveniles, providing drug treatment in a therapeutic environment. Prevention efforts also exist – a national action plan on prevention of trafficking is in place, along with a formal victim-centred protocol, which serves to assist first-line responders in identifying victims of human trafficking. In practice, however, agencies and organizations that work with communities, victims and perpetrators do not seem to collaborate effectively. Therefore, overall crime prevention efforts boast little success. NGOs operate in the country, some of them engaging in human trafficking prevention and victim support. Although press freedom is generally respected in The Bahamas, defamation is still a crime and the government allegedly favours certain media outlets. A Freedom of Information Act has been passed, although implementation is reportedly lacking.