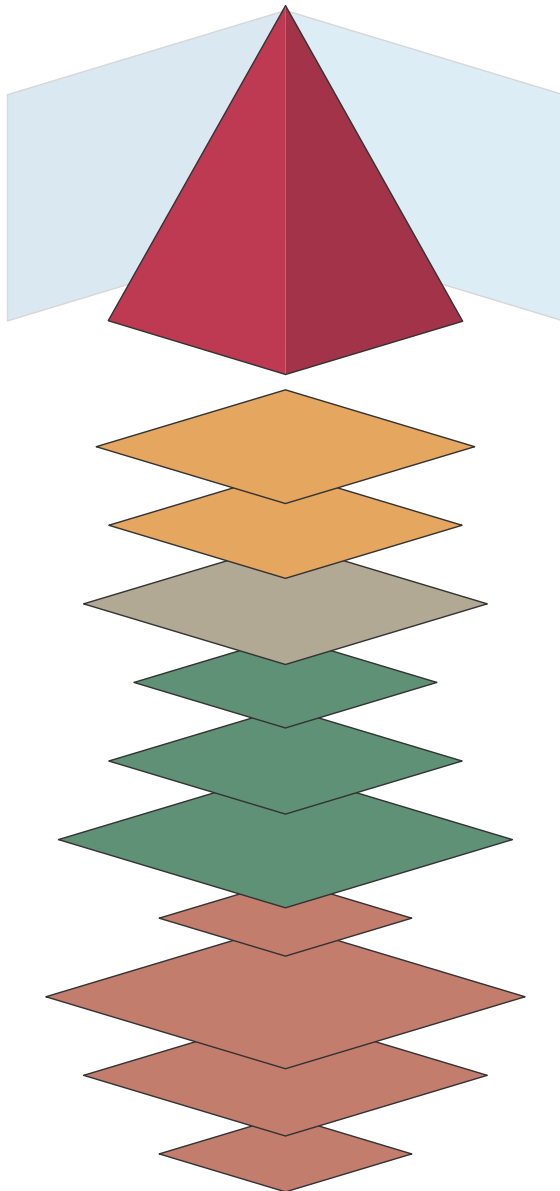




COLOMBIA



7.66

CRIMINALITY SCORE

2nd of 193 countries

1st of 35 American countries

1st of 12 South American countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

7.20

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 7.50

HUMAN SMUGGLING 7.00

ARMS TRAFFICKING 8.00

FLORA CRIMES 6.00

FAUNA CRIMES 7.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 9.00

HEROIN TRADE 5.00

COCAINE TRADE 9.50

CANNABIS TRADE 8.00

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 5.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

8.13

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 9.50

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 9.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 7.00

FOREIGN ACTORS 7.00



5.83

RESILIENCE SCORE

40th of 193 countries

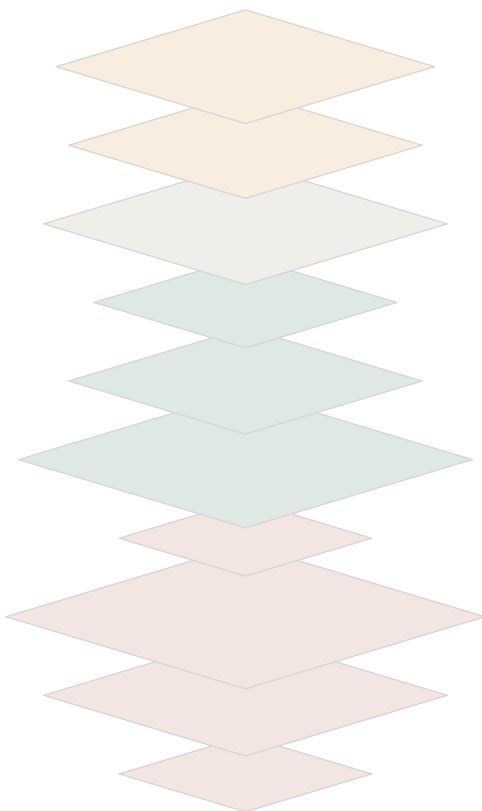
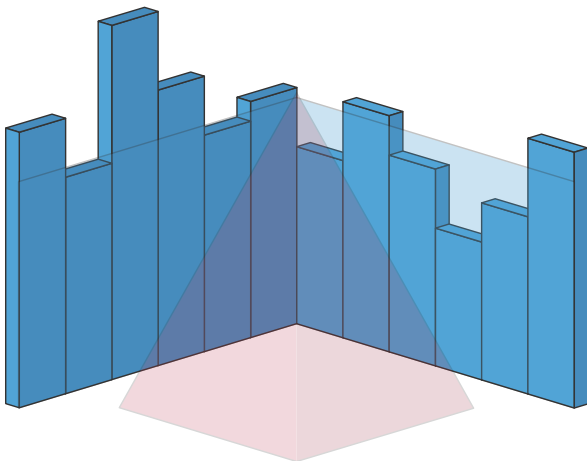
6th of 35 American countries

4th of 12 South American countries





COLOMBIA



5.83

RESILIENCE SCORE

40th of 193 countries

6th of 35 American countries

4th of 12 South American countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE **7.00**

GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY **5.50**

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION **9.00**

NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS **7.00**

JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION **5.50**

LAW ENFORCEMENT **6.00**

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY **4.50**

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING **6.00**

ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY **5.00**

VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT **3.50**

PREVENTION **4.50**

NON-STATE ACTORS **6.50**



7.66

CRIMINALITY SCORE

2nd of 193 countries

1st of 35 American countries

1st of 12 South American countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **7.20**



CRIMINAL ACTORS **8.13**



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Colombia is a major centre of human trafficking, with some of the most sophisticated and prolific trafficking networks in the Americas. While networks mainly traffic women to Asia for sexual exploitation, there are other routes that lead to the Caribbean. With prostitution legalized in Bogotá, Colombia has domestic networks feeding people into the capital from around the country. Colombia also has a prolific online human-trafficking industry, mainly catering to foreign visitors.

Colombia is a vital transit country for migrants moving across the region, mainly heading for the US. Multiple criminal actors – from international organizations to local criminal structures and specialized networks – smuggle African, Asian, Haitian and Cuban nationals through the country. The crisis in Venezuela has swelled the demand and profits for smugglers, with that country essentially becoming a hub for human smuggling to which Colombian networks have easy access, moving people north to the US or south to the Southern Cone countries. COVID-19 has had a major short-term impact on human smuggling, owing to the restrictions placed on transport and travel. It remains too early to be clear, however, on the longer-term impacts the COVID-19 pandemic will have on human smuggling in Colombia.

TRADE

Colombia's illicit arms market is large as a result of the number of groups in its criminal world vying for arms, such as guerrilla armies, pro-government paramilitaries and several loose criminal networks. Alongside these groups, Colombia has its own insurgent army, the Ejército de Liberación (ELN), which is armed by the illegal import of weapons with the assistance of international criminal networks. The economic collapse in Venezuela is having an impact in this market in Colombia, with growing volumes of arms being diverted from the Venezuelan army into the hands of Colombian criminal actors. Despite arms trafficking declining to some extent since the 1990s and 2000s due to the demobilization of certain paramilitary groups, the market remains large and highly active.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes are increasingly widespread in Colombia and, although this illicit market is not a major one for the country's most prominent organized-crime groups, some of the more sophisticated criminal groups are becoming

involved in extortion practices within the flora market. Approximately half of Colombia's wood production is considered to be illegal and, since the demobilization of the FARC guerrilla group, vast areas of virgin forest have opened up, creating opportunities for criminal exploitation. Similarly, the illegal wildlife market is a pressing issue and Colombia has become a significant source country for trafficking of illegal animal products, such as exotic birds and reptiles, destined primarily for Europe. There are also illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing practices off Colombia's Pacific and Archipelago coasts.

The most pervasive environmental crime in the country, however, is illicit trade in non-renewable resources. Colombia is the fourth-largest gold producer in the continent, and with 80% of gold thought to be extracted illegally, this is by far the most common and lucrative illicit trade in non-renewable resources. Illegally mined gold can be readily legalized in Colombia, making the country a hub for laundering narco-profits and a destination country for conflict gold from Venezuela. Gold mining is linked to corruption and high levels of violence, and it is anticipated that a shift from illicit crop cultivation to illegal gold mining is likely to occur because of its profitability and weakening environmental control as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, petrol smuggling has been known to occur and although the country's emerald trade has become increasingly regulated, it has historically been a bastion of criminal groups and used for money laundering.

DRUGS

Cocaine production and trafficking are the main criminal markets in Colombia, with the country producing 75% of the world's cocaine. Colombia traffics cocaine to North America, Europe and Asia through transit points in Africa, the Middle East and South-eastern Asia. Sophisticated local criminal networks are linked to international organized crime groups that traffic the drug across porous borders. Various eradication efforts to reduce the number of hectares under coca cultivation have been unsuccessful, and the amount of cocaine produced has continued to grow each year. Brazil, historically a transit route for Colombian cocaine, has now become one of the largest consumer markets for cocaine in the world and a significant destination market for Colombia. Cocaine is a major source of funding for criminal groups and one of the main causes of conflict and murder. Furthermore, domestic consumption of cocaine has increased in Colombia.

Colombia is also a source and destination market for cannabis, likely the second-largest drug-trafficking market after cocaine and the most consumed drug domestically. The main cultivation area for cannabis is a current centre

of violence as ex-FARC members battle other groups for control of the industry. The heroin trade is also a significant source of income for domestic trafficking organizations. The trade is run by groups, often operating out of Cali, that supply the high-end market in the US. There is also a sizeable heroin market in the country, with poppy cultivation in Nariño and Cauca, managed by criminal groups, which continues to be a significant source of income for local communities. Lastly, there appears to be a small-scale synthetic drug production market in Colombia, and there is growing consumption linked to the nightclub scene.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

There are numerous sophisticated and powerful mafia-style groups in Colombia, including the ex-FARC mafia and the ELN. Colombia's main cultivation and departure points for illegal drugs and many of the informal mining areas are largely under the control of these powerful organized-criminal groups. They comprise thousands of individuals and are involved not only in transnational organized crime, but also in low-level activities such as extortion. They exert social control and illicit governance in certain areas, imposing norms, regulating civilian activity, and providing social services in lieu of the state.

Colombia's organized-crime networks are well structured, though it is likely that there has been some fragmentation in recent decades. They have proven very adaptable in diversifying their methods to suit evolving transnational crime conditions and work in smaller and more informal

networks. These groups appear to have stronger levels of influence and impact in modern-day Colombia. As the cocaine trade has fragmented, more criminal networks have entered the industry to gather parts of the trade. However, they also operate in most other illicit economies, including arms trafficking, environmental crimes and the trafficking and smuggling of people.

Although corruption in Colombia is of a lower level and less systemic than seen in its Latin American neighbours, it is still endemic in all state branches and levels of government. For example, politicians often form alliances with criminal actors in an attempt to win elections, later returning favours by embezzling state funds to such actors. Criminal groups regularly bribe judges and attorneys, including those operating in the country's high courts. Police, military and prison officials are also frequently embroiled in corruption scandals.

There is no evidence of armed, organized foreign groups having a presence in Colombia. However, there are a plethora of foreign emissaries from drug-trafficking groups involved in the processing and transport of drugs. There has also been an increase in members of European mafia groups collaborating with Colombian actors in the cocaine trade, and a notable increase in Mexican actors. However, the evidence points to Mexican cartels serving in emissary roles within Colombia, rather than seeking to establish territorial control or solidify their presence in the country. Finally, Brazil's powerful prison gangs also maintain an operational presence within Colombia.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Colombian government has taken a tough stance against organized crime, with a particularly hard line against drug trafficking focusing on forced eradication of drug crops. Although significant work remains to be done, the government has been successful, at the municipal and national level, in scaling back organized-criminal groups' power and potential for violence and disruption. While far from perfect, Colombia is a leader among Latin American countries for transparency and accountability. The state has several tools in place to publish and provide transparency in government, although not all branches of government are equally accessible. Widespread corruption, however, still greatly undermines and hinders the transparency of state bodies, and public trust in institutions suffers as a result.

While Colombia has ratified many of the relevant international treaties, it has notably not ratified protocols around the

smuggling of migrants and firearms trafficking, and is not a member of the Arms Trade Treaty. Colombia has a cooperative relationship with the US, using billions of dollars of American money to fight drug trafficking and organized crime; it continues to extradite prominent criminal figures to the US. Colombia also cooperates with the EU, as well as other Latin American countries in crime-related initiatives.

Colombia has a reasonably solid legislative framework for identifying and combating organized crime, and primary legislation pertaining to drugs and firearms. In 2019, Colombia adopted a national strategy on human smuggling, with assistance provided by the UNODC. There are also laws on human trafficking and exploitation, although the definition of trafficking falls short of international legal standards.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Although there are various independent mechanisms in place to regulate the judicial system, it is burdened by a lack of resources and high levels of corruption, with exceedingly high impunity rates. Overall, the Colombian prison agency is well organized compared to its neighbouring countries, and, although organized-criminal groups – especially prominent mafia figures from Medellín – continue to organize their networks from prison, the state maintains control over the prison system.

Colombia is well equipped to fight organized crime: it has the second-largest armed force in the Americas, as well as numerous intelligence bodies and special units focused on organized crime. However, the country's vast and difficult terrain means criminal groups have consolidated control in areas that security forces struggle to reach. Moreover, communication between intelligence agencies and judicial bodies is sometimes poor, and widespread corruption continues to be one of the greatest obstacles to effective law enforcement. Police reform has become a major political issue in the country, in response to police killings of civilians.

Colombia's porous international borders, with large areas populated by rainforest, create a strategic weakness for the government, enabling criminal groups to move large volumes of illegal commodities in and out of the country under cover. The geography of the country has also made establishing the effective presence of law-enforcement bodies difficult in remote areas, where criminal groups have managed to exert social, economic and political control.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Colombia has among the highest levels of money laundering and terrorist financing in the world. Although the country has had some success in investigating and prosecuting money-laundering activities, the problem is so pervasive that it overwhelms the efforts of the state. Colombia has a specialized anti-money-laundering unit (the financial investigations and analysis unit), which works with law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect suspicious financial movements. However, money-laundering practices are sophisticated and diverse, making them difficult to detect.

Colombia has relatively good economic regulation systems under its state entities and national bank, although there have been reports that national and foreign corporations were forced to pay paramilitary groups for security against insurgent threats. The main area of weakness lies in the difficulty in accessing the financial system, especially in rural areas, creating ideal conditions for criminal groups to step in to provide financial services, and effectively launder dirty money. Extortion practices and protection payments are rife in these areas and land property rights remain a significant issue, negatively impacting vulnerable populations.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Although Colombia has laws in place aimed at supporting the victims of armed conflict, the processes of victim reparation run by the state are often poorly implemented, involving delays and shortcomings. The lack of witness protection schemes is also a serious concern, while Colombia falls well below international standards on helping victims exit slavery. The treatment of human trafficking victims and drug-abuse victims is another area where support is severely lacking.

The Colombian government has largely taken a militarized approach to combating organized crime, and effective prevention measures are lacking. Programmes aimed at hindering the cultivation of drug-producing crops are losing momentum, and light-touch laws around the confiscation of personal doses of illegal drugs seem lacklustre and have been met with scepticism. However, there have been attempts to implement more experimental, non-police prevention strategies aimed at curbing criminal governance, with policy experiments, such as hotspot policing, in Bogotá and Cali. Although these have not led to substantive changes in policy, they indicate an appetite for novel policy solutions and progressive leadership among mayors and civil-society groups.

There is a fairly robust civil society presence in Colombia, which plays a key role in analyzing and hindering organized crime, mediating with criminal groups and helping to get vulnerable youths out of gangs. NGOs, as well as international and religious groups, and organizations linked to the private sector play an important role in the fight against organized crime. However, the scale of organized crime and the associated violence experienced by civil society actors suppresses the effectiveness of their initiatives. Although investigative journalism plays a strong role in Colombia, at the same time it is one of the most dangerous countries for journalists who cover subjects such as the environment, armed conflicts, organized crime and corruption, and they are frequently targets of abduction and assassinations.

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