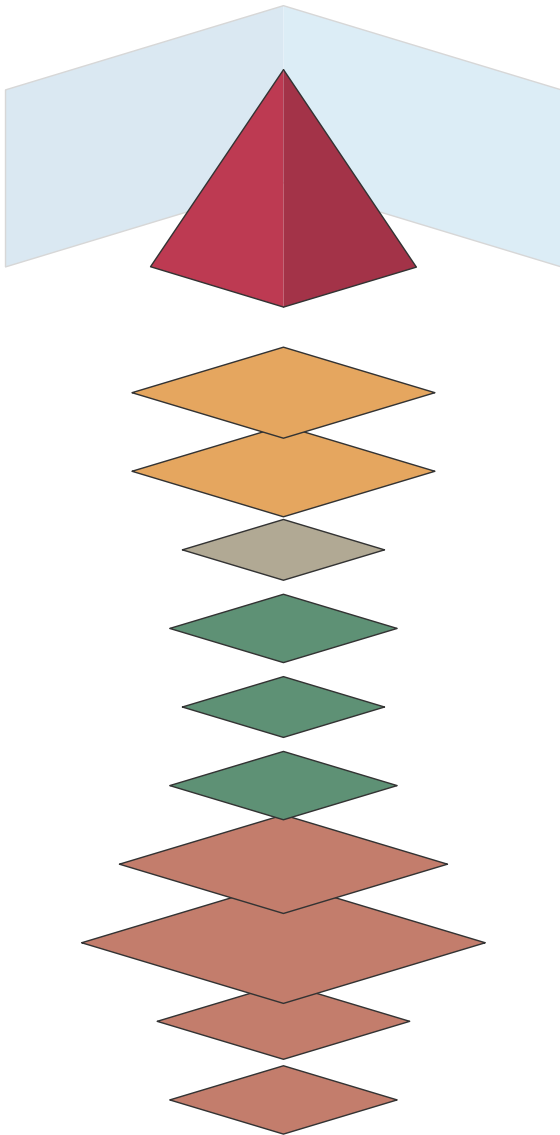




DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



5.15 CRIMINALITY SCORE

80th of 193 countries
16th of 35 American countries
3rd of 13 Caribbean countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **5.30**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00
FLORA CRIMES	4.50
FAUNA CRIMES	4.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.50
HEROIN TRADE	6.50
COCAINE TRADE	8.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	4.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS **5.00**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	5.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	5.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00



4.67 RESILIENCE SCORE

99th of 193 countries
21st of 35 American countries
10th of 13 Caribbean countries

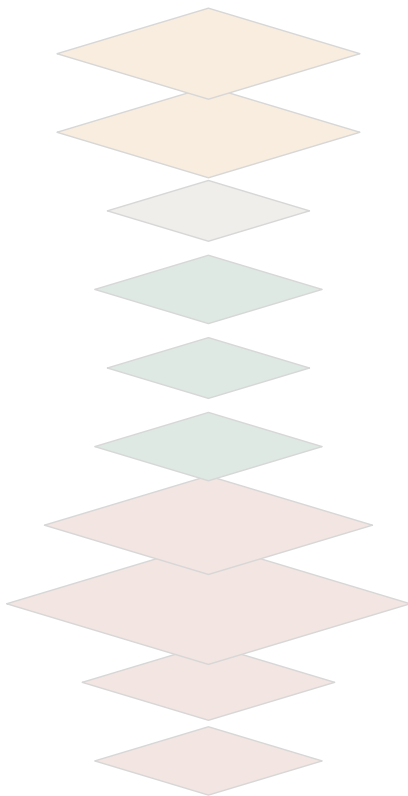
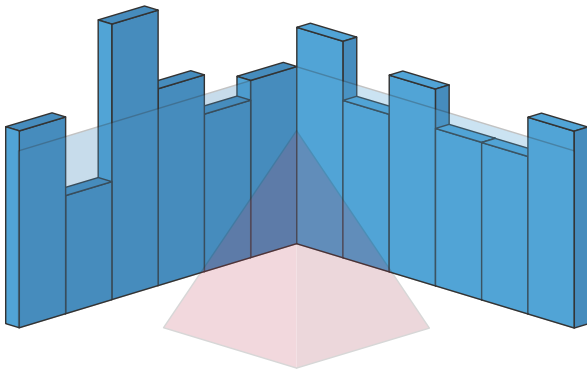


Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC





4.67 RESILIENCE SCORE

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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	4.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.00

5.15 CRIMINALITY SCORE

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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.30
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The Dominican Republic is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. The phenomenon predominantly takes the form of sexual exploitation, but forced labour and marriage are also known forms of trafficking that occur in the country. Victims of human trafficking, either locals or foreign nationals transiting the Dominican Republic, are headed for a number of different potential destinations, most prominently the United States, Europe and South America. Victims from other countries may also be trafficked into the Dominican Republic where they are subjected to sexual exploitation or forced labour. Recent years have seen an influx of Venezuelan and Haitian trafficking victims, but Colombian nationals are vulnerable to exploitation in the country as well. Like their foreign counterparts, victims from the Dominican Republic are typically subjected to forced labour or sexual exploitation around the country's beach resorts. Recruitment of Dominicans is done by networks operating throughout the country under false pretences, using deceptive practices to lure victims.

The criminal market for human smuggling is large, with the Dominican Republic seeing a large portion of the human-smuggling cases in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic is a transit country for Haitians moving to South America irregularly, as well as a source country for migrants smuggled to other countries in the region, such as Chile, the United States and, particularly, nearby Puerto Rico. The high levels of human smuggling in the Dominican Republic are enabled by factors such as the country's geographic position, the crises in Haiti and Venezuela, and widespread administrative corruption in the country. Perpetrators of human smuggling into and through the Dominican Republic tend to be networks from the victims' countries, and groups from Haiti in particular. While the use of falsified documentation is a common practice, COVID-19-related border closures and internal confinement measures have reduced migrant smuggling that relies on irregular migrants hiding within formal and mixed migration flows.

TRADE

The Dominican Republic is a destination market for illegal small arms and light weapons. The United States plays a significant role in the arms market in the Dominican Republic, with reports suggesting that illicit arms flows originate in Florida and enter the country by sea. The porous Haitian border is another known entry point for arms into the Dominican Republic. In line with regional trends, the Dominican Republic has a high incidence of

death by firearms. The country has, however, witnessed a downward trend in homicides in the recent decade. There is some evidence that military and police personnel have been involved in the criminal market for small arms and light weapons in the Dominican Republic.

ENVIRONMENT

There is a critical lack of evidence on the nature and scope of the environmental crime markets in the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, illicit trade is known to occur in non-renewable resources such as timber and charcoal, as well as endangered species. The Dominican Republic is rich in various non-renewable resources and has a number of limestone, clay and salt mines. Notably, artisanal and unregulated mining is taking place at some sites. The Dominican Republic also plays an important role in the illicit gold trafficking market, acting as a transit country for illegal gold of Venezuelan origin. Illegal trafficking of Venezuelan gold is perpetrated by transnational criminal organizations and networks, which are simultaneously engaged in other forms of trafficking, such as drug trafficking. The main forms of flora-related crimes in the Dominican Republic are the illegal harvesting of timber and the illegal mining of charcoal. These illegal timber and charcoal products are believed to circulate regionally. Additionally, the Dominican Republic is a transit country for illegal Amazonian timber destined for Mexico and the United States, and appears to be a destination country for illegal timber originating in Peru. The Dominican Republic is rich in biodiversity and the country houses a large number of endangered species that are in demand on the black market. A large number of fauna species, in particular turtles, are sold as souvenirs for tourists and there is also a larger illicit economy in sea turtle products such as eggs, meat and shells. Another profitable commodity in the Dominican Republic is the American eel, which is in high demand in Asian countries, largely for culinary purposes.

DRUGS

The Dominican Republic is an important trans-shipment point for cocaine, heroin, Ecstasy and fentanyl, and a destination country for cannabis. Cocaine constitutes the largest single criminal market in the Dominican Republic. The country is believed to be the leading Caribbean transit hub for cocaine from Venezuela destined for North America or Europe. Cocaine is primarily transported in the country into the country by go-fast boats and shipping containers. From the Dominican Republic, traffickers often target Puerto Rico as a gateway into the US. Similarly, the territories of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Anguilla, Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands provide opportunities for organized crime groups to ship cocaine to France and the

UK. Traffickers also often target Spain, where there is a substantial Dominican diaspora. This is how Spain has become the principal European entry point for cocaine from the Dominican Republic. Domestic drug consumption is primarily concentrated in metropolitan and tourist areas.

While the cocaine trade is the most pervasive drug market in the Dominican Republic, cannabis is the most consumed drug in the country. Cannabis is trafficked into the country primarily across the land border with Haiti, where the drug is cultivated, and from Jamaica. Criminal networks from both the Dominican Republic and Haiti work collaboratively in the trafficking of cannabis, which is often imported into the country by truck, either camouflaged or hidden among other products.

The Dominican Republic is also an important regional transit hub for heroin, often destined for the US market, but some domestic heroin consumption does take place. Additionally, the Dominican Republic is a small trans-shipment point for Ecstasy moving from its countries of origin, the Netherlands and Belgium, to North America, and potentially also for fentanyl coming from Mexico.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Inside the Dominican Republic, gangs known as naciones and pandillas dominate the organized crime landscape. The

most prominent groups are the Latin Kings, Los Trinitarios (a New York-based gang), the Bloods, Los 42, Metálicos, Ñetas, Mercaderos, Dorados and Rastafrys, among others. These groups have a presence in the larger cities of both the Dominican Republic and the US, and are involved in drug retailing, extortion, racketeering and money laundering. While the influence of these gangs may have waned in recent years, they still appear to have significant territorial control and often have the capacity to provide services within their territories. While evidence suggests that organized crime in the Dominican Republic is dominated by gangs, criminal networks play important roles in the human trafficking, human smuggling and drug trafficking markets, as well as some of the smaller criminal markets such as the environmental or natural resources market.

Criminal markets, including the narcotics market, rely heavily on transnational links: to Dominican nationals operating abroad, to foreign networks and to foreign individuals living and operating in the Dominican Republic. State-embedded actors are involved in various criminal activities, particularly in the drug trade. There have been multiple cases of military and police personnel participating in drug trafficking, and of links between drug traffickers and high-level officials and politicians.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Leaders in the Dominican Republic have made a number of statements warning of the threat of organized crime and drug trafficking in particular, but the rhetoric has yet to be followed up with concrete and effective action. Levels of perceived corruption in the Dominican Republic are high and recent administrations have failed to tackle the country's systemic issues with corruption. Without a dedicated anti-corruption institution, the Dominican Republic has major flaws in its framework for combating and deterring corruption.

The Dominican Republic has signalled that it is committed to international cooperation on anti-organized crime and is party to a number of treaties and conventions pertaining to organized crime. An extradition law is in place, and the Dominican Republic has extradition agreements with the United States, Brazil, Panama, Mexico, Italy, Spain, Chile and Haiti, as well as members of the Organization of American States. In addition, INTERPOL cooperates with national police in the Dominican Republic via its office in Santo

Domingo. The Dominican Republic has domestic legislation specifically targeting some criminal markets, including the importing of weapons, parts and ammunition, the possession and trafficking of drugs, and money laundering. However, the country does not appear to have domestic legislation specific to organized criminal groups, and there is no evidence to suggest that membership of a criminal group is criminalized.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Although nominally independent, the judiciary often suffers from political interference, corruption and a lack of adequate resources and personnel. Recent years have demonstrated that the judiciary of the Dominican Republic sometimes fails to prosecute criminal and corrupt individuals. The country has two types of prisons – traditional prisons and so-called rehabilitation centres. The former often suffer overcrowding and a high number of pre-trial detainees, while no such issues are reported in relation to the latter. Law enforcement in the Dominican Republic is challenged

by high levels of corruption. At the same time, however, there have been some improvements and the national police in the Dominican Republic has established dedicated units for narcotics, human trafficking and cybercrime. The country's geographic location along major drug-trafficking routes continues to be a major source of vulnerability.

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ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The Dominican Republic has one of the more dynamic economies in the Caribbean and has experienced sustained growth for a number of years. Although poverty rates have been successfully reduced, there is a significant informal economy embedded within the country, and private-sector development is restrained by factors such as the lack of a robust economic regulatory framework.

The risk of money laundering in the Dominican Republic is moderate. Despite recent updates to the country's anti-money laundering regulations and a strengthening of the financial intelligence unit, the latest Financial Action Task Force follow-up report notes that deficiencies remain. Numerous factors, including corruption, a large informal sector and weak financial controls, make the country vulnerable to money laundering and illicit financial flows. Moreover, the Dominican Republic has a weak asset forfeiture regime that is not aligned with international standards. On the other hand, the Dominican Republic is not a major secrecy jurisdiction and fares reasonably well when it comes to banking transparency.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The penal code in the Dominican Republic guarantees victims and witnesses of crime the right to protection. However, the efficiency of the witness protection programme has been questioned in the past. The government has launched initiatives for assisting drug users, for instance through the introduction of an opioid substitution programme and initiatives that introduce alternatives to imprisonment for drug offenders. At the same time, however, there are significant deficiencies in the Dominican Republic's response to human trafficking and the country lacks mechanisms to support trafficking victims. The government has introduced crime-prevention strategies such as a community policing force focused on crime prevention and public safety. Furthermore, a community youth police programme is in operation. The country is home to many active civil-society organizations and movements and the government has taken steps to increase the space for civil society. Press freedom is still often undermined and many journalists self-censor due to fear of violence. Nevertheless, the Dominican Republic has seen a steady improvement in freedom of the media in recent years.