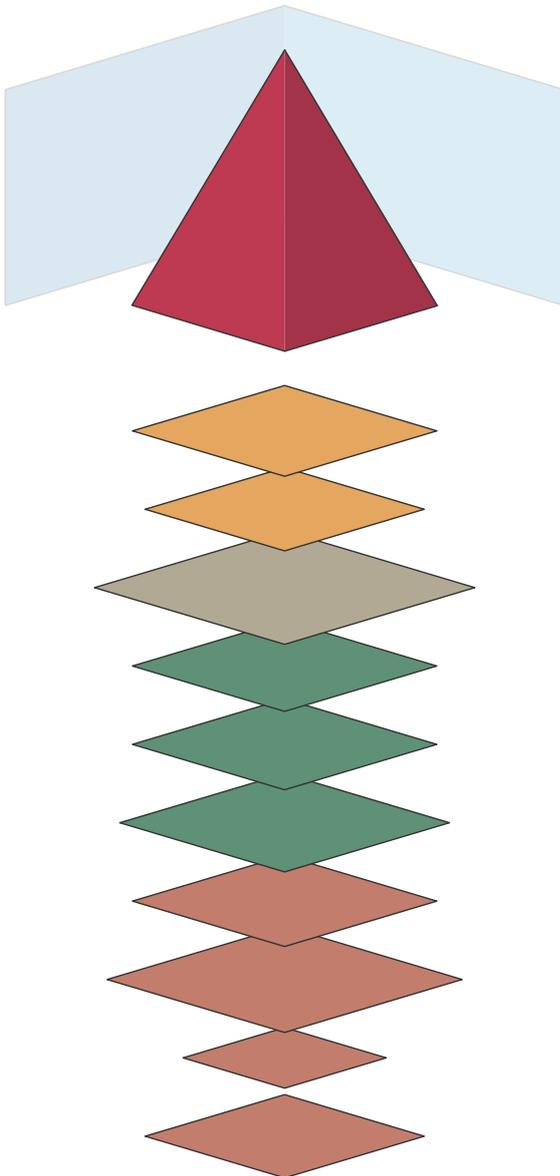


ECUADOR



6.25 CRIMINALITY SCORE

31st of 193 countries
10th of 35 American countries
6th of 12 South American countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS 6.00

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	7.50
FLORA CRIMES	6.00
FAUNA CRIMES	6.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	6.50
HEROIN TRADE	6.00
COCAINE TRADE	7.00
CANNABIS TRADE	4.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS 6.50

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.50



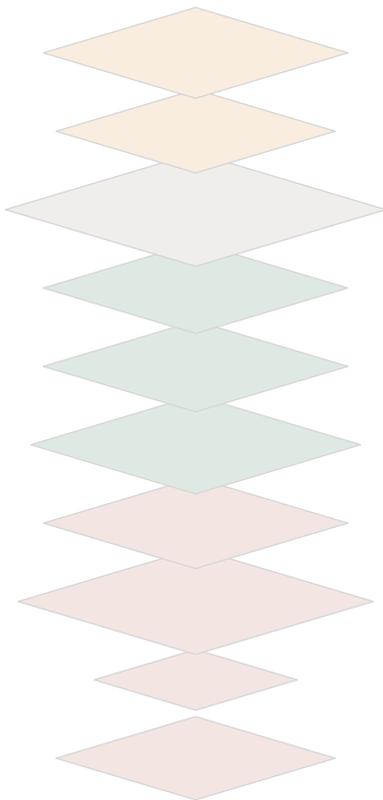
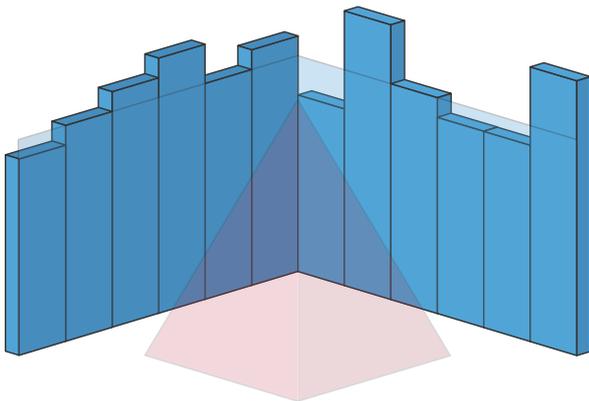
5.71 RESILIENCE SCORE

43rd of 193 countries
7th of 35 American countries
5th of 12 South American countries





ECUADOR



5.71

RESILIENCE SCORE

43rd of 193 countries

7th of 35 American countries

5th of 12 South American countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	4.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00



6.25

CRIMINALITY SCORE

31st of 193 countries

10th of 35 American countries

6th of 12 South American countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS 6.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS 6.50



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Ecuador is a major source point as well as a transit and destination market for human-trafficking victims, mostly women and girls targeted for sexual exploitation and forced labour, although human trafficking for the purposes of illegal adoption, organ trafficking and forced recruitment for militias has also been reported. A large percentage of cases respond to domestic demand, with some brothels operating legally in the country also found to be centres for sexual exploitation.

The lack of visa requirements for many countries makes Ecuador a significant corridor for human smuggling, particularly for irregular migrants making their way into the United States. The route has become increasingly dangerous, with local crime groups charging Venezuelans who arrive without visas high rates to cross the border and Mexican organizations forcing irregular migrants to carry drugs in their bags.

TRADE

The illegal arms trade has been developing in the country, despite tight regulations regarding the ownership, manufacturing, buying and selling of weapons, with criminals buying or even renting guns in the grey market. Transnational crime structures are known to smuggle US- and Mexican-made high-tech weapons through Ecuador to Colombian armed groups, with some being sold in the local grey market to hired assassination networks and groups that are part of drug cartels. Consequently, violence and use of firearms is on the rise.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora and fauna crimes are widespread in Ecuador. Illegal logging, including of protected species such as mahogany and cedar, is reported in protected areas, particularly around the Amazon rainforest. Peruvian loggers are believed to be behind this criminal market, paying bribes to officials in order to move the illegally extracted wood, sometimes alongside legal shipments. Active military personnel has also been implicated as a criminal element in the illicit flora market, facilitating the trafficking of timber by means of exploiting information as well as the logistics capacity of the military. Although the Ecuadorian market is comparatively smaller than those in neighbouring countries, it has a high value. As one of the most megadiverse countries in the world, Ecuador is highly attractive for traffickers looking for exotic wildlife species, including birds – particularly

parrots – reptiles, mammals and shark fins for China. Ecuador is also vulnerable to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Both domestic and international consumption of protected animals as pets and even bushmeat is putting many species under threat.

The non-renewable-resource criminal market is dominated by illegal mining, mostly of gold – which is the main economic activity in some areas of the country – and fuel smuggling. The market is largely controlled by domestic criminal networks, with Colombian crime groups heavily involved in transportation across the border, particularly gasoline, which is used to process cocaine.

DRUGS

Ecuador is a major trans-shipment hub for Peruvian and Colombian cocaine trafficked to large markets including the United States and Europe. Trafficking is largely controlled by Mexican and Colombian mafia groups and cartels, which team up with local gangs. Drugs are generally moved by road to the country's main ports, from which they are transported by boat and light aircraft to the United States and by cargo ships to Europe. Ecuador also produces limited amounts of cannabis, which fail to meet local demand for the most consumed drug in the country. In addition, Ecuador is a trans-shipment point for cannabis from Colombia to Chile.

Heroin is also transported through Ecuador to the United States and Europe and for domestic consumption. Foreign guerrilla groups who have laid down their arms and moved across the border into Ecuador seem to control the market in collaboration with domestic criminal gangs. The market for synthetic drugs is considered high, with lifetime prevalence of Ecstasy use among young people increasing fairly quickly. With other synthetic drugs coming into the country, authorities have now come to regard synthetic drug production and consumption an issue of increasing concern.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Ecuador's most powerful mafia-style groups have traditionally operated in collaboration with foreign mafias, particularly from neighbouring Colombia and Mexico, to facilitate transport and logistics. There is also growing evidence of the presence of organized crime groups from the Balkans for the most part involved in drug trafficking, and China, engaging primarily in human smuggling. Domestic mafia-style groups are also involved in criminal activities such as assassinations, extortion, kidnappings, illegal mining and money laundering. Other types of mafia-style groups in Ecuador are gangs, although these have been in decline over the last decade, partly as a result of government

policies aimed at increasing social inclusion, innovative approaches to criminal justice (including the legalization of several of these groups) and police reform, which have also helped reduce the homicide rate in the country. The most powerful groups use sophisticated weapons, ammunition and explosives, mostly obtained through corrupt officials at all levels who also facilitate drug and illegal gold trafficking by waiving shipments, providing security and granting impunity.

Endemic corruption in Ecuador renders state-embedded actors quite influential. These actors are known to facilitate

criminal markets, especially the drug trade. Criminal groups makes use of close ties to officials in order to get their illegal shipments through border controls. However, state embedded actors also provide security detail to shipments or otherwise assist traffickers in transporting drug cargoes. While not as influential, loose criminal networks also operate in Ecuador. They operate mostly at the city or provincial level, engaging on the drug- and human-trafficking markets. Some of these criminal structures are believed to be functional within the prison system as well, exerting a significant degree of violence and extortion.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Despite still being considered a moderately fragile state, Ecuador has made improvements over the last decade, as illustrated by the reduction in its murder rate. Nevertheless, organized crime has infiltrated public institutions and compromised their integrity, significantly damaging public trust in authorities. The ability of authorities to maintain public security is also impaired because of their inability to monopolize the use of legitimate violence. Corruption remains a considerable challenge, with implementation of existing legislation and access to information considered to be low. Because of budget cuts, coupled with corruption allegations against key political figures, the number of public institutions tasked with ensuring transparency and public information has been reduced, which has deepened public mistrust in the public sector as a whole and the judiciary in particular.

Regarding Ecuador's legal framework, the national laws are robust and adequate to combat organized crime. Despite the extensive and inclusive legal framework, implementation of laws remains a challenge. The country has signed and ratified a number of treaties and conventions to fight organized crime (with the exception of the Arms Trade Treaty) and has extradition agreements with key countries in the region. However, the resources to put them into practice are often lacking. The country has several cooperation agreements to strengthen the fight against criminal markets, including with Brazil, Spain, Colombia, Peru, Mexico and the United States (one of its key allies).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The lack of independence of Ecuador's judiciary limits the country's ability to effectively pursue corruption and money-laundering investigations, including those related to organized crime, and weakens the rule of law. In the last

two years, several judges have been dismissed for serious violations, including involvement in drug trafficking. The country's penitentiary system is generally overcrowded, with prisons largely controlled by mafia-style groups violently fighting for control. There is a specialized law enforcement unit in the country, dedicated to countering organized crime that effectively collaborates with international counterparts. In spite the police force in Ecuador being recognized as one of the most professional in Latin America, however, law enforcement in the country suffers significant drawbacks. Among the major challenges faced are the lack of resources, the limited capacity to monitor and patrol the entire territory of the country as well as the significant delays caused by heavy bureaucracy. Importantly, corruption also opens up a vulnerability of the police force to corruption, especially against the backdrop of the surge of Andean cocaine.

Located between two of the largest cocaine producers globally - Peru and Colombia, Ecuador experiences increased pressures from drug traffickers. Estimates point to a third of Colombian cocaine being trafficked through Ecuador either through the Pacific or the Amazon route. The ability of authorities to monitor and patrol the northern border of the country is impaired due to the difficult jungle terrain. As a result, the territory is largely controlled by drug cartels. The southern border is also vulnerable, but much less so than the northern border. To counter border vulnerabilities, action plans foreseeing significant investments have been approved. It is, however, early for assessments of their effectiveness to be made. The Venezuelan crisis and subsequent influx of migrants into Ecuador have further challenged Ecuador's territorial integrity.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Ecuador has a sound legal framework to fight money laundering and institutions in charge of implementing it, including by monitoring suspicious transactions. Although

the country is also part of international groups working to tackle money laundering and terrorism financing, these crimes are still common and very few charges end in a criminal conviction. Ecuador is believed to be home to hundreds of ghost companies used to launder money or evade tax, most commonly in the mining, real-estate, car sales, banking, tourism, security and retail-jewellery sectors. Finally, Ecuador is assessed as a moderate-risk country when it comes to doing business, with the government's recent tax cuts and loan incentives for entrepreneurs meeting a challenging economic context in which nearly half the population works informally. Nevertheless, estimates point to almost half of the country's workforce being engaged in the informal economy.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Ecuador has reported a national system for the protection and assistance of victims and witnesses that covers the entire country and delivers permanent or semi-permanent police protection and judicial, psychological and life-planning assistance, although the system has suffered from a lack of sufficient resources. The country's police, through its Community Police Units, is in charge of implementing nationwide prevention campaigns on issues including crime and drug consumption, a strategy that is believed to account for the reduction of the homicide rate in the country. Civil society organizations are very active in Ecuador, despite excessive government regulations, while the media play a key role in investigating crimes, including corruption, particularly by the state, and are believed to work in relative freedom.

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