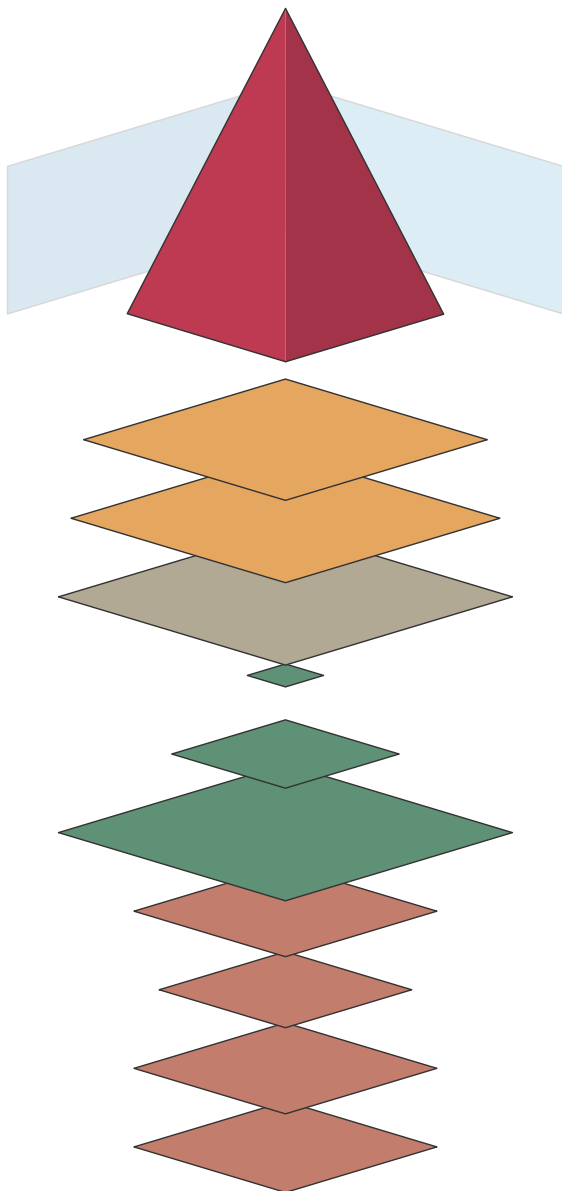




IRAQ



7.05 CRIMINALITY SCORE

8th of 193 countries
4th of 46 Asian countries
2nd of 14 Western Asian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **6.35**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	8.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	9.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.50
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	9.00
HEROIN TRADE	6.00
COCAINE TRADE	5.00
CANNABIS TRADE	6.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS **7.75**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	9.00



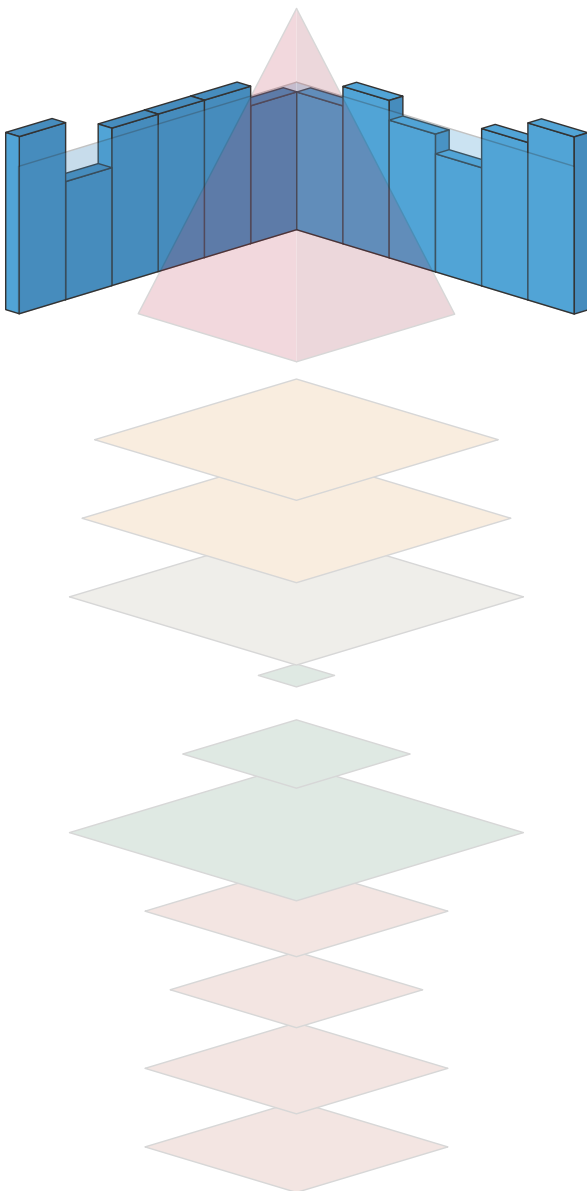
3.79 RESILIENCE SCORE

142nd of 193 countries
33rd of 46 Asian countries
10th of 14 Western Asian countries





IRAQ



3.79

RESILIENCE SCORE

142nd of 193 countries

33rd of 46 Asian countries

10th of 14 Western Asian countries

<u>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</u>	4.50
<u>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	3.00
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	4.00
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	4.00
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	4.00
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	3.50
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	3.50
<u>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</u>	4.00
<u>ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY</u>	3.50
<u>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</u>	3.00
<u>PREVENTION</u>	4.00
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	4.50



7.05

CRIMINALITY SCORE

8th of 193 countries

4th of 46 Asian countries

2nd of 14 Western Asian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

6.35



CRIMINAL ACTORS

7.75



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Iraq has thriving human trafficking and human smuggling markets. Most human trafficking victims are subjected to sexual exploitation or forced labour, although organ trafficking also occurs, and many children are forced into begging or recruited into armed groups. Sexual exploitation remains by far the most common type of human trafficking, especially for female and child victims. The sex trafficking market is extremely lucrative and is facilitated by corrupt state-embedded actors issuing temporary marriage contracts. Women and children from minority groups are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and have been sold as slaves by terrorist organizations in the country. Rampant violence and insecurity in recent years have exacerbated vulnerability to human trafficking, especially for women and children, as well as for refugees and internally displaced people.

Iraq's human smuggling market has also continuously expanded since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Iraqis constitute one of the largest groups of irregular arrivals to Europe, most often being smuggled along eastern Mediterranean smuggling routes. Many Iraqi nationals seek to be smuggled abroad due to devastated infrastructure, a lack of economic opportunity, weak political institutions, blackmailing and the difficulty of obtaining foreign visas. Many internally displaced people in particular seek the aid of smugglers to escape violence and instability that render certain regions of the country uninhabitable. Human smuggling is also particularly prevalent in Iraqi Kurdistan, from where many vulnerable individuals seek the aid of smugglers to reach Europe. Many Syrian refugees have also been smuggled into Iraqi Kurdistan and currently reside there. However, smuggled individuals are highly vulnerable to human trafficking, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish the two markets. As with the human trafficking market, bribery and corruption run rampant in Iraq's human smuggling market.

TRADE

As a major recipient of foreign military aid and a significant transit country for weapons merchants across the Middle East, Iraq is highly vulnerable to arms trafficking. Weapons from decades of conflict remain in circulation, and weak border security, corruption and terrorism enable the arms trafficking market to flourish. An estimated third of both Iraqi and Kurdish citizens possess firearms, and due to Iraq's proximity to other regional conflicts in the Middle East, illicit arms proliferation has continued to rise, even after the defeat of ISIS in north-western Iraq.

Black-market weapons are sold primarily in urban centres or online through social media, with Mosul in northern Iraq serving as a significant weapons hub. Many weapons from neighbouring countries, as well as Western-origin weapons such as handguns or light machine guns, are also smuggled into the country. Weapons diversion is a significant issue, with many small arms intended for use by the Iraqi military and law enforcement officials entering civilian markets instead. Weapons are also trafficked out of Iraq, primarily through Anbar province. Corrupt state-embedded actors largely facilitate the arms trafficking market.

ENVIRONMENT

Iraq has one of the largest oil reserves in the world, as well as enormous mineral wealth, including numerous metals such as uranium, gold and silver, among others. As such, the country's non-renewable resource illicit markets are flourishing, facilitated by rampant corruption and bribery among state-embedded actors. Oil trafficking constitutes the most pervasive market, and crude oil is often smuggled out of Iraq and into neighbouring countries or elsewhere in the Middle East. The oil trafficking market flourished throughout ISIS's rule in north-western Iraq, during which several illegal pipelines were installed; these are still there. Because of the engagement of corrupt state-embedded actors in oil trafficking, the market is also a significant source of internal conflict between Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government officials. Gas smuggling and mercury theft also pose significant challenges in Iraq.

Fauna crimes also play a role in Iraq's illicit environmental economy. Licensed zookeepers often engage in the trafficking of exotic birds, the most sought after being high-value falcon species, through Iraq to other countries in the Middle East. Waterfowl in particular are commonly sold on the black market, both domestically and in neighbouring countries. The poaching and illicit trade pertaining to many other species, including wild goats, gazelles, flamingos, water chickens and the Euphrates soft-shell turtle, are also pervasive in Iraq. Increased poaching is connected to the proliferation of illicit weapons throughout the country, and also facilitated by corrupt government officials. The illicit flora trade, on the other hand, remains negligible, as many plant species no longer survive in the country due to the destruction of the Iraqi landscape from decades of conflict and the targeted burning of agricultural fields.

DRUGS

Iraq is a haven for the international drug trade. Synthetic drug consumption has been steadily rising for more than a decade, and methamphetamine consumption in particular has risen in urban settings and prisons, even among youth

and children. Methamphetamine is smuggled into Iraq from neighbouring countries through Basra province, and is also increasingly produced domestically. Recent information suggests Iraq is also becoming a waypoint for methamphetamine trafficked towards Turkey and potentially Europe. The abuse of prescription drugs such as Tramadol is also a significant issue, and the consumption of Captagon, which is smuggled into Iraq primarily from neighbouring and Central Asian countries, for the purpose of enhancing fighting capabilities, is also known to occur. Heroin consumption in Iraq is also rising, primarily in Basra province and in south-eastern Iraq, especially among youth and middle-aged adults. Opium is smuggled into Iraq from neighbouring and Central Asian countries. Heroin trafficking occurs in both Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan, and is trafficked out of the country to other Middle Eastern countries or to Europe.

Although cannabis use was traditionally quite high in Iraq, largely due to its low price, the pattern seems to have subsided during the last decade, instead giving way to synthetic drug consumption. Najaf, Basra and Safwan are the most important drug trafficking hubs in the country, largely due to their proximity to its only maritime border. Militias throughout Iraq are believed to profit heavily from the drug trade. Iraq's cocaine trade is far less pervasive, but although domestic consumption is rare, cocaine is smuggled into Iraq from neighbouring countries and transited on to other countries in the Middle East.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups are involved in most of Iraq's criminal markets. These groups are especially active in the drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, human smuggling and oil trafficking markets, and include a range

of actors, as well as militias that employ mafia-style tactics to acquire funding. Reportedly, mafia-style groups in Iraq are expanding their control over certain parts of the country. The Popular Mobilization Forces, an umbrella organization for many militias and military figures in Iraq, have clashed with mafia-style actors in recent years, as militias increasingly turn towards mafia-style tactics such as illegal taxation, illicit-goods smuggling and extortion. Oil mafias are prevalent in northern Iraq, especially in Iraqi Kurdistan, and engage heavily in oil trafficking. Corrupt state-embedded actors are known to cooperate with mafia-style groups throughout the country. A diverse array of criminal networks also operate in Iraq, and are often organized along tribal lines. These networks engage in criminal activity such as oil trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking, robbery and assassination. High border porosity and a general lack of security throughout the country enable both mafia-style groups and criminal networks to flourish.

Many criminal groups operating in Iraq have ties to corrupt state-embedded actors. Both Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government officials have been involved in domestic and transnational organized crime, accruing high levels of profit from activities such as arms trafficking, oil trafficking and illicit-goods smuggling. Corruption permeates nearly all levels of government, with many state-embedded actors operating at the executive and ministerial levels. Iraq has also long been susceptible to foreign influence; most criminal activities involve foreign actors who are citizens of neighbouring countries or elsewhere in the Middle East and Central Asia, although European and Latin American criminals have also been linked to criminal activity in the country. Iraq's lack of national security and poor border control makes the country a haven for foreign criminals.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Political leadership in Iraq is fragmented. Official government statements on security and intelligence are often contradictory and fail to reflect reality, and the allocation of government positions through a quota system based upon ethnicity also perpetuates ethno-sectarian tensions, in turn hindering government efficacy and fuelling the existence of patronage networks. Corruption is rife, and throughout the past decade the government has experienced an increasing crisis of legitimacy due to an intensification of protests against rampant corruption, elite criminality and foreign interference. The 2019 Tishreen Revolution, a massive uprising of civil society activists, was met with

state violence and human rights abuses. Concrete efforts to combat organized crime are hindered by corruption and the criminal activity of state-embedded actors.

Although the Iraqi government has expressed a commitment to combating certain forms of organized crime, including human trafficking, efforts remain limited and largely ineffective. Moreover, despite ratifying international conventions related to organized crime, with the exception of the Arms Trade Treaty, and establishing extradition treaties with various countries, Iraq's legislative framework remains ineffective. Legislation in both Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan pertains to a number of forms of organized crime

such as human trafficking, oil trafficking and poaching, but law enforcement remains limited, as officials are often themselves implicated in such crimes. Internal government rivalries also hinder both government efficacy and the fight against organized crime. Moreover, the focus on the fight against ISIS in recent years, as well as on the current COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in the shifting of resources away from combating organized crime, in turn enabling criminal markets such as the drug trade to further expand.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Rampant corruption threatens criminal justice and security in Iraq. Law enforcement capacity is limited, criminal procedures remain underdeveloped, corrupt state-embedded actors continue to engage in organized crime and criminal activity continues to rise. The judicial system is overburdened, and its efficacy is hindered by corruption, a lack of political independence, limited institutional cooperation, long delays and a lack of enforcement regarding both penalties and investigations into criminal activity. A lack of judges, lawyers and prosecutors also poses a significant obstacle to combating organized crime, and many judges have been threatened, and some killed, by various political actors and criminals. In addition, the dissolution of Iraq's security apparatus since the US invasion has ultimately led to the erasure of state responsibility for the protection of civilians, fueling crime and violence. Although some parts of the country are relatively secure, such as Iraqi Kurdistan, law enforcement officials lack control over many areas, especially desert regions, and have been largely replaced by local militias and tribal powers.

Iraq's territorial integrity has also consistently deteriorated over the previous two decades. High border porosity enables cross-border organized criminal activity such as drug trafficking and human trafficking to flourish. Moreover, a lack of border security largely facilitated the country's infiltration by foreign fighters seeking to join ISIS. Since the defeat of ISIS, securing the country's borders has been a primary concern for the Iraqi government, along with preventing the resurgence of terrorism. Regardless, corruption among border officials remains pervasive and the lack of cooperation between border officials in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan also threatens territorial integrity and security.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The Iraqi government relies heavily on foreign aid, as well as on imported food and goods from neighbouring and Western countries, and on internal imports from Iraqi Kurdistan. Oil exports dominate the Iraqi economy, comprising just under half of the national GDP and accounting for almost all exports. The government faces pressure to further increase oil production in efforts to increase public revenue. Capital flight also poses a major economic challenge in the country, and its impact on high debt volumes, low business

volumes and weak production has aggravated the country's unemployment crisis. Terrorism also remains a significant threat to economic stability, and pervasive corruption has eroded both living standards and economic recovery. As such, Iraq is one of the most difficult countries in which to do business.

Iraq is highly susceptible to money laundering, lacking both a structured banking system and effective anti-money laundering mechanisms. Corruption hinders the establishment of international banking relationships, limiting possibilities for financial transactions, and also rendering the economy largely cash based. Many rely on the informal hawala system for both small and large financial transfers. Although the Iraqi government has cooperated with international institutions to improve the country's economic regulatory environment, progress has yet to materialize. Legislation criminalizing both money laundering and terrorist financing was passed in recent years, also prompting the establishment of monitoring mechanisms, but corruption and the circumvention of such regulations have made the legislation ineffective.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support services are severely lacking in Iraq. Despite government efforts to identify human trafficking victims, major deficiencies persist, and law enforcement officials lack necessary training in victim identification methods. Awareness campaigns for human trafficking are also significantly lacking. While welfare shelters for female victims exist, predominantly in Baghdad, the state neither recognizes nor supports these shelters, forcing them to operate clandestinely. Moreover, despite rising drug consumption having overburdened the Iraqi health care system, little support is extended to those affected. Government inaction is thus a significant barrier to effective crime prevention strategies.

While Iraqi civil society is relatively active, a lack of collaboration among the abundance of civil society organizations in the country makes it difficult to establish civil society's role in the fight against organized crime. Foreign NGOs also provide significant amounts of aid to Iraq. However, the country remains one of the worst in the world for media freedom, and there is a significant lack of transparency regarding public information. Criticism of the government is harshly punished, and many journalists face kidnapping or murder. Since the Tishreen Revolution, rates of harassment, kidnapping, violence and murder against journalists have increased, especially towards those who have criticized the government.

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