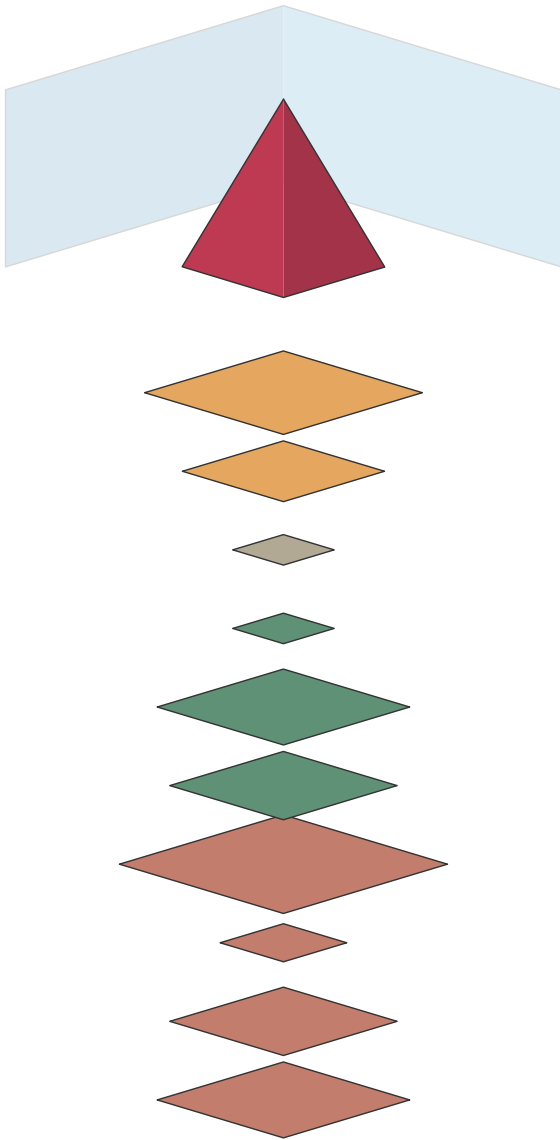


 **KAZAKHSTAN**



 **4.26**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

133rd of 193 countries
37th of 46 Asian countries
6th of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **4.15**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.50
HEROIN TRADE	6.50
COCAINE TRADE	2.50
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **4.38**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00

 **4.71**
RESILIENCE SCORE

98th of 193 countries
17th of 46 Asian countries
3rd of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries

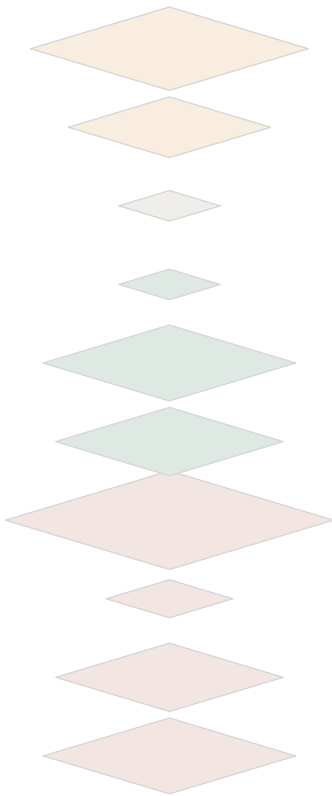
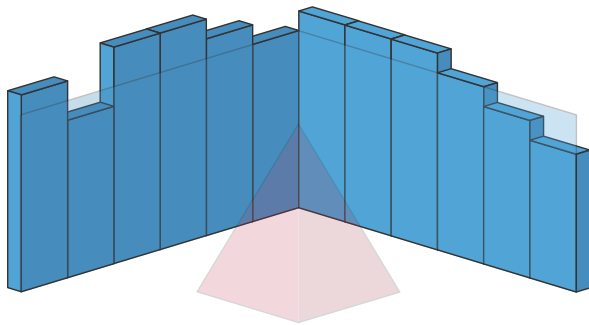


Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

 **KAZAKHSTAN**





4.71
RESILIENCE SCORE

98th of 193 countries
17th of 46 Asian countries
3rd of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.50
PREVENTION	4.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.50

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CRIMINALITY SCORE

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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.15
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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Kazakhstan is a source, transit and destination country for victims of human trafficking. Domestic victims are subject to sexual exploitation in Russia, the Middle East and Europe. Victims from other countries in Central Asia also transit Kazakhstan on their way to Russia and other European destination markets, while migrant workers from neighbouring countries in the region as well as Chinese, Filipinos and Ukrainians, are exploited in the Kazakh oil-focused economy, construction and domestic services. Exploitative labour practices have also been reported in the mining sector in Kazakhstan. Oralmans – ethnic Kazakhs who have returned to the country in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union – are most vulnerable to the practice. Although not as prevalent as in Uzbekistan, child labour also occurs in Kazakhstan. Female foreign nationals, as well as women from rural areas, are forced into prostitution in larger cities in Kazakhstan. Since an estimated 1 million Uzbek migrants were banned from re-entry into Russia, a significant percentage of them have tried settling in Kazakhstan, where they have become susceptible to trafficking. Trafficking rings reportedly collaborate with brothels in the country and abroad. Traffickers allegedly use debt bondage and tough national law enforcement policies as a means of coercing victims into remaining in exploitative situations.

Irregular migration occurs within the region, primarily towards Kazakhstan and Russia. People with no valid travel documents, or citizens of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, seek help from smuggling networks. Kazakhstan may also be a transit country, with people from Southern Asia flying to Central Asia, from where they continue on land towards their final destinations in Europe. Irregular migrants may enter Central Asia in Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan, from where they make their way through Kazakhstan and on to Russia, sometimes via Uzbekistan.

TRADE

Historically, arms trafficking has been a concern for the Kazakh authorities and has often overlapped with illicit drug flows. Trafficking of weapons continues to be an issue, but while its extent is unknown, it is unlikely the impact of the market is significant. Information points to several routes for illicit weapons going into Kazakhstan, with authorities maintaining that Russia, Tajikistan and Afghanistan are the primary source countries. Other sources of illicit weapons include the diversion of domestic arms stockpiles and local craft production.

ENVIRONMENT

Illicit logging appears to be occurring in Kazakhstan, most likely on a small scale, while fauna crimes are more pronounced. Kazakhstan is a major partner in the Belt and Road Initiative, which will presumably increase the frequency of irregular wildlife trade along with legal trade. The poaching of sturgeon is a significant issue, with both live specimens and caviar being illegally trafficked. Indications point towards organized crime groups and state officials' involvement in the trade. Strict measures have been set in place and poaching is declining, but it is still problematic. Animals are predominantly poached for subsistence, but rare and threatened species (especially saiga antelope) have also been killed for their parts, which are subsequently smuggled into China and elsewhere in Eastern and South-eastern Asia. Trafficking has had a distinct environmental impact, evident in the striking 98% decline in the sturgeon population in the Ural-Caspian region in the span of a decade, and the 95% decline in the population of saiga antelope over the past 20 years.

Additionally, fuel and lubricants have been illegally imported into Kyrgyzstan from Kazakhstan. Fuel is smuggled out of the country by Kazakhstani companies in collaboration with Kyrgyz nationals, mostly by rail. The Chaldybar–Avtodorozhny and Kaindy–Avtodorozhny checkpoints on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border have been flagged as the main transit points for smuggled fuel, although historically Kazakhstani and Russian fuel was smuggled into Kyrgyzstan via the Chu (Shu) River.

DRUGS

Kazakhstan is a key transit country on the so-called 'northern route' for heroin trafficking originating in Afghanistan and destined for Russia. The domestic heroin market in the country is well developed and among the largest in Central Asia. Conversely, the cocaine trade in the country is marginal, limited to the higher strata of the Kazakh society.

Kazakhstan is a large producer of cannabis, which is cultivated predominantly in the Chu Valley. Official reports specify that more than 90% of the cannabis on the Russian market originates in Kazakhstan, while more than 80% of hashish either originates in or passes through Kazakhstan. Generally, seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants in Central Asia have been low compared to the more popular drugs across the region, namely cannabis and heroin. This suggests the existence of a smaller market for synthetic drugs in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the use of psychoactive substances is a relatively recent phenomenon and seems to be following the same pattern as in Russia, where younger users prefer synthetic drugs. The synthetic drug trade has not yet achieved a critical mass comparable with opiates,

but it will likely grow in coming years. It is also likely that Kazakhstan plays some part in the global synthetic drug flows, serving as a waypoint for drug shipments trafficked from China onto Europe.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Criminal networks in Kazakhstan may sometimes bribe low-ranking law enforcement officials to avoid charges. There are allegations of police officers facilitating human trafficking and being implicated in fauna crimes as well as the drug trade. While, in regard to systemic state collusion in organized crime, Kazakhstan cannot compare with other countries in Central Asia, corruption at the top level is pervasive with only regime loyalists being allowed access to state resources. Foreign actors are active in the country. According to some reports, Chinese Triads consider Kazakhstan a convenient transit point for synthetic drugs. Criminal communities based in Russia also exert a major influence on Kazakhstan. Foreign actors hailing from Central Asia and outside the region are known to engage

in legal commercial activities in Kazakhstan as cover for trading in drugs.

Mafia-style groups have been losing their foothold in Kazakhstan for the past couple of decades. The larger cities still have clusters of smaller, mafia-style organizations involved in drug trafficking. However, these do not usually control significant territories. Elements of former mafia structures that have survived are reportedly now a part of cross-border criminal organizations spanning the Kazakh-Russian border. Criminal networks in Kazakhstan are relatively underdeveloped compared with other countries in Central Asia. Only the smaller groups have remained in drug trafficking as it is considered to be too dangerous. Larger organizations have moved on to more lucrative smuggling markets, such as oil, alcohol and consumer goods brought in mainly from China. Most trafficking groups operate locally, but there are some that have ties to foreign groups and operate transnationally. They engage in human and drug trafficking, as well as in the smuggling of arms and counterfeit goods.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Prior to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev taking the reins in 2019, little official information was available on the country's approach to organized crime beyond the 'Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy' – which calls for increased attention to the underdeveloped border regions, modernization of the country's labour code and an intervention to stop sexual slavery. Since then, however, certain steps to strengthen the measures against the illicit economy have been taken, including the formation of an economic crimes agency. Corruption persists across the state apparatus. While it is true that law enforcement officers and the customs administration are vulnerable to corruption, the elite are not as intertwined with organized crime groups, in the sense that they do not facilitate organized crime activities. Kazakhstan is more of a kleptocratic state, and it is therefore unsurprising that corruption charges against members of the political elite are rare and only likely to be brought up in instances where individuals have fallen out of favour. Nevertheless, there are indications of the political elite controlling state resources and only allowing access to regime loyalists. Access to information in Kazakhstan is poor as both the legislature and the government offer little transparency over decision-making and other operations.

Kazakhstan is party to all relevant treaties pertaining to organized crime and has bilateral extradition agreements with more than 60 nations. In spite of its international

commitments, there is room for improvement in the field of international cooperation as trust in Kazakh authorities is, at times, limited. Nevertheless, the country's legislative framework is well equipped to tackle organized crime. Not only are the relevant laws in place, but amendments are drafted regularly – especially to human trafficking, wildlife crime and drug trafficking laws – in an attempt to better facilitate the response to current and emerging threats.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Although Kazakhstan is able to enforce its laws, corruption is pervasive in the judicial system and the political elite hold influence over it. Recruitment in the judiciary is in the hands of high-level officials and court administrators. Expectations of justice and public trust in the efficiency of the legal system are therefore low. Recent changes to the country's legislative framework reportedly leave space for the potential and arbitrary prosecution of dissent. Prison guards have allegedly been involved in the abuse and torture of inmates, and the Kazakh penal system is struggling to meet international standards. Systemic lack of resources and corruption within the police is a significant issue as well, with arbitrary arrests and detentions a common occurrence. However, efforts to prosecute corrupt police officers have been met with impunity. In 2018, a roadmap for reforms in the police force was introduced, but these reforms are still ongoing. The national security committee of

Kazakhstan (KNB) is the country's intelligence agency, which is tasked with counterterrorism as well as with managing the country's border services. The KNB also has specific units within its ranks that are tasked with countering forms of organized crime. Additionally, the ministry of interior has formed a special department within its ranks to counter organized crime and human trafficking. Due to its border and customs units being systematically underfunded and ill-trained, Kazakhstan struggles with securing its borders. The country's geographic location at the heart of cross-border trafficking flows makes it vulnerable to organized crime. Despite Kazakhstan receiving training and support from its international partners, further efforts in tackling drug trafficking, wildlife crime and human trafficking are necessary.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Kazakhstan does not face any major vulnerabilities of money laundering and terrorist financing or strategic AML/CFT deficiencies. In spite of that, as a transit country for a number of trafficking flows, and with its weak enforcement of AML/CFT legislation, Kazakhstan is somewhat susceptible to money laundering. Despite government attempts to bring Kazakh legislation in line with international standards, law enforcement agencies lack the capacity to investigate sophisticated financial crimes. Additionally, parallel financial investigations are not carried out routinely alongside investigations of money laundering, and interagency information-sharing is poor. The economic regulatory environment in Kazakhstan is to some extent conducive to doing business and objectively better than most countries in the region. Another positive step is the adoption of unparalleled system-wide reforms that should improve the business environment in the country and lessen the bureaucratic barriers and burdens. Nevertheless, corruption is reportedly the primary constraint to doing business in Kazakhstan. Patronage networks negatively affect the country's business environment, while bureaucracy and vague legislation restrict foreign investment. In addition, public procurement carries a high risk of corruption for businesses investing in Kazakhstan, with public funds often diverted to individuals or companies with ties to the elite.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Kazakh government has taken steps to protect victims of human trafficking, but foreign victim identification and assistance are negligible. Related to that, large percentage of foreign victims are unwilling to self-identify primarily because they do not trust authorities. A number of state-funded, NGO-operated shelters for victims operate in the country, providing legal, medical and psychological assistance. Foreign victims, however, are ineligible to receive services at these shelters unless they cooperate with law enforcement. There is government assistance available to victims in the form of pro bono attorneys, but the latter often lack the experience. Victim referral and

cooperation between NGOs and the police are reportedly effective. There is an anti-trafficking national action plan in place, which has provisions on prevention that are focused predominantly on raising awareness. Additionally, the government continues to promote the availability of an anti-trafficking hotline that is operated by an NGO. The latest available data on the prevention of drug use suggests that there are various government resolutions in place, in addition to regional programmes which also set out preventative measures. These include awareness-raising and health initiatives.

Press freedom is heavily constrained. Most opposition media outlets have been banned and the few that remain are restricted by judicial proceedings. Mass surveillance and restriction of access characterize internet usage in Kazakhstan. Civil society organizations are underdeveloped and severely limited. Routine harassment and persecution of activists is the norm, while legislative amendments – often on the grounds of counteracting radicalization and extremism – have either already been adopted or are in the process of being drafted to tighten control over society. Foreign-funded NGOs are not allowed to pursue political goals, while restrictions on the freedom of association, assembly and speech make governmental control over the civil sector and political opponents ubiquitous.

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