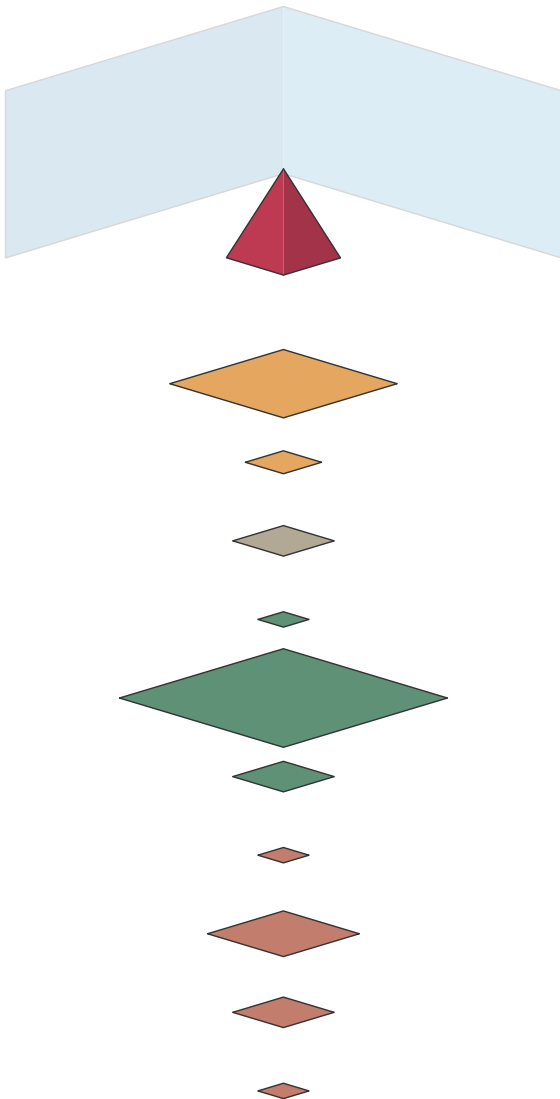


 **KIRIBATI**



 **2.35**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

186th of 193 countries
9th of 14 Oceanian countries
4th of 5 Melanesian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **2.45**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	1.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	6.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.00
CANNABIS TRADE	2.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **2.25**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	1.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	2.50

 **4.33**
RESILIENCE SCORE

118th of 193 countries
13th of 14 Oceanian countries
4th of 5 Melanesian countries

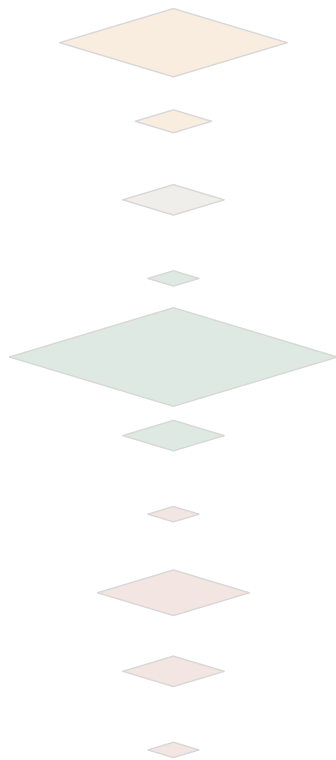
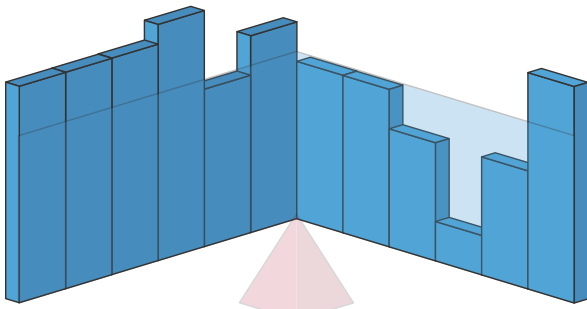


Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

 **KIRIBATI**





 **4.33**
RESILIENCE SCORE

118th of 193 countries
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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	4.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	3.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	1.00
PREVENTION	3.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.50

 **2.35**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	2.45
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	2.25



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Sexual exploitation is the most significant form of human trafficking occurring in Kiribati. Local women and, to a lesser extent, children are most affected by the criminal market. Exploitation is often opportunistic, given the relative poverty and high number of female-headed families. As is the case with other island nations in the region, foreign fishermen making temporary stops in Kiribati fuel the demand for sexual exploitation. Labour exploitation is also present domestically, with victims often being young children. There is no information to confirm that children are exploited in organized operations, which again suggests opportunistic offending on the part of family members.

TRADE

Foreign actors are known to move illicit arms in Kiribati waters, with local fishermen being used by criminal networks to traffic the goods. Nevertheless, transit of illicit arms does not appear to exist on a noticeable scale, and demand for arms in Kiribati is non-existent.

ENVIRONMENT

Limited forest areas may increase vulnerabilities to the import of illegally harvested timber, but there is no evidence to suggest that a criminal market around flora-related crimes exists in Kiribati. In contrast, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is the most significant form of organized crime that affects the country. Kiribati has the third-largest exclusive economic zone in the Oceania region and effective management is a challenge, which brings about vulnerabilities. The issue has reportedly in part subsided since 2014, but it is likely that foreign IUU fishing vessels are still engaged in IUU fishing in Kiribati waters. The impact on the local population is significant, mainly as a result of overfishing, which limits an essential food source. Likely as a result the depletion of fish resources, there is increasing indication of locals engage in illicit fishing activities. Beyond IUU fishing, Kiribati is a source of sought-after rare coral and reef fish species. The country is also vulnerable to mining for sand, gravel and other aggregates for construction purposes, but there is no indication of the involvement of organized crime groups. In combination with rising water levels, the coastal erosion and degradation of the shoreline associated with mining could be catastrophic.

DRUGS

Due to its location, Kiribati is a potential transit point for heroin trafficking, although, overall, heroin trafficking in Oceania is declining. Conversely, the region is an important transit route for cocaine, and Kiribati fishermen are likely used by organized crime groups to traffic cocaine. Domestic demand, on the other hand, is probably very small or non-existent.

An increase in cannabis use was observed in 2012, largely fuelled by cannabis trafficked from neighbouring Fiji. Still, the use of cannabis appears to be low, with misuse of alcohol outweighing cannabis use. Synthetic drugs and precursors are also increasingly trafficked through the region, but there is no indication of domestic actors participating in either trafficking or trade.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Criminal networks are the dominant criminal structures in Kiribati. They are involved in human trafficking as well as IUU fishing, but it is unclear how organized their activities are. It is possible that groups are formed on an ad hoc basis, not necessarily maintaining an established structure or lasting operations. Kiribati is situated in a region that is a popular transit route for cocaine and synthetic drugs, and foreign actors who operate in Kiribati waters or have vested interests in the trafficking routes going through Kiribati territorial waters have established connections with local populations.

While corruption is problematic, state-embedded actors do not engage in organized crime, and there is no evidence of domestic mafia-style groups in Kiribati.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Kiribati is politically stable, although nepotism and corruption, mainly in the fishing industry, are widespread. The government takes a strong stance against organized crime, particularly IUU fishing, which historically has been the most significant threat. Lack of resources, reliance on foreign aid and a weak framework guiding access to public information make the country vulnerable to corruption. Nevertheless, noticeable anti-corruption efforts have been made over recent years, such as the establishment of an anti-corruption unit in 2018, aiming to promote the principles that underpin the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Furthermore, officials are arguably aware of the power that is bestowed upon them, which positively affects transparency and reduces the potential for corruption, at least in smaller, local governance.

Kiribati is party only to the UNTOC and two of its three protocols, as well as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UNCAC. Kiribati has been responsive to international pressures to ban fishing in at least sections of its territorial waters. Nevertheless, the international community has made calls for the country to increase restrictions and has emphasized that Kiribati is not able to tackle the issue as an individual government. Kiribati also collaborates with the Pacific Transnational Crime Network, the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police and other regional security bodies, which seek to provide island countries in the Pacific with police-led intelligence and investigation capabilities to better tackle organized crime. The country's national legislative framework is sufficiently sound and adequately addresses organized crime. The laws reflect model provisions developed by the Pacific Islands Forum and New Zealand, and meet many, if not most, of the standards set by relevant international treaties.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Certain deficiencies within the judicial system in Kiribati were identified, such as a lack of qualified legal support for and limited training of magistrates, leading to a backlog of cases. In response, a project spanning 2014–2017 and aiming to improve case management as well as develop core skills in problem areas was implemented with the support of the Commonwealth. The project was to ultimately enable the High Court to act as an independent and effective service, in line with international standards. Information on the results, however, is lacking. The prison system is inadequate: poor detention conditions and lack of security, allowing prisoners to move freely in and out of prisons, are the most obvious challenges. There are specialized law-enforcement units (the Transnational Crimes Unit, the Organized Crime Department and the Kiribati Police

Maritime Unit) tasked with countering organized crime, but it is difficult to assess their capacities. In any case, training and staffing programmes backed by foreign donors have been implemented. Nevertheless, the positive changes are driven not by national initiatives, but rather by external pressures and foreign donors. Kiribati has no capacity to adequately manage its borders due to a general lack of resources and the country's isolated geography. Additionally, its relative proximity to US territories opens up additional vulnerabilities to organized crime. Thus, borders are highly porous and often used by foreign actors, mostly for illegal fishing. Illegal mining of sand, gravel and other aggregates for construction purposes are contributing to coastal erosion and degradation of the shoreline. Along with rising sea levels – the result of climate change – these are endangering the very existence of the atoll nation.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Although resources to fight money laundering and terrorist financing are scarce, Kiribati seems to be making efforts to engage on an international level in this regard. The country is not a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering but holds observer status. In addition, Kiribati is reportedly strengthening its anti-money-laundering system and has a financial intelligence unit in place, along with mechanisms for reporting suspicious transactions. The heavy economic regulations make doing business in the country extremely difficult. At the same time, it is only a small economy to regulate due to a lack of skilled workers, weak infrastructure and vast distances from neighbouring countries' markets. Kiribati is also highly dependent on foreign aid and, by extension, extremely vulnerable to foreign actors/donors and state capture. A lack of human resources and know-how is identified as a further obstacle in building more resilience in this context.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No victim or witness support structures have been identified in Kiribati. While a well-established common-law practice affords protection to court witnesses, small communities render witness protection difficult. The research, resources and skills needed for effective and sustainable prevention programmes to be developed are lacking. In 2019, New Zealand aided the Pacific Crime Prevention Programme in order to develop a more preventative approach to policing in the region. It is unclear, however, whether the programme addresses the prevention of organized crime, which is arguably in its infancy in the region. The civil-society sector is generally well developed, with NGOs cooperating with the government in matters of countering overfishing and protecting endangered marine species. The media sector

is free of interference, although it is neither large nor diverse. Nevertheless, citizens have access to information, including foreign radio services. In 2018, Kiribati signed a deal to establish a high-speed internet connection by means of undersea cables, potentially allowing further access to more diverse media content.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.