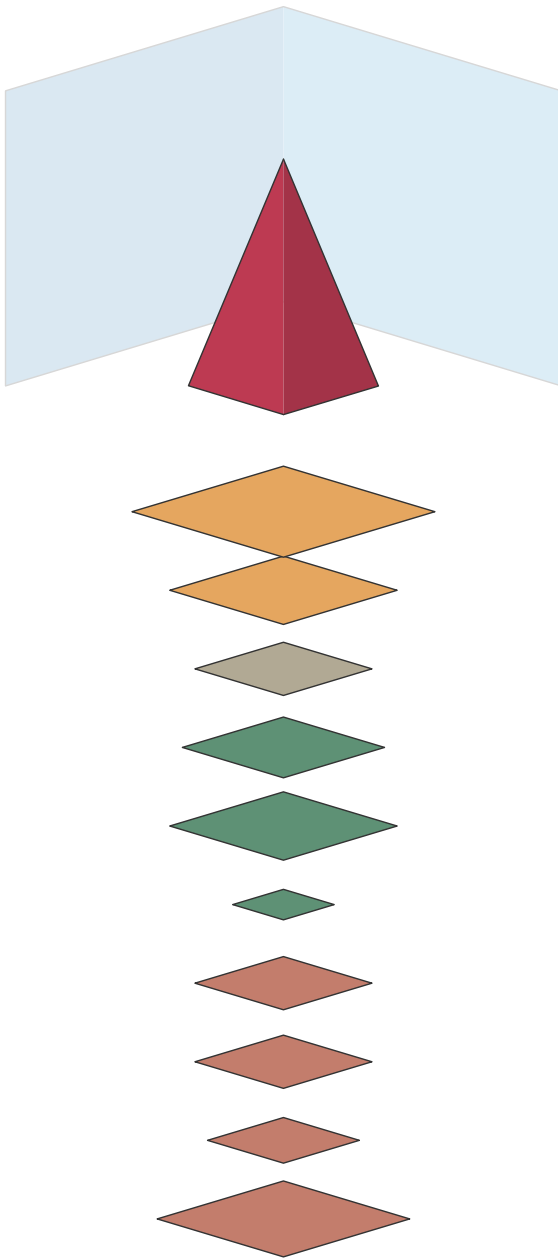




# KOREA, REP.



## 4.91 CRIMINALITY SCORE

94<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries  
29<sup>th</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
2<sup>nd</sup> of 5 Eastern Asian countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.95**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.50
FLORA CRIMES	4.00
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00
HEROIN TRADE	3.50
COCAINE TRADE	3.50
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00



### CRIMINAL ACTORS **5.88**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.50



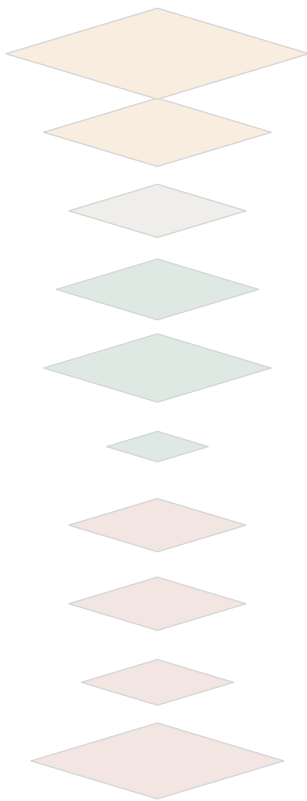
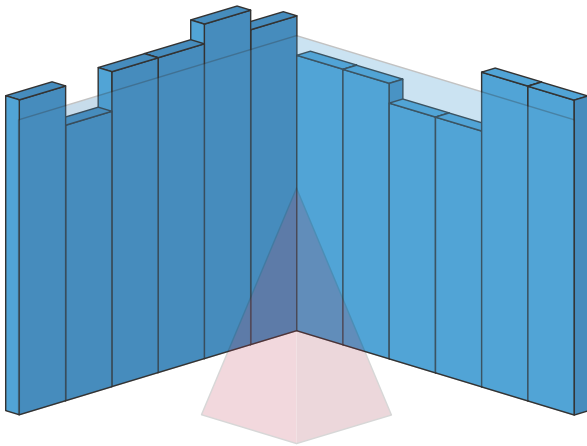
## 7.54 RESILIENCE SCORE

14<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries  
2<sup>nd</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
1<sup>st</sup> of 5 Eastern Asian countries





# KOREA, REP.



7.54

## RESILIENCE SCORE

14<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries  
2<sup>nd</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
1<sup>st</sup> of 5 Eastern Asian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	8.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	7.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	8.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	7.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.50
PREVENTION	8.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	8.00



4.91

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

94<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries  
29<sup>th</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
2<sup>nd</sup> of 5 Eastern Asian countries



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** 3.95



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** 5.88



# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

South Korea is a destination country for human trafficking. Sex trafficking is the most prevalent form of human trafficking in the country, with victims tending to originate from South-east and Central Asian countries, and increasingly from Russia as well. Traffickers often lure women into sex work via contracts that involve hidden costs that indebted the victim. As with human trafficking, South Korea is predominantly a destination country for human smuggling flows. A significant number of North Koreans flee to South Korea every year, many of whom hire the services of organized networks of smugglers based in South Korea and China. In addition to refugees from North Korea, South Korea is also a destination country for migrants smuggled from various South Asian and South-east Asian countries.

### TRADE

The level of arms trafficking in South Korea is limited and the rate of confiscation by the police is very low. Authorities in the country have implemented voluntary firearm surrender schemes and weapon seizure programmes, which have contributed to the reduction of illicit firearms in the country.

### ENVIRONMENT

South Korea is a destination country for illegally harvested timber and poached animals, as well as a transit country for illicit flows of fauna products and various non-renewable resources. As a major importer of timber and wood-based products, South Korea is believed to import a significant amount of illegally harvested timber. At the same time, however, illegal imports have fallen over the years, which may also reflect the fact of the reduction in illegal logging in Indonesia, a key trading partner in timber. South Korea has long been a destination for illegal wildlife trade, including rhino horns, for use in traditional medicine. Additionally, South Korea is one of the known transit points for illicit wildlife products such as ivory, rhino horn and pangolin scales being smuggled from Africa to China. However, while illegal wildlife trade persists in South Korea, stricter regulations and reforms have reduced the size of the criminal market significantly. Some non-renewable resources, such as illegally mined gold and North Korean coal, are also believed to transit South Korean territory.

### DRUGS

South Korea is neither a major consumer nor producer of heroin, cocaine or cannabis, but evidence suggests that the use of synthetic drugs has steadily increased in recent years. Methamphetamine, known as 'ice' or 'philoapon', is believed to be the largest drug market in South Korea, with record-breaking seizures of the drug having been made in recent years. In addition to methamphetamine (which is also mixed with caffeine in 'yaba' pills), the use of ecstasy and the synthetic cannabinoid JWH-018 has also steadily increased. Korean drug dealers import synthetic drugs via foreign drug trafficking organizations, including the Taiwanese syndicate Zhulianbang (the Bamboo Union Gang) and the Japanese Inagawa-kai. In recent years, methamphetamine trafficked from South-eastern Asia and Taiwan has increased, while crystalline methamphetamine trafficked from China has decreased significantly. As in many other countries, marketplaces for synthetic drugs are increasingly found online.

Despite being the first East Asian country to legalize medical cannabis, South Korea has some of the strictest rules regarding the sale and consumption of recreational cannabis. Because of this, the country has a relatively small cannabis market by global standards. Nevertheless, attempts to smuggle liquid cannabis and cannabis-infused foods have increased in recent years. South Korea is mainly a transit country for cocaine travelling to other destinations including Australia, China, Hong Kong, Macau and other parts of Asia. Most known cases of cocaine smuggling via South Korea have involved criminal networks and drug trafficking cartels, predominantly from Columbia and Mexico. Heroin is not commonly used in Korea, as indicated by seizure and arrest data, but there have been large seizures of poppy plants.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

Criminal actors in South Korea are mostly domestic and foreign mafia-style actors and decentralized criminal networks. South Korean mafia-style criminal actors include the Cheongha Wisaeng-pa, the country's largest crime syndicate, as well as the Chilseong-pa, the Tongsongno-pa and the Shinsangsa-pa. These mafia-style groups have a strong hierarchical structure, comprising a boss ('tumok') and an underboss ('pu-tumok') who are in charge of the day-to-day operations which in turn are implemented by captains ('haengdong daechang'). South Korean crime syndicates also have at their service several advisors ('ko-mun'), who are often either members of the political or business elite, illustrating the power and reach of the criminal organizations. Entertainment businesses, drug smuggling, extortion, real estate and the sex trade are dominated by

mafia-style groups, while extortion remains an important means for organized crime groups to generate revenue.

In addition to mafia-style actors of domestic origin, several foreign mafia-style actors are operating in South Korea. These include Chinese Triads, Japanese Yakuza and the Russian mafia. These foreign criminal actors have substantial influence in the criminal markets for drugs and increasingly in sex trafficking and human smuggling as well. Criminal networks are prevalent in many of the

same criminal markets as mafia-style actors, namely drug trafficking (mainly methamphetamine), sex trafficking and loan sharking. Although there is limited evidence of sustained engagement of state-embedded actors in illicit activities, criminal actors have been known to form links to corrupt elements of the state. These include politicians, decision-makers and police officers who can provide some level of protection.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

South Korea is a stable and consolidated democracy with a strong record of respecting political freedoms and human rights. The government of South Korea has shown commitment and leadership in the fight against transnational organized crime and has relatively strong capabilities for combating crime. Corruption at high levels of the public and private sectors remains an issue and improving government transparency is a work in progress. However, the government has shown a commitment to address corruption and has made great progress in strengthening the country's integrity systems.

The government has also shown commitment to international cooperation in the fight against organized crime. South Korea has ratified UNTOC, the Palermo protocols, UNCAC and other key treaties. South Korean authorities engage in international cooperation through organizations such as the UNODC and INTERPOL. The government has signed extradition treaties and mutual legal assistance treaties with around a dozen countries and supports a number of regional initiatives against transnational crime. Domestically, South Korea's legal framework for combating organized crime contains the necessary provisions for an effective response against criminal markets in drugs, human trafficking and other crimes such as money laundering. The legal framework also criminalizes forming or participating in criminal organizations, though these provisions are not always easy to apply in practice.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judiciary in South Korean courts is considered independent, reliable and efficient in handling cases. However, in recent years, a number of corruption scandals have damaged the integrity of the courts. Detention facilities are generally up to global standards and there are no reports of severe abuse such as torture or overcrowded prisons with unsanitary conditions. While police officers

have been known to abuse their power in some cases, law enforcement in South Korea is generally a source of resilience. The Korean national police agency has specialized units capable of tackling a wide range of threats and crimes and has very high clearance rates for serious crimes. One source of vulnerability in regard to the territorial integrity of the country, however, is South Korea's northern neighbour, which is a source of many illicit and criminal flows and whose government generally has a destabilizing effect on the region.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

South Korea has a dynamic, export-oriented economy with an economic regulatory framework that is very comprehensive and conducive for private sector development and foreign direct investment. Organized criminal actors in South Korea are increasingly diversifying their activities into legal activities such as construction, real estate, gambling and stock trading, but there is no evidence that involvement of organized criminals in legal sectors limits the opportunities for non-criminals. South Korea's legal and institutional framework for AML/CFT is relatively efficient and the country is not currently considered a major jurisdiction for money laundering. While South Korea does not have any major strategic deficiencies in its AML/CFT framework, there is room for improvement as the country is only partially compliant on eight of the 40 Financial Action Task Force recommendations. Cash dealing and cryptocurrencies are the most vulnerable to money laundering in South Korea, although there is a relatively low risk of financing terrorism.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The government of South Korea has set up a number of victim protection mechanisms and has created laws intending to regulate a national victim protection regime. While there is no formal witness protection programme, the law orders the

central government to assume responsibility for the protection of crime reporters and whistle-blowers. Moreover, South Korea has set up a mechanism for legal counselling, advice and representation for those without financial resources and legal knowledge. Victims of sexual abuse can seek a range of medical, legal and psychosocial services in larger cities. In regard to preventive measures, the government of South Korea has been actively participating in regional efforts to prevent trafficking in people. The government has also established a task force that focuses on prevention of prostitution and has been taking measures to improve recruiting and employment transparency in order to prevent the possibility of smuggling, forced labour, debt bondage and other forms of modern slavery. Moreover, the Korean Institute of Criminology conducts policy-relevant research on crime prevention and the treatment of offenders to inform effective crime prevention strategies.

Human rights groups and other NGOs are active and generally operate freely within South Korea, although these organizations have at times faced political pressure when they criticized the government or other powerful groups. The media are for the most part free to report critically on government policies and allegations of wrongdoing on the part of business and political elites alike. However, political interference is not uncommon and strict defamation laws have led to a certain degree of self-censorship.

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*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.*