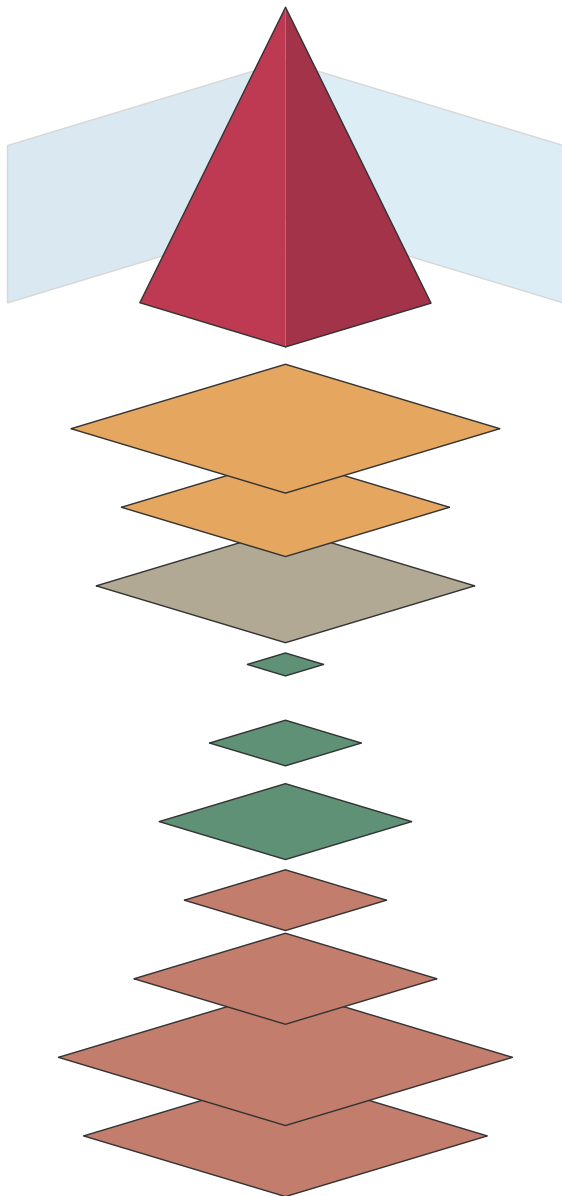




LEBANON



6.76

CRIMINALITY SCORE

15th of 193 countries

8th of 46 Asian countries

5th of 14 Western Asian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.90

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 8.50

HUMAN SMUGGLING 6.50

ARMS TRAFFICKING 7.50

FLORA CRIMES 1.50

FAUNA CRIMES 3.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 5.00

HEROIN TRADE 4.00

COCAINE TRADE 6.00

CANNABIS TRADE 9.00

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 8.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

7.63

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 6.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 7.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 9.50

FOREIGN ACTORS 8.00



4.00

RESILIENCE SCORE

133rd of 193 countries

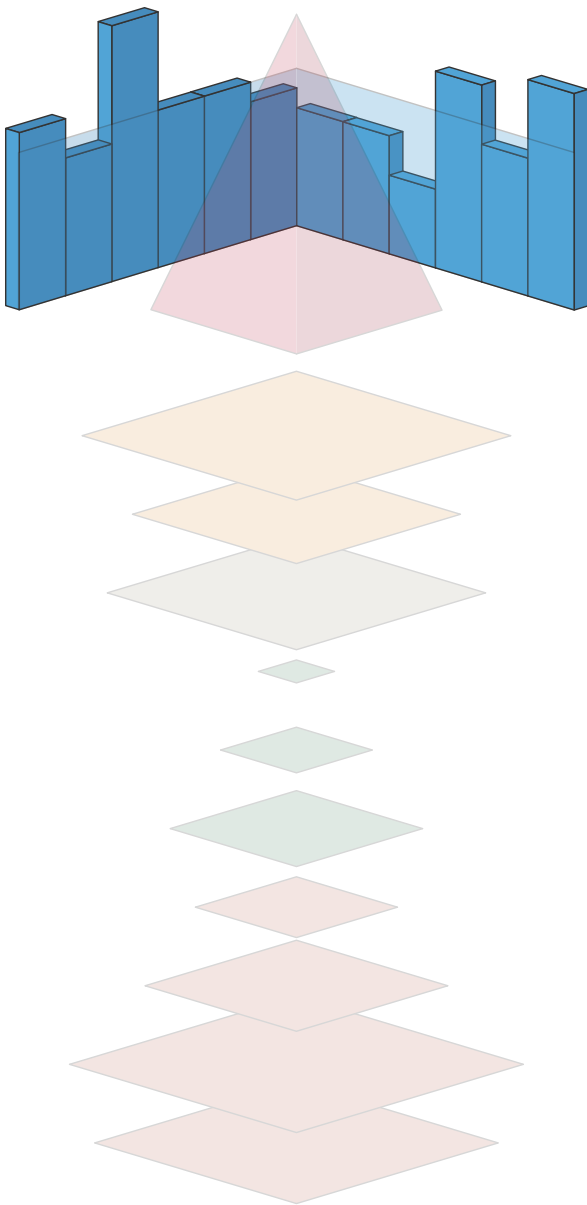
29th of 46 Asian countries

9th of 14 Western Asian countries





LEBANON



4.00

RESILIENCE SCORE

133rd of 193 countries

29th of 46 Asian countries

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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE 4.50

GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY 3.50

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION 6.50

NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS 4.00

JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION 4.00

LAW ENFORCEMENT 3.50

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY 3.00

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING 3.00

ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY 2.00

VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT 5.00

PREVENTION 3.50

NON-STATE ACTORS 5.50



6.76

CRIMINALITY SCORE

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CRIMINAL MARKETS 5.90



CRIMINAL ACTORS 7.63



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Lebanon is primarily a destination country for trafficked victims from abroad, often Asian or African female domestic-labour migrants or 'artist workers' from Eastern Europe, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia, forced into prostitution and nightclub dancing. Migrants face abuse and sexual exploitation. Although Lebanese nationals must shoulder costs for sponsoring migrants, sponsorship is illegally 'sold'. Migrants forfeit their legal status if they leave their hotels or employers' houses without permission and sponsors often withhold passports. Due to COVID-19, some domestic workers have been abandoned and restrictions targeting Syrian refugees have been introduced. The exploitation of refugees has also greatly increased trafficking, as victims are forced into prostitution, begging, domestic servitude or hard labour in exchange for food and shelter. Finally, children are also internally trafficked within Lebanon.

Lebanon is a destination and transit country for human smuggling. Poverty and the recent entry restrictions on Syrians have increased levels of smuggling, possibly facilitated by Hezbollah and the Syrian Army's Fourth Division. Smuggling occurs across legal and irregular crossings, particularly into the Beqaa Valley and at the Masnaa border crossing. Individuals persecuted by the Syrian regime pay more for smuggling services, while others are now being smuggled back into Syria. Until 2016, when Turkey introduced new visa requirements, Lebanon was a transit point for Syrians travelling to Turkey and on to Europe. Nowadays, illicit travel agencies sell these visas fraudulently.

TRADE

Lebanon has been a transit, source and destination country for arms trafficking since its civil war, when foreign powers provided weapons. Small-arms proliferation is problematic as Lebanon has one of the highest firearm rates per capita. Thousands of rockets and missiles are imported annually, and some politicians face trafficking charges. Since the manifestation and elimination of ISIS-aligned factions, unlicensed arms possession has risen in Christian communities. Hezbollah also continues to develop its weapons arsenal, importing partly via Syria from Iran, while weapons are also smuggled out to Syria, Libya and other countries.

ENVIRONMENT

While the illicit flora trade is negligible, Lebanon is a source, transit and destination country for fauna trafficking, primarily birds but also reptiles and mammals, including tigers, leopards, bears and lions. Endangered species, seen as status symbols, are increasingly smuggled from Ukraine and Syria to local markets or onwards to Gulf countries. Sales are often advertised online, and animals are imported using a customs loophole whereby characteristics are omitted, likely aided by low-level corruption. Additionally, Lebanon is a source and destination country for gasoline and diesel smuggling, utilizing legitimate and uncontrolled border crossings. While lacking in natural resources, Lebanon is a transit country for precious metals, notably gold. The trade is difficult to track, enabling illicit gold to be resold into global markets, funding family clans, militias and non-state actors.

DRUGS

Lebanon is one of the biggest producers of cannabis in the world, and the identification of cannabis as a possible government-revenue source has sparked a legalization debate. Earlier eradication efforts failed to introduce profitable alternatives, and the redirection of security efforts due to Syria's civil war enabled record production and arms acquisitions by drug organizations. Production occurs primarily within the Beqaa Valley, where there are thousands of outstanding arrest warrants and, in 2020, Lebanon reported a record seizure of 25 tonnes of hashish. The thriving amphetamine trade, namely involving Ecstasy and Captagon, caters to the local and Gulf markets, and the market has expanded beyond the Beirut elite to more conservative areas. Increasing seizures suggest that Lebanon is not only used to transfer Syrian pills but is also a source country due to the availability of cheap precursor chemicals because of the lack of monitoring of pharmacies and manufacturing plants. Meanwhile, Captagon production underwent a shift from Eastern Europe to the Middle East, including the Beqaa Valley and Beirut. While the Syrian conflict enables production, it also mitigates Syria as a transit route, turning Lebanon into a key hub. Prescription opioids, including Tramadol, are smuggled in from India, and Ecstasy is also primarily imported, although local production does occur.

Cocaine and heroin markets are smaller, due to high costs and limited demand, with the Levant serving as a transit zone to the Gulf, Turkey and Europe. Despite its associated stigma and a decrease in cultivation and seizures, heroin use is increasing in Lebanon, illustrated by possession arrests. Cocaine, used by youth, the urban elite and foreign nationals, is the most expensive drug, and seizures have steadily increased as well, with reports alleging Hezbollah

to be behind that spike. The drug enters by land from neighbouring countries and by sea and air from Latin America, North and East Africa, and is then distributed locally or shipped to Europe, Turkey, Jordan or Syria.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

In Lebanon, large and violent families or clans with a leadership cadre, known as 'Woujah', are capable of mobilizing armed militias and kidnapping for ransom, although they tend to adopt a strategy of largesse in their territories. Birth does not dictate leadership and, as their weapons outmatch some security agencies, they can act with impunity. Some have relations with the Syrian Assad family and cross the border without disrupting their operations. Clans lack indefinable membership, but control territory that the state cannot enter. Lebanese criminal networks are active in most markets, mainly in Beirut, the Beqaa Valley and the border regions. Many have Syrian members, especially those that exploit refugees. While some project their reach more freely into Syria, others use foreigners from Gulf countries or Eastern Europe, or link with Lebanese

mafias in Europe and South America. Mafia groups may provide direction from a distance.

State-embedded actors and security personnel provide operational support and political cover for cannabis, prostitution, currency forgery and smuggling from Syria. Low-level Internal Security Forces (ISF) members blackmail illegal enterprises, while political parties and militias indirectly control organized crime within their territories, ensuring sect members are not targeted. Criminal investigations are also used to exert political pressure. While Beqaa Valley cannabis farms are run by armed families, Hezbollah is also involved in smuggling, and its authority is recognized. Lebanese drug-trafficking groups in Latin America, North America and Europe have been linked to Hezbollah, with loyalists arrested for facilitating drug and human trafficking. Hezbollah is also said to be an Iranian proxy, developing weapons and smuggling pipelines. Syrian criminal actors often work with Lebanese counterparts to lure sex-trafficking and smuggling victims, while Palestinian contraband networks operate without scrutiny within refugee camps.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The country's widespread corruption and nepotism are punishable in the penal code, but enforcement is poor. There is no overarching counter-narcotics strategy and the public is unaware of how seized narcotics are disposed of. Although measures exist to curb human trafficking, minimum standards are not met. The exclusion of migrant domestic or sex workers from the Labour Code enables exploitation, and victim- and witness-protection clauses are lacking. Despite the prevalence of forced prostitution, few trafficking cases are brought to court. Furthermore, the deportation of Syrian refugees not only increases vulnerability but also contradicts the Lebanese constitution. When customs fees lost to human smuggling were cited as a potential government-revenue source, ISF set about closing irregular crossings. Corrupt elites funnel resources through patronage networks, facilitated by the lack of sanctions, and public discontent was exacerbated by the 2020 Beirut port explosion, with protesters unified across sectarian lines demanding sweeping social and economic reforms.

Lebanon is party to treaties related to organized crime, corruption and terrorism, which is somewhat contradicted by the supply of weaponry to Hezbollah from Iran. The US, UK and EU attempt to develop the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) by funding programmes

to manage borders, training soldiers and the ISF, building military bases and watchtowers, and providing military equipment. Cypriot and Lebanese regional authorities have agreed to collaborate to stem refugee movement to Cyprus. Regarding drugs, personal cannabis use is illegal and the ISF recently disrupted Captagon networks, in collaboration with Saudi Arabia, with maximum penalties applying to organized-crime perpetrators. Other concerns are current weapons laws that lack sufficient penalties, that civilians can be prosecuted in the Military Court and environmental laws that fail to mention organized crime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

While Lebanon's penal code punishes organized crime, enforcement remains poor. The judiciary system suffers from a lack of judges, lengthy pre-trials, slow proceedings and case backlogs, with prisoners spending one year on average in pre-trial detention. Lebanese prisons are among the world's most crowded, exacerbated by a lack of preventive policies or coordination between judiciary and security officials, as well as insufficient investigative capacity. Prisons may even be recruiting grounds for organized crime. The EU, the UK and Canada have allocated funds to improve Lebanon's judiciary and prisons, and Lebanon's justice minister vowed to eradicate judicial corruption, as politicians frequently interfere to protect sect members. In

2020, Lebanon's parliament was set to vote on legislation that would pardon perpetrators of non-violent crimes and reduce prison sentences, but this was postponed indefinitely due to a backlash regarding a clause pardoning public officials accused of serious offences.

Corruption in law-enforcement agencies is high and employment follows power-sharing arrangements, making it prone to criminal infiltration. The security apparatus, including the human-trafficking unit, is underfunded, lacking staff and equipment, with no focus on arms-trafficking prevention. As the Ministry of Interior's legally mandated Central Counter-narcotics Office exists only on paper, the ISF handles this work but struggles to apprehend traffickers, resulting in increased military operations. Intelligence services have overlapping mandates and competing interests, and departments blame failures on others.

Lebanon has a relatively unified territory, although certain areas are loyal to sectarian or tribal militias. The Syrian-Lebanese border is a trafficking hotspot, control of which is compounded by mountainous terrain and police corruption. Drug enclaves exist where the state cannot exert full control and the army similarly lacks control over Palestinian refugee camps. The army and security services attempt to improve territorial integrity but authorities are subject to political and sectarian interference. While the army successfully uprooted a Beqaa Valley ISIS faction, the LAF cannot control Hezbollah's weapons-smuggling.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Lebanon is at risk for money laundering and terrorist financing. The industry is overseen by the country's Central Bank, but Lebanon's banking system is nonetheless suspected of money laundering. US counterterrorism regulations sanction those facilitating Hezbollah's financial operations, resulting in a risk-averse banking sector and tension between banks and Hezbollah. Doing business in Lebanon is considered relatively difficult and many larger firms have political connections. Lebanon has one of the highest global debt levels and therefore relies on donors to improve infrastructure. Austerity measures introduced to placate funders instigated protests and tension between political classes. Protests and COVID-19 have contributed to unemployment, with over a million in poverty. There are no restrictions on foreign money exchange or capital movement but business venues are limited and the free economic system allows criminal networks to operate with ease. The difference between black-market and official lira rates also incentivizes money laundering.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Lebanon lacks a clear strategy to counter organized crime. While drug users are considered victims, limited capacity means that only a fraction have access to treatment. Courts do not follow up on treatment provided by non-governmental

organizations, private clinics and hospitals, mainly located in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. Drug-prevention and -awareness programmes are largely left to NGOs, while churches and religious institutions run most schools and health facilities. There are limited efforts to prevent trafficking, but migrant-worker and trafficking complaint hotlines lack follow-up data, and potential victims have been accused of irregular immigration and arrested, detained or deported. The judiciary may conceal witness identities but lacks a victim-centred approach and protection.

Civil society organizations often provide the only services for victims, but most are small, have governance and organizational needs, and receive insufficient state support. Hezbollah is seen in a different, more legitimate, light than the state and can therefore exert pressure on organized crime. However, it has also recognized its limitations and, not wanting to be perceived as a transgressor, has allowed the state to conduct raids on drug dealers within its territories. Lebanon's media outlets are extensions of political parties or businesses and press freedom frequently comes under attack. While the media do report on drug seizures, they play a minimal role in spreading awareness.

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