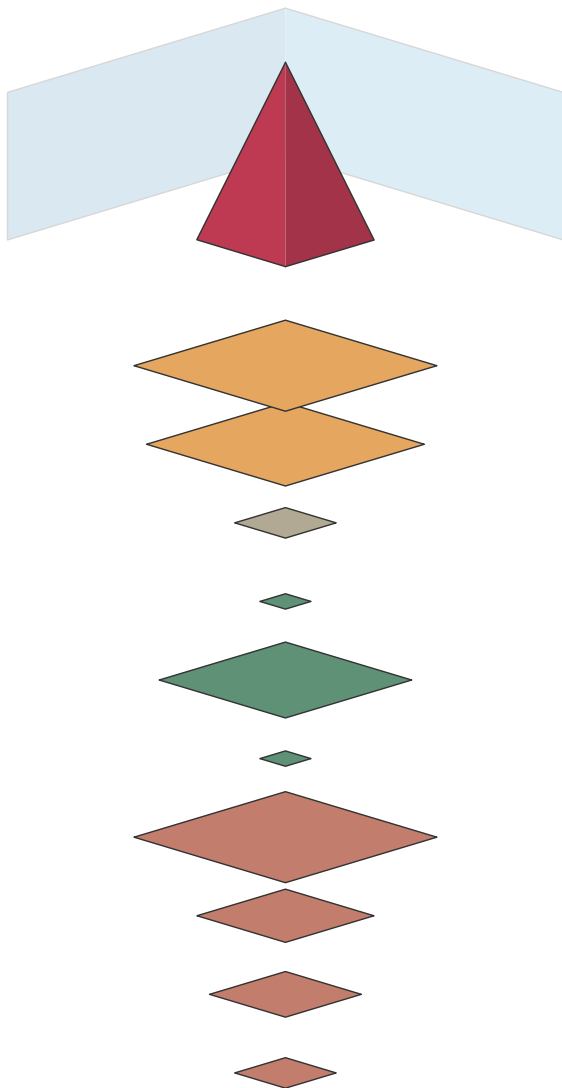


 **MALDIVES**



 **4.06**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

140th of 193 countries
39th of 46 Asian countries
7th of 8 Southern Asian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **3.50**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	1.00
HEROIN TRADE	6.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.50
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	2.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **4.63**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	5.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.50

 **3.88**
RESILIENCE SCORE

141st of 193 countries
32nd of 46 Asian countries
6th of 8 Southern Asian countries

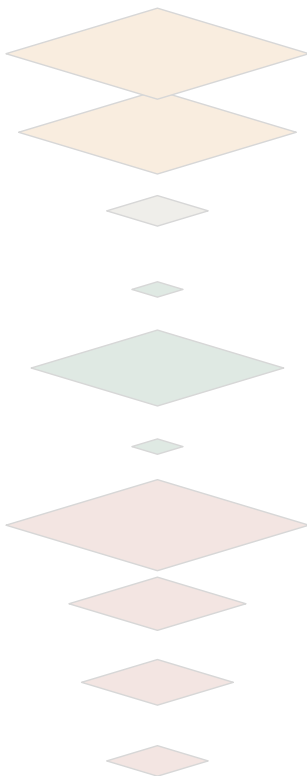
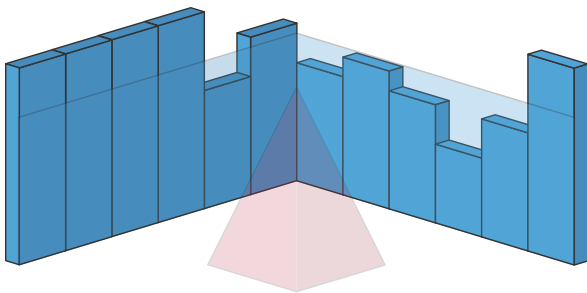


Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

 **MALDIVES**





 **3.88**
RESILIENCE SCORE

141st of 193 countries
32nd of 46 Asian countries
6th of 8 Southern Asian countries

<u>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</u>	5.00
<u>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	5.00
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	5.00
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	5.00
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	3.00
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	4.00
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	3.00
<u>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</u>	3.50
<u>ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY</u>	3.00
<u>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</u>	2.00
<u>PREVENTION</u>	3.00
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	5.00

 **4.06**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

140th of 193 countries
39th of 46 Asian countries
7th of 8 Southern Asian countries

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	3.50
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.63



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.

CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The Maldives is an origin, transit and destination country for transnational human trafficking and human smuggling. The scale of the human trafficking market is large, relative to the size of the country. Human trafficking victims are often exploited for bonded labour in the construction sector or for sexual exploitation. Victims of labour trafficking tend to be men of Indian and Bangladeshi origin tricked into debt bondage or having their wages or identity documents withheld. Victims of sex trafficking tend to be women from Southern Asia and the remote islands, serving either the local population or around tourist resorts. Children are particularly vulnerable to being sent to the capital, Malé, to work as domestic servants.

The nature of the criminal market for human smuggling is closely linked to the market for human trafficking and is similarly driven by the expansion in the construction and tourism industries, which increases the demand for foreign labour and creates opportunities for criminal and corrupt practices.

TRADE

Although evidence suggests that the arms trafficking and ammunition smuggling market is of limited scale and scope in the Maldives, there are anecdotal reports that corrupt actors within the state apparatus have been selling off arms, and the National Defence Force has long been associated with the illicit movement and storage of arms. Other reports have been concerned with the Maldives' armed Islamist Salafi groups, which have keen interests in acquiring and distributing arms to other places in Southern Asia and further west to the Middle East.

ENVIRONMENT

The only environmental criminal market proven to exist to any substantial degree in the Maldives is the fauna crimes market. Illegal wildlife trade happens on a substantial scale and conditions in the Maldives are ripe for the market to expand in the coming years. The decline of European tourism has been met with a rise in the number of East Asian visitors who often demand wildlife products and engage in practices such as shark finning. Products such as the jaws and teeth of Maldivian sharks can be found for sale in tourist shops across Malé. Shark finning, the selling of stingray skin, damage to coral, overfishing and similar practices could have a negative impact on marine productivity, upon which many industries and locals rely.

Conversely, there is no evidence to support the existence of flora or non-renewable crime markets in the country.

DRUGS

The most pervasive drug market in the country is the heroin market, and the Maldives plays an important role as a transit point in the regional heroin trade in Asia and Oceania. Informal links between drug trafficking organizations and high-level state officials have existed for many years and the criminal actors who move heroin from Pakistan into the Maldives enjoy considerable levels of protection from coast guard and customs officials. Moreover, the domestic market for heroin in the country appears to be on the rise. The Maldives is also a stopover for cannabis enroute to South and South East Asia. Cannabis use in the Maldives is relatively common and, for the most part, socially acceptable.

The cocaine and synthetic drug markets are far less pervasive in the country, but the Maldives does act as a transit country for cocaine that originates in various North and South American and European locations, and is transported towards Thailand, the Philippines and India. The trafficking of cocaine through the Maldives is believed to be managed by international criminal groups. The local market for cocaine is small, with domestic demand mostly generated by tourists and a small group of wealthy elites. Finally, relatively small volumes of synthetic drugs also transit the Maldives. While the domestic market for synthetic drugs is negligible, crystal meth use is reportedly on the rise and there have been small local seizures of the drug. Moreover, the Maldives' proximity to India, a large-scale supplier of precursor chemicals, has raised concerns of problems in the future.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The Maldives is believed to host a range of different criminal actors, including local and foreign mafia-style groups, state-embedded criminal actors, violent extremist organizations and decentralized criminal networks. Mafia-style groups in the Maldives are not clearly structured, and membership can be hard to identify. Nevertheless, there is believed to be around two dozen gangs with substantial memberships in Malé and its suburb of Hulhumalé. Some gangs in the Maldives are believed to have been co-opted by state-embedded criminals, including the country's now-jailed former vice president, who claimed to be capable of controlling a substantial part of the country's criminal underworld. Gangs have received payments and various favours in exchange for participating in protests, starting riots, destroying property or injuring opponents. However, the current administration appears to be taking

steps to reverse this trend and collusion between state-embedded criminal actors and gangs may have diminished in recent years.

Foreign actors have an important role in criminal markets such as drug trafficking and have formed linkages with local criminal organizations. International drug trafficking organizations, particularly Pakistani heroin traffickers, may have a sustained presence in the Maldives. Foreign

decentralized criminal networks are co-involved in the human trafficking and human smuggling markets. Moreover, the potential involvement of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in the Indian subcontinent has been a source of concern. There are allegations that these violent extremist actors have forged links with local gangs and are involved in recruitment and money laundering for financing terrorist activities.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

After decades of authoritarian rule, the Maldives held its first multi-party presidential election in 2008. Democratic progress has been gradual and there are still severe restrictions on opposition activities and on free expression and assembly, growing Islamist militancy as well as politicization of state institutions. Nevertheless, the opposition victory in 2018 is believed to be a manifestation of democratic progress in the country and has led to increased political will to combat organized crime and corruption. While corruption, state capture and state-embedded criminality remain pervasive and systemic issues, the new government has taken a more coherent approach to corruption and organized crime, as is evident in the introduction of anti-corruption reforms, the strengthening of oversight mechanisms and the suspension of two government ministers charged with corruption.

Although the Maldives has not yet ratified the UNTOC, it claims to be working towards it, and all other major relevant treaties pertaining to organized crime have been signed. The Maldives cooperates with international partners in a range of forums, including a regional intelligence-sharing platform for Southern Asia and ongoing technical cooperation with INTERPOL, UNODC and other UN agencies. The Maldives also has a number of extradition treaties in place and has proven willing to extradite foreign criminals. Domestically, large gaps remain in the legal framework for combating organized crime, but there are sustained attempts, in cooperation with international organizations and UN agencies, to create stronger legislation. Over the past decade, for example, a series of laws on human trafficking and drug trafficking have been introduced.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Maldivian judiciary sorely lacks the ability to provide adequate access to justice and the rule of law. Criminal justice procedures are not outlined clearly in legislation, creating considerable legal uncertainty and making it harder to convict organized criminals. Moreover, high levels of

corruption in the judiciary weakens the accountability of, and trust toward, the courts, as well as the capacity to ensure high-level convictions. Similarly, the prison system in the Maldives is weak and prison conditions are poor. Law enforcement bodies struggle with persistently low levels of public trust and high levels of corruption and bribery. The maintenance of territorial integrity is another challenge in the Maldives. The scattering of around 2000 islands that constitute the Maldives and its geographic location on crucial shipping routes render the country susceptible to transnational illicit flows. There are signs, however, of a political willingness to address the challenges in the criminal justice sector. Prison reform is currently being addressed by UNODC-facilitated training, while the Strategic Action Plan 2019–2023, drafted by the Maldives government, identifies rule of law and judicial reform as a government priority.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The private sector in the Maldives suffers from low access to credit, difficulties in registering properties and weak minority-investor protections. The market is characterized by monopolistic tendencies and high levels of control by a small handful of ultra-rich resort owners. As a result, there is a lack of economic opportunities in the private sector. Furthermore, despite revelations of major money laundering schemes in 2016 and high-level political scandals, anti-money laundering measures remain notoriously weak. Both the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Bank of Maldives are subject to political interference and there have been few credible efforts to investigate or prosecute financial crime linked to organized crime groups.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Although the Maldives has a legal framework in place for witness protection, witness protection programmes are almost non-existent and, insofar as they do exist, extremely ineffective. Most, if not all, drug treatment

facilities in the country are run by individuals or NGOs. In 2018, the Maldivian police launched a community-policing initiative with neighbourhood-support officers assigned in the capital Malé and its suburbs Hulhumalé and Villimalé. However, any prevention initiatives implemented by law enforcement are unlikely to have any significant positive effect until the police force undergoes significant reform to end infiltration by those linked to political power and organized crime.

There is an energetic civil society sector in the Maldives, but its relationship with the state is not good. Similarly, the media in the Maldives continue to be a source of resilience and play a critical role in discussions around organized crime and corruption. However, journalists do not always operate without fear and have been subjected to threats by gang members. Improvements to the media environment have been made in recent years since the new administration entered office.

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.