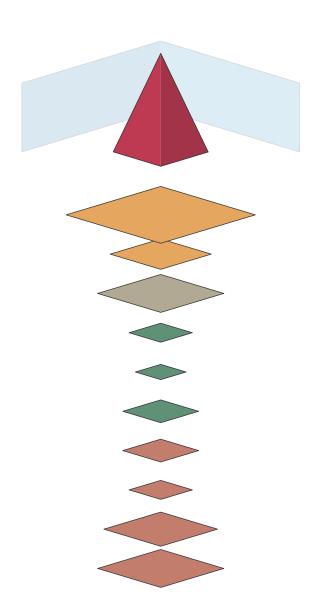




MOLDOVA **R**



4.45 **CRIMINALITY SCORE**

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123rd of 193 countries **26th** of 44 European countries 15th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries

CRIMINAL MARKETS	3.90
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.50
FAUNA CRIMES	2.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00
HEROIN TRADE	3.00
COCAINE TRADE	2.50
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.00
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00



145th of 193 countries 44th of 44 European countries 17th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries



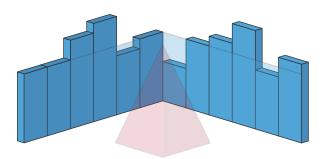
Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.







3.71 RESILIENCE SCORE

145th of 193 countries
44th of 44 European countries
17th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	3.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	4.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	2.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	3.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00
PREVENTION	3.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.00



123rd of 193 countries
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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The human trafficking market in Moldova is large and growing, with sex trafficking being the most prevalent form of it, alongside forced labour in the agricultural and construction sectors. Moldova is principally a source country, supplying nations such as Russia, Dubai, Europe, the Middle East and Eastern Asia, alongside its own significant local market. The majority of victims, usually women, are from rural areas with low levels of education, and there is a concerning rise in the exploitation of disadvantaged children, especially for pornography. This market is facilitated by some degree of corruption from high-level officials in government.

Information about the human smuggling market in Moldova appears to reference the early stages of human trafficking, where Moldovans are offered the chance to leave the country irregularly but those who accept are instead diverted into the trafficking market. As such a high number of Moldovans are eager to leave the country, this deceptive practice is widespread. Nevertheless, the criminal market for human smuggling is limited and there is little involvement of organized criminal actors in this activity.

TRADE

Moldova is a source and transit country for arms trafficking. The organized criminal groups that dominate the market run sophisticated and well-structured operations. Some use ostensibly legitimate companies as a front to mask their involvement in arms trafficking. Moldova has a surplus of weapons left over from the Soviet era and trades closely with Odessa in Ukraine, particularly out of the de facto sovereign state of Transnistria.

ENVIRONMENT

The fact that the country has little forest cover means there is little flora-related crime in Moldova. The illegal logging industry reached its peak in 2012, but legislation introduced in recent years to counter it has prevented the growth of this criminal market. The fauna crime market is similarly limited. However, there are criminal networks of dog handlers who train and export dogs to fight abroad. In addition, criminal groups engage in the export of illegal black caviar from Russia into Italy. Despite Moldova's poor environmental performance, non-renewable resource crimes do not appear to be prevalent. However, the country is highly dependent on oil imports, which creates an opportunity for criminal networks to become involved in oil smuggling.

DRUGS

Historically, cannabis has been the most commonly consumed drug in Moldova, with most demand coming from within the country itself, alongside limited demand from Ukraine and Russia. Corrupt practices by state officials are fairly common, with some high-level politicians being significant facilitators of the market. Moldova is a source and transit country for synthetic drugs, with criminal networks producing the drugs for export into Ukraine and Russia. MDMA is widely consumed throughout the country and many users are currently addicted to synthetic drugs. Social media platforms are used to facilitate the sale of new psychoactive substances.

Moldova operates as a small transit country for heroin, where foreign transnational organized crime groups move the drug from Turkey into neighbouring countries and the EU. Moldova also has small laboratories dedicated to producing opium for local consumption, but those involved are predominantly the drug users themselves. The heroin market within Moldova is small and has been further reduced by COVID-19. The country does not appear to have any sustained involvement in the cocaine trade.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Moldovan mafia groups exist, but their numbers are thought to be relatively low and they do not dominate the country's criminal markets. The influence of mafia-style groups is largely confined to Transnistria, where they mainly operate in the human trafficking, drug trafficking and money laundering markets. Loose criminal networks also operate within the country, particularly in the trafficking of humans and arms, while violence is moderate but widespread. These networks are also active in Transnistria, as well as other territories bordering Ukraine and Odessa.

Corrupt state-embedded actors are often used by criminal groups to facilitate their activities, and while their criminal involvement rarely extends beyond this, there are notable cases of politicians playing active roles in criminal networks. The most common crimes carried out by actors within the state are money laundering and voter fraud, alongside the use of state resources for services provided to criminal enterprises. There are reports of collaboration between Russian criminal actors and Moldovan politicians, particularly inside Transnistria. The foreign criminal groups most involved in the Moldovan criminal markets come from Russia, Georgia and Ukraine. There is moderate cooperation between these groups, especially in relation to complex cross-border markets such as human trafficking, but no foreign criminal groups exert dominance over local criminal markets.



RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The political leadership is not trusted by the public in Moldova, with corruption and criminal facilitation being widespread and many believe that the government mainly consists of Russian-funded politicians. In 2014, political leaders were found to have embezzled money from the banking system, but subsequent governments have been unable to apprehend the culprits or retrieve any of the embezzled funds. Because of the level of corruption and the unwillingness of the government to fulfil its election campaign promises, there are concerns that the state is vulnerable to being captured by powerful criminal interests. However, these fears were partly allayed in 2019 when the country held its first open-list election where the voters could influence the structure of parties and the government itself. Despite widespread corruption, the government is relatively transparent.

Despite delays in signing treaties, Moldova is a signatory to UN treaties that aim to end drug and arms trafficking. although these conventions are not implemented in the territory of Transnistria. Moldova is also a founding member of the Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe, which allows for data exchange between organized crime intelligence bodies. On the ground, national law enforcement is praised by international partners for their willingness to cooperate in disrupting organized crime activities. Moldova's legislative efforts to curb and prevent organized crime have a mixed record of success and are incomplete. For example, there are laws related to drug and arms trafficking, but policies relating to the illegal movement of people fails to distinguish between human trafficking and smuggling. There are minimal and poorly developed laws relating to fauna, flora and non-renewable resource crimes, although these crime markets are not well established in the country.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Moldovan judicial system has proven its inability to prosecute high-level crimes. The justice system itself has been implicated in crime, with 16 judges and four court bailiffs being arrested for their role in money laundering in 2016. There have also been reports of physical abuse and institutionalised torture within the detention system. Inmates have created powerful informal hierarchy structures inside prisons that have become a breeding ground for criminal activity.

Corruption is rife in Moldovan law enforcement agencies, with the police neglecting victims and abusing their powers while also actively facilitating and participating in human trafficking. Small-scale bribery is pervasive among local law enforcement officials, which has undermined public trust in their ability to maintain law and order. As a former territory within the USSR, Moldova has found it difficult to assert authority over its border since its independence in 1991. The most prominent example of this is the breakaway state of Transnistria, on the border of Ukraine, which has declared independence from Moldova. Transnistria has extensive links with organized criminal groups and it has become a hub for arms trafficking.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Money laundering is at the centre of Moldova's corruption problems. The most notable case was in 2015 when large sums of money were siphoned from the Moldovan central bank, which culminated in the bankruptcy of the three largest banks in the country. Many politicians and criminal groups have taken advantage of Moldova's ineffective anti-money laundering measures over the years and the country remains highly vulnerable to this type of crime.

The economic and regulatory landscape in Moldova is not favourable to business and bribery and money laundering are well-entrenched in the economy. However, the government has taken small steps to rectify this with the introduction of measures that aim to prevent criminal involvement in legitimate business. Nevertheless, business confidence has been damaged by high-level financial scandals involving the banking system and illegal proceeds from Russia.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Despite recent legislative attempts to improve victim support and protection, there has been little success in this area. For example, the victims do not receive adequate support from the state, which relies on NGOs and other non-state actors to fund and provide the needed support. Furthermore, despite the government having discussed a national strategy for the prevention of organized crime, a coherent plan has yet to be drawn up. Most preventative measures are carried out by civil society organizations (CSOs), which do not receive funding or assistance from the government. The government does not only deny support to CSOs, but, in 2017, introduced a bill that prevented NGOs from receiving international funding. Moldova's media environment is extremely polarized and vulnerable to external influences and editorial censorship.



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