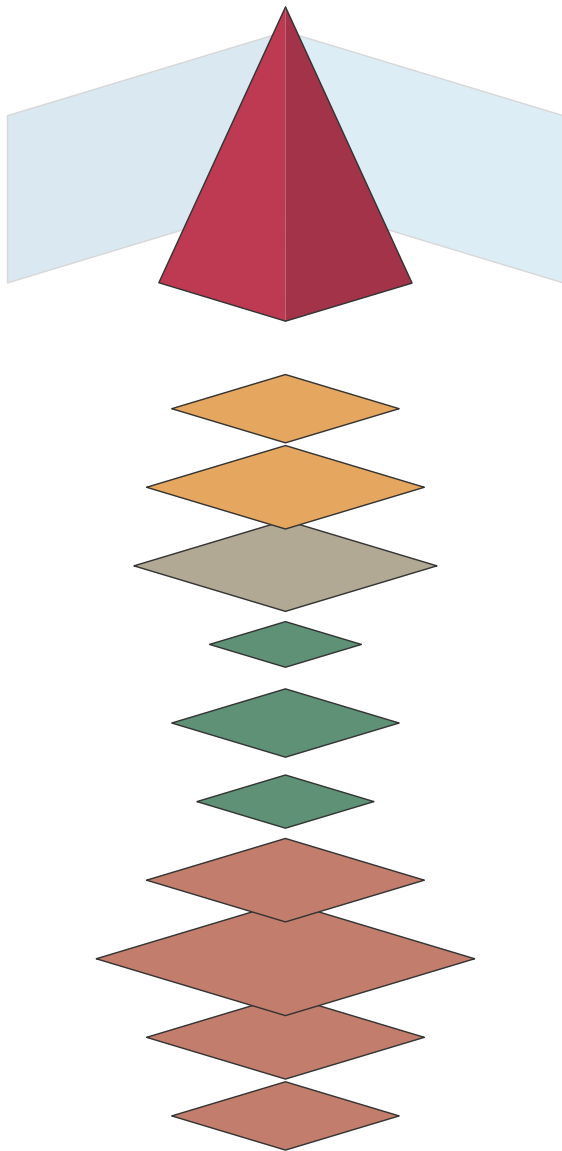


 **MONTENEGRO**



 **6.00**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

45th of 193 countries
4th of 44 European countries
4th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.00**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.00
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.50
HEROIN TRADE	5.50
COCAINE TRADE	7.50
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	4.50

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **7.00**

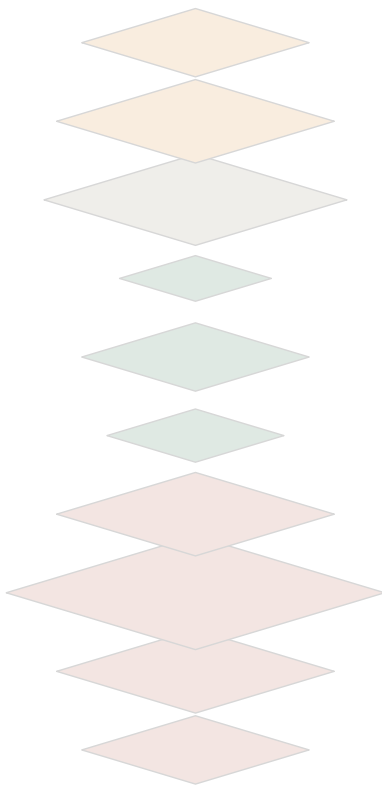
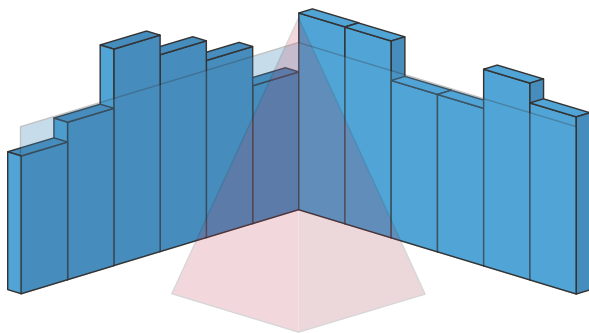
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	7.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00

 **4.46**
RESILIENCE SCORE

112th of 193 countries
38th of 44 European countries
12th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries



MONTENEGRO



4.46

RESILIENCE SCORE

112th of 193 countries

38th of 44 European countries

12th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	3.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.50



6.00

CRIMINALITY SCORE

45th of 193 countries

4th of 44 European countries

4th of 17 Central & Eastern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS 5.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS 7.00



Funding provided by the United States Government.



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Montenegro is primarily a transit zone, and to a lesser extent a country of origin, for human trafficking. Only 22 victims were formally identified between 2015–2019, but there has been a growing trend towards sophisticated forms of trafficking and slavery to facilitate cybercrimes. There is evidence of child sex trafficking in the country and children from minority ethnic backgrounds are particularly at risk of forced begging and forced marriage.

As a result of the broader regional migration crisis, there has been an increase in human smuggling in Montenegro. While Montenegro is not part of the main Western Balkans migration route, it serves as a transit country from Turkey and Greece into central Europe. However, due to the country's difficult terrain and less developed transport infrastructure, it is not as important as some of its neighbouring countries.

TRADE

Montenegro is positioned along one of the most significant transit routes for arms trafficking in the region, from Serbia to the Middle East, Russia to North Africa (particularly Libya), and the Balkans to Western Europe, as well as from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia and Kosovo. Weapons are usually smuggled in with legal cargo in private vehicles. Following the Yugoslav conflict, light weapons were in heavy circulation and remain easily accessible on the black market today, with Montenegro having one of the highest numbers of civilian-held firearms globally. Although the trade is highly profitable for criminal groups, levels of arms trafficking sharply declined between 2017 and 2018, and organized crime groups have moved away from arms and into cigarette and drug smuggling.

ENVIRONMENT

Illicit logging takes place in the northern parts of Montenegro, primarily as a way for poor villagers to secure their livelihoods, and there is little evidence of criminal networks managing these activities. Nonetheless, small criminal groups are involved in illicit logging along the border with Albania and Kosovo, as the moratorium on logging in the former has created more demand and increased profits. Where illicit logging takes place in state-owned forests, the government appears unable or unwilling to tackle the issue. Fauna crime is a moderate but growing market in Montenegro and the mountainous region around the Danube basin is often used for smuggling animals and animal parts. There have been violent clashes between poachers and

environmental activists, but no organized crime networks appear to have been involved. Lake Skadar attracts illegal fishing, particularly of carp, though mainly by locals without organized crime links. Albanian organized crime groups are thought to smuggle illegal fuel from Montenegro in high quantities, and fuel is also smuggled into Montenegro from Novi Pazar in Serbia.

DRUGS

Montenegro is a transit country for heroin, where Albanian and Kosovar heroin is smuggled into Serbia and the EU. Several organized crime groups are involved in the market bringing with them significant levels of violence. Despite its role as a transit country, domestic consumption of heroin remains low.

Montenegro is primarily a transit country, and to some extent a destination country, for cocaine. Montenegro is the main entry point for cocaine trafficked through the Balkans into the EU, particularly cocaine coming from Latin America. The market is controlled by several mafia-style groups, most notably the Kavac clan and the Škaljari clan. High levels of violence are associated with the trade. However, local consumption is relatively low because of the high price of the drug.

Montenegro is a major transit country for cannabis originating from Albania and transported to Bosnia and Serbia. Cannabis is also the most seized and consumed drug in the country, with a visible increase in consumption rates over the last decade. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the price of cannabis increased due to a higher demand for recreational use. The production of synthetic drugs is also on the rise in Montenegro, with several laboratories being detected in recent years. In line with more production, consumption rates are also increasing, albeit from relatively low levels. Because of the small size of the market, there is little evidence of organized crime involvement.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The domestic and transnational criminal markets are dominated by mafia-style groups in Montenegro, especially the rival groups from the town of Kotor, Skaljari and Kavac, which vie for territory and dominance over criminal markets. Violence between these groups is common, and often spills over the border into Serbia, with the cocaine market generating the most violence. Criminal networks are well consolidated and highly sophisticated, often cooperating with mafia-style groups and with corrupt law enforcement and politicians. These groups are not as powerful as the mafia-groups but cooperate with them in facilitating crime.

State actors are heavily involved in the criminal markets, with law enforcement, secret service and politicians providing protection to criminal actors and their assets. The political leadership of the country has remained unchanged for almost 30 years, establishing a powerful network of corrupt government officials, private companies and criminal actors involved in managing the illicit markets. In 2020, however, the previous leadership gave way to the newly

elected government, which declared anti-corruption efforts and the accession of Montenegro to the EU as its main priorities. Serbian criminal groups play a highly influential role in Montenegro's criminal markets, as historically did Russian criminal groups, whose influence has waned since the 2016 coup and NATO accession. Turkish criminal actors are attempting to integrate themselves more into Montenegro's criminal markets.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The country's governing party had been in power since 1991 and had shown little political will to curb organized crime, before giving way to the newly elected government in December 2020. The state appears, to a certain extent, to have been captured by organized criminal interests. Despite having a constitutional parliamentary system, in 2018 measures were brought to greatly expand presidential powers and further weaken parliamentary oversight. Public trust in the state was low throughout 2020 and criminal groups were often protected by the governing elite. Corruption and cronyism remains widespread, with modest efforts by authorities, prompted by the EU accession rules, producing limited results. Several high-profile corruption and bribery cases in recent years have not prompted appropriate action from the authorities. The functioning of the state administration lacks legal clarity and there are no effective accountability processes. Transparency in law and order is limited, and efforts to improve this are narrow and poorly implemented.

International cooperation has improved significantly in recent years, especially after the country joined NATO and signed bilateral agreements with the US and other western and neighbouring countries. The country has participated closely with EU arms trafficking policy and co-lead EMPACT. Montenegro benefits from EU funded projects to increase the effectiveness of and cooperation between regional and national authorities in tackling organized crime. Montenegro also has a good record of cooperating with law enforcement agencies such as INTERPOL. However, criminal capture of parts of the state apparatus limits the scope and effectiveness of international cooperation. Although Montenegro has among the highest number of national policies and strategies dedicated to combating organized crime in the region, there are severe deficiencies in their implementation and gaps in their Criminal Procedure Code. However, some progress has been seen in the fight against human trafficking, following the government's implementation of a nationwide anti-trafficking strategy.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Corruption is widespread within the justice system, and 2018 saw the release of secret recordings that implicated high-ranking justice officials in bribery and corruption. Moreover, judicial capacity in Montenegro is low and there is much political interference in the courts. This means that despite an adequate legal and regulatory framework in place to tackle organized crime, court implementation is ineffective. Meanwhile, the prison system does not meet international standards for healthcare, education and human rights. Law enforcement is fragmented and under-resourced, lacking in professionalism and technical skills. There is an absence of measures to ensure there is no political interference in the operation of law-enforcement bodies that are currently unable to maintain integrity in their investigations. Law enforcement is often used as a tool by the ruling party, especially around election time.

Montenegro has a long and vulnerable coastline with a number of seaports used as trafficking points which have seen a proliferation of trafficking, especially in cocaine. Government officials' own involvement in cigarette smuggling has led to an unwillingness to tighten border controls, however, there has been more cooperation with the EU custom authorities to address this issue in recent years. The government's strategic framework for managing its border has focused on increasing skills and analytical capacity, improving checks of cargo ships as well as greater cooperation between border police and customs. Overall, the border police still lack sufficient funding and resources, and corruption is a constant issue.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Montenegro meets the minimum requirements for fiscal transparency according to the US State Department, and while anti-money laundering laws and units are in place, their application is weak and ineffective. The tools for freezing, handling and confiscating criminal assets are inadequate, and known criminals feel protected enough to put their own names to their illicit assets. The Council

of Europe has raised concerns about the lack of capacity and professionalism in anti-money laundering and terrorist financing activities.

Montenegro performs reasonably well in the area of economic capacity, with credit being easily accessible along with simple cross-border trade and tax regimes. The economy has grown with low to moderate inflation, but there is high public debt, poor protection of minority investors and low property rights. The weakness of the rule of law and unfair competition from the informal economy damages the business environment, in addition to the labour market facing structural challenges and high unemployment.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Although Montenegro's witness protection programme could be improved, it meets most internationally recognized mechanisms to help victims exit modern slavery. Montenegro has two strategies in place to support human trafficking victims, but little action has been taken and the specialized units have insufficient resources to identify victims effectively. Montenegro has sectoral strategies and action plans in place to fight against organized crime, however state authorities (law enforcement and prosecutors) need more operational capacity and cooperation to be effective. The police in Montenegro are decentralized and work closely with local communities which helps prevent some minor criminal activity, but the Anti-Corruption Agency is perceived as insufficiently independent and proactive. As criminal activity is strongly linked to state actors in Montenegro, the prevention response still lacks political will and legal and technical assistance.

The media environment is censorious and intimidatory, with violence against journalists and attacks from the government commonplace. As part of its EU accession process, some efforts have been made to involve civil society in policy discussions, but these have been superficial. Civil society organizations are also highly influenced by Russian disinformation campaigns and those that intensify social divides.

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