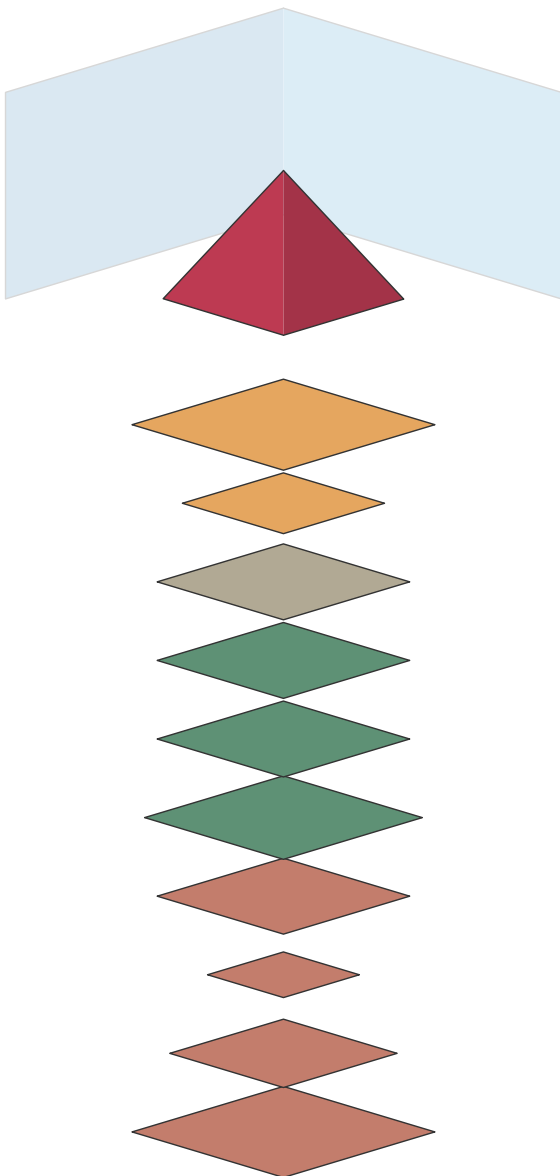




# OMAN



4.14

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

136<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries

38<sup>th</sup> of 46 Asian countries

14<sup>th</sup> of 14 Western Asian countries



## CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.90

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 6.00

HUMAN SMUGGLING 4.00

ARMS TRAFFICKING 5.00

FLORA CRIMES 5.00

FAUNA CRIMES 5.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 5.50

HEROIN TRADE 5.00

COCAINE TRADE 3.00

CANNABIS TRADE 4.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 6.00



## CRIMINAL ACTORS

3.38

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 1.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 5.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 4.00

FOREIGN ACTORS 3.50



5.25

## RESILIENCE SCORE

72<sup>nd</sup> of 193 countries

14<sup>th</sup> of 46 Asian countries

7<sup>th</sup> of 14 Western Asian countries



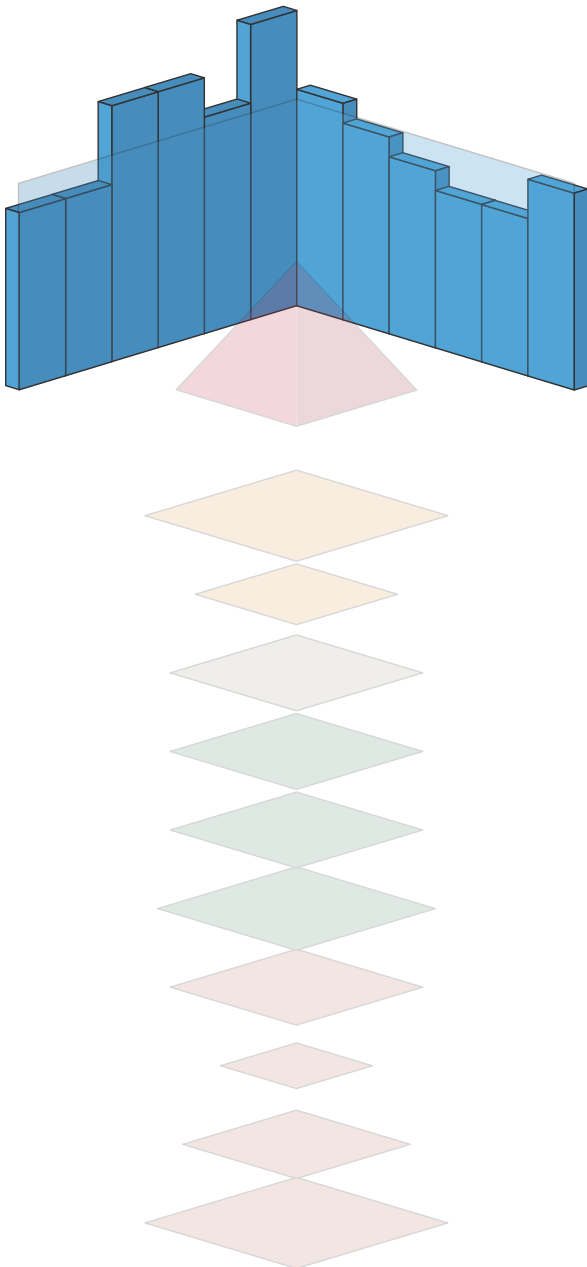
Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.



# OMAN



5.25

## RESILIENCE SCORE

72<sup>nd</sup> of 193 countries  
14<sup>th</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
7<sup>th</sup> of 14 Western Asian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	4.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.00



4.14

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

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**CRIMINAL MARKETS** 4.90



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** 3.38



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# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

Oman is a popular destination for migrant workers from Asia and Africa. Most enter Oman by legal means, but restrictive labour regulations put many migrants at risk of human trafficking in the form of forced labour and in some cases forced prostitution. Foreign nationals account for a high percentage of Oman's resident population, and the country is dependent on foreign workers in many sectors of the economy. There is a high degree of collaboration between recruitment agencies in Oman and agents in the countries of origin, who together use deception and misinformation to attract migrants to the country. A high recruitment fee paid to the agent then pushes migrants into debt, forcing them to complete a contract or refund the amount paid to the local agent. The controversial Kafala (sponsorship) system is also operational in Oman, heightening the risk of human trafficking. The human smuggling market, conversely, is far less consolidated in Oman. Nevertheless, instances of the smuggling of individuals to and from the UAE have been documented.

### TRADE

While Oman's role in the transnational arms trafficking market is fairly limited, Oman does play a role as a transit point for arms trafficked to Yemen. Omani state actors allegedly work in tandem with local criminal networks who transport weapons caches through Oman into Yemen. Additionally, there are documented cases in which rifles of Omani origin have been taken through Saudi Arabia, before making it across the border to Yemen. However, Oman's borders have been heavily fortified in recent years, making it difficult for large pieces of equipment to pass through the border-control system, reducing the opportunity for arms trafficking across its borders.

### ENVIRONMENT

Oman is, for the most part, a destination or transit point for criminal flows related to environmental exploitation. It is a major importer of illicitly produced Somali charcoal. Somali charcoal production is controlled by organized criminal operations that bankroll Somalia's Islamist insurgency, and is causing devastating damage to forest resources in Somalia. With regard to fauna crimes, Oman is a destination country for ivory and other poached exotic animals, such as African grey parrots and various falcons and leopards. Finally, known criminal markets pertaining to non-renewable resources in Oman are diesel and gold smuggling. Oman is a transit hub for illegal gold being smuggled to India by Indian

criminal organizations. Moreover, in recent years, both Omani nationals working for a state-owned company and foreign nationals have been arrested for their involvement in diesel smuggling.

### DRUGS

Oman is a regional waypoint for heroin trafficking from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Tanzania, with the Makran coast across the Gulf of Oman being an important stopover for maritime heroin shipments rerouted to Europe via Africa. In addition to heroin, authorities in Oman have seized relatively large amounts of morphine, Captagon, Kemadrin and Tramadol. In many cases it is uncertain where these drugs are heading and where they originate from. However, some may be destined for the UAE, some for Oman, and Tramadol seizures have tended to be of Bangladeshi origin. Oman is a destination country for cannabis, which seems to be relatively widely consumed, smuggled into the country by foreign nationals working in cooperation with locals. Finally, although isolated seizures of cocaine have been made in the country and cocaine is reportedly consumed in Oman, the cocaine market is not significant in scope and scale.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

A mixture of decentralized criminal networks, low-level state-embedded actors and foreign actors make up Oman's criminal ecosystem, but no mafia-style group is known to have a presence or influence in Oman. Criminal employment agencies and foreign actors are prevalent in the human trafficking trade. The human trafficking networks are seemingly diffused across the entire country and extend beyond Oman to connect with local agents in trafficking victims' countries of origin. Low-level state-embedded actors in Oman's criminal markets seem to be corrupt and complicit law enforcement officials, security personnel and airport officials who allow traffickers to move people into the country through legal access points.

Additionally, due to its geographical position within the Gulf, there is a small smuggling community in places such as Musandam, the northernmost exclave of Oman, that caters to the Iranian contraband market. Some government officials are believed to be complicit in or tolerant of these operations. The organizations using Omani territory for drugs transshipment are believed to be mostly of foreign origin, though they may work with Omani nationals and potentially, low-level state-embedded actors.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Oman is a sultanate, and the decision-making process is largely subordinate to the sultan's executive prerogatives. Oman's leadership has not taken a specific stance on organized crime, which is not part of the political discourse. While the country has embarked on an anti-graft drive, there are still many conflicts of interest in the government and the boards of state-owned companies, and petty corruption in law enforcement agencies. This hinders effective responses to organized crime.

Oman has acceded to the UNTOC and the Palermo Protocols, the UNCAC, the Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and most other relevant treaties. Though it is not a signatory of the Arms Trade Treaty, Oman has sought to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects. Oman cooperates with international partners on a range of areas, including with the US and the UK on maritime issues and a number of African countries on countering human trafficking. A member of INTERPOL since 1972, Oman hosts a National Central Bureau. Domestically, it has a comprehensive legal framework for combating organized crime, with a penal code that criminalizes organized crime as an enterprise, different criminal activities and membership of a criminal organization.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Oman's judicial and court system is perceived as impartial, independent and relatively free of corruption. While there are concerns around transparency, there is no evidence to suggest that organized crime is able to influence the judicial process. Although the conditions in Oman's prison system generally meet international standards, allegations of abuse and life-threatening conditions have been reported.

Oman's territorial integrity is largely sound. There is some debate, however, about the state of its border with Yemen, and the south-western hinterlands, where there are alleged Iranian efforts to smuggle weapons to the Houthis. Iran has reportedly accomplished this through developing ties to locals in Oman's Dhofar region. Whether this is due to a genuine lack of capacity to control its territory or a political gambit to ensure that its interests are preserved remains ambiguous. The primary law enforcement entity in Oman is the Royal Oman Police. While there is corruption within the police, police and the wider security sector cannot engage in corruption with impunity, and generally appear to be under effective oversight. There are no reasons to believe that the Omani security sector lacks the capacity or trust to respond adequately to the threat of organized crime.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The economy of Oman is under increasing pressure, due to a combination of business shutdowns and the oil-price contraction resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The rising unemployment rate has pushed workers in Oman, in particular foreign workers, into increasingly precarious situations, making them more vulnerable to exploitative practices. More generally, restrictive labour regulations and lack of transparency in public procurement are major impediments for private sector development in the country.

Nevertheless, money-laundering risks are relatively low and Oman's 2016 anti-money laundering law, which created the National Centre for Financial Information, has strengthened the country's anti-money laundering efforts and has significantly helped in countering the financing of terrorism regime. Thus, the strategic deficiencies in Oman's AML/CFT are relatively minor. This notwithstanding, Oman continues to be vulnerable to corrupt dirty-money flows from Yemen.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Efforts to assist victims of crime, predominantly of human trafficking, take the form of the provision of shelters that provide psychological, legal and medical facilities, as well as the development of anti-trafficking capabilities by the police. Nevertheless, Oman remains behind the curve due to various structural impediments, such as continued reliance on victims of trafficking to self-identify (with a high risk of negative consequences) and domestic workers not being subject to Omani labour laws. Regarding narcotics, Oman has set up a dozen rehabilitation centres across the country to attend to the needs of people who use drugs and has conducted national-awareness campaigns geared towards young people. On the whole, however, the country generally lacks crime-prevention initiatives and policies.

The media environment in Oman is relatively restricted, and the government exercises heavy censorship on both traditional media and the internet. Journalists have been arrested and charged with insulting the head of state, creating a climate that makes it difficult for the media to raise issues such as corruption and organized crime. Likewise, the space for civil society is limited and, while there are a few NGOs working in areas such as human trafficking, their efficiency is often impeded by an opaque bureaucratic system.

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