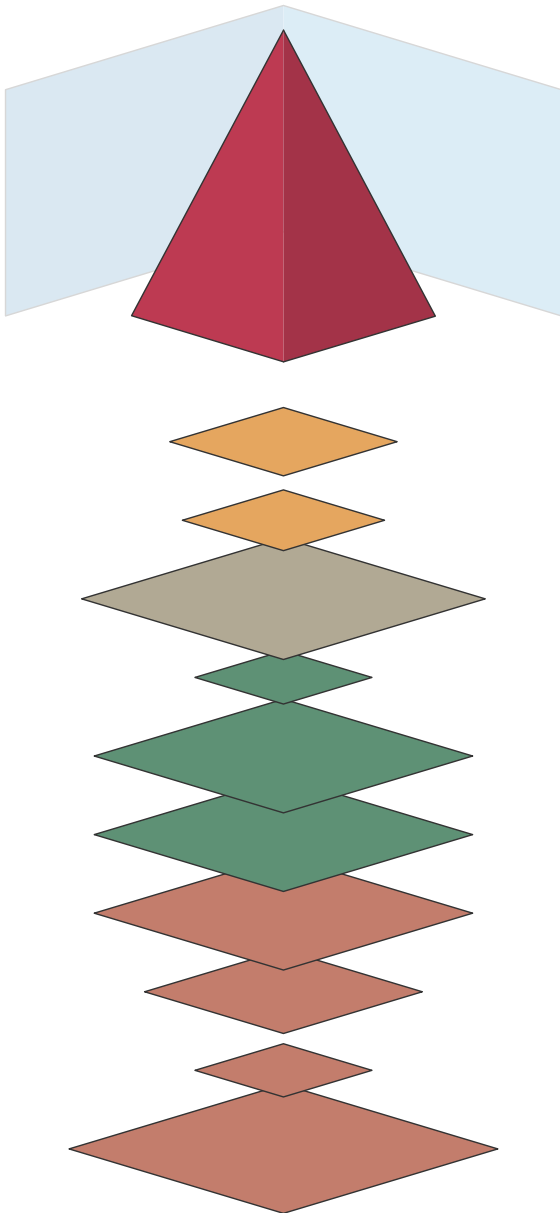




# SOUTH AFRICA



6.63

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

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

5<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries

1<sup>st</sup> of 13 Southern African countries



## CRIMINAL MARKETS

6.00

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 4.50

HUMAN SMUGGLING 4.00

ARMS TRAFFICKING 8.00

FLORA CRIMES 3.50

FAUNA CRIMES 7.50

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 7.50

HEROIN TRADE 7.50

COCAINE TRADE 5.50

CANNABIS TRADE 3.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 8.50



## CRIMINAL ACTORS

7.25

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 7.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 7.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 7.50

FOREIGN ACTORS 7.50



5.79

## RESILIENCE SCORE

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

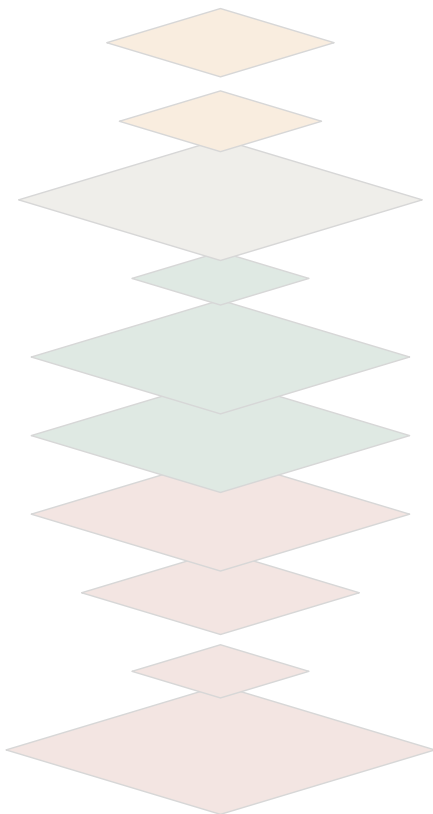
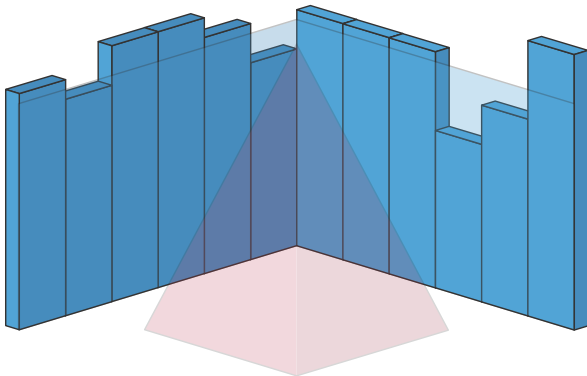
2<sup>nd</sup> of 54 African countries

1<sup>st</sup> of 13 Southern African countries





# SOUTH AFRICA



5.79

## RESILIENCE SCORE

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

2<sup>nd</sup> of 54 African countries

1<sup>st</sup> of 13 Southern African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00



6.63

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

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

5<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries

1<sup>st</sup> of 13 Southern African countries



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** 6.00



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** 7.25



# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

South Africa is a destination country for human trafficking and the prevalence of trafficking internally is just as pervasive, if not more, than transnational trafficking. Traffickers are known to recruit people from the poorer, rural areas to urban centres, where they are then forced into domestic servitude, sex trafficking and other forms of forced labour. There is also evidence of Mozambican, Zimbabwean, Basotho and Malawian migrants in forced labour arrangements. Labour exploitation is becoming recognised as a greater threat than sex trafficking. However, this is not criminally organized and mostly linked to the farming sector.

A major corruption market in South Africa is associated with the movement of foreign nationals, predominantly related to paperwork and the process of crossing borders with a bribe, instead of a valid passport. Highly organized professional criminal networks and transactional cash-based networks run the human smuggling industry in South Africa. These groups are, however, not violent, and the criminal market still has significantly less reach than in other countries on the continent. The smuggling of undocumented foreign nationals into South Africa often takes place on buses or trucks crossing the border, a practice in which South African police and immigrations authorities are often complicit.

### TRADE

A significant flow of arms exists within the country. These firearms are overwhelmingly used by criminals to kill, injure, and intimidate. There are a variety of sources that have fuelled the pool of illegal firearms including the flow of arms from outside South Africa and within the country. Additionally, the long history of the apartheid regime led to the heavy arming of civilians. Weapons have also historically been smuggled across the borders from neighbouring countries. While recent figures suggest there has been a decrease in this cross-border trade, it's still taking place, albeit to a lesser degree.

The flow of arms has also been influenced by more recent local sources including weapons stolen or lost by legitimate firearm owners and weapons siphoned off from state institutions. The assassination in September 2020 of Lieutenant-Colonel Charl Kinnear, a high-ranking police officer who was investigating a 'guns-to-gangs' scandal implicating senior police officials and powerful gang members, shone a light not only on the endemic corruption plaguing South Africa's firearms registry, but also on the

entrenched links between corrupt members of the country's law enforcement institutions and the criminal underworld.

### ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging is not considered a prominent issue in South Africa, apart from small-scale theft of timber from commercial plantations and in rural communities. However, South Africa is considered a consumer of illegal timber from other countries in the region, notably Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and to an extent Mozambique. The country furthermore functions as a conduit for illegal timber, specifically hardwoods from Zimbabwe and Zambia to Chinese markets via the port of Durban.

Fauna crimes are considerably more pervasive throughout South Africa. The poaching and trafficking of rhino horn is the most widely reported and prominent criminal market. However, there is also a growing range of other wildlife trafficking markets including lion bones, ivory, abalone, and pangolins. Abalone poaching provokes violence, via the gang activity surrounding the trade and has precipitated turf wars. Moreover, there is a close trafficking relationship between South Africa and Asia, predominantly pertaining to the illicit trade of lion, hippo and rhino products.

Non-renewable resource crimes in South Africa are characterised predominantly by the illicit trade of gold and, to some extent, diamonds. The illegal gold mining industry has expanded significantly, with a clear differentiation emerging between gangs of miners who work in dangerous conditions and are subject to exploitation, and criminal networks purchasing and trafficking the products. South Africa has multiple other minerals-related vulnerabilities, including the illegal production and exportation of chrome and platinum group metals, mostly from mines in the north east. Aside from the environmental and economic impact of the illicit activity surrounding the mining sector in South Africa, there have been numerous assassinations of local residents who oppose mining developments in the region of KwaZulu-Natal since 2016. In addition to precious metals and gemstones, another prominent non-renewable resource crime that is prevalent in South Africa is fuel theft, which has increased exponentially over the past two years. While most of the stolen oil is sold domestically, a sizeable proportion is smuggled out of South Africa into neighbouring countries where the price of fuel is higher.

### DRUGS

South Africa is both a destination and trans-shipment point for Afghan heroin arriving directly via sea and air routes, and indirectly via overland routes originating in East Africa. South Africa stands out as a major transit country because

it is easier for traffickers to move containers to Europe from South Africa than it is from other countries in the region. There is strong evidence that the heroin market is growing and becoming increasingly fatal for users. The trade is controlled by organized criminal groups originating in South Africa, and Southern and West Africa, with direct links to South Asian networks. Border, customs, and police officials are reportedly involved in facilitating the distribution of the drug, and transit through the country. With regard to cocaine, the amount consumed and trafficked has grown significantly. In particular, South Africa has become a trans-shipment zone for cocaine from Andean suppliers en route to Europe and Middle Eastern markets. While crack cocaine use grew rapidly in the country in the 1990s, since 2000, the domestic market for cocaine has largely stabilized, as synthetic drugs and heroin have become more prominent.

Domestic cannabis production and cultivation is high, as it is the most commonly consumed drug in the country. South Africa is also a source country for cannabis to regional markets as well as trans-shipment via regional neighbours to other destination markets in West and North Africa. The country's 'Durban Poison', a cannabis strain, has global brand recognition. Domestic and regional organized criminal groups facilitate this trade, in conjunction with corrupt state security officials, via air, land and sea routes. Notably, the low value to weight ratio makes cannabis unattractive for illicit traders next to commodities like cocaine, amphetamine, or Mandrax. Historically, Mandrax was the dominant synthetic drug in South Africa. However, since the 2000s, other drugs have undercut its dominance, yet it is still prevalent in many of the poorer communities across the country. Moreover, since 2003, the consumption of crystal methamphetamine, commonly referred to as 'tik', began in Cape Town and quickly took hold of drug markets in many poor communities.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups drive high crime rates, particularly in regard to drugs and extortion, and to a lesser extent, environmental crime. While termed gangs, these groups are easily identifiable with known leaders and with membership concentrated in major cities. Moreover, these groups are well armed, and there is a high level of violence associated with their operations. These gangs are arranged in two broad alliances, the 26s and the 28s. The assassination of a 28s boss, and one of the country's most powerful gang leaders, Ernie 'Lastig' Solomon, in November 2020 was another milestone in the power shift from the crime bosses of the 1980s and 1990s to a new generation of gang leaders. Mafia-style violence and organizations are also present in the mini-bus taxi industry, a significant generator of criminal violence. By the beginning of 2020, targeted killings of individuals operating in the taxi industry in South Africa had reached unprecedented levels. Many gangs operating in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town, were strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures, capitalizing on the alcohol and cigarette bans, as well as on the increased marginalization and vulnerability of communities who took a severe economic hit, to strengthen their hold over local populations.

South Africa also has quasi-criminal style networks, termed 'syndicates' locally, with significant transnational links. Their activities are associated with moderate to high levels of violence and focus on a variety of criminal pursuits. There are high, middle, and lower-level state actors in all criminal markets in South Africa. Pervasive corruption exists within many of the different state departments, including at senior levels within the police, prosecution, and prison services. Meanwhile, South Africa is a prominent settlement destination for foreign criminal actors, particularly from Nigeria, China, Pakistan, Israel and southern and eastern European nations. These actors are concentrated in major cities, though none have complete control over specific markets.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

South Africa's overall trend over the last 13 years (2002–2020) is one of worsening instability. However, the recent moves by the current government to crack down on corruption involving the political elite, coupled with the work being done by the Zondo Commission of Inquiry into State Capture must be seen as positive moves. The current government is also considering the establishment of a body with investigative powers to deal with cases of

corruption. And, in 2020, the ruling party decided to back the president in the establishment of a permanent agency tasked with combating white-collar crime, organized crime and corruption.

South Africa has standards and systems for international cooperation in place. However, in the past considerable challenges have been reported in relation to international cooperation, extradition, and mutual legal assistance. There is evidence this may improve. On the domestic level, South

Africa has robust anti-organized crime legislation and a strong overall legal framework. However, a persistent problem the country faces is with the implementation of this legal framework due to capacity issues and resource limitations.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Evidence suggests that judges are independent and generally free from corruption in South Africa. The prosecution service, however, has developed a reputation for a lack of capacity, corruption, and mismanagement. The current president, Cyril Ramaphosa, has made new appointments that are widely seen as a move to clean up the prosecution services. However, possible budget cuts linked to the impact of COVID-19 could undermine these efforts. Violence, and threats thereof, against lawyers is also considered to be a threat to the integrity of the country's judicial system.

In regard to law enforcement, South Africa has a single national police service, which is controlled nationally with structures in each of the nine provinces. The South African police are encouraged to prioritize drug-related arrests which has had the effect of putting extreme pressure on the country's court system. Although the police were remilitarized in 2010 in an effort to combat crime, the move resulted instead in the service becoming less transparent and accountable. In addition, the police have experienced serious problems related to management, in-fighting, and corruption. Greater powers accorded to police during the COVID-19 lockdown have, in some instances, given more scope for corrupt officers to exploit and extort communities.

As for its territorial integrity, South Africa has several points of entry and land crossings that are porous. This makes the country an attractive route for illicit trafficking. However, in 2020, the Border Management Authority Act was signed into operation, with the goal of establishing a single implementing entity under one executive authority.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The formal market in South Africa is comparatively well regulated. South Africa also has an economic regulatory environment that is conducive to doing business, but while the informal economy is proportionately smaller than many other countries in the region, a significant proportion of the labour force works informally. South Africa is one of the countries hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which, together with school closures, has been an important facilitator of gang recruitment in the country's major crime hotspots. Furthermore, temporary bans on the sale of alcohol and cigarette during the pandemic created a major black market overnight, which gangs swiftly exploited.

South Africa is a significant hotspot for money laundering, a significant proportion of which is intrinsically linked to the widespread corruption in the country. However, South

Africa's anti-money laundering framework is among the most robust in Africa. South Africa's main anti-money laundering legislation was introduced in 2001, which also introduced the country's Financial Intelligence Centre, a professional, well-funded and relatively effective body. Vast improvements to the framework have been since 2017, including with regard to customer due diligence requirements, among other aspects.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Given the scale of the challenge, drug users and their families report difficulties in accessing effective state services in South Africa. Most treatment and victim support services are run by civil society, with some also supported by municipal and provincial government bodies. Corruption within the criminal justice sector and fear of witness reprisals has had a negative impact on witness and victim support. Additionally, the government has an increasingly robust framework in place to provide support to victims of modern slavery. Meanwhile, several prevention strategies across a number of sectors, including gangs and environmental crime, are in place, including the National Crime Prevention Strategy, but often are not well-resourced or implemented. In November 2020, however, the government introduced a 'safer cities' concept aimed at reducing crime in cities across the country through various measures, including community policing and embracing the use of new technology.

Civil society in South Africa is extremely vibrant, with non-state actors playing important roles in combating gang violence, and the drivers thereof, as well as other forms of organized crime. There is a free and active media in South Africa, with investigative journalists playing instrumental roles in exposing corruption and organized criminality in the country. However, journalists have come under attack by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic for exposing corrupt practices, and cases of violence against journalists at the hands of police have been reported.

---

*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.*