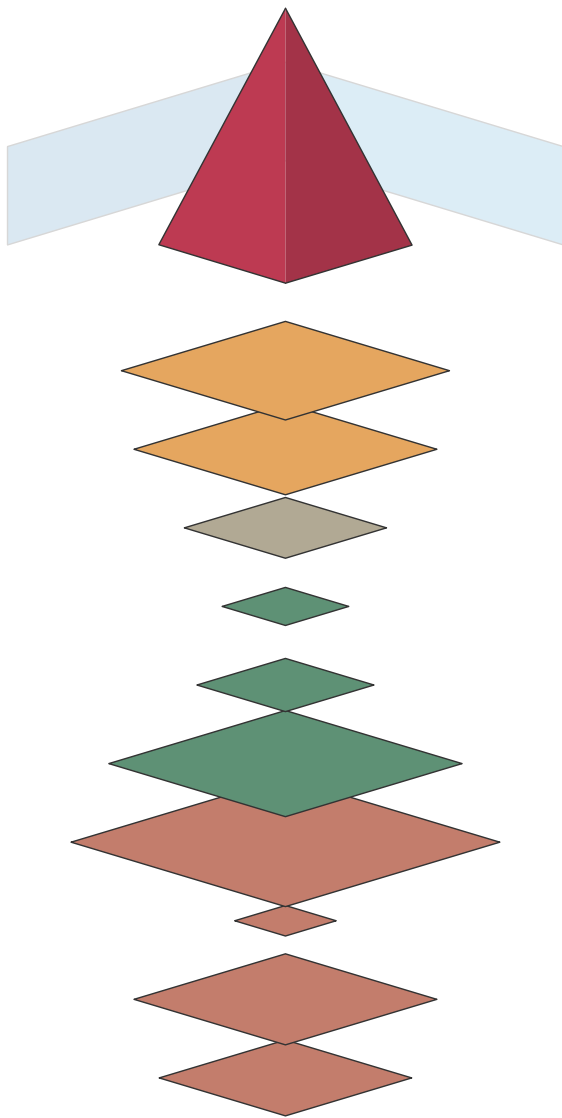


 **TAJIKISTAN**



 **5.61**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

62<sup>nd</sup> of 193 countries  
20<sup>th</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
1<sup>st</sup> of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.10**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.50
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	7.00
HEROIN TRADE	8.50
COCAINE TRADE	2.00
CANNABIS TRADE	6.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **6.13**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	5.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	9.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00

 **2.67**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**

172<sup>nd</sup> of 193 countries  
41<sup>st</sup> of 46 Asian countries  
7<sup>th</sup> of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries

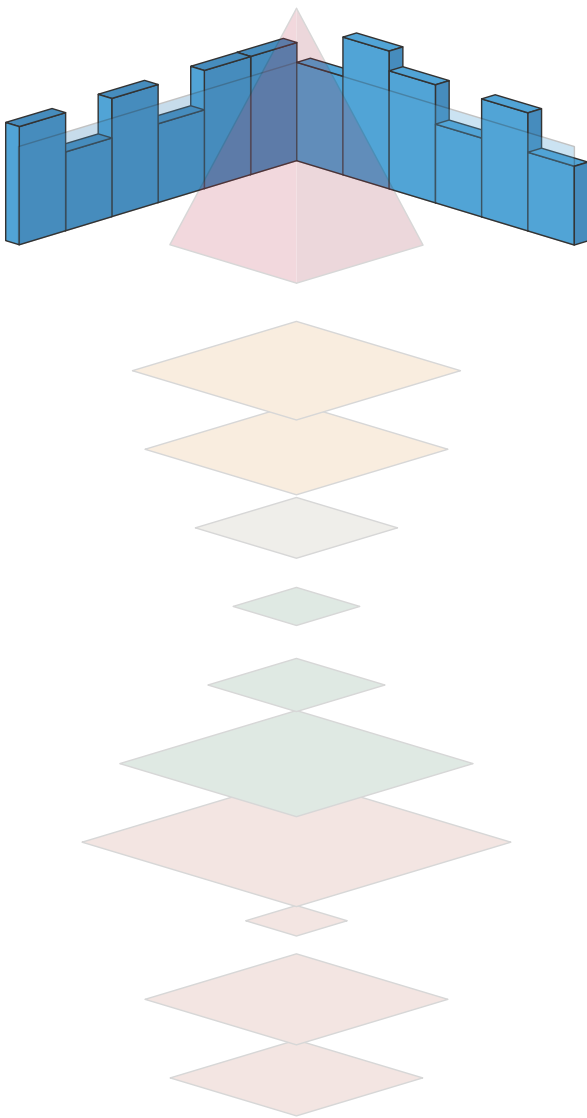


Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

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<u>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	<b>2.50</b>
<u>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</u>	<b>3.50</b>
<u>ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>PREVENTION</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	<b>2.00</b>

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 <b>CRIMINAL ACTORS</b>	<b>6.13</b>



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# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

Tajikistan is a country of origin, as well as a destination market for human trafficking, where limited livelihood options, combined with a demand for low-skilled labour in neighbouring countries, mean Tajiki men are vulnerable to being trafficked for forced labour into Russia, Kazakhstan and the UAE. Gender inequality and domestic violence, on the other hand, make Tajiki women and children vulnerable to sex trafficking within Tajikistan and in neighbouring countries. The cotton harvest is crucial for the economy, and victims are trafficked primarily from Afghanistan and Bangladesh and forced to work the harvest without pay. Tajikistan nationals generally only manage the trafficking of victims into Tajikistan, while criminal actors in bordering countries manage the movement of Tajiks out of the country. Corrupt government officials continue to assist traffickers with impunity.

Due to the Commonwealth of Independent States agreements, it is relatively easy for Tajik citizens to migrate legally to Russia for work, meaning there is little need for Tajiks to employ smugglers. Although the complexity of travelling through the country means it is not a regional transit hub, Tajikistan still provides a viable transit route for human smuggling. Most migrants moving through the country are primarily from South and Eastern Asia destined for Russia and Western Europe. The criminal actors running the smuggling operation out of Tajikistan are Russian organized criminal groups assisted by Tajik actors such as employment agencies.

### TRADE

After the Tajik civil war ended in 1997, the number of illicit firearms has decreased significantly due to the work of the government and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The illicit arms market is relatively small in Tajikistan, especially when compared to neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, the trade in illicit arms that does exist, which in many instances is a remnant of the civil war, continues to contribute to localized violence.

### ENVIRONMENT

The flora criminal market is minor in Tajikistan, mainly limited to illicit logging to meet domestic demand for fuelwood. Although the activity has contributed to the depletion of the country's forests, the practice has declined by almost 90% over the past two decades, largely due to

the increasing availability of alternative energy sources. Regarding fauna crimes, Tajikistan is a waypoint, and to a lesser extent a country of origin, for illegal wildlife products. Criminal actors are traditional hunters and poach in remote areas, primarily because of the lack of legal employment opportunities. Until recently, hunting and poaching was legal and socially acceptable throughout the country, but hunters have begun to create community-based conservancies to protect endangered wildlife. There are now reasons to believe the fauna crimes market is shrinking, with a revival in the numbers of protected species.

Tajikistan is rich in natural resources, particularly large deposits of silver, aluminium and coal. The mining of aluminium is crucial to the economy, and extraction is predominantly carried out by a state-controlled company, Talco. It generates more than a third of Tajikistan's GDP, but is highly corrupted and has been used as a slush fund for the president and his leading government officials. The main criminal actors in the natural-resource market are state-embedded actors, who can ensure a lack of proper oversight and regulation in the market.

### DRUGS

Tajikistan is a considerable transit country for drug trafficking, with at least 25% of Afghan opiates passing through towards Russia and Europe. Despite Tajikistan having the highest volume of seizures of opiates regionally, there are high levels of collusion between drug traffickers and the state, and increasingly local law enforcement is prevented from seizing vast amounts of heroin. State actors collude with domestic actors, usually Tajik warlords who have remained active since the civil war, and foreign actors, usually from Central or Western Asian countries.

Similarly, Tajikistan is a significant transit country for cannabis due to its proximity to Afghanistan, a major cannabis-producing country. Substantial amounts of cannabis are trafficked together with heroin and opium through Tajikistan, suggesting that the criminal actors work across both markets, with mafia-style groups collaborating with state actors. Tajikistan's synthetic drug market is fairly limited, with most synthetic drugs entering the country from Russia and to a lesser extent, European countries such as Germany. While Tajikistan's local market is small, there are signs that it is growing, with the criminal actors being generally Tajik, though some Afghan and Russian nationals have also been implicated. The cocaine market, on the other hand, is negligible.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

There are several mafia-style groups operating within Tajikistan. Mafia control is predominant along the borders and in particular in criminal enclaves where they are embedded in the community, exerting some control over daily life. The groups are for the most part involved in drug trafficking and have forged links with state actors, sometimes even being integrated into the state administration. Tajikistan also has criminal networks often loosely connected with the ethnic clans that existed and emerged out of particular civil war factions. These clans and networks mainly compete for shares of the drug market, often combining trafficking with legitimate business, such as car exports. Most of the violence perpetrated by these gangs takes place along the borders and in neighbouring countries, rather than in Tajikistan itself.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Tajikistan is a one-party state; political opponents face severe intimidation and extensive smear campaigns executed by state media. The Tajik government does not communicate a strong position against organized crime, and this is likely due to its intimate involvement in the criminal drug trafficking market. There is a serious lack of government transparency and accountability, especially concerning the lack of independent oversight mechanisms against corruption. In fact, the government's anti-corruption unit is headed by one of the president's sons and is perceived by the public as one of the country's most corrupt institutions. It is woefully understaffed and under resourced and has no legal obligation to make its audit reports available to the public. Despite citizens' right to request government information and records, the legal framework underpinning access is poor, and the system is highly unreliable.

Despite formal participation in international treaties and the presence of multilateral organizations in the country, Tajikistan's cooperation appears to be nominal. Having signed many treaties pertaining to corruption, human trafficking and smuggling, and drug trafficking, Tajikistan's government appears reticent to engage properly with international partners, and the treaties have been ineffectively enforced, resulting in no significant changes. The story is similar with Tajikistan's national policies and laws. Many specific areas of organized crime have been criminalized under domestic legislation, such as drug trafficking, corruption and money laundering, among others, but the legal framework underpinning the policies is deficient and ineffectively utilized.

There is widespread corruption and collusion with criminal groups at all levels of government, especially in relation to drug trafficking, where high-level officials earn some of the revenues of the trade by facilitating its smooth running, using sanctions, non-prosecution and direct involvement. After the civil war, President Emomali Rahmon acquired much of the drug trade by replacing officials in anti-trafficking units with loyalists, and by using law enforcement to affect seizures of non-state-backed drug traffickers, to monopolize the market. Drug trafficking has become one of the country's largest income-generating streams and is vital to its functioning. Foreign actors also engage in the drug trade, the most prominent of which is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic State groups, and Russian, Chechen and Afghan groups.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Though the judiciary is technically independent under a separation of powers, it is effectively subordinate to, and controlled by, the executive branch. Checks and balances are ineffective, transparency in the judiciary is virtually non-existent and the president holds both formal and informal power over the courts, demonstrated by the courts' consistent rulings against opposition figures and dissidents. Tajikistan also holds political prisoners within its prison system, where conditions are extremely poor, prisoners are tortured and denied basic needs, and violence is rife. Bribery is common among guards and prisons function as recruitment grounds for organized crime groups.

Tajikistan has few law enforcement units focused specifically on combating organized crime, and the institutions it does have, such as the Drug Control Agency, have had their own serious problems with corruption. Public trust in law enforcement is extremely low, with corruption and bribery a daily occurrence in dealings with law enforcement, while arrests appear to be politically motivated rather than focused on battling organized crime. Tajikistan is vulnerable to the spillover of Afghanistan's organized criminal networks, especially with regard to heroin and opium, where its location makes it an important transit country for Afghan opiates destined for Europe and Russia. Tajikistan is also vulnerable to the radicalized Islamist groups in neighbouring Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The military's border force protects the borders, but due to a lack of resources and training, they rely on the presence of the Russian military, and have sustained fatalities at the hands of radicalized Islamist groups. Criminal groups

have substantial control along the borders, especially with Kyrgyzstan and in the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous republic where criminal groups control and are embedded in the community.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Tajikistan offers a highly unattractive environment for business and having failed to recover from the 2008 financial crisis, the banking sector remains on the verge of collapse. The bureaucratic and administrative system is unreliable, and entrepreneurship is restricted by regulations. State-owned enterprises distort the economy and corruption is rampant, while private sector industry appears to play no role in mitigating organized crime.

Tajikistan is assessed to have one of the highest risks of money laundering and terrorist financing in the world. Despite having set up action task forces to combat the practice, it is particularly vulnerable to money laundering because of the prevalence of cash transactions as a result of the deficiencies in the formal banking sector, as well as the country's sizeable shadow economy; and because tackling money laundering is not high on the political agenda.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Despite certain legal frameworks being in place to support victims of crime and to protect witnesses, they are deficient enough to be effectively redundant. Theoretically, compensation for victims is legally available, but is rarely provided. There is a serious lack of effective legal representation, and the subordinated judiciary means that victims are unlikely to be granted adequate justice. The government and civil society do not provide support to victims or witnesses of organized crime and victims are often themselves punished by the law. Once identified as victims by the government, they are usually passed to international or civil society organizations. Tajikistan falls considerably below international standards in reference to combating modern slavery and drug user rehabilitation.

The Tajik organized crime prevention landscape has improved over the last decade, the government having, at least nominally, scaled up its efforts with regard to human trafficking in particular. The ministry of education disseminates leaflets containing information on the prohibition of child labour, a significant vulnerability in the cotton-harvesting sector. There have been various government-funded campaigns targeting human trafficking, and a national anti-trafficking commission made up of government officials, donors, NGOs and international organizations.

Civil society organizations have slowly taken root and begun improving in recent years. Legislation around the formation of civil society organizations has become more liberal and regulatory thresholds for official recognition of NGOs and public associations have been lowered, while their rights

have been expanded. However, local government elites closely monitor the activities of these organizations, and will prevent anything that could be perceived as political. The press environment is significantly limited and controlled, and is getting worse. Independent media outlets have been closed and websites blocked, while intelligence services intimidate, blackmail and even exile journalists. In 2020, a new countering extremism legislation was passed, which gave authorities the ability to control the internet, monitor social media activity and block websites as they see fit.

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*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.*