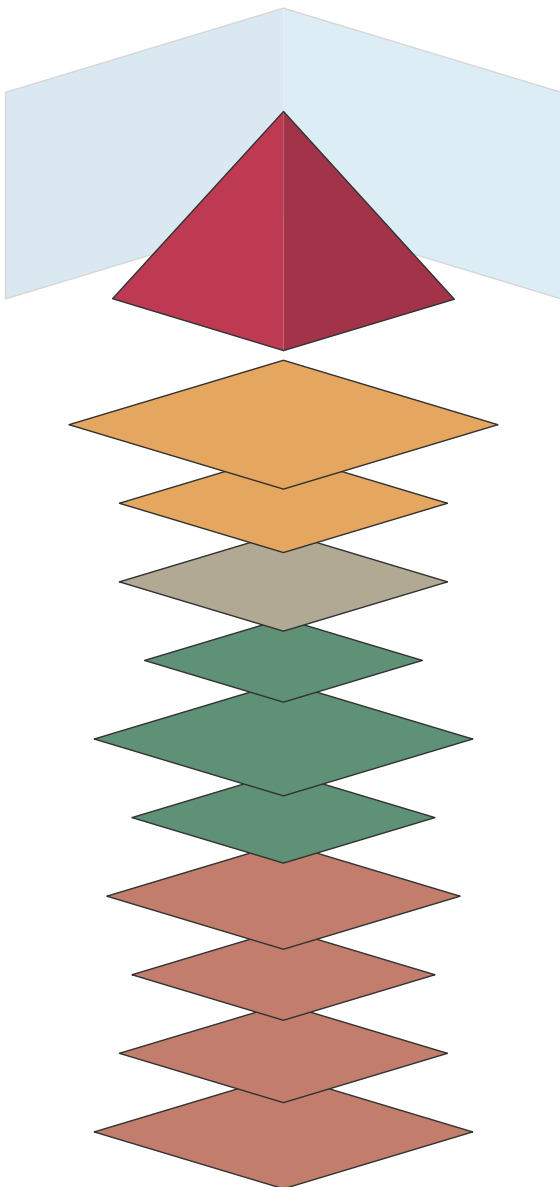




UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



5.75 CRIMINALITY SCORE

57th of 193 countries
19th of 46 Asian countries
8th of 14 Western Asian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **6.75**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.50
FLORA CRIMES	5.50
FAUNA CRIMES	7.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	6.00
HEROIN TRADE	7.00
COCAINE TRADE	6.00
CANNABIS TRADE	6.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS **4.75**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00



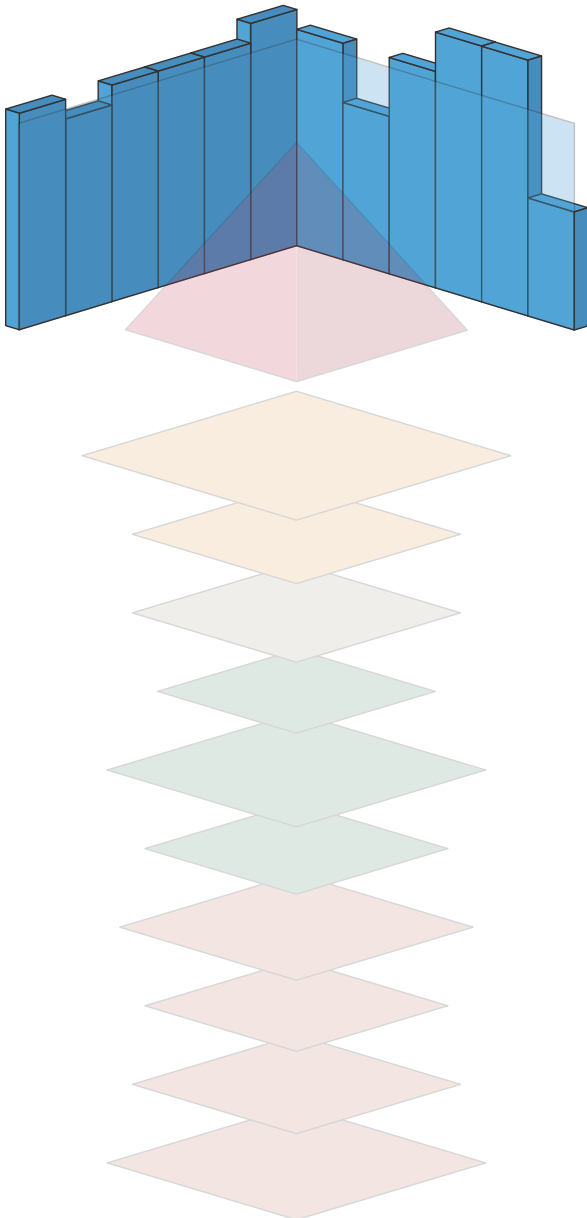
5.33 RESILIENCE SCORE

68th of 193 countries
13th of 46 Asian countries
6th of 14 Western Asian countries





UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



5.33

RESILIENCE SCORE

68th of 193 countries

13th of 46 Asian countries

6th of 14 Western Asian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.50
PREVENTION	6.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.00



5.75

CRIMINALITY SCORE

57th of 193 countries

19th of 46 Asian countries

8th of 14 Western Asian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

6.75



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.75



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a popular destination for foreign migrant workers of various Asian and African origins. In combination with the continuation of the sponsorship (Kafala) system and a failure of the government of the UAE to meet the minimum standards for combating trafficking and smuggling, the demand for cheap labour enables both human smuggling and trafficking on a relatively large scale. According to documented cases, women are most often trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation, though many are also trafficked for domestic servitude and labour. Male victims, conversely, tend to be trafficked for labour purposes. Most victims of human trafficking are tricked into debt by recruitment agencies or experience their sponsors in the UAE withholding identity papers or wages. Besides human trafficking, local demand for cheap labour has fuelled irregular migration into the UAE, one of the most popular destinations for Filipino migrant workers, many of whom hire smugglers to enter the country. The evidence also suggests that many irregular migrants stay in the country only temporarily before journeying onto other destinations in the Middle East or South Africa. The UAE is thus not only a destination country but also increasingly a transit point.

TRADE

While the size of the illicit transfer of weapons is difficult to estimate at the country or regional level, the UAE has had a growing role in the diversion of weapons shipments to developing countries in recent years. The UAE is one of the largest arms importers in the world and 41% of its 2019 federal budget was reserved for defence spending. The country's defence spending is opaque and governance in the security sector lacks transparency. Nonetheless, it is believed that the UAE supplies various organizations and Saudi-backed militias in Yemen. Furthermore, the UAE has allegedly exported arms to Libya in contravention of UN sanctions, in addition to having violated the arms embargo in South Sudan.

ENVIRONMENT

The criminal markets for illicit gold and diamonds, as well as exotic wildlife, in the UAE are sizable by global standards. The UAE is one of the world's largest trading hubs of artisanally mined, undeclared and illicit gold and diamonds. UAE-based networks are reportedly an integral core of a wider criminal supply chain with a global reach. Aided by corrupt officials and foreign mafia-style actors,

gold, possibly with a value in the billions, is smuggled out of different West African and Sahelian countries into the UAE. Some of this gold is traded on the UAE gold market, while some is smuggled to India or Nepal by mafia-style groups of South Asian origin. Such gold has potentially been mined by criminal and violent extremist organizations.

Aside from the criminal markets in non-renewable resources, the UAE is regarded as a major global trading hub for illicit wildlife trade between Africa and Asia as well as a significant destination market for exotic animals. The domestic trade in various falcons is particularly large and could constitute one of the largest of its kind in the world. In recent years, the UAE has seen the emergence of an illegal wildlife marketplace for exotic and endangered species on social media platforms where traders can avoid disclosing their identities. Flora crimes, conversely, are limited in scale and scope, although there is evidence to suggest that the UAE may be a small-scale source country for smuggled date palm trees.

DRUGS

Recent years have seen record drug seizures in the UAE, suggesting that it is becoming an increasingly important transit country in the global trade in heroin as well as Captagon, methamphetamine and cannabis. The UAE is a transit country for vast amounts of heroin and cannabis from Afghanistan previously transited through Pakistan, Iran or India on its way to Europe or North America. Drug trafficking organizations of South Asian origin are believed to be responsible for much of the trade in heroin, cocaine and cannabis, whereas the criminal actors involved in the smuggling of synthetic drugs tend to be from a diverse set of countries, including Indonesia, Libya and Mexico. Although the criminal markets for drugs in the UAE are for the most part not generated through domestic demand, there is some domestic demand for cocaine, as well as for cannabis, in particular cannabis oils for vaping. There are also indications that the domestic consumption of methamphetamine is growing.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

While mafia-style groups do not exist in the UAE, decentralized criminal networks, foreign criminal actors and state-embedded actors all play major roles in the country's organized crime landscape. Foreign actors with a sustained presence in the UAE include Indian, Pakistani and Balkan (predominantly Albanian) mafia-style groups. Such organizations have often cooperated with Emirati nationals and local criminal networks who specialize in, for instance, money laundering. Decentralized criminal

networks are also central to the UAE's environmental criminal market. In some isolated cases, low-level state-embedded

actors have enabled organized crime, but these have not implicated state officials of higher rank.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The UAE is an autocracy with limited political and civil liberties and high levels of surveillance. However, the UAE outperforms many other Gulf countries in indices of efficiency of public administration and accountable governance. The government has adopted a tough stance against organized crime and has put a special emphasis on combating the trafficking of humans and drugs. While the UAE performs relatively well in the fight against corruption, the country lacks effective anti-corruption mechanisms and senior members of the ruling family can engage in corruption with impunity.

The UAE is a signatory to UNTOC and most other important international treaties but is yet to sign two of the Palermo protocols. The UAE cooperates in the fight against global transnational crime through INTERPOL and has signed several extradition and anti-human trafficking treaties with other countries. The national legal framework against organized crime is relatively comprehensive and all major criminal markets are criminalized. While appearing relatively resilient on many governance indicators, the UAE often sees its territorial integrity violated by international smuggling operations, and the country's role in transnational criminal markets appears to be growing.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

While rule of law and criminal justice are not systemic weaknesses in the UAE, there are areas where resilience is limited. The UAE's judiciary is effective in carrying out criminal investigations, but also lacks independence from executive influence. Moreover, in many cases due process is not respected and detainees are denied adequate access to legal counselling during interrogation. There are also recurrent allegations of torture and mistreatment during custody, where there are reports of overcrowding in UAE prisons as well as occasional reports of substandard sanitary conditions and food shortages. Law enforcement bodies in the UAE, particularly in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, are sufficiently resourced and the police forces have a number of specialized units, such as a unit responsible for countering human trafficking. Lastly, the UAE has placed a strong emphasis on border control and territorial integrity, implementing the highest levels of technology at its airports and seaports. However, the country still faces several challenges given its geographic location on

several transnational smuggling routes and in proximity to countries with prominent criminal markets.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The UAE is a competitive investment destination and a relatively easy place to do business. Reforms in recent years have sought to further ease procedures for establishing and operating businesses in the country. At the same time, state interference can sometimes be an impediment to private sector development and the ruling families have considerable influence over the economy, potentially skewing market competition and openness.

Money laundering and terrorist financing is a large-scale, systemic risk in the UAE and the country has become a global centre for money laundering. In spite of attempts at addressing the issue, for instance by setting up a financial intelligence unit and implementing economic substance requirements which resulted in the removal of the UAE from the European Union's 'blacklist' of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, the UAE's framework for AML/CFT has not fully been capable of addressing the country's money laundering and terrorist financing vulnerabilities. The property market in Dubai, in particular, has become a key means for organized criminals, corrupt politicians and terrorist networks to launder money with very few restrictions.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In recent years, the UAE has begun to explore more crime prevention strategies. For instance, law enforcement has worked towards an increased focus on community policing, and the UAE's national committee to combat human trafficking has adopted a strategic plan that puts prevention at the centre of its efforts. The government of the UAE has also voiced increasing awareness of the role of the private sector in responding to the challenges posed by organized crime and terrorism. However, few concrete steps have been taken to provide civil society with a genuine civil role in the fight against organized crime. With regard to support for victims of organized crime, the UAE's human trafficking support services infrastructure is relatively robust, including the provision of victim shelters and training courses and rehabilitation services to victims. Significant improvements can be made, however,

including by improving potential victim identification procedures and by improving access to support services for victims of labour trafficking in particular. With regard to drug use, although it is a taboo subject in the UAE, the rehabilitation can be offered as an alternative to punishment through the criminal justice system. Finally, in 2020, the government introduced a witness protection program, although the effectiveness of the program remains to be seen.

The space for civil society actors, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in the UAE remains heavily restricted. The media, too, has often been suppressed harshly, journalists are subject to surveillance and, on several occasions in recent years, critical journalists have been arrested for allegedly disseminating false information.

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