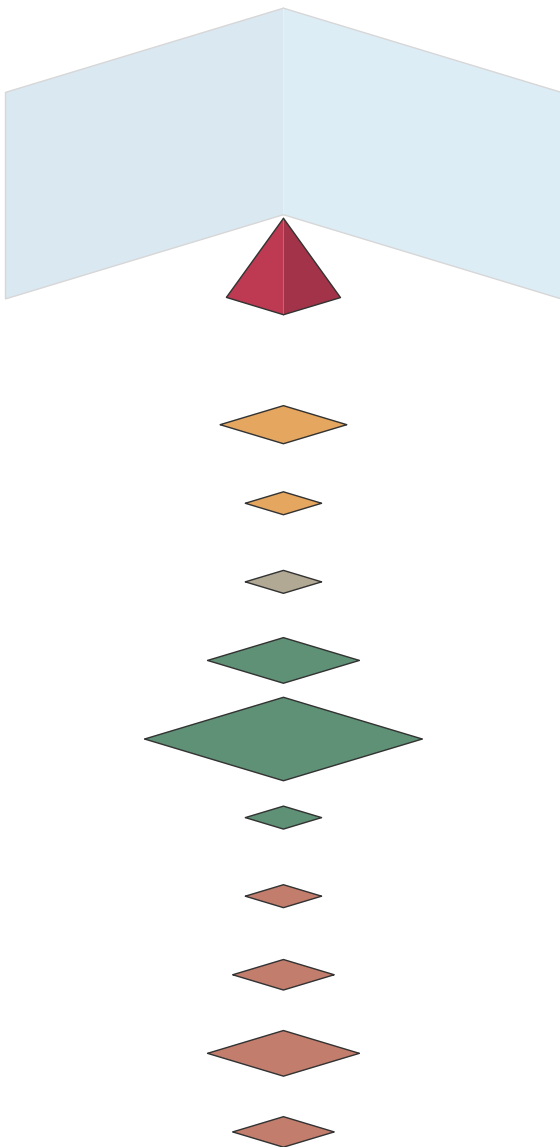


VANUATU



2.20 CRIMINALITY SCORE

188th of 193 countries
11th of 14 Oceanian countries
5th of 5 Melanesian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS 2.40

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	2.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	1.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	1.50
FLORA CRIMES	3.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	1.50
HEROIN TRADE	1.50
COCAINE TRADE	2.00
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	2.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS 2.00

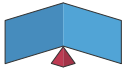
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	1.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	2.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	3.50



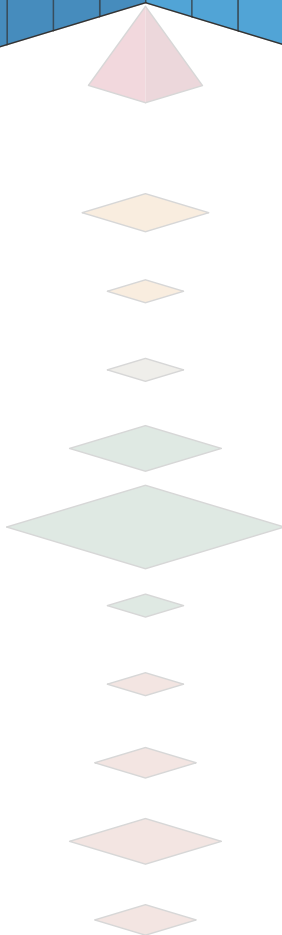
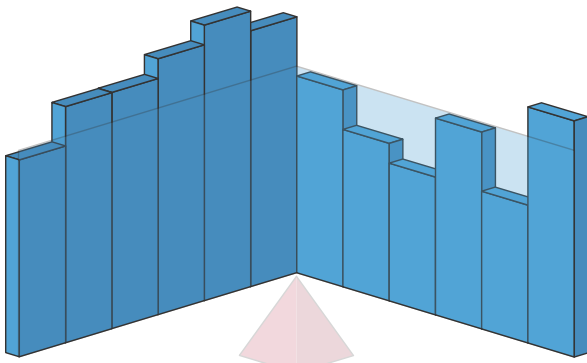
5.33 RESILIENCE SCORE

68th of 193 countries
5th of 14 Oceanian countries
1st of 5 Melanesian countries





VANUATU



5.33

RESILIENCE SCORE

68th of 193 countries

5th of 14 Oceanian countries

1st of 5 Melanesian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	6.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	3.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00
PREVENTION	3.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.00



2.20

CRIMINALITY SCORE

188th of 193 countries

11th of 14 Oceanian countries

5th of 5 Melanesian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS 2.40



CRIMINAL ACTORS 2.00



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Cases of human trafficking in Vanuatu are isolated and the human-smuggling market is limited. Vanuatu is believed to be a transit country for human trafficking from South-eastern Asia to Fiji and anecdotal evidence indicates that foreign and domestic actors are involved in human trafficking. Within the country, domestic or foreign victims might be trafficked from one island to another for sexual or labour exploitation. In one of the biggest cases in recent years, 100 Bangladeshi men and two children were trafficked to work for a South African retail company in Vanuatu. In 2021, Vanuatu was in the spotlight for selling passports to foreign citizens in 2020, allowing them, including several individuals with alleged connections to organized crime and illicit activity, visa-free access to the United Kingdom and the EU. Nevertheless, the local impact of the 'golden passport' scheme was likely limited in scope.

TRADE

There is no evidence to suggest the presence of an arms-trafficking market in Vanuatu, with few illicit arms in circulation in the country.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental crimes continue to be the most widespread form of organized criminal activity in Vanuatu. Illegal logging operations are reported to occur and case evidence suggests that the actors involved in the market operate locally and include public servants and landowners among others. For instance, in 2018, there were reports of commercial illegal logging activities in the largest conservation area in the country - Big Bay, Matantas. Additionally, there have been unconfirmed reports of the processing of rosewood, most likely destined for the Chinese furniture market.

Despite the country having declared close to a quarter of its exclusive economic zone marine protected areas, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing persists and is the main fauna crime in Vanuatu. The main source of vulnerability is foreign vessels operating in the nearby waters without proper authorization. On the other hand, there is no organized crime market surrounding non-renewable resources.

DRUGS

In general, Vanuatu's exposure to criminal drug markets is limited and it mostly functions as a transit country. However, there is a market for cannabis, with demand being domestically generated, and, in recent years, a small market for methamphetamines has emerged. In the case of cannabis, demand is predominantly satisfied by cannabis of domestic origin, although local police report that cannabis in small quantities is imported from nearby countries, such as Tonga.

Local authorities report that there have been cases of cocaine traffickers (and, less often, heroin traffickers), who take the drugs through Vanuatu to destinations such as Australia or New Zealand, posing as tourists. In some cases, cocaine has been smuggled on luxury yachts docking in Vanuatu. There is some evidence that there is limited local demand for synthetic drugs and that some people in the country have the capacity to produce small batches of methamphetamine. In May 2016, a methamphetamine manufacturing facility was dismantled in Port Vila in Vanuatu.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The dominant criminal actor type in Vanuatu is foreign actors. There are no reports of domestically rooted organized criminal networks or mafia-style groups. Corruption among Vanuatu officials is an issue, but the forms of corruption in the country are predominantly graft, embezzlement and petty corruption, as evidenced by the 'golden passport' scheme, which was exposed in early 2021. Evidence suggests that foreign criminals participate in human trafficking. In 2018, several foreign actors were arrested for trafficking 100 Bangladeshi nationals to Vanuatu. Fishing crimes most likely involve foreigners and there have been cases of Chinese fraud scammers using Vanuatu as a base for operations.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Organized crime is not considered a major issue in Vanuatu and, for this reason, it remains a low priority on the government agenda. The government and the opposition rarely communicate any strategies or campaigns to combat particular types of organized crime and measures are reactive, rather than proactive. There have not been cases of the international community raising concerns about the topic. The legal framework in Vanuatu criminalizes transnational human trafficking, human smuggling, arms trafficking and various drug offences. Meanwhile, the debate on legalizing cannabis continues. Abuse of office and corruption are a problem, but the judiciary, the office of the ombudsman, and other anti-corruption institutions safeguard against corruption by holding elected officials accountable in high-profile cases. Although corruption remains a problem, Vanuatu consistently performs well above the average for the Asia-Pacific region on the Corruption Perceptions Index. Although right-to-information mechanisms exist, accessing public information remains difficult due to costliness and excessive bureaucracy.

Vanuatu has ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime but is yet to ratify the Palermo protocols. Vanuatu joined INTERPOL in 2018 and is a member of a number of regional security organizations and law-enforcement networks. Despite these efforts, experts have argued that accession to international treaties has been driven from the outside, and implementation is problematic. On the other hand, there are continuous collaborative efforts with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, the Australian Federal Police, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, as well as a shiprider agreement with the US. Vanuatu is also a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, through which it collaborates on matters of security with other countries in the region. Most recently, member states signed the Boe Declaration on Regional security, which emphasizes human and environmental security, as well as transnational crime and cybercrime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judiciary in Vanuatu operates with independence, integrity and impartiality, but there is evidence that courts suffer from a backlog in cases, sometimes resulting in long detention periods. Prisons in Vanuatu tend to suffer from overcrowding, and poor conditions and management. As a result, violence and escapes happen on a frequent basis and are a cause for concern. Another law enforcement issue in Vanuatu is monitoring the country's borders because of the high number of smaller islands (the archipelago is made up of more than 80 islands, of which 65 are inhabited). These geographical

features make the country vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers and smugglers who wish to transit in Vanuatu.

Law enforcement in Vanuatu has a number of specialized units that work to counter organized crime, including the Serious Crimes Unit, the Drugs Unit, the Crime Prevention Unit and the Maritime Wing of the police, as well as the Transnational Crime Unit in the National Intelligence Unit.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The private sector in Vanuatu faces a number of constraints, including complex and non-transparent bureaucratic procedures, rigid labour laws that prevent a formal labour market from developing and mismanagement of subsidized state-owned enterprises. Vanuatu continues to be non-compliant with international anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) standards. The country is an offshore tax haven with secrecy laws, which do not allow authorities to access information about beneficial ownership of entities, except under a court order. The country's financial system is exposed to laundering of criminal proceeds from corruption, fraud, drug offences, tax evasion and other crimes. Although it has made some progress against the Financial Action Task Force criteria, it continues to appear on the European Council's list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions because it has not delivered on its commitments since the first blacklist was adopted in 2017.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

There is little information on the framework for victim- and witness-protection procedures in Vanuatu. The police force has a unit focused on crime prevention, but it has not published a strategy. The space for civil society and media in Vanuatu is generally respected and a number of civil society organizations focus on crime-related issues. One of these is the non-governmental organization, Campaign for Justice, which has investigated illegal logging in the country's largest conservation area. The right to free speech and critical journalism is generally upheld, though there have, in the past, been isolated cases of intimidation of journalists.

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