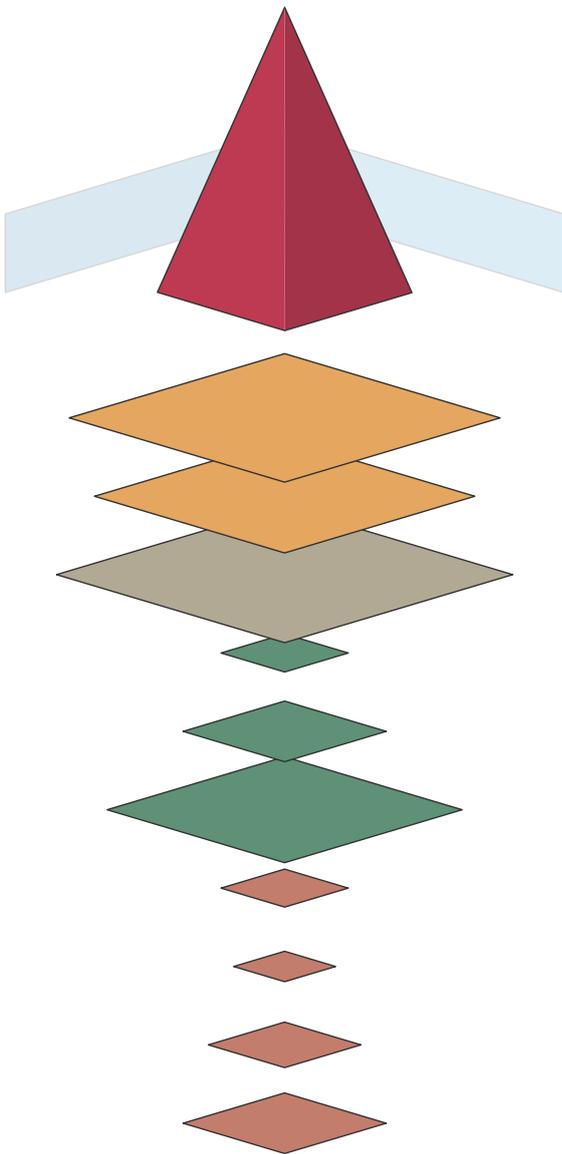


 **YEMEN**



 **6.13**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

39th of 193 countries
13th of 46 Asian countries
6th of 14 Western Asian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.00**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	9.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.50
FAUNA CRIMES	4.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	7.00
HEROIN TRADE	2.50
COCAINE TRADE	2.00
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	4.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **7.25**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	8.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	8.00

 **2.00**
RESILIENCE SCORE

186th of 193 countries
44th of 46 Asian countries
13th of 14 Western Asian countries

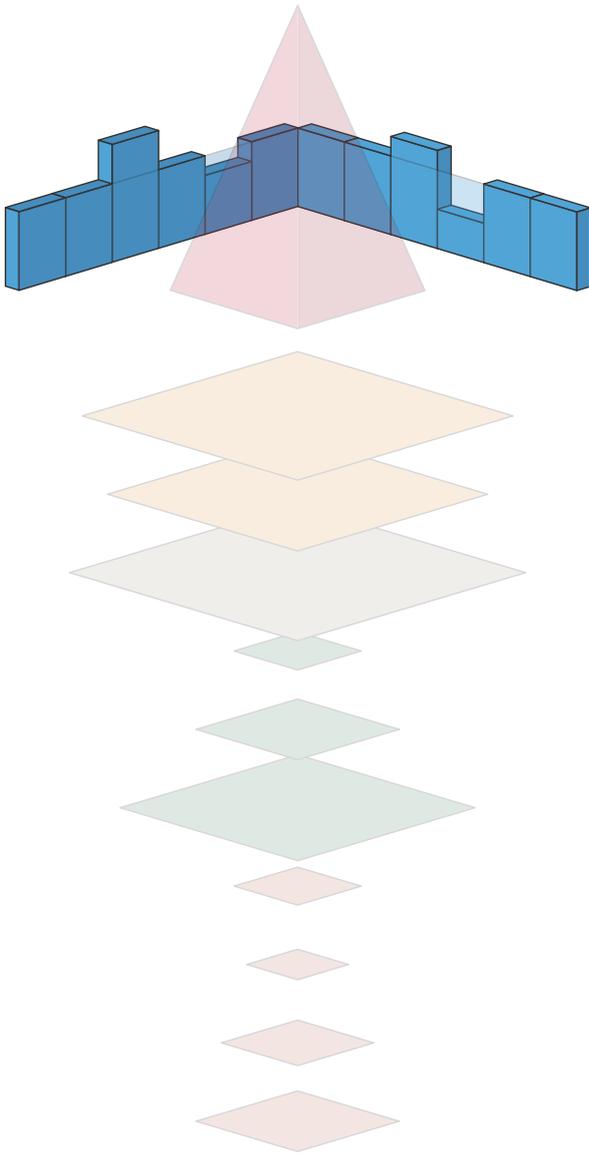


Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

 **YEMEN**



 **2.00**
RESILIENCE SCORE

186th of 193 countries
44th of 46 Asian countries
13th of 14 Western Asian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	2.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	2.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	3.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	2.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	1.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	2.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	2.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	2.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	2.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	1.00
PREVENTION	2.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	2.00

 **6.13**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

39th of 193 countries
13th of 46 Asian countries
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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.00
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	7.25



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking is a growing phenomenon in Yemen. Many trafficking networks are based in Ethiopia or Somalia and operate with local partners. En route to Saudi Arabia, individuals are exploited, kidnapped, or even killed. Southern actors, including tribes, internationally recognized government (IRG) members and Southern Transitional Council (STC) officials, prevent transit via the North, and victims are often subject to further extortion in IRG or STC detention camps. United Arab Emirates (UAE) influence has also resulted in a new trafficking market in southern Yemen. Furthermore, organ trafficking from Yemen to Egypt is worsened by poverty and extortion. Profits are shared by hospitals, networks and mediators, and some Yemeni hospitals secretly conduct organ transplants. Yemeni children are also victims of trafficking, forced into temporary marriages, commercial sex tourism domestically and in Saudi Arabia, and used as child soldiers. Children collected by Saudi gangs are sent under military escort to the Gulf, and subjected to involuntary domestic service, begging, or drug smuggling into Saudi Arabia.

Yemen is also a source, transit and destination for human smuggling. Yemen's porous borders and weak enforcement enable smuggling, namely from the Horn of Africa to Saudi Arabia in pursuit of false offers of employment. The irregular movement of Yemeni nationals for work in other Gulf countries also occurs. Smugglers are bound by strong social links, and Yemeni networks include Somali and Ethiopian facilitators. Smugglers are paid twofold when contracted by Yemen to return individuals to Africa. Migrants who seek the services of smugglers often subsequently face intimidation, threats, physical violence and extortion.

TRADE

Yemen has widespread gun ownership and one of the largest arms-trafficking markets in the world, with weapons redirected from military stores or acquired from foreign actors. Ongoing conflict has resulted in an increase of light and medium weapons such as Turkish pistols and silencers, but tanks, ammunition, grenades, machine guns and light armoured vehicles are also sold in open-air arms markets. Small arms sale, including coalition weaponry, thrives on social media, and the military, security forces, navy, and coast guard are accused of illegal arms shipments and facilitating black-market smuggling. The Houthis (an Islamic armed political movement), STC, and IRG have historically collaborated on arms trafficking, and battlefield exchanges or sales between factions have occurred. Before the conflict, Yemen was a transit hub for East African and Gulf

weapons, and weapons are now smuggled via Yemen into Palestine, Sudan and Somalia. An active weapons trade also exists between al-Qaeda factions, and Iranian weaponry, including drone technology, is smuggled to the Houthis.

ENVIRONMENT

Fauna trafficking is a significant issue in Yemen, and although flora crime is comparatively unsubstantial, alleged smuggling of the Socotra Island's endemic dragon tree by UAE-related actors is a source of tension. With regard to fauna, Yemen is a transit country for African wildlife, such as cheetahs, destined for wealthy consumers in the Arabian Peninsula. Deer, hyenas, monkeys and other fauna are also illicitly sold in the country. Yemen is a source and transit hub for endangered and other vulnerable species, including pangolins, Arabian leopards, golden sparrows, blue baboon spiders, Yemen veiled chameleons, falcons, and large cats primarily bred in Yemeni villages for Gulf markets. The market is enabled by corruption and bribery, with traders importing specimens from Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea. Additionally, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing depletes fish stocks; although illegal, the market is largely socially accepted. IUU fishing overlaps with more lucrative criminal activities, particularly arms trafficking from Eritrea via fishing boats.

Moreover, the illicit trade of stolen oil is on the rise in Yemen, and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which once controlled various facilities, has now turned to smuggling. Meanwhile, intra-coalition fighting in southern Yemen focuses on extraction or storage-facility control. Gangs use ground tanks and oil tankers to store and transport oil from government to Houthi areas, resulting in systematic crude-oil looting from state-owned company fields. Illegal oil and gas sales transpire with Houthi and IRG facilitation, with cross-faction collaboration and military-commander involvement. Governorates under Houthi control are also experiencing a gas crisis due to the militia's black-market trading and selling of gas.

DRUGS

Conflict has intensified Yemen's illegal drug trade and increased the border's porosity. Yemen is a transit country for drugs from the Gulf, Pakistan and Iran, with heroin from Afghanistan sometimes transiting Aden international airport into Egypt. Heroin sales have been increasing in Sana'a, and although the trade is overseen by the Houthi, several routes run exclusively through IRG-controlled territory. Meanwhile, cocaine shipments have been apprehended in deliveries to government agencies, and opportunistic gangs transiting cocaine to Gulf and Arab countries primarily utilize sea routes.

Yemen is also a transit country for cannabis from Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. Sana'a has seen unprecedented cannabis and hashish activity, and seizures are increasing. The Houthi secretly coordinate hashish smuggling with affiliates, in order to preserve their image. However, cannabis may be sidelined by Yemeni-produced khat, which although legal, invites organized-criminal activities and may utilize forced labour. The same networks facilitate khat and small-arms smuggling into Saudi Arabia, and Yemen exports khat to countries with Somali or Yemeni diaspora, the proceeds subsequently being laundered into Yemen through the hawala (money broker) system. Synthetic drug use is also increasing and inexpensive drugs, primarily prescription drugs and Captagon pills, are the most readily available. In Yemen, drugs are used to control and encourage youth involvement in conflict or in political smear campaigns. Although government-affiliated media claim that Houthi funding comes primarily from the drug trade, the Houthi militia have facilitated the disposal of Lebanese Hezbollah drug products, including Captagon.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Large Yemeni tribes engage in banditry, kidnapping, and have significant weapons arsenals, allowing them to act with impunity and dictate their own governance. In northern and eastern Yemen, goods cannot cross territory without tribal permission. Oil- and arms-smuggling networks collaborating with Houthi, IRG, and STC actors share similar mafia-style

characteristics, and military brigade commanders provide them with protection or documentation. Gangs and mafias linked to the Houthi militia are involved in arms, oil, drug, and human trafficking, looting, robbery, home raids, and kidnapping. Victims are subjected to violence and are kept in secret prisons while mafia members work as brokers. The Houthi also control cigarette smuggling, and oil companies are owned by Houthi officials or their relatives. Overlapping tribal, government and security membership makes it difficult to surmise the extent of collusion, and state actors involved in peace negotiations may have links to criminal markets, ignoring illicit practices to ensure constituent loyalty.

Loose criminal networks involved in arms trafficking, human trafficking and human smuggling may also have mafia ties. With regard to the latter two, individuals from Somalia and Ethiopia act as facilitators and brokers, while Saudi members, as well as Saudi-residing Somalis and Ethiopians, receive victims. Meanwhile, Yemeni criminal networks connected to state actors interact with Egyptian organ-harvesting networks. The black market now encompasses everyday items, and criminal networks are violent and widespread. Yemeni networks with ties to militia and the Horn of Africa collaborate with Saudi traffickers, and these networks are often formed to carry out terrorist activities. Regarding the arms market, Saudi Arabia supplies the IRG, the UAE supplies the STC, and Iranian actors, while also involved in drug trafficking, supply the Houthis.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Yemen is considered one of the world's most fragile and corrupt states. State institutions, plagued by corruption, bribery, and cronyism, lack capacity and rely on UN funding. This is exacerbated by the government's security approach and the lack of IRG popular support and influence. The war has damaged infrastructure and facilitated organized crime, and although the supreme national authority for combating corruption was established before the conflict, even then it lacked capacity. The security sector has long suffered from corruption, including ghost soldiers, preferential treatment, and the distribution of military commands for political gain. A 2019 decision facilitating oil trade by commercial companies affiliated with Houthi loyalists, resulted in financial losses for the state oil company, oil derivative purchases by fictitious companies, black-market expansion, and economic crisis. While access to information is fairly robust, monitoring, compliance, anti-corruption and transparency efforts have stalled. Nevertheless, the

2020 IRG and STC Riyadh agreement contained clauses regarding corruption reduction.

Yemen is party to international and regional agreements regarding organized crime, corruption, drug and arms trade, wildlife crime, and terrorism financing, also covered by domestic law. Despite expressing reservations regarding arbitration and extradition, Yemen has an extradition agreement with Egypt and a judicial cooperation agreement and protocol with Tunisia. The IRG occasionally collaborates with UN human-rights mechanisms, and the US supports the coast guard with training and equipment. Due to the fragile political situation, the government has faced internal security threats, weak institutions, law-enforcement and economic challenges, and systemic corruption. Although the penal code criminalizes slavery and child sex trafficking, it excludes sex trafficking as understood within international law, and despite efforts to combat trafficking and protect victims, laws are not enforced.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Yemen lacks a comprehensive justice system, adequate courts, judges, staff and training, and no units focus specifically on organized crime. There is no monitoring mechanism and the transition to a paid system has increased corruption. Data is further skewed by the stigma regarding the arrest of women and the categorization of most violent crimes as politically motivated. The government lacks control over the court and prison systems, and by law, parties may settle informally outside of court. Most prisoners are pre-trial detainees, and conditions do not meet international standards due to overcrowding, lack of prison staff training, ineffective case management, underfunding, poor sanitation, inadequate access to justice, the intermingling of pre-trial and convicted inmates, and deteriorating infrastructure. Houthi-affiliated tribal militias operate prison facilities with unknown conditions, and sexual exploitation is common in Sana'a prisons. While the Houthi militia arrests critics and subjects some to forced migration, others are held in secret UAE jails in Yemen and tortured.

The military characteristics and criminal opportunism of policing structures has resulted in decreased public trust. Due to the conflict, resources have shifted, and military capabilities have been exhausted. Despite abetting crime, security officials benefit from impunity, and officers responsible for investigating organized crime have been involved in repressing peaceful demonstrations. Polarization and multiple loyalties exist, based on party, sectarian, regional and tribal affiliations. Territorial integrity is challenged by the conflict between the North and the South, ongoing counterterrorism campaigns against AQAP, tribal issues, extensive borders, and US drone attacks. Moreover, Yemen's eastern governorate faces destabilization due to the geopolitical struggle between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, and Yemen's proximity to Africa makes maritime routes viable for organized crime. The interior of the country is difficult to police, but as a result of a Yemeni-US-Saudi initiative, the border guard situation has improved, particularly in performing checkpoints, patrols, advanced methods of inspection, and confiscation.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Yemen is one of the most at-risk countries for money laundering and terrorist financing. Although laws and institutions exist to combat both, efforts are hindered by conflict, poor financial policies and low commitment to international standards. Control of the Central Bank has been fought over by the Houthis and the government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, and the hawala system lacks formal oversight and is used for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions. Yemen's informal economy is significant, and agriculture is the country's largest employment sector. Yemen's economy has been dependent on the oil sector since the mid-1980s, but the sector faces declining productivity. While mineral ore reserves are still significant, the sector lacks investment, and Yemen depends heavily

on aid. Doing business in Yemen is extremely difficult, due in part to regulatory deficiencies, and competing Central Banks undermine the IRG's ability to regulate the economy. The Houthis have also enacted a tax regime, resulting in a continued stream of income.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

A pattern of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances has occurred in Yemen. Those targeted suffer torture, ill treatment, are denied access to lawyers and their family, and many detainees are held in secret. The killing of several preachers prompted others to flee, and Houthi militants are accused of hostage-taking, torture, and abuse. The government lacks capacity to protect trafficking victims, who are often incarcerated or deported. Furthermore, Yemen lacks specialized centres for drug-addiction treatment or meaningful crime-prevention measures. The non-governmental organization community within Yemen suffers due to the ongoing conflict, but some organizations have sought to shed light on organized crime. Tribes are involved in security provision, rule of law and justice, but their role in countering rather than enabling organized crime is ambiguous. Press freedom has been curtailed by all parties, and the Houthis have blocked online access, with several online newspapers being restricted to disseminating information via social media. Journalists are subjected to abduction, incarceration without trial, arbitrary detention, threats of kidnapping, arrest, torture, the blocking of news sites, and salary suspension.

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