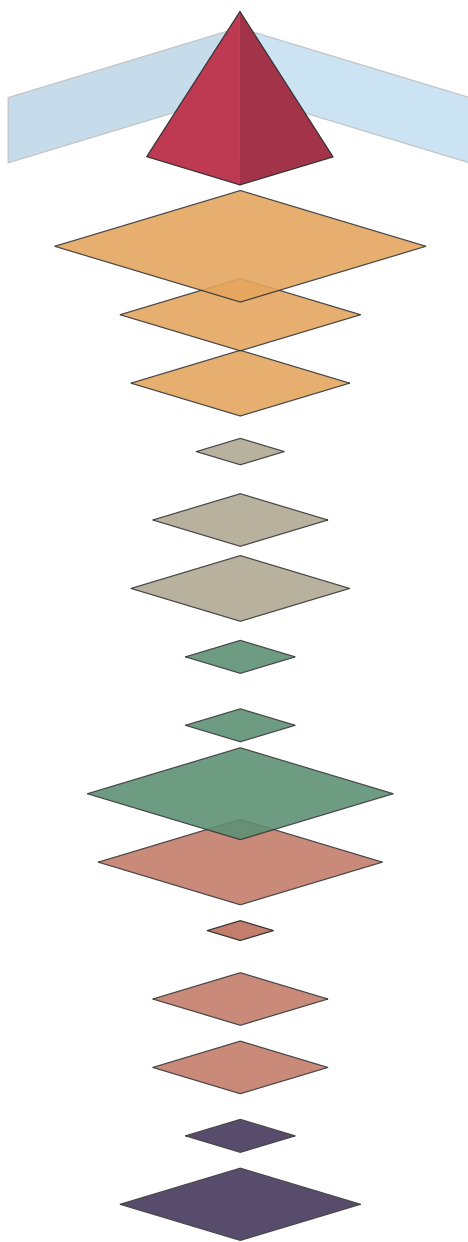




TURKMENISTAN



4.40

CRIMINALITY SCORE

132nd of 193 countries

36th of 46 Asian countries

6th of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.40

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| HUMAN TRAFFICKING | 8.50 |
| HUMAN SMUGGLING | 5.50 |
| EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING | 5.00 |
| ARMS TRAFFICKING | 2.00 |
| TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS | 4.00 |
| ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS | 5.00 |
| FLORA CRIMES | 2.50 |
| FAUNA CRIMES | 2.50 |
| NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES | 7.00 |
| HEROIN TRADE | 6.50 |
| COCAINE TRADE | 1.50 |
| CANNABIS TRADE | 4.00 |
| SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE | 4.00 |
| CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES | 2.50 |
| FINANCIAL CRIMES | 5.50 |



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.40

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS | 2.50 |
| CRIMINAL NETWORKS | 5.00 |
| STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS | 8.50 |
| FOREIGN ACTORS | 3.50 |
| PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS | 2.50 |



2.21

RESILIENCE SCORE



Funding provided by the United States Government.

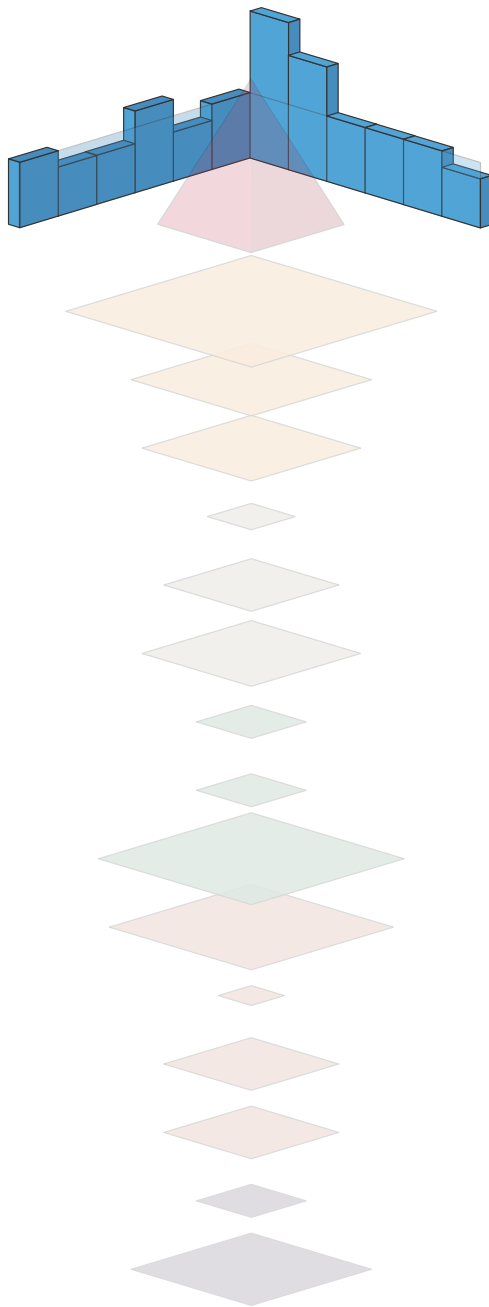


Funded by the European Union

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.



TURKMENISTAN



2.21

RESILIENCE SCORE

180th of 193 countries

41st of 46 Asian countries

8th of 8 Central Asian and Caucasian countries

| | |
|--|------|
| POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE | 2.00 |
| GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY | 1.50 |
| INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION | 1.50 |
| NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS | 2.50 |
| JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION | 1.50 |
| LAW ENFORCEMENT | 2.00 |
| TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY | 4.50 |
| ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING | 3.50 |
| ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY | 2.00 |
| VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT | 2.00 |
| PREVENTION | 2.00 |
| NON-STATE ACTORS | 1.50 |



4.40

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.40



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.40



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The country is both a destination and a source for human trafficking. This criminal market affects students, employees at private-sector institutions, soldiers and public sector workers forced by the government into the cotton harvest industry without payment. (Where farmers do not meet government quotas with their cotton harvests, they are forced to let go of their lands.) Trafficked individuals from Turkmenistan are also forced to work abroad in the textile, agricultural, construction and domestic service sectors, as well as in drug trafficking. Turkmen women are exploited for sex trafficking abroad and within the country. Corruption is rampant; low-level officials and political elite appear to be involved in the market.

Turkmenistan is part of a Central Asian transit area for irregular migration, and for migrant smuggling from Asia (South, South West and East) to Europe. Kazakhstan and Russia are the main destinations for irregular migrants from Turkmenistan. The profits made from the human trafficking and smuggling markets are accrued to domestic and foreign actors alike. Despite limited information about extortion and protection racketeering, these criminal activities are known to be prevalent. For instance, victims of forced labour in the cotton harvest industry are known to face extortion.

TRADE

The arms trafficking market in Turkmenistan is small to negligible. Gun control in Turkmenistan is very strict: only very few security personnel are authorized to carry handguns. Civilians are required to pass background checks and psychiatric evaluations in order to purchase hunting shotguns.

Due to its location on the route between Asia and Europe, Turkmenistan is a transit and destination country for counterfeit goods. Pirated and counterfeit goods constitute a considerable share of most consumer goods, including imported textile products, footwear and electronics. Counterfeit medicines are also part of this illegal market, which is spreading in the country. There also seems to be an existing market for contraband cigarettes, due to the tightened control on tobacco in the country. Small retailers and top-ranking state affiliates appear to be involved in this market.

ENVIRONMENT

There is limited flora crime in Turkmenistan. Wild plants such as soaproot and wild rhubarb are collected, and the former has been pushed to the brink of extinction due to overharvesting. Organized crime units don't seem to be involved in these markets. The illegal fauna market consists of illegal sturgeon fishing, leopard skin trade and the hunting of houbara bustards. Turkmenistan also acts as a transit country for falcons and hawks that are smuggled between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to the Gulf states. Trade in viper snake venom has also been reported. Despite the variety of wildlife trafficking in the country, the fauna crimes market appears to be limited. In terms of non-renewable resources, the state has an opaque approach to the management of the large oil and gas sector in the country, implying high-level state looting of natural resources.

DRUGS

Although Turkmenistan does not have a major heroin market, it appears to be a transit hub for heroin destined for Russia and countries bordering Afghanistan. Such narcotics smuggled through the country are directed from Afghanistan to Turkish, Russian and European markets, either directly or through Iran. Seizures mostly occur along Turkmenistan's rugged 800-kilometre border with Afghanistan, and its 1 120-kilometre border with Iran. Some reports indicate that heroin is the second most widespread drug, after cannabis, with suspected involvement of state actors in drug shipping.

The lack of information about use and seizure of cocaine suggests that there is a very small or non-existing cocaine market in the country. This is due to the low purchasing power of the vast majority of the population, and the historical use of opiates in the region. Even though there is also limited information about the cannabis market, it is reported to be the most used and widespread drug in the country, although consumption is relatively low by global standards. The extent of the synthetic drugs market is similarly limited, with sporadic data.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Turkmenistan has one of the lowest rates of cybercrime in Central Asia. Citizens have low levels of internet access, making the country an unattractive market for perpetrators.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, in the form of banking fraud, embezzlement of state funds and tax evasion, seem to be the most prevalent forms of financial crime in Turkmenistan. Most crimes in the financial sector are likely perpetrated by bank employees and state affiliates. Lower-level criminality is also widespread, however, making it difficult to estimate the scope.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Corruption is deeply embedded in the state apparatus in Turkmenistan. State embedded actors are known to either facilitate or directly carry out a variety of criminal activities in the country. There is evidence of increasing activity of loose criminal networks in the country, accelerated by the ongoing economic crisis in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. These networks are mostly involved in drug

trafficking, human trafficking and goods smuggling, and they are known to cooperate with transnational organized crime groups. The level of violence perpetrated by actors in criminal networks depends on the criminal market. According to reports, there is often medium or high-level violence in human trafficking.

There are no known mafia-style groups that are still active in Turkmenistan, since the crackdown in the 1990s. One of the last so-called 'thieves in law' in Turkmenistan was publicly executed, and since then there has been little if any mafia-style crime. Mafia-style groups have minimal control over the prison system and moderate access to weapons in the country. Because the political elite exert monopolistic control over the entire economy, legal and illegal, there is minimal to moderate interaction between foreign and local criminal actors. The involvement of private-sector actors in criminal markets is similarly limited, with sporadic incidents reported – usually financial crimes.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Turkmenistan has weak levels of political governance and government effectiveness with widespread corruption and opaqueness around the administration. The sectors most commonly affected by corruption are education, health, customs, taxation, justice, the security services and police, and the oil and gas industry. Laws penalizing official corruption are not effectively used. Public administration relies heavily on patronage networks. There are no independent institutions tasked with combating widespread corruption. Overall, there is a lack of information and transparency, which hinders the assessment of criminal markets and the current situation in the country. The exception seems to be cyber-dependent crimes: in this market, the government has shown political will to counter the emerging threat.

Turkmenistan is one of the most isolated countries in the world and also a neutral country. It has limited its cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other regional agreements, although it has ratified international organized crime treaties addressing corruption and the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. That being said, Turkmenistan's participation in international programmes is only cosmetic. Internally, the country has adopted legislation and a national legal framework criminalizing many forms of organized crime, including human trafficking, arms trafficking, flora and fauna crimes, drug trafficking and illicit trade of excise goods. However, the implementation of the legal framework remains ineffective.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Even though the law provides measures for an independent judiciary, the judiciary is subordinate and controlled by government executives. It routinely engages in politically motivated abuse of power: judgements are delivered based on instructions from the presidential office, which is able to unilaterally appoint and dismiss judges. In this respect, the courts are commonly used to punish dissent and remove potential threats. No independent judicial control exists, and international bodies are prevented from carrying out meaningful audits. Courts are unable to pass effective judgement against organized crime defendants or high-profile criminals. As for the penitentiary system, prisons are overcrowded with sub-standard living conditions. Corruption and torture are reportedly rampant among prison officials.

Similar to the other branches of the state, the political leadership also holds sway over law enforcement, which is usually used to fight dissenters and political opponents rather than punish and prevent organized crime. The national police and the Ministry for National Security (which succeeded the Soviet KGB) use repressive means to maintain internal security. Arbitrary arrests, excessive use of force and corruption by law enforcement officials have been identified as serious issues, although security forces continue to operate with impunity. In broad terms, crime remains low in the country, but this is mainly due to the repressive characteristics of the regime.

Turkmenistan is a major transit point for many criminal goods because of its geographic location. Given its extensive borders, effective policing is a challenge. It is reasonable to argue that borders remain fairly porous as the country is along major trafficking routes. The country's proximity to major criminal markets such as the opium and heroin markets of Afghanistan exacerbates its vulnerability to criminal activity. Border control officials are perceived to be corrupt, cast against a backdrop of widespread corruption in the country as a whole. That said, there have been recent efforts to strengthen Turkmenistan's borders, particularly with Afghanistan. Government measures against cyber-dependent crimes are in place and effective.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Turkmenistan has shown significant improvements in relation to its anti-money laundering (AML) and combatting terrorist financing (CFT) laws. The country has pledged to work with the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group as it continues to address the full range of AML/CFT issues and further strengthen its regime. Some gaps in the protection plan still exist. For example, there are currently no measures in place to prevent the abuse of crowdfunding and online gambling from becoming channels for money laundering.

There are no adequate mechanisms in place to ensure that legitimate businesses can expand and operate free from criminal activities. The country's economic system is centrally administered and it operates with very tight state regulation and large-scale corruption. Furthermore, the government controls all key sectors of the economy, such as the oil and gas industry, electricity, cotton production and telecommunications. Patronage networks are the basis of power and this has inevitably given rise to a culture of bribery, nepotism and embezzlement, where bribe-taking is the norm. This is particularly prevalent among customs, licensing and social-service agencies, as well as in the education and healthcare sectors. All state projects require a presidential decree. Likewise, all procurement processes are carried out arbitrarily and with no oversight or regulation.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Government efforts in response to human trafficking, sex work and forced labour remain negligible. Despite a legal framework that requires the provision of various services to trafficking victims (such as medical assistance, legal assistance and physical protection), this framework has failed to fulfil its duties. International organizations and NGOs have also not been appropriately funded to provide such services. The legal provisions for victim identification and referral have not been implemented; authorities have had to resort to informally referring suspected trafficking victims to international organizations.

Similarly, the government has made negligible efforts to prevent organized crime and corruption – for example, there have been limited awareness-raising programmes targeting youth. While the government has provided anti-trafficking training programmes for its diplomatic personnel, it has not made any efforts to reduce the demand for sex trafficking and forced labour.

As there are very few individual activists and low levels of informal activism, Turkmenistan's civil society is virtually non-existent. The status quo is maintained by attacks against journalists and civil society activists; the government has also persecuted and coerced opposition activists living abroad. The law provides for the possibility of privately-owned TV stations to be established, but only if they promote a positive image of Turkmenistan. Even though civil society organizations play a large role in combating human trafficking in Turkmenistan, the state is not open to fostering and promoting a strong and independent civil society sector – this extends to the media. Onerous registration and regulatory requirements prevent most independent NGOs from operating legally or from receiving any foreign funding, and activities by unregistered groups can draw fines, detention and other penalties. Authorities regularly suppress and retaliate against independent media and routinely deny freedom of movement to citizens.

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