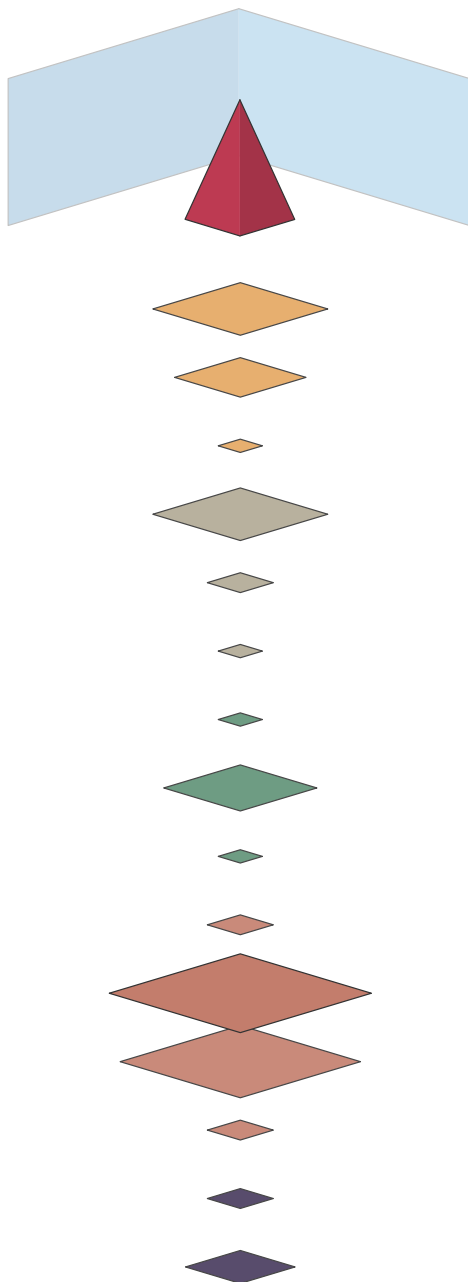


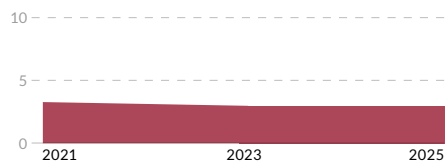


ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



3.03 $\nearrow 0.05$
CRIMINALITY SCORE

173rd of 193 countries $\nearrow 4$
31st of 35 American countries $\nearrow 2$
9th of 13 Caribbean countries $\nearrow 2$



CRIMINAL MARKETS 2.57 $\searrow 0.10$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	1.00	$\searrow 1.00$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	1.50	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	1.00	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	1.00	$\searrow 0.50$
HEROIN TRADE	1.50	$\searrow 1.50$
COCAINE TRADE	6.00	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.50	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	1.50	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	2.50	0.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS 3.50 $\nearrow 0.20$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	3.50	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	3.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	2.50	$\nearrow 1.00$



This project was funded in part
by a grant from the United
States Department of State.

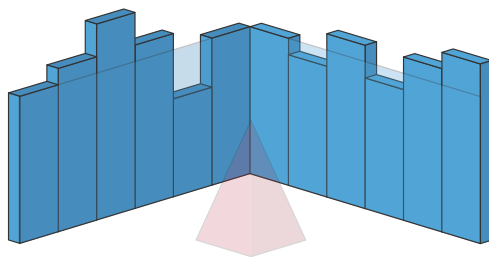


Funded by
the European Union

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.



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



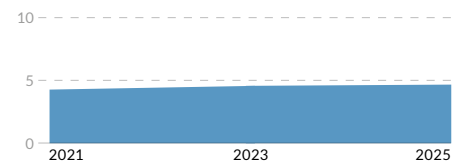
4.67 $\nearrow 0.08$

RESILIENCE SCORE

102nd of 193 countries $\nearrow 5$

21st of 35 American countries $\nearrow 2$

12th of 13 Caribbean countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.50	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	4.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00	0.00
PREVENTION	5.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.50	0.00



This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State.



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.

CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Although modest in scale, Antigua and Barbuda's human trafficking market involves both local and foreign victims exploited in the sex and labour sectors – particularly tourism, domestic work and retail. Recent cases highlight how Guyanese and Jamaican women have been trafficked in nightlife venues and minors subjected to forced labour. Despite detection efforts and initiatives focused on migrants, trafficking persists via informal networks that are often linked to migration. Local normalization of exploitation contributes to continued under-reporting and institutional tolerance.

Additionally, the country serves as a source, destination and transit point for human smuggling, though this market is limited. Data on victim identification during the last couple of years shows several overlaps between smuggling and trafficking activities. Smuggling networks exploit the country's tourism infrastructure, formal labour agreements and geographic position linking West Africa and Latin America to US routes. The use of both air and maritime smuggling methods has increased, with recent incidents including a capsized vessel bound for the US Virgin Islands.

Extortion and protection racketeering are not established criminal markets in the country, and there is no evidence of systematic or organized activity in recent years. However, isolated incidents have been reported involving the extortion of tourists by individual actors, including security personnel.

TRADE

Although arms trafficking in Antigua and Barbuda remains limited in scale, its impact has grown, as evidenced by a rise in firearm-related crimes and seizures. The country experienced a record increase in homicides during the first half of 2024, including several high-profile incidents such as armed robberies and police shootouts. The increasing pervasiveness of this market has been driven by criminal networks' need to arm themselves to engage in other illicit activities. While the country does not produce arms, trafficking routes – possibly involving maritime transfers from Jamaica – appear to exist. Perceptions of police complicity and growing gang activity have undermined trust and may further entrench this market.

The counterfeit goods market remains small. Activity primarily involves local individuals selling imported counterfeit items, such as luxury watches and jewellery, through informal markets and online platforms. There is no evidence of domestic production or organized criminal groups' involvement. Goods reportedly arrive from China

via Cuba, and while some remain for local sale, the country's geographic location suggests it may also be a transit point. The lack of official data on volumes trafficked limits a full assessment. There is no indication of an established criminal market for excise goods.

ENVIRONMENT

There is no evidence of a criminal market for flora-related crimes. On the contrary, the country maintains a small but established fauna-related criminal market – primarily involving illegal fishing and the trade of Queen Conch and other molluscs – often linked to tourist demand. Individual residents have reportedly engaged in out-of-season purchases, with broader criminal networks facilitating export. While recent assessments indicate improvements in resilience against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, the tangible impact of these developments on curbing such illicit activities has yet to materialize. There is no indication of an established or emerging criminal market for non-renewable resources.

DRUGS

There is limited information on the heroin market in Antigua and Barbuda and its role in the broader regional trade. While the country is not a significant producer or common transit point for heroin within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) route, local criminal networks involved in other illicit substances may potentially use Antigua and Barbuda for trafficking. However, there is no evidence of heroin trafficking in the country in recent years.

By contrast, Antigua and Barbuda serves as a transit point for the cocaine trade due to its strategic position between South and Central America, and North America and Europe, as well as insufficient territorial monitoring. Cocaine destined for the US, Canada or Europe typically originates in Colombia and Venezuela. As interdiction efforts intensify along Central American routes, more drugs are diverted through the Eastern Caribbean. Notable cocaine seizures in recent years have highlighted the prevalence of this market in Antigua and Barbuda. While the rise in violence in the region is linked to drug trade routes, it is unclear if the increase in local violence is solely driven by cocaine trafficking.

The country's location, combined with its access to smuggling vessels, has also long made it a transit point for cannabis destined for North America, Europe and other Caribbean nations. Despite decriminalization allowing limited possession and cultivation for personal use, the illegal cannabis trade persists, with major seizures reported.

Significant cannabis-related incidents have occurred in the last few years, indicating the ongoing prominence of cannabis trafficking.

Antigua and Barbuda exhibits a limited synthetic drug market, with no reported seizures in recent years. However, the absence of drug seizures does not indicate the absence of drug market activity, particularly considering its profitability and the country's strategic location along international drug trade routes.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

There is no evidence of significant, ongoing cyber-dependent crimes or large-scale cybercrime networks operating in Antigua and Barbuda.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

While financial crimes are not widespread in Antigua and Barbuda, the country's large financial sector, bolstered by favourable tax breaks and policies for foreign investors, makes it vulnerable to financial crimes. Common offenses include pyramid schemes, email-based price scams and payment redirection fraud. Corruption scandals, such as the involvement of a former financial regulator in a Ponzi scheme, underscore the issue. The country's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) scheme adds to its financial vulnerabilities, attracting potential exploitation.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Antigua and Barbuda has several local gangs, such as '2Drilly' and '700 Bones', and youth involvement in delinquent activities is widespread. These groups are believed to maintain connections with international criminal organizations.

Despite the rise of youth gangs, organized crime groups do not dominate society or control territory. Instead, smaller, less structured groups – often imitating US gangs – contribute to the localized violence. These loosely organized criminal networks are involved in various illegal activities, particularly human trafficking, drug trafficking and arms smuggling. Criminal activities also extend to petty crimes, such as thefts and break-ins, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas.

The country also faces long-standing corruption issues, with individual cases among government officials continuing to surface. For example, some police officers have been implicated in trafficking-related crimes, and prison officers are believed to be involved in smuggling contraband into prisons. Despite these instances, prosecutions are rare, with most offenders facing administrative sanctions rather than legal action.

Foreign actors are heavily involved in various criminal markets due to Antigua and Barbuda's strategic location. Local groups often collaborate with nationals from other countries – such as Guatemala, Jamaica and Guyana – particularly in the trafficking of cocaine, cannabis and human trafficking operations. The island's position as a transit point for illicit commodities facilitates the involvement of foreign criminals, especially in drug, human and arms trafficking, as well as human smuggling.

Private actors also play a role in various illicit markets in the country, particularly cyber, financial and fauna-related crimes. In Barbuda, corruption surrounding land deals primarily involves the private sector, particularly real estate. The island's unique land ownership system, established post-slavery, restricts land sales, creating complexities that are often exploited by corrupt elites.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The current government has made strides in addressing corruption and organized crime. However, challenges remain in fully tackling certain criminal markets. The country shows solid governance performance, with improvements in corruption control, political stability and rule of law, though concerns about corruption persist. Issues like electoral integrity and the controversial CBI programme remain contentious, while recent efforts to address land rights and human rights abuses have garnered attention. In 2024, Antigua and Barbuda faced issues including low

wages, job scarcity and drug trafficking, highlighting the need for stronger governance.

The current government has also made strides in improving transparency by establishing oversight mechanisms. While the country has a robust anti-corruption legal framework, flaws remain, such as vague requesting procedures and unclear access fee rules. Limited resources and concerns about whistle-blower security further hinder effectiveness. The Public Accounts Committee has struggled with inefficiency and the auditor general's reports have been delayed. Meanwhile, ongoing corruption scandals continue

to emerge, fuelling public scrutiny and undermining trust in institutions.

Antigua and Barbuda is party to all major international treaties on organized crime, including the UNTOC and protocols on firearms, wildlife, corruption and drugs. The country has ratified multiple UN conventions, including those on narcotics, illicit trafficking and transnational crime. Due to its strategic location, Antigua remains a transit point for trafficking routes, making international cooperation vital. The country has fostered relationships with organizations like INTERPOL and CARICOM, and has committed to combating transnational crime, including via participation in a UN-led mission in Haiti.

Domestically, while Antigua and Barbuda has enacted several laws and provisions to combat various forms of criminal activity – including drug, arms and human trafficking, as well as crimes involving flora and fauna, financial systems and cyber networks. The country has also strengthened its regulatory frameworks to counteract money laundering linked to illicit drug trafficking, though there is still considerable room for improvement. With support from the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, Antigua and Barbuda implemented a five-year Anti-Drug Strategy targeting drug abuse prevention, treatment for dependents and controlling illicit drug supply. The country has decriminalized small cannabis possession and legalized medicinal cannabis production, but the illegal cannabis trade remains a concern.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

While independent, Antigua and Barbuda's judiciary faces inefficiencies, particularly in criminal proceedings, resulting in significant case backlogs. To address this, the 2024 amendment to the Criminal Proceedings Act made judge-alone trials permanent. Meanwhile, the country's only prison is severely overcrowded. Remand prisoners often face years of pre-trial detention, contributing to corruption among staff. The prison also lacks essential infrastructure and security, such as functional surveillance, exclusion zone fencing and mobile phone jamming technology. In 2024, a prison officer was detained for allegedly smuggling drugs, prompting the introduction of new integrity measures.

The Royal Antigua and Barbuda Police Force has the principal responsibility for maintaining law and order in the country. Corruption within the force – including bribery and failure to prosecute crimes – is a concern, with cases of police misconduct, especially related to discrimination. Despite this, accountability measures exist and officers are subject to internal investigations. The country relies on regional cooperation, particularly with INTERPOL, to tackle organized crime, including cybercrime and drug and human trafficking. The Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force, consisting of 250 personnel, aids in maintaining public order.

Although the country is a transit point for drug, human and arms trafficking, its geographical features, such as coral reefs, hinder easy access by criminal networks. The country faces challenges with border control due to limited resources, including the absence of a radar system and an under-resourced Coast Guard. Increasing air travel further strains airport security. Despite these issues, Antigua and Barbuda has implemented cybersecurity legislation to address the vulnerability to cyberattacks, though such crimes remain a concern due to the country's limited capabilities to handle these threats.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Antigua and Barbuda demonstrates a strong political commitment to combating money laundering and terrorist financing, with the country no longer listed for anti-money laundering deficiencies by the Financial Action Task Force. However, international assessments report a slight increase in the country's money laundering risk, particularly linked to drug trafficking. Antigua remains a known tax shelter, drawing illicit actors seeking citizenship to funnel illicit funds. While the country was removed from the EU's tax haven blacklist in October 2024, concerns persist over the effectiveness of its anti-corruption laws.

Antigua and Barbuda's economy relies on tourism, construction and efforts to develop a 'blue economy' – with a focus on foreign investment – including in cryptocurrencies and blockchain. However, the lack of restrictions on foreign control has helped make the country a well-known tax haven. The CBI programme has raised concerns about increased foreign influence, particularly from China. In response, the government has signed international standards to encourage investment through the Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority, which offers services for local and foreign investors.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Antigua and Barbuda has established support systems for victims of human trafficking, domestic violence and gender-based violence, including shelters run by NGOs and the Directorate of Gender Affairs. However, while new legislation has been introduced to improve information sharing and sex offender registries, victim identification remains a challenge.

The country has also strengthened its efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling, dedicating resources to prevention programmes, raising public awareness and providing anonymous reporting channels. The government has pledged to increase prosecutions and convictions, noting new legislation with severe penalties. Additionally, a temporary night-time curfew for individuals under 18 was introduced in 2024 to address rising youth gang-related crimes. There are also public awareness campaigns targeting drug abuse, including the National Anti-Drug

Plan, which reinforces prevention, treatment and demand-reduction efforts in coordination with both state and non-state partners.

There are strong partnerships between the government, media and non-state actors in combating organized crime. These efforts focus on public education through outreach programmes and media to help citizens identify trafficking and crime activities. Key partners include local universities, civil society organizations and religious charitable organizations. The media play a crucial role, though press freedom is challenged by editorial censorship and political influence. Additionally, laws against libel allow for the prosecution of journalists for defamation, posing risks of fines or imprisonment.

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.