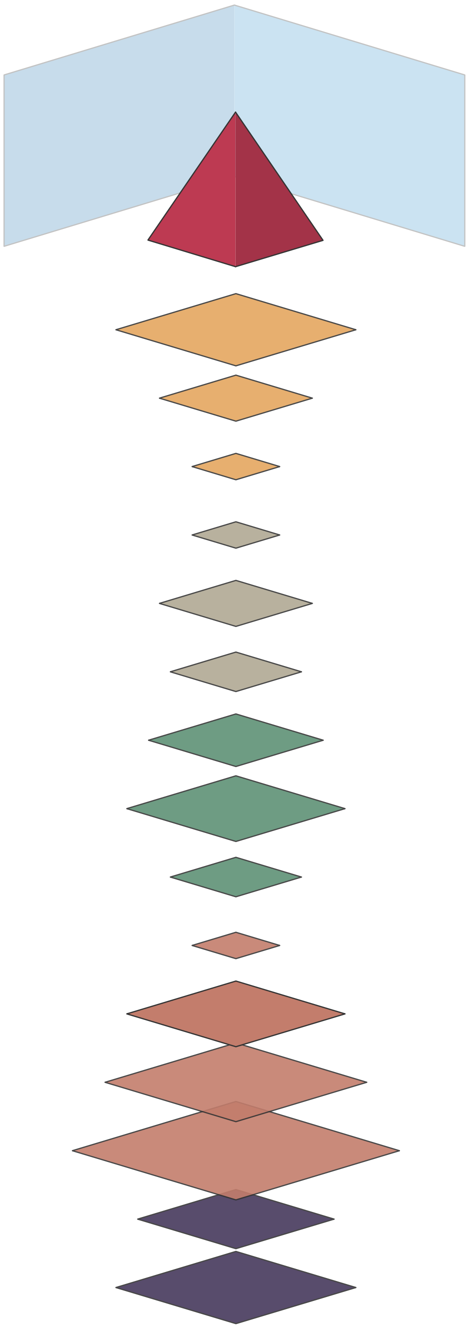
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

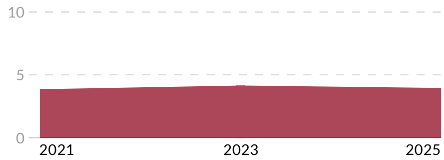
GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

FIJI



4.02 ↘0.13 CRIMINALITY SCORE

154th of 193 countries ↘8
5th of 14 Oceanian countries ↘2
3rd of 4 Melanesian countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.13	↘0.17
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50	↗0.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.50	↘0.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00	↘1.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	3.50	↘1.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.00	↘1.50
FLORA CRIMES	4.00	↗0.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00	↗0.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00	↗0.50
HEROIN TRADE	2.00	↘0.50
COCAINE TRADE	5.00	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	6.00	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.50	↗0.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	4.50	↗0.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.50	0.00

CRIMINAL ACTORS	3.90	↘0.10
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50	↗0.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00	↗1.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.00	↘2.50

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

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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.

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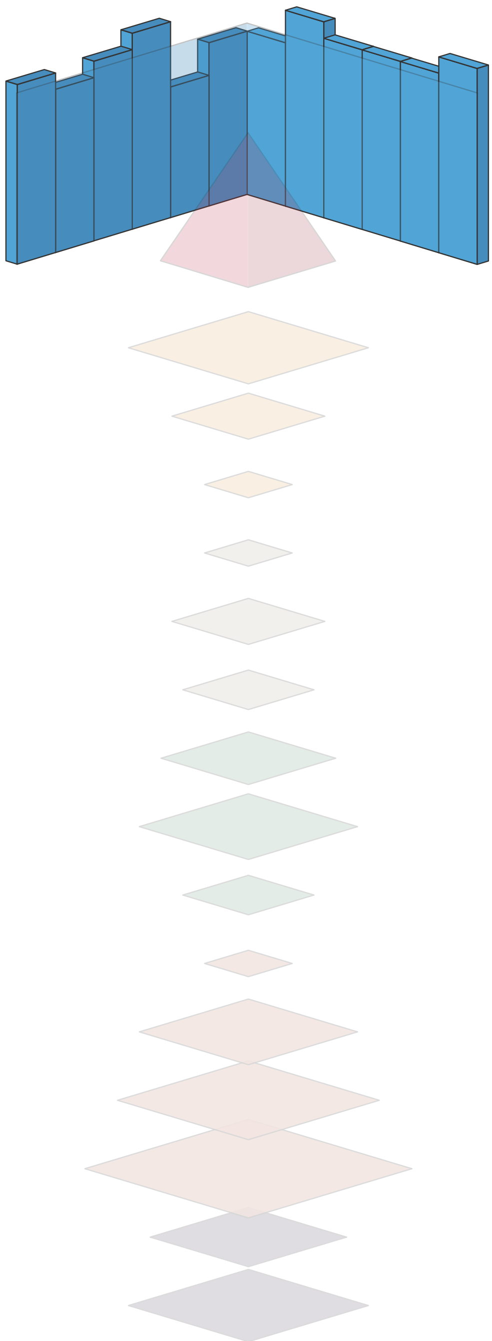
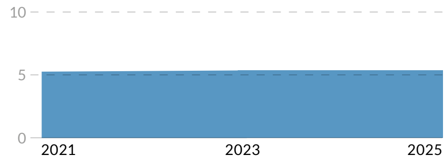
FIJI



5.38 ↘0.04

RESILIENCE SCORE

62nd of 193 countries -
7th of 14 Oceanian countries -
1st of 4 Melanesian countries -



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

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Fiji continues to be a source, transit and destination for human trafficking of both adults and children, particularly for sexual exploitation. Loosely organized networks recruit the victims who are then transported to urban centres, such as Suva, where they are exploited in illegal brothels, hotels and massage parlours. Working independently or in small networks, business owners, managers and pimps recruit and exploit the victims, while foreign nationals, including business people and tourists, contribute to the demand. Family members are also implicated in child trafficking, with children sent to live with relatives in cities where they are coerced into domestic servitude or sexual exploitation. Victims from South Asia are trafficked to work in the fishing, construction and agricultural sectors under exploitative conditions. Sextortion is another concern in the Pacific region, with reports indicating that public officials may be involved in demanding sexual favours in exchange for services.

Although human smuggling is not well-documented, Fiji's geographic position makes it a prominent transit point for people from East and South East Asia who are attempting to reach the US, Australia and New Zealand. Smuggling networks often operate under the guise of legal recruitment or migration agencies, and limited evidence suggests that a mix of foreign and local actors are involved in smuggling activities. The fishing industry facilitates much of the smuggling across the Pacific region. The bulk of irregular migrants in Fiji are people who have overstayed their visas.

Extortion and protection racketeering does not appear to be a widely consolidated criminal market in Fiji, although sporadic cases of extortion have been reported.

TRADE

Arms trafficking is not a significant criminal market in Fiji due to strict firearm regulations and low gun ownership rates. Although arms trafficking occurs in the broader Pacific region, there are no indications of significant illicit arms shipments transiting through Fiji.

In recent years, counterfeit goods within retail and online markets have become a serious concern, fuelled by consumer demand for affordable alternatives to high-priced branded electronics, clothing and food products. Despite existing intellectual property protections, enforcement gaps enable the opportunistic trade of counterfeit items. The relative impact of this type of trade on Fiji's economy is notable.

In Fiji, the illicit trade in excise goods, particularly tobacco and alcohol, persists, driven by high excise taxes that incentivize smuggling. Authorities have conducted seizures of contraband goods being smuggled in foreign fishing vessels, which are the main facilitators of illicit tobacco and alcohol smuggling. However, the number of identified cases of illicit trafficking in excise goods suggests that this criminal market remains limited, contrary to what has been observed in previous reports. Moreover, smuggling is generally carried out by opportunistic actors rather than organized criminal groups.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging is a growing concern in Fiji, with increasing cases of unauthorized timber harvesting, transportation and trade. This illicit trade involves falsifying declarations of harvest volumes or species, as well as export documentation. Moreover, non-compliance with environmental regulations (such as bypassing waste disposal and environmental impact assessment requirements) and weak enforcement mechanisms contribute to the viability of this trade. However, the scope and scale of the criminal market remain difficult to assess due to limited data and the country's limited focus on flora crime threats.

The main fauna crimes in Fiji are illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) and wildlife trafficking. Foreign vessels have been implicated in IUU fishing, and the fishing industry has been linked to corruption, with reports of bribery facilitating illegal activities. Illicit wildlife trade includes sea cucumbers, sea turtles and other marine species destined for international markets. Similar to flora crimes, the scope and scale of this criminal market are difficult to assess given the limited data and the country's limited focus on fauna crime risks and threats.

Non-renewable resource crimes in Fiji are limited in both scope and scale. However, the expansion of illegal sand and gravel extraction threatens Fiji's coastal ecosystems, particularly black sand mining that is closely linked to iron ore extraction. Unauthorized mining operations have been reported, sparking opposition from local communities and raising concerns over allegations of police harassment linked to mining disputes. Foreign companies generally operate legally in the sector, but questions about the legality of some operations persist due to expired licences and regulatory loopholes that create opportunities for illicit activities. Local people also participate in unauthorized sand extraction, particularly in areas where monitoring is weak.

DRUGS

Heroin does not appear to be a significant criminal market in Fiji. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the country may serve as a transit point for heroin trafficking within the region. However, no organized criminal activities involving heroin trade have been reported in recent years, and domestic demand remains negligible or largely undocumented.

Cocaine trade is a notable concern, with Fiji increasingly being used as a transit hub for cocaine shipments moving from South America to Australia and New Zealand. Compared to previous years, cocaine seizures have declined, but indigenous crime syndicates are reportedly collaborating with transnational networks to traffic drugs through the Pacific region. The spillover effect of cocaine trafficking has contributed to a rise in domestic consumption.

The most widespread illicit drug market in Fiji is the cannabis trade, with most domestic demand supplied by local cultivation, particularly in Kadavu. There is little evidence of cannabis trafficking from Fiji to other Pacific nations. The illicit cannabis market generates substantial revenue, attracting many young people who have limited economic opportunities. Despite strict legal penalties for cannabis-related offences, law enforcement has struggled to contain the trade, which remains deeply entrenched in rural communities.

The synthetic drug trade is well-established in Fiji, where methamphetamine trafficking and production are increasing at an alarming rate. Reports indicate a rise in clandestine methamphetamine laboratories, signalling that manufacturing knowledge has spread within the country. Ketamine is another synthetic drug increasingly found in the Fijian market. Synthetic drug consumption has surged, particularly among youth, and methamphetamine use is contributing to rising HIV infection rates.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes have escalated in Fiji, with rising numbers of ransomware attacks, malware deployment and hacking that target both government institutions and private businesses. However, under-reporting makes assessing the extent and impact of this criminal market difficult.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The most prominent financial crimes in Fiji are tax evasion and cyber-enabled fraud, such as credit card fraud, investment scams, advance fee fraud and lottery scams. Counterfeit currency cases have been reported, although most counterfeits are of low quality and easily detectable. Pyramid schemes and online fraud are common, with cybercriminals frequently exploiting digital payment platforms.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

In Fiji, organized crime groups do not have a clear hierarchical structure or centralized leadership associated with mafia-style groups. Criminal activities tend to be facilitated by fluid and loosely connected networks rather than structured groups that exert territorial control or engage in systematic extortion. The loosely organized criminal networks are mostly involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and human trafficking. Local people are involved in cannabis cultivation and trade, which remains one of the country's most entrenched illicit markets. The country has also become a key hub for transnational organized crime, with indigenous criminal networks collaborating with syndicates from Papua New Guinea, Tonga and the Marshall Islands, among others. Fiji also hosts local outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMCGs), including the Fiji Rebels who have sub-chapters in Suva and Nadi. These networks are believed to play a crucial role in drug shipments from South America to Australia and other Pacific destinations, although detailed research on their operations is limited. Furthermore, the growing number of criminal deportees from Australia, New Zealand and the US add to the risk of organized crime, as many deportees engage in illicit activities due to socio-economic marginalization.

Corruption among state-embedded actors, particularly within law enforcement and customs agencies, is a challenge in Fiji. State involvement in organized crime is particularly evident in human trafficking and drug trafficking, where corrupt practices facilitate illicit activities. Reports suggest that IUU fishing is enabled by networks involving government officials who manipulate licensing agreements and access to maritime resources. Politically linked people have also been implicated in money laundering and financial crimes.

Foreign organized crime groups exert significant influence over illicit markets in Fiji and the broader Pacific region. Fiji's geographical proximity to South East Asia makes it susceptible to the activities of transnational criminal syndicates involved in human trafficking, cyber fraud, money laundering and drug trafficking. Chinese criminal networks, including those linked to IUU fishing and human trafficking, have been identified as key actors in the region. Reports indicate that foreign nationals use Fiji as a base for illicit enterprises, with some fugitives from China settling in the country to continue their activities. Latin American cartels, particularly from Colombia and Mexico, have also expanded their role in the Pacific drug trade.

Fiji is part of a regional drug trans-shipment network that facilitates cocaine and methamphetamine trafficking. Cooperation between local crime networks and transnational groups has allowed for on-site drug production in some Pacific nations, embedding Fiji further within global trafficking networks. Foreign OMCGs, such as the Hells Angels and Mongrel Mob, are also active in drug trafficking and violent crime. Furthermore, reports indicate that Fijian-based Bangladeshi nationals facilitate fraudulent visa schemes, leading to labour exploitation in the construction industry. Foreign private-sector actors have also been implicated in transnational illicit financial flows, exploiting gaps in Fiji's financial regulations and weak enforcement mechanisms.

Although private-sector actors have not been widely implicated in direct involvement in illicit activities, financial oversight vulnerabilities create opportunities for money laundering. No systematic evidence links domestic private-sector actors to organized crime, but anecdotal reports suggest that some businesses engage in tax evasion and financial fraud.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Fiji operates as a parliamentary democracy but faces political stability and governance challenges. Despite efforts to uphold democratic principles, concerns include political interference in institutions, allegations of corruption and restrictions on opposition parties and media. The electoral system functions, but transparency and fair representation are questionable. Under the former administration, democratic norms weakened, institutions were eroded and the rule of law was frequently sidelined. In 2022, the change in government after 16 years of single-party rule generated cautious optimism, with renewed commitments to addressing organized crime and corruption. However, whether these efforts will translate into sustained reforms or significant improvements in governance remains to be seen.

Government transparency and accountability are inconsistent in Fiji. Legal frameworks are in place for oversight, but enforcement is often weak and public access to information limited. Trust in institutions is undermined by allegations of corruption within high-ranking government positions, while anti-corruption bodies face political influence, which limits their effectiveness in addressing governance-related misconduct.

Fiji actively participates in regional and international cooperation efforts to combat organized crime, including the Pacific Islands Forum (headquartered in Suva), INTERPOL and regional security frameworks to enhance crime prevention and enforcement strategies. Fiji also fosters bilateral relationships with regional and international counterparts, including Australia, New Zealand, China and Indonesia, to enhance collaborative efforts in the fight against organized crime and corruption, and has extradition agreements with countries from the Commonwealth and the Pacific Islands Forum. However, the implementation of international agreements and treaties is not always consistent, with gaps in enforcement mechanisms.

Fiji's national legal framework criminalizes various forms of organized crime, including human trafficking, drug trafficking and financial crimes, but does not explicitly criminalize participation in an organized criminal group. With regards to drug trafficking, the Counter Narcotics Strategy 2023–2028, launched in July 2024, recognizes the significant challenges posed by the illicit drug trade and acknowledges the evolving nature of the drug trafficking business, which has become increasingly sophisticated. Although the country has specific laws to address transnational organized crime, their inconsistent application and existing legal loopholes hinder effective enforcement. Aside from some exceptions, such as the Counter Narcotics Strategy, minimal efforts have been made to update the legislation in response to evolving organized crime threats. Without legislative revisions, existing laws risk becoming outdated and ineffective in addressing the shifting dynamics of transnational organized crime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Fiji has an independent judiciary, but political influence, court backlogs and limited judicial capacity hinder the timely prosecution of organized crime cases. Corruption within the judiciary reportedly affects the impartiality of legal proceedings. Fiji's penitentiary system is characterized by overcrowded detention facilities and some facilities that do not meet international human rights standards.

Fiji has several specialized law enforcement units dedicated to combating transnational organized crime that collaborate and share intelligence with regional counterparts. These units are generally well-resourced and receive additional funding and training from international aid partners. Fiji follows a community policing model, with officers actively engaging with the communities that they serve. However, in recent years, the lack of public trust in law enforcement has undermined the effectiveness of this approach. This distrust stems from perceived shortcomings in handling basic crime referrals and a broader lack of diligence in investigations. Confidence in security institutions is further weakened by reports of law enforcement officers being complicit in drug trafficking and other illicit activities. Systemic challenges persist despite ongoing efforts to enhance policing and border security.

Fiji's vast coastline and porous borders make it susceptible to drug trafficking, human smuggling and illegal fishing operations. Border control agencies conduct regular patrols, but effective monitoring and enforcement are hindered by limited maritime surveillance capabilities. While regional cooperation plays a crucial role in mitigating border-related crime, gaps in coordination and resource allocation persist.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The financial sector in Fiji is vulnerable to money laundering, particularly through real estate and offshore financial services. Although the country has taken steps to improve its anti-money laundering (AML) standards, illicit financial activities persist due to gaps in enforcement mechanisms. Regulatory agencies are tasked with monitoring financial transactions and business activities, but enforcement of AML measures is inconsistent and constrained by limited resources. In addition, the informal economy provides opportunities for criminal actors to facilitate financial crimes by exploiting regulatory loopholes. Economic downturns and external shocks further exacerbate vulnerabilities in the regulatory framework.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Support services for victims and witnesses of organized crime in Fiji are available but are underfunded and inadequately resourced. Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide assistance to victims of human trafficking, domestic violence and other forms of exploitation. However, gaps in victim protection programmes limit the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, while legal and institutional barriers pose challenges for victims seeking justice and support.

Crime prevention initiatives in Fiji include community-based programmes and awareness campaigns to address the root causes of organized crime. Prevention efforts are in place, but funding constraints and inconsistent implementation hinder their long-term impact. Collaboration between law enforcement and community organizations has improved crime prevention efforts, but challenges remain in sustaining these initiatives.

Civil society actors in Fiji play a crucial role in advocating for human rights and holding the government accountable. Despite their significant contributions to addressing transnational organized crime, these organizations receive minimal financial and logistical support, which limits their effectiveness. Fiji's media landscape has historically faced restrictions and political interference, but changes in government in 2022 eased pressure on independent journalism. The repeal of the Media Industry Development Act marked a significant step toward restoring media freedom and public trust. However, although legal and political constraints have lessened, economic challenges continue to threaten the sustainability and independence of media outlets.

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.