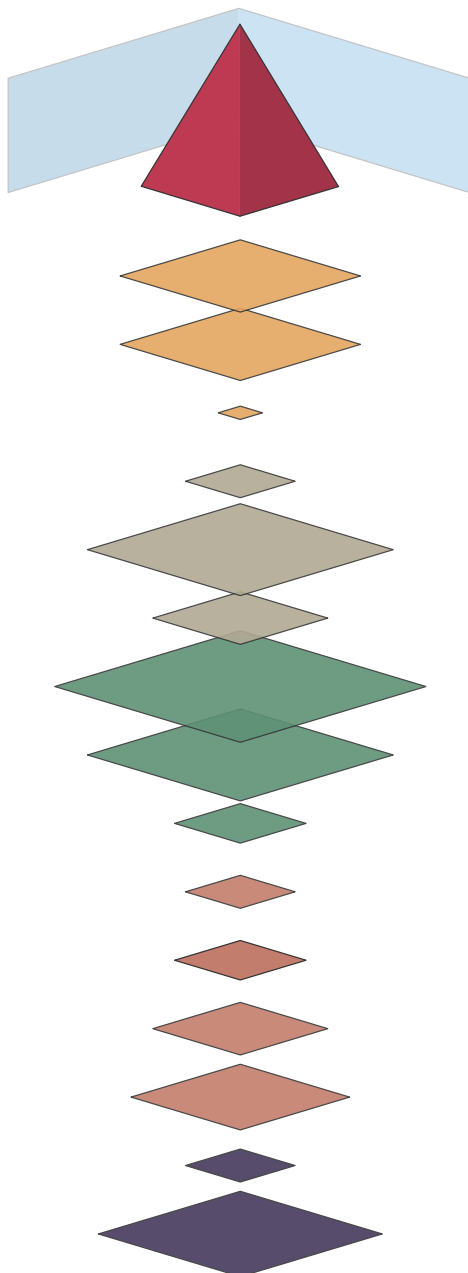


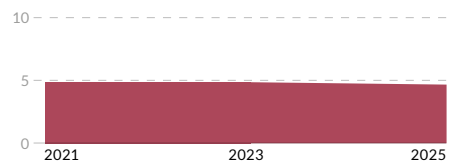


GABON



4.70 $\searrow 0.15$ CRIMINALITY SCORE

120th of 193 countries $\searrow 11$
38th of 54 African countries $\searrow 5$
8th of 11 Central African countries $\searrow 1$



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.50 $\searrow 0.10$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	1.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.50	$\searrow 2.00$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.00	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
FLORA CRIMES	8.50	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	7.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	2.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.00	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	4.00	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	2.50	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.50	$\searrow 0.50$



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.90 $\searrow 0.20$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.50	$\searrow 0.50$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.50	$\searrow 0.50$
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.50	0.00



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

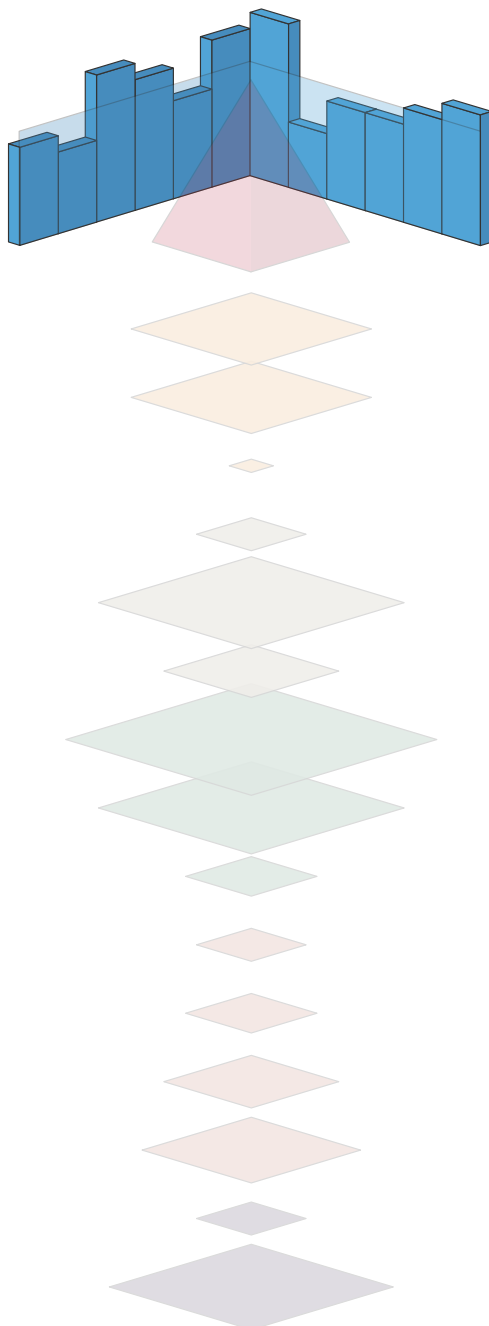


Funded by
the European Union

ENACT is funded by the European Union
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affiliation with the Global Initiative Against
Transnational Organized Crime.



GABON



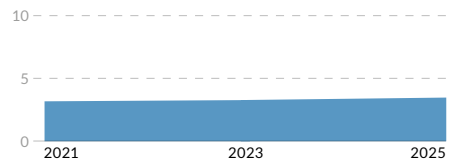
3.50 $\nearrow 0.25$

RESILIENCE SCORE

148th of 193 countries $\nearrow 11$

30th of 54 African countries $\nearrow 5$

4th of 11 Central African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE **3.00** $\nearrow 1.00$

GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY **2.50** $\nearrow 0.50$

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION **4.50** $\searrow 0.50$

NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS **4.00** 0.00

JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION **3.00** 0.00

LAW ENFORCEMENT **4.50** 0.00

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY **5.00** $\nearrow 0.50$

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING **2.00** 0.00

ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY **3.00** $\nearrow 0.50$

VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT **3.00** 0.00

PREVENTION **3.50** 0.00

NON-STATE ACTORS **4.00** $\nearrow 1.00$



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Gabon is a destination and transit point for human trafficking, particularly forced labour and sex trafficking, affecting victims from west and central Africa. Criminal networks, including domestic and foreign actors, exploit vulnerable individuals in sectors such as street vending and domestic service. Traffickers use coercion, deception and logistical proficiency to move victims across borders to other destination countries. Corruption and weak law enforcement hinder anti-trafficking efforts.

Similarly, Gabon is a destination and transit point for human smuggling, particularly involving individuals from west and central Africa, often facilitated by falsified documents. There is a close link between human smuggling and trafficking as smugglers, primarily West African, exploit vulnerable individuals, including children, for forced labour and commercial sex, particularly in Libreville's markets. These operations are marked by high technical proficiency, smugglers independently handling recruitment, transportation and document forgery. Smuggling contributes to local violence, corruption and social unrest. The market is financially viable and, in some cases, socially accepted. No official data is available on extortion and protection racketeering.

TRADE

Gabon does not pose a significant risk for arms trafficking, with no recorded incidents of such activities in recent years. Armed groups are closely monitored, particularly after the August 2023 military coup. Arms trafficking is minimal and largely confined to the Cameroon border, primarily affecting Cameroon rather than Gabon. Trade in counterfeit electronics and medicines is increasingly prevalent, driven by weak regulation and low criminal risk. Estimates suggest that up to a third of drugs in circulation are counterfeit, including painkillers, tranquillizers and cough syrups. The trade is fuelled by criminal networks from Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Mali and Gabon, involving smugglers, vendors and street hawkers. Counterfeit drugs enter Gabon via land and sea routes, primarily from China and India. Despite legal measures and seizures, enforcement is weak due to corruption, complicity and public acceptance, many consumers preferring cheaper counterfeit drugs over legitimate alternatives. The illicit trade in tobacco and other excisable goods is a significant issue. The trade, often interlinked with counterfeit pharmaceuticals, results in considerable revenue losses and fuels criminal activity. Illicit tobacco products are readily available in street markets, providing cheaper alternatives that undermine

tobacco control measures. Organized crime groups exploit this trade for money laundering.

ENVIRONMENT

Gabon, a major exporter of hardwood, faces a significant illegal logging market driven by criminal networks, corrupt officials and foreign actors. The illicit timber trade costs Gabon about US\$1 billion annually, fostering collusion and undermining governance. Despite measures to curb this market, illegal logging continues, especially in the Nkok forest. Timber exports are substantial and major partners include China, Europe and the US. Foreign demand, particularly from China, fuels the illicit trade, contributing to deforestation and environmental degradation. Corruption and weak enforcement hinder effective control, sustaining the illegal timber market and its environmental and social effects.

Wildlife crime is a significant issue. Poaching and trafficking, especially of ivory, severely affect biodiversity, including the elephant population. The market is driven by profitable international trafficking networks involving actors from Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, who finance and support poaching operations. These networks generate substantial profits, rivalling other forms of organized crime, and use specialized skills and logistics to facilitate the illegal ivory trade. Gabon faces increasing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, particularly shark finning, driven by high demand in east Asia. This includes large-scale industrial vessels supplying foreign markets and small-scale artisanal operations.

Gabon has seen limited reports of non-renewable resource crimes, and it is increasingly involved in illicit activities related to maritime smuggling of sanctioned crude oil. The country has become a key destination for dark vessels, particularly those linked to Russian ports, and its ship registry grew significantly in 2023. Gabon is also part of the Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkébé region, a hub for illicit trafficking of gold and other precious minerals which are often used to finance terrorist groups in west and central Africa, contributing to regional instability.

DRUGS

Gabon is a transit point for the heroin trade, facilitated by its porous borders. Recent heroin seizures in Libreville and its Léon Mba International Airport exemplify this trend. Gabon's growing involvement in the Gulf of Guinea's expanding drug trade might exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. The cocaine trade appears to be limited but potentially growing, reports suggesting a lack of consolidation in the market. Recent law enforcement operations highlight the possibility of an underreported cocaine trade, potentially influenced

by regional trafficking networks. The cannabis trade is a concern, and Gabon is a destination for illicit trafficking from neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and Congo. Traffickers use makeshift roads through forests and other methods to evade detection. Oyem, Mitzic and Bitam are key hubs for the illegal cannabis market. Although the cultivation, sale and consumption of cannabis is formally prohibited, these activities persist, indicating a well-established illicit market. The nature of the trade and the volume of illicit cannabis suggest enforcement efforts have had limited impact.

The trade of synthetic drugs is becoming a serious issue. Local and foreign actors, particularly from Cameroon, traffic substances such as tramadol (kobolo). Gabon is a transit point in broader international networks, and trafficking routes pass through Bitam and connect to Congo. Traffickers use concealment methods, such as hiding tablets in cabinet compartments, to evade law enforcement. There has been a rise in the distribution of kush, a synthetic drug combining cannabis and tramadol, sometimes laced with dangerous substances. Recent seizures highlight the growing demand and challenges posed by this illicit market.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes appear limited, with few reported incidents and little evidence of widespread activity. Although isolated cases have occurred, Gabon is largely absent from global cybercrime dynamics, suggesting minimal involvement as a target or source of attacks. In 2024, however, a group of hackers claimed responsibility for a denial-of-service attack that temporarily disabled dozens of government and official websites. While minor incidents have been reported, the overall cybercrime landscape is probably underreported and shows little evidence of organized or coordinated activity.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are primarily driven by high-level officials, particularly in the extractive sector. The old ruling elite has long been at the centre of embezzlement allegations and several members face prosecution. Since the military coup there has been a visible crackdown on corruption, though it is too early to assess its long-term impact. Financial fraud is increasingly common and scams are often disguised as legitimate investment opportunities. Despite recent initiatives, systemic financial crime poses a serious challenge.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

There have been no recent reports of traditional mafia-style groups operating in Gabon. Looser criminal networks are involved in illicit activities such as human trafficking, human smuggling, trade in counterfeit goods and wildlife crimes.

These networks primarily operate near borders and in local markets, often exploiting victims or meeting demand for counterfeit goods. The trafficking and smuggling operations are transnational, with key links to neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and the broader West African region. Wildlife crimes and the counterfeit medicine trade are connected to international actors from China and India. While these criminal activities involve local and regional actors, their societal impact in Gabon is relatively moderate compared to other regions.

State-embedded actors are heavily involved in financial crimes and systemic corruption and bribery are widespread across the public sector. Judicial staff are implicated in trafficking crimes, reportedly accepting bribes to influence or dismiss cases. Corruption is widespread, particularly in the extractive sector where embezzlement and money laundering thrive, and has previously involved top officials. High-ranking officials, including individuals closely linked to the former regime, have been accused of embezzling public funds and laundering money through property investments abroad. The military coup led to significant changes in the state apparatus, prompting increased public discussion on transparency and potential reforms. Foreign criminal actors from Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad are key players in illicit markets, including human trafficking, counterfeit goods and fauna crimes. They frequently collaborate with local criminals, creating a network of transnational crime. The human trafficking and smuggling market is mainly controlled by Cameroonian nationals in partnership with Gabonese criminals. Foreign involvement extends to flora crimes, implicating Chinese and other Asian companies. Private sector actors are heavily involved in the sale of counterfeit medicines, which are distributed through markets, shops and street vendors. Vessels smuggling sanctioned crude oil under the Gabon flag are linked to a private company that manages the country's registry. Although there are concerns about the role of private actors in laundering profits from these illicit activities, detailed information is lacking. While there were minor shifts in trends after the coup, these changes are not yet significant enough to alter the overall landscape of criminal activity.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Political leadership and governance were significantly affected by the coup, following public dissatisfaction with economic hardships and corruption. The transitional government has implemented anti-corruption measures, such as arrests related to drug trafficking and financial crimes, but the release of convicted officials has raised concerns. Efforts to restore democratic processes include proposed electoral reforms and decentralization, and a presidential election was held in April 2025. In 2024, Gabon held a referendum introducing a new constitution amid concerns about potential electoral manipulation. Despite promises of reform, challenges persist in ensuring political integrity and accountability. Corruption is entrenched and there are allegations of selective enforcement and obstacles to legal proceedings. Gabon has established legal frameworks to address corruption, including targeted anti-corruption campaigns which have had some success, especially in reducing extortion by security forces. However, corruption is prevalent among law enforcement, including the police and military.

Gabon participates in international efforts to combat organized crime, ratifying key international conventions on corruption, narcotics trafficking and environmental crimes. Partnerships with global networks such as the Nature Crime Alliance and organizations such as the US Forest Service enhance enforcement capabilities. However, the coup led to disruptions, including the suspension of US aid and France's cessation of activities in the country. Despite these setbacks, Gabon is engaged regionally, supporting initiatives such as the Rabat Plan of Action and rejoining the Economic Community of Central African States. It emphasizes cybersecurity in its crime prevention strategies, participating in regional anti-crime initiatives with INTERPOL and AFRIPOL.

Gabon has enacted laws targeting organized crime but challenges remain in compliance and implementation. There are also reports of shortcomings in the legislative framework which mean some criminal markets are not criminalized according to international standards. Difficulties in adopting an Anti-Trafficking National Action Plan, stalled since 2019, and the failure to implement the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants highlight gaps in addressing some criminal markets. A national commission established in 2022 aims to combat small arms trafficking, centralizing efforts to address this issue. Cybersecurity laws face implementation challenges. The penal code imposes harsh penalties for counterfeit medicine crimes, reflecting a commitment to public health and safety. The ongoing transition to democratic governance includes reforms that could strengthen legal frameworks addressing organized crime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judiciary faces significant challenges in countering organized crime, lacking specialized units and technical capacity. Its effectiveness is undermined by corruption, delays in case handling and insufficient penalties for trafficking offences, which weaken deterrence. The detention system struggles with overcrowding, inadequate healthcare and poor conditions that violate international standards, fostering environments for organized crime. Despite reforms after the coup, including in prisons and civil liberties, the overall judicial framework has seen limited changes. The political upheaval has prompted potential reviews of legislation but not yet led to substantial shifts in the legal landscape.

Gabon has taken significant steps to enhance law enforcement's ability to combat organized crime, including specialized military training on illegal resource exploitation and drug trafficking, and the establishment of a Criminal Intelligence Analysis Unit in the National Police. Despite these advances, challenges remain, particularly with human trafficking, where investigations and law enforcement corruption are issues. A surge in crime in Libreville followed the 2024 release of more than 500 prisoners, some of whom reoffended. Reports of harassment and extortion by law enforcement against immigrant communities highlight persistent vulnerabilities in the enforcement of laws.

Gabon presents security challenges and cooperation opportunities at its borders. It has a long-standing territorial dispute with Equatorial Guinea, though efforts to resolve it through international legal channels continue. Gabon has shown resilience in managing its borders, including enforcing temporary closures during elections. However, corruption among customs officials, particularly along the Cameroon border, contributes to timber, wildlife and human trafficking. Gaps in coastal and inland surveillance further exacerbate vulnerabilities, highlighting the need for enhanced border control and security measures to combat illicit trade.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Gabon faces significant challenges in effectively addressing anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. Despite having a legal framework for international cooperation, it struggles with a lack of a centralized filing and case management system, limiting data tracking and coordination. The Financial Intelligence Unit is under-resourced and budget and technological constraints affect its operations. Anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism measures are inadequately implemented, with weak supervision in the financial sector.

and poor prosecution rates for money laundering. After the 2023 coup, the Transitional Council introduced reforms to address economic issues, but frustrations persist due to inflation, unemployment and inconsistent auditing.

Gabon has made efforts to improve its investment climate, focusing on supporting legitimate businesses, but challenges persist. Regulatory frameworks, especially in property rights enforcement, are restrictive, and gaps in oversight have allowed illicit activities such as the sale of counterfeit goods. Despite modest economic growth projections driven by sectors such as manganese and timber, economic uncertainty has increased since the coup. The country struggles with accessing bank loans, corruption and inconsistent customs enforcement, undermining investor confidence. The establishment of a special economic zone in Nkok near Libreville aims to attract investment but difficulties remain in navigating bureaucratic hurdles and ensuring reliable government payments.

shown a willingness to engage with civil society but media freedom is tightly constrained. NGOs highlighted significant press restrictions during the pre-coup 2023 elections. Although arbitrary arrests have become rare and some exiled journalists have returned, intimidation tactics persist, notably through security service summonses.

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.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Challenges in victim protection persist, including inadequate funding, limited shelter space and inconsistent access to benefits for foreign victims. The government funds two NGO-run shelters that provide comprehensive services to human trafficking victims, including medical care, legal support and education. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs uses a trafficking in persons procedural manual to assist in identifying and referring child victims. Gaps in victim identification and rehabilitation services, particularly for drug abuse, hinder efforts to combat trafficking and support victims.

Gabon has taken steps to prevent some forms of organized crime, particularly in areas such as human trafficking, illegal deforestation and counterfeit drugs. The government established the National Commission for the Prevention and Fight Against Human Trafficking, adopted a new National Action Plan for 2024–2028, and enhanced border security. Despite these efforts, challenges include unabated demand for commercial sex acts, funding constraints and lack of labour inspections. The government has signed a protocol to curb illicit tobacco trade and introduced a timber traceability system to combat illegal logging. However, ineffective law enforcement and regulatory gaps allow criminal activities to thrive, especially counterfeit drug distribution and deforestation.

NGOs play a critical role in combating organized crime, including human and wildlife trafficking, through partnerships with the government. Organizations such as Conservation Justice have collaborated with the government to disrupt illegal activities. NGOs also support transparency in the extractive industries, reducing corruption and indirectly fighting economic crimes. Despite operational challenges, NGOs advocate gender equality, press freedom and the protection of civil liberties. Since the coup, the junta has