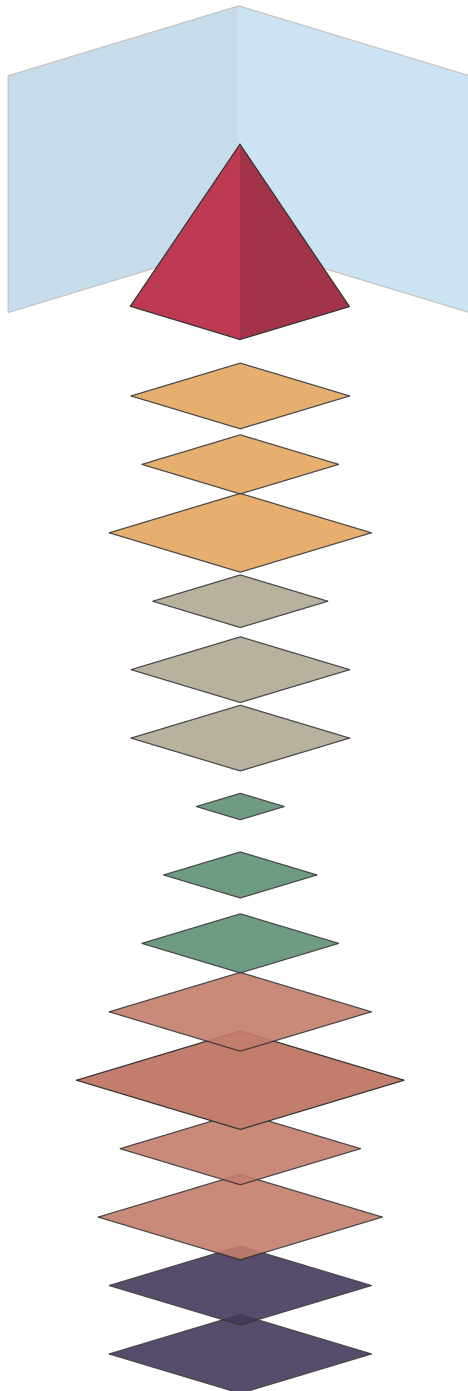
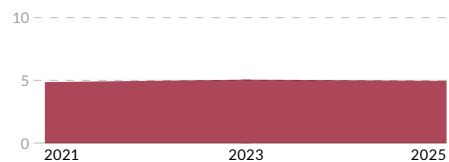


IRELAND



4.97 $\nearrow 0.12$ CRIMINALITY SCORE

103rd of 193 countries $\nearrow 12$
19th of 44 European countries $\nearrow 2$
5th of 11 Western European countries $\nearrow 1$



5.13 $\nearrow 0.03$ CRIMINAL MARKETS

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.00	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.50	$\nearrow 1.00$
HEROIN TRADE	6.00	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	6.00	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	0.00



4.80 $\nearrow 0.20$ CRIMINAL ACTORS

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50	$\nearrow 1.00$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$



This project was funded in part
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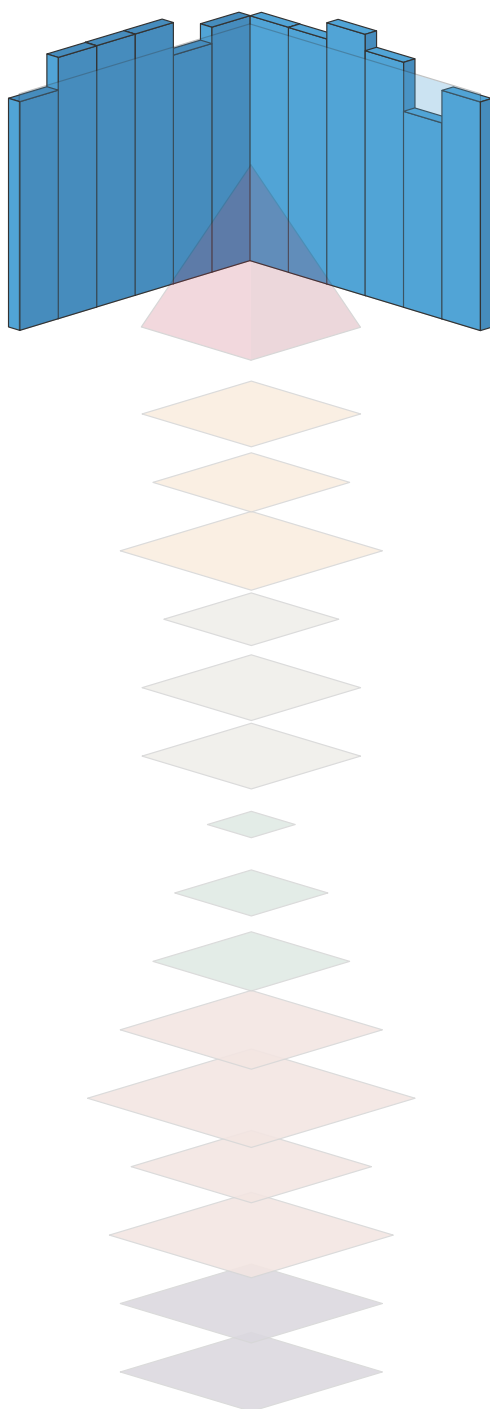


Funded by
the European Union

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IRELAND



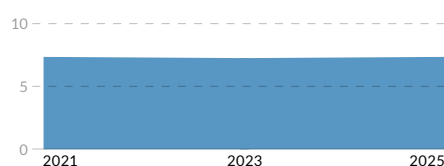
7.42 $\nearrow 0.08$

RESILIENCE SCORE

18th of 193 countries $\nearrow 3$

12th of 44 European countries $\nearrow 3$

6th of 11 Western European countries $\nearrow 2$



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.00	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	7.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.50	$\searrow 0.50$
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	8.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
PREVENTION	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking in Ireland remains a relatively small but well-consolidated market, and mainly involves sexual exploitation and forced labour. For the most part, Ireland is a destination country, with victims originating mainly from Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, Romania, Latvia, the Philippines and Indonesia. Some cases involve transit through Ireland to Northern Ireland and the UK. Criminal organizations, many of them foreign-led, operate underground prostitution networks, frequently moving victims between different locations. Forced labour trafficking is most prevalent in the fishing and hospitality industries, where victims are coerced through threats of deportation and financial exploitation. Digital platforms often facilitate sexual exploitation, making victim identification more challenging.

Human smuggling in Ireland is less prevalent than human trafficking but a persistent issue, with organized criminal groups exploiting the country's geographic location. Smuggling operations often use Ireland as a transit point to the UK, with key routes originating from France and Spain. In recent years, there have been documented cases of migrants being smuggled in shipping containers and concealed in trucks. There is also some overlap between human smuggling and human trafficking, particularly in industries such as hospitality and fishing, where individuals smuggled into the country may later be coerced into exploitative labour.

Extortion and protection racketeering are entrenched in Ireland's organized crime landscape, particularly among reconstituted Irish Republican Army (IRA) paramilitary factions. These groups, which have transitioned from political militancy to organized crime, use extortion to control drug markets. Protection rackets are prevalent in the construction industry, with site managers compelled to pay substantial sums to prevent property damage and threats to staff. Reports have also emerged of local government employees facilitating payments to organized crime figures under the guise of 'maintenance fees.' Despite some law enforcement successes, extortion remains a persistent challenge, particularly in sectors where cash transactions dominate.

TRADE

The arms trafficking market in Ireland remains relatively small and loosely organized. The country has stricter gun control than many other European nations, limiting the scale of the illicit arms trade. Nevertheless, organized criminal groups involved in drug trafficking procure firearms for

intimidation, enforcement and targeted killings. Ireland's illicit firearms market is linked to transnational smuggling networks, as evidenced by Europol-led investigations that traced weapons from Spain to Ireland. While domestic demand for illicit arms is largely confined to organized crime groups, the use of firearms in drug-related violence remains a concern.

The trade in counterfeit goods is well-established in Ireland, with organized crime groups overseeing large-scale operations. The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) has reported that demand for counterfeit products is higher in Ireland than the EU average. The most commonly counterfeited items include clothing, footwear, electronics and personal care products, which are mainly imported from Asia, notably China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Türkiye. Digital marketplaces serve as the primary sales channel, with many goods intercepted at postal hubs. Authorities recently seized millions of euros' worth of illicit cigarettes and dismantled a commercial-scale counterfeit tobacco factory in Dublin. Previously, paramilitary groups funded activities through counterfeit tobacco and consumer goods; however, these groups have weakened in recent years, and control over the market has shifted to transnational criminal networks.

The illicit trade in excise goods, particularly tobacco and alcohol, remains highly profitable. The market is driven by both domestic and foreign actors, with transnational smuggling networks bringing large shipments of contraband cigarettes and alcohol into the country. Despite law-enforcement efforts, the illicit cigarette trade continues to incur significant tax losses, and enforcement remains inconsistent, with a low conviction rate relative to the number of seizures.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes are relatively rare in Ireland. While some cases of illegal logging have been reported, they are largely confined to small-scale operations by unorganized individuals. Investigations into illegal tree felling for agricultural expansion have resulted in occasional prosecutions, but overall, the country plays a minimal role as a source, transit, or destination point for illicit flora.

Fauna crimes in Ireland mainly involve illegal fishing, poaching and wildlife persecution. The illegal fishing of wild salmon is a notable issue, with stocks declining dramatically in recent decades. Poaching of deer and killings of birds of prey are widespread, with authorities receiving hundreds of reports annually. While the market for illicit fauna is largely domestic and unlikely to be driven primarily by organized criminal groups, there are occasional reports

of Irish organized crime groups engaging in elver (juvenile eel) trafficking.

Non-renewable resource crimes in Ireland have historically been associated with fuel laundering, a market previously dominated by paramilitary groups. While fuel laundering was largely eradicated in the previous decade, sporadic operations have resurfaced, particularly following fuel price increases in 2022. Investigative reports have also revealed the involvement of the Kinahan cartel in laundering drug proceeds through gold smuggling operations linked to Africa and West Africa. Gold trafficking remains a concern, as it enables organized crime groups to move and conceal large sums of money.

DRUGS

The heroin market in Ireland is well-established, though recent trends suggest an increasing shift towards synthetic opioids. While heroin use has declined among younger generations, opioid addiction rates remain high, with Dublin serving as the primary hub for heroin distribution. Organized crime groups, including Lithuanian and paramilitary-affiliated networks, dominate the trade. Heroin supply shortages have led some dealers to substitute heroin with synthetic opioids, which increase overdose risks.

The cocaine market is highly consolidated, with Ireland emerging as a strategic European entry point for the drug. The volume of cocaine seized by Irish police has surged, reflecting an increase in trafficking activities. Irish criminal organizations, including the Kinahan cartel, have extensive transnational links to South American cartels. Cocaine seizures have reached record levels, reflecting both increased trafficking activity and rising local demand. Violence linked to drug debt enforcement remains a major concern, with organized crime groups engaging in intimidation and targeted attacks.

Cannabis remains the most widely used illicit drug in Ireland, with large quantities smuggled from North America and Europe. The market involves a mix of domestic and international criminal actors, and there is evidence of forced labour in cannabis cultivation. While small-scale domestic cultivation exists, most of the supply is imported. Law enforcement efforts have resulted in sizable cannabis seizures, and demand remains high.

The synthetic drug market is expanding, particularly for fentanyl and synthetic cannabinoids. Irish heroin traffickers have begun diversifying into synthetic opioids, by establishing links with Mexican cartels. Ireland has become a significant hub for the transit and distribution of synthetic drugs manufactured in Mexico, the Netherlands and elsewhere. Ireland's consumption of Ecstasy per capita is the second highest in Europe after the Netherlands. Law enforcement operations have seized growing quantities of synthetic drugs, but the market continues to evolve rapidly.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime in Ireland is significant and well-established. Ransomware attacks and cryptocurrency scams are common, often perpetrated by foreign criminal groups. The market remains transnational, with foreign criminal groups often targeting Irish businesses and institutions.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, particularly cyber-enabled fraud, have become widespread in recent years. Phishing and bank fraud are pervasive, with investment scams growing steadily as cyber criminals target individuals and families across the country. Tax fraud continues to be a concern, with criminals taking advantage of Ireland's corporate tax environment to move illicit funds. International organized crime groups, including the Nigerian Black Axe Confraternity, are active in this market. Money mule networks and front businesses are sometimes used to disguise the proceeds of such activities.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Ireland remain highly active, with the Kinahan family, the Hutch gang and the New IRA being the most prominent. The Kinahan family operates as a transnational cartel with direct ties to Mexican and South American drug suppliers, positioning itself as one of the dominant players in the European drug trade. The Hutch gang, which has engaged in extortion, drug trafficking and armed robbery since the 1980s, has maintained a significant presence in Ireland, the UK and Spain. A violent feud between the Kinahan and Hutch groups has resulted in numerous killings, though successful police operations have contributed to a decline in gangland murders in recent years. The New IRA, a paramilitary group that did not disband following the Good Friday Agreement, has evolved into a mafia-style entity mainly involved in extortion and protection racketeering, particularly targeting drug dealers and illicit businesses. While these groups exert influence over criminal markets, their territorial control remains limited, with most directing operations from abroad.

Domestic criminal networks in Ireland continue to play a significant role in organized crime. These networks, often composed of loosely affiliated individuals rather than rigid hierarchies, operate in drug trafficking, arms smuggling and the illicit trade of excisable goods. The growing involvement of Irish criminal networks in cyber-enabled financial crimes has further diversified their activities. Investigative operations have uncovered Irish groups using encrypted communication platforms to facilitate drug trafficking and money laundering. Notably, the dismantling of four major Irish crime groups by Europol in 2024, which included the seizure of significant drug quantities and encrypted devices, revealed the transnational capabilities of these networks. While generally less violent than mafia-style

groups, these networks remain influential, particularly in urban centres such as Dublin.

Though Ireland has seen political figures linked to criminal activities in the past, large-scale state complicity in organized crime remains limited. Political wings of paramilitary organizations, such as Sinn Féin's past association with the IRA, continue to raise concerns, despite the party's efforts to distance itself from its militant origins. The left-wing republican political party Saoradh has also been linked to the New IRA, though it denies these allegations. Corruption cases within law enforcement have been exposed, including instances where Irish police officers were found to have ties to the Hutch gang.

Foreign criminal actors play a notable role in Ireland's organized crime landscape. Eastern European groups have been identified as key players in human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Cybercrime in Ireland is largely controlled by foreign actors, with international groups exploiting the country's financial infrastructure for fraud and money laundering schemes. The drug trade also has substantial foreign involvement, with Irish criminal networks collaborating closely with South American cartels.

Private-sector actors in Ireland are increasingly exploited by organized crime for financial crimes, particularly money laundering. The hospitality industry has been identified as a sector for laundering illicit funds, as has the construction sector, with property investments also serving as a means of concealing criminal proceeds.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Ireland has demonstrated strong political commitment to combating organized crime, with the government maintaining a strong public stance against criminal activities. The Garda National Drugs and Organized Crime Bureau (GNDOCB) leads intelligence-driven operations targeting drug and firearms trafficking, armed robberies and money laundering. While organized crime remains a key political issue, opposition parties have criticized the ruling government's handling of crime, linking rising crime rates to governance failures. Ireland maintains high governance standards, reflected in its strong performance on anti-corruption measures.

Transparency and accountability measures in Ireland are well-developed, with institutions such as the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the Criminal Assets Bureau and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions playing key roles in investigating and prosecuting corruption. The Freedom of Information Act allows public access to official records, while the government provides extensive budgetary and audit disclosures to enhance accountability. But some transparency shortcomings do exist, particularly in political finance and lobbying regulations.

Ireland is an active participant in international anti-organized crime efforts. The country has signed and ratified key treaties, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Ireland collaborates closely with Interpol, Europol and the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics). The country's 2021 integration into the Schengen Information System has enhanced the cross-border coordination of law enforcement.

Ireland has a robust legal framework to combat organized crime, with national policies and laws governing criminal activities, financial crimes and corruption. The Criminal Justice Act provides the legal foundation for tackling money laundering, drug trafficking and organized crime offences. Amendments to anti-corruption legislation have sought to strengthen transparency and accountability measures. The country has also implemented enhanced laws regulating financial transactions to counter illicit financial flows. But there are shortcomings in enforcement, with difficulties in securing convictions in complex financial crime cases. Despite legislative advancements, delays in the judicial process and inconsistencies in the application of organized crime laws remain a concern.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Ireland's judicial system is well resourced, with the Special Criminal Court playing a central role in handling organized crime cases. This court operates without a jury to prevent witness or jury intimidation. The Irish justice system's budget is substantial, and courts maintain a strong track record of prosecuting organized crime cases.

Law enforcement agencies, particularly An Garda Síochána, have taken significant steps to address organized crime. The GNDOCB is responsible for dismantling major criminal groups, using intelligence-led strategies. However, Síochána has been criticized for lacking a comprehensive strategy against organized crime, with failings noted in intelligence implementation and delays in operational response. Despite these shortcomings, the police force has achieved notable successes, including substantial drug and asset seizures.

Ireland's territorial integrity remains vulnerable due to its extensive coastline and a porous land border with Northern Ireland. Brexit-related complications have heightened smuggling risks, with criminal networks exploiting the Common Travel Area (CTA) to facilitate illicit activities. Ports and airports remain key entry points for illicit trade, while the lack of patrols along the land border presents enforcement challenges.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Ireland has implemented a robust anti-money laundering (AML) framework, mainly governed by the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act. The FIU, housed within An Garda Síochána, plays a central role in coordinating AML efforts. However, concerns remain over the evolving nature of money-laundering risks, particularly the use of cryptocurrencies and online gambling platforms by criminal actors.

Ireland's economic regulatory environment is considered strong, with a business-friendly landscape attracting multinational corporations. The Central Bank of Ireland oversees financial transactions to prevent economic distortions, though certain industries, such as real estate and hospitality, remain vulnerable to illicit financial flows. Regulatory frameworks are largely effective, but the efficiency of dispute resolution mechanisms has been questioned, and regulatory enforcement weaknesses exist in specific sectors.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Ireland has developed a well-structured framework for victim and witness support. The National Referral Mechanism provides services for trafficking victims, including healthcare, legal aid and vocational training. New legislation introduced in July 2024 aims to improve victim protections but leaves gaps regarding child trafficking and equitable support regardless of immigration status. Victim identification remains inconsistent, with reports indicating that only a fraction of identified trafficking victims receive assistance. Enforcement efforts have led to some arrests, but the overall response with regards to the protection of individuals, especially trafficking and smuggling victims, remains inadequate. Ireland's witness protection programme is highly regarded, operating outside formal legislation to ensure security. The country's drug policy follows a health-centred approach, emphasizing harm reduction and rehabilitation. The National Drugs Strategy promotes community resilience against drug misuse, but the scope of support for communities affected by drug-related violence is currently modest. Drug-related intimidation remains a major concern, with insufficient resources for community-driven responses.

Prevention strategies in Ireland include a mix of state and civil society-led initiatives. Community policing initiatives

exist but are underfunded, and critics allege that they are more theoretical than practical. The Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau (GNCCB) plays a major role in preventing cybercrime. The GNCCB offers preventative measures on their website for both individuals and organizations to minimize the risk of being targeted by cybercriminals. Whistleblowing mechanisms are available for reporting organized crime, though there is some doubt about their effectiveness. Non-state actors play a vital role in addressing organized crime issues. NGOs provide critical support for trafficking victims, drug addiction services and counterfeit prevention. Organizations focusing on human trafficking and drug rehabilitation operate alongside government efforts. While the state and civil society collaborate on key initiatives, there remains a need to integrate NGO expertise more effectively into law enforcement operations. Ireland ranks highly in press freedom indices, with investigative journalism playing a key role in exposing organized crime. Despite occasional threats against journalists, no significant attacks on them have been recorded. The state's relationship with non-state actors is uneven, with inadequate cooperation in some areas, particularly victim identification and anti-trafficking efforts.

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.