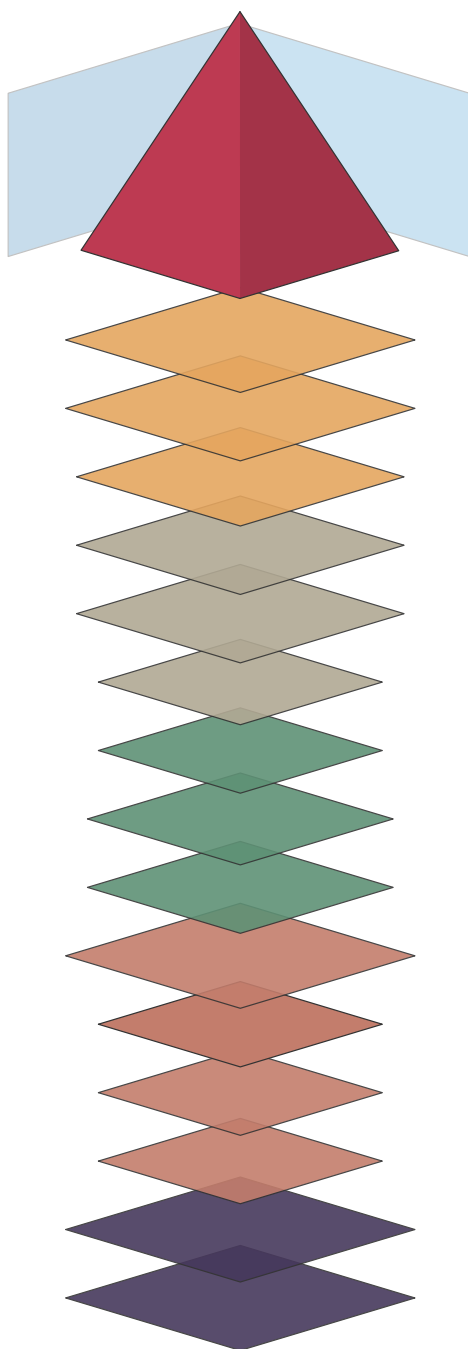




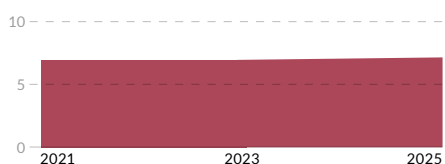
KENYA



7.18 $\nearrow 0.17$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

11th of 193 countries $\nearrow 5$
4th of 54 African countries -
1st of 9 East African countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS

7.27 $\nearrow 0.33$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	7.50	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FAUNA CRIMES	7.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	7.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
COCAINE TRADE	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	6.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.50	$\nearrow 1.00$
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	8.00	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$



CRIMINAL ACTORS

7.10 0.00

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	7.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	8.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.50	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.00	0.00



This project was funded in part
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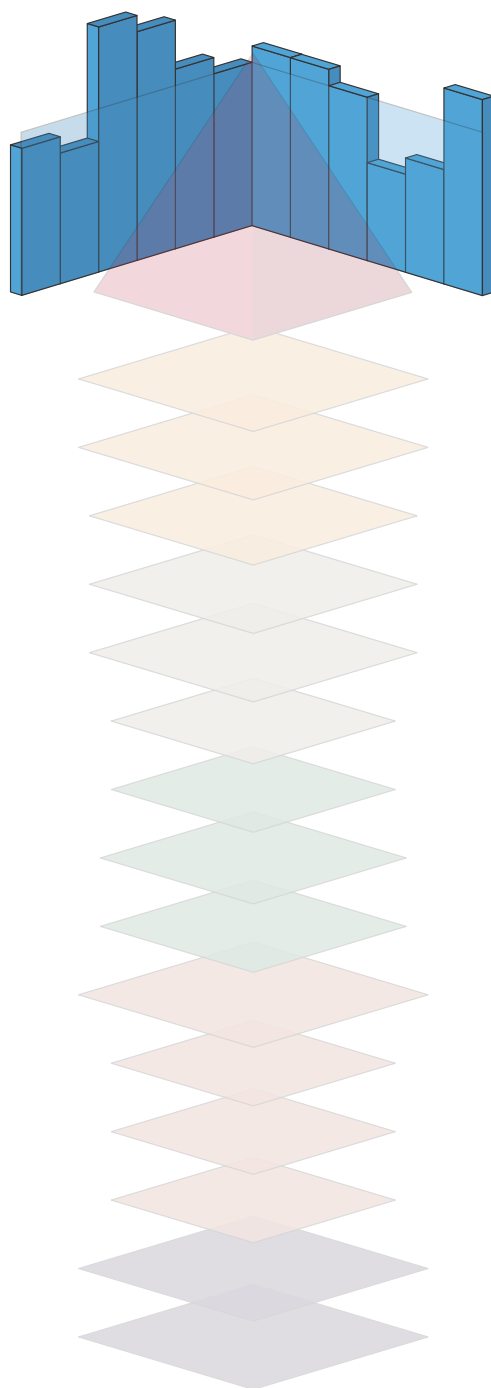


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ENACT is funded by the European Union
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affiliation with the Global Initiative Against
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KENYA



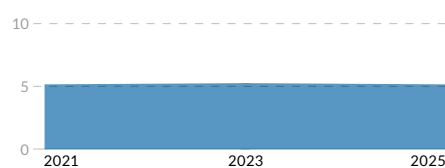
5.17 $\nearrow 0.17$

RESILIENCE SCORE

75th of 193 countries $\searrow 6$

9th of 54 African countries -

1st of 9 East African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50	$\searrow 0.50$
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00	$\searrow 1.00$
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.50	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	$\searrow 0.50$
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50	$\searrow 0.50$
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00	$\searrow 0.50$
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.00	0.00
PREVENTION	3.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.00	$\searrow 0.50$



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Kenya is a key hub for human trafficking in Eastern Africa, with increasing incidents of forced labour and sexual exploitation. Criminal groups, including those with political affiliations, exploit socio-economic vulnerabilities, while foreign actors target Kenyan women through deceptive online relationships. Human trafficking is closely linked to drug markets, with addiction fuelling recruitment. Corruption weakens response measures, while economic priorities overshadow crime-fighting efforts. Despite measures to combat trafficking, criminal networks continue to expand, using illicit profits to finance other crimes. Competition within the criminal market drives violence. Child sex tourism is a concern and Kenya's role as a transit and destination country further complicates enforcement challenges.

Kenya is also a major hub for human smuggling in Eastern Africa, leveraging its strategic location and air network to facilitate migrant movement, primarily to Western Asia. Smuggling operations, concentrated in Nairobi and Mombasa, rely on fraudulent documentation and the involvement of corrupt officials, often involving law enforcement and private-sector actors. Local marketplaces at border areas serve as hubs for smuggling activities. Economic hardships and regional conflicts fuel smuggling demand, with citizens from neighbouring countries playing a key role and using Kenya as a destination and transit point as they flee their respective countries.

Extortion and protection racketeering are pervasive across Kenya, with Somali influences in border regions. Criminal groups, including the 'Matatu Mafia' and vigilante groups, often colluding with officials, employ kidnapping, violence and targeted attacks to extract payments. Organized networks operate within transport, security and waste management: gangs manage waste collection fees in urban centres, while transport operators face initial and recurring levies. Vigilante groups have evolved into extortion outfits, creating insecurity before offering paid 'protection'. At the national level, extortion emerges as a grave concern, often making headlines for its escalating frequency. Furthermore, recent reports indicate a rise in extortion incidents in Nairobi, disproportionately impacting women. Beyond the economic impact, extortion undermines community trust, restricts mobility and exacerbates social tensions in the country.

TRADE

The proliferation of illicit firearms, driven by corruption and political manipulation, presents a significant challenge in Kenya. Armed groups, both domestic and foreign, contribute to escalating violence, especially in the northern border regions and urban areas. Al-Shabaab is expanding its presence in the region, reportedly collaborating with actors in northern Kenya known to be active in the illicit arms trade. The country also appears to serve as a transit point for arms shipments moving to Sudan, with the port of Mombasa playing a critical role in this facilitation. Trafficking networks, fuelled by demand from ethnic groups, exploit government resources, with firearms often diverted by state actors to escalate intercommunal conflict. Despite government efforts, illegal arms remain a lucrative enterprise, exacerbating insecurity and human and drug trafficking trends. The transnational nature of the trade, combined with corruption and money laundering, further destabilizes the country. Arms trafficking fosters a cycle of violence, disrupting both social norms and economic stability.

The trade in counterfeit goods has become a major criminal enterprise in Kenya, resulting in significant economic losses and public health risks. The trade involves various criminal actors, including corrupt officials, foreign and local networks, and mafia-style groups, exacerbating the challenges of enforcement. With one in five goods in Kenya being counterfeit, the market is valued among the largest criminal sectors in the country. The availability of counterfeit goods, including alcohol, medicine and electronics, undermines consumer trust and hinders legitimate commerce. Kenya's strategic location and corruption among law enforcement officials facilitate smuggling and counterfeit distribution.

Similarly, the illicit trade in excisable consumer goods is prevalent in Kenya, particularly in urban centres such as Nairobi and Mombasa, fuelled by high demand, corruption and weak enforcement. Tax increases and price hikes have worsened the situation, with criminal networks and foreign actors often smuggling goods such as tobacco and alcohol alongside other legal products. Smuggling operations exploit regulatory gaps, leading to significant tax losses. The overall impact of the market is severe, particularly with regard to products such as alcohol, contributing to both domestic and international criminal activity and undermining the country's market stability.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Kenya, including illegal logging and trafficking of wild flora, have surged in recent years, driven by increasing international demand for sandalwood and illegal timber imports from neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Criminal networks, including

mafia-style groups and private-sector actors, exploit forest resources for profit, often colluding with authorities. These crimes contribute to deforestation and biodiversity loss, with local and international markets fuelling demand. Despite government efforts, ineffective enforcement and corruption persist, allowing the illicit trade to thrive. The illicit timber trade impacts both the environment and local communities, with Kenya serving as a key transit point for illegal wood trafficked from neighbouring countries.

Similarly, wildlife crimes in Kenya, including poaching and trafficking, are pervasive, with criminal networks spanning local and international markets. With wildlife being exploited for profit by both local and foreign actors, Kenya serves as both a source and a transit point for wildlife trafficking, as criminal networks engage in wildlife poaching and trafficking. Demand from external markets, particularly Asia, drives much of the activity and wildlife products such as ivory are trafficked to these destinations. Wildlife crimes continue to thrive, with large profits fuelling organized crime networks in the country.

Non-renewable resource crimes in Kenya, including illegal mining and smuggling, also pose significant threats to the economy and environment. Criminal networks, both local and transnational, are involved in the illicit trade in gold, sand and limestone. Illegal sand mining operations have recently led to substantial financial losses for the country. These activities contribute to environmental degradation, violence and economic instability. Corruption and informal practices exacerbate the situation, with external demand driving the illicit market. Kenya is also a regional hub for non-renewable resources smuggled via the country from neighbouring and conflict-ridden regions to Western Asia.

DRUGS

Heroin trafficking is a significant issue in Kenya, with the country increasingly serving as both a considerable market and transit hub for heroin, particularly from Afghanistan. The Port of Mombasa is a key gateway for the illicit trade, aided by corruption and minimal government intervention. Although efforts to curb trafficking have been initiated, heroin consumption is widespread, fuelling societal and economic challenges. In fact, a report from the National Institute of Health highlights the widespread prevalence of heroin addiction, warning of its severe health risks and societal consequences, including impaired ability to function in daily life. The trade is linked to violence, territorial disputes and the proliferation of illicit arms availability. Despite some deterrents, such as high-profile arrests, the trade continues, driven by local demand and Kenya's strategic geographic position.

The cocaine trade in Kenya is growing owing to high demand and the involvement of well-connected criminal networks, including government officials. Cocaine primarily enters Kenya through air and sea transport from Latin America,

with Mombasa serving as a key entry port. The trade has expanded in recent years, with emerging trafficking routes and increased local consumption. Corruption facilitates the trade, with criminals adapting their methods to evade detection. Kenya has become a significant trans-shipment point for regional trade. The trade is linked to various other criminal activities and has a noticeable impact on the country's economy and social fabric.

Cannabis trade in Kenya is widespread, driven by domestic cultivation and high consumption, particularly in urban areas such as Nairobi. The trade is supported by criminal networks, including state-embedded actors and private-sector actors who facilitate production and distribution. Cannabis is readily available owing to local production, with its affordability contributing to widespread use. Substantial seizures have highlighted the scale of the trade. Kenya's strategic location, bordering several countries and with access to international markets, further strengthens its role as a major hub in the cannabis trade.

Lastly, Kenya faces significant and increasing challenges with synthetic drug trafficking, mainly centred in Nairobi. Corruption within government and business sectors facilitates the trade, with synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine, MDMA and synthetic cannabinoids prevalent. Kenya serves as both a trans-shipment point and a growing market for synthetic drugs, with trafficking networks exploiting local corruption and existent markets. The widespread diversion of synthetic pharmaceuticals from legitimate medical channels has further diversified substances circulating in Kenya's domestic drug market, including methcathinone and methaqualone. In addition, the domestic production of methamphetamine occurs in clandestine laboratories. The trade is linked to other crimes, including arms trafficking and human smuggling. Although synthetic drug volumes are smaller than those of heroin or cannabis, their impact is considerable, fuelling violence and addiction.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes are pervasive, with many cyber threats targeting critical infrastructure. High numbers of incidents and attempts are reported daily. Kenya is positioned as a hub for cybercrime in Africa as the prevalence of the illicit market continues to challenge enforcement efforts. Organized cybercrime groups, including foreign actors, are involved in activities such as hacking, ransomware attacks and crypto fraud. The financial sector is most affected.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Kenya is grappling with widespread financial crimes, including embezzlement, fraud and tax evasion, exacerbated by corruption among government officials. A substantial amount of money was flagged in illicit activities during this reporting period, significantly impacting the country's economic growth. Organized crime groups, including

foreign actors, perpetrate these crimes, with credit card fraud and identity theft becoming prominent. The rise of online banking and cyber-enabled crime, such as financial fraud, further complicates enforcement efforts. Despite regulatory efforts, Kenya remains a hub for financial crimes, with emerging risks from insider threats and online fraud.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Kenya operate with varying levels of organization, often leveraging corruption to maintain influence. These groups, such as the Mungiki, engage in activities such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, arms trade and extortion, sometimes in collaboration with government officials who facilitate their operations. Collaboration with political figures, particularly during election periods, enables them to secure power. Although their control is not absolute, they exert significant influence, often resorting to violence or threats to maintain dominance. The rise of mafia capitalism has seen their involvement in activities such as cybercrime, human trafficking and the trade of counterfeit goods.

Beyond these more structured groups, other criminal networks in Kenya are characterized by decentralization and are involved in various illicit activities, including drug trafficking, cybercrime, human trafficking and the trade in counterfeit goods. Corruption within law enforcement facilitates their operations, with collusion between the police, politicians and businesspeople. Criminal networks in Kenya have been growing, fuelled by the country's worsening economic situation. In Mombasa, gangs are closely linked to drug trafficking and protecting drug lords and their territories. In northern and southern regions, gangs are hired by politicians, officials and wealthy businesspeople to carry out cattle rustling. These networks, often connected to powerful figures, engage in violence (including maiming, kidnapping and killing) for political purposes and also traffic weapons used in terrorist attacks. Transnational connections, particularly in human trafficking and the drug trade, highlight the regional, and sometimes global, reach of these networks. Smaller gangs, such as the Panga Boys

and Eastlando, contribute to violence and criminal unrest across various counties.

State-embedded actors in Kenya significantly influence criminal activities, often manipulating systems for personal gain. Corruption within law enforcement and political spheres enables organized crime, with drug traffickers and criminal networks leveraging political ties. Corruption has intensified under the current administration according to reports from the Auditor General and international agencies. Gang members frequently collude with the government officials, receiving protection from corrupt officials. The country's weak legal framework allows public officials to engage in businesses benefiting from government contracts. These systemic vulnerabilities perpetuate a cycle of corruption, undermining democratic processes and facilitating both local and transnational criminal activities.

Foreign criminal actors have a notable presence in Kenya, impacting various illicit trades, particularly in major cities such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Key foreign groups, such as the Italian mafia, engage in drug and arms trafficking, human trafficking and money laundering, particularly along the coast. Foreign nationals, including from China, Nepal and Belgium, contribute to drug trafficking, illegal mining and human trafficking, often in collaboration with local networks. Citizens from West African countries, Tanzania and Uganda have been involved in heroin and cocaine trafficking and poaching. These actors collaborate with local criminals, shaping a complex, transnational criminal landscape.

In addition, private-sector actors play a significant role in the criminal economy in Kenya, particularly through their involvement in money laundering. Their financial operations facilitate the flow of illicit funds within the country and also internationally, supporting a range of criminal activities. Strong links between private-sector actors and mafia-style groups appear to exist, especially in sectors such as transportation and public services, creating opportunities for collaboration. Unregulated financial systems, such as hawaladars, further enable the laundering of illicit proceeds.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Government of Kenya has allocated resources to combat organized crime through agencies such as the Ministry of Interior Security and local police. However, responses targeting specific criminal markets have been slow and these crimes have continued unabated. Moreover, increasing intolerance towards opposition has been

noted during the reporting period and governance and accountability appear to have deteriorated. Despite this, initiatives to tackle crime continue, and youth involvement in governance is being encouraged through programmes aimed at fostering political engagement and addressing inequality issues.

Corruption is a significant barrier to addressing these issues, with some government officials allegedly complicit in criminal activities. Despite strong anti-corruption frameworks, implementation challenges persist, particularly in procurement abuses and government spending. Since the government transition in 2022, efforts to combat embezzlement have included initiatives such as the e-citizen portal, aimed at reducing cash transactions and improving transparency. However, corruption remains deeply entrenched, hindering domestic investment and effective resource allocation. The new administration has been accused of facilitating state capture, with politically connected individuals gaining control of government tenders. Oversight bodies such as the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission continue to face enforcement difficulties, impacting their overall effectiveness.

Kenya has affirmed its position against organized crime through various international collaborations and agreements. It has established extradition arrangements with Rwanda and the USA and participated in asset seizures through partnerships such as the UK–Switzerland Jersey under the Framework for Return of Assets from Corruption in Kenya. The country has ratified nearly all key international treaties on organized crime, ensuring information flow and transparency, although notably the country is not a part of the Arms Trade Treaty. However, with regard to regional cooperation, Kenya has been observed taking potentially compromising positions, such as aligning with the Rapid Support Forces amid the unfolding crisis in Sudan, thus undermining efforts to foster effective cooperation.

Internally, Kenya's legal framework for combating organized crime includes laws targeting many specific crime types, including arms trafficking, money laundering, wildlife crimes, human trafficking and the proliferation of criminal gangs. The Constitution criminalizes organized crime, with penalties of up to 5 million shillings or 15 years' imprisonment. However, corruption, institutional conflicts and limited enforcement hinder the effectiveness of these laws. Challenges persist in enforcing penalties for drug use and wildlife protection, while a lack of technical expertise hampers cybercrime investigations. However, Kenya has made progress in protecting wildlife and combating wildlife trafficking through initiatives such as the National Recovery and Action Plan for Giraffe.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Kenya's judicial system, comprising the high court, court of appeal and supreme court, faces significant challenges in dealing with organized crime cases, including corruption, lack of evidence and political influence. These issues, along with resource constraints such as inadequate staffing and funding, contribute to case backlogs. The judiciary, while generally impartial, struggles with institutional weaknesses, allowing delays that enable external influences to interfere with court processes. Despite these hurdles, Kenya has

made progress in combatting corruption, with notable convictions signalling some judicial resilience. Regarding the penitentiary system, significant reforms were introduced to tackle prison overcrowding. These included revising bail and bond terms to reduce unnecessary detention of unconvicted individuals and regularly reviewing sentences to maintain a sustainable prison population, among other measures.

In addition, Kenya has invested in its National Police Service, including specific units such as the Kenya Police Service, Directorate of Criminal Investigations and Administration Police Service and specialized agencies such as the Anti-Narcotics and Anti-Terrorism Units. These entities collaborate to combat organized crime, but face challenges because of limited resources, corruption and weak coordination. Despite arrests of various criminal actors in the reporting period, law enforcement's investigative capacity remains insufficient; however, efforts have been made to improve coordination, such as through the creation of the Transnational Organized Crime Unit. The government also implemented a strategic plan aimed at addressing these issues, although trust between local communities and police remains low.

Kenya faces significant challenges in securing its borders owing to a combination of illicit activities, natural disasters and geopolitical issues. The country's numerous land borders are exploited by criminal syndicates involved in human trafficking, arms smuggling and the drug trade, particularly along the Kenya–Somali border. In addition, extremist groups like al-Shabaab pose ongoing security risks. Corruption within customs enforcement further enables transnational crime. Although the government has deployed additional personnel, improved surveillance and constructed barriers, resource constraints and bureaucratic inefficiencies hinder progress. Cybercrime also presents new security challenges, requiring enhanced measures and international cooperation.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Kenya strengthened its legal framework with the enactment of an anti-money laundering act, empowering various agencies to investigate illicit financial activities. Despite these efforts, corruption and political influence hinder effective implementation, and Kenya faces challenges in enforcing anti-money laundering measures. In 2024, it was placed under increased monitoring by the Financial Action Task Force for deficiencies in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. In addition, Kenya's status as East Africa's financial hub and mobile banking systems heighten its vulnerability to financial crimes, including laundering related to online gambling. Despite moderate economic freedom and efforts to attract foreign investment, large-scale corruption, political interference and weak rule of law undermine business regulation. Kenya's informal economy plays a major part, with the counterfeit economy alone generating significant revenue. Criminal syndicates also manipulate markets and launder

money through financial institutions. Remittances from expatriates contribute significantly to foreign inflows. Although Kenya has experienced notable economic growth and implemented investment-friendly policies, challenges such as corruption, public debt, climate change and inflation continue to affect its economic stability.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Kenya's legal framework includes a witness protection programme, established to protect vulnerable witnesses and victims and offering services such as relocation and identity changes. Despite these efforts, challenges persist in providing adequate protection, especially for victims of human trafficking and drug addiction, who often face mistreatment and criminalization. Although Kenya has enacted legislation to protect crime victims, including the Victim Protection Act and the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act, implementation remains hindered by operational issues and lack of state-run shelters. The absence of adequate victim support infrastructure, particularly for children, and continued reliance on civil society organizations (CSOs) hamper effective protection and care. Even so, Kenya has developed a comprehensive strategy to combat organized crime, guided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It includes a well-equipped police force focused on intelligence gathering and targeted operations. Community-based initiatives such as Nyumba Kumi empower locals in crime prevention. The Prevention of Organized Crimes Law strengthens efforts to tackle organized crime and terrorism, including the collection of illicit firearms and anti-drug campaigns. Despite these efforts, corruption, weak enforcement and political interference hinder progress in the prevention of organized crime.

CSOs play a vital role in combating organized crime, human trafficking, wildlife poaching and drug trafficking, despite challenges with resources and government attempts to suppress dissent. They advocate for citizens' rights and promote transparency, especially through legislative advocacy and public awareness campaigns. However, CSOs face risks such as arbitrary arrests, intimidation and restrictions on free speech, particularly during election periods. The media also has a key role in ensuring government accountability, but suffers from political pressure, harassment and physical attacks. Despite these obstacles, CSOs remain committed to promoting justice and combating corruption in Kenya.

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.