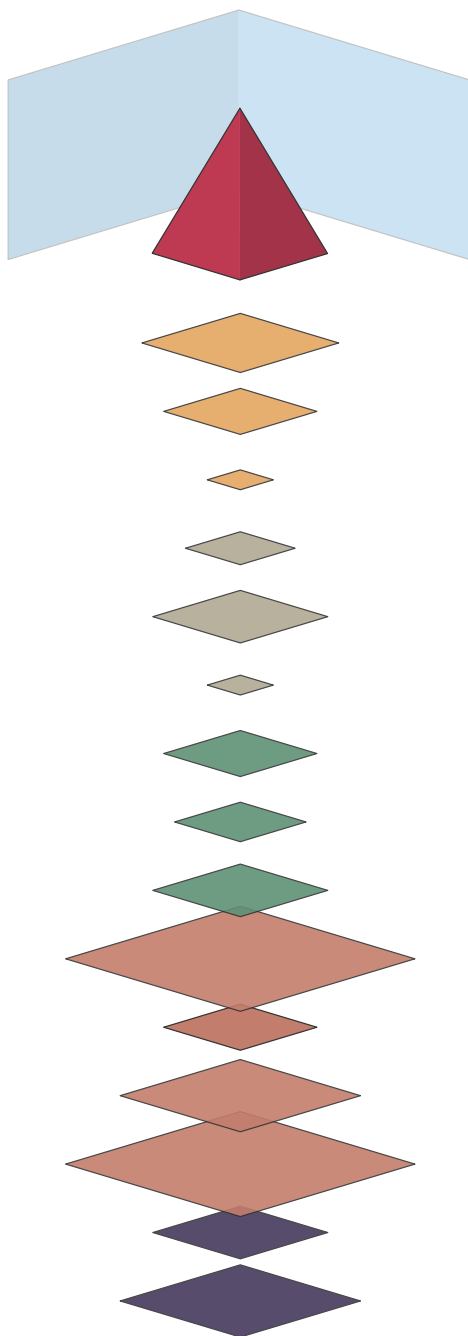




MAURITIUS



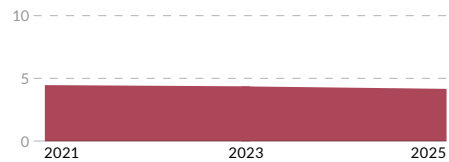
4.23 $\nearrow 0.13$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

143rd of 193 countries $\searrow 5$

46th of 54 African countries $\searrow 1$

9th of 13 Southern African countries $\searrow 1$



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.17 $\nearrow 0.03$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	1.50	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.50	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	4.00	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	1.50	$\searrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	3.50	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	8.00	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.50	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	8.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	4.00	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.50	$\nearrow 1.00$



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.30 $\searrow 0.30$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50	$\searrow 1.00$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	5.00	$\searrow 1.00$
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.00	$\nearrow 1.00$



This project was funded in part
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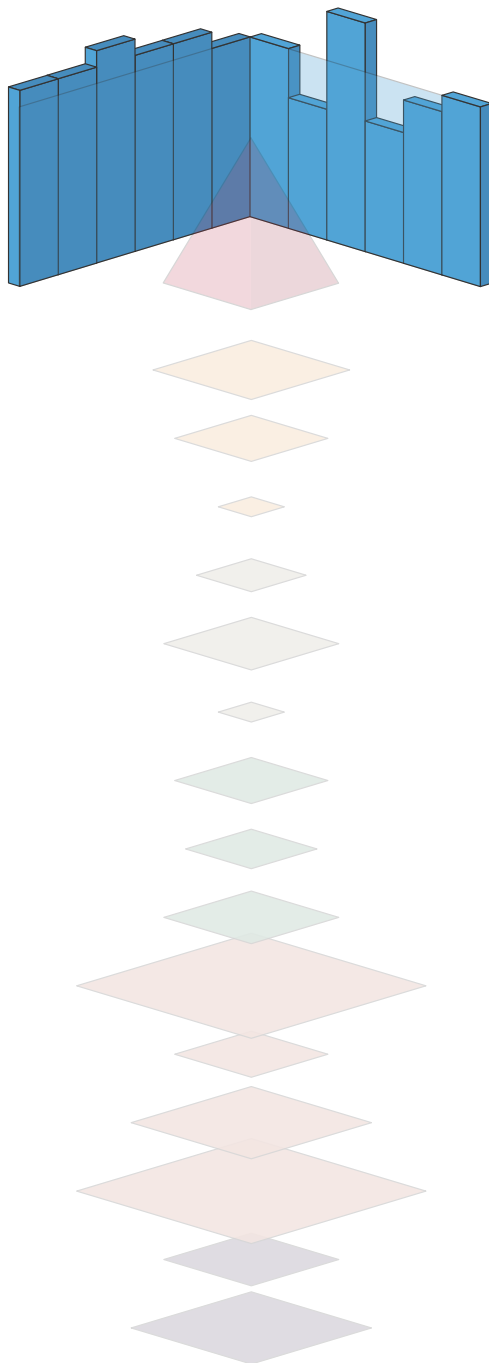


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MAURITIUS



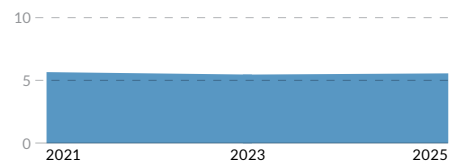
5.58 $\nearrow 0.04$

RESILIENCE SCORE

50th of 193 countries $\nearrow 6$

4th of 54 African countries $\nearrow 1$

2nd of 13 Southern African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	6.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.50	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.50	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00	0.00
PREVENTION	5.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.50	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking is a challenge in Mauritius despite legal frameworks prohibiting the practice. The market is particularly active in forced labour and sexual exploitation, and foreign nationals from Bangladesh, India, Madagascar, Sri Lanka and Nepal are the most affected. Trafficking networks target individuals for labour in the garment, textile, manufacturing and construction industries. A growing trend has seen foreign workers illegally transition from the textile sector to higher-paying jobs in construction, exposing them to exploitation and potential trafficking risks. Private sector actors, including business owners, have been implicated in coercive practices such as passport confiscation to control migrant workers. The link between human trafficking and the drug trade has also intensified and trafficked individuals, particularly sex workers, have been coerced into drug distribution. This trend is particularly visible on the island of Rodrigues and urban areas such as Port Louis, Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and Quatre Bornes. Organized groups frequently exploit Malagasy women through fraudulent job offers, leading to increased cases of exploitation.

Human smuggling is largely unconsolidated and there is limited evidence of large-scale networks. The country is primarily used as a transit point and smuggled individuals, including Malagasy women, are often routed through Mauritius on their way to Gulf states. Smuggling operations predominantly occur using air travel, Mauritian airports being used as key transit hubs.

Extortion and protection racketeering are sporadic and loosely organized. Reports indicate isolated incidents of criminal networks extorting citizens. Links between extortion and gun-related crimes have emerged, but the market is relatively small and unstructured.

TRADE

Arms trafficking is largely unconsolidated due to Mauritius's strict gun policies. Firearms are available for sale but strict regulations have resulted in low levels of illicit arms trading. However, criminal actors, including local gangs, are reported to be acquiring weapons, primarily for use in drug-related conflicts. The intersection between the arms trade and drug markets is particularly notable, and criminal groups engage in armed confrontations with law enforcement. Compared to regional trends, arms trafficking in Mauritius is relatively low, but continued demand among criminal actors underscores ongoing risks.

The counterfeit goods market is consolidated and Mauritius is a transit hub for counterfeit products moving from Asia to the rest of Africa and the EU. China is the primary source of counterfeit goods, while counterfeit textiles originate mainly from Thailand, Bangladesh and India. Counterfeit items span a wide range of products including textiles, cosmetics, watches, pharmaceuticals, cigarettes and automotive components. Local and foreign actors, including organized networks known as pirates, are active in this trade, often leveraging the tourism sector to distribute counterfeit goods.

The illicit trade in excise goods is largely fragmented, though exceptions exist in the trade of tobacco and alcohol. Some private sector actors engage in smuggling to avoid high taxation and goods often enter the country from Madagascar and Réunion. Nevertheless, the involvement of organized crime elements in this criminal trade remains unclear.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Mauritius primarily involve illegal sandalwood harvesting, loosely organized criminal networks engaging in illicit logging. Sandalwood is highly prized and seized timber reaches significant market values. The trade persists despite periodic arrests, and law enforcement lacks a clear understanding of the broader criminal structures behind these activities. Mauritius is also a destination for illegal rosewood trafficking from Madagascar. Reports indicate that local and regional political actors, transnational commercial networks and organized criminal syndicates play a role in the rosewood trade.

Fauna crimes in Mauritius are relatively unstructured, most operations being driven by independent actors rather than organized groups. However, the market for turtles is consolidated and illegal traders target these species. Mauritius is also a transit point for illicit wildlife trade and there have been cases of serin birds and bay turtles being smuggled through the country. The trade is stable, and domestic and foreign actors profit from illicit wildlife transactions.

Non-renewable resource crimes primarily involve the illicit flow of gold, and the country is implicated in facilitating cross-border financial transactions linked to gold smuggling. Mauritius is not a producer of gold but it is a key financial intermediary in regional smuggling networks. Reports suggest that gold smuggling is connected to Zimbabwe and South Africa and foreign actors use local companies to launder proceeds. Mauritius has also been linked to illegal sand mining, though detailed reports on the scale of this activity are limited.

DRUGS

The heroin trade is consolidated and Mauritius is a significant transit point for international drug networks. High-purity heroin is trafficked through Mauritius and there are reported links to Madagascar, Afghanistan, and eastern and southern Africa. Authorities have made notable seizures but law enforcement efforts are hampered by corruption, with police officers implicated in heroin trafficking. Reports suggest that the resurgence of heroin use has fuelled an increase in robberies and violent crime, particularly in areas such as Karo Kalyptus, which has become a major drug distribution hub.

Cocaine trafficking is a concern, and Mauritius is a transit country for cocaine shipments. The market is stable despite police seizures, and Bolivia and the UAE have been identified as key trade points. Corruption in law enforcement has facilitated cocaine smuggling, and officers have been implicated in trafficking activities. Cocaine consumption is relatively low, primarily associated with upper-class citizens and expatriates.

The cannabis trade is stable, relying on foreign actors who smuggle the drug into the country. Réunion is the primary supplier and Madagascar is a key transit route. Recent seizures have also revealed links to Russia and South Africa, indicating the expanding reach of cannabis trafficking networks. Local demand is high despite enforcement efforts, and discussions about cannabis legalization have gained momentum in recent years.

The synthetic drug trade is well established, and local and foreign actors are involved. Smuggling on maritime routes, and to a lesser extent local production of synthetic drugs, are major concerns. Recent cases suggest that traffickers are employing increasingly sophisticated concealment methods, such as hiding substances in bath salts and oils, making detection more challenging. Moreover, corruption enables trafficking networks to operate with a significant degree of impunity across the islands. Mauritius is a global transit hub for synthetic drugs, with established links to international locations, including Hong Kong, China, Germany and the UAE. Synthetic drugs are associated with violent crime and authorities have noted a high volume of airport seizures, indicating sustained demand for these substances.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes have increased in Mauritius, hacking, ransomware and malware infections posing threats. Reports indicate a high number of cybercrime incidents, highlighting the growing risk. Hacking cases have declined but ransomware is a persistent challenge, particularly for businesses and government institutions. However, the full impact of ransomware is difficult to quantify as many affected organizations opt not to disclose incidents publicly.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Mauritius is vulnerable to various forms of financial crimes. Issues such as embezzlement, public procurement fraud and corruption persist despite the country's efforts to shed its reputation as a tax haven through legal reforms and increased regulatory oversight. The market also has cross-border implications, with reports – albeit minimal – of offshore fraud attempts. Cyber-enabled fraud is the most prevalent financial crime, and young professionals and retirees are frequently targeted. Common scams include fraudulent job offers, e-commerce fraud, romance scams and investment fraud, all of which have become increasingly widespread, leading to substantial financial losses for victims. Criminal networks, including loosely connected fraud rings and private sector entities in financial institutions, have been implicated in these schemes. These actors often exploit victims' trust through gradual manipulation, coercing them into fraudulent transactions over time.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Although Mauritius does not exhibit a significant presence of traditional mafia-style groups, there are organized gangs that operate similarly, particularly in terms of their hierarchical structure and use of violence. These groups recruit young individuals from their communities, fostering a sense of brotherhood and loyalty. Their activities centre on extortion, human trafficking and arms trafficking. There are growing concerns over their alleged connections to state actors, particularly through corruption that may facilitate their operations. Criminal networks are well established in Mauritius and operate across many illicit markets, including extortion and racketeering, counterfeit goods, environmental crimes and drug trafficking. These networks, while widespread, tend to function in a decentralized manner and the actors involved change frequently. Reports suggest that some networks maintain transnational ties, particularly in the drug trade, with the UAE, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. These networks have a presence in various illicit markets but they do not appear to exert significant influence over state institutions or the political landscape. State-embedded actors in Mauritius operate largely independently and evidence suggests their activities are more opportunistic than part of a coordinated effort to facilitate organized crime. Public perception indicates that some state officials wield influence over criminal markets, though evidence is limited. These actors primarily exploit their positions to extract resources from private individuals rather than directly influencing state policies or transnational criminal activities. Foreign criminal actors, particularly Bolivian and UAE nationals, are active in Mauritius. Other foreign influences include actors from China and Hong Kong, particularly in the counterfeit goods market, where China has been identified as the primary supplier. These foreign actors do not operate in isolation but collaborate with local actors, demonstrating a degree of integration into the criminal landscape. Drug trafficking

networks have also involved foreign actors, and there have been cases of Nigerian students smuggling drugs into the country. However, there is no direct evidence linking these individuals to larger organized criminal networks. Private sector actors play a significant role in facilitating organized crime, particularly in the realms of financial crimes and illicit trade. Reports indicate that gold smuggling and money laundering are key areas where private sector actors have been implicated, and businesses are conduits for illicit financial flows. The human trafficking market has been linked to beauty parlours and massage centres, which reportedly operate as fronts for sex work and trafficking-related activities. These businesses are not limited to domestic operations but have been found

to have transnational links, particularly with South Africa, the UAE and Zimbabwe. Authorities have identified cases involving the use of informal financial transfer systems for money laundering in Mauritius. Some of these operations have been linked to businesses operating as legitimate fronts, facilitating the movement of funds to international destinations, including Dubai, India, South Africa and Comoros. There have been concerns about the intersection between private and public actors in fraudulent activities. Reports suggest that private entities have leveraged their connections with state officials to secure business advantages, raising questions about potential corporate influence and corruption in government contracts.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Mauritius has a stable political environment with a well-established democratic structure and a strong legal framework to address organized crime. Political leadership has taken measures to combat crime through legislative reforms and international collaboration. However, concerns remain about political influence over law enforcement and selective prosecution, contributing to public scepticism. The country has not faced internal or external conflict and its democratic system has remained largely intact. General elections in November 2024 were marked by unrest, and voter turnout was high despite political controversies. The elections resulted in a significant political shift as the opposition coalition secured a decisive victory, driven by growing public discontent over economic challenges, crime and corruption. Government transparency and accountability are areas of concern. Mauritius has anti-corruption measures and a legal framework for financial disclosure, but enforcement is inconsistent. Investigations into financial misconduct involving political elites have led to mixed judicial outcomes, raising questions about the impartiality of oversight institutions. The country has taken steps to improve financial disclosure policies but challenges persist in ensuring compliance at all levels of governance. Reports indicate that certain public officials have faced scrutiny for financial irregularities, but successful prosecutions are infrequent. Mauritius engages in international anti-crime frameworks and has ratified many conventions related to organized crime, drug trafficking and financial crimes. The country collaborates with regional bodies and law enforcement agencies, including INTERPOL and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, to enhance cross-border crime prevention. It also maintains cooperative relationships with neighbouring countries and south Asian partners, facilitating intelligence

sharing and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen its crime-fighting capabilities.

Mauritius has a broad legal framework covering crimes such as drug offences, human trafficking, cybercrime and smuggling. It also leads in tobacco control, being the first African country to adopt plain packaging laws. Yet, it lacks legislation specifically targeting organized criminal groups. Moreover, despite ongoing reforms and targeted efforts, the country does not have a unified national strategy focused on combating organized crime, leaving a gap in its otherwise evolving criminal justice framework. While deficiencies remain in addressing firearms trafficking, counterfeiting and environmental crimes, progress has been made in the fight against financial crimes. The Financial Crimes Commission Act has established a new framework by prioritizing tighter anti-money laundering controls and targeting a wider range of financial crime risks. Mauritius is preparing for the growth of cyber-dependent crimes, implementing a national cybersecurity strategy for 2023–2026 and enacting updated cybercrime laws. In the drug market, the government is shifting towards a rehabilitative approach for personal use, planning to decriminalize small-scale possession and amend laws accordingly.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system in Mauritius, despite lacking specialized units dedicated to countering organized crime, has demonstrated effectiveness through successful prosecutions. However, concerns about judicial independence remain, particularly in cases involving political figures. Detention facilities, while playing a critical role in crime prevention, have faced criticism for failing to meet international standards for hygiene and inmate treatment. There are indications

that criminal actors, including organized groups, exert influence in prisons. Reports also suggest instances of collusion between prison staff and inmates, enabling some individuals, particularly those linked to drug trafficking, to continue their operations from detention centres. Law enforcement agencies, including the Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit and the Central Crime Investigation Department – which has units for maritime crimes, cybercrimes, financial crimes and others – are central to efforts against organized crime. These agencies have made progress in disrupting drug networks and financial crimes, but political interference and corruption hinder their effectiveness. Despite international support in capacity-building initiatives that have strengthened investigative capabilities, public confidence in law enforcement is low due to allegations of misconduct and selective enforcement. Mauritius, an island nation with an extensive coastline and numerous offshore islands, faces significant challenges in maintaining its territorial integrity due to its geographic location and limited maritime enforcement capacity. Long and complex coastal areas present difficulties for law enforcement, particularly in curbing drug trafficking, which is a persistent issue. In response to border security challenges, the government, in collaboration with international partners, has established initiatives to enhance port security and strengthen border control measures. However, gaps in enforcement persist, particularly concerning the smuggling of illicit goods and counterfeit products. Ongoing territorial disputes, including one involving an exclusive economic zone near Chagos, add complexity to the country's ability to manage and safeguard its maritime borders effectively.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Anti-money laundering efforts have been a key focus for Mauritius, especially after its removal from the Financial Action Task Force grey list in 2021. Stricter financial regulations have been introduced, leading to increased oversight of financial transactions and offshore banking activities. Although there are no financial intelligence units, the proposed changes would establish such units. No implementation date has been announced by parliament. Nevertheless, vulnerabilities remain in the financial sector, particularly concerning tax evasion and illicit capital flows.

Mauritius has demonstrated resilience against organized crime through its strong economic regulatory framework. Reforms aimed at enhancing transparency and oversight in financial transactions have contributed to reducing opportunities for illicit activities. Historically, the country was viewed as a conduit for tax avoidance and money laundering, particularly in sectors such as property and luxury goods, where criminal networks leveraged regulatory loopholes. However, Mauritius has since implemented significant tax and financial reforms in response to international scrutiny, strengthening its regulatory mechanisms and aligning with global anti-money laundering standards.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support services are provided by government institutions and non-government organizations. Programmes for trafficking survivors and drug rehabilitation services have been established, but resource limitations hinder their reach and effectiveness. Victims of human trafficking often face challenges in accessing legal support, and witness protection programmes are underdeveloped, raising concerns about the safety of individuals cooperating with law enforcement. Reports suggest that shelters for trafficking victims are limited, and reintegration programmes are inadequate in addressing long-term rehabilitation needs. As part of the government's strategy to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, a key element is the proposed Whistle-blower Act. It is expected to encourage more individuals to come forward with information on organized crime activities, and establishes measures to protect them.

Prevention initiatives targeting organized crime include public awareness campaigns and legal reforms designed to encourage reporting and improve the identification of human trafficking and financial crimes. Mauritius has strengthened its investigative capacity in these areas through better coordination and amendments to key legislation. New protections against labour exploitation – such as eliminating worker-paid recruitment fees – have been introduced. The government has also reinforced anti-trafficking coordination structures and inaugurated a Migrant Resource Centre to promote fair labour practices and reduce the risk of exploitation. Despite these measures, effective implementation is limited.

Civil society in Mauritius is active and engaged across social, economic, cultural and political spheres, benefiting from government support and international funding. However, concerns over restrictions on democratic freedoms have emerged, particularly after an attempt by the communications regulator to limit social media access before the general election. The decision was swiftly reversed after a public backlash, but it raised concerns about potential encroachments on civil liberties. Over the past decade, democratic freedoms have faced increasing constraints and concerns have grown about political influence in governance. The media landscape, while active, is not without challenges, as instances of censorship and polarization persist. The national TV station has been criticized for favouring government narratives and selectively omitting coverage of contentious political issues. The influence of political and business elites in media ownership has contributed to concerns over biased reporting and limited representation of opposition voices.

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.