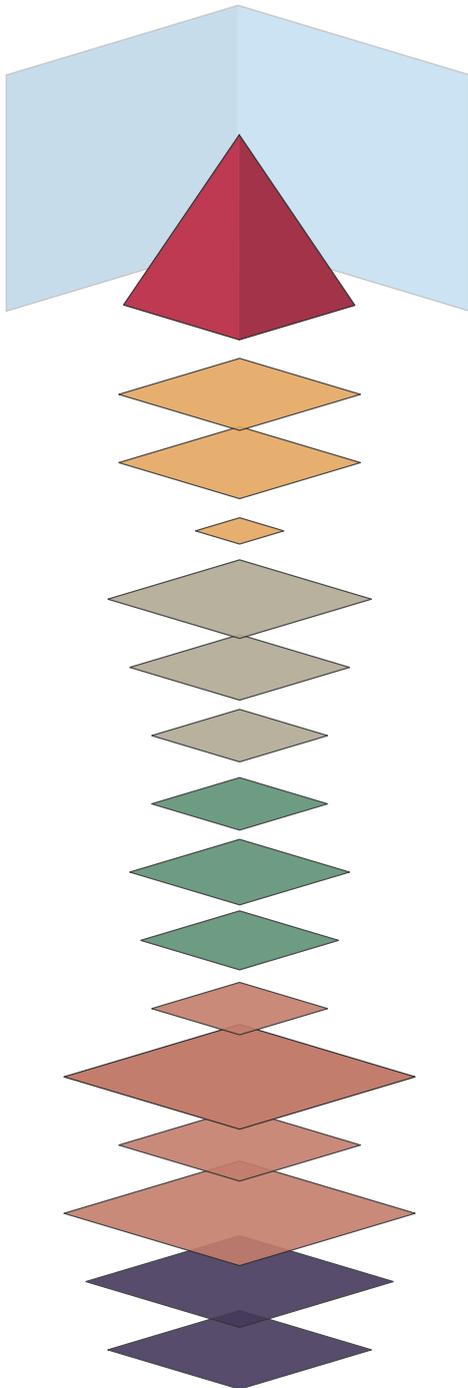
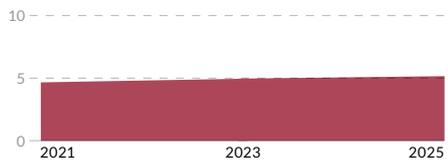


NETHERLANDS



5.17 $\nearrow 0.20$
CRIMINALITY SCORE

91st of 193 countries $\nearrow 6$
16th of 44 European countries $\nearrow 4$
4th of 11 Western European countries $\nearrow 1$



CRIMINAL MARKETS **5.33** $\nearrow 0.10$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00	$\succ 0.50$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.00	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	4.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.50	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	4.00	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	8.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	7.00	$\succ 0.50$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	$\nearrow 1.00$

CRIMINAL ACTORS **5.00** $\nearrow 0.30$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.00	$\succ 0.50$
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	3.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$



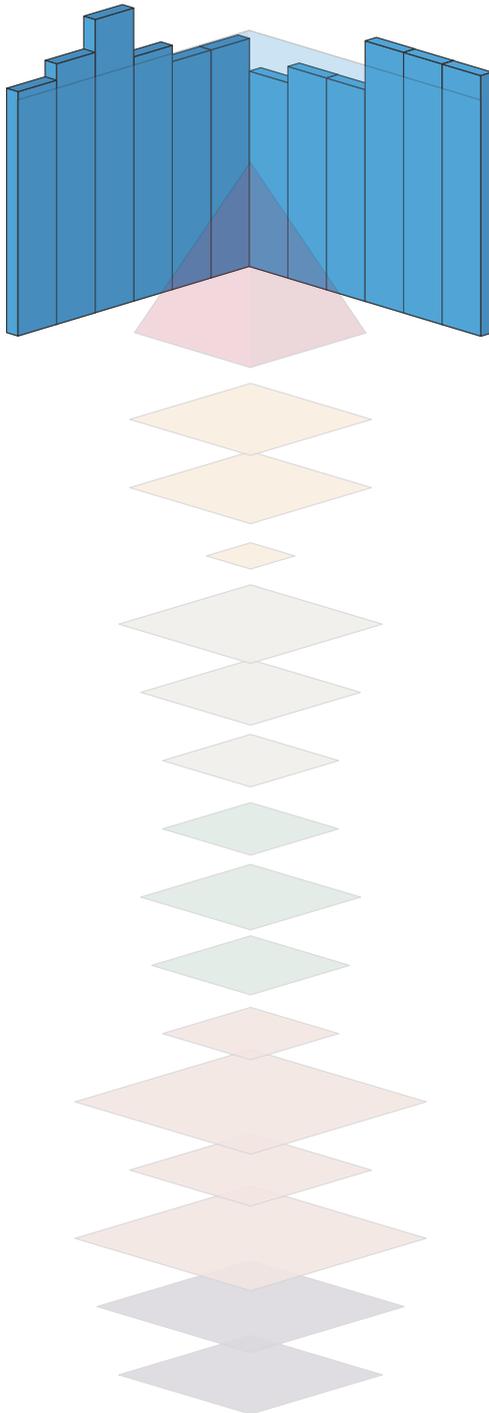
This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State.



Funded by the European Union

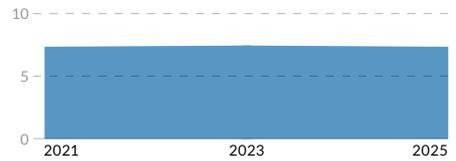
ENACT is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Institute for Security Studies and INTERPOL, in affiliation with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

NETHERLANDS



 **7.42** $\downarrow 0.04$
RESILIENCE SCORE

18th of 193 countries $\downarrow 1$
12th of 44 European countries $\uparrow 1$
6th of 11 Western European countries $\uparrow 1$



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	9.00	$\uparrow 0.50$
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.50	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00	$\downarrow 0.50$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.00	$\downarrow 0.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.50	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.50	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	8.00	0.00
PREVENTION	8.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	8.00	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The Netherlands is mainly a destination country for human trafficking, though its role as a source country has grown in recent years. Victims are often subjected to sexual exploitation, forced labour, or other forms of trafficking. A significant number of identified victims experienced exploitation in legal sectors, including hospitality, inland shipping and agriculture. The country's legal sex work industry creates opportunities for traffickers to operate within regulated spaces, further complicating law enforcement efforts. Vulnerable groups, including asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and refugees – especially those fleeing the war in Ukraine – face increased risks of labour and sexual exploitation. Nigerian and Ugandan nationals represent a growing share of victims, while ethnic Albanian and Chinese criminal organizations are significant perpetrators of trafficking operations.

Human smuggling networks continue to exploit the high influx of asylum seekers into the Netherlands, facilitating the irregular entry of migrants, particularly through maritime routes and key transit points such as Ter Apel and Hoek van Holland. Smugglers operate near major refugee reception centres, helping new arrivals to reach other destinations within the European Union. The Netherlands also serves as a transit hub for migrants smuggled to the United Kingdom, with organized groups using Dutch ports to move them across the English Channel. Maritime smuggling operations have grown increasingly sophisticated, involving the illicit storage and transport of boats, life jackets and forged documents.

Extortion and protection racketeering are not well-documented within the Netherlands, though there have been isolated incidents involving organized crime groups. Reports of systematic racketeering remain limited, and it is unclear whether such activities constitute a consolidated criminal market.

TRADE

The Netherlands is both a destination and transit country for arms trafficking, with illegal firearms entering through Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic. Smuggling methods include concealed compartments in vehicles and the use of the darknet for purchasing firearms from the US. Criminal groups, particularly of Antillean, former Yugoslavian and outlaw motorcycle gang affiliations, are involved in firearms trafficking, with some members also

acting as end-users. Deactivated firearms, prevalent in Slovakia due to a lack of standardized EU regulations for deactivation, can be easily re-activated by criminal elements in the Netherlands. Also, legally purchased non-lethal pistols from abroad, notably originating from Türkiye, are then converted into live-firing firearms in the Netherlands for use in illegal activities.

The trade in counterfeit goods is prevalent in the Netherlands, particularly in luxury items, designer clothing and counterfeited cigarettes. In particular, the Netherlands is used as a transit hub for counterfeit cigarettes destined for the UK and Ireland. Police operations have uncovered large-scale storage facilities for counterfeit goods, with criminal networks potentially using the illicit trade to launder money. The counterfeit market is closely linked to broader criminal activities, including drug and arms trafficking. The illicit trade in excise goods, particularly cigarettes, remains a significant issue. Recent seizures in neighbouring countries reveal millions of euros worth of illicit tobacco found to have transited through Dutch ports.

ENVIRONMENT

The Netherlands serves as a transit and destination hub for flora crimes, particularly the trafficking of endangered plant species. Schiphol Airport and the Port of Rotterdam play key roles in facilitating the movement of illicit flora, including orchids and cacti from Indonesia, Madagascar and Panama. Also, the country's role in importing wood-based products from China, Romania and Ukraine has raised concerns about illegal logging in source countries.

Fauna crimes are a growing problem, with the Netherlands ranking among the top European countries for wildlife seizures. The country is a significant entry point for illegal wildlife products, including reptiles and birds. Reports indicate an active underground market in exotic pets, with poison frogs from Brazil being trafficked through specialized pet stores and online platforms. The Netherlands also plays a role in the illicit trafficking of wildlife products through its shipping infrastructure, with seizures occurring at major ports and mail centres.

Illicit trade in non-renewable resources, particularly gold, poses a risk to the Netherlands. The country is implicated in the transnational trade of illegal gold, with criminal networks laundering money through gold transactions. Dutch overseas territories, including Aruba and Curaçao, act as key transit zones for Venezuelan gold, which is then refined and traded in mainland Netherlands. Fuel smuggling has also been reported, with Dutch gangs involved in tax fraud schemes related to fuel blending and resale.

DRUGS

The Netherlands remains a hub for the heroin trade, serving as a distribution point for heroin trafficked through the Balkan Peninsula. Turkish and Kurdish criminal groups dominate the heroin trade, with Dutch networks involved in storage and distribution across Europe. Nevertheless, recent seizures involving individuals linked to the 'Mocro Mafia' suggest their involvement as well. Seizures at the Port of Rotterdam have revealed the country's role as a key entry point for heroin shipments destined for the EU and the UK. While heroin use in the Netherlands remains stable, the market continues to contribute to gang-related violence in cities such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

The Netherlands, with its substantial maritime infrastructure, serves as a major transit hub for cocaine, notably facilitating the trafficking of cocaine from South and Central America. The Port of Rotterdam remains a focal point for cocaine smuggling. Criminal groups operating in the Netherlands collaborate with counterparts in Morocco to facilitate the movement of cocaine into Europe. The Netherlands also serves as a distribution hub for cocaine trafficked through Belgian ports, and vice versa.

The cannabis market in the Netherlands continues to be shaped by its regulatory framework, which permits sales in 'coffee shops' while leaving production and supply in the hands of criminal networks. The 'backdoor problem' – retail sales are legal, but supply remains illicit – has been a key driver of this illicit market. Domestically produced cannabis is not only distributed within the Netherlands but also trafficked to neighbouring European countries, while imports from Morocco supplement the domestic supply.

The synthetic drug trade is expanding, with the Netherlands serving as the major production hub for MDMA and amphetamines in Western Europe. Synthetic drug laboratories have increased in number, with Dutch criminal groups exploiting established trafficking routes to export products worldwide. China remains a key supplier of precursor chemicals, while Dutch-produced synthetic drugs are trafficked to several other regions – from Australia and New Zealand to West and Central Africa and, in recent years, to South America, Central America and the Caribbean. The proliferation of clandestine drug labs poses enforcement problems, even though authorities are dismantling record numbers of methamphetamine production sites.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime remains a significant threat, with ransomware attacks affecting businesses and individuals. Following the conflict in Ukraine, there has been a revival in hacktivist organizations, exemplified by the Russian DDoS attacks on Dutch companies. Cryptocurrency-related fraud is also widespread, with illicit transactions detected across multiple platforms. Dutch authorities continue to enhance

cybersecurity measures, though enforcement shortfalls persist due to the ever-evolving nature of cybercrime.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The Netherlands is considered one of the top global facilitators of corporate tax avoidance. Mafia networks have exploited Dutch financial structures for large-scale VAT fraud, with investigations revealing multimillion-euro schemes. Online scams, authorized push payment fraud and investment fraud have surged, with substantial fraud losses for public revenue. The Dutch Caribbean territories have seen a sharp rise in unusual financial transactions, highlighting the growing link between financial crime and organized criminal networks. Payment fraud, particularly authorized push payment scams, has also increased, with financial institutions struggling to mitigate risks associated with digital fraud.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) represent the closest equivalent to mafia-style groups in the Netherlands. Although media and political attention on OMGs has declined in recent years, their presence remains notable. Several prominent groups operate in the country, including Caloh Wagoh, Bandidos, Satudarah, Hells Angels and No Surrender, with the largest being Satudarah. These organizations maintain structured hierarchies, identifiable symbols and clear membership regulations. OMGs are associated with a range of criminal activities, including drug trafficking, gang violence and isolated incidents of extortion. Hardliners MC, for instance, has been linked to cases of drug-related debt enforcement, involving home visits, threats and violent reprisals against individuals failing to meet financial obligations. Despite indications of continued criminal involvement, official reporting on OMGs has been limited in recent years, raising questions about whether the perceived threat remains significant or whether this reduced visibility reflects a shift in the focus of law enforcement.

Organized crime in the Netherlands is dominated by loosely structured criminal networks rather than rigid hierarchical groups. These networks are active in street-level drug sales, prostitution and arms trafficking, often engaging in medium-level intergroup violence. The 'Mocro Mafia', a prominent criminal network originating in the Dutch-Moroccan community in the Netherlands, is a key player in the cocaine trade and has gained notoriety for its violent operations, including assassinations of high-profile figures such as journalists and defence lawyers. Criminal networks in the Netherlands also play a central role in the production and distribution of synthetic drugs, with Dutch groups collaborating with Turkish and Kurdish actors for heroin trafficking.

There is limited evidence of state-embedded actors facilitating criminal markets in the Netherlands. The main concerns are information leaks and police infiltration, particularly at lower levels of law enforcement and logistics hubs.

Foreign criminal organizations have a substantial presence in the Netherlands, contributing to the country's role as a key hub for transnational organized crime. Italian groups such as the 'Ndrangheta and, to a lesser extent, the Camorra operate in the Netherlands, particularly in financial crimes and drug trafficking. Albanian-speaking criminal groups have a strong foothold in the cocaine trade and are also involved in cannabis and synthetic drug production. Turkish and Kurdish groups dominate the heroin market, working closely with Dutch criminal networks for importation and distribution. Eastern and Central European groups, including Bulgarian, Romanian, Polish and Lithuanian criminal networks, known for 'mobile banditry', engage in organized robberies, vehicle theft and transnational criminal activities. The Netherlands is also

home to organized groups from Suriname, Indonesia and the Dutch-Caribbean territories, with Aruba and Curaçao serving as important nodes in transnational illicit financial transactions. Also, triads such as the Snakehead Gang and German-Turkish OMGs like the Black Jackets maintain a presence in the country, further diversifying the range of foreign criminal actors.

The private sector in the Netherlands plays a noticeable role in facilitating organized crime, particularly in financial crimes and money laundering. Underground banking networks and corporate structures provide avenues for illicit financial flows, with concerns growing over the ease with which drug money is laundered through Dutch businesses. A large proportion of companies in the Netherlands are found to have either had staff convicted of crimes or had owners with criminal records, suggesting the likelihood of repeat offences. In Amsterdam in particular, retailers such as souvenir shops are used as fronts for money laundering.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Netherlands remains a stable and well-governed country, with political leaders showing awareness of the risks posed by organized crime. Fears over the country's vulnerability to becoming a so-called 'narco-state' have prompted politicians to seek expertise from international counterparts, particularly in Italy, to strengthen responses to organized crime. Organized crime prevention remains a priority within the national judicial policing strategy, with significant police resources allocated to tackling cross-border drug trafficking, human smuggling, arms trafficking, fraud and money laundering. While there is overall political consensus on tackling organized crime, skepticism prevails about the effectiveness of current measures. Government transparency and accountability mechanisms are robust, though areas of concern exist. The Netherlands ranked among the world's least corrupt countries, but has faced criticism for weak enforcement in addressing corporate bribery abroad. Influence peddling is not classified as corruption under Dutch law, and this prevents many potential prosecutions. Also, oversight of lobbying activities is limited, as the country allows politicians to transition into lobbying roles with few restrictions. Reforms aimed at increasing transparency have been implemented, including the Open Government Act, which requires the proactive publication of government documents. However, delayed responses to information requests are common, and some government bodies have resisted full compliance with transparency rulings.

The Netherlands actively participates in international efforts against organized crime, hosting both Europol and Eurojust, and has extensive cooperation with law enforcement agencies worldwide. The country has ratified key international treaties, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Arms Trade Treaty. The Netherlands also has several bilateral extradition treaties signed with international counterparts, including but not limited to Morocco and the United Arab Emirates, to enhance cross-border cooperation against organized crime. Further collaborations with Latin America and Africa aim to strengthen security, trade and migration-related agreements. The country's legal framework has undergone several amendments to address organized crime more effectively. The Dutch Opium Act provides the foundation for drug-related legislation, maintaining the country's tolerance policy on cannabis while enforcing strict penalties for hard drugs. Experts have raised concerns that the country's generally permissive cannabis policy may contribute to organized crime, prompting a controlled supply-chain experiment in ten municipalities, with positive early results in replacing the illegal market. The legal framework governing arms trafficking aligns with EU regulations, and the BIBOB Act remains a critical tool in preventing criminal infiltration of the legal economy. The effectiveness of regulations on illicit gold trade and wildlife crime remains unclear, but recent enforcement actions indicate a growing focus on environmental crimes.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Dutch judiciary is generally well-resourced and independent, with dedicated units addressing transnational organized crime. The National Prosecution Office specializes in crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime. While prison conditions in the Netherlands meet international standards, concerns have been raised over conditions in Dutch Caribbean territories, where reports of substandard facilities persist. Staffing shortages in the Netherlands' prisons have also been noted, alongside increasing incidents of violence and intimidation. High-ranking members of criminal organizations have been reported to continue illegal activities from within prisons, prompting the addition of security measures in some facilities. Dutch law enforcement is highly organized, with specialized units focusing on counterterrorism, organized crime and intelligence gathering. But observers say the police force is underfunded relative to the scale of organized crime threats. In 2024, police representatives requested increased funding to address staff shortages and modernize digital crime-fighting capabilities. While Dutch law enforcement collaborates effectively with EU and international agencies, public trust in the police has declined, and there has been a notable increase in reports of excessive use of force. Criticism has also been directed at the tax authorities for failing to act on large volumes of financial crime reports.

The Netherlands' geographic location and extensive transport infrastructure make it a key hub for illicit trade. Rotterdam, Europe's largest port, remains a focal point for drug and arms smuggling, while Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport is a major transit hub for organized criminal activity. As a Schengen member, the Netherlands faces challenges in controlling illicit flows across its borders. While enforcement efforts at ports and airports have increased, vulnerabilities persist, particularly in Aruba and other Dutch Caribbean territories, where cybercrime risks and financial crimes remain notable concerns.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Money laundering remains a significant challenge for the Netherlands, with the country serving as a major hub for illicit financial flows. While anti-money laundering regulations have been strengthened, the ease of establishing shell companies and the nature of the country's corporate tax regime create opportunities for criminal exploitation. Hawala banking networks, particularly within South Asian communities, are an alternative financial system that has proved difficult to regulate. The Netherlands actively co-operates with the Financial Action Task Force and has made progress in seizing criminal assets. But concerns remain over regulatory loopholes related to virtual asset service providers and beneficial ownership transparency. The Dutch economy benefits from strong legal protections and a transparent business environment, but some vulnerabilities exist, allowing criminal groups to exploit legitimate businesses for money

laundering. Regulatory measures aimed at preventing criminal infiltration are in place, but their enforcement is inconsistent across different industries.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Netherlands places considerable emphasis on victim and witness support, with extensive resources dedicated to trafficking victims and individuals affected by organized crime. Witness protection programmes are considered effective, and civil society organizations play a key role in victim assistance. However, foreign victims without legal residency face difficulties in accessing support services, and restrictions on non-cooperating trafficking victims obstruct their access to long-term assistance. Moreover, the Netherlands is entering a new era of harm reduction, with renewed calls to shift from punitive drug policies toward health- and rights-based approaches that prioritize regulation, reinvestment in services, and stronger support to victims. In Dutch Caribbean territories, funding for anti-trafficking initiatives has been criticized as inadequate, raising concerns about the protection of vulnerable populations.

Crime prevention efforts in the Netherlands focus on strengthening security at key transport hubs, disrupting criminal financial networks, and providing social alternatives for at-risk youth. In 2024, the government introduced stricter sentencing for serious drug-related offences to deter organized crime involvement. At the same time, it began phasing out funding for Mainline, a key harm reduction organization, signaling a move away from a public health-centered drug policy. Corporate self-reporting mechanisms were also introduced, offering fine reductions for companies that disclose financial misconduct. Human trafficking prevention efforts have also been expanded, with more funding allocated to support services for trafficking victims.

Non-state actors play a critical role in combating organized crime in the Netherlands. NGOs actively contribute to research, policy advocacy and victim support. The Netherlands maintains strong protections for media freedom, although journalists face increasing threats, particularly those reporting on organized crime. Concerns have also been raised about government pressure on NGOs, particularly in relation to counterterrorism financing regulations, which have led to increased scrutiny of Islamic organizations. Despite these challenges, civil society organizations continue to operate freely, with limited government interference. Media outlets are instrumental in uncovering organized crime networks and holding authorities accountable, though risks to press freedom exist.

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.