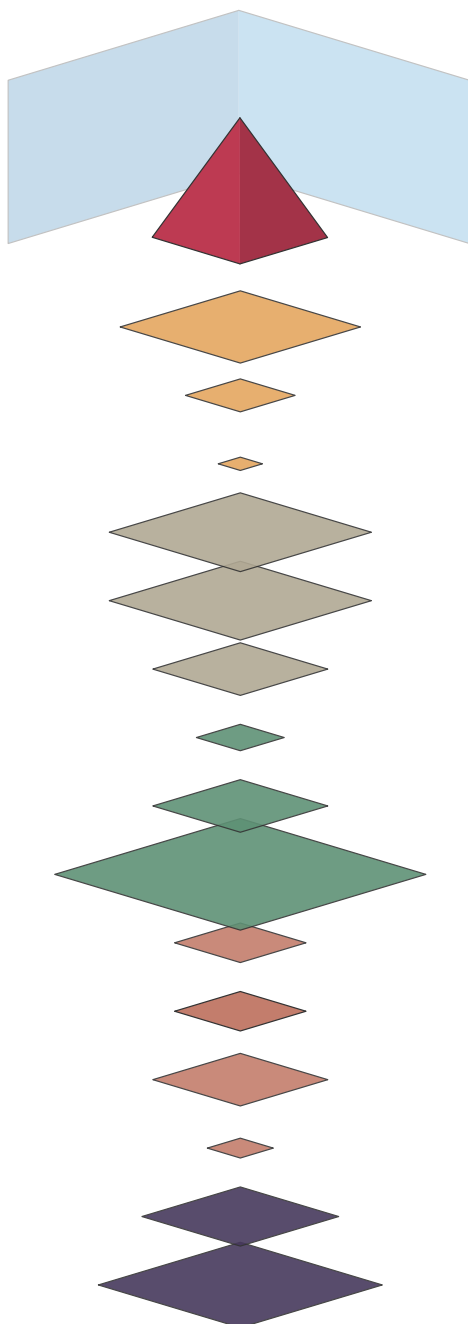




RWANDA



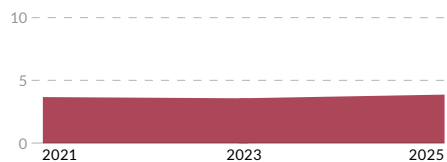
3.87 $\nearrow 0.27$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

158th of 193 countries $\nearrow 6$

51st of 54 African countries $\nearrow 2$

10th of 11 Central African countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.13 $\nearrow 0.13$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50 $\nearrow 0.50$
HUMAN SMUGGLING	2.50 0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	1.00 0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00 $\nearrow 1.00$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	6.00 0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.00 0.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.00 $\searrow 0.50$
FAUNA CRIMES	4.00 0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	8.50 0.00
HEROIN TRADE	3.00 0.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.00 $\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	4.00 0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.50 0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	4.50 0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.50 $\nearrow 0.50$



CRIMINAL ACTORS

3.60 $\nearrow 0.40$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.00 $\nearrow 1.00$
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	3.00 0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.00 $\nearrow 1.00$
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00 0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.00 0.00



This project was funded in part
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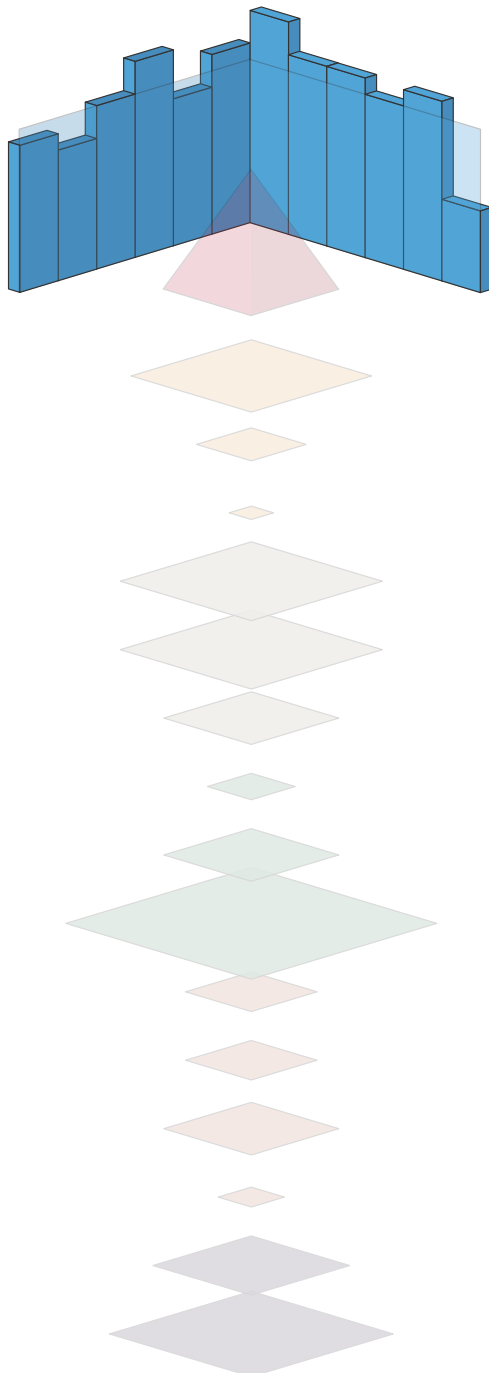


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RWANDA



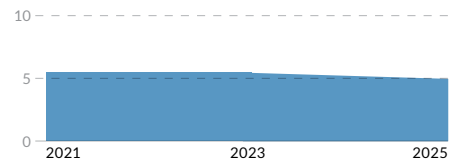
5.00 $\searrow 0.54$

RESILIENCE SCORE

87th of 193 countries $\searrow 31$

12th of 54 African countries $\searrow 7$

1st of 11 Central African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50	$\searrow 1.00$
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.50	$\searrow 0.50$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.50	$\searrow 1.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50	$\searrow 0.50$
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.50	$\searrow 1.00$
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00	$\searrow 0.50$
PREVENTION	5.50	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	2.50	$\searrow 1.00$



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Rwanda is a source, transit, and to a lesser extent destination for human trafficking, with men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sexual exploitation. Domestic trafficking has reportedly slightly decreased due to prevention measures, but cross-border trafficking persists, driven by economic hardships and regional trends. Refugees, especially from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi, face exploitation, while child soldier recruitment and forced involvement in criminal activities have risen. Rwanda is increasingly a destination for trafficking victims, particularly from China in construction. Domestic exploitation, including forced street begging, is a significant issue. Vulnerable groups include homeless youth, orphans and internally displaced people. Rwanda is also a destination for refugees fleeing regional conflicts, particularly in Libya and the DRC, and many reside in camps or urban areas. While no evidence suggests large-scale human smuggling into or out of Rwanda, limited smuggling networks facilitate irregular migration, primarily for Congolese individuals, especially the Banyarwanda. There is no evidence of an organized extortion or racketeering market.

TRADE

Rwanda faces challenges related to illicit arms circulation due to past internal conflict, regional instability and border control issues. While unregulated weapons are reportedly used in local crimes, overall violence is low. Rebel groups from Burundi and Tanzania are primary sources of illegal firearms entering Rwanda, contributing to an active black market. Former Rwandan military factions and dissident groups facilitate arms trafficking, particularly along the DRC border. Overall, while increased security measures have reduced inflows, reports suggest an increase in weapons trafficking from Rwanda to the DRC, and there are allegations of government support for armed groups despite international restrictions.

Illicit trade in counterfeit goods appears to be widespread, including locally produced food, clothing, pharmaceuticals and sanitary products which are smuggled through porous borders. The closure of key trade routes and economic hardships have contributed to the demand for counterfeit goods. The ban on second-hand clothes has further fuelled this market. Counterfeit alcohol from illegal breweries is a concern and increased cases of intoxication pose health risks. The smuggling of excise goods, primarily alcohol and tobacco, persists despite enforcement efforts. These goods are often transported from the DRC by trucks and

taxi-moto operators supplying local retailers. The illicit trade in tobacco has grown due to high excise taxes, and smuggling is concentrated at major border crossings such as Goma-Gisenyi and Bukavu-Cyangugu.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes are minimal due to strong forest governance and enforcement. The country has effectively controlled deforestation. Only small-scale actors engage in bamboo and firewood logging for fuel. Illegal sales of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers have been detected and authorities have disrupted major operations. Rwanda's position and enforcement discourage transnational syndicates from using it as a route for illicit timber trade, and traffickers favour routes through Uganda and Kenya for access to broader east African and international markets. Similarly, wildlife trafficking occurs at a relatively limited scale, though cases involving ivory, rhino horn and exotic species have been recorded, primarily in transit to and from the DRC and Burundi. Proximity to conflict economies in the region heightens vulnerability to poaching, which threatens shared ecosystems. The country is also a source and transit hub for exotic birds, with declining populations observed. Illegal poaching of various species continues at low levels, often driven by poverty.

Rwanda plays a significant role in the illicit mineral trade, particularly in gold, tin, coltan and tantalum smuggled from the DRC. These minerals are trafficked into Rwanda and exported into global supply chains, primarily on the national airline. Rwanda's increasing control over DRC gold flows may be linked to rising criminal activity in the sector. Reports suggest a post-pandemic resurgence of illegal mining and substantial coltan and gold exports despite limited domestic production. Allegations persist about state-backed militant involvement though there is scepticism about Rwanda's role. Authorities have denied involvement, highlighting regulatory measures and periodic mineral seizures as counteractions.

DRUGS

Rwanda has a minor role in global drug markets but is emerging as a regional transit hub. It is an overland trans-shipment point for heroin entering from Kenya and Tanzania, destined for southern and central Africa. Domestic consumption is low and youth are the primary users. As Rwanda's regional connectivity grows, its involvement in transnational drug trade dynamics is expected to increase. Cocaine trafficking is relatively limited, though instances of local use and trafficking have been observed and there have been seizures at Kigali International Airport. The drug

primarily enters via west and central African airports, and there are additional smuggling routes through Uganda and the DRC. The compact packaging of cocaine facilitates its concealment, often on individuals or in small bags. Alleged unreported cases suggest that foreigners, particularly from Europe and North America, access cocaine through fraudulent diplomatic channels and trade.

Rwanda is a trans-shipment point for regionally produced cannabis, particularly from the DRC, and a minor destination market. Cannabis use is low compared to its neighbours but the substance has gained popularity among young people and is increasingly subject to trafficking. Police efforts to curb its distribution in Kigali have yielded only modest results. The synthetic drug trade is negligible. Although there is probably minimal domestic demand for synthetic drugs, the lack of research and evidence leads to the assumption that the market is virtually non-existent.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Rwanda has experienced a notable presence of cyber-dependent crimes, particularly involving computer viruses, attributed to increased digital infrastructure and greater online exposure. Even so, cyber-dependent crimes are sporadic and the market is not yet systematically consolidated.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, particularly tax evasion, embezzlement and misuse of public funds, cause significant monetary loss. Despite government efforts, corruption is widespread in the public and private sectors, where mismanagement and violations of contractual terms contribute to financial setbacks. Ponzi schemes and mobile money fraud are growing concerns, with perpetrators using phone calls and SMSes to exploit individuals. Financial crimes involving powerful state-linked entities often go unreported, and some government investments, such as in European sports clubs, have not been audited, leading to potential opportunities for misconduct.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Rwanda does not appear to have domestic mafia-style groups, though powerful families have significant control over various sectors of the economy. Politically motivated armed groups such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda are active along the DRC-Rwanda border, engaging in criminal activities that fuel regional instability. Loose criminal networks exert influence over illegal markets, including counterfeiting, illicit trade in excisable goods, wildlife trafficking, mineral smuggling and financial crimes. These networks often involve state-supported entities and local groups, including some in customs and the mineral sector. The criminal landscape is further complicated by cross-border interactions with transnational actors.

State-embedded actors are reported to be involved in criminal markets, including arms trafficking, non-renewable resource crimes and the illicit trade in wildlife and drugs. There are allegations of government support for the M23 rebel group in the DRC despite embargoes. These actors are thought to facilitate illegal activities such as smuggling, espionage and illicit financial dealings, and reports suggest the use of shell companies and international property acquisitions. While foreign media highlight these issues, the government typically denies or deflects responsibility.

In general, reports refer to smuggling activities in border regions as often being perpetrated by foreign nationals from the DRC, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania. Although militias from neighbouring countries such as the DRC, Burundi and Tanzania have previously been involved in illegal activities, there have been few recent reports of incidents.

Anecdotal evidence points to private sector involvement in illicit markets, particularly in the flow of goods and minerals. These actors are also believed to facilitate embezzlement, potentially collaborating with state-embedded individuals. Some sources suggest private sector figures may act as fronts for businesses tied to influential figures, though these claims are largely anecdotal.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Rwanda is one of Africa's safest and most stable countries. The government exerts tight control and prioritizes crime prevention in national security strategies. Challenges include political suppression and allegations of impunity

for major crimes, particularly those involving prominent political figures. The regime is authoritarian and there is limited opposition or criticism of its leadership style. The government faces accusations of involvement in regional conflicts, with claims that it supports armed groups in neighbouring countries. While governance improvements

are noted, political freedoms are constrained and there are significant concerns about the gradual transition of power beyond the current leadership.

Rwanda faces challenges in government accountability and transparency despite its anti-corruption frameworks. Issues such as embezzlement, fraudulent procurement and judicial dishonesty persist, though the government has made efforts to combat corruption. Electoral transparency is a concern and opposition parties face barriers to participation. While there are legal provisions for access to government information, their effectiveness is limited by weak enforcement and fear of retribution against independent investigations. Corruption perception is moderate and bribery encounters have decreased. The government's anti-corruption efforts have led to the prosecution of several officials, though some high-ranking figures are seen as immune to accountability due to their political ties.

Rwanda has actively engaged in international cooperation, ratifying key treaties related to organized crime, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the UN Convention against Corruption and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. However, it has yet to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty and the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. Regionally, Rwanda is involved in peacekeeping missions and works with the East African Community to address regional tensions. It collaborates with INTERPOL and regional law enforcement on criminal markets. However, diplomatic relations with Western countries are strained due to concerns about the presidency's governance, notably affecting cooperation on human rights and diplomatic presence. In 2023, the country signed a treaty with the UK committing to further reinforce protection of migrants and asylum seekers. Rwanda is also a signatory to the Hague Convention on International Cooperation, which aims to strengthen collaboration in prosecuting serious crimes.

Rwanda has implemented several laws to combat organized crime, including cybercrimes, human trafficking, drug trafficking and corruption. The government enacted comprehensive cybercrime legislation to address rising fraud and cyberterrorism. To combat illegal logging and wildlife poaching, Rwanda passed laws on biodiversity and wildlife conservation, aligning with its tourism-driven development strategy. However, enforcement faces challenges due to limited capacity. The Rwanda Development Board and Rwanda Investigation Bureau play key roles in enforcing these laws, particularly in protecting wildlife and promoting ecotourism.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system, while undergoing modernization, is vulnerable to political influence and the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front plays a significant role in judicial appointments. Reforms in the prison system face challenges due to limited resources. Political dissent is often targeted through selective detentions, especially among opposition members. The National Public Prosecution Authority reports that theft and voluntary assault dominate crime statistics and a significant portion of cases are resolved through mediation. However, the lack of specialized units to combat organized crime and the prevalence of harsh prison conditions, including overcrowding and abuse, are concerns. There are also uninvestigated deaths in detention, including high-profile cases.

The law enforcement system includes several agencies, such as the National Police, the Rwanda Investigation Bureau and the Financial Intelligence Centre, tasked with tackling organized crime, particularly financial and drug-related offences. Despite limited resources, the government conducts regular training for law enforcement to address specific criminal markets, such as human trafficking. While law enforcement is effective in investigating corruption, there are concerns about police brutality and the disproportionate targeting of government critics. Reports indicate arbitrary arrests, beatings and a tendency to overlook offences committed by regime supporters. Public trust in the police is high due to low violent crime rates and tight territorial control.

Rwanda maintains its territorial integrity but a laissez-faire policy allows traffickers and smugglers to operate before being detected. The military patrols the borders but incursions by armed groups continue, particularly from the DRC and Burundi. Tensions between Rwanda and the DRC have escalated, particularly over alleged support for M23 rebels, prompting the Rwanda Defence Force to strengthen border security. Rwanda is developing its cyber capabilities and has inaugurated a cybercrime investigative centre to combat rising cyber threats, despite technological gaps.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The financial sector, primarily dominated by banks, has made significant strides in modernizing and bolstering resilience against money laundering and terrorism financing. These include the introduction of an anti-money laundering framework and the establishment of a Financial Intelligence Centre. Risks associated with money laundering and terrorist financing are moderate, with particular concern over the laundering of proceeds from mineral smuggling across the DRC border. Although authorities are responsible for tackling these issues, concerns persist about their operational independence and effectiveness in combating illicit financial activities.

The economy is primarily driven by subsistence agriculture, tea, coffee exports and increasing tourism, and manufacturing also plays a role. The government has improved the regulatory environment, fostering business opportunities, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture and information and communications technology. However, challenges such as energy shortages, poor transportation infrastructure, regional instability and political influence on investments hinder private sector growth. While reforms have supported economic expansion and gradual reduction of poverty, the weak rule of law and persistent corruption discourage long-term development of economic regulatory capacity. The government's nationalization of businesses and legal disputes with investors have undermined efforts to attract foreign investment. Vision 2050 aims for middle-income status by 2035.

and significant censorship. Journalists face surveillance, detention and even exile for critical reporting. Public assembly is limited due to fears of police violence, and civil liberties are restricted. Rwanda is one of the countries where the press is most tightly controlled by the state.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Government efforts to support human trafficking victims have had mixed results. Authorities operate one-stop centres offering shelter and medical, legal and psychosocial services, though they primarily focus on female victims and pay less attention to men. Transit centres sometimes release detainees without proper support, exposing them to revictimization. Long-term victim support services vary and there are concerns about inadequate screening. The absence of formal internal procedures to identify and refer potential victims, including those from underserved communities, hinders efforts and access to services. The government also promotes anti-drug support and rehabilitation.

The government has made efforts to combat human trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrimes and environmental offences, implementing national and local awareness campaigns and training initiatives. It has focused on cross-border trafficking, particularly small arms proliferation, while re-establishing an interagency anti-trafficking working group. Community policing has contributed to crime reduction, such as the arrest of individuals involved in illegal alcohol production. Rwanda has participated in combating human smuggling in the Sahel, northern Africa and the Horn of Africa, cooperating with European countries and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The National Police has targeted counterfeit goods and illegal alcohol but faces resource constraints. Despite all these initiatives, the government still does not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of organized crime and identifies and prosecutes only a low number of trafficking cases.

Civil society organizations face restrictions, particularly those not aligned with the government. While independent organizations exist, their impact is limited due to constraints such as the new NGO law, which gives the government control of their management and funding. This has contributed to distrust of foreign NGOs, especially since their perceived failure to assist during and after the 1994 genocide. Press freedom has declined due to government-controlled media