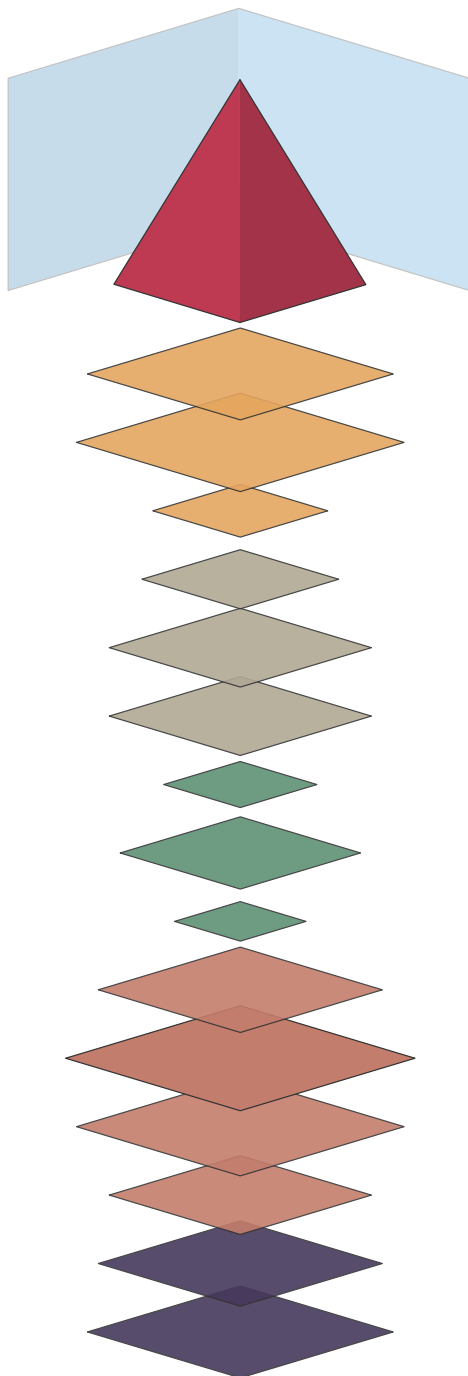




SPAIN



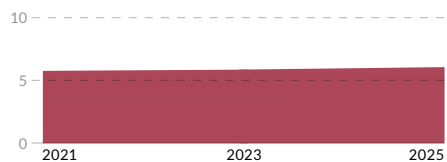
6.05 $\nearrow 0.15$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

49th of 193 countries $\nearrow 5$

5th of 44 European countries -

2nd of 8 Southern European countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.90 $\nearrow 0.20$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	4.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	6.00	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.00	$\searrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	3.50	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
HEROIN TRADE	6.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	7.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7.00	0.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

6.20 $\nearrow 0.10$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.50	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.00	0.00



This project was funded in part
by a grant from the United
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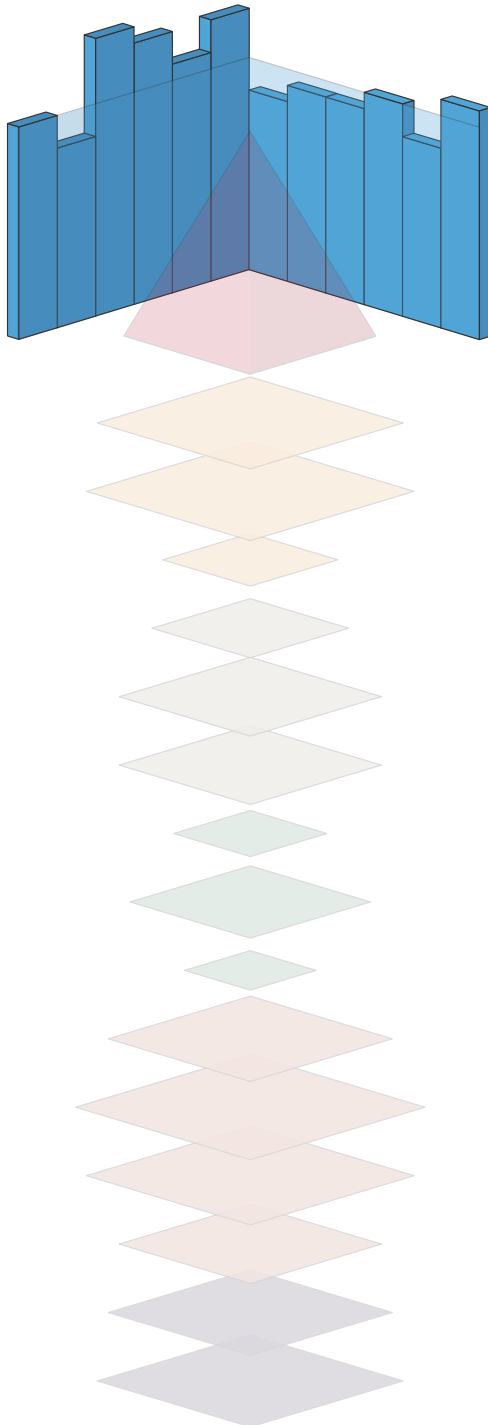


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SPAIN



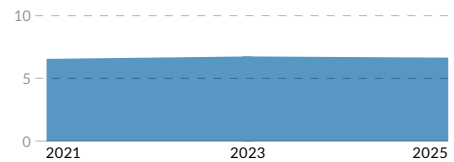
6.67 $\downarrow 0.08$

RESILIENCE SCORE

28th of 193 countries -

20th of 44 European countries -

1st of 8 Southern European countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.50	$\downarrow 0.50$
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	8.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.00	$\downarrow 0.50$
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.50	0.00
PREVENTION	5.50	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Spain remains a key destination and transit country for human trafficking, with victims primarily exploited for sexual and labour purposes. A smaller proportion is trafficked for forced marriage and criminal exploitation. The majority of individuals engaged in prostitution are believed to be trafficking victims, highlighting the significant role of organized criminal networks. Spain's strategic location attracts traffickers from Africa, South America and Asia. Labour exploitation is prevalent in agriculture, particularly in the southern regions, where victims, often with an irregular status, are subjected to slavery-like conditions. Chinese criminal networks have been identified as key actors in exploiting trafficked individuals for illicit marijuana cultivation and drug distribution. Human smuggling has surged in recent years, with the Western African route to the Canary Islands experiencing a sharp increase in irregular crossings. This route has also become one of the world's deadliest. Criminal organizations in North Africa and Spain, traditionally involved in drug trafficking, have expanded into human smuggling, employing 'narco-boats' to transport both migrants and drugs. Smuggling networks leverage infrastructure, such as commercial vessels and warehouses, while utilizing sophisticated security measures, including counter-surveillance tactics. Additionally, fraudulent document rings assist in the smuggling process, producing fake work permits and residency documentation for individuals seeking entry into Spain. Although extortion and protection racketeering are not widespread in Spain, isolated cases involving foreign actors, including the Bulgarian mafia and South American gangs, have been documented. In 2024, a joint operation with Europol dismantled a 'thieves-in-law' network engaged in extortion, racketeering and money laundering. Another operation targeted a Russian-speaking network that infiltrated public institutions and tourism.

TRADE

Arms trafficking in Spain remains moderate, though seizures indicate growing concerns. Extremist groups and criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking are primary actors, often using weapons for drug thefts and territorial disputes. Spain's arms trafficking regulations were tightened in 2024 to align with EU directives. However, there is evidence of growing sophistication in arms smuggling operations, with weapons entering Spain primarily through maritime and land routes, often hidden among commercial shipments. Firearms trafficked into Spain include automatic rifles, submachine guns and 3D-printed weapons, which are increasingly used by youth gangs and organized criminal groups.

Spain is a significant hub for counterfeit goods, with organized crime groups exploiting labour in production and sales. Counterfeiting results in the loss of thousands of jobs and billions in revenue across various industries, including cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages. Criminal networks involved in counterfeiting have established supply chains that integrate fake goods into legitimate commercial channels, making detection more difficult. The majority of counterfeited items seized in Spain continue to originate from China, Türkiye and India.

The illicit trade of excise goods, primarily tobacco and alcohol, persists. However, a decline in the consumption of smuggled tobacco products has been reported in recent years, with major dismantling operations on tobacco smuggling networks carried out by law enforcement. Nevertheless, Spain continues to see illicit tobacco flows, particularly from Gibraltar and Andorra, with Andalusia experiencing the highest rates of illicit cigarette consumption. Organized criminal groups continue to exploit regulatory gaps in cross-border trade, making Spain both a destination and transit country for illicit tobacco products. Authorities have identified foreign mafia-style groups as key players in this market, particularly those with ties to Eastern Europe and North Africa.

ENVIRONMENT

Spain's flora crimes market is underdeveloped, but timber trafficking remains an issue. Illegal logging of protected species and unauthorized trade of high-value timber, including mahogany and Brazilian cedar, were uncovered in 2024. Calls for enhanced legal protections have intensified following high-profile cases of deforestation in Madrid. Weak enforcement of environmental regulations has allowed traffickers to exploit the sector, with timber shipments often falsely declared to bypass regulatory scrutiny. Fauna crimes are more established, with Spain serving as a key transit point for illegal wildlife trafficking from South America and Africa. Large seizures in 2024 included glass eels, a lucrative export to Asia. The illegal fur trade also continues to be a concern, with exports directed mainly to the US, South Korea and Hong Kong. Criminal groups specializing in wildlife trafficking utilize sophisticated smuggling methods, including falsified documentation and the use of private aviation routes to transport high-value species undetected. Although non-renewable resource crimes are not highly developed, illicit gold smuggling and mining violations persist. Spain was implicated in a cartel-led gold laundering scheme in 2024, and illegal mining operations were documented in Andalusia and Galicia. The exploitation of natural resources continues to raise environmental and labour concerns. The mining

industry in Spain has seen increased involvement from organized crime, particularly in illegal mineral extraction operations where local workers are often subjected to exploitative conditions.

DRUGS

Spain's heroin market is smaller than its cocaine and cannabis markets but remains well-established. Pontevedra, in Galicia, is the primary entry point for heroin into the country. The drug generally reaches Spain via the southern route, originating in Pakistan or Iran, passing through Southern or West Africa, and entering via North Africa. However, recent seizures indicate an alternative route through land transport from the Netherlands. Despite its presence, heroin consumption in Spain remains low, and trafficking groups tend to avoid violence.

Spain has become Europe's primary cocaine gateway, with record seizures in 2024. Increased security in Belgium and the Netherlands has shifted trafficking routes to Spain, particularly through Valencia, Algeciras and Barcelona. Criminal groups involved include the Italian 'Ndrangheta, Albanian-speaking networks and Colombian cartels. Corruption in ports and logistics facilitates trafficking, while competition among criminal groups has led to rising violence, particularly in areas where rival networks vie for territorial control.

Cannabis trafficking remains highly lucrative, with Spain being Europe's top cannabis producer and a primary hashish entry point from Morocco. The use of narco-boats has resulted in clashes with law enforcement. Rising cannabis-related violence and increased THC levels in illicit products have raised public health concerns. Spain's domestic cultivation of marijuana has expanded, with some production networks linked to foreign criminal syndicates, including Albanian-speaking and Chinese groups.

The synthetic drug market is growing, particularly MDMA and 'pink cocaine' (tusi). Labs dismantled in 2024 demonstrated high sophistication. Spain is a significant distribution hub, with trafficking networks linked to Ibiza's nightlife scene. Methamphetamine seizures have also increased, with some operations connected to the Sinaloa cartel. There has been a notable rise in synthetic drug production within Spain, with clandestine laboratories appearing in urban areas, often equipped with advanced chemical processing facilities.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes in Spain have increased significantly in the last few years. Ransomware attacks, hacking and business-targeted cyber-dependent crimes are prevalent. In addition to private sector actors, governmental institutions and media outlets are often targeted by cybercriminals. Healthcare institutions have also been attacked, with a

high-profile ransomware attack on a Barcelona hospital in 2024. Cybercriminal networks operating in Spain are becoming more specialized, using advanced encryption and dark web marketplaces to conduct illicit activities.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, particularly fraud and tax evasion, remain a persistent issue in Spain. Cyber-enabled fraud increased in 2024, with phishing scams and investment fraud becoming widespread. The country is among Europe's worst offenders for tax evasion, with offshore holdings estimated at billions of euros. A criminal network engaged in a multimillion-euro VAT fraud through luxury car imports was dismantled in 2024. Political corruption remains a concern, with cases of embezzlement at various administrative levels. High-profile corruption cases in 2024 exposed misuse of funds and bribery networks involving government officials.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Although Spanish authorities do not officially recognize the presence of Spanish-founded mafias, several family-based criminal clans operate in the country, exhibiting mafia-style characteristics. These groups, particularly in Galicia and Andalusia, control drug trafficking routes and maintain influence in local communities. However, their structure has evolved to become more fluid, allowing them to avoid law enforcement crackdowns. Unlike traditional mafia groups, they do not exercise widespread territorial control but focus on specific drug corridors and local neighbourhoods. In Sevilla, mafia-style clans remain particularly active, competing for control over drug distribution networks. Territorial disputes between these groups have led to escalating violence, with recent incidents raising concerns over potential retaliatory clashes. The growing internationalization of organized crime in Spain has resulted in the adaptation of these groups, reducing their direct involvement in drug sales while reinforcing their role as intermediaries in larger trafficking operations.

Spain hosts a diverse network of organized crime groups, many of which operate along coastal areas and key harbour cities, including Valencia, Galicia, Barcelona and Algeciras. These networks vary in structure, with some maintaining hierarchical leadership, while others function as decentralized criminal enterprises. Increasingly, Spanish criminal networks provide logistical and infrastructural services to foreign actors, supporting drug trafficking, human smuggling and money laundering operations. Criminal networks in southern Spain maintain close ties with narco-organizations, facilitating the transport of hashish from Morocco via high-speed boats. These groups continuously adjust their smuggling routes in response to law enforcement efforts, allowing them to sustain their operations despite heightened border controls. Spanish law enforcement has also identified an emerging trend of criminal networks offering specialized services,

such as document forgery and arms trafficking, to other illicit organizations. Authorities have recently dismantled transnational crime networks involved in cyber-enabled financial crimes and arms smuggling, including an operation exploiting trade loopholes to evade customs duties.

Spain does not exhibit widespread state-embedded criminality, though cases of police and customs officer corruption continue to surface, particularly in relation to drug trafficking. Certain public officials have been implicated in schemes where they facilitate smuggling activities in exchange for financial compensation. These cases generally involve law enforcement personnel at key transit points, who provide intelligence and logistical support to trafficking organizations. Some investigations have revealed instances of administrative corruption, including officials suspected of manipulating trade and customs regulations to benefit criminal enterprises. Furthermore, recent cases have revealed the direct involvement of high-level officials – including those within anti-money laundering and fraud units – in corrupt schemes. Although such incidents do not indicate systemic criminal capture of the state, they underscore ongoing vulnerabilities within Spain's border security and regulatory frameworks.

Foreign criminal actors exert significant influence over Spain's organized crime landscape, with criminal groups from more than 30 countries actively involved in illicit activities. These organizations often engage in strategic alliances with local networks, reinforcing their drug trafficking, money laundering and arms smuggling operations. The Italian mafia, particularly the 'Ndrangheta and Camorra, maintains a discreet but entrenched presence in Spain, leveraging long-standing connections with Latin American drug cartels. These groups primarily focus on cocaine trafficking and money laundering, taking advantage of Spain's real estate and hospitality sectors for financial operations. The 'Mocro Mafia', operating primarily on Dutch and Belgium territory, has become increasingly violent and

visible in Spain, particularly in Marbella and Algeciras, where they specialize in coercing dockworkers into facilitating drug imports. Other significant foreign groups include Colombian networks, which manage cocaine shipments, and groups originating in the Western Balkans, which have consolidated control over key maritime smuggling routes. The Russian mafia continues to focus on financial crimes and money laundering, embedding itself in Spain's real estate market and tourism sector. Chinese criminal organizations also play a crucial role, particularly in money laundering schemes, often serving as financial intermediaries for other criminal groups. Youth gangs with ties to Latin American criminal organizations, such as the Dominicans Don't Play and Trinitarios, are active in street-level drug trafficking and arms trade. These groups increasingly recruit minors, raising concerns about the long-term expansion of foreign-linked gang activity in Spain.

Although organized crime groups do not directly control major industries, the hospitality and real estate sectors in Spain serve as primary channels for money laundering and illicit financial activity. Criminal networks frequently invest in luxury properties, entertainment venues and tourism-related businesses, using these industries to integrate illicit proceeds into the legal economy. Investigations into money laundering cases have revealed the use of complex corporate structures and offshore financial mechanisms to facilitate large-scale illicit transactions. Spanish law enforcement has recently dismantled networks involved in fraudulent commercial transactions, demonstrating how criminal actors exploit financial institutions to legitimize illicit funds. Spain's role as a financial hub for international organized crime highlights ongoing challenges in enforcing anti-money laundering regulations and monitoring high-risk business sectors. Despite enhanced compliance measures, vulnerabilities in corporate oversight and financial transparency continue to be exploited by criminal entities.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Spain's political leadership has faced challenges in addressing organized crime, with electoral platforms varying in their emphasis on crime-related issues. Although the current ruling party has not explicitly prioritized organized crime in its policy agenda, opposition parties have accused it of being lenient in its approach. The country's governance indicators reflect a stable democratic system, but trust in national institutions remains relatively low, with public confidence in regional and local governance comparatively higher. While Catalan separatist movements have introduced

a degree of political fragility in the country, recent efforts indicate a shift toward resolution. The government is seeking to pass an amnesty law that would grant impunity to individuals involved in the crisis, aiming to promote political reconciliation. In terms of combating specific forms of crime, the fight against cybercrime is a stated government priority, with strategic initiatives launched to bolster cybersecurity awareness and law enforcement capabilities. However, despite increased investments in cybercrime prevention, Spain has experienced a high frequency of cyberattacks, particularly around electoral

periods, raising concerns about its preparedness in handling digital threats. Human trafficking remains a key focus of law enforcement efforts, with an increase in identified victims and criminal prosecutions.

Government transparency and accountability have been subject to scrutiny, with concerns over corruption and political party financing. Spain's anti-corruption framework includes specialized prosecutorial bodies dedicated to investigating corruption-related offenses, and legislative measures ensure public access to government records. However, civil society organizations and international observers have criticized bureaucratic obstacles in obtaining government-held information. Moreover, the agency responsible for monitoring transparency regulations has been flagged for insufficient financial and human resources. Although there is a legal framework for transparency, compliance has been inconsistent, leading to ongoing challenges in accountability.

Spain actively participates in international cooperation efforts to combat transnational organized crime. The country has ratified key international conventions related to organized crime, corruption and drug trafficking, and has strengthened bilateral agreements with European, African and Latin American partners. Collaboration with Europol, INTERPOL and other security organizations remains a cornerstone of Spain's anti-crime strategy. Spain has further engaged in extradition agreements with various countries, though gaps exist with nations that lack formal extradition treaties, occasionally hindering the prosecution of fugitives.

Spain's national policies and legal framework are robust in addressing various forms of organized crime. The country has comprehensive criminal legislation targeting human trafficking, drug trafficking and money laundering, among other offenses. However, the legal framework for victim protection remains fragmented, and efforts to streamline laws and centralize victim support mechanisms are ongoing. Recent legislative reforms have enhanced Spain's response to financial crimes, reflecting a commitment to aligning with international anti-money laundering standards.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Spain's judicial system is equipped with specialized prosecutorial units tasked with handling organized crime cases. These include dedicated offices for corruption, drug trafficking, human trafficking and cybercrime, ensuring focused legal action against criminal networks. Although prosecutions remain effective, judicial officials have at times faced criticism regarding impartiality and delays in processing cases. Training deficiencies, particularly in handling human trafficking cases, have led to gaps in victim protection and legal proceedings. The detention system in Spain adheres to international human rights standards, with adequate living conditions, healthcare and legal assistance

for inmates. The prison population has steadily declined, partly due to alternative sentencing measures. However, a rise in inmate suicides has prompted authorities to review suicide prevention policies within correctional facilities.

Spain's law enforcement agencies, including the National Police and Guardia Civil, maintain strong operational capabilities in combating organized crime. The country has achieved historically high personnel levels, reflecting increased government investment in national security. Specialized law enforcement units focus on financial crimes, drug trafficking and environmental offenses, though their credibility is sometimes undermined by instances of corruption, particularly among customs officials. Furthermore, the government has continued to invest in improving policing, including advancements in technology. However, challenges remain in intelligence sharing and in developing a more coordinated, holistic approach to combating organized crime.

Spain's territorial integrity continues to face threats due to its strategic location between Europe, Africa and Latin America, making it a key transit point for drug and human smuggling operations. Increased bilateral security cooperation with Morocco has helped mitigate irregular migration flows and combat transnational criminal organizations. However, smuggling routes remain dynamic, and traffickers have adapted their methods in response to enhanced border controls.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Spain remains a primary hub for money laundering, with criminal organizations exploiting real estate, hospitality and financial sectors to launder illicit proceeds. The country has enacted strict anti-money laundering regulations, with compliance oversight conducted by financial intelligence units and regulatory agencies. However, criminal groups continue to exploit financial loopholes, particularly through cryptocurrency transactions and shell companies. Spain has improved its collaboration with international financial watchdogs, working closely with the Financial Action Task Force and the EU to strengthen anti-money laundering measures. Despite these efforts, a significant proportion of laundered funds remains undetected.

The economic regulatory environment in Spain is generally conducive to legitimate business operations, with a well-established legal framework aimed at preventing criminal interference in commercial activities. Spain maintains several free trade zones that facilitate international commerce while also presenting potential vulnerabilities for illicit trade. The country's financial institutions have enhanced fraud detection mechanisms, including collaborative initiatives between major banks to prevent financial crimes. Nonetheless, tax evasion and offshore asset concealment remain persistent challenges, requiring enhanced cross-border regulatory cooperation.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Spain's victim and witness support mechanisms are established but require further enhancement, particularly in the areas of human trafficking and witness protection. Although Spain has enacted laws ensuring victim rights and legal representation, access to protective services is often conditional on victims' cooperation with law enforcement, discouraging many from seeking assistance. The government has partnered with NGOs and civil society organizations to improve victim identification and support frameworks, but gaps remain in data collection and victim outreach programmes.

Prevention initiatives in Spain emphasize awareness campaigns, law enforcement expansion and increased penalties for criminal offenses. The government has implemented strategic plans to combat human trafficking, cybercrime and financial fraud, often in collaboration with international partners. Though progress has been made, Spain lacks a unified national crime prevention strategy, with anti-corruption measures being particularly fragmented. Recent legislation has enhanced whistleblower protections, aligning Spain's legal framework with EU directives on corporate accountability and fraud prevention.

Non-state actors, including NGOs and media organizations, play a significant role in raising awareness about organized crime and corruption. Civil society groups actively engage in crime prevention efforts, victim advocacy and government transparency initiatives. However, NGOs remain restricted from formally identifying human trafficking victims, limiting their role in direct law enforcement collaboration. Spain's media landscape remains largely free, though political polarization and pressures on journalists have raised concerns about press freedom. Although investigative journalism continues to expose corruption and organized crime, legal threats and political interference have at times undermined journalistic independence. Efforts to decriminalize certain offenses related to state symbols and defamation laws represent progress in protecting freedom of expression. Nonetheless, authorities have faced criticism over past incidents involving arrests of journalists covering protests or sensitive political matters.

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