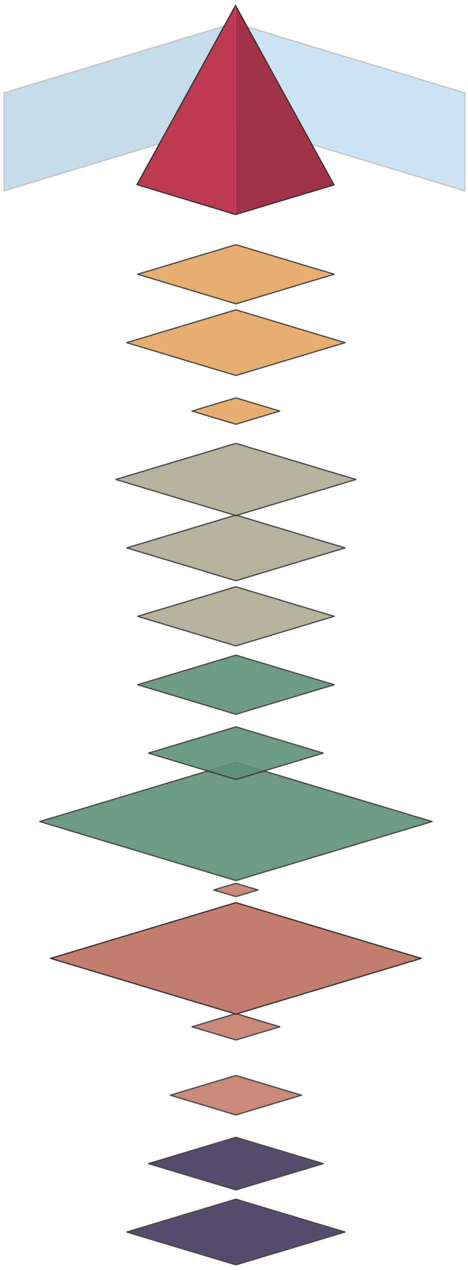
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

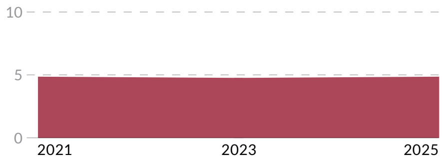
SURINAME



4.90 ↗0.13

CRIMINALITY SCORE

109th of 193 countries ↗6
24th of 35 American countries -
11th of 12 South American countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.50	↘0.03
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50	↗0.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.00	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00	↘1.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.50	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.50	↗0.50
FLORA CRIMES	4.50	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	4.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	9.00	↗0.50
HEROIN TRADE	1.00	↘0.50
COCAINE TRADE	8.50	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	2.00	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	4.00	↘1.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.00	↗0.50

CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.30	↗0.30
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.50	↗1.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.00	0.00

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

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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.

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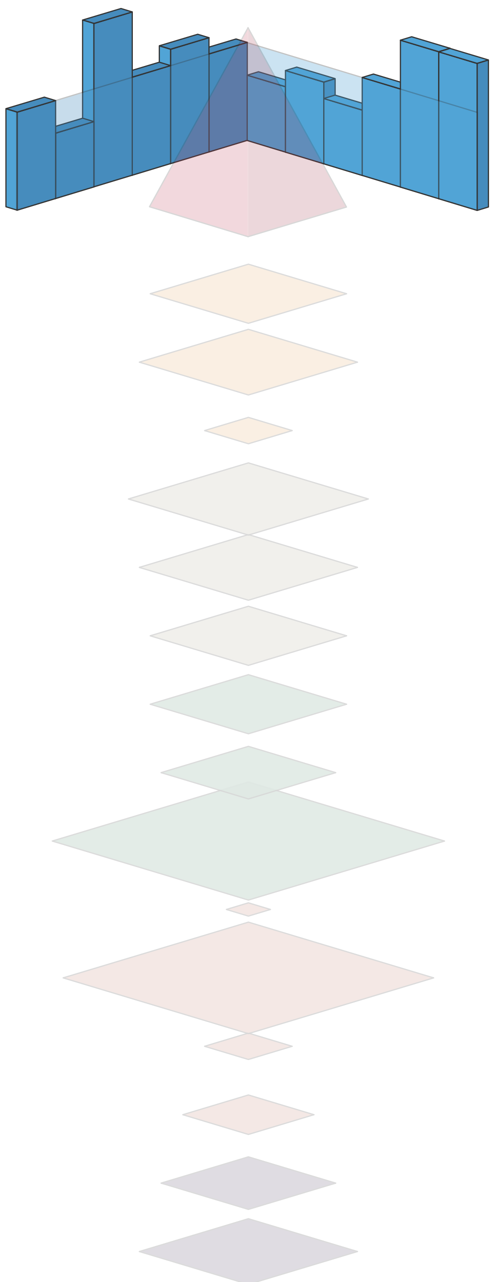
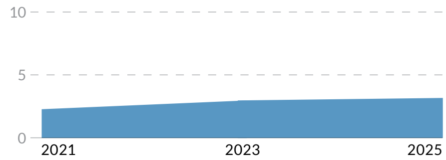
SURINAME



3.17 ↗0.12

RESILIENCE SCORE

161st of 193 countries ↗9
32nd of 35 American countries -
11th of 12 South American countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	3.00	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	2.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00	↗0.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	3.00	↘0.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.50	↗0.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	2.00	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	2.50	↗0.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	2.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.00	0.00
PREVENTION	4.50	↘0.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.50	↗1.00

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Suriname remains a transit and destination country for the human trafficking of national and foreign victims, facilitated by the country's forested terrain and porous borders. The victims mainly come from Venezuela, Haiti, Brazil, Cuba and Asia. Irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable, with women facing sexual exploitation in brothels and gold mines, while men and children are subjected to labour trafficking in agriculture, construction and mining. Surinamese traffickers primarily operate domestically, while foreign actors from neighbouring countries and Asia, particularly China, are increasingly involved in labour and sexual exploitation. This has become more visible and widespread with the rising numbers of Chinese miners, many of whom are trapped in debt bondage.

Suriname functions primarily as a transit country for human smuggling within the region, driven by continuous migration and minimal entry barriers. Most irregular migrants stay in the country by overstaying visitor visas. Meanwhile, due to instability in their home country, Haitian nationals often choose the services of smugglers, particularly mafia-style foreign groups. Despite recent efforts to curb smuggling, border control remains compromised by corruption among police, customs and border officials. Smuggling along the Maroni River border predominantly targets entry into French Guiana's gold mines, coordinated by Brazilian miners and local maroons rather than structured criminal organizations. Inadequate monitoring and recent visa restrictions hinder both accurate estimations of victim numbers and effective interventions. Suriname has a limited extortion and protection racketeering market, with sporadic extortion incidents occurring in the country, primarily concentrated in gold-mining settlements.

TRADE

Suriname also functions as a transit country for arms trafficking within the region, primarily receiving firearms from Brazil and the United States. Domestic supply of illicit firearms is provided by national stockpile diversion, civilian ownership, craft production and recirculation. Illicit firearms are often acquired for protection, criminal activities and economic reasons. Arms smuggling routes are controlled by criminal networks, including foreign groups linked to cocaine trafficking. Corruption in law enforcement and government offices has facilitated the trade, including military involvement with Brazilian criminal groups.

Suriname has seen an influx of counterfeit goods, including medicines, automotive parts and cosmetics, most of which originate in China, with smaller volumes coming from Brazil. Entry is facilitated by weak customs controls at seaports and corruption among customs officials. These counterfeit items are widespread in street markets and Chinese-owned warehouses and shops. Due to concerns about authenticity and quality, legitimate car garages increasingly bypass local supply chains, sourcing parts directly from the Netherlands.

The country is both a destination and transit point for excisable goods, with criminal groups smuggling tobacco and other items between Paraguay, Guyana and Brazil. Paraguay, for example, provides half of Suriname's circulating tobacco and Brazilian boats bring goods illegally into the country. Surinamese groups move excisable goods such as food, alcohol and mining supplies into neighbouring countries. The Maroni River is a key smuggling corridor to illegal mining sites in French Guiana. Although generating low profits, these logistical operations offer daily canoe departures from Suriname.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging is driven by unregulated activities and limited oversight in inland areas and causes significant deforestation. Foreign companies, primarily Chinese and Malaysian, dominate logging concessions and illegal timber is often sold online, making it difficult to trace. Organized crime networks exploit timber resources, sometimes aided by corrupt officials. Marginalized indigenous and maroon communities, lacking state support, frequently resort to unauthorized logging for survival, while local leaders exchange land rights for financial compensation, often to their own benefit. Despite international rulings, unauthorized logging on Saamaka lands continues, leading to forest degradation.

Suriname functions as a source country for wildlife trafficking, particularly jaguars and songbirds, fuelled by external demand. Trafficking in jaguars for traditional medicine markets in China is highly profitable, with jaguar fat paste commanding high prices. Incentivized by criminal networks linked to corrupt politicians, local hunters are shifting from subsistence to commercial hunting. Chinese criminal organizations exploit local hunters and form part of broader trafficking networks operating in Bolivia and South East Asia.

Suriname's gold-mining sector, a major economic driver, is plagued by illegal mining and smuggling, fuelled by tax rates that are lower than in neighbouring countries. This has made Suriname a key transit point for smuggled gold from French Guiana, Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela. The

Lawa River region, bordering French Guiana, is a major hotspot for illegal mining activities. It is estimated that nearly half of the gold produced illegally in French Guiana is transported through organized smuggling routes into Paramaribo without effective oversight. Indigenous maroon communities and Brazilian miners dominate illegal operations, creating social and environmental challenges. Reports also point to the involvement of transnational criminal networks and foreign commercial actors in these activities, including members of Brazil's Primeiro Comando da Capital and Chinese merchants. Discrepancies in export data indicate substantial under-reporting. These issues are compounded by systemic corruption, with reports indicating that higher-level government officials have vested interests in illegal gold-mining operations, facilitating smuggling flows to neighbouring countries where regulatory frameworks are weaker or royalty rates are lower. Mercury and fuel smuggling also heighten health and ecological risks.

DRUGS

Suriname has solidified its role as a major cocaine transit point to North America and Europe, with limited local consumption. Cocaine primarily enters by way of private planes from Colombia and Venezuela or 'mules' on commercial flights, despite crackdowns in the neighbouring countries. Established land routes from Colombia, Venezuela and Guyana are facilitated by corrupt law enforcement, particularly at the Maroni border. Once in Suriname, cocaine is concealed in shipping containers or submarines for shipment to Europe, either directly or via intermediate stops like French Guiana and Martinique. Local criminal networks collaborate with Colombian, Brazilian and Venezuelan groups, exploiting the pervasive corruption within law enforcement and some of the highest elites in the country which continues to enable trafficking despite limited countermeasures.

The cannabis market in the country is small compared to neighbouring countries, with supply coming from French Guiana and Brazil, facilitated by corrupt customs practices. External factors, including the influence of organized smuggling networks, and insufficient internal controls contribute to the country's role as a conduit for cannabis trafficking.

The synthetic drug trade appears to be limited in Suriname. However, there are indications of synthetic drugs entering the country to be smuggled to neighbouring states and on to the United States and Canada. Traffickers are primarily foreign actors operating in the Netherlands, where the drugs are produced and shipped from. There is no evidence to suggest that Suriname has a consolidated heroin market, nor of heroin-related illicit activities or criminal organization.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

While the country has experienced several cyberattacks, there has not been a consistent or prolonged pattern of such attacks. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that Suriname has a well-established market for cyber-dependent crimes, although limitations in Suriname's cybersecurity systems leave the country vulnerable.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Suriname has an established financial crimes market, with corruption pervasive in the public sector. High-level cases involve embezzlement and misuse of funds, often tied to private and international enterprises through manipulated governmental contracts. Tax evasion is also widespread, involving both organized cartels and individual economic actors, particularly within the gold export sector. External economic pressures exacerbate risks, drawing international scrutiny and highlighting systemic vulnerabilities.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Suriname remain largely under the radar, with no significantly powerful or well-structured organizations dominating the country's criminal markets. No criminal enclaves exist in the country, despite the jungle-dense territory which allows for a bigger concentration of illicit activities and criminal groups. Insofar as they do exist, mafia-style groups in Suriname are hierarchical and small, and controlled by a few key government, military and police leaders.

Criminal networks are relatively active in Suriname's organized crime landscape, each with transnational dimensions and systemic vulnerabilities. Border-related transnational groups collaborate with Brazilian and Guianese counterparts, engaging in arms trafficking and the illicit gold and mercury trades, utilizing Brazilian payment systems to launder proceeds. Friend-to-friend smuggling networks transport illegal commodities such as jaguar paste and drugs, operating both domestically and internationally, including connections to the Netherlands. Highly structured cocaine smuggling organizations were identified as the main actors managing the transport of cocaine to Europe, increasingly relying on French Guianese residents as mule operations attract tighter security. Money laundering networks are linked to political elites, with past administrations entangled in corruption.

Suriname's organized crime landscape is shaped by systemic corruption involving influential political figures and actors embedded within state institutions. Senior officials have been implicated in serious criminal allegations, while political power has been consolidated through strategic appointments and control over profitable sectors such as gold mining. Community initiatives have at times been leveraged to bolster political influence. The legacy of past leadership continues to contribute to deeply rooted governance challenges by reinforcing ties between criminal networks and elements within the state. The illicit gold trade remains dominated by corrupt practices, with foreign entities such as Chinese and Dubai-based companies implicated alongside the country's leadership. Transparency is notably absent in agreements with foreign mining firms. The current administration, despite recognizing the extent of corruption, does not confront officials because of the economic significance of informal gold mining, which employs a significant portion of the population and dominates exports.

Suriname functions as a critical trans-shipment hub for drug trafficking between Latin America and Europe, attracting diverse foreign criminal organizations from Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and the Guianas. The country's strategic location facilitates long-standing cooperation between Surinamese and Colombian groups, historically linked to major drug trafficking networks. Brazilian criminal organizations extend their influence beyond the drug trade to illicit mining operations, controlling significant portions of both jungle and urban economies. Former Colombian insurgents have also established a presence in Suriname. Additionally, Chinese private-sector actors play a central role in Suriname's illicit economy, particularly in the illegal trade of gold, mercury, cyanide and wildlife products, exploiting regulatory loopholes and transnational connections to destinations in Asia. Multinational corporations also leverage their substantial economic influence to shape government policies and exploit regulatory loopholes to secure favourable conditions.

Private-sector involvement in Suriname's organized crime landscape is moderate, but particularly pronounced in the mining and gold sectors. Mining companies subcontract artisanal miners, bypassing legal accountability. Illegal flora exploitation persists under lax regulations, with companies obtaining concessions at the expense of indigenous communities. Human smuggling is facilitated by private clubs and construction firms recruiting foreign labour informally, highlighting the interplay between economic power, regulatory gaps and transnational influences in fostering organized crime.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Suriname faces persistent challenges with governance, organized crime and regulatory quality, despite a change in leadership during the reporting period. Electoral processes largely align with international standards. However, unequal district sizes and outdated population data persist, and the electoral system has been deemed unconstitutional. Governance effectiveness remains low, with regulatory efforts undermined by widespread corruption, clientelism and state involvement in the gold sector. Organized crime, particularly drug and arms trafficking, infiltrates political and law enforcement systems, exacerbating governance issues.

Suriname faces pervasive corruption, with limited progress despite establishing an anti-corruption commission during the reporting period. Corruption cases largely go undetected or unprosecuted. Transparency remains a significant issue, particularly in key sectors like mining, where recent agreements failed to include public disclosure. The country lacks legislation to guarantee access to public information, contributing to low openness scores and hindering accountability. Outdated legal and regulatory frameworks further exacerbate governance challenges, though the current administration has pledged to enhance transparency in public tendering. Recent measures include mandating financial disclosures from ministers and holding regular press conferences, yet implementation remains inconsistent, leaving gaps that allow financial crimes to persist without consequence. A landmark conviction of the former president suggests a tentative shift toward accountability, but institutional weaknesses and crime penetration prevail.

The country has ratified most major international conventions on organized crime, except the Firearms Protocol and the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. During the reporting period, it strengthened bilateral and regional cooperation, signing enforcement agreements with Brazil, Guyana and French Guiana, and participating in Caribbean Community mechanisms to combat transnational crime. Joint security initiatives include intelligence-sharing and anti-narco-trafficking operations. The United States provided financial and technical assistance to enhance border and aerial security. Suriname collaborates with the UN on illicit firearms detection and operates a container control programme to curb trafficking.

Suriname's legal framework to address organized crime is outdated, with limited updates or amendments made over the past decades, resulting in inadequate implementation and enforcement. Consequently, investigations, prosecutions and convictions for organized crime remain scarce. Forestry regulations exist, including measures for sustainable logging and biodiversity protection, but enforcement is weak and penalties are insufficiently stringent, particularly for wildlife trafficking. While human trafficking laws include harsh penalties, enforcement gaps persist. The government has developed a national cybersecurity strategy and conducted public awareness campaigns on cybercrime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Suriname's judiciary has gained increased autonomy since the change of government, with initiatives to build capacity through training, improved remuneration and expanded hiring. Despite these advances, continuing challenges include limited resources and personnel, trial delays and extended pretrial detention. The judiciary is subject to political tensions, including criticism of the Supreme Court's policies and allegations of political interference. The General Prosecutor's office, which focuses on environmental crime, anti-money laundering and drug offences, faces challenges due to internal government conflicts and delayed formal appointments. Overcrowded and unsanitary prison conditions, coupled with reported abuse by personnel, further undermine judicial integrity.

Law enforcement in Suriname faces severe challenges from understaffing, low salaries and high workloads, leading to widespread corruption, including demands for 'passage fees' at checkpoints and disproportionate fines for minor infractions. Customs operations are marked by severe underfunding, corruption and inadequate equipment, compromising international airport security and requiring additional checks at foreign destinations. Despite the lack of a dedicated organized crime unit, existing specialized squads address narcotics, international drug trafficking, container control and human trafficking, with increased investigations and prosecutions reported during the period. Cybersecurity efforts include international training and plans for a cybercrime unit.

Suriname faces severe challenges in maintaining territorial integrity due to porous and inadequately protected borders. At the same time, the country's geographical position on major cocaine trafficking routes makes it a crucial transit point for illicit markets. Borders with Guyana and French Guiana experience high volumes of illegal crossings, while the lack of an official post on the Brazilian border exacerbates vulnerabilities. Unmonitored southern regions, sparse population and unprotected inland territories facilitate cocaine and weapon smuggling by foreign and local criminal groups. Law enforcement faces systemic corruption, limited resources and budgetary constraints amid an economic crisis, severely undermining border control efforts.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The country faces medium-high money laundering risks, primarily due to cocaine trans-shipment to Europe, illicit gold mining and unregulated cash-based transactions, including gold purchases and a cash-driven casino industry. Despite the efforts of the current administration to enhance anti-money laundering enforcement, the country remains vulnerable due to limited resources, outdated technology and insufficient inter-agency coordination. While the financial intelligence unit has improved cash-deposit monitoring, there has been limited suspicious-activity reporting by financial institutions. Weaknesses within the financial investigation team hinder effective money laundering case identification and investigation. While mandatory anti-money laundering legislation is being pursued, implementation remains limited.

The economy remains constrained by corruption and state control, limiting private-sector growth and long-term development. The public sector dominates employment, with limited investment in workforce education and training. The extractive sector, a major source of foreign investment, suffers from opaque public tenders and corruption. Weak rule of law and the lack of competition legislation further hinder economic progress. While property rights are constitutionally protected, enforcement is inconsistent, particularly in land policy and government contracts. Efforts to reduce excise taxes as a strategy to curb illicit markets are hampered by inflation and currency devaluation.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Government victim support programmes primarily address human trafficking, and a temporary shelter has been established and publicly funded. The government collaborates with international organizations and NGOs to facilitate safe third-country travel for foreign victims, though repatriation assistance remains unavailable. A protocol for first responders to victims of trafficking has been implemented across various agencies. While the Bureau of Victim Services offers food, shelter, medical care and counselling, specialized care centres for children and adult male victims are lacking. Victim identification has decreased despite a 24-hour anti-trafficking hotline operating in multiple languages. Witness identity protection during trials remains insufficient.

Progress in crime prevention has been made, particularly with regard to human trafficking and wildlife poaching, yet enforcement challenges persist due to institutional limitations. Public awareness initiatives, including multilingual brochures and school campaigns, aim to combat human trafficking, with a special focus on vulnerable groups such as the maroon indigenous communities. Wildlife crime prevention efforts target jaguar poaching in collaboration with NGOs and public figures, yet enforcement remains weak. Government policing entities face financial and human resource constraints. Corruption and insufficient remuneration for compliance officers increase their vulnerability to bribery. Illegal logging persists despite monitoring initiatives, further strained by the country's vast rainforest and systemic corruption.

Non-state actors, including NGOs and indigenous maroon communities, actively combat crime and environmental degradation in Suriname, focusing on wildlife protection and pollution prevention. The media environment is generally open, with constitutional guarantees for press freedom and a pluralistic landscape, but it includes challenges such as financial limitations and cyberattacks on news outlets that compromise digital archives and content integrity. Investigative journalism, particularly in the gold sector, is often conducted by foreign journalists due to local reluctance. While the government is generally accessible, strict defamation laws and occasional political pressure deter critical reporting. Despite sporadic aggression towards journalists and political biases, NGO involvement in policymaking remains strong and unimpeded by government interference.

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.