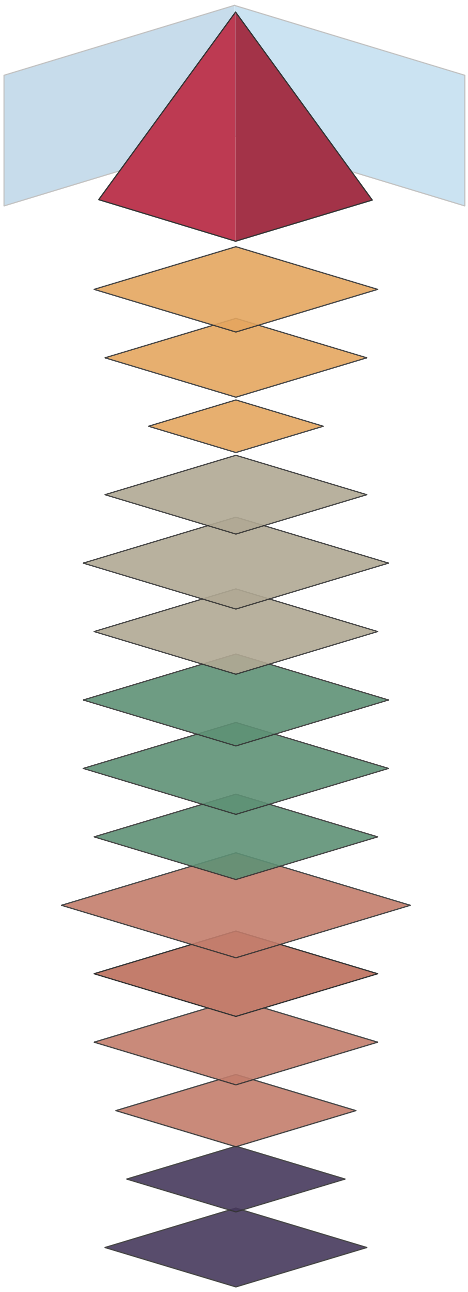
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

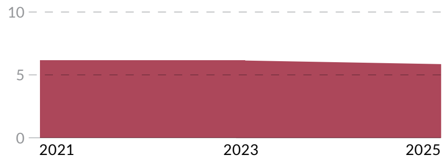
TANZANIA



5.93 ↘0.27

CRIMINALITY SCORE

53rd of 193 countries ↘11
17th of 54 African countries ↘6
7th of 9 East African countries ↘2



CRIMINAL MARKETS 6.27 ↘0.13

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.00	↘1.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	4.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.50	↘0.50
FLORA CRIMES	7.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	7.00	↘1.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	6.50	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	8.00	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	6.50	↗0.50
CANNABIS TRADE	6.50	↘0.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.50	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.00	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	↗0.50

CRIMINAL ACTORS 5.60 ↘0.40

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00	↘0.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.50	↘0.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.00	↘0.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00	↘0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.50	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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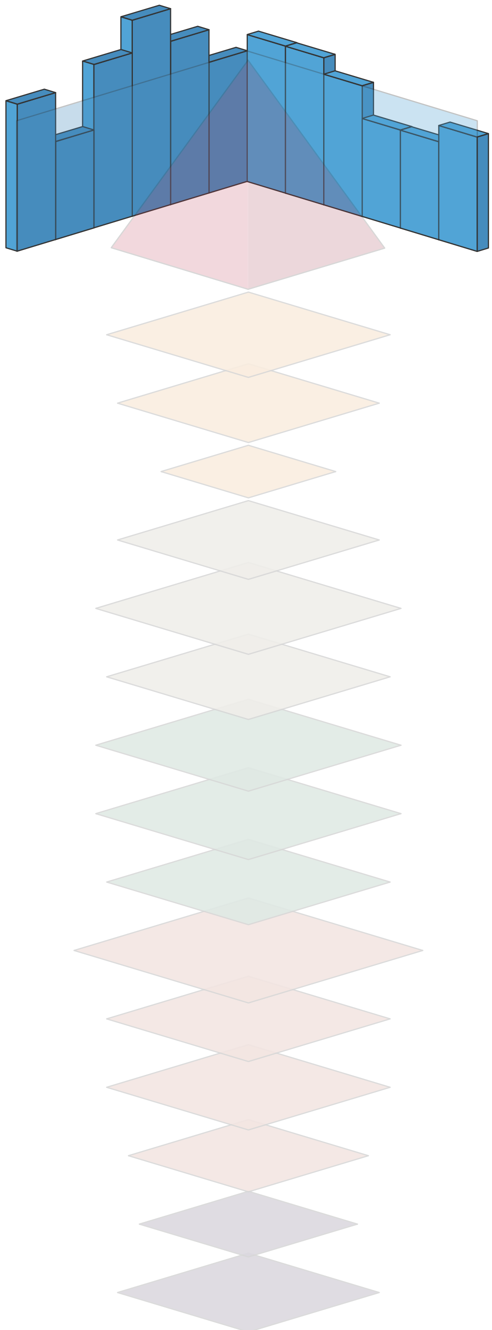
GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

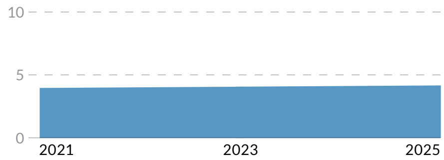
TANZANIA



4.17 ↗0.04

RESILIENCE SCORE

125th of 193 countries ↗1
23rd of 54 African countries ↗1
3rd of 9 East African countries ↗1



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	**4.50**	↘1.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	**3.00**	↗0.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	**5.00**	↗0.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	**6.00**	↗0.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	**5.00**	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	**4.00**	↗0.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	**4.50**	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	**4.50**	↘0.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	**4.00**	↘1.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	**3.00**	0.00
PREVENTION	**3.00**	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	**3.50**	↗1.00

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Tanzania is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, with victims exploited in forced labour, mining, agriculture and sex trafficking. Traffickers use fraudulent job postings to recruit Tanzanians, with Zanzibar serving as a transit point to Western Asian countries for domestic servitude. Vulnerable migrants and refugees passing through Tanzania, including those from Burundi, are also at risk of trafficking. Children, especially orphans and those with disabilities, face exploitation in forced begging and sex trafficking. Overall, the country falls short of meeting minimum trafficking elimination standards. Tanzania also serves as a key transit country for human smugglers, with migrants from the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia and Burundi passing through en route to Southern African countries such as Mozambique and South Africa, as well as to Western Asia. Criminal networks, sometimes aided by state-embedded actors, exploit inadequately monitored borders to smuggle people. Increased risks of human smuggling are also linked to violent extremism in neighbouring Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Tanzania is a notable entry point for illegal immigrants from East Africa seeking to travel to Southern Africa for economic opportunities or to escape conflict. Nevertheless, the government has intensified its crackdown on smuggling routes, resulting in the arrest of both smugglers and smuggled individuals. Extortion through kidnapping for ransom is a moderate issue in Tanzania, with both domestic and foreign actors involved in these crimes. City gangs reportedly attack and kidnap individuals for ransom. Although there have been arrests and charges against perpetrators, the ongoing nature of these crimes highlights the resilience of the extortion market in the country.

TRADE

Arms trafficking is a persistent issue in Tanzania, exacerbated by ongoing conflicts in neighbouring countries. Criminal networks and foreign actors facilitate the flow of arms and ammunition, particularly across the north-western borders, such as Lake Tanganyika. Despite efforts such as amnesty programmes, arms trafficking continues, fuelled by violence over indigenous land use and regional instability. Conflicts in Mozambique and the DRC further increase trafficking risks. The government's efforts to secure borders have made it harder for the media to report on these cases, but Tanzania remains a key transit and destination point for illicit arms.

The trade of counterfeit goods is a significant issue in Tanzania, particularly in the pharmaceutical sector. Criminal networks and foreign actors drive this illicit trade, contributing to revenue loss and tax evasion. The market is fuelled by local production and demand for cheaper counterfeit goods. Popular counterfeited drugs, such as antimalarials and antibiotics, pose significant public health risks. Other counterfeit goods such as electronics, clothes and food are occasionally confiscated from warehouses and shops. The trade in counterfeit goods is driven by local demand as counterfeit goods are perceived to be more affordable.

Similarly, the illicit trade of excisable goods is a well-established criminal market in Tanzania, involving smuggling of cigarettes to Kenya and the importation of avocados from Kenya. Illicit alcohol, which constitutes a significant share of the market, is particularly prevalent owing to its affordability, resulting in substantial revenue losses for the government. The trade is driven by criminal networks, state-embedded actors and foreign participants. The market is socially accepted and continues to thrive, with little proactive government action to address it. However, citizens and businesses are growing increasingly concerned about the influx of smuggled goods saturating local markets, undercutting legitimate traders and reducing tax revenues. Illicit trade facilitated through ports is also on the rise along the shores of Lake Tanganyika, especially in the Uvinza District of the Kigoma region.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging and the illicit charcoal trade are major environmental and economic challenges in Tanzania as they represent a criminal market with severe influence in the country. Charcoal, a key export, has been severely impacted by illegal activities involving criminal networks, state-embedded actors and private-sector participants. Government efforts to curtail illegal logging are hampered by the involvement of state-embedded actors in the criminal market. Similarly, Tanzania is a key source and transit point for illegal wildlife products, including ivory, reptile skins and rhino teeth, with Dar es Salaam serving as a major trafficking hub. Criminal networks from Tanzania, and foreign actors from China and West Africa, are involved, primarily targeting Asian markets. Despite some efforts to stabilize elephant population numbers, illegal trade continues to threaten the environment, socio-economic development and the tourism sector.

Tanzania is a key transit hub for illicit gold and tanzanite, primarily trafficked by criminal networks, foreign actors and insurgent groups, including those in the eastern DRC and northern Mozambique. Despite increased law enforcement efforts, Tanzania continues to play a central role in the smuggling of conflict gold. These criminal activities are a significant concern, fuelled by heightened regional instabilities.

DRUGS

Tanzania is a significant transit and destination point in the regional heroin trade, involving local and foreign actors. Despite ongoing crackdowns, the heroin trade continues to thrive, driven by both local and tourist demand. Tanzania's strategic position and its regional connectivity to Southern Africa facilitate trafficking operations and its importance in the global heroin trade, with the Dar es Salaam port serving as a key hub for Afghan heroin. There is evidence of two forms of heroin being trafficked through the country: a purer form being trafficked through Southern Africa onwards to Europe and an adulterated form trafficked to Southern Africa for domestic consumption. Tanzania is also a key transit hub for cocaine trafficking, with criminal networks, including local and foreign actors, facilitating the movement of the drug primarily from Latin America. Zanzibar is a notable hub for cocaine and its significance has increased in recent years, driven by local demand, particularly from the tourism sector. Cocaine seizures have increased along the Indian Ocean coast, with the drug often transported via Tanzanian ports to Kenya and beyond, including to South Asia through air couriers.

Tanzania serves as both a source and a transit hub for cannabis, with extensive local cultivation driven by criminal networks, foreign actors and state-embedded individuals. Cannabis is the most widely consumed illicit drug in the country, followed by khat, heroin and cocaine. Despite government efforts and extensive seizures occurring in the reporting period, cannabis remains deeply ingrained in local economies, where it is socially accepted, contributing to its widespread cultivation and consumption. In addition, Tanzania has a moderate role in the synthetic drug trade, both as a transit hub and a destination. While the market for synthetic drugs is smaller than for other drugs, criminal networks and foreign actors continue to drive the trade. Several operations that led to seizures of notable volumes of methamphetamine as well as fentanyl occurred in the reporting period and reflect ongoing prevalence of the trade in synthetic drugs in the country.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes in Tanzania are not currently prevalent but are an emerging concern, as authorities suspect that the actual number of cases is underreported. Law enforcement, along with financial institutions, has observed and confirmed the increasing trend of cybercrime in Tanzania with crimes such as cyberattacks, especially against government institutions, and crypto-related scams being highlighted as key concerns.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are a significant concern in Tanzania, with cases of misappropriated public funds, fraud and Ponzi schemes on the rise. Criminal networks and state-embedded actors are heavily involved in these activities. Despite efforts to curb this market, Tanzania's cash-based economy and corruption facilitate illicit transactions, contributing to the persistence of financial crimes. Significant financial losses as a result of mobile money scams, virtual bank transfers and ATM-related fraud have been reported by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Some organized and structured city gangs involved in criminal activities such as kidnapping operate in Tanzania, but these groups have limited influence on society. In addition, numerous loosely organized criminal networks with both local and international connections are involved in illicit activities such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, the trade of counterfeit goods and illegal logging. The operations of these networks are particularly concentrated in major urban centres and key ports, which serve as significant hubs for transnational crime. State-embedded actors in Tanzania, particularly at lower levels, are involved in criminal markets such as human trafficking, smuggling and environmental crimes. Despite efforts to curb this involvement, including legal action against corrupt officials, these actors continue to operate in some sectors.

Foreign actors, especially from West Africa and Asia, have a significant role in Tanzania's illicit markets, often collaborating with local criminal networks. These foreign actors facilitate the transportation of illicit goods, strengthening Tanzania's position as a key transit hub for various illegal trades. In addition, the private sector is significantly involved in organized crime, including money laundering, tax evasion, corruption and smuggling of goods, drugs, and counterfeit products. Criminal enterprises in these areas often mirror legitimate import and export businesses, facilitated by private-sector actors who engage in illegal activities. These illicit operations have both domestic and transnational links, indicating a broader international dimension to the criminal markets in which Tanzania participates.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Tanzania's government maintains efforts to combat organized crime, with a focus on corruption and illicit trade. However, high-level local criminals often evade justice, raising concerns about corruption within enforcement structures. Political tensions have increased, with opposition leaders facing arrests, violence and abductions, especially in the run-up to the elections. Critics accused the presidency of stalling reforms to curtail organized crime owing to pressure from the ruling party, raising fears of repression as elections approached.

During the reporting period, Tanzania continued its anti-corruption efforts through several institutions, including the Prevention and Combating Corruption Bureau and its Zanzibar counterpart. There have been efforts to reduce corruption opportunities in key agencies, although concerns remain about embedded corruption. Companies bidding for government tenders are required to submit anti-bribery commitments, but the effectiveness of this policy is uncertain. The government also completed its National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan, focusing on high-risk sectors such as oil and gas. In 2024, the country passed an amendment to its Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act with the goal of improving its implementation and making it more effective. Despite these efforts, critics question the plan's ability to address structural issues, although Tanzania's ranking and score in global corruption indices have improved.

Tanzania has ratified key international treaties addressing organized crime, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. The Arms Trade Treaty and the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs have not been ratified. The country cooperates with regional and international bodies (e.g. the EU, the East African Community and INTERPOL) to combat transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and human smuggling. Tanzania also collaborates with Kenya and Uganda on regional security, focusing on Lake Victoria's cross-border crimes. In addition, Tanzanian troops have been deployed in Cabo Delgado under a bilateral security agreement and the country works with the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization to tackle terrorism and organized crime.

Internally, Tanzania has enacted over 114 pieces of legislation to address organized crime, including laws on drug trafficking and firearms control. Despite a robust legal framework, enforcement is hindered by corruption and patronage networks. During the reporting period, the country adopted several national policies, such as anti-poaching strategies and an anti-human trafficking action plan. Since the introduction of the Wildlife Policy Implementation Strategy and the Tanzania Elephant Management Plan 2023–2033, authorities have reported notable successes in conservation efforts. According to recent official estimates, Tanzania's elephant population has grown significantly: from 43 330 in 2014 to approximately 60 000. Similarly, the number of rhinos has risen markedly, now exceeding 200. In addition, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act was amended to impose stricter penalties, removing the option for fines instead of imprisonment. The Anti-Money Laundering Act was also amended to adopt a risk-based approach to combating money laundering, terrorism financing and related crimes.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system suffers from a shortage of resources, delayed court proceedings and perceptions of protecting the elite. Tanzania's Economic, Corruption and Organized Crime Court, established under the Economic and Organized Crime Control Act, faces challenges because of underfunding, political influence and the lack of judicial independence. The court's susceptibility to political pressure is especially evident in cases involving opposition figures and government critics. Although the country's prisons are overcrowded and operate under poor conditions, instances of crime are not reported. Tanzania has made some progress in addressing organized crime, with agencies such as the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority and the Anti-Drugs Unit conducting significant drug trafficking seizures. However, challenges in enforcement persist, including a lack of centralized law enforcement data on trafficking and human trafficking statistics, as well as corruption and complicity within the system. Specialized units such as the marine police, cybercrime unit and various regulatory agencies have had some success, but face resource and technology gaps. Although lower-level criminals are regularly arrested, major players, particularly in the drug trade, are rarely apprehended, partly owing to pervasive corruption and low police salaries.

Tanzania's extensive and in some cases poorly manned borders, particularly along its coastline, present significant challenges in policing and controlling organized crime. The country's land borders, where local communities engage in cross-border trade and agriculture, are frequently exploited by smugglers. Tanzania's unmanned entry points and informal ports are key routes for illicit activities, including drug and human trafficking. Although Tanzania participates in regional initiatives such as the World Customs Organization's Container Control Programme and collaborates with neighbouring countries, corruption among border officials is a major obstacle to effective border management.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Tanzania amended its Anti-Money Laundering Act, adopting a risk-based approach to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. The country has a strong legal framework for asset tracing, seizure and confiscation, but faces significant capacity challenges that limit the effectiveness of its anti-money laundering (AML) efforts. Despite these advances, Tanzania remains on the Financial Action Task Force grey list owing to gaps in its AML and counter-terrorist financing framework. The loss of correspondent banking relations has further exposed vulnerabilities, affecting the country's integration into the global payment system. Coordination between government institutions is critical to addressing these deficiencies, and the lack of reports from the Financial Intelligence Unit hinders effective enforcement.

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have deepened economic hardship in Tanzania, leading to an increase in organized crime activities such as poaching, illicit drug trafficking and money laundering as people seek alternative sources of income. A challenging business environment and a large informal sector further incentivize participation in the illicit economy. Although the country has experienced recent economic growth, structural issues, including poor public finance management, corruption and an underdeveloped legal framework, hinder long-term development. The informal sector, which includes industries such as mining and agriculture, undermines the government's capacity to effectively regulate the economy. Over the past year, business owners have protested against an extortionate taxation system, while inflation and corruption, along with crimes such as money laundering, have notably increased.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Tanzanian government has made efforts to combat human trafficking by establishing an Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Task Force. However, a formal national referral mechanism for victim services is absent, and although a service provider directory was created, it was not effectively implemented. Civil society organizations provide most victim services without government support. There is little evidence that the Tanzanian government provides meaningful support to drug users. Harm reduction programmes are generally implemented exclusively by civil society organizations, including international NGOs such as Doctors of the World and local NGOs like Salvage and Human Rights Defender, both based in Dar es Salaam. The government also introduced the Whistle-blower and Witness Protection Act in 2015, but has not developed a comprehensive witness assistance programme. Although the law entitles victims to restitution from traffickers, such compensation has not been reported.

With regard to prevention, the Tanzanian government has enacted laws to combat organized crime and launched anti-human trafficking campaigns in schools, but enforcement and protection mechanisms remain inadequate. Efforts to address labour law violations and fraud in recruitment agencies are hindered by insufficient safeguards for migrant workers, leaving them vulnerable to trafficking. Despite collaboration with international organizations for capacity building, challenges persist owing to understaffed regions. Community policing, particularly in border areas such as Mtwara, has helped improve public trust. However, significant government involvement in the domestic drug trade hinders broader crime prevention efforts.

NGOs continue to fill gaps in services for victims of organized crime amid the challenging environment for civil society. In addition, civil society groups largely manage drug rehabilitation initiatives. Tanzania's media freedom remains restricted despite some improvements, such as the lifting of bans on online media and restoring newspaper licences. The Media Services Act and Online Content Regulations have led to self-censorship and a pro-government bias in the media, with significant penalties for defamation. Despite promises of greater freedom, media constraints persist, especially ahead of the elections (October 2025), where critical voices face suppression.

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.