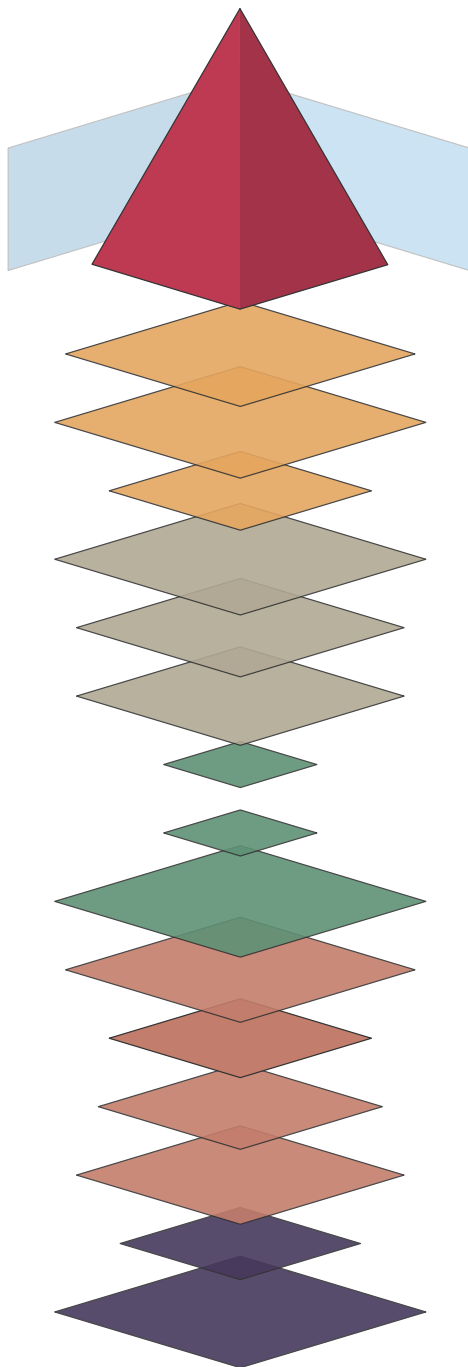
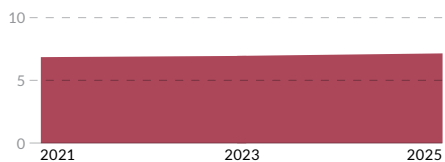


 TÜRKIYE



7.20 $\nearrow 0.17$
CRIMINALITY SCORE

10th of 193 countries $\nearrow 4$
3rd of 46 Asian countries $\nearrow 3$
2nd of 14 Western Asian countries $\nearrow 2$



CRIMINAL MARKETS **6.90** $\nearrow 0.13$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	8.50	$\searrow 0.50$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	6.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	8.50	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	3.50	$\searrow 0.50$
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	8.50	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	8.00	$\searrow 0.50$
COCAINE TRADE	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	6.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	8.50	$\nearrow 0.50$



CRIMINAL ACTORS **7.50** $\nearrow 0.20$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	8.00	$\searrow 0.50$
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	8.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	9.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.00	$\nearrow 1.00$



This project was funded in part
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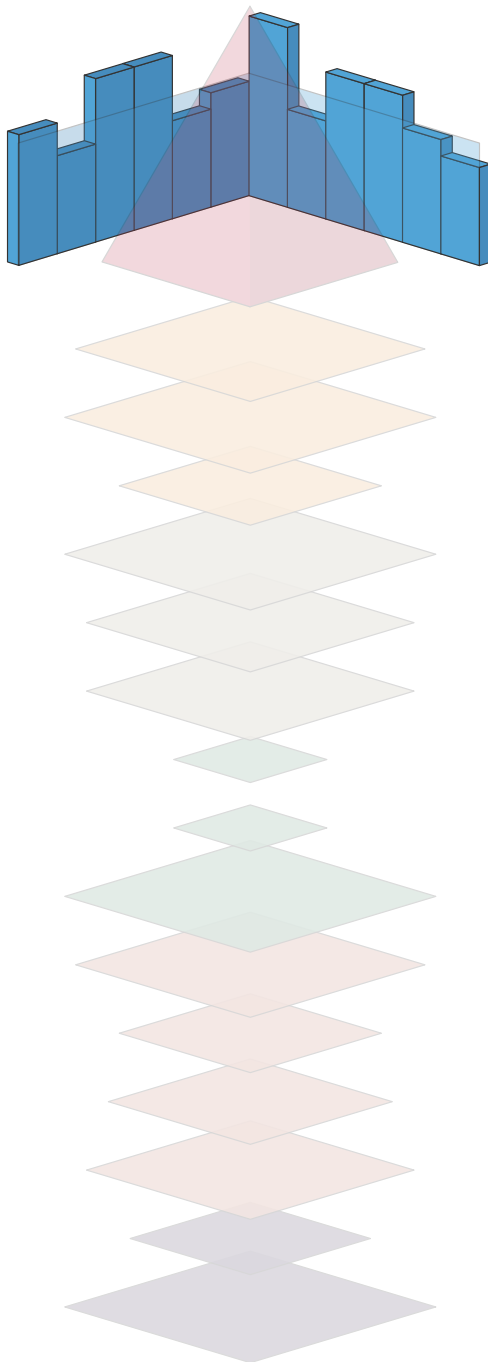


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TÜRKIYE



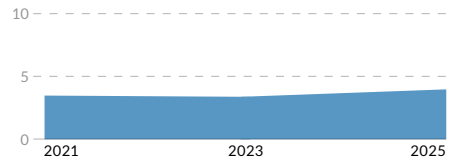
3.96 $\nearrow 0.58$

RESILIENCE SCORE

131st of 193 countries $\nearrow 22$

25th of 46 Asian countries $\nearrow 12$

8th of 14 Western Asian countries $\nearrow 2$



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.00	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00	$\nearrow 1.50$
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
PREVENTION	3.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.00	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking in Türkiye remains a significant concern, particularly in metropolitan, border and tourist regions. The country is both a destination and transit hub where most victims are foreign nationals, including Syrians, Uzbeks, Afghans and Kyrgyz citizens. Forms of exploitation range from forced labour in agriculture, textiles and services to sexual exploitation and forced marriages. Children are frequently pushed into labour or early marriage, while Syrian women and girls are often sexually exploited, especially near the Syrian border. Reports of organ trafficking, domestic servitude and exploitation through sham marriages also persist. Additionally, sexual exploitation of women and children continues, with media reports detailing coercive operations disguised as job offers. The overlap between trafficking and human smuggling further complicates mitigation efforts.

Türkiye remains a major hub for human smuggling due to its strategic location and large refugee population. Irregular migration trends indicate sustained activity across both Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, with apprehensions of irregular migrants and smugglers continuing nationwide. Moreover, Turkish nationals increasingly appear among those attempting irregular entry into the EU, signalling a shift in Türkiye's role from a transit to a source country as well. Smuggling networks are increasingly transnational, expanding toward routes via Mexico and involving actors from Syria, Central Asia and Africa. Despite efforts to step up enforcement, migrant exploitation persists, including inflated smuggling fees, forced drug transport and exposure to violence.

Extortion remains a persistent activity among organized crime groups in Türkiye, having re-emerged more prominently amid recent economic challenges. While historically dominant in the 1990s, extortion declined as groups shifted toward smuggling and trafficking in the early 2000s but has since resurged. Extortion is frequently carried out alongside other criminal activities, including arms and drug trafficking. Criminal networks often exploit legitimate businesses to pressure indebted individuals, frequently using threats or violence. Some groups also employ private security firms to carry out intimidation and extortion in public spaces, particularly within the nightlife and entertainment sectors, highlighting a diversification of methods and targets.

TRADE

Türkiye plays a significant role in the global illicit arms trade, acting as a source, transit and destination country. Turkish-origin weapons, including convertible blank-firing arms, have been increasingly trafficked into Europe and seized in regions as distant as Africa and South America. Domestically, widespread illegal possession drives rising gun violence and other crimes, with annual increases in firearm-related incidents. Recent operations seized tens of thousands of unregistered weapons and led to numerous arrests, including of traffickers operating gun factories. Turkish-origin arms have also reached conflict zones via both legal and illicit channels, drawing international concern over their use in documented human rights violations.

Similarly, Türkiye is a major global hub for counterfeit goods, consistently ranking among the top source and transit countries for counterfeit items destined for European and other foreign markets. While counterfeit production spans diverse sectors – such as apparel, pharmaceuticals, electronics and cosmetics – domestic demand has also risen, driven by inflation, poverty and normalized societal attitudes. Counterfeit goods are widely sold in physical markets in urban areas as well as tourist regions as well and increasingly online. Türkiye is also a leading source of counterfeit pharmaceuticals, with seizures revealing unsafe and expired medicines in circulation. Turkish and foreign actors are involved, with some using legitimate logistics and textile companies to facilitate distribution. While the government has launched enforcement operations, including notable seizures of counterfeit perfumes and medications, the structural persistence of the market underscores the challenges of enforcement.

Türkiye's illicit excise goods trade – spanning tobacco, alcohol and related products – remains widespread and resilient, increasingly driven by inflation, heavy taxation and local economic hardship. Border regions, particularly in the east and south-east, serve as key hubs, with smuggling facilitated by local actors and cross-border Kurdish networks. Goods often enter Türkiye through land borders, but air and maritime routes are also used. Despite intensified enforcement and seizures, the trade persists, reflecting both strong demand and perceived social acceptability. Evidence suggests involvement by loose criminal networks and, at times, corruption among border officials, with some revenue reportedly supporting insurgent activity.

ENVIRONMENT

Türkiye's rich biodiversity has made it a source country for bio-smuggling, particularly of endemic flora such as orchids, truffles and sandalwood. Bio-smuggling is most concentrated in the eastern Black Sea and Mediterranean

regions and often involves foreign nationals – frequently professionals – who exceed permit limits or act without authorization. Additionally, illicit logging and timber trafficking persist, with Türkiye also serving as a transit route for sanctioned Burmese timber.

Wildlife trafficking in Türkiye remains active though not highly consolidated, with fauna smuggling driven by the country's rich biodiversity and strategic transit location. Species trafficked include goldfinches, parrots, reptiles and exotic mammals, with Turkish authorities recording significant seizures of both live animals and wildlife products. Türkiye also serves as a transit and destination hub, with foreign nationals frequently implicated. The illicit trade includes ivory, skins, taxidermy and wildlife-derived goods, often smuggled through airlines or land borders. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing has worsened, reflecting growing environmental and enforcement challenges.

Non-renewable resource crimes is the most pervasive environmental crimes in Türkiye. The country is involved in oil, gold and diamond smuggling, acting as a source, transit and destination country. Oil smuggling from the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan has long been a major issue. Despite legal rulings and enforcement actions, illicit fuel remains widely traded. High taxes and economic pressures drive this market, with seizures occurring regularly across the country. Gold smuggling is similarly entrenched, with large volumes of illicit gold entering Türkiye from Africa and neighbouring countries. Local demand, price disparities and laundering networks support the market. Illicit gold is sometimes disguised as silver imports. Diamond smuggling, though smaller in volume, is also notable. Criminal groups, including foreign actors and state-embedded people, play a role in these operations. These markets are frequently linked to money laundering and facilitated by both organized crime and state-embedded actors.

DRUGS

Türkiye is a key transit hub in the global heroin trade, primarily trafficking Afghan-sourced opiates along the Balkan route to European markets. Although heroin seizures surged post-2020, they declined by 2022, with smaller quantities continuing to be intercepted through 2024. Increased seizures along the Turkish–Iranian border, partly due to disruptions from the Russia–Ukraine War, suggest evolving smuggling patterns. Türkiye also sees transit of heroin precursors like acetic anhydride. While primarily a transit country, domestic heroin abuse persists. Kurdish and Syrian criminal groups are key actors, and foreign networks are increasingly involved, with overlaps between drug and human smuggling markets and emerging links to cocaine and cannabis trades.

Türkiye's role in the global cocaine trade has grown significantly, evolving into a key transit point between Latin

America and European, Russian and Caucasian markets. Trafficking often occurs directly from Latin America or via West Africa or Black Sea/Balkan routes. Despite increased cocaine seizures, including multi-tonne shipments from Peru and Italy, domestic consumption remains low because of high prices. Turkish mafia-style groups have gained prominence in global trafficking, working closely with Latin American cartels. Cooperation with Latin American actors, along with reported associations involving state-linked people and strategic port investments, have been noted as factors that may enable trafficking operations. Observations by international stakeholders raised questions around transparency and oversight mechanisms.

Türkiye plays a central role in the regional cannabis trade as a major source, transit and destination country. Cannabis enters via the Turkish–Iranian border, but is also widely cultivated domestically, particularly in south-eastern provinces like Diyarbakır and Bingöl. Cannabis remains the most consumed drug in Türkiye. Criminal groups involved include Syrian, Kurdish and Albanian traffickers, with the PKK reportedly earning significant revenue from cannabis production. Cannabis cultivation is often linked to other markets, such as heroin trafficking, with reports indicating exchanges made between cannabis and heroin.

The synthetic drug trade in Türkiye has become increasingly consolidated, with Captagon and methamphetamine being the most prevalent. Türkiye functions as both a transit and limited destination country. Captagon trafficking, especially by air to the Gulf, has risen, with seizures along the Syrian border and near Istanbul. Methamphetamine trafficking, particularly from Iran, has increased markedly. The country is both a transit and consumer market, with domestic methamphetamine consumption rising significantly. Laboratories processing liquid methamphetamine into crystal form have been uncovered in Turkish cities. Iranian actors are frequently implicated in laboratory operations, while Turkish authorities have seized record amounts in recent years.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crime is increasingly widespread in Türkiye, with common threats including ransomware, data breaches and malware, such as Redline, often spread through pirated media. Türkiye's widespread use of unlicensed software and prevalence of online piracy have increased its vulnerability to cyber-attacks, including those on industrial control systems and Internet of Things infrastructure. Both domestic and foreign actors, including Russian-trained individuals, are active in Türkiye's cyber-crime networks.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are widespread in Türkiye, including fraud, embezzlement and tax evasion. High-profile fraud cases have drawn public attention, involving influencers, businesspeople and public officials. Ponzi schemes and scams

involving significant sums have been reported. Embezzlement has affected local governments and municipalities, while tax evasion remains problematic among high-net-worth people. State-embedded actors and politically connected businesspeople are often shielded from accountability. Reporting challenges and legal immunities hinder effective enforcement. Notably, in 2024, authorities uncovered a healthcare-related fraud network involving the misuse of infant patient records to claim undue social security payments. Cyber-enabled financial crimes are equally pervasive. Techniques such as phishing, identity theft and social engineering are commonly employed to defraud individuals and organizations. Increases in online shopping have facilitated credit card theft, while fake donation appeals linked to natural disasters have also been used for fraud. Both domestic and foreign actors participate in these crimes, exploiting weak regulations and oversight.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style criminal groups in Türkiye, originally hierarchical and family-based, have evolved into decentralized networks of semi-autonomous cells. These groups are active across various illicit markets, notably drug and arms trafficking, human smuggling and online gambling, alongside extortion and violence. While over two dozen prominent groups operate nationwide, the extent of their influence varies. Alliances and rivalries among leading factions shape the criminal landscape, including strategic coalitions formed by Istanbul-based figures. Notably, PKK, while primarily a separatist militant organization, also engages in criminal activity resembling that of mafia-style entities, particularly in drug trafficking. Widespread ties between organized crime figures and state-linked actors, particularly within political circles, have contributed to limited enforcement and institutional reluctance to address organized crime comprehensively.

Similarly, criminal networks in Türkiye also operate extensively at regional and local levels, with hundreds dismantled in recent years, reflecting their persistent presence. These groups are deeply embedded in cross-border smuggling, including narcotics, migrants, oil, gold and diamonds, and maintain strong ties with transnational criminal actors. Networks in major western cities, notably Istanbul, Izmir and Bodrum, are central to human smuggling routes into Europe. Turkish criminal groups are involved in the global heroin and cocaine trades, while networks of Kurdish-origin are prominent in opiate trafficking across Central Asia. Türkiye also serves as a key hub for arms trafficking, particularly of domestically produced weapons to conflict zones in Iraq, Syria and Iran.

State-embedded actors have been referenced in various reports and allegations as playing a role in Türkiye's organized crime landscape. Over time, both historical and recent claims have drawn attention to possible links between people in official positions and illicit activities. These actors have been associated with a range of criminal

markets, including narcotics, arms, human trafficking and counterfeit goods. Allegations have also touched on potential involvement in smuggling networks operating in south-eastern border regions, as well as in the cocaine and gold trades. Furthermore, some low-level officials, particularly at border crossings, have been noted in reports for allegedly accepting bribes in exchange for facilitating unauthorized cross-border movements. Despite widespread public allegations, accountability remains limited, reinforcing a culture of impunity. Financial crimes involving embezzlement of public funds further reflect the embedded nature of corruption in state structures.

Türkiye has become a hub for transnational organized crime due to weak financial oversight, lenient citizenship policies, and limited law enforcement capacity. Foreign criminal groups from the Balkans, Russia, Central Asia and elsewhere operate within the country, exploiting its strategic location. Russian and Uzbek-speaking networks are active in migrant smuggling routes toward the US, while Latin American groups, in cooperation with Turkish actors, have established a cocaine trafficking corridor to Europe, Russia and the Caucasus. Several high-profile arrests of foreign criminal figures underline the scale of these operations. The growing presence of international crime groups underscores Türkiye's evolving role as a key node in global organized crime networks.

Criminal networks in Türkiye commonly use legitimate businesses – ranging from real estate firms to car dealerships – as fronts to launder illicit profits. Beyond serving as laundering vehicles, some of these private enterprises, particularly those with political connections, are directly implicated in financial crimes such as tax evasion and embezzlement. Private-sector actors also play a role in facilitating arms and gold trafficking, as well as the movement of counterfeit goods. Transportation companies are frequently cited in investigations for aiding smuggling operations, including human trafficking and the trade of excise goods.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Political leadership and governance in Türkiye is characterized by centralized authority and a strong executive role, which have contributed to both policy continuity and concerns regarding institutional balance. While the government has demonstrated an increased focus on combating organized crime in recent years, observers continue to express concern about limited civic space, constrained political pluralism, and declining democratic standards. The concentration of decision-making power has raised questions about the effectiveness of checks and balances, and recent electoral cycles have been met with criticism related to transparency and voter freedom. Amendments to electoral regulations and administrative appointments in certain municipalities have also been noted for their impact on local representation. Although public messaging has emphasized reform and security, scepticism persists regarding the strength of institutional change. Civic mobilization, including demonstrations concerning governance and foreign policy matters, points to heightened public engagement within a polarized political environment.

Government transparency and accountability continue to face significant challenges. While legal frameworks exist to support transparency, their implementation remains inconsistent. Corruption is perceived as widespread, with high-profile reports estimating substantial losses in public contracts due to mismanagement and bribery. Procurement processes lack sufficient oversight, and company ownership data remains inadequately disclosed. The enforcement of anti-corruption laws has been weak, with few high-level prosecutions and limited action despite media and public scrutiny. Civil society organizations and municipal bodies have reported increasing government control over local administrations and weakening institutional checks and balances. Investigations are infrequent despite sustained media attention. These issues have undermined public trust, disrupted equitable resource allocation, and contributed to weakened democratic oversight across state institutions.

In terms of international cooperation, Türkiye is party to major treaties on transnational organized crime, corruption, narcotics, arms trade and environmental protection. It has signed numerous extradition agreements and cooperates with entities such as INTERPOL and the EU. Training initiatives, particularly with US and EU support, have bolstered border control capabilities and increased interdiction of illicit goods. However, concerns remain about the selective use of extradition mechanisms, with critics noting that legal tools have at times been politicized rather than criminal offenders. Recent foreign policy efforts, such as the application to join the BRICS countries and regional engagement in Western Asia, reflect Ankara's broader strategy of balancing Western alliances with

relationships in Asia and Eurasia. Despite these dynamics, selective participation in international investigations and human rights concerns occasionally undermine Türkiye's international standing.

Türkiye has established a robust legislative framework to address various forms of organized crime, including drug and human trafficking, counterfeiting and cybercrime. However, the enforcement of these laws remains inconsistent. Challenges are particularly evident in labour trafficking, where legislative gaps persist in corporate accountability for supply chain abuses. Recent legal changes have introduced stricter penalties for tobacco smuggling and increased regulation on cybercrime and financial activities. Despite these developments, enforcement remains uneven, and legal tools are not always effectively applied. The discrepancy between the existence of comprehensive laws and their inconsistent execution continues to contribute to a climate of impunity.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The independence and capacity of Türkiye's judiciary remain subjects of concern. Political interference, arbitrary detention and conflicting rulings between high courts have been noted in prominent cases involving human rights defenders and political figures. The lack of consistent application of judicial decisions and the political climate surrounding the judiciary undermine public trust in legal institutions. Deficiencies in training and specialization have further hindered the effective prosecution of complex organized crime cases. Judicial proceedings often rely on victim testimony, which can be hampered by procedural challenges, repatriation and fear of retaliation, further reducing the likelihood of successful prosecution. Detention conditions in Türkiye are characterized by severe overcrowding and insufficient access to basic services. Although the government has implemented amnesty programmes to reduce prison populations, capacity remains stretched. Civil society and international observers have raised concerns about inadequate healthcare, sanitation and access to safe water within the prison system. Reports of mistreatment persist, and while investigations occasionally occur, outcomes are seldom made public. These issues undermine efforts to maintain humane detention standards and limit the judiciary's credibility in administering justice fairly and effectively.

Türkiye's law enforcement agencies possess modern equipment and have demonstrated capacity in dismantling organized crime groups through large-scale operations. Recent efforts have led to the arrest of thousands of suspects, including members of international gangs. However, gaps remain in handling complex crimes like human trafficking, often due to insufficient training and expertise, resulting in misclassification of offences. Enforcement against counterfeit trade and piracy

is further hindered by legal limitations and poor interagency coordination. Concerns about political influence over law enforcement persist, with reports of police violence and alleged involvement in corruption. Instances of excessive force and abuse against peaceful protesters and civil society activists continue to draw criticism.

Türkiye's geographic location and extensive borders make it a strategic transit hub for organized crime, including human smuggling, drug trafficking and the trade in counterfeit goods. Although international support has contributed to improved border management, significant challenges persist. Corruption among low-level border officials enables the illicit movement of goods and people, particularly along the Turkish–Iranian frontier. Free trade zones, such as the one in Mersin, have been exploited by criminal actors for smuggling operations, highlighting gaps in regulatory oversight. These areas require more stringent controls to prevent misuse. While efforts have been made to bolster territorial integrity, porous borders and regional instability continue to complicate enforcement.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Türkiye remains a key financial hub for surrounding regions, but its anti-money laundering regime continues to face challenges. Although Türkiye has implemented reforms in line with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations, including laws regulating cryptocurrencies and financial crimes, enforcement remains inconsistent. The country was removed from the FATF grey list in June 2024, reflecting international confidence in its renewed economic governance. However, vulnerabilities in the financial system persist, particularly in addressing illicit flows from drug trafficking, human smuggling and fuel trading. While technical compliance with international standards has improved, implementation gaps limit overall effectiveness.

The Turkish economy has experienced volatility due to inflation, a depreciating currency and external shocks such as the war in Ukraine. Although entrepreneurship has grown and regulatory procedures have been simplified, structural issues such as rigid labour markets and widespread informality hamper resilience. Türkiye's monetary policies, particularly low interest rates amid inflation, contributed to the collapse of the lira. Although recent policy shifts aim to stabilize the economy, vulnerabilities persist, with inflation and unemployment remaining high. The erosion of regulatory enforcement and the expansion of informal markets continue to facilitate criminal enterprises. Public trust in economic institutions is further undermined by the perception of unequal enforcement and a lack of transparency. While Türkiye's financial sector remains regionally influential, its vulnerabilities to organized crime persist in the absence of stronger oversight.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support services in Türkiye have expanded in recent years, particularly for survivors of human trafficking. State institutions, including the Presidency of Migration Management and the Ministry of Family and Social Services, operate shelters and mobile outreach teams. Victims are eligible for temporary residence and, in some cases, work permits. Despite these efforts, structural shortcomings persist. Shelters lack capacity, supplies and inclusive services for marginalized groups, including LGBTQI+ people. The identification process is hindered by inconsistent screening practices, especially for forced labour victims and people who have been smuggled. Additionally, foreign victims are at times deported before identification, raising concerns about due process. Judicial support services are available but underutilized, and restitution remains rare. Coordination with civil society remains limited, and funding for non-governmental partners has not kept pace with growing needs.

Prevention measures have focused primarily on human trafficking, with increased training for law enforcement and awareness campaigns targeting at-risk communities. A national hotline supports multilingual communication and outreach. Despite these efforts, challenges persist. The national action plan on trafficking remains outdated, and inspections targeting labour exploitation are reactive rather than proactive. Prevention of sexual exploitation and drug use receives comparatively less attention, and commercial counterfeiting continues to strain enforcement capacity. Recent discussions about cybersecurity reflect a growing awareness of emerging threats, though implementation of a dedicated agency remains under consideration. Limited control over illicit financial flows continues to impact prevention efforts across criminal markets.

The role of non-state actors in Türkiye's resilience landscape is constrained by an increasingly restrictive environment for civil society and the media. Press freedom has declined, with the vast majority of media outlets under state influence. Journalists and media organizations critical of the government face censorship, legal pressure and, in some cases, violence. Recent legislation criminalizing disinformation has been used to suppress dissent, particularly ahead of national elections. Social media monitoring and targeted campaigns against journalists and activists contribute to a climate of self-censorship. Despite these conditions, segments of civil society remain active in human rights advocacy, anti-drug education and anti-trafficking efforts. However, the inclusion of these groups in formal policy processes remains limited.

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