

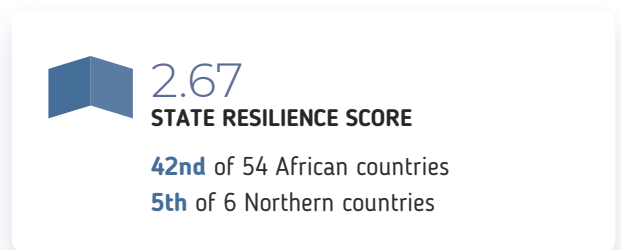
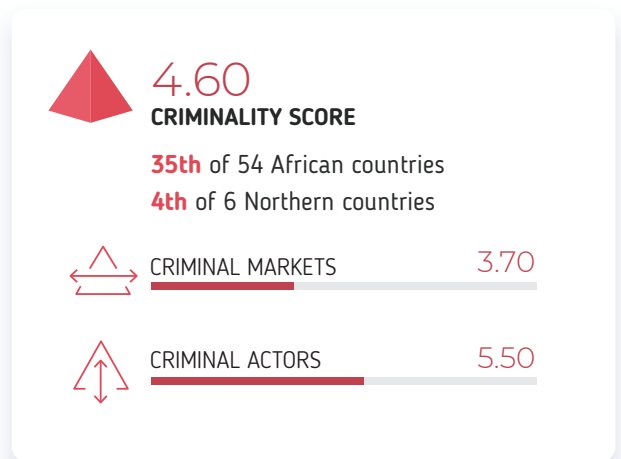
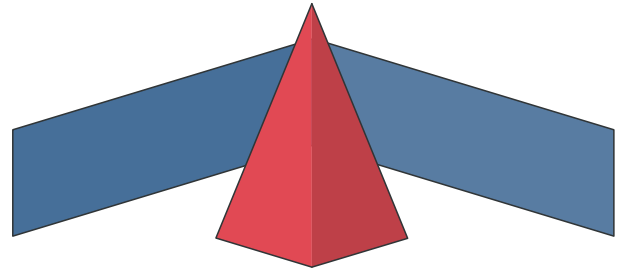
 MAURITANIA

Mauritania's **criminality** score falls below the continental average, ranking 35th in Africa and 4th in North Africa.

As with many countries across Africa, Mauritania's score is driven to a significantly larger extent by its **criminal actors** score than its **criminal markets** score. Two criminal markets stand out as particularly detrimental in Mauritania – **human trafficking and the cannabis trade**, which score 7.5 and 6, respectively – but the majority of criminal markets only have moderate to little influence on society.

However, two **criminal actor** types score above 6 – **mafia-style groups** and **state-embedded actors** – reflecting their significant negative influence on society in Mauritania. **Criminal networks** and **foreign actors** also have a moderate influence on society and the state's structures. Overall, while the pervasiveness of criminal markets as a whole is limited in scope, criminal actors of all types are influential in organised crime in Mauritania.

Although Mauritania performs better than most African nations with regards to **criminality**, its **resilience** score is markedly below the continental average, ranking 42nd. The only indicator not categorised as non-existent or extremely ineffective is **territorial integrity**. The country is failing in many areas of resilience, notably with regards to levels of **government transparency and accountability**, the effectiveness of the **judicial system** and the failure to provide any **support to victims and witnesses** of organised crime.



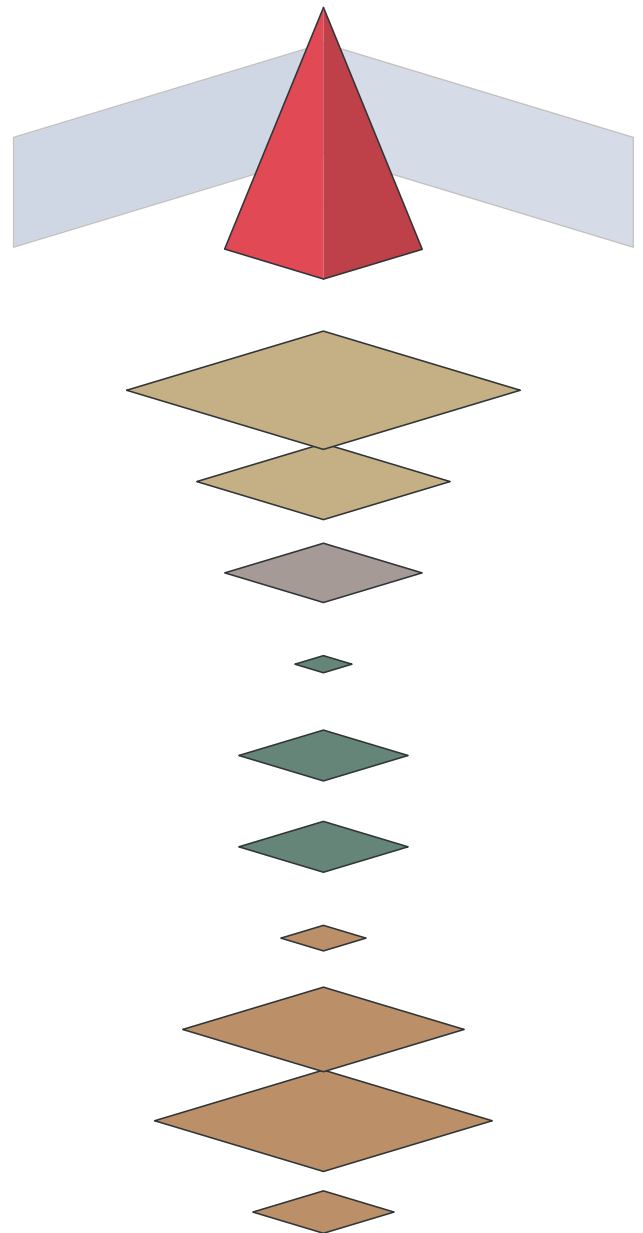
CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.50
MAFIA STYLE GROUPS	6.0
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.0
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.0
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.0



CRIMINAL MARKETS	3.70
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.0
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.5
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.5
FLORA CRIMES	1.0
FAUNA CRIMES	3.0
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES CRIMES	3.0
HEROIN TRADE	1.5
COCAINE TRADE	5.0
CANNABIS TRADE	6.0
SYNTHETIC DRUGS TRADE	2.5



Criminal Markets

Mauritania's **criminal markets** score is considerably lower than the continental average, ranking 43rd overall. Two criminal markets stand out in the country, one of which is **human trafficking**, which scores 7 in the Index. Mauritania has an embedded culture of slavery, which dates back centuries. Men, women and children from poor communities, mainly black Moor and Afro-Saharan groups, are all susceptible to forced labour and servitude. Nationals from neighbouring countries are also exploited in Mauritania.

The second criminal market pervasive in Mauritania is the **cannabis trade**, which scores 6, reflecting the significant influence it exerts in the country. While cannabis is illegal and severe sanctions are in place for its use, possession and cultivation, Mauritania plays a major role in the transnational cannabis trade as a transit country. Smuggling of cannabis through Mauritania, which arrives predominantly from Morocco through Western Sahara, is a significant problem. In general, any cannabis originating from Morocco that is



destined for the countries of the Sahel region passes through Mauritania. It is also a transit country for cannabis destined for the Arabian Gulf, circumventing the Algeria-Morocco border where security is tighter.

Mauritania also plays a role as a transit country in the **cocaine trade**, scoring 5 in the Index. The country operates primarily as a transit point for cocaine from South America destined for Europe. The cocaine passing through Mauritania arrives mainly from Guinea and Guinea-Bissau.

Lastly, **human smuggling**, while not as prevalent in Mauritania as other countries in Africa, has a moderate influence, scoring 4.5. Mauritania is a transit country for individuals being smuggled into Europe. The country's relatively effective border control, including long-standing cooperation with the Spanish government on coastal patrols, and a punitive militarised policy to prevent unauthorised movement in its desert areas, has stemmed the flow of irregular migrants to a greater extent than elsewhere in the region. However, occasional departures from Mauritania following this largely closed route suggest latent capacity exists.

Criminal Actors

There is a considerable disparity between Mauritania's **criminal markets** and **criminal actors**, the latter ranking 23rd in Africa. All four types of criminal actors have at least a moderate influence in organised crime in Mauritania.

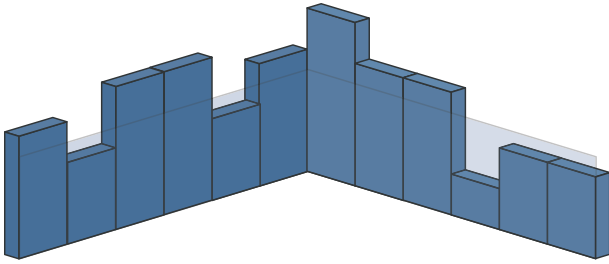
State-embedded actors score the highest, at 7, and state complicity in the contraband trade is prevalent in Mauritania. Customs officials often play a key role in enabling the trade. Officials often provide special permits to traffickers to present at checkpoints. Although official data is scant, such findings point to state collusion with smugglers and facilitation of organised crime.

With a score of 6, **mafia-style groups** are the second-most important criminal actors in Mauritania. The score is driven predominantly by terrorist organisations, which engage in various organised criminal activities to finance their operations. Groups that are bound together by family and tribal ties are also hugely influential in the country, engaging in numerous forms of cross-border trafficking and smuggling.

While the influence of **foreign actors** and **criminal networks** is lower, they nevertheless exert a moderate influence on society and state structures in Mauritania, scoring 5 and 4, respectively. Foreign criminal actors are involved predominantly in drug trafficking. There are indications that members of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) collaborate with Mauritanian nationals in trafficking various drugs. Criminal actors from Western Sahara are also involved in smuggling goods into Mauritania. Smuggling networks are active in the country, particularly with regards to the cannabis trade and illicit trade in pharmaceuticals.



RESILIENCE SCORE



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	3.0
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	2.0
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	3.5
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	3.5
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	2.0
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.0
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	4.0
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	3.0
ECONOMIC REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT	3.0
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	1.0
PREVENTION	2.0
NON-STATE ACTORS	2.0

Mauritania has a very low **resilience** score, ranking 42nd in Africa. Almost all **resilience** indicators are characterised by either non-existent or extremely ineffective regulatory and institutional frameworks. A history of coups d'état has undermined the stability of the government.

While the current administration has taken a stance against the trafficking of illicit goods, in particular when such enterprises have links to terrorist organisations, state collusion with criminal actors is a major obstacle in the nation's fight against organised crime.

The regime in Mauritania is authoritarian; transparency is low, corruption is rampant, and laws are often used to subvert justice and criminalise dissidents. Mauritania scores 3 and 2 on **political leadership and governance** and **government transparency and accountability**, respectively.

Despite the headquarters of the G5 Sahel being based in Mauritania, the country's international cooperation on organised crime, in particular with the ECOWAS bloc, is severely lacking. Although a degree of international cooperation has been achieved on border control with neighbouring countries, information sharing is kept to a minimum. There is a high degree of distrust between Mauritanian military officials and their counterparts in neighbouring states. Mauritania scores 3.5 on **international cooperation**.

Given the authoritarian regime and the extreme influence the government exerts, Mauritania's judicial system is severely compromised and the prison system is in poor condition, with strong evidence of the use of torture. The decision of the country's appellate court to release 30 convicted traffickers in 2011 perhaps typifies the influence that corrupt officials have over the judiciary. There is no evidence to suggest the situation has improved in recent years. The severe deficiencies outlined above are reflected in a score of 2 for the **judicial system and detention indicator**. Plagued with corruption and undue influence from political actors, and having extremely limited operational funding, **law enforcement** agencies score 3.

Social protection measures aimed at supporting witnesses and victims of organised crime, and preventing organised crime in the first place, do not fare any better. In fact, the scores of 1 and 2 for **victim and witness support** and **prevention**, respectively, are the lowest scores of all the **resilience** indicators in Mauritania.

Trafficking victims in the country are very often not looked after and the government often targets anti-slavery activists with intimidation. The criminalisation of sexual relations outside of marriage reduces potential support for victims of trafficking and sexual assault. Police in Mauritania are generally unresponsive to assisting victims of crime and government-funded programmes are scarcely present, if at all.



Civil society in Mauritania is present but severely limited by the authoritarian regime. For example, security forces often arrest and intimidate anti-trafficking activists. Journalists are targeted, especially if they write about slavery in the country. Laws such as the anti-discrimination law are used to deal harshly with critics of the government and have led to the arrest of journalists and activists. The hostile environment in which civil society and the media are forced to operate in Mauritania is reflected in the score of 2 for **non-state actors**.

However, Mauritania performs in line with the majority of African nations on **territorial integrity**, scoring 4 in the Index. The large size of the country makes it difficult to control its borders, but numerous measures have been taken to enhance the country's territorial integrity. These include enhanced border control at key transit points, military involvement in border control and some degree of international cooperation with neighbouring states. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these measures aim to tackle terrorism rather than organised crime.

