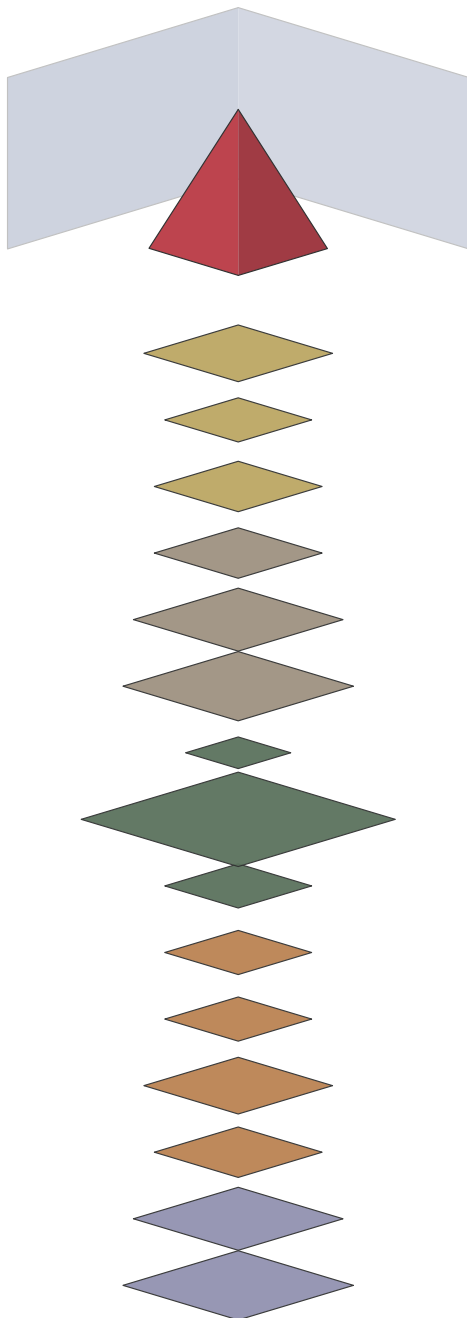


 **BOTSWANA**



 **4.35
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

46th of 54 African countries
9th of 13 Southern African countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.4**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.5
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.5
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	4
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.5
FLORA CRIMES	2.5
FAUNA CRIMES	7.5
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.5
HEROIN TRADE	3.5
COCAINE TRADE	3.5
CANNABIS TRADE	4.5
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	4
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.5

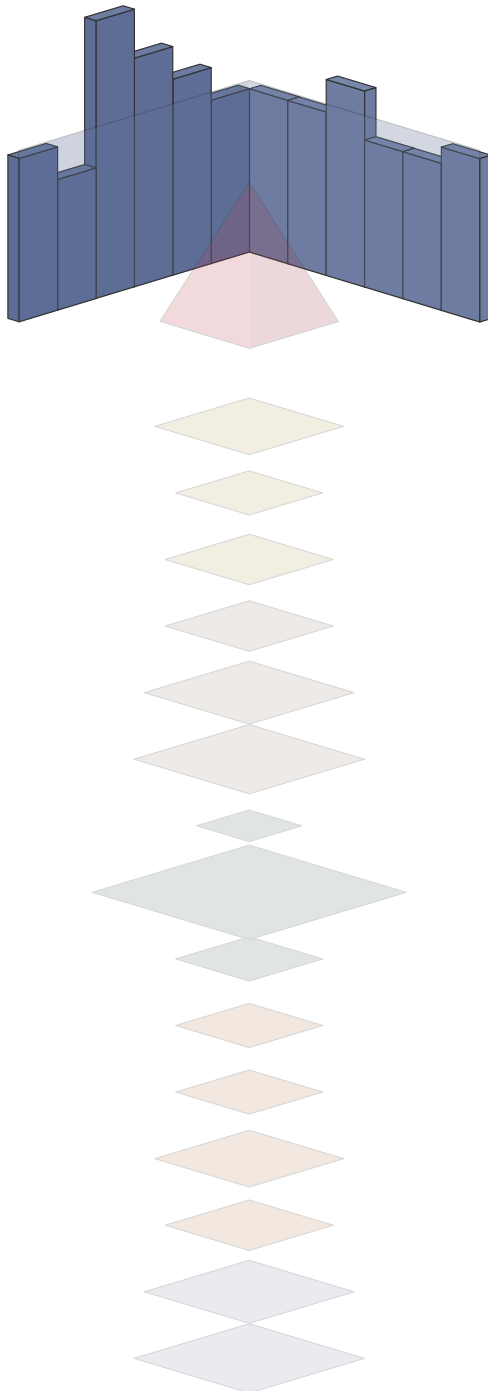
 **CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.3**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.5
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.5

 **5.46
RESILIENCE SCORE**



 **BOTSWANA**





 **5.46
RESILIENCE SCORE**

7th of 54 African countries
3rd of 13 Southern African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.5
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.5
PREVENTION	4.5
NON-STATE ACTORS	5

 **4.35
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.4
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.3



CRIMINALITY

Criminal Markets

PEOPLE

Botswana is a transit and destination country for human trafficking. The most vulnerable groups are the poor communities, especially the San community (Basarwa). These groups are often exploited for labour in the agricultural sector, and children are prevented from attending school and forced to work on cattle farms. Reports suggest that women are exploited in the sex trade, providing commercial sex services in bars and clubs, and forced labour on cattle farms. Zimbabweans including undocumented children are vulnerable to trafficking in Botswana. These activities are carried out by Zimbabwean criminal networks which use fake job opportunities to lure Zimbabweans into Botswana and then subject them to forced labour and sex trafficking in the country. It is recognized that the widespread corruption among state officials hampers law enforcement efforts against human trafficking.

Although human smuggling occurs in Botswana, it is not commonly reported. Migration from Zimbabwe has been on the rise because of the worsening political and economic crisis in that country. However, despite a steady increase in people from the African Great Lakes region, many Zimbabweans have returned home with proper documentation. The socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have forced people to resort to human smuggling, which is becoming an alarming issue in the region. Extortion and protection racketeering are not deemed to be widespread, with anecdotal incidents of such illegal activities being reported in the country.

TRADE

Although arms trafficking in Botswana remains relatively low, there are growing concerns that the market has seen an increase, with the country predominantly serving as a transit point. It is believed that some members of state security agencies may have corrupt relationships with criminal organizations, facilitating the smuggling of arms into the country. Botswana's land borders make effective policing difficult, leading to an increase in armed robberies and gun violence. Recent armed heists have resulted in fatalities attributed to exchanges of fire between police and criminals. The police have recently arrested foreign nationals, mostly from South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as locals who were in illegal possession of arms.

Counterfeit goods are a growing problem in Botswana, with the country serving as a back door for fake goods smuggled into the South African market. The most common counterfeit products observed in the country are clothing, shoes, electronics, and medical products. The illicit trade of excisable goods is also considered an issue in Botswana, with illicit cigarettes and alcohol being the most commonly smuggled items through the involvement of smuggling cartels. Although a track-and-trace system for excisable products has been implemented to combat this issue, the problem persists. Zimbabwe is involved in the dumping of illicit tobacco in the Botswana market, and the COVID-19 ban on cigarette and alcohol sales allowed the distribution networks of this illicit trade to strengthen. The police have seized goods arriving from Zimbabwe, including clear beer, whiskies, and other types of alcohol.

ENVIRONMENT

Botswana, where forest reserves are not widespread, is primarily a transit territory for illegal wood coming from countries such as Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, and Angola on its way to South Africa and then to Asian and European markets. Botswana's sparse population and arid landscape make it an ideal location for unregulated cross-border flows of timber from Zambia and Zimbabwe. Although there is no evidence of significant illegal logging trends, authorities have reported an increase in illegal cutting of wood for domestic use.

Botswana is home to a significant population of savanna elephants and has made efforts to conserve them. However, poaching by actors from neighbouring countries like Zambia and Zimbabwe continues to occur. Moreover, the country has faced a dramatic increase in poaching of its rhino population in recent years, leading the government to take measures such as banning hunting and killing suspected poachers. Illegal poaching of bush meat for local consumption also remains a problem, and authorities suspect that these criminal activities take place across borders. Asian syndicates are known to be involved in the smuggling of animal parts out of the country. Concerns have also been raised about the illicit trade of cheetahs and lions in Botswana, especially cubs, as they are easier to conceal for cross border movements. Some farmers in the Gantsi area are alleged to be involved in the illicit trade of lion bones, which are smuggled across the long porous border into South Africa.



Botswana faces non-renewable resource crimes, including diamond smuggling, fuel smuggling, illegal gold mining, and sand mining. Because of its location and immense land borders, Botswana is vulnerable to illegal smuggling of various materials. Diamond smuggling has increased in recent times, with police reporting multiple arrests and interdictions of illicit stones. However, since Botswana does not have any artisanal, small-scale mining, these stones are probably smuggled from neighbouring Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also, Botswana severely punishes unauthorized possession of uncut diamonds and the country's strong regulation around diamond mining appears to have stymied the consolidation of a criminal diamond market. Fuel smuggling is another issue, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Illegal gold and sand mining also continue across the country, despite police vigilance. It is not believed that the smuggling of non-renewable resources is linked to terrorism financing or the laundering of criminal proceeds.

DRUGS

Botswana is a transit country for the heroin trade, with traffickers using unpopulated land borders to move products into countries with larger local markets, such as South Africa, Angola, and Mozambique. Mules carrying heroin are often detained at airports, and heroin use has been growing because of the presence of a local trade, although it is not significant. In addition, the South African heroin market has been expanding and is suspected to have reached Botswana. The country also serves as a transit route for cocaine shipments northwards, although its role in the regional market is considered small. Cocaine moves through the country via third-party criminal actors or arrives directly via air routes. Consumption is reportedly low but increasing in Botswana and there are concerns that the country will become an attractive proposition to traffickers currently using routes, better known to law enforcement agencies, through South Africa and Mozambique.

Cannabis is the most commonly used drug in Botswana, with police reporting an increase in cannabis smuggling through the southern border into the Central District. Although the drug is illegal, it is widely regarded as medicinal, and there have been calls for its legalization. The police struggle to contain cannabis imports, which they suspect come from South Africa. Local cultivators supply the local market, with most of the cannabis remaining in the country. Some of it is exported to European countries, primarily the Netherlands, the UK, and the US, usually through trans-shipment points in South Africa and/or West Africa. Africa has the lowest number of synthetic drug seizures, indicating low overall consumption. Despite

insufficient information about and underreporting of synthetic drugs in Botswana, there has been a significant rise of methamphetamine retail operations run mostly by Chinese and Nigerian nationals. Methamphetamine usually comes from Afghanistan, then transits through Mozambique, before finally reaching South Africa, with Nigeria seen as another source. South Africa is identified as the holding destination before distribution to secondary traders in countries including Botswana.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Botswana is currently facing a surge in cyber-attacks, which includes crimes such as ransomware, hacking, and other types of cybercrime. The attacks have mostly been directed towards outdated information and communications technology systems, where cybercriminals can easily take advantage of system vulnerabilities. There have been incidents of fraud related to cryptocurrency investment in Botswana, with perpetrators deceiving business owners and members of the public into investing in crypto with the false promise of profits. Despite having a national cyber-security strategy, which is rare among African countries, Botswana continues to struggle with cybercrime. Furthermore, there is a lack of awareness about cyber-security among citizens, which compounds the problem.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes such as fraud, corruption, market abuse and insider trading, tax evasion, embezzlement, and identity theft are prevalent in Botswana. Shell companies have been established to engage in fake business deals, resulting in significant amounts of money lost to fraudsters. Authorities have received a higher number of suspicious transaction reports in recent years. Scammers have also surfaced, impersonating pastors and religious leaders to raise funds on social media. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered cybercrime in the country. Fraudsters advertise goods on the internet, and people pay without receiving them. Additionally, fraudulent activities have been identified in companies that received pandemic relief funds, therefore defrauding the government. Recently, cyber-enabled financial crimes have become widespread in the country, with malicious apps being used to steal personal information and passwords from mobile users.

Criminal Actors

Botswana is plagued with various criminal activities, including robbery, property crimes, drug trafficking, and livestock theft. Criminal networks between Zimbabwe



and Botswana are becoming more organized and violent, often crossing borders to evade capture. These networks are known to be well armed and equipped with military skills. Local poaching networks in collaboration with foreign networks operate in the country. However, there is no evidence of the existence of Botswana-based mafia groups.

Foreign actors are involved in different types of crimes in Botswana, such as poaching and drug trafficking. Also, cases of violent crimes are spilling over from South Africa and include, among others, armed robberies and car thefts. Asian and West African-led criminal networks are among the most reported foreign actors in the country, and they often collaborate with Botswana people. Foreign poaching syndicates employ men with military experience from the region to help them cross into Botswana from neighbouring countries.

Regarding private sector criminal actors, Botswana has been accused of being a back door for dubious companies and business owners trying to launder money, evade taxes, and avoid paying taxes. Private sector actors are also accused of being involved in corrupt schemes, specifically in tender processes, in the form of kickback payments in exchange for the awarding of mega-projects. However, Botswana is one of the best countries in the region at tackling corruption, and there is no evidence of widespread corrupt practices. Reports suggest that police authorities are aware of criminal routes, particularly at border controls, but they do not always act on the information. Despite these allegations and aside from corrupt border officials facilitating cross-border smuggling, there is little indication of state-sponsored criminality.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Botswana is generally recognized for its stability and effective governance through good government practices. Despite the government's reputation for upholding the rule of law, apprehensions relating to certain practices that exhibit authoritarian tendencies remain. These concerns include the growing authority of the president over the military and the police, as well as the persecution of opposition members without proper and transparent information. The constitutional review process undertaken in 2022 has also raised concerns as the process was found to lack transparency and comprehensive participation. Civil society groups have expressed concerns about accountability and the public perception of corruption in recent years. These issues have exacerbated pre-existing problems in the country related to lack of transparency, patronage networks, conflicts of interest, nepotism, and judicial independence. Botswana's lack of legislation around access to information has led to excessive secrecy in government, and corruption is perceived to have increased.

Botswana's foreign policy prioritizes international cooperation, and partnerships with neighbouring countries and other nations address regional issues. Zimbabwe remains a key partner on issues such as poaching and livestock theft, with several memoranda of understanding signed between the two countries.

The US, as well as other governments, have supported Botswana, providing funds to help address various problems in the region, and cooperating on military and policing activities. However, Botswana still faces coordination challenges with neighbouring countries to combat issues like poaching, drug smuggling, and human trafficking. The country has implemented a range of laws to combat crime, including legislation related to money laundering and drug enforcement. However, some of these laws have been accused of being inconsistent with human rights. For instance, Botswana's approach to the war on drugs has been criticized for criminalizing drug users while allowing some people to legally cultivate narcotic drugs with a permit. Penalties for possession of illegal diamonds, human trafficking, and poaching are also severe. In particular, conservation laws are strict to protect wildlife and national parks and, according to reports, the country appears to have an unofficial shoot-to-kill policy when it comes to poachers. There are concerns about outdated reporting and the potential misuse of privately owned guns in areas where government oversight is limited.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Botswana's judicial system is generally effective, with harsh penalties for most offences. Although the judiciary is strong and independent, there are concerns about



the government not respecting its independence, particularly after COVID-19 restrictions were put in place. There have been complaints by civil society actors about a biased and compromised judiciary. The judiciary remains constrained by a lack of resources and training for judges, with claims of judicial secrecy that might influence judges' decision-making processes. Additionally, the process of investigating and decision-making is slow. NGOs and international organizations continue to express concern about the use of the death penalty in Botswana.

The relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions has led to an increase in criminal activities, particularly smuggling, at Botswana's borders. The police have recorded a rise in crime and are calling for the use of drones and other technological solutions to help them be more effective. Botswana's crime priorities are environmental crimes such as poaching and animal parts smuggling, and human trafficking, which require international cooperation to be addressed effectively. The country's intelligence and security agency has become more powerful than ever before, and there are allegations of corruption within the organization, which have led to a decrease in public trust. Reports suggest corruption and bribery among members of the security services, particularly at the borders, where government oversight over its own forces is difficult. There are concerns that the military's increasing presence in police patrolling operations may lead to abusive practices. Finally, there are suspicions of human rights violations, such as the excessive use of force during protest marches and suspicious deaths of people in police custody.

Botswana faces challenges in maintaining its territorial integrity because of its extensive, underpopulated land borders. Despite efforts to patrol these areas, criminal actors exploit porous borders to smuggle drugs and people, and private land and cattle ranchers limit the authorities' ability to police their lands. Botswana is part of regional security efforts to curb cross-border crimes and has established dialogue with neighbouring countries to improve border security. Botswana has large nature reserves dedicated to environmental protection, but these areas remain vulnerable because of limited policing. Poachers take advantage of this and engage in cross-border raids, often retreating to Zambia and Namibia to avoid capture. South African groups smuggle drugs and contraband, while Zimbabweans regularly cross into the country to engage in petty crimes with Botswana accomplices. Syndicates are present in most border regions, and there is growing concern about acts of vandalism and theft around fenced border areas.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Botswana has taken significant steps to combat money laundering, including implementing laws to target this crime in different sectors such as the second-hand car industry. These efforts have led to the country being removed from the Financial Action Task Force grey list for money laundering, but it remains black-listed by some EU member states. Nevertheless, Botswana is a leader in the region when it comes to financial transparency and standards. However, the country still faces challenges in combating money laundering because of its largely cash-based economy, making it difficult to detect illicit financial flows. Banking fraud and smuggling of goods also present risks for money laundering.

Although Botswana's economy is relatively free, it faces high unemployment rates, indicating that many economic operations occur in informal settings that are difficult to regulate. There are concerns that locals are not yet sufficiently empowered to take over certain industries, such as agriculture and tourism, and that protectionist policies may not be effective in reducing the import bill. Botswana's economy is heavily reliant on mineral extraction, particularly diamonds, by large foreign companies. Corruption, bribery, nepotism, and favouritism among some officials adversely affect the economic capacity of Botswana. The rise in global oil prices because of the war in Ukraine has disrupted production and trade in Botswana, intensifying the threat of long-lasting high inflation and the risks of illicit trade in the country.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Botswana government provides protection to victims, more specifically to trafficking victims, through a combination of government- and NGO-run facilities where victims are provided with shelter, medical care, counselling and other services. Although interference with witnesses is criminalized, there is no established witness protection scheme, which discourages victims from reporting crimes.

Botswana is implementing its plan to prevent human trafficking using government funds, including initiatives to raise awareness and exchange information with other governments and NGOs. However, labour offences are not accounted for, and labour inspections are sparse and underfunded. Reporting on, investigations of, and convictions based on whistle-blowing lack efficiency, leading to underreporting of criminal activity, as the implementation of the Whistleblowing Act continues to have gaps. The government lacks appropriate technological



capabilities and training to prevent crimes that target financial facilities. The government's efforts to prevent crime are focused on increasing vigilance, setting up CCTV systems and special gender and child protection units, and ordering the police to 'eliminate thieves by all means'. Conservation is a strong point of concern, with the government trying to prevent poaching and launching a new anti-poaching initiative that includes non-state actors.

The Botswana government interferes with privately-owned broadcast media press, and state-owned media are biased towards the government's interests rather than the public's. Although new media regulations

were passed, journalists are required to register to practise in the country, limiting their freedom to report independently. In addition, there are no laws for the right of access to information, making it difficult for media to hold the government accountable. Civil organizations and NGOs have a strong impact on government affairs in Botswana, with a wide range of groups participating in decision-making. However, the government has created alternative NGO forums that are de facto government departments, resulting in the rejection of representatives nominated by the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations. The council has previously complained that the government wanted to choreograph their participation in the review of the country's Constitution.

