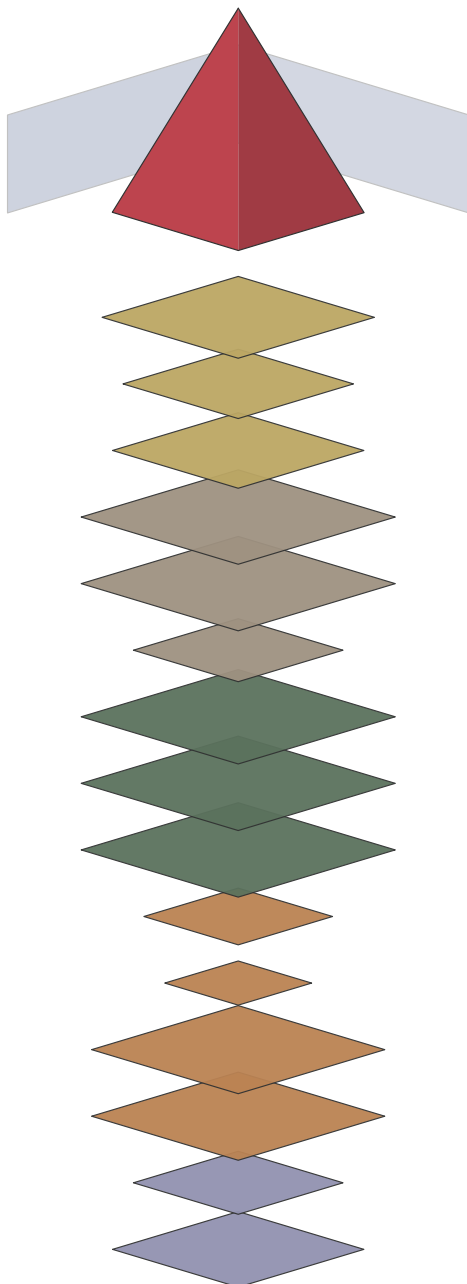




CAMEROON



6.27 CRIMINALITY SCORE

10th of 54 African countries
3rd of 11 Central African countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **6.23**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.5
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.5
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	6
ARMS TRAFFICKING	7.5
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.5
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5
FLORA CRIMES	7.5
FAUNA CRIMES	7.5
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	7.5
HEROIN TRADE	4.5
COCAINE TRADE	3.5
CANNABIS TRADE	7
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6



CRIMINAL ACTORS **6.3**

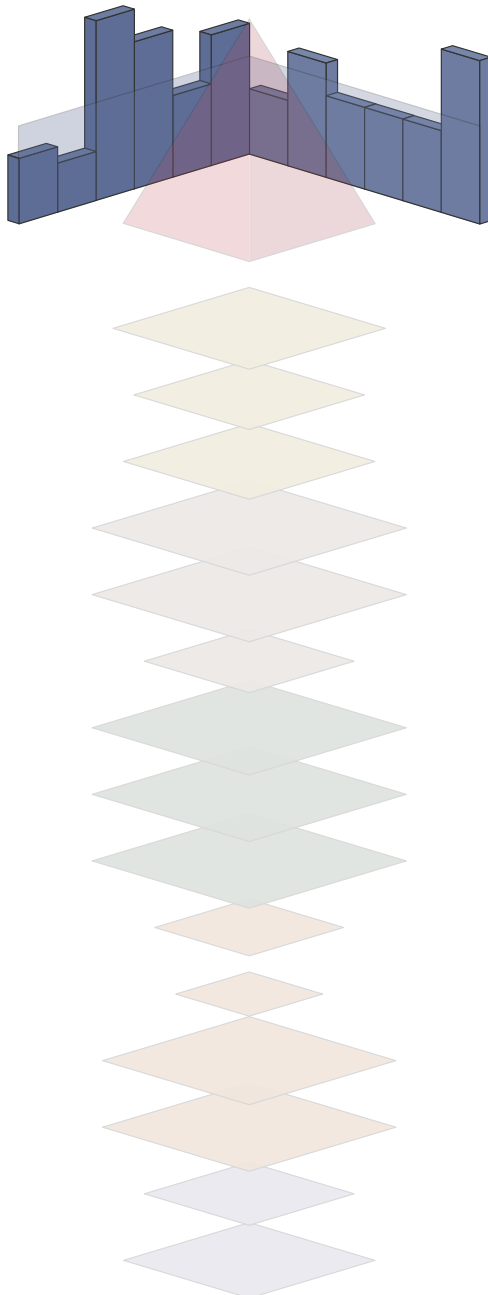
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.5
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8
FOREIGN ACTORS	7
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	7



3.17 RESILIENCE SCORE



 **CAMEROON**



 **3.17
RESILIENCE SCORE**

38th of 54 African countries
6th of 11 Central African countries

<u>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</u>	2
<u>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	1.5
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	5.5
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	4.5
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	2.5
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	4
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	2
<u>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</u>	3.5
<u>ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY</u>	2.5
<u>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</u>	2.5
<u>PREVENTION</u>	2.5
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	5

 **6.27
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

 <u>CRIMINAL MARKETS</u>	6.23
 <u>CRIMINAL ACTORS</u>	6.3



CRIMINALITY

Criminal Markets

PEOPLE

Cameroon is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The situation is aggravated by local facilitators, who collaborate with international syndicates. Human trafficking in the country, which is predominantly linked to the economically vulnerable and marginalized such as internally displaced persons and refugees, has been exacerbated by the conflict in the far north (the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adi wal-Jihad (JAS) insurgency) and south-west/north-west (the Anglophone separatist conflict), which have created large numbers of displaced individuals, a diminished police and judicial presence and a disrupted economy and educational system. There is evidence of child labour and sexual exploitation at the country's sizeable artisanal mining sites and gravel quarries, and in the fishing and agriculture industries. Victims are also exploited abroad, with fraudulent labour brokers facilitating trafficking to the Middle East, especially to Kuwait and Lebanon; Europe, including Switzerland; Cyprus; the United States and several African countries, including Benin and Nigeria. Baby trafficking, involving a network of traffickers, syndicates, medical experts, nurses and babysitters, is also prominent and is the result of poverty, limited social and economic opportunities and a lack of social protection, especially for teenage mothers. Although the trafficking is mainly carried out between Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is expanding towards countries such as Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad.

Human smuggling is also a factor in the country as young Cameroonians who try to leave in search of a better life are willing to pay smugglers exorbitant fees. A new phenomenon – smuggling boys and girls identified as talented young footballers – is intensifying in urban areas, and there is also a fairly high prevalence of human smuggling of women to the Middle East, Europe, the United States and multiple African countries for slavery or sex work. Numerous migration 'brokers' help Cameroonians secure fraudulent documents and visas for travel abroad. Although there is little violence associated with human smuggling in Cameroon, resurgent violence and conflict may trigger an upsurge in migration facilitators for the displaced.

Extortion and protection racketeering are rife in the Anglophone conflict, as many armed groups, known as the Ambazonians, in the north-west and south-west provinces have turned to crime, funding themselves through extortion and kidnappings, targeting businessmen, politicians and clergymen.

TRADE

Cameroon has a long history as a source, transit and destination country for arms trafficking, which is one of the fastest-growing criminal markets in the country, particularly in regions affected by violence and facilitated by the porous border with Nigeria, the main source of the arms. However, Nigeria is not the only source for the arms which enter Cameroon. Weapons from Sudan, Chad and Central African Republic circulate widely in the region, and particularly between the tri-border zone of CAR, Cameroon and Chad. Many are weapons belonged to armed forces in the region, but were seized in rebel attacks or sold on by soldiers for profit. There are also large circulating stocks of legacy weapons and craft weapons. Since 2012, ISWAP has been involved in trafficking arms and the armed conflict with secessionists in the south-west and north-west regions since 2017 has increased the demand for illicit arms. In fact, arms trafficking has been a reality since 2016, when the manufacture of homemade weapons was legalized, but since May 2021 the sale of self-defence weapons has been prohibited.

The increasing illicit sale of counterfeit products, including but not limited to pharmaceutical products and branded labels, constitutes a threat to the national economy. The preponderance of counterfeit products in national markets has resulted in some local industries performing below expectations, causing a substantial loss in public revenue. The porosity of the borders, corruption, the lack of quality control, the lure of profit and the inadequacy of actions taken against perpetrators are the main causes of the increase in the prevalence of counterfeit products. There is also a thriving illicit trade in excisable products, which range from alcoholic beverages and cigarettes to tea and coffee, causing large losses in tax revenue every year. However, there is evidence that recent increasingly effective controls at borders and ports have reduced the illicit trade in excise goods.



ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Cameroon are a major concern in the forestry sector, with heavy involvement from government officials and traditional authorities. In particular, there is widespread illegal timber logging and smuggling to Europe and Asia. Most of the timber consumed locally comes from informal sources. Illegal activities reported in the forestry sector include allocation of concessions, logging, laundering of illegally harvested wood and corruption in the allocation of logging permits. The illegal logging market in the country, which is estimated to amount to US\$60 million a year, benefits both domestic criminal networks and those extending beyond national borders.

Cameroon is considered both a transit country and a country of origin for the trafficking of wildlife, including elephant tusks, rhino horns, pangolins, snakes, lizards and monkeys. Illegal trade in bushmeat also remains a concern. The country has already lost several species, including black rhinos and cheetahs, due to poaching, loss of habitat and human-wildlife conflict. Theft and trafficking of cattle and other livestock are common in various parts of the country, as well as a plethora of fisheries-related crimes. The country is a key transit point for wildlife trafficking originating in Central African countries such as Gabon and the Republic of Congo. The town of Djoum in the southern Dja region of Cameroon is a crucial transit hub for ivory coming from the country's southern and eastern neighbours. Wildlife trafficking was found to be linked to other crimes, including smuggling of counterfeit goods, arms trafficking and human smuggling and trafficking.

Cameroon is one of the main destination and transit countries for illicit fuel trafficked from Nigeria. The cross-border flow of stolen Nigerian crude oil also caters to local consumption, which is facilitated by corruption. Mining sector operations, which are opaque, include unauthorized and unlicensed mining. Gold deposits have been exploited in Eastern Cameroon by artisanal diggers and Chinese mining companies. Cameroon is a major transit country for gold and gemstones, including diamonds, mined in the Central African Republic and smuggled over the border for export.

DRUGS

Cameroon is considered to be both a transit and a destination market for heroin, the use of which has grown in the country in recent years. Cocaine consumption is also reportedly increasing, although comprehensive data is lacking. Cannabis remains the most commonly used drug in the country. Cameroon is not only considered

a major importer but also a trans-shipment point for cannabis produced domestically and in other African countries. Cannabis is regularly smuggled in and out of the country via sea and airports.

Tramadol is the main synthetic drug of concern in Cameroon and the drug most in demand after cannabis. It is generally trafficked from India via West Africa (particularly Nigeria) and distributed within Cameroon and other Central African countries. Despite the government's efforts to curb the problem, the sale of synthetic drugs continues to grow in the country.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Most cyber-dependent crimes targeting individuals in Cameroon go unreported because reporting mechanisms are unclear and unknown. While many people in the private sector have been consistently under attack, senior executives have been left unaware of the problem and of the shortage of the skills required to defend against it. Fraudulent activities involving cryptocurrencies are also on the rise, but, according to the Cameroonian authorities, cyber-dependent crimes constitute a very small percentage of all cybercrimes (a mere 2.30%).

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The most prevalent financial crimes in the country include embezzlement of public funds, tax evasion, fraud and other forms of cyber-enabled financial crimes, resulting in significant financial losses. The government published the report of an investigation into social networks that shed light on extensive misappropriation of funds intended for the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, amounting to more than US\$34.8 million.

Criminal Actors

Mafia-style groups in Cameroon are predominantly either terrorist groups that engage in organized criminal activity, armed secessionist groups or urban youth gangs. ISWAP finances its operations in large part through criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, extortion and burglary. While the majority of separatist armed groups in north-west and south-west Cameroon have become involved to some extent in illicit and criminal activities, some factions have effectively transformed into mafia-style groups, and engage primarily in smuggling and extortion. The violent activities carried out by these groups are adding to the numbers of internally displaced people in the region.



Criminal networks proliferate in the country, among them kidnap groups operating in the Adamawa region, armed robbers and traffickers in the eastern region and criminal networks exploiting the conflict in the south-west and north-west regions. These groups are involved in a variety of criminal activities including drug trafficking, arms trafficking, kidnapping, hijacking, money laundering, the illegal fuel trade and illegal logging. Kidnap for ransom is increasingly prolific in Cameroon, particularly in the northern, eastern and south-western provinces. In the border zones with CAR and Chad, criminal groups frequently engage in kidnap for ransom and arms trafficking. The identities of these groups are difficult to be certain of – some are Cameroonian, but Chadian and Central African armed individuals frequently cross the border to engage in crime as well. Significant numbers of Nigerians are involved in illicit economies in the south-west and north-west, including those interlinked with conflicts in these areas. Foreign actors from neighbouring countries are in fact

known to operate across Cameroon. However, there is also evidence suggesting the involvement of criminal actors from other parts of the world, such as Chinese business owners, as well as Turkish officials, especially in enabling human trafficking by facilitating the granting of visas with little oversight.

The high levels of corruption in state institutions potentially provide a safe haven for criminal actors. Corruption by state officials mainly involves embezzlement of public funds and abuse of office. Such actions also facilitate other criminal activities and some state officials and political elites are believed to be directly involved and profiting from fuel, timber and wildlife, and probably from gold and diamonds as well. In the private sector, banks, forestry and wildlife operators, mining companies, real estate agents, currency exchange offices, dealers in precious metals and stones and notaries are some of the sector-specific actors who are exposed to either money laundering schemes or terrorist financing.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Longstanding security threats facing the country have eroded trust and faith in the government. There is also an increase in inter-communal tensions, politically motivated arrests and other acts of repression in response to demands for social and political reform. The national capacity to address organized crime remains limited, and current legislation does not comply with international standards. The government has repressed political opponents in various ways, among them using the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to suppress the right to assemble. It is also characterized by high levels of corruption and a lack of transparency and has been reported to be facilitating a variety of crimes, resulting in many Cameroonians perceiving it as corrupt.

Cameroon has ratified many treaties relating to preventing and combating organized crime. However, the country has struggled with implementation. It has also participated in bilateral and regional initiatives to address human trafficking, human smuggling, drug trafficking, arms trafficking and wildlife trafficking. Although there are a number of domestic laws pertaining to organized crime, these are not fully implemented. There are also gaps in domestic legislation that benefit traffickers.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

A lack of resources and limited independence from the executive branch hamper the ability of Cameroon's judicial system to process and prosecute cases pertaining to organized crime efficiently. The problem is highlighted by the backlog of cases awaiting prosecution and the common impunity for government officials accused or suspected of involvement in organized crime. Perceptions of corruption in the judicial system among Cameroonians are high. Prison conditions fall far below international standards.

Law enforcement is often politicized, as demonstrated by anti-corruption drives that have focussed on political opponents of the regime. The government has made an effort to deal effectively with organized crime by training law enforcement agencies, cooperating with INTERPOL and the Economic Community of Central African States over intelligence and creating initiatives to tackle the problem. However, corruption in the law enforcement agencies, particularly in customs services and the forestry sector, has severely weakened the effectiveness of such efforts. Cameroon's borders are porous, facilitating cross-border trafficking, including of drugs, arms and natural resources. Border porosity



is aggravated by armed conflict and unrest as well as corruption among border police and customs officers.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Cameroon has a regulatory framework and institutions governing its anti-money laundering responses, and is not defined by the relevant international authorities as a non-compliant jurisdiction or as having strategic anti-money laundering deficiencies. The country is also part of a regional task force that tackles money laundering. However, there are still significant gaps in its money-laundering regulatory framework. The implementation of the different regulations pertaining to money laundering is inconsistent because of the absence of a specialized institution to ensure compliance with these measures. In order to reduce money-laundering activities in the private sector the government has initiated a series of capacity-building workshops for the staff of the Ministry of Mines and Technological Development and for magistrates as well as judicial officers and police officers.

The Cameroonian economy is highly regulated and influenced by governmental price controls and, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation caused by the crisis in Eastern Europe between Russia and Ukraine, the market has faced enormous difficulties.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The treatment of and support for victims of human trafficking remains weak, further decreasing in recent years and varying significantly from case to case. The government does not have a formal policy encouraging victims to participate in investigations or prosecutions of

their traffickers or of providing counselling, legal support or any other assistance to victims testifying in court or protecting victims cooperating with investigations, despite reports of trafficking networks threatening victims during trials.

There are also no known governmental mechanisms to support drug users. Measures implemented to prevent organized crime are relatively limited, and instead the approach is predominantly premised on deterrence through severely punishing those found guilty. Nonetheless, the Cameroonian government has launched some awareness raising initiatives to prevent some types of organized crime, such as human trafficking and human smuggling. The government has also taken steps to prevent illicit trade in the vehicle sector by developing a digital platform.

Civil society continues to be active in combating organized crime in some areas, such as human trafficking and human smuggling, where it plays a crucial role by providing direct services to victims. Similarly, there is significant and effective cooperation between the state and civil society organizations in attempts to counter the trafficking of fauna and flora, notably timber. Nevertheless, the government is increasingly criticized for cracking down on civil society organizations that oppose or criticize its policies. Legislation relating to civil society participation is obsolete and does not comply with international standards. Moreover, relations between the state and the privately-owned media are contentious. Journalists are constantly threatened with verbal or physical aggression as well as arbitrary detention. This issue is highlighted by the number of journalists imprisoned, abducted or assaulted in the country.

