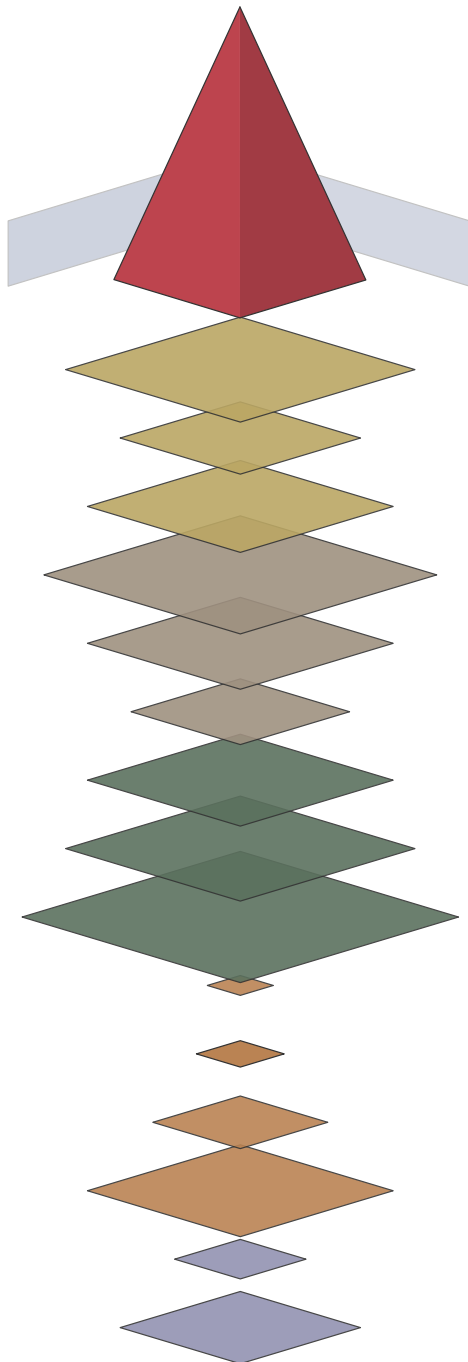




CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

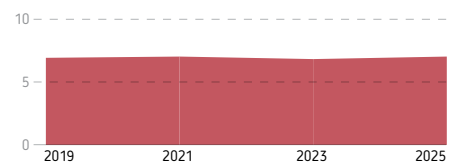


7.03 $\nearrow 0.28$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

6th of 54 African countries -

2nd of 11 Central African countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.97 $\nearrow 0.37$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	7.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	9.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	7.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	8.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	10.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	2.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	4.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	3.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.50	$\nearrow 2.00$



CRIMINAL ACTORS

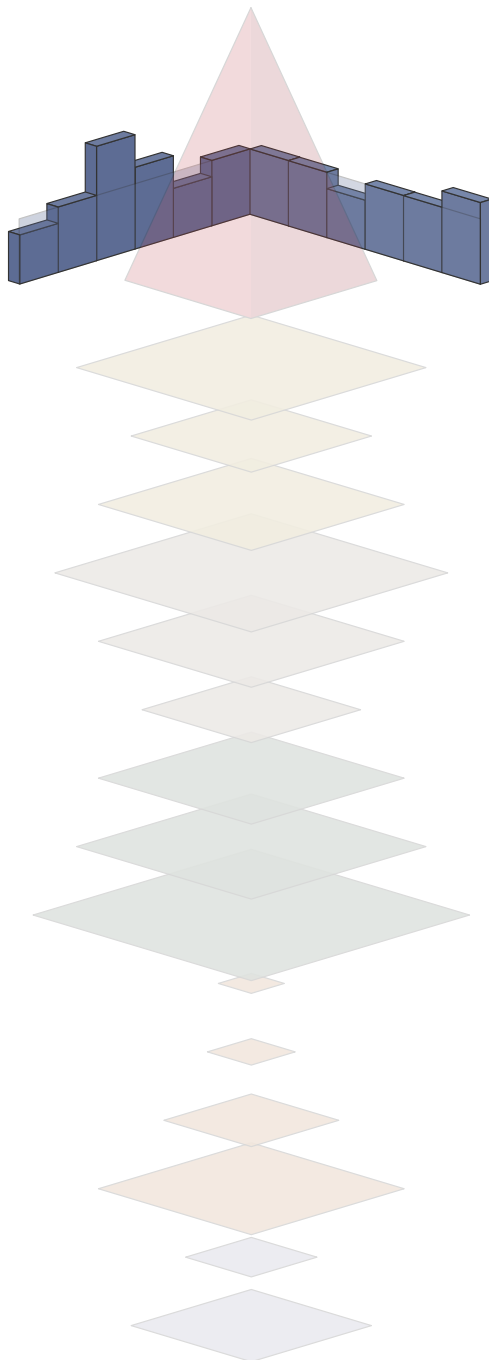
8.10 $\nearrow 0.20$

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





CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

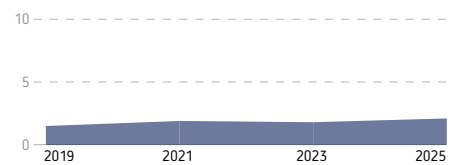


2.08 $\nearrow 0.29$

RESILIENCE SCORE

49th of 54 African countries $\nearrow 3$

10th of 11 Central African countries $\nearrow 1$



**POLITICAL LEADERSHIP
AND GOVERNANCE** 1.50 0.00

**GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY
AND ACCOUNTABILITY** 2.00 $\nearrow 0.50$

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION 3.50 $\nearrow 0.50$

NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS 2.50 $\nearrow 0.50$

JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION 1.50 $\searrow 0.50$

LAW ENFORCEMENT 2.00 $\nearrow 0.50$

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY 2.00 $\nearrow 0.50$

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING 2.00 0.00

ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY 1.50 0.00

VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT 2.00 $\searrow 0.50$

PREVENTION 2.00 $\nearrow 1.00$

NON-STATE ACTORS 2.50 $\nearrow 1.00$



CRIMINALITY

Criminal markets

PEOPLE

Human trafficking in the Central African Republic (CAR) persists at a high level, driven by forced labour in mining, sex trafficking and the recruitment of child soldiers. Exploitation affects domestic and foreign victims and trafficking networks operate across borders and involve diverse actors, including armed groups, corrupt officials and foreign operatives. Organ trafficking has emerged as a profitable and disturbing trend. Although there have been attempts to raise awareness and improve legislation, enforcement is weak and no prosecutions have been recorded since 2022. Demand for trafficked individuals fuels violence and instability, while limited resources, public distrust and systemic corruption hinder efforts to reduce CAR's vulnerability to these interconnected criminal markets.

Human smuggling is an important component of the criminal economy, where porous borders and regional instability enable criminal networks to operate. Routes link CAR to neighbouring countries, facilitating migrant flows and complicating efforts to distinguish between smuggling and legal movement. Enforcement is undermined by resource limitations and corruption. Facilitators in CAR communities play a key role in human smuggling, offering logistical support to migrants as they move through the country. Transnational criminal organizations from neighbouring countries leverage their extensive networks to facilitate cross-border migrant movements. Competition among these networks for control over lucrative smuggling routes further fuels conflict and instability in affected areas. Recent crises have altered migration flows, some countries becoming sources and destinations. The scale and patterns of smuggling are insufficiently documented, obscuring a full understanding of the threat.

Extortion and protection racketeering are widespread, particularly among non-state armed groups that finance operations through control of gold mining, smuggling routes and illegal taxation. The Africa Corps exerts influence in several sectors and there are documented instances of coercion and violence towards mining communities. A significant protection economy exists around transhumance and herd movements, primarily managed by Peuhl/Fulani armed groups. Extortion distorts local markets by raising transport and retail costs. These criminal activities provide financial resources to the perpetrators and consolidate their control over territories and influence over economic and social dynamics. The groups' fear and intimidation tactics further enhance their relevance and power, contributing to overall instability.

TRADE

The UN Security Council lifted the arms embargo on CAR government forces in mid-2024, while calling for measures to prevent the supply of weapons to armed groups operating in the country. Illicit arms trafficking is nevertheless entrenched. Diversion of state-held weapons to armed groups persists, now harder to monitor. Arms trafficking is a pervasive issue exacerbated by the country's instability. Foreign mercenaries, rebel militias and criminal networks rely heavily on the illegal trade of weapons to sustain their activities and assert control over territory. Regional trafficking networks link CAR to conflicts in Sudan, Libya and neighbouring states, while armed groups – though facing diminished purchasing power – acquire weapons through cash or barter, including diamonds and gold. Criminal actors include state-embedded actors, foreign entities and members of peacekeeping forces. Enforcement is weak amid legal ambiguity, underfunded oversight and widespread corruption. Though military operations have disrupted trafficking routes, arms trafficking is outpacing state efforts to address it.

Counterfeit pharmaceuticals are a persistent illicit market, driven by limited healthcare access, high drug prices and weak regulatory enforcement. The trade is primarily supplied by smuggling routes from Cameroon and Congo, and unlicensed pharmacies in Bangui play a central distribution role. These outlets cater mainly to low-income residents, offering more affordable but potentially harmful alternatives. Local traffickers facilitate nationwide distribution through informal networks. The trade undermines legitimate pharmaceutical sales and contributes to public health risks, including treatment failures and antimicrobial resistance. Despite awareness and enforcement measures, systemic corruption and limited institutional capacity hinder meaningful progress against the illicit pharmaceutical trade.

Illicit trade in excisable goods, particularly alcohol and tobacco, is prevalent and facilitated by porous borders, weak governance and entrenched corruption. While Cameroon is a key regional hub, smuggled goods pass through CAR from and towards various countries, including Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Cameroon, South Sudan and Nigeria. Conflict and limited state presence, especially in rural areas, have enabled smuggling networks to flourish. Recent indications suggest an uptick in illicit trade as criminal actors use bribery to bypass excise controls. The absence of secure marking systems further hampers enforcement. Proxy indicators suggest elevated risk levels, given CAR's poor customs capacity, corruption and moderate tobacco control effectiveness.



ENVIRONMENT

Illegal timber trade in western CAR drives extensive deforestation and environmental degradation, fuelled by organized crime, weak governance and foreign exploitation. Sapele wood is the primary target, trafficked by actors including mafia-style groups, foreign firms and private military contractors. The Wagner Group's involvement has intensified violence and environmental harm, though international sanctions may be limiting its role. Corruption enables fraudulent concessions and transnational trafficking, and routes extend through neighbouring states. Illegal exports persist despite enforcement actions. Timber is the most lucrative commodity, while coffee, sesame and bamboo trafficking – once significant revenue sources for armed groups – have declined due to increased state presence and military operations.

Wildlife trafficking is sustained by complex criminal networks involving poachers, corrupt officials, armed groups and transnational syndicates. The trade targets ivory, pangolins and bushmeat, largely for export to Asian and Arab markets. CAR's porous borders and strategic location facilitate trafficking, and corruption enables impunity across enforcement levels. Despite existing legal protections, enforcement is weak, contributing to rising illicit activity. Trafficking is linked to broader crimes including arms smuggling and money laundering, undermining biodiversity, conservation and legal industries. Economic hardship and weak governance contribute to local participation. Recent cases have implicated international humanitarian personnel, raising accountability concerns.

The criminal market that supports the non-renewable resource crimes economy thrives on the exploitation of gold and diamonds, which are CAR's primary extractive focus due to their high value and ease of smuggling. This trade undermines economic stability and funds armed conflict. It has been a key driver of insecurity and facilitated the entry of the Wagner Group, which has been linked to serious incidents of violence. While there is local demand for gold and diamonds, the primary market is international, facilitated by criminal networks operating in the country. Fuel smuggling, on the other hand, largely involves cross-border flows to and from the DRC, Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Sudan. Foreign and local actors, including international companies and paramilitary groups, profit through corrupt licensing and smuggling. Fuel smuggling, tied to regional networks, further distorts markets and reduces revenues. Illicit mining intersects with arms trafficking, forced labour and environmental degradation. Systemic corruption and insecurity have limited the effectiveness of recent enforcement efforts. Substantial revenues from these trades are laundered through complex schemes. Demand is largely international, sustaining a transnational criminal ecosystem that fuels violence and ecological harm.

DRUGS

The cannabis trade in CAR has expanded, reflecting broader regional and global trends. The drug's affordability and ease of access on the black market have fostered widespread use among youth and armed groups. Although current data on market scale is limited, previous evidence points to a consistent influx of cannabis from northern DRC into Bangui. The trade involves a diverse set of actors, including local cultivators, elites and external groups. The overall quality of cannabis is low.

The misuse of substances such as tramadol – locally known as tramol or béret vert – has become entrenched in the criminal economy, and distribution networks are linked to neighbouring countries including Cameroon, Chad and Sudan. Illicit trade is reportedly facilitated by armed groups, contributing to widespread access across urban markets. Consumption is common among young people and has been linked to incidents of violence. Interventions appear to have had a mitigating effect, but trafficking and consumption still shape local security dynamics.

There are links between regional terrorist organizations and trafficking in drugs, including heroin, but little is known about domestic use and supply. The heroin trade's impact is thus minimal. There is also limited evidence of cocaine trafficking in the CAR, as cocaine use is limited to the local elite. There are two main supply flows; one has poorer quality cocaine, primarily imported from the DRC, and the other has higher quality cocaine brought in from Europe.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crime is poorly documented in CAR. Public awareness of cyber risks is low and critical infrastructure is vulnerable. Although trends in the illicit cyber market are unclear, recent cases underscore its presence, including the use of cryptocurrencies in criminal activity. A recent example is a widespread cryptocurrency investment scam involving a foreign-managed company and the state-associated Sango Coin. The fallout affected several sectors of society and raised concerns about systemic accountability, since the perpetrators remain at large and losses reached a record high in local currency.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, including embezzlement, fraud and misuse of public funds, significantly hinder institutional integrity and economic development in CAR. These offences are fuelled by weak governance, lack of transparency and a heavy reliance on informal financial systems. Recent incidents have also exposed misappropriation in legislative, ministerial and municipal institutions. The suspension of financial aid by Western partners after increased Russian involvement has left the state's coffers depleted, prompting

the government to halt all payments in December 2022. Since then, the administration has increasingly relied on the informal economy to access liquidity, further exacerbating corruption and embezzlement.

Criminal actors

Armed groups in CAR operate in mafia-style structures, significantly undermining governance and security. The Coalition of Patriots for Change – comprising factions such as the Popular Front for Renaissance of the Central African Republic, Unity for Peace in the Central African Republic, the Patriotic Movement for the Central African Republic, the Return, Claim and Rehabilitation movement and anti-balaka militias – seeks to disrupt national stability through violence and territorial control. These groups engage in extortion, resource exploitation, arms trafficking and tax levies at checkpoints. Despite restructuring attempts and increasing attacks against government forces in recent years, coordination issues persist in the coalition. Factions maintain influence over remote regions, forming criminal enclaves beyond state reach. Armed groups' attempts to manipulate political processes further entrench instability and obstruct democratic development.

Criminal networks operate through fluid, clandestine structures of traffickers and bandits engaged in illicit arms trading, natural resource exploitation, human trafficking, extortion and smuggling. These networks are pervasive and deeply entrenched across the country, facilitated by CAR's vast and challenging terrain. Actors conceal their operations in legitimate trade routes, often using livestock or merchandise as cover. Armed groups exert control over resource-rich areas, generating revenue from diamonds, gold, ivory and forced labour. High-intensity violence, including mass atrocities, is widespread, fuelled by weak governance. Cross-border ties with foreign actors facilitate arms flows and movement of fighters across neighbouring states. Like mafia-style groups, these actors seek to support

or undermine political candidates and parties through coercion and manipulation, shaping electoral outcomes to secure access to resources and protect criminal enterprises.

State control over criminal markets varies. At all levels, state actors are often complicit, either through corruption or direct involvement in illicit activities. Alleged collaborations between elite officials and foreign entities, notably Russian interests, facilitate the extraction of resources and support financial crimes such as embezzlement. This alignment of local and transnational actors entrenches criminal economies, erodes governance and sustains instability. The entanglement of state-linked individuals in domestic and cross-border criminal networks significantly hampers efforts to establish effective rule of law and institutional control.

Criminal dynamics in CAR reflect a complex interplay between diaspora communities, foreign armed actors and local authorities. Chadian and Sudanese diasporas, due to geographic positioning, facilitate arms and mineral smuggling, while Congolese groups are also implicated. The Wagner Group exerts extensive influence, controlling mining operations and trade routes, engaging in arms trafficking and fostering corruption through state connections, which undermines governance and peace efforts. Chadian rebel groups operate in northern CAR, with ambiguous responses from the authorities and reported ties to Wagner. Chinese companies are heavily involved in gold extraction in several regions. Sudan's Rapid Support Forces use CAR for recruitment and logistics, further entangling the country in regional conflict and instability.

Organized crime has penetrated the private sector, particularly the gold mining and timber industries. Weak regulatory frameworks and minimal oversight have allowed illicit actors to exploit trade-based money laundering and front companies to disguise criminal proceeds. Many firms operate in the legal and illicit economies, blurring lines of legitimacy. Criminal groups exert control over resource-rich zones by dominating extraction, transport and trade, facilitating extortion, smuggling and cross-border laundering.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

CAR faces persistent instability, and organized crime compounds challenges linked to weak governance, political violence and external influence. Though the government has periodically affirmed its opposition to organized crime, limited institutional capacity and allegations of official collusion impede meaningful progress. Foreign actors have

influenced governance and resource policies, including revisions to mining legislation favouring state control of artisanal production. International actors have also sought to shape regulatory frameworks. Despite disarmament efforts and new elections, armed groups remain active, engaging in illicit trade and undermining democratic



processes. Legislative reforms and international peacekeeping initiatives continue, but entrenched corruption and criminal infiltration hinder sustained institutional development.

Despite the 2018 creation of an independent anti-corruption body, efforts are hampered by political interference, limited resources and restricted civil society oversight. International actors have played a sustained role in advancing reform, offering targeted support to strengthen fiscal governance, external control mechanisms and legislative engagement. In 2023, a significant funding initiative aimed to build capacity for domestic resource mobilization and reinforce transparency in development policy implementation. Digital tools such as e-payment systems have been introduced to curb bribery, though challenges persist in public access to government data. State collusion in criminal markets and foreign influence further erode practical transparency and accountability despite formal institutional improvements.

CAR has ratified key international conventions addressing organized crime, corruption, arms trafficking, narcotics and wildlife trade. However, institutional fragility, resource limitations and persistent insecurity hinder enforcement. While CAR has extradition treaties, a lack of transparency obscures their implementation, and data on asset seizures is limited. International cooperation efforts are uneven, complicated by corruption and minimal regional engagement. A shift from Western to Russian and Chinese partnerships led to donor fatigue, but recent signs indicate a gradual return of Western support. Rwanda also exerts significant influence in CAR, being the primary contributor of UN peacekeeping troops and deploying soldiers through a bilateral arrangement. The 2024 lifting of the Kimberley Process embargo on CAR diamonds signals progress, though illicit trade concerns persist.

CAR has taken steps to address organized crime, though significant legal and institutional gaps persist. The penal code criminalizes trafficking offences but lacks provisions specifically targeting organized criminal groups. This gap is said to hinder the effective enforcement of the existing legal framework. A revised criminal code is reportedly in development with EU support, but details are undisclosed. Law enforcement is hampered by resource shortages, limited training and corruption, while judicial inefficiencies hinder prosecution. Recent legislation addresses cybercrime and human trafficking, with new frameworks for digital security and victim protection. External partners have supported reforms, including anti-poaching efforts. Nonetheless, concerns remain over opaque law-making and policies affecting economic sectors and cultural activities, complicating governance and public trust.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

There are pronounced difficulties in addressing organized crime, largely due to institutional fragility in the CAR's judiciary and penal systems. Judicial units nominally tasked with combating organized crime are undermined by corruption and intimidation, limiting their operational effectiveness. Resource allocation to the judiciary has been inadequate for years, and limited funding and capacity further impedes effective responses to organized crime. External support exists but is constrained by political conditions and limited scope. In rural areas, weak judicial presence necessitates reliance on informal dispute resolution, weakening state authority. The Wagner Group allegedly has extensive influence over the judicial system, particularly the prosecution service. The penal system is characterized by overcrowding, poor infrastructure and systemic corruption. Criminal actors exert influence in prisons, facilitating illicit activities and violence. Conditions fall short of international standards, further entrenching organized crime inside and outside prisons.

Law enforcement operates under severe resource constraints and depends heavily on international assistance for training, equipment and operational support. International actors, including UN personnel and foreign police mentors, aid anti-trafficking operations and provide training. Despite increased external engagement, long-term progress is uncertain due to inconsistent support and pervasive corruption, and foreign influence notably affects senior law enforcement leadership. Public trust in police is weakened by ethnic divisions, corruption and misconduct. Intelligence capacity is underdeveloped and hindered by weak infrastructure and politicized institutions, though Russian-backed efforts have led to recent improvements.

CAR faces persistent challenges in securing its extensive, porous borders shared with six countries. Difficult terrain and insufficient surveillance facilitate the trafficking of arms, minerals, wildlife and agricultural goods. The government initiated a national border management strategy in 2023, followed by the launch of a border management commission and a 10-year action plan in 2024, though implementation is uncertain. CAR's strategic location near regional conflict zones enables transnational criminal networks to exploit instability. Border control efforts are hindered by armed groups, external interference, weak governance and outdated infrastructure. Corruption affects key transport hubs, while inadequate cybersecurity heightens national vulnerability.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

New legislation aligned with international anti-money laundering standards requires financial institutions and designated non-financial sectors to conduct due diligence, report suspicious transactions and retain records. Financial intelligence units have been established, though they are not affiliated with the Egmont Group. Authorities have



made efforts to build investigative capacity through training and international support. However, enforcement is hindered by limited institutional capacity, uneven risk understanding and a non-operational anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism policy committee. Sector-specific risk assessments are incomplete and asset identification mechanisms are lacking. While banks demonstrate compliance, broader systemic weaknesses persist, particularly in applying enhanced risk mitigation and ensuring national coordination.

The government faces persistent challenges in fostering a business environment free from criminal influence, hindered by institutional fragility, security volatility and limited financial resources. Budgetary constraints have worsened following a sharp reduction in fiscal support from Western partners. Despite administrative progress in simplifying business registration, opaque regulatory practices, inadequate legal protections and corruption burden legitimate enterprises. The economy, heavily reliant on natural resource exports, suffers from recurring conflict and underinvestment, impeding labour market development. Illicit exploitation of diamonds, gold and timber undermines economic stability and formal regulatory efforts.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

State efforts to protect victims of crime are hindered by political instability, limited resources and corruption, resulting in a reliance on non-state actors – such as NGOs and humanitarian agencies – for victim support, including counselling, medical aid and legal services. While some state-led witness protection and anti-racketeering initiatives exist, their reach is limited. Civil society operates drug treatment centres amid prevailing social stigma. Judicial

efforts, including by the hybrid Special Criminal Court, are compromised by external influence over law enforcement, affecting victim and witness protection.

Although prevention efforts exist, they often lack coordination, evidence-based planning and clear objectives. National strategies address various criminal markets, including trafficking in persons, drugs and arms, and CAR participates in regional cooperation through different initiatives. Recent legislation and institutional reforms have aimed to address trafficking, sexual violence and the use of child soldiers, though enforcement is weak. Local and international partnerships support awareness campaigns and training programmes. However, insufficient victim services, corruption and limited institutional capacity undermine sustained progress.

Civil society organizations and the media play pivotal roles in countering organized crime, including human trafficking, arms smuggling and wildlife poaching. These actors often fill gaps left by a weak and under-resourced state, engaging in community-based intelligence gathering, advocacy and support for victims. Their efforts face challenges stemming from political instability, corruption and limited institutional capacity. Recent legislation has sought to increase state control over civil society and the press, curbing freedoms and exposing activists and journalists to harassment, detention and violence. The deteriorating security situation and foreign influence have further strained the space for independent action and undermined coordinated efforts to combat organized crime. However, despite capacity gaps and reduced opportunities, civil society organizations are among the few active and moderately effective bastions of resilience on these issues.

