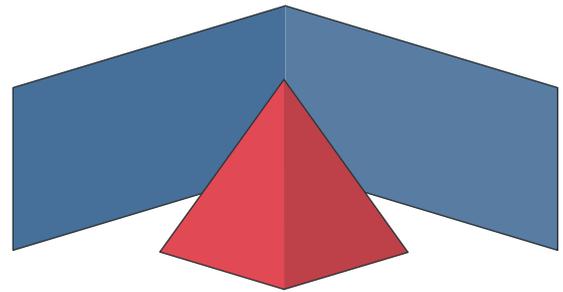


BENIN

Benin ranks 31st in the Index, with a broad range of criminal markets scoring between 3 and 7.

The most significant markets are in the environmental sector, with the illegal rosewood trade, ivory trade and fuel smuggling all deemed by experts to be major issues facing the country. Benin's illicit narcotics markets scored moderately, with the country serving as a transit point, although local drug consumption is generally low. Nevertheless, **synthetic drugs** scored highly (7) as a result of growing local consumption. The main criminal actors operating in Benin are **criminal networks** and **foreign actors**, who often cooperate in illicit drug trafficking. Moreover, illegal activity is often facilitated by corrupt state officials.

Benin performs better than most African nations in terms of **resilience** to organised crime, ranking 20th on the continent. Although some significant steps have been taken with regard to **international cooperation**, **anti-money laundering**, and allowing **non-state actors** to flourish, experts noted some concerns, including a corrupt **judiciary**, and insufficient **victim and witness support**.



 **4.83**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

31st of 54 African countries
12th of 15 Western countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.15**

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **4.50**

 **4.33**
STATE RESILIENCE SCORE

20th of 54 African countries
7th of 15 Western countries



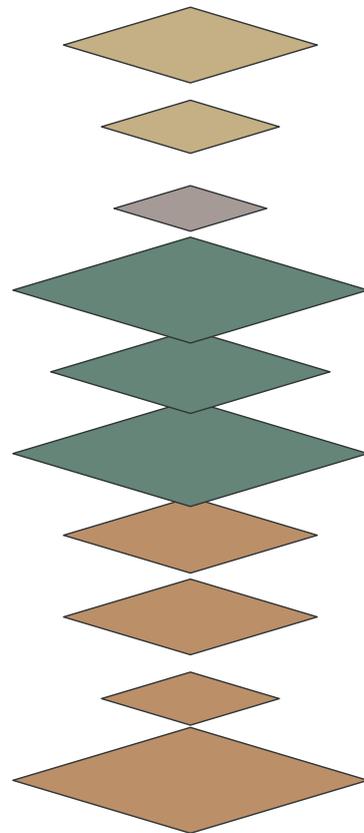
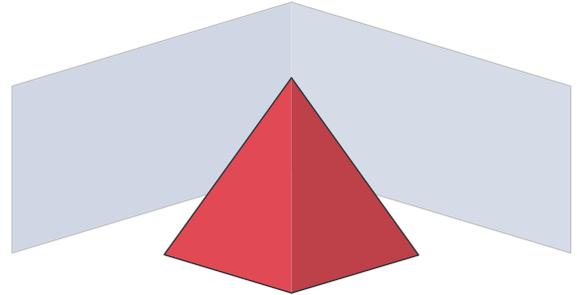
CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.50
MAFIA STYLE GROUPS	1.0
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.5
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.0



CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.15
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.0
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.5
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.0
FLORA CRIMES	7.0
FAUNA CRIMES	5.5
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES CRIMES	7.0
HEROIN TRADE	5.0
COCAINE TRADE	5.0
CANNABIS TRADE	3.5
SYNTHETIC DRUGS TRADE	7.0



Criminal Markets

In terms of criminal markets, Benin is ranked 16th in Africa, largely owing to the presence of numerous established markets in combination with various illicit economies that exert a significant influence. Weak law enforcement has been reported as a concern that intensifies high **criminal market** scores in Benin. The most pervasive markets are **flora crimes**, **non-renewable-resource crimes**, and the **synthetic drugs trade**.

Flora-related criminal markets, which scored 7, are a significant problem in Benin. Rosewood is the most pervasive illegally traded commodity and this market is increasing due to corruption and the involvement of political elites in the criminal market. Concessions, as well as timber felling and transportation contracts, have long been awarded to politically connected elites. Illicit and unregulated logging takes place on the borders with Togo and Burkina Faso, and timber is moved to ports for export with its provenance concealed.



Non-renewable-resource crimes also scored 7 and these have a significant detrimental impact on society. Due to its high cost in the country, Benin is a destination and transit country for fuel, which is purchased legally in neighbouring states, primarily Nigeria, and then smuggled into the country. Fuel-smuggling networks operate in border areas, and various routes have been established to avoid checkpoints and border control. Much of the fuel is smuggled into Togo and beyond.

There is limited gold mining in the country. However, the country is a recipient of gold smuggled from neighbouring countries, such as Niger. Although few actors are involved in this market, well-connected individuals are likely to be benefiting from the illicit economy. A two-year ban in artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Ghana has contributed to the expansion of the illegal market for gold in other parts of West Africa.

The trade in **synthetic drugs** has been growing in recent years, most notably for Tramadol and methamphetamines, which are trafficked into Benin from neighbouring countries. The port of Cotonou is the main entry point for much of the Tramadol that enters West Africa. While violence is not an intrinsic feature of this criminal market, there have been numerous cases of state-embedded actors directly involved in the illicit market.

Criminal Actors

While Benin's **criminal markets** overall are much more pervasive than in the vast majority of African states, the strength of the various **criminal actor** types in the

country is lower than the continental average, ranking 35th in Africa.

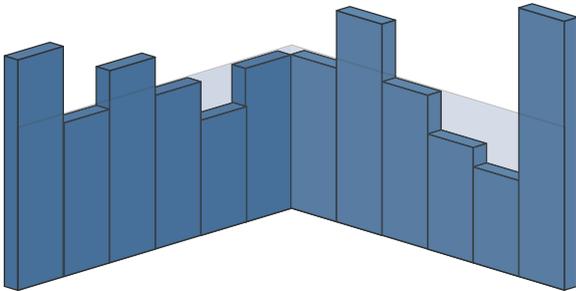
Criminal networks are influential, as reflected by their score of 6.5. In Benin, local and Nigerian syndicates have been known to cooperate in illicit drug trafficking. Drugs such as cannabis are smuggled out of Porto-Novo into western Nigeria through the joint efforts of these groups. Fuel smuggling appears to be facilitated by Beninese and Nigerian communities living close to the border. While organised hierarchies are usually absent, the cultural homogeneity of border communities helps facilitate cooperation in terms of illicit cross-border activity. Various routes have been established by traffickers, who may not be part of any syndicate but are often described as 'freelancers' or 'entrepreneurs', using their access to fuel and knowledge of existing trade routes to profit from fuel smuggling.

As described above, **foreign actors** play a significant role in illicit smuggling. Nationals from neighbouring countries are said to play a key role in illicit drug and fuel smuggling, as well as in the human trafficking industry. Furthermore, international actors from Asian countries have been reported to play key roles in the smuggling of rosewood and pangolins.

Compared to the African average, **state-embedded actors** in Benin have a far lower influence in organised-criminal activity. Nevertheless, corruption in the law-enforcement authorities and within border-control agencies plays a key role in aiding the illicit criminal flows both from and into Benin, particularly rosewood smuggling.



RESILIENCE SCORE



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.0
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.0
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.0
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	4.0
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.0
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.0
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	4.0
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.5
ECONOMIC REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT	4.0
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.0
PREVENTION	2.5
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.0

Benin is ranked 20th on the African continent for resilience to organised crime, performing better than the majority of African states. While most of the country's **resilience** indicators are assigned mid-range scores, it is Benin's performance on the **non-state actors** indicator that stands out. Civil society in the country is regarded as vigorous, with groups such as Social Watch-Benin involved in setting up working groups and drafting reports on social, economic and environmental governance; such organisations are considered very active. However, recent developments are concerning, including arbitrary arrests of activists and journalists during peaceful demonstrations.

Benin is more transparent and accountable than many other states in the region, albeit insufficiently so. Government officials have made very few public statements on the issue of organised crime in recent years. However, the authorities have recently made concerted efforts to combat organised crime, especially in the area of trafficking of persons. Furthermore, a national action plan to address organised crime was developed in 2018, which was subsequently validated in 2019. With regard to **government transparency and accountability**, the integrity of the government has been criticised, and although it performs better than many African nations, corruption is widespread in Benin.

As for anti-organised-crime legislative frameworks and the broader criminal-justice system, Benin performs marginally worse than the continental averages. There are

very few laws in place pertaining to organised crime, while weak legal regulations in Benin account for significant smuggling and trafficking through the country. Judicial effectiveness is poor, hampered by insufficient funding, inefficiency and corruption. Nevertheless, a special trial court for hearing cases involving terrorism and financial crimes has recently been established. Prisons are overcrowded and basic necessities in short supply, creating an environment that is vulnerable to the spread of organised-criminal activities.

However, **law enforcement** capacity in Benin is improving, aided considerably by the merging of the Gendarmerie and the police force. Nevertheless, corruption within law-enforcement bodies in the country is an obstacle to the effective combating of organised crime. Efforts to strengthen border control have been noted, but the effectiveness of the border posts has been questioned after an increase in reported organised-criminal activities.

Some efforts have been made to enhance **victim and witness support** in Benin. Child-trafficking victims and victims of foreign nationalities have been afforded support by the Central Bureau for the Protection of Minors and Families and the Prevention of Human Trafficking. Efforts here remain focused mainly on children, sometimes at the expense of adult victims. Little information exists in terms of treatment for drug addiction and prisoner rehabilitation, although in terms of the latter, recidivism appears to be primarily the result of a lack of employment prospects.

