ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia ranks 37th in the Index, with most criminal markets scoring below 5, suggesting a moderate negative influence on society.

Human smuggling, human trafficking and arms trafficking are the most prevalent markets. Established criminal networks and foreign actors are involved in human smuggling and trafficking in Ethiopia, as well as the illicit narcotics trade.

Although there is no evidence of the direct involvement of state-embedded actors in organised crime, experts note high levels of corruption. The government has demonstrated a willingness to tackle organised crime, leading to Ethiopia ranking as one of Africa’s most resilient nations, ranking 6th on the continent. Effective anti-money laundering legislation, ratification of international treaties and prevention of smuggling and trafficking all contribute to high scores in resilience categories.
Criminal Markets

Ethiopia’s moderately low criminality score is in large part due to low scores for most criminal markets, all of which score below 7 and the majority below 5.

The main criminal markets in Ethiopia are human smuggling, as well as arms trafficking and human trafficking. The country is a source and transit country for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sexual exploitation. Although awareness of the risks of labour exploitation is reportedly high, severe abuses and sexual exploitation are common.

Human trafficking is therefore judged as exerting a significant negative influence on society. Ethiopia is also a country of departure for many migrants, and sophisticated smuggling networks facilitate irregular flows into and out of Ethiopia.
Experts view arms trafficking as the most significant criminal market in Ethiopia, giving it a score of 6.5. The high score is mainly due to the trafficking of arms across the border with Sudan, and reports that Ethiopia has armed forces in Somalia outside the control of the federal government, in contravention of UN notifications requirements.

None of Ethiopia’s illicit drugs markets score higher than 5, implying at most a moderate negative influence. The illicit cannabis trade scores highest with 5, because of Ethiopia’s role as transit country for cannabis trafficked between central Asia and Western Europe, and levels of domestic consumption.

Ethiopia is also a transit point for cocaine, heroin and synthetic drugs, in part enabled by corrupt security officials. Although there is no major domestic consumption of these drugs, heroin use is reported to be on the rise, as is domestic supply.

Similarly, experts attribute low scores to Ethiopia’s environmental markets, ranging from 3 to 4. The illegal market for non-renewable resources scores highest with 4, due to Ethiopia’s role as an exporter of gold, gemstones, marble and tantalum. Evidence also suggests gold is smuggled from Sudan to the UAE through Ethiopia.

Although plant trafficking from national parks, conservation sites and border areas is viewed as common, experts believe flora crimes exert only a limited negative effect on society. In relation to fauna crimes, Ethiopia is a transit point for ivory, rhino horns and live animals; poaching is high in certain areas identified as hotspots.

The government’s efforts to combat these criminal markets through increased vigilance at airports and improved law enforcement efforts contribute to the overall low score for environmental markets.

**Criminal Actors**

Ethiopia’s scores on criminal actor typologies suggest there are two main groups of criminal actors: foreign actors and criminal networks, scoring 7 and 6.5, respectively. Criminal networks in Ethiopia range from opportunist criminal entrepreneurs, to highly organised and sophisticated networks, engaging in illegal activities such as human smuggling and exerting a significant negative influence on society.

Ethiopia has evolved as hub for criminal activities involving foreign actors. Transnational networks from other regions in Africa are involved in drug and wildlife trafficking, as well as human smuggling, in Ethiopia. Although there is no evidence of state-embedded actors taking part in organised crime, widespread corruption is reported, resulting in a score of 3.5.
Ethiopia ranks as one of the most resilient countries in Africa, ranking 6th on the continent, with the majority of indicators scoring between 6 and 7. The country scores well in areas such as political leadership and governance and national policies and laws. It has passed effective legislation on organised crime and experts rate it as having a strong will to implement a national strategy. Indeed, the government has made numerous statements against organised crime, and has passed a series of measures to combat criminal actors.

However, although Ethiopia scores highly in most categories, high levels of corruption, insufficient support for victims of organised crime, and a judiciary that rarely deviates from government policy, are all deemed as areas of concern, contributing to more moderate scores.