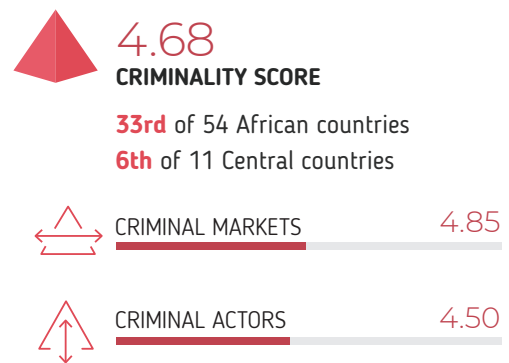
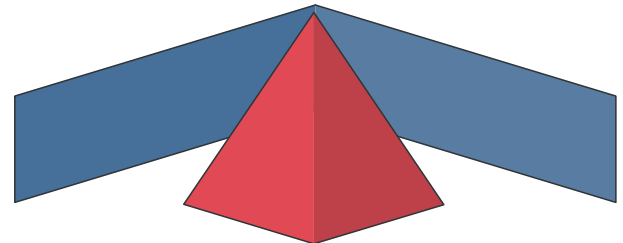


 **GABON**

Gabon has lower levels of **criminality** than most countries in Africa, ranking 33rd in the Index.

The country's score is driven by a handful of particularly established **criminal markets**, namely **flora crimes** and **fauna crimes**, as well as **human trafficking** and **human smuggling**, and the influence of **state-embedded actors**. High levels of illegality in the timber industry and the trade in elephant ivory, in addition to forced labour, sexual exploitation and irregular migration into the country, are the defining features of organised crime in Gabon.

With regard to **resilience**, Gabon ranks 41st in Africa, reflecting fairly low levels of resilience to organised crime. Although **law enforcement** and **territorial integrity** are moderately effective in the country, significant deficiencies remain. These include: high levels of corruption; lack of government legitimacy in the eyes of the population; weak economic and financial institutional and regulatory frameworks; and extremely ineffective social protection measures.



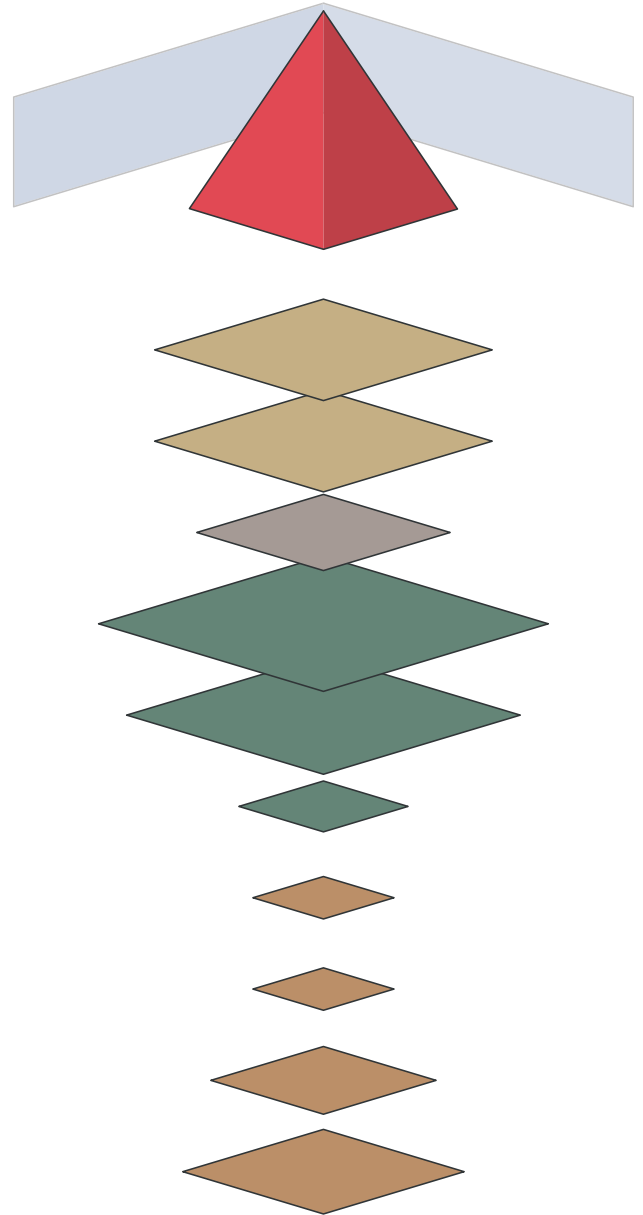
# CRIMINALITY SCORE



<b>CRIMINAL ACTORS</b>	<b>4.50</b>
MAFIA STYLE GROUPS	1.0
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	3.5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.5
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.0



<b>CRIMINAL MARKETS</b>	<b>4.85</b>
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.0
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.0
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.5
FLORA CRIMES	8.0
FAUNA CRIMES	7.0
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES CRIMES	3.0
HEROIN TRADE	2.5
COCAINE TRADE	2.5
CANNABIS TRADE	4.0
SYNTHETIC DRUGS TRADE	5.0



## Criminal Markets

**Flora crimes** are the most pervasive criminal market in Gabon, with a score of 8, reflecting high levels of criminality surrounding the timber sector in the country. A multitude of crimes are committed in the forests of the West African state, many of which are facilitated, if not perpetrated, by an entrenched network of corrupt state officials. A key pattern is the provision of concessions – often involving bribery – to foreign companies, which may then engage in further illegal activity, including the export of high-value protected species, such as rosewood.

**Fauna crimes** are similarly pervasive in Gabon, in particular the illegal trade in elephant ivory. In the past decade, elephant populations have declined significantly as a result of poaching. In January 2018, officials in Gabon arrested the country's biggest so-called ivory kingpin and his eight-member criminal syndicate, who were suspected of having trafficked over 600 elephant tusks in 2017 alone. The ivory network stretched across Gabon's nine provinces and beyond its borders. Foreign



actors play an important role in poaching in Gabon, but corruption continues to curtail efforts to hold poachers and traffickers to account.

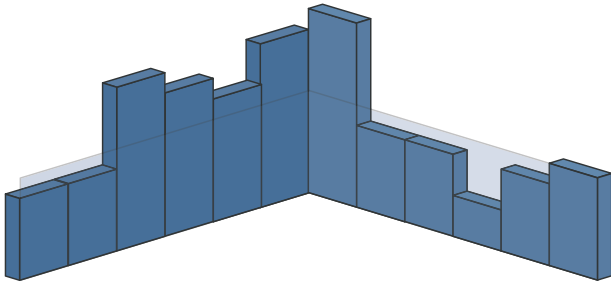
**Human trafficking** is also a problem in the country and the government is not assessed as making significant efforts to tackle it. Gabon is a transit and destination country for human trafficking, with victims subjected predominantly to forced labour and sexual exploitation. Children – primarily boys – are mainly used as street vendors, mechanics and in the transport and fishing sectors; girls are used as domestic workers, traders in markets and labour in roadside restaurants. Also, **human trafficking** and **human smuggling** in Gabon are becoming increasingly intertwined. The country is a key destination market for migrants from West and Central Africa seeking to access the labour market. Having arrived in the country, many migrants find themselves vulnerable to exploitation and what begins as human smuggling, often leads to human trafficking.

## Criminal Actors

**State-embedded actors** and **foreign actors** dominate organised crime in Gabon, scoring 7.5 and 6, respectively, compared to markedly lower scores of 1 and 3.5 for **mafia-style groups** and **criminal networks**. Corruption within the state apparatus in Gabon is fundamental to the proliferation of criminal markets, not least environmental crimes. An established network of corrupt state officials facilitates organised crime in the timber sector, by granting concessions – often to foreign companies – in exchange for bribes. The oil industry in the country is controlled almost in its entirety by one family, suggesting collusion with the state.



# RESILIENCE SCORE



<b>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>ECONOMIC REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>PREVENTION</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>NON-STATE ACTORS</b>	<b>2.5</b>

Gabon has very low levels of **resilience** to organised crime, ranking 41st in Africa. The country has been experiencing a political crisis since the presidential election in 2016, which led to the attempted overthrow of the government in 2018. Citizens of Gabon perceive the country to be controlled by the Bongo family, who have been in power for the past five decades, and view the government as corrupt and mafia-like. Corruption is rife in Gabon and public officials are heavily involved in facilitating organised criminal activity.

Gabon has been relatively forthcoming in its **international cooperation** with regard to flora crimes, but far less so in the fight against other forms of organised crime, most notably human trafficking, human smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering. The country has a handful of **laws on organised crime**, but is weak on implementation and enforcing compliance. Given the country's poor standards of leadership and governance, the **judicial system** is not trusted and is seen as merely a tool for the ruling elite.

The body responsible for the country's **anti-money laundering** strategy, the National Financial Investigations Agency (ANIF), is severely under-resourced, which gives

it very limited scope to operate effectively in countering money laundering. Also, those suspected of money laundering in Gabon operate with high levels of impunity, often with the collusion of state officials.

With respect to human trafficking, there are no government-run initiatives that provide **support for victims** of trafficking. However, two state-funded NGO shelters (with unknown funding) offer medical, legal, housing and other services to orphans and street children who are vulnerable to trafficking. There is no evidence of government support for victims of drug abuse.

Although Gabon has taken preventive measures against certain criminal activities, such as wildlife trafficking, **prevention** efforts are lacking in other areas. In 2018, GPS tracking collars were introduced in a bid to stop elephant poachers and rangers patrol the country's national parks. In relation to other crimes, however, such as human trafficking, the US State Department downgraded the country to Tier 3 in its annual Trafficking in Persons Report, due in part to a lack of campaigning to raise public awareness. Lastly, press freedom in Gabon is severely limited and civil society suffers as a result.

