KENYA

Kenya ranks 11th in the Index, with a wide range of significantly influential criminal markets and actors scoring moderately between 4 and 7.5.

Experts describe a system where established criminal networks and mafia-style groups collaborate with corrupt state-embedded actors to profit from various criminal markets, such as the illicit narcotics trade, human smuggling and arms trafficking.

Kenya scores relatively well overall in terms of resilience, ranking 13th in Africa, as efforts have been made to combat organised crime, notably in terms of legislation and increases in judicial capacity, leading to high scores. Nevertheless, the reported involvement of state officials in organised crime, coupled with systemic corruption, has undermined these efforts and contributes to Kenya scoring poorly in many resilience categories.
Criminal Markets

Kenya has a wide range of established criminal markets, all exerting moderate to significant levels of influence, with scores ranging from 4 to 7.

Although no criminal markets stand out as being much more important than others, human smuggling, arms trafficking and human trafficking are all judged as exerting a significant negative influence on society. Kenya is a source, transit country and destination for victims of trafficking, and a major hub for labour migration.

Syndicates that undertake human smuggling are reportedly also involved in human trafficking, and often collude with law enforcement officers. The high scores are attributed in part because of associated frequent and organised sexual exploitation and violence.

Arms trafficking is also reported to be a major problem and Kenya is a transit point for weapons being trafficked across borders into conflict zones. The proliferation of weapons is regarded as being of added concern, given...
the reported collusion of government officials with militant group al-Shabaab.

Consumption of heroin, cannabis and synthetic drugs is widespread in Kenya. Although cocaine usage is less common, it is reportedly on the rise. Experts also report high levels of cannabis cultivation, one of the factors affecting the debate on legalising cannabis.

Heroin is judged as the most significant drug in terms of its effects on society, scoring 7. This is largely because of the nexus between the heroin trade and other forms of crime in Kenya, including smuggling of commodities and humans, and poaching. Kenya is a trans-shipment point for all four illicit narcotics markets and experts note its strategic position as an international hub.

Illicit environmental markets are well established in Kenya, and flora crimes and fauna crimes are also deemed to exert a moderate influence on society. Illegal markets for wildlife products such as ivory, rhino horn and venomous snakes are prevalent. Kenya is a transit point for illegal flora products, such as timber, and illicit fauna commodities. The scores attributed for environmental markets are elevated due to high levels of violence related to these markets and to role of sophisticated criminal smuggling networks.

Non-renewable-resource crimes such as the smuggling of minerals and oil – are of concern, especially given reported ties between smugglers and high-ranking politicians.

Criminal Actors

Kenya has high scores across the four categories of criminal actors, all of which score 6 or above, suggesting a significant negative influence. Collaboration between criminal networks and mafia-style groups with state-embedded actors is widespread. Politics and crime are so closely interlinked they are often inseparable, creating major problems in the fight against organised crime.

Gangs, terrorist groups and other criminal actors all reportedly use violence. Foreign actors such as the Italian mafia or smugglers from neighbouring countries, play active roles in a variety of criminal markets, notably human trafficking and drug trafficking.
Kenya scores relatively well on resilience, ranking 13th overall in Africa, with the main concern being government corruption and involvement of state officials in criminal markets. This undermines the effectiveness of government institutions and reduces the prospect of prosecutions and implementation of effective policies.

Additionally, experts note the absence of victim and witness support, permeable borders, and insufficient prevention of terrorism as concerning. Nevertheless, Kenya achieves high scores in some resilience categories, notably regarding comprehensive legislation and the success of non-state actors such as civil society organisations in lobbying for people’s rights.