MALAWI

Malawi ranks 43rd for criminality, primarily due to general the absence of any criminal markets that have any significant impact on society.

High scores for the cannabis trade and fauna crimes, however, indicate these are the most significant criminal markets in Malawi.

While the majority of criminal markets are described as active, they are not as pervasive as in other African countries. State-embedded actors and foreign actors the most influence criminal actors in Malawi and are reported to be prevalent in human trafficking and wildlife trafficking.

In terms of resilience, ranking 19th in Africa, Malawi is assessed to have greater levels of resilience than the majority of African states. Its porous borders have led to Malawi becoming a transit country for all types of organised crime, though the government is working with the UN to combat this. Prevention measures and frameworks are in place, but due to the porous borders and lack of resources for law enforcement, their effectiveness is often limited.
Criminal Markets

The most significant criminal market in Malawi is the poaching and trafficking of wildlife (fauna crimes), scoring 6. Reports suggest highly organised criminal syndicates use the country as a transit point for the trafficking of ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales and more.

There are concerns surrounding other environmental markets. While it only receives a score of 4, the illicit trade in non-renewable resources is said to be on the rise due to the volume of mineral resources in the country, which Malawian citizens are reportedly selling privately to buyers in neighbouring countries.

With respect to human trafficking, experts note that while the market does not appear to be spreading, it is a known concern in Malawi, despite data being sparse. Both human and arms trafficking have the potential to become more organised, due to poor border control and proximity to nations in conflict.
Other criminal markets such as human smuggling and illicit trade in flora are known to be prevalent, but do not have a significant impact on society or are thought to be underreported.

Cannabis is ubiquitous throughout Malawi and the country is described as a prominent source for African and European markets. In terms of the heroin trade and cocaine trade, Malawi is considered a trans-shipment country and the drug trades have limited impact on society. However, domestic use of heroin is reported to be growing. Data on synthetic drugs is extremely scarce, but their use in Malawi is reported to be limited and restricted to urban centres.

Criminal Actors

Experts describe state-embedded actors and foreign actors as a spreading influence on society, due to their involvement in human trafficking and fauna crimes. Actors from other countries are involved in human, drug and wildlife trafficking.

Experts believe highly organised national criminal networks operate across markets. However, due to lack of data, it is not known how pervasive they are across society. There are no reports of mafia-style groups in Malawi.
Malawi ranks 19th for resilience, which reflects the government’s political will to combat organised crime through international cooperation, though experts note increased leadership would improve efficacy.

 Numerous initiatives, policies and laws for the prevention of organised crime are reported. Notably, however, frameworks are insufficient to curb wildlife trafficking, which is one of the largest criminal markets in Malawi.

Reports indicate lack of resources affects law enforcement negatively and insufficient long-term victim and witness support provisions are in place. Malawi’s territorial integrity is considered extremely ineffective due to the lack of border control and porous borders, which facilitate criminal activities in the country.