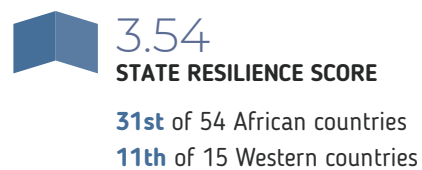
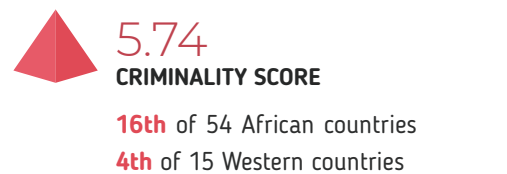
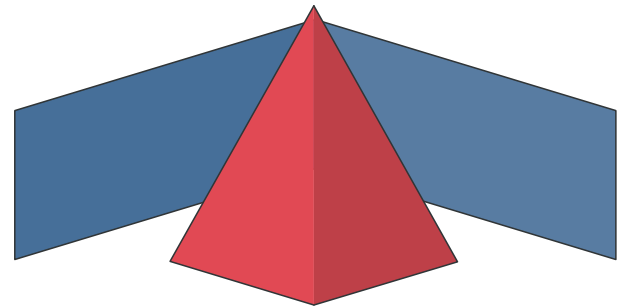


 **NIGER**

Niger ranks 16th in Africa, with a **criminality** score considerably higher than the continental average.

The country's overall **criminality** score is driven both by well-established **criminal markets** and a range of powerful **criminal actors**. Niger has a number of entrenched criminal markets, the most pervasive of which are for **arms trafficking** and **human smuggling**. The country serves as a key transit route for weapons heading to conflict zones in the region, but the deterioration of the country's security situation has resulted in an increase in the domestic demand for weapons, particularly small arms and ammunition. The country also plays an important role in global drug flows, including the trafficking of **cocaine**, **cannabis** and **synthetic drugs**. **State-embedded actors** are highly influential in Mali, in particular in the drug smuggling, migrant smuggling and illicit gold mining economies. **Criminal networks** and **foreign criminal actors** also play a major role in the organised crime landscape in the country.

Niger ranks 31st in Africa for **resilience**, performing just below the continental average. Although the country's **legislative framework** and **law-enforcement** agencies are deemed to be moderately effective, there are major deficiencies in Niger's social protection frameworks.



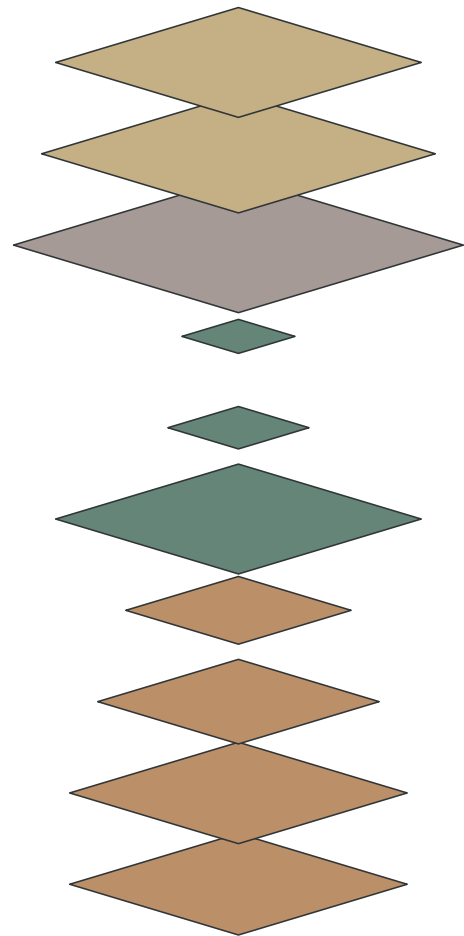
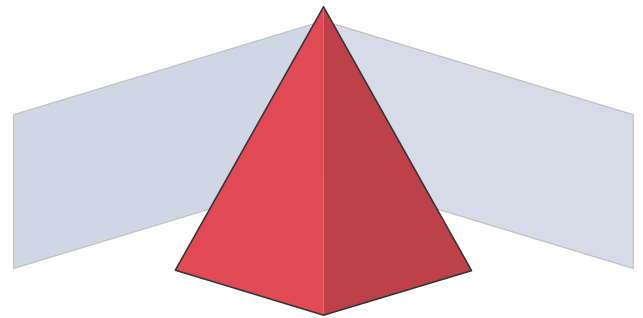
# CRIMINALITY SCORE



<b>CRIMINAL ACTORS</b>	<b>6.13</b>
MAFIA STYLE GROUPS	2.0
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.0
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.5
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.0



<b>CRIMINAL MARKETS</b>	<b>5.35</b>
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.5
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.0
ARMS TRAFFICKING	8.0
FLORA CRIMES	2.0
FAUNA CRIMES	2.5
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES CRIMES	6.5
HEROIN TRADE	4.0
COCAINE TRADE	5.0
CANNABIS TRADE	6.0
SYNTHETIC DRUGS TRADE	6.0



## Criminal Markets

The most pervasive criminal market in Niger is the **arms trafficking** market, scoring 8 on the Index. The country is a key transit node for weapons heading to conflict zones in the region, while the deterioration of the country's security situation has resulted in an increase in domestic demand for weapons too. Weapons circulating in the illicit market in Niger include a mixture of materiel left over from past rebellions, diversions from national stockpiles and weapons smuggled in, generally by

land and mainly from neighbouring Chad, Libya, Mali, and Nigeria. In addition to arms and ammunition, gold mining has also generated a demand for explosives, which are smuggled into Niger.

**Human smuggling** networks in Niger operate on a spectrum from highly organised networks to freelance criminal entrepreneurs opportunistically responding to the demand for migration. Niger is a key transit country



for the smuggling market and has long been a crossroads for trans-Saharan migration along caravan routes that link Africa to the Mediterranean. In recent years, the city of Agadez has become a strategic hub in the trans-Saharan irregular migration corridor, where various migratory routes from across West Africa converge in mixed migration flows towards Libya and Europe. The smuggling networks in Agadez are generally connected to larger networks that operate an entire smuggling route. Human smuggling has become deeply rooted in the political economy, particularly in the northern part of the country. The market is considered a vital financial lifeline for many local people.

In addition, the challenges associated with traversing the vast and dangerous 'Saharan sea' are such that migrants generally do not undertake this trek on their own. Instead, they turn to human-smuggling networks to facilitate this journey for them. While migrant flows from Niger to Libya have decreased significantly, the number of migrants entering Niger has remained high. New smugglers and new routes have emerged in an attempt to circumvent the controls.

Increasingly, West African migrants fall victim to **human traffickers** while transiting Niger en route to Libya and, ultimately, Europe. Nigerien boys are subjected to forced labour, including forced begging, within the country and in neighbouring countries, especially by corrupt hermits or 'holy men', known regionally as marabouts. Loosely organised clandestine networks also place Nigerien girls in domestic servitude. Other networks, based in Zinder and Maradi, specialise in trafficking women and children for labour exploitation – mostly in the form of begging and domestic work.

Niger is a source country of gold, and artisanal gold mining is widespread in the country. At the time of writing, there were 69 artisanal gold mines in the country, with 24 artisanal sites where gold is mined and processed using cyanide. Only three of these sites could be considered as having some form of government control or supervision, in terms of the presence of technical support, security guards or tax agents. It is estimated that two tonnes of gold are produced every year by Niger's artisanal gold mines. Gold panning causes enormous losses for the country and increases risks of corruption, misrepresentation, money laundering and non-payment of taxes, as well as child labour, forced labour, prostitution and sexual violence.

The **cannabis** and **synthetic drug** markets have a significant impact on society in Niger. Cannabis is consumed locally, and cannabis resin is reported to be trafficked through Niger. Senior political officials have been linked to the trade in cannabis and an increase in Tramadol consumption, and trafficking has been reported, due to a large extent to weak pharmaceutical monitoring. Niger also plays an important role in the global **cocaine** and **heroin** markets as a transit country for

drugs originating from Latin American countries on their route to European and Middle Eastern markets.

## Criminal Actors

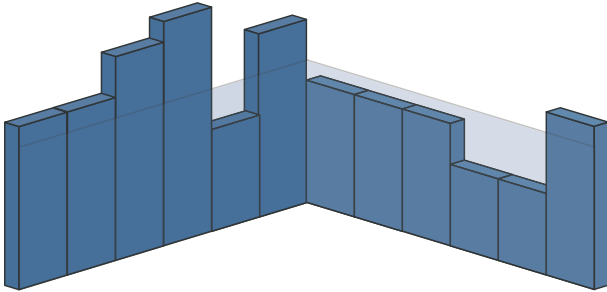
**State-embedded actors** are highly influential in Niger, and government officials at all levels within the state apparatus are suspected of being involved in the drug-smuggling, migrant-smuggling and illicit gold-mining economies. These include officials such as members of local government councils and members of parliament. Although high-level government officials are clearly involved in the country's illicit markets, their degree of involvement is not clear. Furthermore, transactional corruption pervades state institutions and law-enforcement agencies. The payment of bribes to state officials for basic services is akin to a national taxation system.

Loosely organized **criminal networks** operate in Niger, particularly in the human smuggling market. In northern Niger, a desert region, members of the semi-nomadic, pastoral Tuareg ethnic group have long facilitated cross-border licit and illicit trade, including the smuggling of contraband (e.g. weapons, illegal drugs, fuel, vehicles and cigarettes – and people). Along the border with Nigeria, criminal elements smuggle everything from fuel to rice to vehicles, and smuggling is often done by means of caravans of trucks through the desert. Smuggling activities have increased since 2016, as the government of Niger has cracked down on migrant transportation, which used to play an important role in the economy of central and northern Niger. The effect of criminalising migrant transport has been to drive the business underground, encouraging more violent practitioners willing and able to take greater risks, while feeding the trafficking of drugs and weapons.

**Foreign criminal actors** also operate in Niger. Latin American cartels are active in the drug and smuggling economies in the Sahel (including cocaine); there are cartels from Asia (involved in heroin); mafia groups are present, made up people from African diasporas residing in Western countries; as well as Maghreb mafias. Foreign nationals in Niger who operate within the broader migrant-smuggling economy are usually active at the lowest levels of the business chain. There are, however, foreign actors who have become involved in the political economy of illicit gold smuggling, notably from Sudan, and their influence may be growing within these criminal markets. Similarly, Niger is emerging as a more important hub for gold smuggling (for gold that is both locally extracted and sourced from Mali and Burkina Faso). Foreign actors who have connections in Sudan and Dubai are increasing their influence in this market.



# RESILIENCE SCORE



<b>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>ECONOMIC REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>PREVENTION</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>NON-STATE ACTORS</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Ranking 31st in Africa, Niger has fairly low levels of **resilience** to organised crime. Yet, although the government's actions in practice are not effective at stemming organised crime, there is a clear effort on the part of the state to tackle it. Niger depends heavily on international assistance to build capacity to tackle organised crime, as the main focus of the government is the problem posed by the presence of violent extremist organisations, militias from neighbouring conflicts in Mali, as well as migration and smuggling from other West African countries through Niger to Libya and on to Europe.

Corruption has permeated all public and private services in Niger. To address the problem, the government has established two anti-corruption agencies, the Bureau of Information, Claims and Fight Against Corruption and Bribery (at the Ministry of Justice) and the multi-sector High Authority to Combat Corruption and Related Infractions (HALCIA). HALCIA has, however, received much criticism for its lack of independence and financial dependency on the executive branch. Although cases have been referred to HALCIA, there have been no prosecutions to date. A level of transactional corruption pervades state institutions and law enforcement, with bribes paid to state officials for basic services.

The highest **resilience** score received by Niger is for **national policies and laws**, which is explained by the fact that Niger has incorporated UNTOC provisions into its national legislation, with the support of UNODC

technical assistance. Niger's anti-corruption framework is inadequate and underdeveloped. In addition, Niger has no effective party finance regulation in place, nor does it have an effective auditing mechanism of state spending. The current government, however, is at least committed to tackling corruption and is attempting to align Niger's legal framework with the UN Anti-Corruption Convention, which it has accessed.

While **law enforcement** in Niger is considered moderately effective, the **judicial and detention system** in the country is extremely ineffective. The judiciary is not independent from the executive branch of government in Niger, and rulings by the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court are often ignored. There is a very high risk of corruption in the Nigerien judicial system, with low salaries and a lack of training and resources fuelling corruption. High-ranking politicians often act with impunity and are rarely subjected to judicial action. Politically connected smugglers are known to have been released before prosecution and criminals who are well connected in the first place avoid arrest altogether.

As is the case with most African states, social protection measures in Niger are extremely limited. There is no **witness** protection programme in the country and, with the exception of an agency charged with providing support to victims of human trafficking, very little **support** is offered to **victims** of other forms of organised crime.

