SUDAN

Sudan ranks 6th in the Index for criminality, with high scores for multiple criminal markets and criminal actor types.

This is mostly due to its role as a major transit country for arms trafficking, human trafficking, human smuggling and the illicit trade in non-renewable resources. Although Sudan is not a major transit country for drugs, local cannabis production and consumption are high. Experts note the presence of established criminal networks, state-embedded actors and foreign actors, all of which contribute to organised crime.

Sudan scores relatively poorly on resilience, ranking 38th in Africa, though some indicators are deemed to be moderately effective. The failure to address organised crime appears to stem mostly from lack of political will, undoubtedly influenced by high levels of involvement of state officials in illicit trade flows.
Criminal Markets

Sudan’s criminality score is largely driven by its scores in four criminal markets: human trafficking, arms trafficking, human smuggling and non-renewable-resource crimes, all of which score 8 or above.

Sudan hosts more than 2.9 million refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers. It is a transit, source and destination country for human trafficking and a major hub for human smuggling, acting as a clearing house for journeys towards North Africa and Gulf states. High levels of sexual violence and exploitation are reported, as well as complicity of state actors, without whose involvement much of the smuggling could not occur.

Given an ongoing armed struggle between Sudan and South Sudan, the high level of arms trafficking is unsurprising. Despite UN embargoes, Sudanese arms traffickers supply Muslim rebels in the Central African
Republic, and weapons flows through porous borders with Chad and Libya contribute to arming criminal actors in Sudan. These factors lead to experts to judge this illicit market as having a severe negative influence on society.

Sudanese criminal markets in the environmental sector are of varying significance. The most prevalent market is for non-renewable resources, most importantly gold, which is extracted in Sudan and smuggled out of the country. The high score of 8.5 attributed to this market, representing a severe negative influence on society, is in part because of its links to violence in the Darfur region and high levels of corruption. There are also reports that Sudan serves as a transit country for other non-renewables, including diamonds.

The illicit fauna market scores 5, mainly because of the Sudan’s role as a transit country for ivory trafficking. Nevertheless, little evidence exists of poaching in Sudan, which explains why this market is assessed to exert only moderate negative influence on society.

Although Sudan is minor transit country for cocaine and heroin, and there is some domestic consumption of illicit synthetic drugs such as tramadol and Captagon (fenethylline), these are deemed as having a limited influence. In contrast, Sudan is one of Africa’s largest producers of cannabis and domestic use is reported to be widespread among many different groups in society. The cultural establishment of both the production and consumption of cannabis throughout Sudanese society leads experts to give the market a score of 8.5, suggesting a severe negative influence on nearly all parts of society.

Criminal Actors

Although mafia-style groups are active in Sudan, experts deem criminal networks, state-embedded actors, and foreign actors as having the most severe impact, shown by scores that all exceed 7. Experts describe a system where state-embedded actors facilitate extensive smuggling and human trafficking by criminal networks, mafia-style groups and foreign actors alike. These groups are also reported to smuggle weapons, drugs and wildlife products. Although mafia-style groups are deemed to exert less influence than others, pro-government militias reportedly carry out criminal attacks against migrants, foreigners and internally displaced persons.
Ranking 38th in Africa for resilience, Sudan only scores above 4 on one indicator, national policies and laws. Although there is room for improvement in this area, it is judged as the main positive in the fight against organised crime. Generally, experts believe Sudan’s legal and judicial institutions are often unable to take action due to the prevalence of corruption among state officials.

Lack of funds has led the government to often rely on pro-government militias as enforcers, who are often themselves involved in the criminal flows they are tasked with preventing. Finally, the absence of victim and witness support, and an economic regulatory environment that incentivises the informal economy, are key factors why Sudan has such a low resilience score.