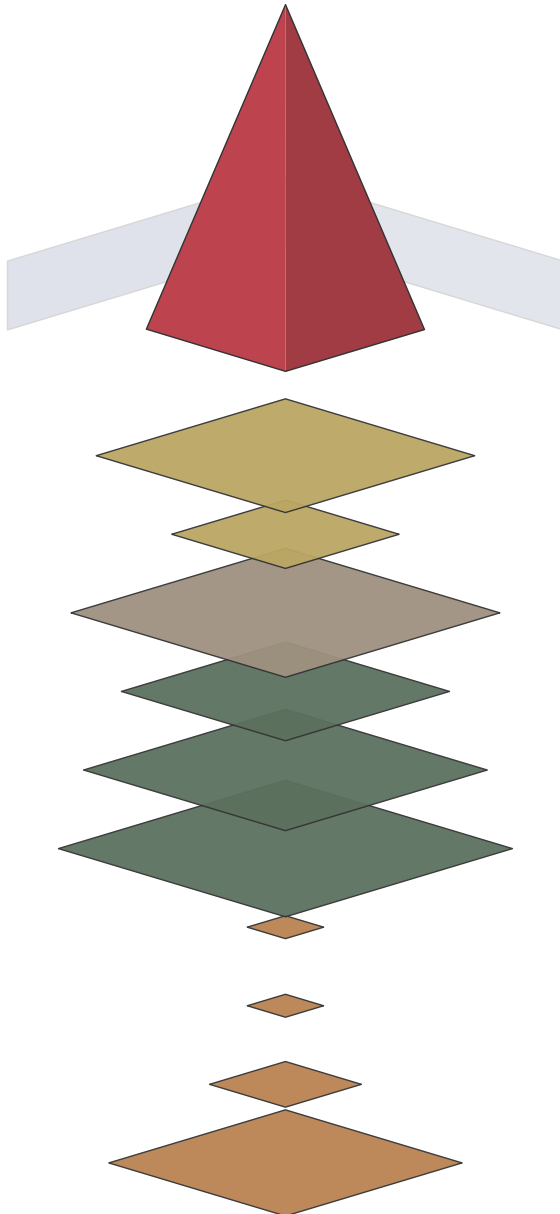




# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



**7.04**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

**3<sup>rd</sup>** of 54 African countries  
**2<sup>nd</sup>** of 11 Central African countries



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.70**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	8.50
FLORA CRIMES	6.50
FAUNA CRIMES	8.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	9.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.50
COCAINE TRADE	1.50
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.00



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** **8.38**

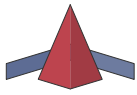
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	9.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	8.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	8.00



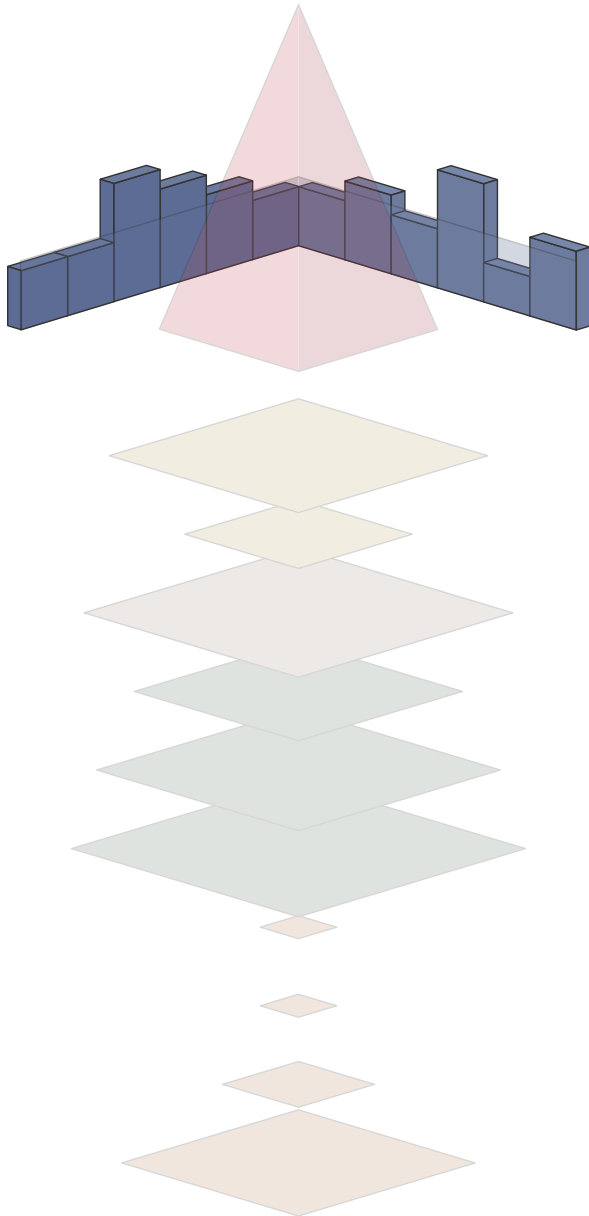
**1.92**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**

**51<sup>st</sup>** of 54 African countries  
**11<sup>th</sup>** of 11 Central African countries





# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



## 1.92 RESILIENCE SCORE

51<sup>st</sup> of 54 African countries  
11<sup>th</sup> of 11 Central African countries

<u>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</u>	<b>1.50</b>
<u>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	<b>1.50</b>
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	<b>2.50</b>
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	<b>1.50</b>
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	<b>1.50</b>
<u>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY</u>	<b>1.50</b>
<u>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</u>	<b>3.00</b>
<u>PREVENTION</u>	<b>1.00</b>
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	<b>2.00</b>



## 7.04 CRIMINALITY SCORE

3<sup>rd</sup> of 54 African countries  
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**CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.70**



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** **8.38**



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

The Central African Republic (CAR) is estimated to have one of the highest levels of human trafficking globally. Labour exploitation is widespread and increasing as a result of the large number of displaced persons caused by violent conflict in the country. Both gold and diamond mines, many controlled by armed groups, have been linked to forced labour, particularly relating to minors. Cases of child soldiers have also been documented. Additionally, there have been reports of the enslavement of girls in the northern part of the country, with many trafficked to Sudan and Chad.

Violence and instability in the CAR have pushed many people to seek ways to leave the country via human smuggling. However, most of the movement within the country and across the borders takes place without the facilitation of smugglers. The main challenge for smugglers is navigating complex geographies, insecurity and competing smuggling groups, as opposed to border restrictions.

### TRADE

Despite a UN arms embargo that has been in force since 2013, weapons can easily be brought into the CAR. Armed conflict and border porosity contribute to the illicit demand for small arms and light weapons in the country. Additionally, the 2014 conflict led to the raiding of government armouries, increasing the levels of illicit flows of arms across the country, especially along the Democratic Republic of Congo-CAR border. Some of the weapons trafficking networks supplying armed groups in the CAR are under the control of military officers.

### ENVIRONMENT

Timber is one of the CAR's primary exports and logging companies have been linked to armed groups. Armed groups, local communities and some Asian actors illegally exploit timber in the CAR. With no forestry service functioning in most of the country, these actors often operate in cooperation with networks based in Sudan and South Sudan. Timber trafficking for international timber companies mostly occurs at the CAR-Cameroon border, but local communities exploit timber mainly in the southern part of the country. Some companies mix

timber cut in the CAR with timber cut in Cameroon. In regard to fauna crimes, the CAR's legal vacuum allows armed groups and poachers to engage in transnational trafficking of elephant tusks, and animals such as panthers and pangolins. Poachers from Sudan and Chad, along with armed groups that have developed relationships with foreign traffickers, enter the CAR by crossing the border with South Sudan. Additionally, independent militarized poachers take advantage of the lack of governance and enforcement. Among the main trafficked items are ivory and big-cat parts hidden in legal shipments of palm oil or cassava. Systematic bushmeat hunting is also increasing as elephant populations have decreased significantly. Forest elephants have also been targeted for poaching. In regard to non-renewable resource crimes, the illicit production and trafficking of diamonds and gold are prevalent in the CAR. Most of the gold and diamonds produced in the CAR are smuggled abroad. The market also facilitates foreign money laundering operations and has been linked to armed groups.

### DRUGS

As the country lacks transportation infrastructures and is landlocked, the logistical environment is not conducive to heroin trafficking. However, the CAR does have existing links between domestic and regional terrorist organizations and drug trafficking, including heroin trafficking, but little is known of domestic use and supply. Similarly, there is limited evidence of a cocaine-trafficking market in the CAR because cocaine use is limited to the local elite. Meanwhile, cannabis is widely used by the local population, especially among militiamen and youth. While there is no official information on cannabis trafficking, besides some indications of the involvement of armed groups, given the country's location and the current organized-crime landscape, it would be unrealistic to conclude that there is no illegal activity pertaining to cannabis. In regard to synthetic drugs, tramadol has become a major issue in the country. Tramadol is openly sold in several markets, mainly coming from networks based in eastern Cameroon, Chad and Sudan. Consumption was high in 2018 but the street price has since increased, making it a little less affordable.

## Criminal Actors

Estimates suggest that there are approximately 20 different armed groups operating in the CAR. Among



these groups, the main ones are the Union for Peace in the CAR (UPC); the Popular Front for the Renaissance in the CAR and its military wing, the National Defence and Security Committee, and the Rassemblement Patriotique pour le Renouveau de la Centrafrique. As of 2020, UPC is the most powerful armed group. Some of these groups, known as the Anti-balaka, have a very loose command structure and are ethnically based. While 14 armed groups signed a peace deal with the government in 2019, the armed groups still control most of the country. Their main source of funding is extortion and illegal taxation – in fact, powerful warlords in the country are involved in the illicit taxation of cattle traders. Some of these armed groups specialize in specific criminal markets. Meanwhile, there is also a proliferation of unorganized traffickers, bandits, criminals, robbers, road gangs (zaraguinas), smugglers, thieves and counterfeiters in the country. They focus largely on cattle theft. Since the state security services are not able to counter them, insecurity in the country

is high. The CAR can be described as one of the most insecure countries in Africa.

Many state actors in the CAR operate outside the law and cooperate with criminal actors, including law enforcement officials and high-ranking members of the government. Corrupt state actors often become involved in criminal enterprises, mainly wildlife crime and diamond trafficking. Moreover, since the peace deal in 2019, the government has included leaders from armed groups, which blurred the lines between state and non-state actors, as well as legal and illegal activities. As for foreign actors, they are numerous and involved in various criminal networks in the CAR, including human trafficking; arms trafficking; the illicit gold, diamond, and timber industries; and fauna crimes. Historically, foreign nationals have also controlled several high-value economic sectors such as the diamond, gold and timber industries, which are associated with criminal activities.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

In the CAR, there is no real state presence outside Bangui. Moreover, a lack of citizen participation and rule of law has created a system of weak governance throughout the country. The CAR ranks among the most fragile states in the world. Furthermore, the country also has an extremely poor record of transparency and accountability. Combating organized crime is not on the government's agenda and collusion between state and criminal actors is rife. In particular, diamond trafficking has played a key role in CAR politics, including at the highest levels of the government. Additionally, mining deals and state contracts are negotiated in secret, while public tenders are rare. International groups have also identified several suspicious bank accounts used to divert public funds from the CAR.

At international level, the CAR has ratified all but one of the international treaties pertaining to organized crime. The government also relies heavily on the international community and benefits from significant humanitarian aid. However, most international authorities do not trust CAR security services, which are seen as corrupt. As a result, the CAR government has turned to China and Russia. Currently, security cooperation with Russia is well established, while economic cooperation with China is

growing. At domestic level, the policy-making capacity of the government is very limited and national policies or laws targeting organized crime are scant. Nevertheless, the CAR has stepped up efforts to combat human trafficking and the penal code criminalizes trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. International NGOs have also offered support to develop more effective law enforcement in forest and wildlife management, but the outcomes are not yet visible.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system in the CAR has no capacity to combat organized crime. Meanwhile, a large majority of the CAR's total prison population is in pre-trial detention. However, a special criminal court was created in 2015 under which some militiamen were sentenced to prison in Bangui in 2019 and 2020, and more cases are pending. There is also national strategy for the demilitarization of prison, which was approved in 2019 and created with the support of several international actors. Similarly, law enforcement agencies in the CAR have no capacity to combat organized crime. Although law enforcement agencies are being rebuilt with the support of several foreign partners, corruption remains a major problem, especially in the customs service. As for territorial integrity, the CAR's borders represent a unique case of porosity,



with the total absence of any border control. The only functioning border posts are located between the CAR and Cameroon.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

While the CAR has created measures to enhance economic capacity, such efforts have not been sufficient and there is no national implementation capacity. The CAR is among the poorest performers in the world on numerous measures of economic capacity. Additionally, the customs system is unreliable, and businesses often seek tax exemptions via bribes. In the CAR, there is also no capacity to implement anti-money laundering measures. A special investigation unit for money laundering was created several years ago but has no real capacity. In most cases, foreign banks have detected incidents of money laundering in the country.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

There is little victim and witness support available in the CAR. However, since the conflict broke out, many international NGOs have set up trauma centres and counselling services in conflict areas, including the capital city. Many churches have hosted and protected internally displaced Muslim communities. Similarly, there is no evidence of any policies, strategies or campaigns to help prevent organized crime in the country. As for civil society organizations, they are very weak and focused more on conflict-related issues than organized crimes due to the fact that the conflict is ongoing. There are some international NGOs focused on good governance, anti-corruption and the protection of wildlife. Meanwhile, the media environment is corrupt and dangerous. International journalists were detained or killed while covering the conflict. The government has also often used bribes and intimidation to cover up reporting on corruption scandals.



