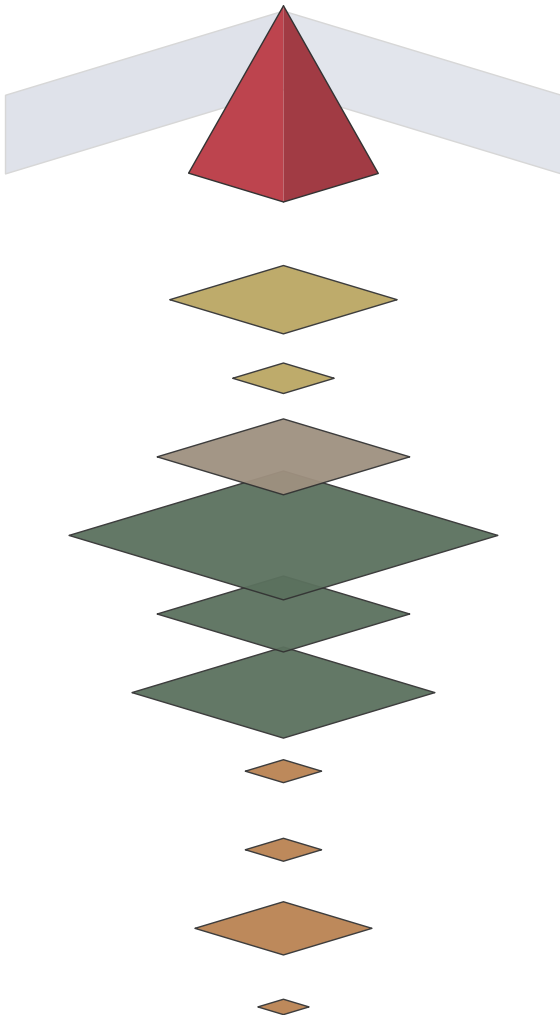




# EQUATORIAL GUINEA



## 4.11 CRIMINALITY SCORE

43<sup>rd</sup> of 54 African countries  
9<sup>th</sup> of 11 Central African countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.85**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	2.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.00
FLORA CRIMES	8.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	6.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.50
COCAINE TRADE	1.50
CANNABIS TRADE	3.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.00



### CRIMINAL ACTORS **4.38**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	2.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	9.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00



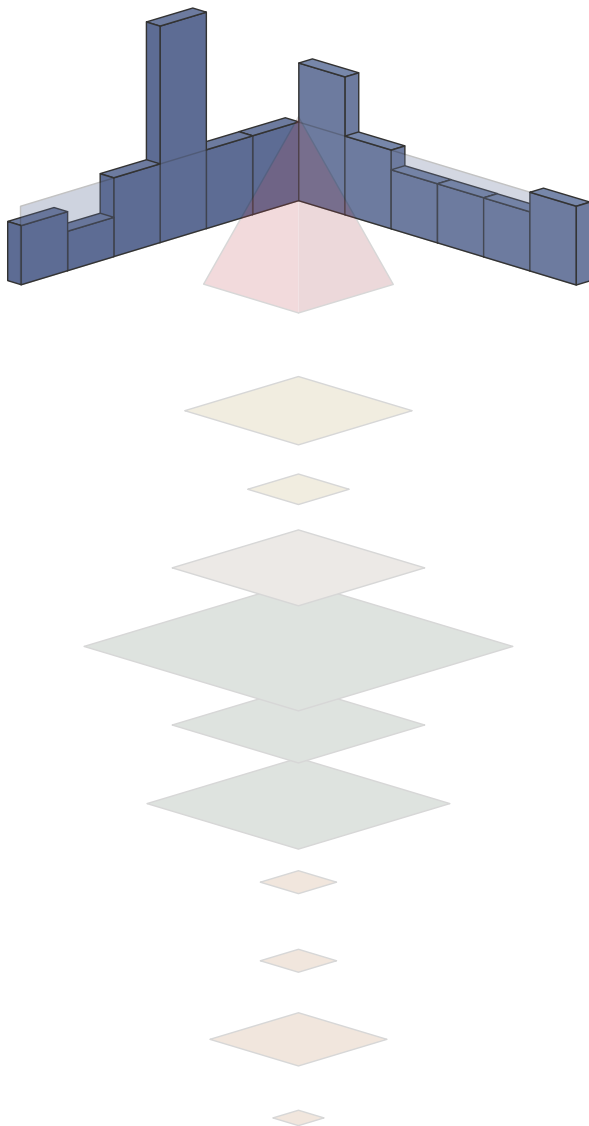
## 2.17 RESILIENCE SCORE

49<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
9<sup>th</sup> of 11 Central African countries





# EQUATORIAL GUINEA



## 2.17 RESILIENCE SCORE

49<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
9<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>1.00</b>
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	<b>5.50</b>
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	<b>2.00</b>
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	<b>3.50</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>1.50</b>
<u>PREVENTION</u>	<b>1.50</b>
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	<b>2.00</b>



## 4.11 CRIMINALITY SCORE

43<sup>rd</sup> of 54 African countries  
9<sup>th</sup> of 11 Central African countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.85**



CRIMINAL ACTORS **4.38**



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

Equatorial Guinea is a destination country for victims of forced labour and a source country of women and girls subjected to sex trafficking. Individuals from the region seeking employment in Equatorial Guinea are also vulnerable to labour exploitation or forced prostitution, with most victims exploited in the capital city Malabo, as well as Bata and Mongomo. Children from other countries in West Africa countries may be subjected to forced labour as domestic workers, market labourers, vendors and launderers, while women from neighbouring countries, China and the Caribbean are recruited for work and subjected to forced labour or prostitution. Ethiopian women are also exploited for domestic servitude by families in Malabo.

Although Equatorial Guinea is an attractive destination for Central and West African workers, there is no significant evidence of human smuggling instigated and maintained by criminal groups in the country.

### TRADE

While Equatorial Guinea is not known to have arms trafficking groups, the smuggling of small guns to neighbouring countries occurs. Piracy and maritime crimes are rampant in the Gulf of Guinea, in which Malabo is located. Gun crime is a major component of piracy and as most weapons that enter West Africa illegally are smuggled through Equatorial Guinea. Additionally, political instability and corruption are rife and create favourable conditions for small-arms and light-weapon trafficking, which has also been linked to other crimes, including drug and human trafficking. The overwhelming majority of the criminal activity pertaining to the arms trade involves state-embedded actors, with reports of arms being trafficked to criminal groups in the Central African Republic, as well as further afield in Ukraine and other countries in Eastern Europe.

### ENVIRONMENT

Much of the continental portion of Equatorial Guinea is covered by dense tropical rainforests that have long been exploited to source illegal flora and fauna. Flora crimes are the most pervasive environmental crime market in Equatorial Guinea, a major source and transit country

for illegal logging, with the export of logs to China in particular increasing to record levels over the last decade. Given its scale, however, much of the illicit timber may originate in neighbouring Gabon and Cameroon. The rate of deforestation in Equatorial Guinea is among the highest in Africa, and the vast majority of logging is illicit. Equatorial Guinea is among the largest oil producers in sub-Saharan Africa. Illegal oil-related activities are mainly committed by the government, and despite the increase in government revenue improvements in living standards have been slow to develop.

Unsustainable hunting is the greatest threat to fauna, and primates are particularly threatened. Illegal hunting, the sale and consumption of bushmeat, and possession of great apes occur especially on Bioko Island, home to seven species of threatened monkeys. The illegal trade in chameleons and pangolin meat also occurs, and the number and price of the trafficked animals have increased. Moreover, Equatorial Guinean territorial waters are a hotspot for illegal fishing, often carried out by European and Asian vessels.

### DRUGS

Cannabis is consumed at all levels of society and is the most prevalent drug in the country. Cannabis plants are grown nationwide and the final product is sold on almost every street. Given that the production, sale and consumption of cannabis are effectively tolerated by society and the government, involvement by criminal organizations is limited. Some cannabis cultivated in Equatorial Guinea is trafficked to Gabon via the Muni River. With regards to heroin, there is very little evidence to suggest that trafficking or significant use occurs in Equatorial Guinea. Reportedly, diplomats from the country have previously been involved in heroin smuggling. Given regional transit flows, it seems likely that some heroin may still be trafficked through the country. There are no reports of cocaine or synthetic-drug trafficking or production in Equatorial Guinea, and consumption of most drugs in the country is either non-existent or negligible at most.

## Criminal Actors

State-embedded criminal actors in Equatorial Guinea are a major part of the criminal landscape, with substantial allegations of high-level officials profiting from corruption. The political elite live lavish lifestyles thanks to vast



revenues generated by the country's oil industry. Foreign authorities have conducted investigations into the presidential family and its alleged network for laundering embezzled funds, filing cases to recover millions of dollars in assets. Cases brought to trial in the United States, France and Spain demonstrate repeated embezzlement by high-level officials. Corruption in the logging sector involves state-embedded actors awarding concessions fraudulently, failing to provide proper oversight or penalties for firms not observing felling or export limits. The conviction of the country's vice-president, also son of the president, Teodorin Obiang, in the French court for laundering proceeds from his shell timber firms, highlights the extent to which the market is embedded in the state apparatus.

Although criminal groups involved in human trafficking in Equatorial Guinea are known to exist, publicly available data is lacking. There is also little information on foreign criminal actors operating in the country. However, unregulated logging is the foundation of Equatorial Guinea's bilateral ties with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Until 2018, several DPRK entities were situated within Equatorial Guinea's forests. Moreover, several Lebanese families, which broadcast statements supportive of Hezbollah, dominate other segments of Equatorial Guinea's forest concession and transport sectors. There is no evidence to suggest the presence of mafia-like structures in the country.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, in power since 1979, has been described as one of Africa's most brutal dictators and worst abusers of human rights. Equatorial Guinea is described as a kleptocracy and a country whose corrupt leaders use their powers to exploit people and natural resources, embezzling funds at the expense of the population. Notably, the government has never prosecuted or convicted any human-trafficking suspects. Furthermore, embezzlement of public funds, fraud and corruption is endemic within the state apparatus, largely surrounding the extractive industries. Additionally, the most common crime is extortion by corrupt police officers, and although the government passed strict anti-corruption laws, these have not been enforced.

Although Equatorial Guinea has ratified international legal instruments pertaining to organized crime, it is not party to key international agreements regarding corruption and bribery. As a member of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), however, Equatorial Guinea has agreed to regulations to suppress terror financing as well as regional cooperation on criminal police matters. The government also claims to actively participate in all initiatives seeking to normalize the security situation in the Gulf of Guinea. In 2011, Equatorial Guinea signed a regional action plan to strengthen enforcement of national wildlife laws and improve cooperation with regard to poaching and the

illegal wildlife trade. However, enforcement is still lacking. National laws address corruption and organized crime, including human, arms and drug trafficking, human smuggling, and fauna- and flora-related crimes, but these are not adequately enforced, allowing state-embedded actors to operate with impunity. Human-rights abuses have also continued, despite the introduction of an anti-torture decree banning all forms of abuse.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system is not independent, as the president is the chief magistrate, and no specialized judicial units exist to counter organized crime. Since the implementation of the law addressing human trafficking and smuggling, neither convictions of traffickers nor prosecution of trafficking cases have been reported. Minimal anti-trafficking law-enforcement efforts have been made, and police have a limited presence in major cities and rural areas, often engaging in extortion. National security forces are accused of engaging in torture as well as other violence during interrogations with impunity. Scarce judicial capacity is enabled by corruption at all levels of government, including the judiciary. Occasionally, business disputes are treated as criminal cases and passports of foreign managers are confiscated until the case is resolved. Notably, in 2018, authorities built a new prison in response to criticism of human-rights abuses.

Equatorial Guinea encompasses 64 islands, a coastline of significant length, and land borders with Cameroon and



Gabon. While the state receives vast financial resources to control borders, there is no strong political will to protect territory and infrastructure against organized crime.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The implementation and enforcement of anti-money laundering laws are weak, and officials have often been investigated by foreign authorities for money laundering and corruption. The exploitation of large oil and gas reserves were key drivers of strong economic growth, which has in recent years, notably in 2020, decreased due to fluctuating oil prices and declining production. Although there are regulations in place requiring certain anti-money laundering measures, such as compliance programmes and suspicious transaction reports among others, these are rarely implemented by financial institutions in Equatorial Guinea. There are no measures in place to tackle most common way of laundering money in the country, cross-border currency transactions and international law-enforcement cooperation on the issue of money laundering is weak. Equatorial Guinea is also a member of the Task Force on Money Laundering in Central Africa, although the country has not had a mutual evaluation to assess compliance with Financial Action Task Force recommendations.

In spite of the government actively soliciting foreign investment, Equatorial Guinea is among the worst-performing countries as far as doing business goes, due to difficulties with setting up a business, trading across borders and paying taxes. In addition, foreign assistance programmes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been cut since 1993 because of corruption and mismanagement.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Although the government have reportedly increased efforts to identify potential victims of human trafficking, protection efforts are extremely weak. Furthermore, the government does not have a witness-protection programme. Although anti-trafficking legislation in the country imposes an obligation on the government to provide various services and provisions to victims of human trafficking, they do not do so, instead placing the burden on NGOs. Authorities have not initiated any human-trafficking awareness campaigns, implemented any programmes to address forced child labour, or made any efforts to prevent trafficking. This inactivity characterizes the government's preventive efforts towards all other criminal markets as well. For example, there is

no evidence of any harm reduction measures in place in the country with regard to drug use.

Obiang has systematically sought to repress the freedom of the press, reflected in the poor media environment and government control over media outlets in Equatorial Guinea. Domestic broadcast media is extremely limited, and any outlets that do operate are almost entirely controlled by the Obiang regime. Most of the population does not use the internet, which is also heavily governed by official authorities. The government is accused of constant human rights violations and the persecution of political opposition by various civil-society organizations. Freedom of association and assembly is also severely curtailed, with the government imposing restrictive conditions on the registration and operation of NGOs. Protests are not permitted, and police will attempt to disperse any such crowds, including by force. The few civil-society activists who work on human rights-related issues are often face intimidation, harassment and reprisals.

