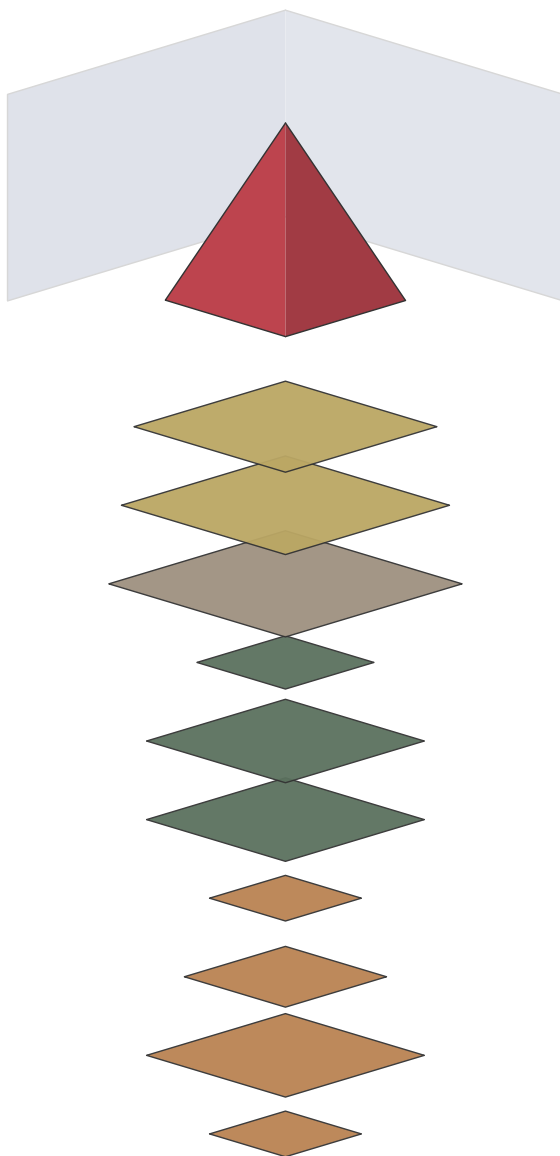


 **ETHIOPIA**



 **4.79  
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

35<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
7<sup>th</sup> of 9 East African countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.95**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	7.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	5.50
HEROIN TRADE	3.00
COCAINE TRADE	4.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.63**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00

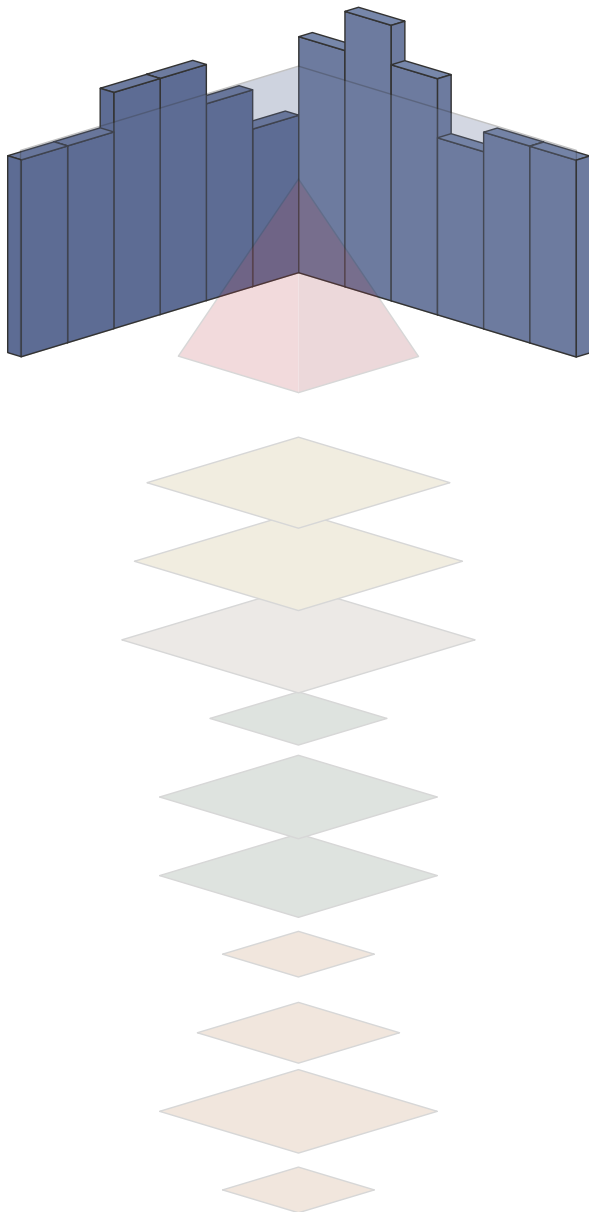
 **5.38  
RESILIENCE SCORE**

8<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
1<sup>st</sup> of 9 East African countries





# ETHIOPIA



## 5.38 RESILIENCE SCORE

8<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
1<sup>st</sup> of 9 East African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.50
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.00

## 4.79 CRIMINALITY SCORE

35<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
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CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.95
CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.63



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

Sex trafficking and forced labour are the predominant forms of exploitation of human beings in Ethiopia, with it being recognized as a country of origin as well as a waypoint and a destination market for human trafficking. Most trafficked persons start their journey voluntarily and become vulnerable to abuses en route to the Middle East, Europe or North America. Meanwhile, internal trafficking occurs from rural to urban areas. The country has a relatively high awareness of the risk of labour exploitation, due to longstanding problems with trafficking related to labour migration and employment agencies. Many recruitment agencies for labour migration to the Gulf are unregistered or informal and effectively act as rackets to exploit workers. While the lifting of a ban on migration to Gulf countries in early 2018 may have increased trafficking of Ethiopian nationals to the region, an increasingly aggressive repatriation policy among Gulf countries – and particularly Saudi Arabia – since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic has likely had the opposite effect.

Ethiopia is a country of departure and transit for irregular migration into other countries in Southern Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Smuggling occurs across borders to and/or from all neighbouring countries, with smuggling networks often facilitating the flow of movements. Overland human smuggling channels from Ethiopia mostly make use of three routes – the eastern, western and southern. The eastern has Somalia and Djibouti as transit points for migrants looking to reach Yemen, the western moves through Sudan and the southern route goes through Kenya and into Southern Africa. Refugee camps in Tigray and Amhara are also recruitment grounds for organized smuggling networks. Additionally, border crossings between Ethiopia and Eritrea were briefly opened in 2018 and then closed again, renewing the demand for smuggling networks to assist Eritreans seeking to cross the borders. Because of Ethiopia not automatically granting asylum to people from Eritrea entering the country's territory since 2020, reliance on smuggling networks for Eritreans attempting to enter or transit through Ethiopia may have increased.

### TRADE

Ethiopia is both a source and transit route for arms trafficking, with weapons flowing freely to and from Ethiopia across the country's long and porous borders. Despite an improvement in relations in recent years, the prolonged border dispute with Eritrea and heavy military presence along the joint border still limits the illicit flow of weapons between the two countries. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian state has routinely violated the arms embargo imposed on Somalia by providing weapons to friendly regional and proxy forces. However, state-sponsored arms trafficking has likely reduced significantly since the strengthening of relations with Somalia. Additionally, the armed conflict in the Tigray region has led to an escalation in small arms and light weapons proliferation in the country as well. Allegedly, Turkey has become a major supplier of illicit arms that are trafficked into Ethiopia through Sudan and Djibouti. Beyond the Tigray and Amhara regions, a spillover of weapons is observed in other parts of the country, Addis Ababa most notably.

### ENVIRONMENT

The flora crimes market in Ethiopia is more akin to an informal trade, in that the government is fully aware of its existence. Plant species are trafficked for the purpose of making local drinks but also for medicinal and fumigation purposes as well as for food. Certain plants are trafficked across the Ethio-Sudanese border. Additionally, there are reports that the movement of charcoal is cross-border, with consignments exchanged between Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. As for fauna crimes, Ethiopia is a transit point in the Horn of Africa for ivory, rhino horn, skins and live animals. With Ethiopian Airlines serving the largest number of routes in Africa, Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa remains a hub for trafficked goods, including ivory and rhino horn trafficked between West Africa and Asia. As home to the largest population of donkeys in Africa, Ethiopia has also been affected by growing demand for ejiao, a product derived from the animals' hide and used in Chinese medicine. The growing commercialization of cross-border cattle rustling in Eastern Africa has also prompted the rise of criminal networks involved in the trade, including in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is also a source and transit route for smuggled non-renewable resources, particularly gold, with buyers in Ethiopia reportedly offering higher than international prices to artisanal producers to facilitate money laundering. Although gold exploitation in Ethiopia



is minimal, reports suggest that gold is also smuggled from Sudan through Ethiopia to the UAE.

## DRUGS

Ethiopia is a transit and destination market for heroin. While domestic use is low, the supply of heroin in the country is growing. Heroin is imported primarily via air, with corrupt security officials allegedly facilitating trafficking. Heroin landing in Ethiopia is often in transit to West African markets, via networks of West African organized crime groups. Heroin also transits Ethiopia on its way to European and United States markets, coming from South-eastern and Western Asia. In regard to cocaine, Ethiopia is mainly a transit country for Andean cocaine destined for markets in Southern Africa, particularly South Africa. Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa is a particularly vulnerable trans-shipment point, receiving cocaine shipments from initial West African points of continental entry. While Ethiopia is primarily a transit country for cannabis trafficked between Central Asia and Western Europe, through neighbouring countries, the country is not a major source or destination market for the drug. There is little production of cannabis in the country, mainly concentrated in rural areas and around the town of Shashemene more specifically. Cannabis use has also reportedly increased over the course of 2020, as have seizures of cannabis in the country. As for synthetic drugs, Ethiopia is not a major production hub for synthetic drugs or precursor chemicals. Nevertheless, Mandrax emerged fairly recently as an issue in the region as chemical precursors and licit drugs are increasingly diverted into the illegal market.

## Criminal Actors

Criminal groups in Ethiopia are more akin to community security groups, rather than mafia-style groups, that are embedded in the security apparatus of the state. In contrast, national criminal networks are quite active in Ethiopia. These networks engage in illegal activities for economic reasons mainly. Human smuggling operations, for instance, extend from loosely linked opportunists and criminal entrepreneurs to well-organized syndicates that have an extensive reach over several states. The latter have an extensive structure with different individuals filling in various roles as part of the larger network.

As a key transit hub for different organized crime activities, there are foreign criminal actors present in Ethiopia. With Ethiopian Airlines serving the largest number of routes in Africa, Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa remains a hub for goods trafficked from and/or throughout the continent. Evidence suggests that drug and wildlife trafficking as well as human smuggling are mainly organized by transnational networks from other parts of Africa. East African drug traffickers are very active in Ethiopia, while West Africans and Chinese nationals lead the illicit fauna trade. In regard to state-embedded actors, anecdotal reports indicate increasing corruption, with the gradual process of economic liberalization in the country providing new opportunities for misappropriation. However, the current government initiated an anti-corruption purge in 2019.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Under the current government, Ethiopia has pursued an ambitious reform agenda, including multiple initiatives intended to counter organized crime. A case in point is the anti-human trafficking projects carried out in the Bole International Airport along with the training and capacity-building exercises designed to build up the capacity of police, immigration and customs officers to respond to and tackle organized crime. Nevertheless, civil unrest remains a significant threat to stability throughout the country. Surging ethnic nationalism in several regional states has also diminished the federal

government's ability to effectively address organized crime. Corruption is also present in Ethiopia but is widely considered less of an issue than in countries throughout the region. While there is some indication of increasing corruption in Ethiopia, the current government has taken measures to combat corruption, including the conviction of multiple former government officials and executives of state-owned companies.

On an international level, Ethiopia has ratified a number of relevant international treaties and conventions pertaining to organized crime. Furthermore, the country is an active member of regional international organizations



and initiatives. Close cooperation on matters related to organized crime exists between Ethiopia and Djibouti. However, prolonged civil unrest has also dented the country's image as an island of stability in the Horn of Africa. On the domestic level, Ethiopia has a solid anti-organized crime legislative framework, although funding and implementation mechanisms are not yet in place. The country has a strong set of national laws regarding wildlife and, since 2019, new firearms legislation has been passed, introducing tougher provisions on illicit firearm use and trafficking. The country also passed new anti-human trafficking and smuggling legislation in early 2020 intended, in part, to strengthen efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers. Additionally, the country's criminal code was recently revised to criminalize money laundering.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Although Ethiopia's judiciary is officially independent, in practice, it has rarely deviated from government policy. The appointment of a new chief justice of the Supreme Court, however, has raised hopes for judicial reform. In the Ethiopian judicial system, there is a special bench on organized crime, with dedicated experts and special prosecutors. Prison conditions in the country are criticized and there are reports of human rights abuses, including torture. Nevertheless, there have been steps to reform the penal system since 2018 with authorities shifting focus to rehabilitation. Meanwhile, efforts have been made in the development of law enforcement capacity against organized crime, including the establishment of various authorities and departments in charge of dismantling organized crime networks. Ethiopia's police force faces notable challenges with regard to corruption and impunity. As for territorial integrity, there are a couple of factors that serve to increase Ethiopia's vulnerabilities, namely the fact that the country stands at the epicentre of a region plagued by instability and the extensive porous borders it shares with neighbouring countries. Moreover, surging ethnic nationalism and widespread unrest in several regional states has likely diminished the federal government's overall ability to patrol some border areas.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

While Ethiopia has legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating financial crimes, its anti-money laundering laws and regulations need further strengthening. Illicit proceeds in the country are reportedly generated primarily by tax evasion or fraud, human trafficking/smuggling, the trafficking of arms

and contraband smuggling as well as illicit financial services. While the country's financial services sector is still closed to foreign investors, with the country's economy opening up and expanding, Ethiopia will likely become more vulnerable to cybercrime, fraud and the related money-laundering activities. However, in 2019, in what potentially marks a significant step in liberalizing the financial sector in Ethiopia, a business license was granted to a US-based firm. Overall, there are clear gaps in terms of the effectiveness of Ethiopia's economic regulatory environment, but the government has reviewed existing policies to enhance economic regulation in the formal sector.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In Ethiopia, there has been a lack of effort in addressing child sex trafficking and a lack of standard procedures for proactively identify victims of human trafficking. In 2018, Ethiopian authorities stepped up their victim-protection efforts by means of collaborating with civil society as well as with international organizations. Moreover, the new Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Proclamation, passed in early 2020, includes a scheme to rescue, support and rehabilitate victims of trafficking. Ethiopia has also put efforts into raising awareness at the community level against organized crime and trafficking-related crimes. A new National Crime Prevention Strategy was approved in 2020 but is yet to be adopted.

The current administration has taken a new approach to the regulation of civil society organizations, allowing foreign and foreign-funded organizations to engage in advocacy and human rights work in Ethiopia. Overall, however, civil society organizations remain weak. In terms of the media, the country has made progress in improving the freedom of the press, but laws that obstruct the work of journalists are still in place. Additionally, the restrictive regime guiding the use of and access to mobile applications and the internet, enforced in light of the 2015 protests in the country, was lifted. However, a new law targeting hate speech and disinformation was passed in 2020 and has been criticized for its potential to stifle public debate.

