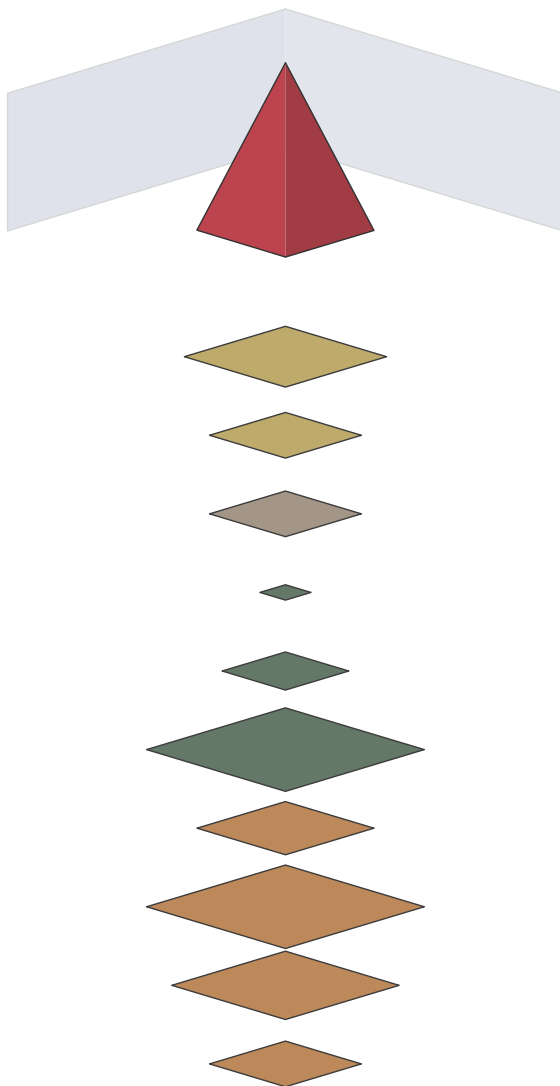




# LESOTHO



## 3.90 CRIMINALITY SCORE

46<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
8<sup>th</sup> of 13 Southern African countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.55**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	2.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	5.50
HEROIN TRADE	3.50
COCAINE TRADE	5.50
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.00



### CRIMINAL ACTORS **4.25**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00



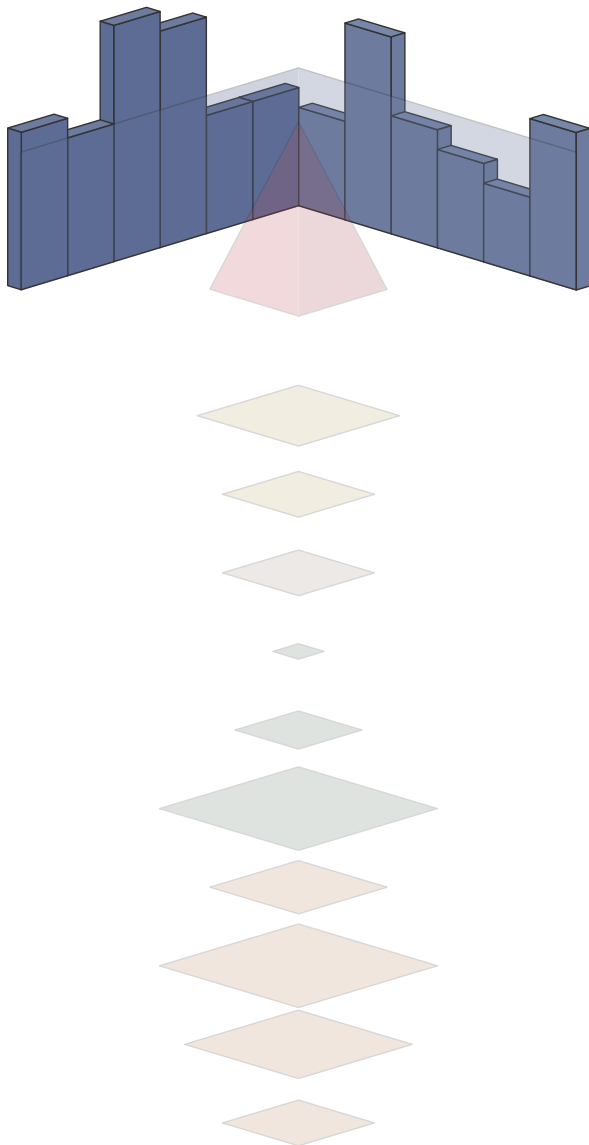
## 3.67 RESILIENCE SCORE

27<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
8<sup>th</sup> of 13 Southern African countries





# LESOTHO



## 3.67 RESILIENCE SCORE



27<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
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POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	2.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	3.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	2.50
PREVENTION	2.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.00



## 3.90 CRIMINALITY SCORE

46<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	3.55
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.25



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

Lesotho is a significant source country for human trafficking. Due to the country's location, human trafficking victims from Lesotho are primarily trafficked into various parts of South Africa. In many cases, human traffickers lure unsuspecting irregular Basotho migrants into forced labour and sexual exploitation with the promise of employment and better economic opportunity in South Africa. While Basotho men and children are often subjected to forced labour in the herding industry or on farms, women and girls are often forced into sexual slavery. Corrupt officials are known to collude with these traffickers. Infant theft and smuggling from Lesotho to South Africa has also emerged as a recent phenomenon.

Lesotho's close proximity to South Africa, along with South Africa's higher living standard, renders irregular migration between the two countries common. While legal migration schemes between the two countries have been successful in providing protection for migrant workers, irregular migration persists. Those involved in the market tend to be low-level actors, and minimal state intervention or regulation occurs.

### TRADE

Arms trafficking is not a significant issue in Lesotho. Nevertheless, small numbers of small arms are often smuggled into the country from South Africa and used for opportunistic crime in urban centres. Unlicensed gun ownership is also a fairly common occurrence in Lesotho and, as a result, the country has high rates of arms-related homicides.

### ENVIRONMENT

No evidence points towards the existence of a significant flora-related crimes market in Lesotho. However, there are some reports of protected medicinal plants being over-harvested, such as various aloe species. In regards to fauna crimes, stock theft is a significant issue in Lesotho and quite common along the country's border with South Africa. Cattle thieves are also known to use small arms to steal cattle. Horses are also reportedly stolen in southern Lesotho on occasion. However, overall the country's isolated geographical position means that there are few opportunities to traffic wildlife out

of its territory. As for non-renewable resource crimes, diamond smuggling is a common occurrence in Lesotho. Moreover, high rates of poverty, political instability, political mismanagement and corrupt practices all play a significant role in undermining efforts to control the diamond sector. The illicit diamond trade in Lesotho involves both small-scale, artisanal miners as well as large diamond-mining companies.

### DRUGS

Cannabis is the most commonly consumed and traded drug in Lesotho. While Lesotho is at the forefront of an emerging medicinal cannabis industry, there are still illicit flows in the country which involve corrupt and compromised officials and public figures. Lesotho is a destination and transit country for a small-scale but growing market for heroin trafficked overland from Mozambique and other countries in East Africa to South Africa. The domestic heroin market in Lesotho is supplied almost exclusively from the city of Bloemfontein in South Africa. Corrupt law enforcement workers and other high-level officials in the country facilitate the trade.

Besides cannabis, cocaine is the most widely used illicit drug in Lesotho. Like the market for heroin, the cocaine market in Lesotho is inextricably linked to Bloemfontein. Lesotho is a rapidly growing cocaine consumer market, facilitated by corrupt law enforcement employees, high-level state officials and well-known professionals. Meanwhile, synthetic-drug use and trafficking are quite limited. However, Lesotho does have a small but growing domestic methamphetamine market.

## Criminal Actors

Criminal networks in Lesotho commonly engage in illicit activities such as vehicle theft and smuggling, diamond smuggling, human trafficking, livestock theft and drug trafficking. A moderate level of violence is associated with these activities, particularly in the case of vehicle hijackings. Criminal networks in Lesotho are often affiliated to political parties, and as a result corruption runs rampant in the country. Low-level state-embedded actors are easily corrupted and allow criminal actors to avoid arrest and prosecution. In particular, government officials have been implicated in human trafficking, stock theft and motor vehicle theft.



Most foreign criminal actors in Lesotho are South Africa-based criminal networks that engage in vehicle theft and smuggling and use Lesotho as a hub to re-register stolen cars. However, South African criminals are also known to be involved in cannabis smuggling, stock theft and attacks on farms in Lesotho. Moreover, Basotho and

South African criminals are known to collude in various criminal markets. Chinese nationals are believed to be involved in the trafficking of other Chinese nationals for sexual exploitation in Lesotho. Meanwhile, there is no evidence of mafia-style groups operating in the country.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

A history of coups and political instability has left the government in a precarious position. Governance structures, particularly those relating to criminal justice, remain functional, but weak. The government has also not sufficiently identified areas of concern nor articulated measures to address them. Moreover, corruption levels in the country are concerning.

On the international level, Lesotho is generally open to cooperation and is a signatory to a number of international agreements. The country holds bilateral agreements with neighbouring South Africa, which has aided in reducing human smuggling, and provided protection to Basotho migrant workers. On the domestic level, the government has successfully passed legislation and accompanying policies to address multiple categories of crime. However, not all acts of legislation are consistent with international standards. In particular, the length of prescribed sentences is often deemed inadequate.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Overall, the independence of Lesotho's judiciary is questionable, and it is often subject to political manipulation. Consequently, judicial efforts to combat organized crime are frequently hampered by backlogs and judicial crises. Meanwhile, law enforcement bodies tasked with organized crime prevention are plagued by inefficiency and a lack of legitimacy. Torture while in custody has been reported, and there are high levels of mistrust in the police. Meanwhile there is friction between the police and the military, which has at various times followed conflict between political factions. The country's only borders, with South Africa, are quite porous and smuggling occurs regularly. While the deployment of South African National Defence Force troops to the border has somewhat tightened border security, the border itself remains easily passable.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Due to its small size, Lesotho is largely dependent on trade with South Africa, and is thus highly susceptible to South African market fluctuations. Recent developments regarding Lesotho's legal trade of cannabis with Canada, along with its legal trade of diamonds with South Africa, have stimulated the economy. However, a lack of control of cannabis cultivation paired with relatively easy public access to diamonds renders the regulation of both commodities difficult. Lesotho has legislation and a national policy against money laundering in place, and a financial intelligence unit was established to combat the problem. The Commercial Crimes Court also aids in the fight against money laundering. Nevertheless, the risk of money laundering remains significantly high in the country.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Treatment for victims of crime is available in Lesotho. However, victim-support services are generally reserved for human trafficking victims and are insufficient in most cases. Meanwhile, active efforts to prevent crime in Lesotho are hampered by poor training and the complicity of corrupt officials in certain criminal activities. In particular, the practical challenge of border management combined with high levels of destitution in Lesotho complicate crime prevention. Furthermore, civil-society organizations in Lesotho are reportedly inactive and hampered by lack of funds. However, the Catholic Church is very powerful in the country, and has worked tirelessly to expose corruption in the diamond industry. The media in Lesotho also lack freedom. Some journalists have reportedly fled to South Africa as a result of the heightened levels of intimidation they are faced with, while those who remain in Lesotho often practise self-censorship. Arbitrary arrests, and in some cases physical violence, are not uncommon experiences for journalists in the country.

