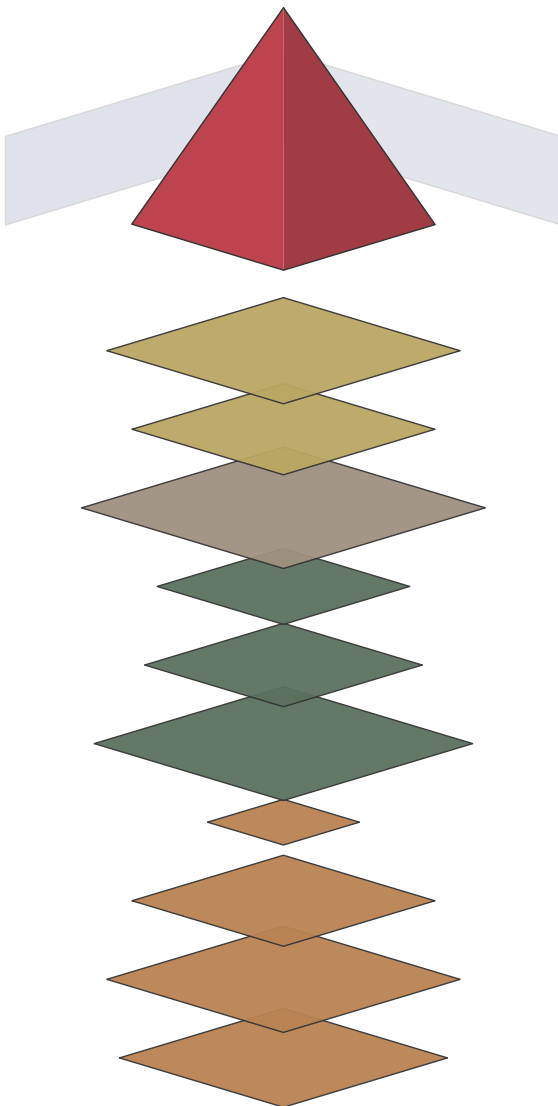


 **MALI**



 **5.89**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

16<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
5<sup>th</sup> of 15 West African countries



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** **6.15**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	8.00
FLORA CRIMES	5.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	7.50
HEROIN TRADE	3.00
COCAINE TRADE	6.00
CANNABIS TRADE	7.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.50



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** **5.63**

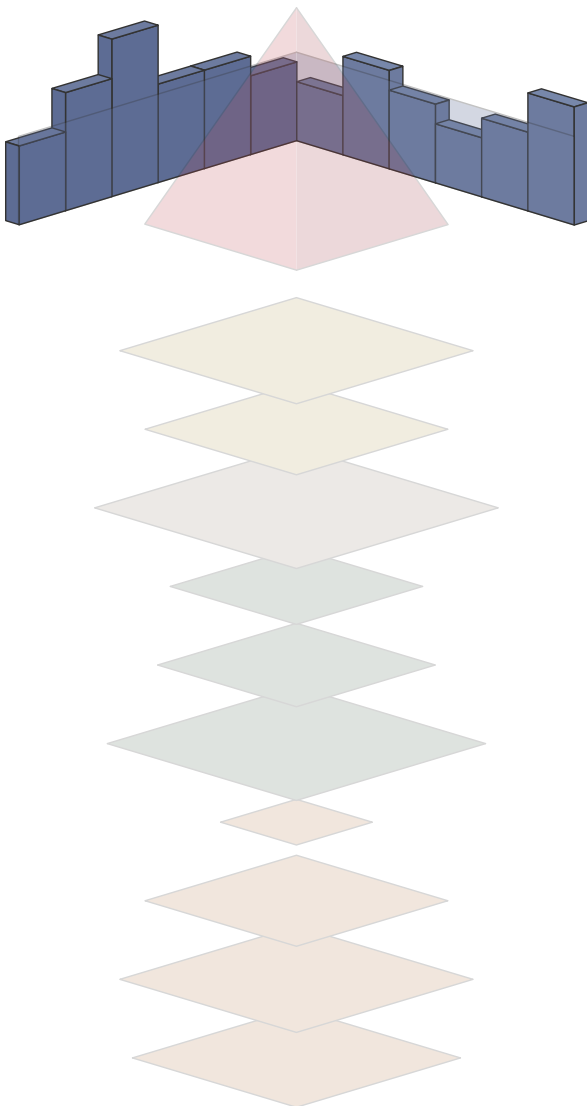
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00

 **2.38**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**

45<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
15<sup>th</sup> of 15 West African countries



**MALI**




**2.38  
RESILIENCE SCORE**

45<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
15<sup>th</sup> of 15 West African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	2.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	4.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	2.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	2.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	2.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	1.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	2.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	2.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	1.50
PREVENTION	2.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.00



**5.89  
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

16<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
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 CRIMINAL MARKETS	6.15
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.63



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

Mali is a source country, transit point and recipient country for men, women and children subjected to human trafficking including forced labour and sex trafficking. In general, trafficking within the country appears to be more prevalent than cross-border trafficking activities. Since 2012, insurgents operating in northern parts of the country, including rebel and Islamic extremist groups, recruit children, mostly boys, for combat. As these groups become more active in controlling gold mining, prostitution in these areas is also being banned, leaving trafficked women and girls in precarious situations. Boys from Mali, as well as Guinea and Burkina Faso are victims of forced labour in various sectors. Outside of the country, Quranic teachers have been known to force Malian boys to beg or carry out agricultural jobs in neighbouring countries. Malian women and girls are victims of sex trafficking in other countries including Gabon, Libya, Lebanon and Tunisia, as well as of domestic servitude in the Middle East and North Africa. Females from other West African countries are lured to Mali with false promises of work but are then forced into sex trafficking instead.

Malians rely on established but decentralized smuggling networks, including some of the Tuareg groups in the region, to facilitate their passage across borders. In the north of the country, smuggling activities are especially prevalent, where armed groups have taken control and offer protection to human smuggling operations. The production of fake and fraudulent documentation to support irregular movement in the region is rife in Mali.

### TRADE

Libya is an important source of illicit arms and ammunition for armed groups in Mali. These weapons include heavy machine guns mounted on 4x4 vehicles. There has also been a proliferation of sophisticated and deadly small arms in central Mali, which likely come from looted stockpiles and might even be procured directly from Malian security forces. The issue of arms trafficking is increasing, in part because conflict is spreading into larger territories in the country.

### ENVIRONMENT

Illicit logging is a considerable problem in Mali, particularly with criminals targeting its rosewood trees. Although Mali has a ban on the export of all raw wood, this has not prevented illegal exports to neighbouring countries and Asia. More than 3000 animal species in Mali are in serious danger of extinction due to poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife, including the furrowed turtle, the marbled teal, the Senegalese turtle, the white-headed vulture, hawks, chimpanzees, crocodiles, the Dama gazelle and elephants. However, with the closing of land and air borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fauna movement across borders has declined. With regard to non-renewable-resource crimes, evidence suggests that there is a significant trade in illicit gold between Mali and refineries in the UAE – and that government officials are involved. Armed groups control or have access to a number of artisanal mines in northern Mali and profit from their involvement in this illegal market.

### DRUGS

Although Mali is not a significant producer of cocaine, it is an important transit hub. Its northern region bordering Algeria and Niger is a key transit point for cocaine coming from Latin America and destined for Europe and the Middle East. Members of various armed groups are involved in cocaine trafficking, resulting in violent clashes between rivals. Despite widespread evidence of the illicit cocaine trade, seizures are very rare, suggesting the involvement of government actors at a national as well as local level. Heroin is imported into Mali mostly by air, often via so-called in-person couriers. As a result of the closure of airports due to COVID-19 however, the trade has seen a major decline.

Cannabis is cultivated on small scale in Mali, predominantly for domestic consumption. More importantly, Mali is a trans-shipment point for the regional cannabis market, with the drug being moved through neighbouring countries as part of the larger Sahel trafficking network en route to European markets. As with cocaine, armed groups are directly involved in the trafficking of cannabis resin, and there has been violence as a result of the competition between them. Mali is a transit country for synthetic drugs, particularly Tramadol and methamphetamines. These drugs usually come from Nigeria and are intended for foreign markets, as well as for increasing domestic consumption. There are concerns but no tangible evidence of production taking place in the country.



## Criminal Actors

Corruption and misappropriation of state resources take place at all levels of Mali's government. Clientelism and nepotism are prevalent in the country, while major traffickers have become involved in the political arena, and their influence in electoral campaigns in the north is particularly strong. Some leaders of organized-crime groups have even embarked on political careers, while other traffickers are linked to the state through their ventures in the legal economy, where they are able to diversify their activities and launder profits.

Criminal networks are prevalent across the country, and numerous armed groups engage in different illicit activities. Organized crime in Mali funds most armed groups – either through direct involvement, taxation or protection rackets. Human smuggling in Mali is built around various sets of actors who have overlapping webs of criminal relationships. In many cases, human trafficking networks in the north are integrated with

drug-trafficking and politico-military groups. There is ongoing tension between armed groups and trafficking networks because their interests are not exactly aligned. Clashes over criminal economies often form the basis of alliances between armed groups.

The narcotics networks – which grew out of the trafficking of licit and illicit goods from Libya, Algeria and Mauritania into northern Mali – are controlled mostly by Arab and Tuareg groups. While other foreign nationals are involved in criminal economies in some of Mali's urban centres, they do not exert control over the entire supply chain. Foreign actors from the broader Sahel region have joined forces to dominate artisanal goldmining in northern Mali, a sector that is booming.

The traditional notion of mafia-style groups does not apply to Mali's criminal networks, as these groups do not have strict hierarchies. However, there are some lower-level criminal organizations that might have mafia-style hierarchies.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Mali's 2012 military coup resulted in the collapse of the state and its ability to provide basic services in large swaths of the country. The Malian government continues to work with the international community to restore the state apparatus and its capacity as a service provider to the entire territory of the country. Mass civil unrest in Bamako in 2020 exacerbated the situation and led to a political crisis that is still being mediated. Misappropriation, fraud and corruption are widespread. Corruption and high levels of organized crime are strongly linked, and while improvements have been made to the country's legal framework, Mali has been slow to establish functioning formal anti-corruption bodies. Organized crime remains a taboo topic within the ongoing peace process.

Mali has ratified a number of international treaties on organized crime. However, its role in the international cooperation framework is first and foremost that of a recipient country. Mali has received widespread support and funding from the international community – and while international legal frameworks have been put in place to fight organized crime in the country, most of them are poorly executed. On a domestic level, Malian

laws do not formally define organized crime, but rather fall back on offences relating to the participation in criminal associations or terrorist groups. Active and passive corruption in the private and public sectors are both offences under the country's penal code. However, there is an extensive gap between the legal engagement and application of these laws.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Malian judicial system is severely lacking. In 2018, insecurity in northern and central parts of the country led many judicial personnel to abandon their positions in these regions. Corruption presents a major challenge – and despite the country having two oversight bodies to address this, corruption remains widespread. Legal action is rarely taken when it comes to organized crime. Similarly, Mali's security forces are undermined by corrupt networks, some of which are linked to organized crime. Mali's internal security apparatus struggles with a lack of resources, low pay and inadequate training. Law enforcement capacity, which has always been limited in the northern region, is now also barely present in much of central Mali. As a result, Mali's territorial integrity



and sovereignty are lacking – large parts of the country are not under the control of the government and still experience high levels of violence.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Mali's economic regulatory environment is relatively poor, with trafficking and smuggling closely embedded in its social and economic structure. Illegal proceeds come largely from the smuggling of legal goods, as well as illicit commodities such as people, weapons and drugs across the Algerian, Nigerien and Mauritanian borders. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and their allies, as well as armed groups aligned with the Islamic State all operate in the north of the country, where they generate funds through smuggling and kidnapping for ransom. A large portion of Mali's economy is cash based, making it difficult to track illicit financial flows. Mali is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, which has created anti-money laundering and combating-the-financing-of-terrorism frameworks for the region.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Mali does not have a witness-protection programme. It also has very few mechanisms in place to help victims exit slavery. However, the government refers identified victims of trafficking to relevant service providers for support. Most of these service providers are NGOs who are funded by private and international donors. With regard to the prevention of organized crime and terrorism, the Malian government is supported by the UN's intelligence-analysis and peacekeeping units.

There are active networks of civil society organizations in Mali. These groups contribute to the country's relatively open political culture and consult regularly with the government on its security strategies and policies. However, their efforts are hampered by increasing insecurity in central Mali and even in parts of southern Mali. From a regional perspective, Mali has a reputation for having a relatively free press. Attacks on journalists have declined in recent years, but media freedom is still fragile.

