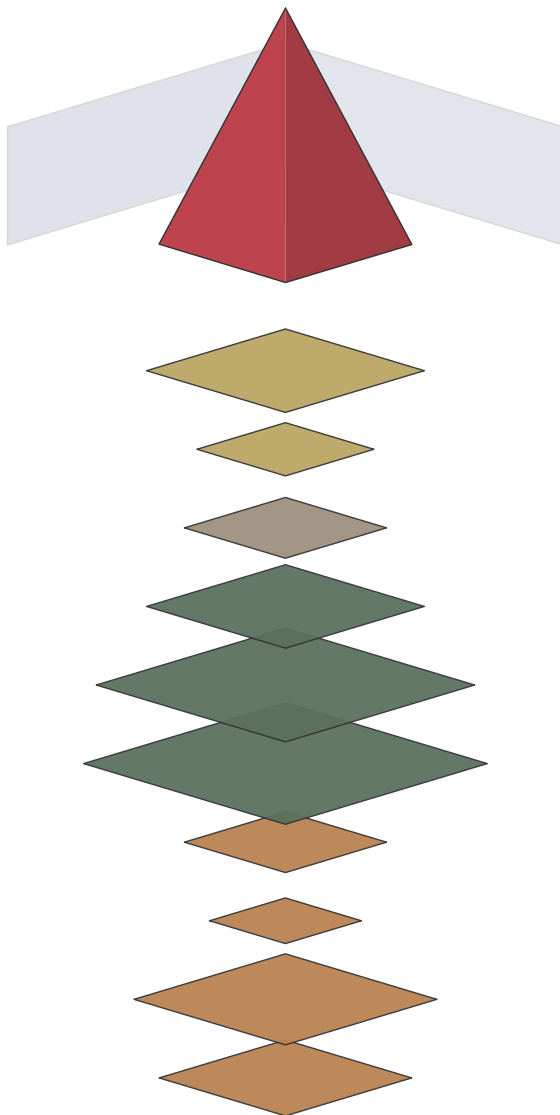





 **ZIMBABWE**



 **5.66**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**  
19<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
3<sup>rd</sup> of 13 Southern African countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **5.20**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00
FLORA CRIMES	5.50
FAUNA CRIMES	7.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	8.00
HEROIN TRADE	4.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.00
CANNABIS TRADE	6.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **6.13**

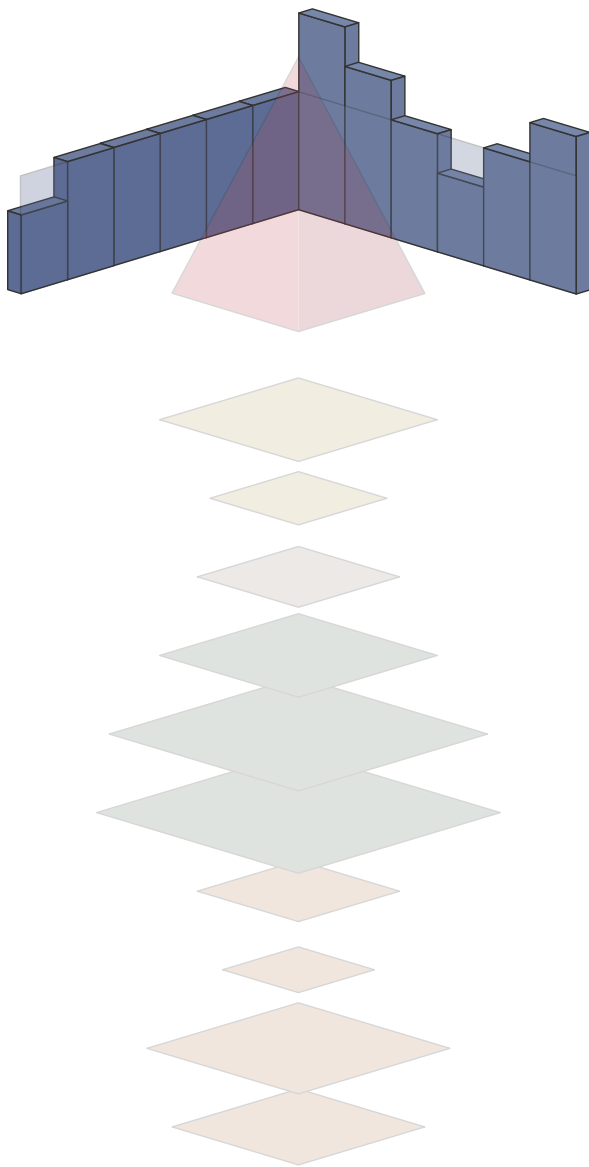
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50

 **3.17**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**  
36<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
12<sup>th</sup> of 13 Southern African countries





# ZIMBABWE




## 3.17 RESILIENCE SCORE

36<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
12<sup>th</sup> of 13 Southern African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	2.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	3.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	3.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	3.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	2.00
PREVENTION	3.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.00



## 5.66 CRIMINALITY SCORE

19<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries  
3<sup>rd</sup> of 13 Southern African countries

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.20
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	6.13



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

Sex trafficking and forced labour are the most common forms of exploitation in Zimbabwe, with it reportedly being a country of origin, a waypoint as well as a destination market for trafficking of human beings. Sex trafficking is particularly common in border towns, while forced labour appears to be significant in agriculture, construction, hospitality and domestic servitude. The traditional practice of ngozi, where the spirits of dead relatives are appeased through giving a member of the family to another kin, opens up additional vulnerabilities to trafficking. Moreover, the deteriorating socio-economic conditions continue to contribute to human trafficking.

Over the course of the past four decades, because of the growing insecurity in the country, Zimbabwe's role has shifted away from being a destination market to a country of origin as well as a transit hub for human smuggling. Irregular migration is thus widespread, with many irregular migrants being skilled Zimbabwean workers or people originating in the Horn of Africa. Although borders are porous, the use of smugglers' services is common. In fact, complicit cross-border transporters and corrupt border management officials, especially on the borders with South Africa and Botswana, facilitate smuggling.

### TRADE

While there is no evidence for the presence of a significant illicit arms market in Zimbabwe, small arms and light weapons (SALW) are trafficked into the country. Accounts point to remnants of arm stockpiles used by the apartheid regime in South Africa being smuggled within the Southern Africa region, Zimbabwe included. Additionally, Chinese small arms have been instrumental in the suppression of the democratic progress in Zimbabwe. Most recently, reports have alleged that modified tanker trucks have been used for the smuggling of drugs, wildlife and arms into the country. Although no armed violence has broken out in Zimbabwe in the post-independence era, due to the easy availability of SALW the possibility of armed violence has increased.

### ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging has increasingly taken place in the country, resulting in significant deforestation and threatening the existence of endangered indigenous forests. Reportedly, illegal logging syndicates work with corrupt officials to exploit legislative loopholes that allow them to pass illicit wood as legitimate and export it in the region. While the ban on the exportation of hardwood timber and the landlocked position of Zimbabwe minimizes commercial smuggling, it does not eliminate domestic trade. Illegal logging is a main source of income for many in impoverished communities, with illegal settlements and wood traders allegedly working just outside of protected parks. Accounts assert that this happens with the implicit consent of state officials.

There are reports of significant levels of poaching in Zimbabwe, in particular for ivory and rhino horns, but also for a range of other species, including pangolins. While officials insist that poaching has dropped in recent years, the success of state measures is questionable as wildlife trafficking appears to involve state actors. Additionally, Zimbabwe seems to be the epicentre for pangolin poaching despite having one of the strictest laws against pangolin poaching in Africa. Importantly, poaching of lions for their parts also occurs in Zimbabwe, with lion parts destined for both local and foreign markets, being trafficked to Asia, often sold there as tiger parts. Cross-border smuggling routes (especially of ivory) have become quite common, as poachers from Zambia cross into Zimbabwe, and then bring the ivory back to Zambia where it is sold. Similarly, lion bones are taken to South Africa to be sold to Chinese nationals. Hence, transnational organized criminal groups from China and Vietnam are also involved in the fauna market. Notably, in 2017 Zimbabwe was considered part of the most common ivory trafficking route, running from Harare to Hong Kong through Dubai.

Due to high unemployment, more than 400 000 Zimbabweans by some estimates have turned to illegal mining. Since 2017, illegal gold mining in particular has quickly spread through the Eastern Highlands and other parts of the country. While basic prospecting and mining is conducted by 'syndicates' of desperate, unregistered miners, knowledge of and access to markets is monopolized by elite bureaucrats who also earn the lion's share of the proceeds. Zimbabwe's resource looting is one of the best encapsulations of a predatory elite – political and military, enriching themselves to the



detriment of the country's benefit. Reportedly, organized crime groups use the leverage of state power to export diamonds. In this way, the trade is deemed legal by virtue of the Kimberly Process, but the diamond industry is in fact captured by criminal actors.

## DRUGS

Heroin is reportedly widely used in Zimbabwe, both as powder and in the nyaope form that is smoked. Users include wealthy Zimbabweans who use powder as well as poorer consumers in rural areas who consume nyaope and heavily diluted powder. As a result, Zimbabwe is not a very lucrative market for heroin. Conversely, Zimbabwe is emerging as a significant inland transit country for heroin, trafficked from Tanzania and Mozambique to West and Southern Africa markets. Allegedly, the country is also a transshipment point for heroin travelling to European markets. The means of heroin entering Zimbabwe range from the drug being smuggled by returning Zimbabwean migrant workers to criminal networks using cargo shipments and drug mules to import the drug. Importantly, information suggests that public figures, as well as political and military officials are all heavily engaged at different stages of the heroin supply chain. In line with the country's deteriorating security situation, it appears that Zimbabwe comes out as a waypoint for cocaine. Conversely, the country does not have a large domestic market for pure cocaine because of the population's low purchasing power. Instead, similar to heroin, cocaine is often diluted with other substances.

Cannabis is widely produced and consumed in Zimbabwe, and is often exported abroad. Nevertheless, the country is also a destination point for cannabis coming from Malawi and Mozambique as well as an established transshipment point. Reportedly, organized crime groups control the cannabis trade, but a new law was introduced in 2018, which allowed farmers to grow cannabis for medical and research purposes. The synthetic drugs market in Zimbabwe is large and growing, due to the lower prices of synthetic drugs. Notably, Zimbabwe is also a transit point for methamphetamines en route to South Africa.

## Criminal Actors

There is a strong indication since the late 1980s of political and other governmental office holders abusing their respective positions and taking part in activities that are either criminal or illicit. Some of the longest-serving political figures have allegedly long been part of criminal networks. It is thus arguable that the state controls various

crime markets in Zimbabwe, in particular trafficking of diamonds and fuel as well as cigarette smuggling and wildlife trafficking. Related to state-embedded actors, criminal networks are also prominent in Zimbabwe. Networks of crime entrepreneurs engage in organized criminal activity often with the help of state-embedded actors, who sanction the use of violence for their economic self-gain. In terms of criminal markets dominated by criminal networks, drug trafficking has increased as such groups groom mules to smuggle hard drugs into the country. Reportedly, a number of crime syndicates of drug lords dominate the markets for illicit drugs in larger cities in the country, such as Bulawayo and Harare as well as in strategic border towns, such as Beitbridge and Mutare. Again, these syndicates engage the services of high-level officials, but cooperation between those two types of criminal actors is evident across other criminal activities, such as wildlife trade.

The vast majority of foreign actors in Zimbabwe operate in the extractive industries, but there are such who engage in other criminal markets – human trafficking and the drug trade, for example. South African nationals account for the majority of foreign criminal actors in the country, but the Chinese diaspora is also active, particularly in diamond mining as well as trafficking of human beings. Furthermore, China's ties with the Zimbabwean army are reportedly deep and the former has become Zimbabwe's top export market. Not least of all, China continues to be a large destination market for illegal wildlife products. Although there are groups of armed men with political affiliations operating in Zimbabwe, there is no evidence of their links to illicit activity or protection networks. There are, however, smaller, violent gangs who mainly engage in illicit mining activities.



# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

As noted above, there is a high degree of criminalization of the Zimbabwean state and, stemming from that, a high level of state control of criminal markets in the country, coupled with a rather poor anti-organized crime platform. With that said, however, the current president has been vocal in aiming to secure greater legitimacy at home and abroad by taking a hard line on corruption and government involvement in criminal activities. There remains doubt as to whether his administration will tackle these issues, as indicated by the 2018 scandal involving the vice-president's wife. Corruption within the Zimbabwean state has arguably had a role in the increase of organized crime in the country and reportedly, as of present, corruption levels are high at the expense of government transparency. Certain legislative reforms were introduced in 2019, but although oversight mechanisms are in place, they are often described as compromised.

Zimbabwe is party to a number of conventions pertaining to organized crime, but the legislative framework on organized crime in Zimbabwe is weakly developed and does not meet international standards. While human trafficking has been addressed in a National Plan of Action, the application of flora and fauna protection legislation has been disastrously uneven. Although laws against poachers appear strict, Zimbabwe is now advocating to lift the worldwide ban on ivory trade in an attempt to sell its stockpiles.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

In the contested political environment in Zimbabwe, the criminal justice system has been a forum for conflict between human rights and the exercise of governmental authority. Trust in the judiciary is low, with strong evidence suggesting that political pressures and corruption are rife. Despite overwhelming evidence of organized criminal activity, convictions are rarely secured. At the same time, dissenting voices are silenced via 'legal' means, including charges of attempting to overthrow a constitutional government and inciting public violence. People are then held in jails for weeks, if not months, awaiting trial.

On the other hand, law enforcement officers are underfunded and poorly trained, which establishes the prerequisite for corruption in the sector. There are no police units specialized in countering organized crime. In addition, reformative reorientation to prioritize human

security rather than the security of the regime is long overdue, but the politicized recruitment, training and promotion practices have upheld the status quo. Alongside this, the absence of mechanisms for retrospectively holding police officers to account for alleged abuse has led police to operate with a heavy hand when it comes to protecting the regime.

Despite issues of corruption among border control personnel, Zimbabwe has control over its territory. There is physical infrastructure in place, including game and high-security fencing, but more importantly, there is enhanced multi-lateral collaboration of border management and law enforcement agencies and structures with foreign counterparts. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has escalated the focus on better border control and a broad range of measures appear to have been taken by neighbouring countries in order to secure borders.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Zimbabwe boasts a relatively sound anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism regime with a financial intelligence unit as well as a unit dedicated to the recovery of criminal proceeds being functional. There is, however, limited information on the practical implementation of coordination and cooperation measures against money laundering. A further concern stems from the limitations on the autonomy and professional independence of the structures assigned the responsibility of guarding transparency and enforcing accountability. The executive's control over resources and selection of leadership compromises their effectiveness and credibility. Thus, the risk of money laundering and terrorist financing is among the highest in the world. The country's business climate is also criticized and necessitates the implementation of significant structural and fiscal reforms. In addition, patronage and corruption have led to a chaotic state of management of public finances, which has further eroded trust in the state and in key regulatory institutions.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Zimbabwe offers little in terms of treatment and victim support, which is instead left to civil society and foreign governments. There is also no evidence of functioning and comprehensive witness protection programmes either. Conversely, the government has maintained



efforts to prevent trafficking and has come up with a national action plan against human trafficking. The latter, however, was not yet launched at the time of writing. While awareness raising has been key to prevention efforts so far, dedicated governmental funds are scarce. In addition, there is no single programme in Zimbabwe to provide support to substance abusers. Instead, scattered organizations provide assistance to communities with health education, support for quitting and treatment.

Zimbabwe has a vibrant civil-society organization (CSO) sector, which is increasingly under pressure from authorities. As socio-economic conditions in the country deteriorate, state institutions have actively sought to restrict the space in which civil society operates. Similarly, while considered independent, media are also under pressure from the state. In spite of that, along with an improved access to information, the practice of self-censorship has become less prevalent, but journalists are still subject to harassment and intimidation. Not least of all, in 2020 security agencies escalated the pressure on CSOs and investigative journalists, evident in the regular arrests and abductions.

