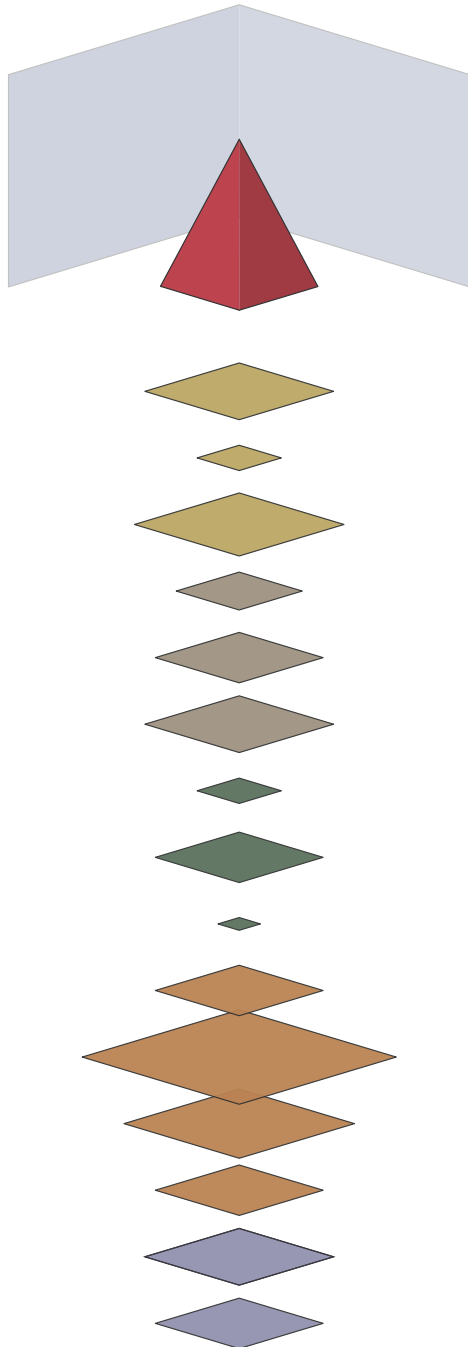


CABO VERDE



4.28 CRIMINALITY SCORE

48th of 54 African countries
15th of 15 West African countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.97**

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| HUMAN TRAFFICKING | 4.5 |
| HUMAN SMUGGLING | 2 |
| EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING | 5 |
| ARMS TRAFFICKING | 3 |
| TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS | 4 |
| ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS | 4.5 |
| FLORA CRIMES | 2 |
| FAUNA CRIMES | 4 |
| NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES | 1 |
| HEROIN TRADE | 4 |
| COCAINE TRADE | 7.5 |
| CANNABIS TRADE | 5.5 |
| SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE | 4 |
| CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES | 4.5 |
| FINANCIAL CRIMES | 4 |



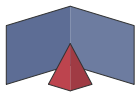
CRIMINAL ACTORS **4.6**

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS | 3 |
| CRIMINAL NETWORKS | 4.5 |
| STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS | 4 |
| FOREIGN ACTORS | 7 |
| PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS | 7 |

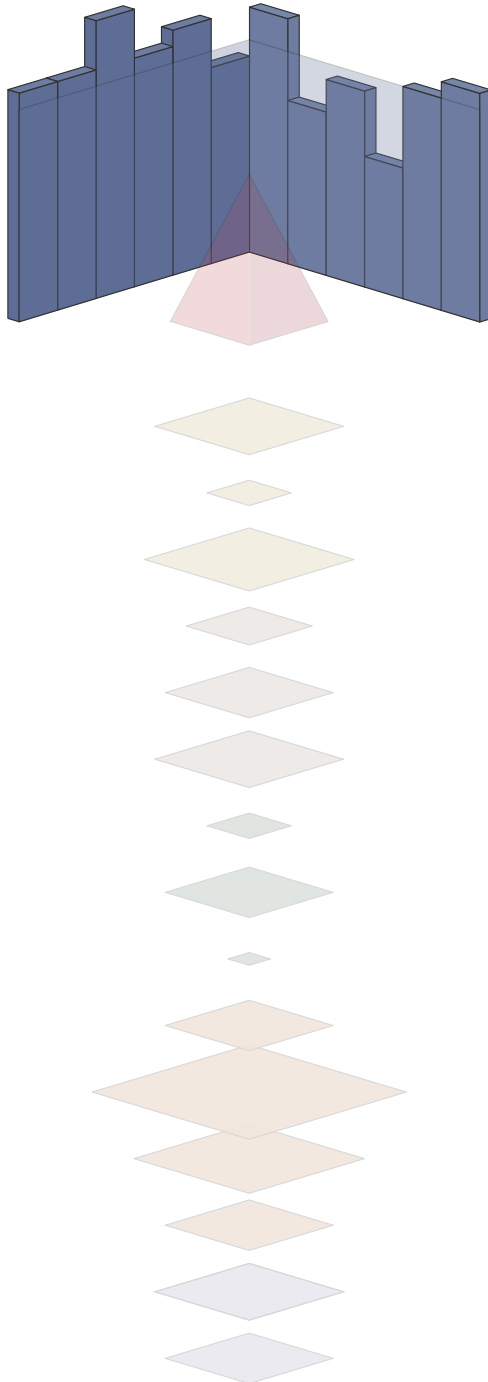


6.58 RESILIENCE SCORE





CABO VERDE



6.58

RESILIENCE SCORE

1st of 54 African countries

1st of 15 West African countries

| | |
|--|-----|
| POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE | 7 |
| GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY | 7 |
| INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION | 8.5 |
| NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS | 7 |
| JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION | 7.5 |
| LAW ENFORCEMENT | 6 |
| TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY | 7.5 |
| ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING | 5 |
| ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY | 6 |
| VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT | 4 |
| PREVENTION | 6.5 |
| NON-STATE ACTORS | 7 |



4.28

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS **3.97**



CRIMINAL ACTORS **4.6**



CRIMINALITY

Criminal Markets

PEOPLE

Cabo Verde is a country of origin for children subjected to sex trafficking and domestic labour and a destination for women forced into prostitution. West African women, including Nigerians and Senegalese, as well as vulnerable children, both Cabo Verdean and foreign nationals, are at particular risk of sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and abuse on a number of islands within the archipelago, such as Brava, Santiago, Fogo, Sal and Boa Vista, occasionally in exchange for drugs. Foreign workers, employed mainly in sectors like private security, civil construction, domestic work, agriculture and fishing face poor working conditions and are vulnerable to forced labour. Once the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic were lifted, sex tourism involving minors, particularly in popular tourist destinations reportedly returned to pre-pandemic levels.

While there is limited human smuggling by means of illegal entry into Cabo Verde because of its remote geographic location, the country has served as a transit point for mainland Africans who are smuggled onwards to the Canary Islands and Southern Europe. The archipelago, historically known for emigration, has rapidly become a destination, particularly for West Africans.

Although extortion crimes have been reported and investigated in Cabo Verde, investigations have tended to be disorganized and the pandemic-induced economic contraction has had a significant impact on the country, leading to local state institutions experiencing funding shortages and making them vulnerable to intimidation and extortion by criminal elements, including Russian mafia, Latin American drug cartels and Angolan money launderers. These factors have further exacerbated the challenges faced by Cabo Verde in combating human trafficking and related issues.

TRADE

There has been an increase in the illegal trade in firearms in Cabo Verde in recent years, leading to a rise in violent urban crime, particularly in the capital city of Praia. The national police have conducted special operations and seizures of illegal firearms, targeting youth gangs with suspected international connections. Investigations have revealed that leaks of arms from the armories

of law enforcement and the army contribute to the availability of weapons.

In addition to the illegal firearms trade, the trafficking of counterfeit goods, primarily originating from Asia, has been on the increase. Counterfeit clothing, shoes and medicines pose significant challenges, with particular concerns about counterfeit medicines smuggled through Praia airport from Bissau and Dakar. Customs authorities have seized substantial amounts of counterfeit medicines, including painkillers and drugs intended to increase sexual potency, concealed in suitcases or mixed with food products. The illicit trade in tobacco, accounting for approximately one-tenth of the total cigarettes sold in the archipelago, undermines tobacco control policies and despite the implementation of various laws, such as the new alcohol law, the effectiveness of control policies on illicitly traded excise goods remains weak.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Cabo Verde are relatively infrequent because there are few forests in the country. In the past three years the few instances of environmental damage, primarily illegal deforestation, have been the result of private companies cutting down trees to create areas for residential development. Although these activities have caused environmental harm they have not been associated with criminal groups and there is no evidence of the commercialization or trafficking of endangered flora.

However, wildlife trafficking poses increasing challenges. Wildlife poaching and the local consumption of marine turtles have become more prevalent, driven in part by the financial difficulties faced by local families. The country's diverse marine life, which includes whales, dolphins, sharks, rays and sea turtles, combined with weak maritime control, make it an attractive target for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by foreign vessels. Local scuba divers and semi-industrial fishing trawlers, particularly along the coastlines of Sal, Maio and Santiago, contribute to these practices. In addition, large industrial fishing fleets from Spain, China and Japan enter Cabo Verdean waters, primarily targeting tuna and tuna-like species, including sharks.

Although Cabo Verde lacks non-renewable resources for exploitation and is not known as a transit point in the region for smuggling these resources, the illegal extraction of sand for construction purposes has become



a growing concern. However, this activity does not appear to be linked to illicit networks.

DRUGS

The country is viewed as an easy trans-shipment point for heroin destined for North Africa and the European markets. Heroin is also consumed on the islands, although the size and impact of consumption are unclear. The country has also emerged as a key trans-shipment hub for cocaine, facilitating the movement of drugs from South America (particularly Brazil) to European destinations, particularly Spain. The country's strategic location on the trans-Atlantic drug trade route, known as Highway 10, makes it an ideal stopover for drug traffickers, who use it to refuel, store their products and ship them to their final destinations. Praia, with its historical, economic and cultural ties with Portugal, plays a crucial role in the 'cocaine corridor'. The main airport also serves as a transit point for drug trafficking, particularly on flights originating from Brazil and other Latin American countries. São Paulo is a significant source of drugs entering the country by air. The link between drug trafficking and money laundering is evident, as proceeds from the cocaine trade are reinvested in Praia through construction companies, facilitated by certain banks.

The consumption of and trade in cannabis is widespread in Cabo Verde. The police have seized numerous caches on various islands, with Santa Catarina de Santiago emerging as a major centre for production, consumption and trafficking. Recent cases have involved large quantities of cannabis confiscated from plantations in the area. Cabo Verde also serves as a transit country for cannabis trafficked from other African production points. For instance, armed groups in the Sahel region reportedly use the islands as a route for transporting cannabis resin to markets in Europe. In terms of synthetic drugs, methamphetamine is present and MDMA (ecstasy) is available on the popular tourist islands of Sal and Boa Vista. With the considerable reduction in tourism in the archipelago during the COVID-19 pandemic, the quantity of synthetic drugs available in the country has decreased slightly.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cabo Verde recently experienced a serious ransomware attack, orchestrated by an international criminal network, which prompted the government to invest millions of Euros in safeguarding the state's network infrastructure. Among the prevalent cyber-dependent offences reported to police investigators are unauthorized access and

privacy breaches through hacking operations. Consistent with the global trend, these types of crimes appear to be on the rise within the country.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The country has long been considered a tax haven, facilitating tax evasion for offshore countries. However, new regulations have outlawed the operations of offshore companies within the country's jurisdiction, which has resulted in the removal of the country from the list of tax havens produced by the European Union (EU). The relevant legal framework also resulted in a decrease in tax evasion activities.

Criminal Actors

Reports indicate that criminal gangs comprising individuals of various nationalities, including Spanish, Cuban, Swiss, Portuguese, Nigerian, Brazilian and Irish nationals, are dominant in various criminal markets of Cabo Verde, specifically in the cocaine trade. Visa-free access to the country has allowed the Nigerian mafia to establish a presence and there have also been reports of the involvement of Chinese criminal actors. Drug cartels from Russia and Latin America have established connections in the country, as Cabo Verdean street gangs based in the US increasingly use it as a hub for money laundering activities.

Criminal networks are influenced by the country's role as a transit point for the West African cocaine trade and by the presence of Cabo Verdean communities in various countries. Although the primary centre of criminal activities is not on the islands, the emergence of gangs within local communities is a concern. Organized crime is mainly conducted by street gangs with varying levels of organization and tactics. Praia is affected by urban violence, primarily attributed to youth gangs known as 'thugs'. These gangs operate in peripheral neighborhoods and engage in various violent crimes, including robbery, theft, homicide and drug and arms trafficking. Local mafia-style groups are also developing and increasingly vying for control of trafficking routes. On several occasions American and European mafia group members of Cabo Verdean origin who had been deported back to their homeland have become involved in drug smuggling activities on the islands. This has enabled them to act as intermediaries between South American drug cartels and Cabo Verdean criminals within overseas communities.

Criminal groups have taken advantage of opportunities to corrupt law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors



and senior government officials. A growing number of Cabo Verdeans perceive corruption to be increasing, as several scandals have exposed the involvement of high-ranking politicians in criminal activities. There are also reports suggesting the possible involvement of some law enforcement officers in drug trafficking.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

By instituting proactive measures and using international support, Cabo Verde has shown its commitment to addressing some of the challenges posed by organized crime, especially drug trafficking. The government has taken significant steps to combat drug abuse and trafficking and its efforts to maintain political stability and democratic governance have been recognized. The country's democratic institutions, multiparty parliamentary system and protection of human rights contribute to its positive reputation in Africa. It is also known for its relatively low corruption levels and high transparency. While some evaluations raise concerns about corruption within the executive branch, there is generally a high level of trust in institutions, particularly the armed forces and the office of the president. However, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has strained Cabo Verde's institutions, increasing the risk of corruption and the potential influence of organized criminal groups.

The country relies heavily on international cooperation to address various challenges and enhance its capacity, collaborating with partners such as Portugal, Spain, the UK and the US to combat drug trafficking and strengthen the monitoring of its international waters. Support from these countries includes training of law enforcement agencies, sharing intelligence and conducting joint maritime operations.

Cabo Verde participates actively in international efforts to combat organized crime, having ratified several relevant conventions and engaged in projects funded by the EU and other organizations. The country has a comprehensive legal framework and national strategies, particularly in the areas of drug trafficking and related criminal activities. The government has also proposed legislative amendments to enhance measures against money laundering, terrorism financing and weapons proliferation, in accordance with international recommendations.

Even though the involvement of private sector actors in criminal markets is limited in the country, there is sporadic evidence indicating that associations and businesses carry out illicit activities such as financial crime and money laundering.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Cabo Verde's judicial system is considered to be independent, but it grapples with challenges related to capacity, access to justice and the protection of citizens' legal rights. Although it has made strides in handling organized crime cases there is a lack of capacity to investigate serious crimes forensically. Capacities to investigate cyber-crimes, including the production and dissemination of online child sexual abuse material, are extremely limited.

Vulnerable individuals, including women (crime against women has increased exponentially) and youth, encounter difficulties in accessing justice and safeguarding their rights. A surge in violent crime has resulted in an overcrowded prison system and delays in court proceedings. Efforts are underway to implement social reintegration programmes for prisoners and improve prison facilities. However, the issue of criminal recidivism remains a significant concern. Despite these challenges Cabo Verde has recorded some notable prosecutions, particularly in cases related to human trafficking, although reports indicate that the judiciary is susceptible to intimidation by foreign criminal actors, particularly drug cartels from Russia and Latin America.

The Cabo Verde National Police, in collaboration with the US, is implementing community policing strategies to combat crime and enhance public safety. Measures include strengthening the capacity of the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Cabo Verde Judicial Police to disrupt transnational organized crime (TOC)s such as money laundering and drug trafficking. Efforts are also being made to improve prison management. However, enforcement of legislation criminalizing online child sexual abuse materials is considered weak, with insufficient supervision and application of fines. Inadequate staffing and resource limitations have hindered the presence of the police throughout the country, impeding the identification of victims, the investigation of crimes and



the collection of comprehensive data. There are still challenges in encouraging community reporting and testimony, highlighting the need to expand the police presence to ensure citizen safety. While instances of excessive use of force by law enforcement officials have been reported, steps are being taken to investigate and punish such behaviour.

Cabo Verde's government has good control of the territorial integrity of its islands, although borders are quite porous. Its strategic location in the mid-Atlantic Ocean makes it a primary route for transnational criminal organizations engaged in cocaine trafficking. Limited resources and a restricted police presence on most of the islands further complicate efforts to control and monitor its extensive territorial waters and borders. However, to bolster citizens' sense of security and deter criminal activities the government has turned to technology, including urban video surveillance and monitoring public spaces.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Cabo Verde's location as a transit point for narcotics exposes it to vulnerabilities related to money laundering and associated criminal activities. While it is currently not considered to have significant anti-money laundering (AML) deficiencies, there are still gaps in its AML framework and systems that need to be addressed. Criminal entities, such as the Russian mafia, Latin American drug cartels and Cabo Verdean street gangs employ various methods to launder illicit funds, including cross-border cash movement, real estate transactions and the use of banks. Implementing AML and countering financing terrorism have proved challenging, especially given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and the limited availability of resources.

A significant informal sector accounts for over a quarter of the country's overall economy, contributes to a lack of transparency and increases the risk of money laundering. The country relies heavily on external factors such as development aid, foreign investment, remittances and tourism. The service sector, encompassing commerce, transport, tourism and public services, plays a crucial role in Cabo Verde's gross domestic product, with tourism the primary driver. However, the pandemic and the resultant restrictions have had a severe impact on the tourism sector, leading to an economic slowdown and recession.

The economy has experienced its largest contraction on record and inflationary pressures have reached peak levels. In response, the government has temporarily suspended plans to privatize state-owned enterprises to address the high level of public sector debt resulting from the

pandemic. The country's economic outlook is closely tied to the global economic recovery and the government's ability to implement appropriate economic policies and reforms. Private business owners often encounter legal and bureaucratic inefficiency as well as corruption, which can pose challenges to their operations.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The government of Cabo Verde has implemented measures to identify and protect victims of trafficking, demonstrating an increased commitment to eradicating this crime. These measures include the adoption of the first Manual of Operational Procedures and the development of standard operating procedures for victim identification. In addition, training programmes have been conducted to develop protection plans for child victims of sexual and gender-based violence, although there are currently no shelters specifically for trafficking victims. Government-funded agencies offer emergency services, temporary shelter and psychosocial care for at-risk populations and crime victims. Victim identification continues to be problematic as well, especially given the lack of thorough investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. While witness protection programmes are not yet established, recognized local NGOs provide support.

Cabo Verde has implemented various measures to improve the prevention of human trafficking. The government's programme focuses on training the police to combat TOC effectively. Collaboration with international organizations is aimed at protecting citizens, preventing trafficking and supporting victims. Efforts to address online sexual exploitation of children include community and parental awareness campaigns, the establishment of a Child Protection Network and training civil society leaders and law enforcement personnel. The police force is increasingly adopting new technologies, such as video surveillance systems, to prevent criminal activity and ensure public safety.

Civil society in Cabo Verde remains alert and active, especially in prevention. However, there has been a decline in press freedom over the years. Although some changes have been made, such as the government relinquishing its power to appoint executives of the main public media group, it still appoints directors of state-owned media outlets, leading to a prioritization of government policies. The government also retains the ability to restrict access to information, and the growth of private media is hindered by a lack of state support and limited advertising opportunities.

