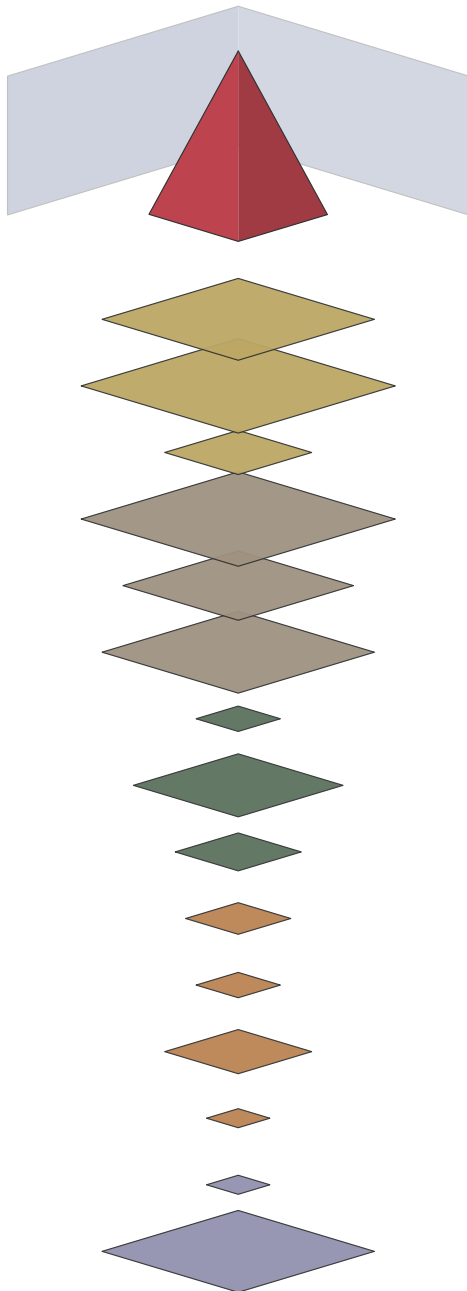




DJIBOUTI



4.65 CRIMINALITY SCORE

37th of 54 African countries
8th of 9 East African countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **4.3**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.5
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.5
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.5
ARMS TRAFFICKING	7.5
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.5
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.5
FLORA CRIMES	2
FAUNA CRIMES	5
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3
HEROIN TRADE	2.5
COCAINE TRADE	2
CANNABIS TRADE	3.5
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.5
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	1.5
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.5



CRIMINAL ACTORS **5**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.5
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	5.5
FOREIGN ACTORS	7
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	7

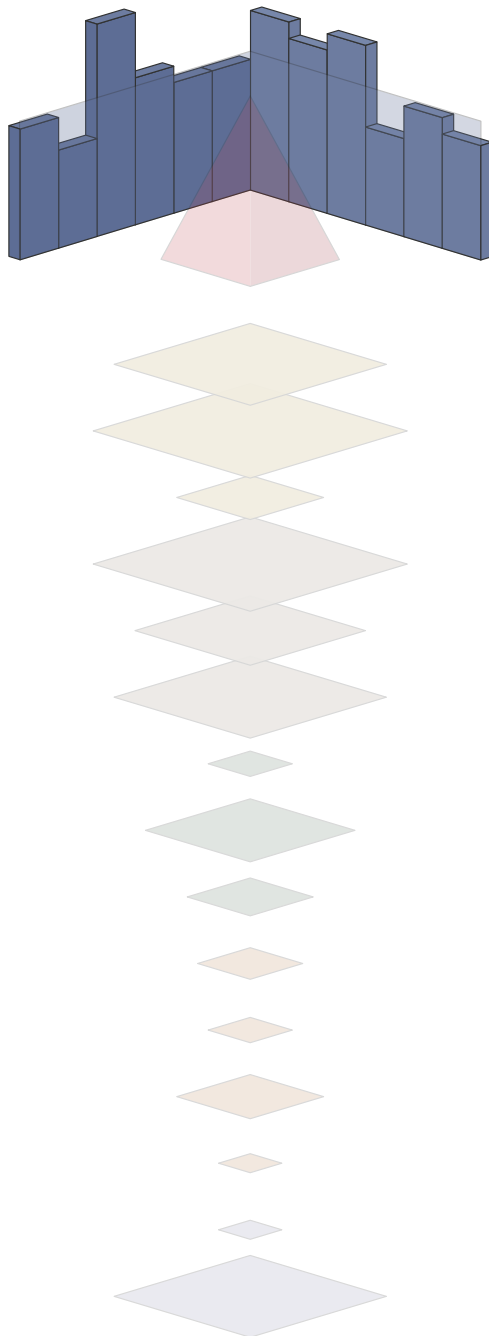


4.38 RESILIENCE SCORE





DJIBOUTI





4.38 RESILIENCE SCORE

22nd of 54 African countries
3rd of 9 East African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.5
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	4.5
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.5
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.5
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3
PREVENTION	4
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.5

4.65 CRIMINALITY SCORE

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.3
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	5



CRIMINALITY

Criminal Markets

PEOPLE

Djibouti serves as a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. Victims mainly come from Ethiopia and Somalia and are transported to the Arabian Peninsula by traffickers. Children are often forced to beg on the streets or participate in criminal activity, while men and women are subjected to forced labour, including domestic service and sex trafficking. Foreign workers are also employed by traffickers in the construction and food service sectors. Corrupt officials and official complicity in trafficking crimes are also concerns, and it is possible some trafficking crimes are ignored owing to bribery. Trafficking slowed down at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic because of anti-migrant action initiated by governments in the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia. However, both human trafficking and human smuggling have since increased—above pre-COVID-19 levels—with the conflict and food shortages in Ethiopia as driving forces.

In addition, Djibouti is still a notable transit point for Ethiopian individuals smuggled travelling across the Arabian Peninsula on what is known as the Eastern route. Ethiopian nationals, including unaccompanied children, embark on the journey to Djibouti on foot. After reaching the country, smuggling networks facilitate their movement to the port city of Obock, where boat departures to Yemen are arranged. Djibouti is also a destination country for Yemeni refugees fleeing the conflict in that country. Human smuggling in Djibouti has increased in sophistication and capacity in recent years. Criminal operations can be divided into three categories: ad-hoc and informal operations, organized smuggling operations, and operations seeking to extend profitability by extorting the families of smuggled individuals. Smugglers usually demand money from individuals or their relatives. Victims waiting for relatives to make payment to smugglers are sometimes subjected to abuse or violence.

Yemeni individuals in Djiboutian refugee camps have claimed to experience extortion and other abuses, allegedly committed by both Yemeni and Djiboutian citizens. In addition, although Al-Shabaab's presence in the country is limited, reports suggest that the group engages in the extortion of smuggled persons.

TRADE

Arms trafficking in Djibouti is expanding, with small islands off the country's coast being used as staging grounds for operations. Most weapons appear to come from Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen, but recent evidence also points towards Turkey as an emerging source. The illicit flow of arms into Djibouti is linked to the country's conflict with neighbouring Eritrea. Arms trafficking through Djibouti into neighbouring countries is also on the rise. Because of its proximity to the Gulf of Aden, Djibouti is one of the countries involved in the trafficking of arms destined to Yemen. Moreover, due to its highly porous borders, the country is an attractive destination for criminal networks illegally transferring arms to Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. The escalation of conflict in the Horn of Africa and Yemen has increased the incoming and outgoing flow of arms.

Trade in counterfeit products is a prevalent issue, owing to Djibouti's strategic location on the busy maritime trade route that links Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Despite being considered a major provenance economy as well as a key transit point for counterfeit goods, Djibouti is no longer among the top countries involved in this type of crime. Illicit trade in excisable goods is also common in the country, prompting continuous operations to seize such goods, including cigarettes, and alcohol. One of the destination countries for cigarettes smuggled through Djibouti is Yemen, which is a growing market for this product, but statistics on the scale of the illicit trade in tobacco products are limited.

ENVIRONMENT

There is no evidence of a significant market regarding flora crimes, but fauna crimes continue to be a problem, with Djibouti serving as both an origin and transit country for illicit goods such as wild animal skins and live animals. The country likely encompasses the largest route for the smuggling of live big cats in Africa, but little action has been taken by authorities. The Dewele border crossing between Ethiopia and Djibouti is a known departure point for wildlife trafficking. Djibouti is also a hub for the trafficking of cheetah cubs to exotic pet markets in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Additionally, gazelles, nesting seabirds, and marine turtles are poached for meat or eggs in the Eritrean Coastal Desert, an eco-region that is part of Djibouti's Red Sea coast. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the country remains limited.



The illicit trade of diamonds, gold, oil, coloured gemstones, and coal is ongoing, although it is relatively limited. The illegal trade of gems and gold is relatively high across the border with Ethiopia, and Djibouti is becoming a transit country for gold being smuggled between Ethiopia and the Persian Gulf. Criminals from Yemen have been known to use Djibouti as a gateway to reach Ethiopian markets, and gasoline, among other goods, has been recovered by Djibouti's coast guard.

DRUGS

Drug trafficking and consumption in Djibouti is limited compared to neighbouring countries in East Africa. Djibouti is used as a transit country for drugs, but has not been identified as a major source of drug shipments. Heroin that enters Djibouti is mainly bound for other parts of East Africa and Southern Africa. Heroin trade, however, is rare, and there has been no evidence of an increase in heroin smuggling or consumption over the past two years. In terms of cocaine trade, shipments from the Near and Middle East as well as south-west Asia have been known to arrive on Djibouti's coast, and shipments from Lebanon have been discovered by authorities. One of the destinations for cocaine transiting the country is the Yemeni port of Hudaydah, which is controlled by the Houthi movement.

Cannabis is still not widely available in Djibouti, and remains relatively unknown. Djibouti is, however, a transit country for cannabis trafficked by sea from India and Pakistan to other East African countries. Sometimes it is also imported from Ethiopia. Djibouti is not a significant source of synthetic drugs and there does not appear to be a notable synthetic drugs market in the country.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

There is no substantive evidence to suggest the existence of cyber-dependent crimes in Djibouti, as such occurrences are limited to sporadic and anecdotal instances.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, particularly corruption and embezzlement, are widespread in Djibouti. The lack of transparency in public procurement further raises concerns about the potential utilization of corrupt practices in government projects. Investigations have been launched against political leaders close to the executive branch of Djibouti's government for alleged abuse of corporate assets, embezzlement of public funds, and corruption of foreign public officials.

Criminal Actors

Criminal networks are engaged in human trafficking and smuggling from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen to countries in the Persian Gulf. The membership of these criminal networks is believed to be overwhelmingly Djiboutian, although many have links to counterparts in Ethiopia and Yemen. Criminal networks in Djibouti also engage in arms trafficking between Yemen and Turkey and other East African countries. State-embedded actors, such as Djiboutian military officials, government representatives, and senior figures in state-owned enterprises, are linked to companies that both fund and facilitate arms trafficking in the Horn of Africa. The Djiboutian secret police and security forces are believed to be involved in human smuggling and trafficking through the acceptance of bribes.

Foreign actors are heavily involved in organized crime in Djibouti. While drug trafficking networks are mainly linked to Kenya and Tanzania, Iranian and Yemeni criminal networks are known to be involved in arms trafficking in Djibouti, delivering arms to Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Moreover, Djibouti has allegedly played a role in arms trafficking orchestrated by China, which would use its port to receive arms and military equipment bound for Sudan and South Sudan. While there is no evidence of the existence of mafia-style groups, Djibouti is preparing to address the threat posed by Al-Shabaab militants from Somalia, and by the Afar region's special militias that have been mobilized to fight pro-Tigray People's Liberation Front forces. There is some evidence of private sector actors' involvement in criminality in the country. Private sector actors, particularly business conglomerates closely linked to senior officials, are believed to be involved, to some degree, in financial crime in the banking sector. However, the lack of transparency in investment and licensing processes as well as poor monitoring of the informal remittance and value-transfer systems make it difficult to assess the scale of the financial crime committed by the private sector.



RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Djibouti is a stable state in the Horn of Africa, but political leadership and governance remain problematic. The country's regime is based on the ruling party's control of all significant business deals with foreign entities in the country. President Ismail Omar Guelleh was re-elected for a fifth term in April 2021, with opposition parties boycotting the election owing to a lack of freedom and fairness. The country's level of socio-economic development is low, and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic and related lockdowns. Corruption remains a substantial issue, enabled by a lack of necessary resources and the independence of state bodies to fight it. Djibouti does not have any regulations aimed at preventing conflicts of interest in public procurement and government tender processes, and no independent watchdog organization has been established.

Djibouti continues to strengthen partnerships with international organizations and participates in migration task forces, aiming to address migrants' protection needs, risks, and vulnerabilities. The country has signed several international agreements aimed at combating organized crime and financial crime. However, a lack of political will hinders the enforcement of laws and policies already in place.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Djiboutian judicial system is heavily influenced by the executive branch of the government and is adversely affected by corruption. In addition, there are no judiciary-related specialized units aimed at countering organized crime. Overcrowding continues to be a persistent issue within the country's penitentiary system, with prisoners being reportedly victims of abuse perpetrated by police and gendarmes. Djibouti's law enforcement agencies are responsible for the security of the country, but there is a lack of meaningful cooperation between them. The enforcement of laws relating to flora and fauna crime and financial corruption is nearly non-existent, and training in identifying victims of human trafficking is scarce.

Djibouti's central location on the Horn of Africa renders it a significant transit point in migration flow and a high-risk area for human trafficking. Irregular migrants are able to cross into the country because of high border porosity and large portions of unguarded terrain. Despite increased border security and the adoption of security

protocols, the government's limited capacity to monitor its borders raises concerns about the possibility of cross-border terrorism. With regard to cyber-security, Djibouti has one of the highest levels of internet penetration in Africa – particularly after its participation in a new fibre-optic submarine system – but this also makes it vulnerable to cybercrime, and it is uncertain whether it has the technical capability to contain such activities.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The anti-money laundering framework in Djibouti has remained stable over the past few years, and the country has four main laws in place, in line with international standards. Although there has been an effort to protect the growing financial sector, money laundering continues to occur. The country's banking sector is still vulnerable to this type of crime, and the institutions established to counter public sector corruption are not fulfilling their mandate. Judges lack both experience and expertise in hearing and prosecuting cases related to financial crime. Djibouti has established a financial intelligence unit, however, it is not operationally independent from the Central Bank of Djibouti. Owing to limited financial and human resources, the unit focuses on banking supervision rather than suspicious transaction reports.

The country's economic regulation remains steady, but corruption and a lack of transparency in policymaking and licensing deters private sector investment. The economy is dominated by state-owned companies and business conglomerates associated with senior officials. Prolonged political tension along with border security pressures and rising social expenditure are believed to have had an impact on trade and growth in the country, and a substantial spillover effect on the economy, which is already at a high risk of debt distress. The conflict in Ethiopia has increased the downside risk in Djibouti's economic outlook.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Djibouti maintains inadequate victim protection efforts. Officials failed to identify any trafficking victims for the third consecutive year, despite the existence of formal standard operating procedures to do so. Authorities, in fact, have in some instances quickly repatriated potential victims without screening for trafficking indicators. In addition, investigations and prosecutions have decreased, and for seven consecutive years the



national action plan to combat trafficking has been only partially implemented. However, the government does cooperate with the International Organization for Migration and UNICEF to ensure better conditions for people crossing Djibouti from border countries to Yemen by sea, including providing life-saving assistance, and women activists are helping victims. Despite awareness campaigns targeted at government officials and vulnerable migrants, potential human rights violations have not been investigated.

Crime prevention in general remains a challenge owing to a lack of human and other resources. The country still lacks national organized crime prevention strategies. Sporadic attempts have been made by law enforcement agencies to prevent and combat organized

crime, however, there is no evidence of their successful implementation or efficacy. Djibouti also has a poor record of political rights, civil liberties, and press freedom. Despite the right of assembly set out in the country's Constitution, protests are often deemed unauthorized, and participants arrested. In 2021, there were reports of security officials arbitrarily arresting journalists, bloggers, opposition members, members of the government, and demonstrators. Authorities maintain strong control over the country's broadband internet to limit access to social media, and freedom of expression is not upheld in practice. Academics and political opposition members are continuously suppressed, and the state oversees the curriculums of both secular public schools and private Islamic schools.

