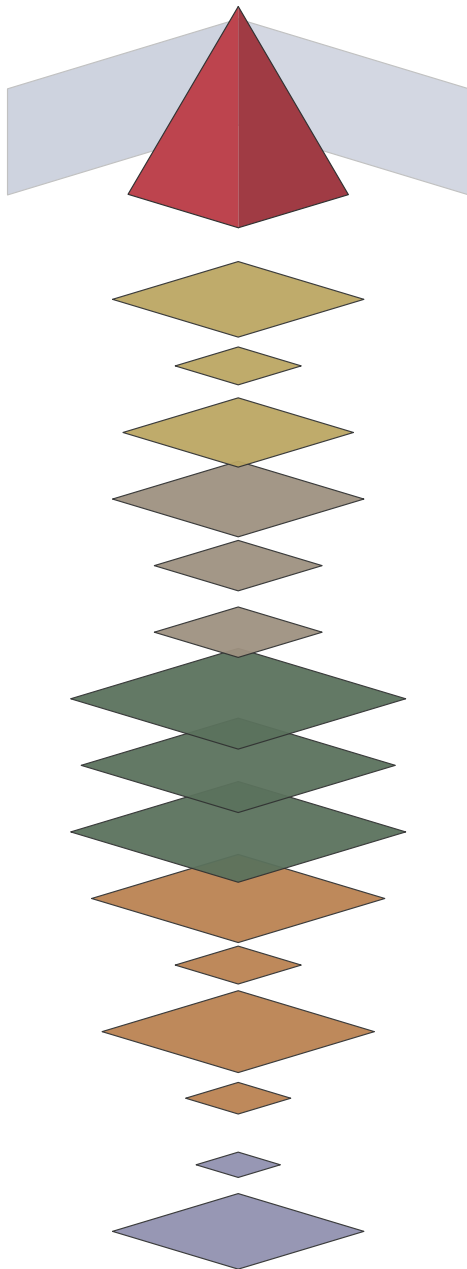


 **MADAGASCAR**



 **5.58
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

20th of 54 African countries
3rd of 13 Southern African countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS 5.27**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	5.5
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	4
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4
FLORA CRIMES	8
FAUNA CRIMES	7.5
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	8
HEROIN TRADE	7
COCAINE TRADE	3
CANNABIS TRADE	6.5
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	2.5
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	2
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6

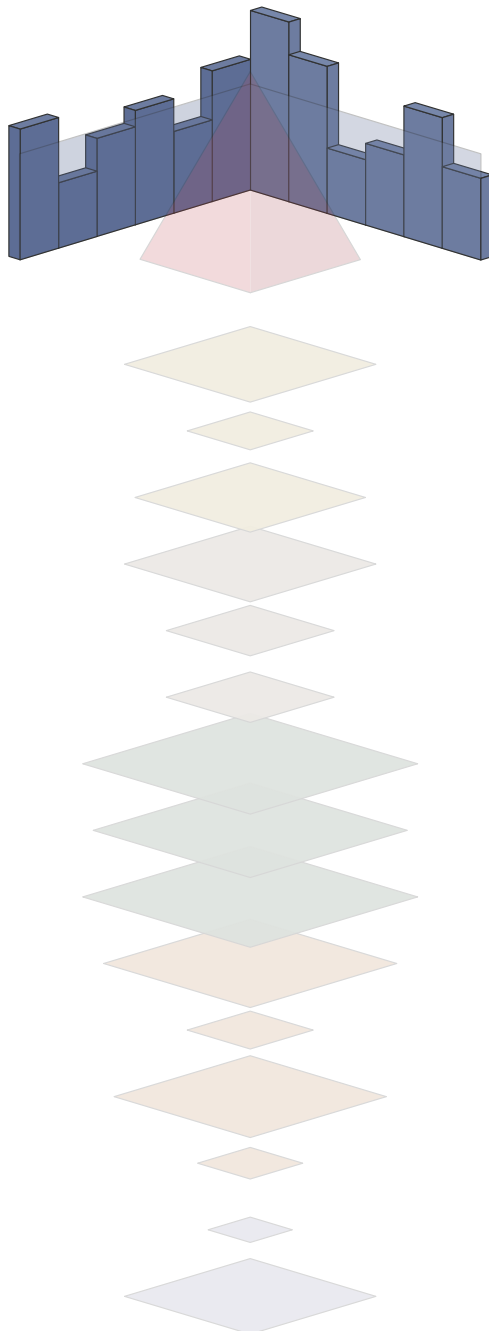
 **CRIMINAL ACTORS 5.9**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.5
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.5
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.5

 **3.33
RESILIENCE SCORE**



 **MADAGASCAR**



 **3.33
RESILIENCE SCORE**

32nd of 54 African countries
9th of 13 Southern African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	2
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	3
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	3.5
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	2.5
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.5
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.5
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	2
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	2.5
PREVENTION	4
NON-STATE ACTORS	2.5

 **5.58
CRIMINALITY SCORE**

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.27
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.9



CRIMINALITY

Criminal Markets

PEOPLE

Madagascar is affected by human trafficking, especially in the form of forced labour, and sexual exploitation of children, making it a source and destination country for these crimes. Traffickers take advantage of traditional practices such as arranged marriage and bride purchasing to exploit girls in child sex trafficking. The complicity of government officials is alleged as they are reported to in some cases provide falsified national identity cards and birth certificates to traffickers. Local recruitment agencies are also involved in human trafficking, with only a few agencies legally registered. The worsening economic situation in the country has led some parents to sell their children in order to survive financially. Mines and logging sites are particular hotspots for sexual exploitation of children. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, sex traffickers have increasingly exploited women and children online. In some cases, they lure women from rural provinces to the capital Antananarivo with the promise of employment, often through false job advertisements on social media.

Madagascar is a source country for human smuggling, mostly facilitated by unregistered recruitment agencies and corrupt officials who provide false identity papers to smugglers and traffickers. The size of the illicit market is difficult to estimate, and officials often do not distinguish between human trafficking and human smuggling. Those smuggled by air usually transit through the Comoros, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Kenya. Meanwhile, human smuggling by sea to the Comoros and the French department of Mayotte from the island of Nosy Be is on the rise, and involves Malagasy as well as foreign nationals from the African Great Lakes region.

Extortion and protection-racketeering are not widespread, although there have been confirmed cases in Betroka in southern Madagascar. Highway banditry is prevalent throughout the country, especially on major highways at night. Kidnapping is rare, except for kidnappings within smaller wealthy Malagasy communities and the Indo-Pakistani community, and occasionally of expatriates. These kidnappings are typically business-driven and conclude with a paid ransom and the safe release of the victim.

TRADE

Madagascar's location between Africa, the Middle East, and Asia makes it vulnerable to international arms trafficking, but its current challenges mainly involve the internal circulation of arms linked to cattle-rustling bandits in rural areas. These groups have become more dangerous because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Local authorities are suspected of facilitating this trade, with bandits allegedly obtaining their weapons from officers of the armed forces who sell non-registered or missing arms. The use of firearms in the country is linked to kidnappings, banditry, piracy, smuggling, and other criminal activities. Despite rising cases of armed attacks in Madagascar, authorities have been unable to identify the criminal groups behind this trend.

Madagascar faces a problem with counterfeit goods, with easy access to such products in local markets, and authorities showing a lack of willingness to control these activities. There is a lack of criminal prosecution of corrupt customs officials who allow the importation of these goods into the country, making customs fraud a significant weakness. Illegal cigarettes are the most commonly traded excise goods in Madagascar, and smuggling often occurs through containerized sea freight and air cargo. Malagasy authorities have taken steps to increase tax revenue, including implementing measures to raise and effectively enforce tobacco and alcohol excises, but the illicit trade of these goods remains a problem.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging and trafficking of precious woods, particularly rosewood, has persisted in Madagascar as a result of corruption and high-level political protection. The government only controls a small percentage of the estimated wood stockpile, with the remainder allegedly in the hands of timber barons and hidden from government oversight. The Malagasy government's proposal to sell off stockpiles of illegally harvested rosewood in its custody has been criticized by conservation groups, as it could result in the laundering of illegal rosewood into legal markets. The approach proposes to use seized rosewood to trade it locally and allows it to leave the island in shipments of less than 10 kilogram, effectively dropping the safeguard of verifying, inventorying and marking the stockpiles before use, which is essential to avoid large scale laundering. The illicit rosewood trade is



already often linked to money laundering and corruption, and activists campaigning against the trade have faced harassment, threats, and violence. The rosewood and vanilla markets are intertwined because the northern Sava region is the major production area for both products, and major illicit rosewood traders have also invested heavily in the vanilla market.

Madagascar's unique biodiversity has made it a major source country for trafficked species, with poaching for bushmeat and traditional medicine driving many species to the brink of extinction. Lemurs, tortoises, reptiles, geckos, snakes and parrots are the most trafficked animals in Madagascar. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) is also widespread in the country with seahorses and other exotic fish commonly targeted by perpetrators. Asia and the Middle East are the main destination markets for wildlife trafficked out of Madagascar. The trafficking of ploughshare tortoises has depleted populations, with only a few remaining in the wild. Madagascar's weak governance, ongoing crises, and corruption facilitate this illegal trade, and the destruction of livelihoods forces people into the market.

Illegal mining is a persistent problem in Madagascar, particularly for gold and precious gems. Despite the government's suspension of legal gold exports, large quantities of gold are being smuggled out of the country, often to Dubai by air. Illegal mining is detrimental to the environment, with the use of mercury contaminating freshwater ecosystems and leading to deforestation, eroded riverbanks, and abandoned pits. Corruption and human trafficking take place at mining sites. Precious gems are smuggled to Sri Lanka, with Thailand being another important destination. The gemstone market is particularly concerning because of its connections with child labour, and gemstone extraction is causing significant environmental damage. Illegal mining is becoming more prevalent as poverty increases in Madagascar, with forests being depleted and locals being exploited for, rather than benefiting from, the trade.

DRUGS

Heroin trafficking in Madagascar has traditionally been limited to transit activities, but recent developments suggest that there is now a rapidly growing domestic heroin market. Reports indicate a rise in heroin consumption across various regions, along with a significant drop in heroin prices. Most of the heroin entering Madagascar is from Afghanistan and Iran, with Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique serving as transit points. Because of conflicts in mainland Africa and increasing efforts to stop the flows from Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique,

Madagascar is becoming more involved in heroin trafficking. Typically, large shipments of heroin arrive in Madagascar and are then divided into smaller batches for easier transportation to other Indian Ocean islands such as Mauritius and Seychelles, as well as to South Africa and Mozambique by sea.

Madagascar is a transit country for the trafficking of cocaine, though to a lesser degree than for heroin. This trafficking primarily occurs on maritime routes. Even though local consumption is on the rise, it remains low since the economic situation of the country makes cocaine unaffordable for most of the population. Regarding cannabis, Madagascar is a significant source and trans-shipment point in the region, with widespread domestic cultivation and usage. Domestic cannabis production not only supplies national consumption, but substantial quantities are also sent to other Indian Ocean islands, making Madagascar one of the top locations for cannabis seizures in Africa. Cannabis-producing regions are home to armed trafficking groups, and cultivation remains a major cause of deforestation in northern forests. The cannabis trade is a source of income in poor regions and is facilitated by the local population and corrupt officials. Local teenagers assist cannabis producers in the fields, and with transportation to and from collecting sites.

Madagascar remains mainly a transit point for synthetic drugs since local consumption is low. Authorities have acknowledged the existence of a limited amount of methamphetamine trafficking, but no significant statistics have been released. In contrast, synthetic cannabinoid use is rising, but its usage is still negligible, and it is more prominent on neighbouring islands like Mayotte and Mauritius.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Access to internet services is limited in the country, and although there is little information available on cybercrime, recent cases have raised concerns among government leaders and users, prompting calls for improved cyber-security measures. Users have expressed a need for stronger security measures to safeguard their mobile money transfers, while leaders have grown increasingly concerned about hacking, distributed denial-of-service attacks, and website defacement.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, such as tax evasion, public procurement fraud, tax appropriation, and customs fraud are major issues in Madagascar. Reports suggest that the country needs to take strong action against large-scale corruption



cases, especially concerning public procurement. Although some efforts have been made to address these issues, corruption is believed to have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Customs clearance processes in Madagascar are particularly susceptible to systemic corruption because of the involvement of a small number of players, high stakes, a lack of punishment for misconduct, threats from economic operators, and low compensation. Despite customs duties being a significant portion of the country's overall tax revenue, there is significant tariff evasion.

Criminal Actors

Corruption is deeply rooted in Madagascar, with government officials involved in organized crime activities such as armed kidnappings, cattle rustling, arms trafficking, and drug trafficking. Retired army officers and local leaders have also been implicated in cattle rustling. Petty corruption is common when dealing with public services, administration, and police, and corruption levels are particularly high in the natural resources sector. Members of the country's political and economic elite reportedly participate in trafficking networks, including for gold and rosewood, and use their political influence to protect criminal networks and disrupt investigations. Corruption is a significant factor in the illegal trade of Madagascar's endangered tortoise species. Furthermore, the private sector in Madagascar colludes with public officials to evade taxes and customs, and to secure public contracts. Some politicians are accused of being timber barons and of owning companies in the supply chain,

much of which is illegal. There are reports of stolen vanilla being laundered into international supply chains, and the suspension of legal gold exports by the government during the COVID-19 lockdown has resulted in private jets being used to traffic gold, as major traffickers own or have links to private jet companies.

Foreign actors continue to play a major role in the illicit activities of Madagascar, with East Asian businesspeople involved in the illegal timber trade, and Chinese nationals consuming methamphetamine and engaging in IUU fishing. West African nationals are involved in drug trafficking, and French and Italian nationals are known to be key clients in the child commercial sex industry. Domestic criminal networks also engage in various illegal activities such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, and the illegal trade of gold, tortoises, and timber. Drug trafficking networks, dominated by key figures who control the market for years, coordinate the transit of illicit drugs through Madagascar and collaborate with local distribution networks. In Madagascar, mafia groups consist of armed bandits known as dahalo, who are primarily involved in cattle raiding as well as familial mafia-style groups that are mostly prevalent in rural areas. Initially, dahalo were men from marginalized populations who would steal a few zebu (cattle) to offer to their brides' parents, but organized groups then began stealing hundreds of cattle. These groups do not form a cohesive organization, but rather are fragmented with clear leaders, and are increasingly clashing with law enforcement. In urban areas, gang activities are limited to kidnappings and armed attacks in specific areas.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Malagasy government is largely ineffective in combating organized crime because of insufficient resources and disbandment of important initiatives. However, the government has received praise for its efforts to counter fauna and flora crimes, including the establishment of a counter-corruption unit and partnerships with NGOs. Despite these efforts, the country has been criticized for its lack of progress in prosecuting high-level members of rosewood trafficking networks and for its handling of the dahalo. Overall, there has been a slight deterioration in governance in recent years. Madagascar continues to struggle with

widespread corruption within its state apparatus on different levels. Corruption safeguards are inadequate, and the anti-corruption agency rarely investigates high-profile people. There have been reports of lawmakers accepting bribes, but no cases have been opened against them. Additionally, the government lacks transparency, and officials are not complying with regulations such as asset declarations. The executive has intervened in the judiciary in cases such as blocking the release of audit reports on COVID-19 pandemic funds. This lack of transparency and separation of powers has eroded trust in the government, resulting in an increase in mob justice.



Madagascar has ratified international treaties related to transnational organized crime and has extradition and mutual legal-assistance agreements with other countries. However, anti-organized crime efforts are mostly supported by international organizations and foreign governments because of a lack of capacity and funds. Although the Malagasy government makes efforts to integrate into the international scene, its commitment to addressing issues such as corruption and wildlife trafficking is insufficient. The implementation of national policies and laws to combat crime is weak. Although laws have been approved for cyber-security and cybercrime, they lack implementation decrees, and there is no national strategy to combat organized crime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Madagascar's judiciary system is heavily influenced by private interests and political pressure, which undermines its capacity to deal with organized crime. Public figures have been accused of interfering in the justice system and even of harassing and threatening judges, magistrates, and lawyers. Conviction rates for human trafficking, drug trafficking, and other organized crimes are very low, and the general culture of impunity fosters criminal activities across the country. Despite the government allocating more funds to the judiciary in recent years, it still lacks adequate financing and training. The prison system in Madagascar is inadequate and suffers from high levels of overcrowding.

Law enforcement in Madagascar remains a challenge, particularly due to widespread corruption and limited resources. Criminal networks take advantage of these factors to smuggle illicit goods in and out of the country. Although a task force on precious Malagasy hardwood was established, it has limited powers and some members of the task force have been implicated in cases of bribery. A lack of collaboration and trust among law enforcement bodies is a major obstacle, and leaks of planned raids and operations hinder law enforcement efficacy. Recently, the dahalo have become more aggressive and powerful, and law enforcement agencies have responded to their attacks with excessive use of force. Moreover, the Malagasy government's approach to countering drug trafficking and use is strongly skewed towards supply-reduction approaches, while harm reduction and health-based responses to drug use are not widely practiced. Despite that, the country has demonstrated general commitment and determination in the field of law enforcement.

Madagascar's border control capacity is largely ineffective, riddled with corruption and under-resourced. Trafficking of protected forest products through smaller ports is common because of corrupt police, military, and customs officers accepting bribes. Rural areas, where banditry and armed cattle rustling are prevalent, are difficult for government forces to access, resulting in minimal state oversight. The lack of effective measures to combat territorial breaches has enabled criminal networks to operate with impunity, hindering Madagascar's ability to control trafficking activities. The government's budgetary limitations have negatively affected the ability of officers to purchase fuel for coastal patrols at Hell-Ville on Nosy Be. Despite these challenges, the country has made efforts to combat organized crime along its borders and maritime control capacities have been slightly improved.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Madagascar is taking steps to update its legal framework to reduce the occurrence of money laundering. However, it remains classified as a high-risk country for this type of crime because of several challenges that the government faces. Authorities have identified the textile industry, the import of construction materials, the export of annuity products, and the trade sector as the areas most affected by organized crime. Although the number of detected money laundering cases in Madagascar has increased significantly, police officials reportedly lack the expertise and training to investigate cases effectively, and the judiciary lacks the resources and political will to prosecute money laundering offences.

Madagascar's weak regulatory environment and poor economic policies have contributed to its low economic development. The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation, with many people turning to criminal activities to make a living. The country's large informal economy and limited financial services make it difficult to track and control corrupt transactions. Furthermore, a lack of investment in infrastructure and legal frameworks has made it challenging to attract private sector investment. Recent cyclones have affected vanilla crops to a limited extent, which could lead to a reduction in the harvest and an increase in the theft of vanilla. Nevertheless, the government has taken steps to encourage the establishment and expansion of businesses through compelling tax incentives and foreign investment opportunities.



CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Madagascar's ability to protect victims remains limited, and despite some efforts, the situation has not significantly improved. The government has established victim support centres to provide assistance to victims of child sexual exploitation and gender-based violence and has repatriated foreign trafficking victims. However, the government has not prosecuted or convicted any traffickers. The lack of standard operating procedures to identify victims locally and abroad, as well as the lack of coordination among the actors responsible, leaves many victims unidentified. Furthermore, the government has not implemented the provision that entitled victims to restitution, and courts in Toliara have denied compensation to child sex trafficking victims because they lack birth certificates and national identity cards.

Efforts to prevent organized crime in Madagascar are mainly focused on awareness campaigns and cooperation with international organizations and governments. Despite these efforts, implementation remains a significant challenge, and few inspections or controls are in place. The government has banned domestic-worker travel to Gulf countries to combat human trafficking, but funding

for anti-trafficking programmes was not disbursed in recent years, leading to the cancellation of many planned activities. Additionally, the country's economic situation, characterized by widespread poverty and severe drought, contributes to flora- and fauna-related crimes.

Madagascar's freedom of speech has deteriorated in recent years. The criminalization of journalism because of investigations into the government's pandemic management has limited public debate and reporting on corruption and abuse of power. Activists and whistleblowers who report illegal activity and corruption face intimidation, harassment, and violence, and are often charged with rebellion and insult to public agents. Despite civil society's significant role in fighting organized crime, including denunciation, law enforcement, and prevention, the Malagasy government does not hold civil society organizations in high regard, and environmental activists have been murdered. Communication between government officials, and the media as well as NGOs, is hindered by conflicts of interest. Although there are no official reports indicating government monitoring of online activity, a cybercrime law prohibits online defamation and has been used to prosecute social media users.

