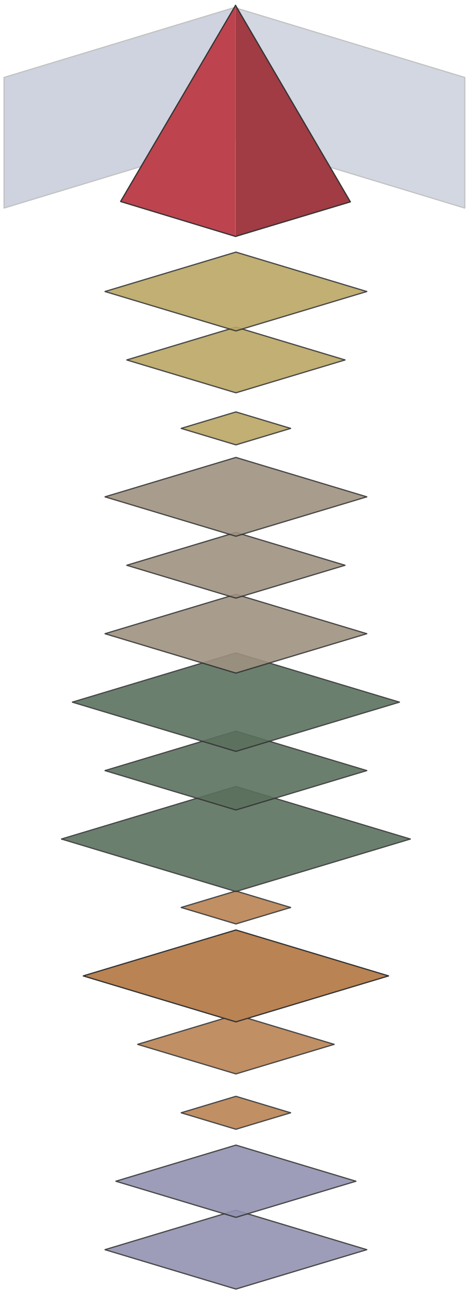
Africa
ORGANISED CRIME INDEX 2025

enact
Enhancing Africa's response to transnational organised crime

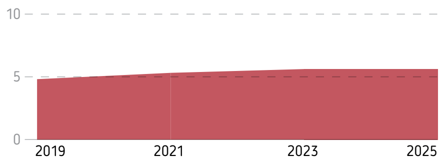
This project is funded by the European Union

ANGOLA



5.62 ↗0.03
CRIMINALITY SCORE

23rd of 54 African countries ↘3
5th of 11 Central African countries ↘1



CRIMINAL MARKETS 5.33 ↗0.17

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00	↘0.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.00	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.50	↗0.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00	↗0.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.00	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	7.50	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	6.00	↗0.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	8.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	2.50	↘0.50
COCAINE TRADE	7.00	↗0.50
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	2.50	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50	↗0.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	↗1.00

CRIMINAL ACTORS 5.90 ↘0.10

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.50	↘1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	7.50	0.00

ISS INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

INTERPOL

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

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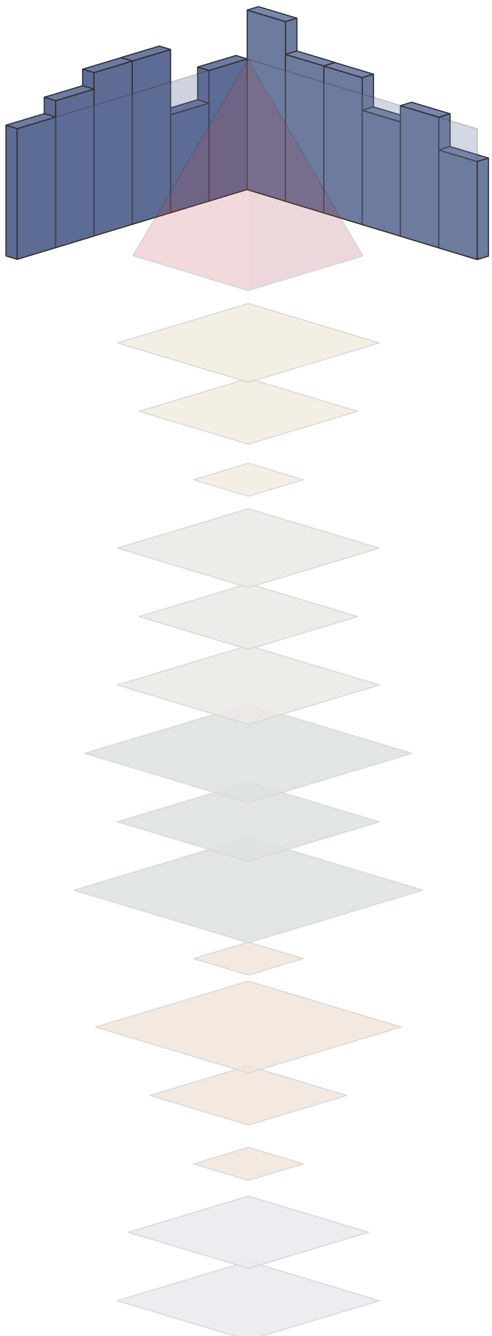
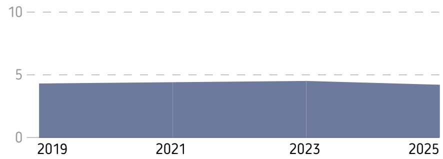


4.21 ↘0.29
RESILIENCE SCORE

22nd of 54 African countries ↘3
3rd of 11 Central African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.00	↘1.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.50	↘0.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00	↘0.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.00	↘0.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.50	↘0.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.50	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.50	↘0.50
PREVENTION	4.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.00	0.00

CRIMINALITY

Criminal markets

PEOPLE

Angola is a source and destination for human trafficking. Locals and nationals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Asia and Latin America are exploited. High-threat areas include Luanda and border provinces, though trafficking has decreased recently in some regions due to increased border control and the arrest and expulsion of armed groups. Victims face exploitation in the construction, agriculture, diamond mining and fisheries sectors, and they are also trafficked for domestic labour and sex work in massage parlours or hotels. Minors are subjected to trafficking as well, especially transporting illicit goods, and sex, domestic and street work. Angolans are subjected to exploitation in South Africa, Namibia, Portugal and the Netherlands in the sex trade and for labour. There is a documented presence of foreign organized criminal networks (Chinese, Vietnamese and DRC nationals) which cooperate with Angolan groups. State-embedded actors – specifically law enforcement – seem to have a role in facilitating this market.

Human smuggling is problematic in Angola, driven by labour migration from neighbouring countries, particularly the DRC and Namibia. Migrants, often seeking work in the mining, agriculture and informal sectors, cross borders illegally, and minors are increasingly exploited in cross-border trade schemes. Criminal networks from Angola, the DRC and Namibia collaborate, often with the complicity of state-embedded actors who accept bribes to facilitate illegal entry. Severe food insecurity has intensified migration from Angola to Namibia. There are rising concerns over the smuggling of children through Angola's main airport to be exploited abroad.

Increasing extortion cases in the capital, Luanda, are generally linked to small-scale and opportunistic actors rather than more structured groups. The targets of these extortion schemes are largely street vendors and migrants, both vulnerable groups.

TRADE

Firearms are increasingly accessible and widely used by criminal networks in Angola. Trafficking primarily occurs across borders with the DRC and Namibia. Weapons sourced from the DRC are often used by secessionist groups in Cabinda province. Many firearms from the Angolan civil war remain in circulation, though their age reduces their effectiveness. Reports indicate involvement in smuggling operations by senior officials, Namibian farmers and private security personnel. Efforts to restrict private security firms' use of lethal weapons have faced resistance, and the state's capacity to address the issue is limited.

The counterfeit trade primarily involves pharmaceuticals and electronics, including mobile phones and computers, as well as imitation leather and footwear. These counterfeit products predominantly originate from the DRC and China. The rise in counterfeit clothing and footwear is noted as a growing criminal market. Angola's vast informal economy and porous borders with the DRC hinder efforts to curb counterfeit trade. Angola also has a well-established market for illicit trade of excisable goods, especially alcohol and tobacco. It is driven by economic challenges and weak enforcement. As a source and destination for illicit tobacco and alcohol, Angola sees large-scale smuggling of goods from South Africa and Zimbabwe and occasional cross-border alcohol smuggling into Namibia. Smuggling is organized, involving criminal groups and private sector actors, and corruption exacerbates enforcement issues.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging is prevalent in Angola, driven by unauthorized fellers and concession holders exceeding quotas, and there is no sign of the market shrinking. Key provinces affected include Cuando Cubango, Huambo and Cabinda. Maiombe forest in Cabinda is experiencing heightened illicit activities, particularly along borders with the Republic of Congo and the DRC. Eucalyptus is the most frequently felled species. Asia, primarily China, is the main destination, with Namibia as a transit hub. Involvement includes private sector actors, local communities and DRC nationals. Enforcement challenges persist due to forestry institutions' limited knowledge, capacity and resources.

Angola has emerged as a significant source and transit country for illicit wildlife products, including ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales and endangered species such as the African grey parrot. Poaching, especially in Quiçama National Park, targets elephants, wildebeest and giraffes, while cattle theft and illegal bushmeat trade are on the rise. Organized transnational networks exploit Angola's position to traffic wildlife from Africa to Asia through Luanda International Airport. Illegal fishing by foreign vessels and inadequate law enforcement exacerbate the problem.

Angola is rich in minerals and oil and experiences extensive trafficking of illicit diamonds, and cross-border fuel and gold smuggling. The country is a significant source for the illicit market in non-renewable resources, and corruption and organized crime have a history of deep entrenchment in resource exploitation. Diamond and oil fields are exploited by elites. Military and private security forces control these areas, making it impossible for large outside criminal networks to operate without the collusion of military personnel. In addition to local citizens, foreign actors, including irregular migrants from the DRC, are involved in illicit mining and trafficking of diamonds and gold, especially in the resource-rich north of the country. Fuel smuggling from Angola to Namibia has increased recently, and local fuel stations have reported significant losses. Reports also highlight illegal sand mining as an issue.

DRUGS

Angola has emerged as a significant hub for cocaine trafficking, primarily operating as a trans-shipment point for South American cocaine, particularly from Brazil, destined for southern and West Africa, Europe and Western Asia. Shared linguistic and cultural ties with Brazil, Mozambique and Portugal facilitate cooperation among criminal networks. Organized crime groups, including Brazil's First Capital Command, are supported by local criminal networks and corrupt officials. Drug mules increasingly include Angolan nationals, while state involvement is reported. Cocaine and crack cocaine consumption are rising domestically, marking Angola as a transit and destination country, despite efforts to disrupt trafficking operations. The heroin market, on the other hand, has little influence, despite some evidence suggesting that Angola is a transit point for Afghan heroin moving towards Europe.

Cannabis grown locally and sourced from South Africa and Namibia is a highly consumed and frequently seized illicit drug. Increasingly, cannabis and cocaine are trafficked together on shared routes and networks. Angolans predominantly handle cannabis while Nigerian and Congolese nationals are more involved in cocaine trafficking. Despite cannabis being widely trafficked and consumed across social classes, some experts consider it a lower criminal priority than other issues facing the country. With cannabis gaining prominence among users, synthetic drug use – mainly involving synthetic cannabis – is limited and declining. Although Angola is speculated to be a transit point for methamphetamine from Nigeria to South Africa, experts disagree on the extent to which the route is used. Synthetic drug use persists in interior regions, notably Bié and Huambo provinces, linked to railway access from the DRC. There are indications that the extent of synthetic drug use may be underestimated.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Angola has emerged as a target for cyber-dependent crimes, primarily affecting government entities and financial institutions. Major incidents have included attacks on leading banks that disrupted operations and involved ransom demands. While losses have been substantial, the sophistication of criminal techniques is relatively low.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes in Angola, including corruption, fraud and embezzlement, are prevalent and often involve state-embedded actors. These crimes frequently involve the highest echelons of power. Ponzi, pyramid and multi-level marketing scams are also prevalent. Investment fraud also persists, exploiting domestic financial markets. Cyber-enabled financial crimes are rising due to weak internet infrastructure and IT security.

Criminal actors

Mafia-style gangs with known names are emerging in Angola's urban centres, particularly Luanda, maintaining territorial control in neighbourhoods. These groups are involved in various criminal markets, including illicit drug trade and firearms trafficking, facilitated by access to weapons from the civil war and private security companies. Weak policing in impoverished areas contributes to gang violence and high homicide rates. Gang activity persists despite police crackdowns and operations targeting specific groups, but its impact on communities is limited.

Organized criminal networks operate in several illicit markets, including wildlife, resource exploitation, drug trafficking, firearms, human trafficking and smuggling. They often collaborate with foreign criminal actors, using shared routes and fostering violence, insecurity and economic loss. Corruption and police protection enable their operations, and there are reports of violence and human rights abuses.

State-embedded actors in Angola significantly influence organized crime, despite ongoing anti-corruption efforts. Corruption, fraud, embezzlement and money laundering have implicated several officials, including relatives of former high-ranking leaders. The involvement of government and law enforcement officials extends to drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal logging, mining and extortion, revealing a deep-rooted issue in the state apparatus. Street vendors often face extortion and violence from the police, partly driven by inadequate salaries.

Foreign criminal actors in Angola include Congolese groups involved in illegal diamond mining, and Chinese and Vietnamese groups collaborating with locals in illegal logging, wildlife trafficking and human trafficking. Latin American organizations, such as Brazil's First Capital Command, participate in the cocaine trade, supported by domestic networks. Nigerian and Congolese nationals also engage in cocaine trafficking, while Namibians and Botswanans are implicated in poaching, arms smuggling and human trafficking. While the presence of foreign criminal actors is notable, their impact is less pervasive than that of other criminal groups.

Private sector involvement in Angola's criminal activities is significant, particularly in financial crimes. Private banks and oil companies are used as legitimate fronts to facilitate fraudulent schemes, often with support from state-linked actors. Oil companies move non-transparent funds, while banks siphon state resources. Despite increased financial oversight by the National Bank of Angola, illicit financial operations persist and many schemes evade detection.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Angola faces substantial challenges in governance and organized crime, as reflected in recent global indices. It exhibits weak political leadership, limited democratic performance and significant deficits in government effectiveness, rule of law and anti-corruption measures. Efforts to combat organized crime and high-level corruption are hindered by political considerations and opposition to systemic reform. Public perceptions of corruption are high, particularly in state institutions, and government initiatives are often seen as politically motivated. While asset recovery policies target elites, they have yet to yield tangible benefits for the broader population. The state's limited capacity to combat organized crime further exacerbates governance and stability issues.

Angola faces challenges related to state accountability and corruption, with increasing impunity and declining transparency. Implementation of legislative efforts to address organized crime and corruption is inadequate. While legislation recognizes the right to information and sets out a clear request process, enforcement is weak and plagued by broad exceptions and lack of oversight. Recent government initiatives aim to enhance transparency but anti-corruption frameworks show limited progress and public procurement and extractive industries are opaque. Public perception is critical and surveys indicate rising corruption, distrust in government efforts, and fears of retaliation for reporting corrupt practices.

Angola has ratified major international legal instruments addressing organized crime, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, and the UN Convention against Corruption. It is a party to UN frameworks governing drug use and trafficking, as well as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. However, gaps remain in enforcing international norms domestically. Angola has pursued increased international cooperation with various intergovernmental bodies and maintains extradition agreements with several countries, though some extradition requests have reportedly been unsuccessful during the reporting period.

The legislative framework addressing organized crime is generally comprehensive but has significant gaps, particularly regarding arms trafficking, wildlife trade, resource crimes and cyber offences. A national cybersecurity strategy is under development to address emerging threats. Enforcement is hindered by corruption and limited capacity, and recent constitutional amendments may limit checks on executive power. Efforts to strengthen flora and fauna crime enforcement include establishing the National Council for the Protection of Forests and Wildlife, aiming to improve standards and participatory governance. Cooperation between law enforcement agencies to combat illegal mining has improved, though legal frameworks for non-renewable resource crimes are underdeveloped. The government has attempted to modernize the customs system through legislation but there are still no laws protecting intellectual property rights, which exacerbates the trade in counterfeit goods.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Angolan judiciary is heavily influenced by executive control. Judges are appointed by the president and rewarded for compliance with lucrative positions. The system is hindered by insufficient human and financial resources, resulting in delays, particularly in complex cases. Protests and strikes among justice system employees have highlighted inadequate working conditions. Public perception reflects a lack of judicial impartiality and effectiveness in combating organized crime. Misconduct and extortion in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights led to employee dismissals during the reporting period. Overcrowding and human rights violations, including sexual abuse, persist in prisons. Calls for judicial independence continue but there is limited evidence of political will for reform.

Angola's law enforcement framework has limited provisions governing the use of force. The Angolan National Police and the Criminal Investigation Service operate autonomously under the Ministry of the Interior. The government has taken steps to enhance law enforcement capacity, including increased training for Criminal Investigation Service personnel and cooperation with foreign counterparts and INTERPOL to address organized crime. However, corruption, inadequate resources and insufficient training significantly undermine effectiveness, making law enforcement one of the country's most corrupt institutions. Reports indicate pervasive bribery and rising police impunity, including arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings. These have particularly targeted political activists and protesters, fostering substantial public distrust.

Angola faces notable challenges related to cross-border crime due to its extensive borders and proximity to volatile regions, notably the DRC. Despite systematic border police operations, limited staffing and resources hinder efforts to combat smuggling and irregular migration, and there have been instances of collusion between border guards and criminal networks. Collaborative efforts between Angolan and Congolese authorities target illegal diamond mining, while transnational crimes with Namibia persist. Increasing pirate attacks off the western coast present new security threats, and armed confrontations with separatist groups further strain security capacity. Despite increased efforts to combat cybercrime, Angola's capacity to manage the evolving threat is limited, leaving the country vulnerable as criminals exploit gaps in cybersecurity infrastructure.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Angola is highly vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing, driven by extensive use of cash and the coexistence of a vast informal sector with a complex financial system. The Financial Intelligence Unit is responsible for analyzing and disseminating suspicious transaction data and cooperating with international partners to combat financial crimes. Political commitment to addressing money laundering and terrorist financing has increased, with enhanced cooperation involving international partners. However, while high-profile prosecutions of former officials demonstrate progress, they do not signify substantial improvements in the government's capacity to counter money laundering and terrorist financing. In October 2024, Angola was placed on the Financial Action Task Force grey list as a jurisdiction under heightened monitoring, signalling strategic deficiencies in addressing money laundering.

Angola faces significant economic and governance challenges, and weak property rights and pervasive corruption undermine business operations. Recent reforms aimed at fostering investor confidence may enhance dispute resolution for foreign businesses. Despite efforts to attract investment through anti-corruption initiatives and state enterprise restructuring, economic regulatory frameworks are insufficient by international standards. While the diamond sector attracts investment, broader economic recovery has been slow, hindered by recession and pandemic consequences. Despite modest economic growth driven by oil prices, living conditions are stagnant. Debt repayment takes priority over social development and governance is heavily centralized under the presidency.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Government efforts to support human trafficking victims are inadequate due to centralized response systems, bureaucratic delays and limited staffing capacity, resulting in slow service access. Legal frameworks for victim support are present but often ineffective, constrained by insufficient financial resources. Front line officials frequently conflate trafficking with other crimes, leading to misidentification and restricted protection. Emergency service access and reintegration processes for victims are delayed, while child support shelters receive limited funding. A new trafficking hotline lacks the staffing and resources for thorough investigations. Rehabilitation services for drug users exist and more centres are planned. Although legislation for witness protection has been introduced, no programmes have been established.

Angola has maintained its organized crime prevention efforts through legislative and institutional reforms. The government partners with international organizations and NGOs to advance its 2020–2025 action plan on preventing and combating trafficking in persons, funded by external donors. Nationwide preventative initiatives have included television and radio campaigns, anti-trafficking events and information pamphlets. However, systemic corruption and chronic resource shortages undermine the effectiveness of these measures, particularly those targeting forced labour. Efforts to prevent financial crimes have been undertaken, including partnerships with international organizations and enhanced domestic coordination. There has been a focus on cybercrime prevention through the creation of a dedicated division in the Criminal Investigation Service. Despite overall increased efforts, gaps persist in enforcement and resource allocation.

Press freedom is restricted despite some improvements, marked by criminal defamation laws and state control over the media. Journalists face censorship, cyber-attacks and intimidation, and accusations of disrespecting public figures have contributed to a regression in media independence. Only a small fraction of radio and TV stations are privately owned and few are considered independent. Physical violence against journalists, academics and protesters was reported, and police used lethal force during peaceful demonstrations. Civil society, though slightly more empowered, is weak and often faces government interference. Recent initiatives aim to address transnational organized crime and human trafficking through collaboration between the government and civil society.