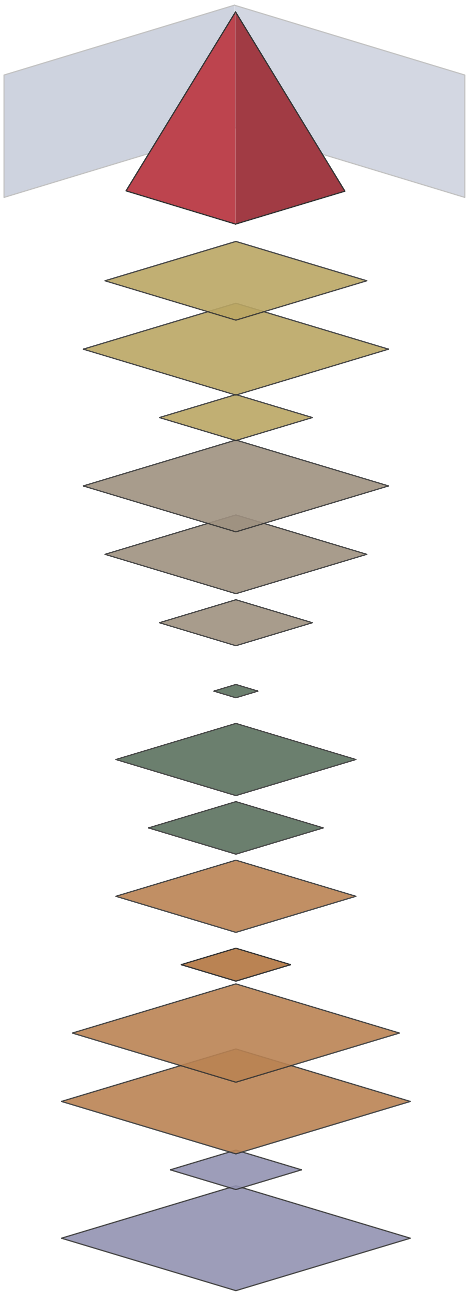
Africa
ORGANISED CRIME INDEX 2025

Enhancing Africa's response to transnational organised crime

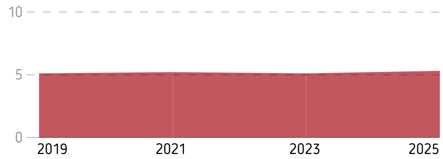
This project is funded by the European Union

EGYPT



5.30 ↗0.25
CRIMINALITY SCORE

27th of 54 African countries ↗2
3rd of 6 North African countries ↘1



CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.20	↗0.10
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.00	↗1.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.50	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	7.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	6.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.50	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	5.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	2.50	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	7.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	8.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	3.00	↗0.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	8.00	0.00

CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.40	↗0.40
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.00	↗1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.00	↗0.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	8.50	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.50	↗0.50

INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

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GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

enact
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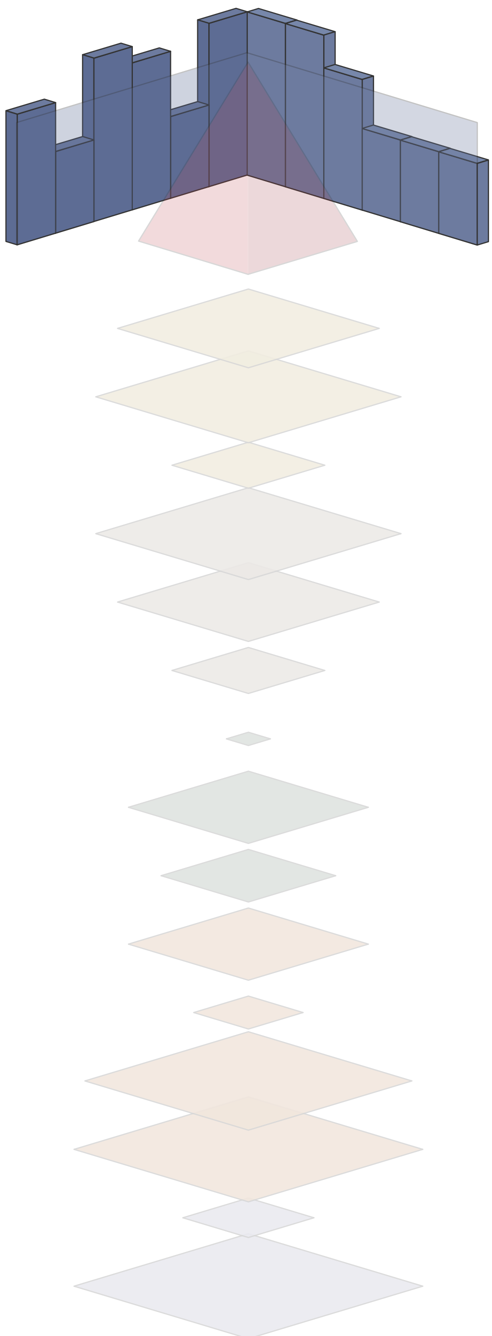
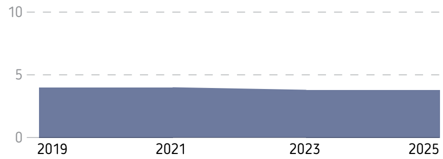


3.75 ↘0.08
RESILIENCE SCORE

27th of 54 African countries ↗1
4th of 6 North African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.00	↗0.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	2.50	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	4.50	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	2.50	↘0.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00	↘1.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	2.50	0.00
PREVENTION	2.50	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	2.50	0.00

CRIMINALITY

Criminal markets

PEOPLE

Egypt functions as a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, with men, women and children – both Egyptian and foreign – exploited through forced labour and sexual exploitation. Victims include migrant workers from Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, often coerced into domestic servitude or commercial sex, sometimes under the guise of 'temporary marriages.' Trafficking is linked to smuggling, document fraud, corruption and money laundering, affecting sectors such as tourism, finance and real estate. Although recent years have seen more frequent investigations into trafficking cases, weak enforcement undermines these efforts, leaving victims vulnerable to trafficking networks. Regional instability is expected to intensify trafficking flows and exploitation in Egypt.

Human smuggling in Egypt is driven by organized criminal networks, corruption and regional instability, particularly conflicts in Gaza and Sudan. These dynamics have increased smuggling flows into and through Egypt, with migrants paying inflated fees to brokers to cross borders or reach Europe. Smuggling operations are integrated with other illicit markets and affect legitimate sectors such as tourism and transportation. Migrants are often deceived via social media and later targeted with extortion. Although legal measures against these abuses exist, their enforcement is inconsistent. The reinstatement of visa requirements for Sudanese nationals and worsening economic conditions in Egypt have intensified smuggling activities. Profits are laundered through corrupt networks which undermine governance.

Extortion and protection rackets in Egypt remain entrenched despite law enforcement raids and arrests, as these efforts are often nullified by corruption. Extortion cases are believed to contribute to rising levels of violence in some locations. Kidnappings are sometimes reported in rural tribal areas but are rare in urban centres.

TRADE

Arms trafficking in Egypt is shaped by political instability, regional conflicts and entrenched criminal networks. Weapons are sourced across the globe and trafficked through transnational routes, with key flows entering Egypt via Sudan and Libya, and circulating in areas like Asyut, Cairo and Sinai. Traffickers include organized groups, corrupt officials and brokers, some with ties to local arms manufacturing. While authorities have attempted to retrieve weapons, especially from Bedouin communities, these efforts have seen limited success. Allegations of weapons moving from Egypt into Gaza persist, despite official denials. Recent incidents involving tunnels and drones reaffirm concerns about Egypt's role in regional arms smuggling.

Egypt has a sizeable counterfeit goods trade, which undermines legitimate businesses and diminishes tax revenue. Counterfeiting is centred on clothing, medicine, food and accessories, due to its large textile sector and to domestic economic pressures. Products are both sold domestically and smuggled abroad, with notable seizures reported in 2024. Digital platforms and payment systems have expanded the market's reach and complicated law-enforcement efforts. The devaluation of the Egyptian pound has led to medicine shortages, increasing both demand for and public tolerance of counterfeit medicine, due to its availability and lower cost.

The illicit cigarette trade remains a concern in Egypt, though recent data is limited. Trade is facilitated by corruption involving customs officials, regulators and politically connected figures, with structured bribes enabling border evasion, falsified permits and regulatory protection. Intermediaries also link traffickers to officials, earning commissions for doing so. In response, Egypt introduced tax stamps and stricter enforcement, leading to reported increases in tobacco tax revenue and reductions in smuggling, though assessments of the impact have been limited.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora-related criminal markets in Egypt appear negligible in scale and organization. In previous years, small-scale, independent smugglers were involved in the trade, although there was no substantial evidence of structured networks. Increased global environmental awareness has prompted stronger enforcement, disrupting existing operations. The absence of extensive reporting or verified data – possibly due to effective enforcement or a focus on broader Nile water issues – suggests that Egypt does not currently host a flora-related organized criminal market.

Fauna-related crime in Egypt has become more connected to regional and international trafficking networks, with online platforms facilitating trade. Despite laws protecting endangered species such as the Sinai leopard and the Egyptian tortoise, illegal poaching and overfishing persist. Fishing methods such as electric shocks and narrow-gauge nets contribute to the depletion of protected species and exceed legal fishing quotas by a wide margin. Recent evidence points to rising demand for Nile crocodiles. The wildlife trade's profitability attracts both domestic and foreign actors, with corruption among law enforcement and customs officials enabling cross-border trafficking and thwarting enforcement measures.

Egypt's illicit trade in non-renewable resources – including oil, coal, gas and gold – has become more consolidated over time. While oil smuggling, particularly into Gaza, remains limited in scale, gold smuggling is more prevalent, with networks linked to eastern mining regions and informal sales in Cairo and abroad. Despite enforcement efforts and policy changes, criminal groups continue to adapt by leveraging corruption, regulatory loopholes and technology. These networks have proven resilient, but the lack of recent data and verified cases makes it difficult to assess the full extent and impact of illegal extraction and trafficking in the non-renewable resource sector.

DRUGS

Heroin trafficking in Egypt involves coordinated networks of local and transnational criminal actors, including organized crime groups, street gangs and syndicates. These networks manage logistics, distribution and street-level sales, often aided by corruption within public institutions. Egypt's geographic location makes it a key transit and destination hub, with heroin mainly sourced from Afghanistan and either consumed domestically or trafficked onward to Europe. Seizure volumes vary with enforcement pressure and market dynamics. The trade's influence extends to legal sectors and public health, prompting government crackdowns on heroin production sites.

The country does not have a significant cocaine market, though its geographic position makes it a potential transit route between source and consumer countries. Most seizures are small, rarely exceeding a few kilograms, and domestic consumption appears limited to affluent urban and tourist populations. Cocaine entering Egypt is mainly trafficked from Libya, with routes often continuing to Europe and Western Asia. However, infrequent cases and low seizure volumes suggest that cocaine trafficking and use are limited.

Cannabis is widely consumed in Egypt despite legal prohibitions, with the country functioning as both a destination and source. Cairo has previously ranked among the top cities globally for cannabis use. Although officials claim that efforts such as workplace drug-testing programmes have reduced consumption, no concrete data confirms this. Trafficking routes typically originate from Lebanon and Morocco, while domestic cultivation – particularly in Sinai – is reportedly improving through the use of modern techniques to meet local demand.

Egypt is a key transit point for synthetic drugs in the region and also serves as a source and destination. Tramadol remains among the most trafficked and consumed substances, particularly among youth, often smuggled from Libya or via maritime routes. Captagon trafficking and consumption are on the rise, with production and seizure cases within Egypt – including an interception of 800 000 pills in 2024 – revealing the scale of the market. Other synthetic drugs such as astrox, voodoo, shabu and methamphetamine have also gained popularity. The country's strategic position has raised concerns that it may become a conduit for methamphetamine flows from production areas like Afghanistan.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

While still limited in scope and scale, cyber-dependent crime in Egypt has evolved in complexity, driven by technological advancements, increased internet use and expanding digital platforms. Criminal activities such as hacking have grown more sophisticated, with cybercriminals demonstrating improved technical capabilities. Key sectors targeted include banking, e-commerce, healthcare and critical infrastructure. While the full financial impact remains unclear due to the lack of official data, cyber-dependent crime poses a growing threat to Egypt's economic stability and national security.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Egypt's financial crime landscape is shaped by the strong military influence over the economy, which has contributed to corruption, mismanagement of public funds and the weakening of economic reforms since 2013. State-linked actors are often implicated in illicit financial activity. The country's cash-heavy economy facilitates tax evasion, one of Egypt's most prevalent financial crimes, alongside fraud and corruption. Financial crimes are embedded in broader regional illicit trade networks, distorting economic indicators and imposing social and fiscal costs. These dynamics undermine legitimate business activity and expose Egypt's economy to transnational criminal operations through tax evasion, cross-border fraud and other financial offences.

Criminal actors

Mafia-style syndicates have become more structured, territorial and hierarchical, with operations spanning arms smuggling, pharmaceuticals, human trafficking and organ trafficking. These groups increasingly collaborate with corrupt officials to neutralize enforcement. Regional instability has also fuelled cross-border operations, with key smuggling hubs emerging in Sinai and Asyut. Local gangs have evolved and cohered into larger and more sophisticated syndicates, with some networks expanding into new markets while others consolidate power. This shift reflects broader political, economic and institutional dynamics driving organized crime in Egypt.

Egypt's criminal networks have evolved alongside economic decline, regional instability and shifting enforcement dynamics. The sale of substandard medicine has grown amid economic hardship, with counterfeit drugs reportedly comprising a notable share of the pharmaceutical market. Organ trafficking has also expanded, making Egypt a regional hub for transplant tourism, especially in Cairo and the Sinai Peninsula. Some smuggled migrants have been victims of forcible organ harvesting. Patterns of violence range from localized disputes to occasional high-level clashes with authorities. Transnational connections – particularly in border regions – link Egyptian groups to broader criminal networks, further entrenching organized crime in a range of illicit sectors.

Corruption remains widespread across all levels of Egypt's public sector, with bribery and impunity undermining judicial accountability. Convictions are rare relative to the scale of corruption, enabling many criminal actors to operate with little fear of prosecution. Low-level corruption within state institutions weakens law enforcement efforts, though ongoing initiatives have been introduced to improve regulatory oversight. At higher levels, political and economic interests influence governance and may reduce the state's willingness or ability to curb organized crime.

Foreign involvement in Egypt's criminal markets spans trafficking in drugs, arms, humans and wildlife. Regional conflicts have spurred cross-border smuggling and arms flows, and other geopolitical developments may have expanded foreign actors' influence. These actors often collaborate with local networks, particularly in border regions and urban centres, exploiting corruption and weak enforcement. Their presence varies in scale and control across sectors. Although attempts by foreign networks to exert political influence have been made, their reach is constrained by Egypt's centralized governance system and its efforts to limit external interference.

Egypt's private sector has become more integrated into global markets, though its operations remain shaped by military monopolies and scant regulatory oversight. These factors foster an environment conducive to fraud, money laundering, tax evasion and corruption. Private sector actors have been linked to criminal activities including human smuggling and fraudulent trade schemes, often exploiting sectors such as real estate, banking and tourism. The dominance of cash transactions and the under-regulation of cyber-trading also serve to increase illicit financial flows. Transnational connections through trade and investment expose private enterprises to the risk of facilitating cross-border organized crime, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Egypt faces deep governance and human rights challenges, with little institutional accountability or democratic reform. The country has been governed by a military regime since 2013, with authorities suppressing dissent and opposition. During the reporting period, Egypt did maintain legislation, enforcement and international cooperation against organized crime – particularly human trafficking, smuggling and drug trafficking. Despite this a combination of economic instability, austerity measures, and currency devaluation has affected the state's capacity to tackle security threats. Although insurgent activity in Sinai was curbed, regional conflicts have strained border enforcement. Efforts to combat cybercrime have gained importance, but perceptions of political-criminal infiltration persist and transparency and accountability mechanisms are weakened by entrenched military influence.

The military's dominant role in public spending and infrastructure development is subject to little oversight, exacerbating debt and economic strain. Anti-corruption frameworks remain ineffective, with few mechanisms to investigate or sanction misconduct, while the repression of political opposition, critics and journalists remains prevalent. The government has claimed it has made progress in financial transparency and budget accountability, citing improvements in oversight processes and the release of plans for future reforms. But the broader impact of these measures is unclear.

Egypt remains a party to international conventions aimed at curbing organized crime, including frameworks addressing human trafficking, corruption and wildlife crimes. While the country has developed relevant legislative and law enforcement mechanisms, implementation is uneven and often steered by vested political interests. Cooperation with foreign law enforcement can be hindered by concerns over institutional integrity, corruption and information security. During the reporting period, Egypt pursued bilateral efforts to strengthen crime prevention, notably with Qatar. However, some agreements have not yet been ratified, and a focus on counterterrorism has depleted efforts against broader organized crime threats.

Despite the existence of an adequate legal framework and dedicated units combatting various organized crime activities, enforcement is hobbled by institutional weaknesses, resource shortages and deficiencies in asset recovery, witness protection and transnational cooperation. Amendments to the anti-smuggling law during the reporting period increased penalties for trafficking-related offences, particularly where vulnerable groups are affected. Intellectual property protections were also developed, though enforcement remains limited. Overall, implementation problems undermine Egypt's legal and institutional response.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Egypt's judiciary includes specialized units to investigate and prosecute organized crime and terrorism-related offences. While these units operate under established legal frameworks, they are impeded by judicial independence, resource constraints and susceptibility to political influence. Notable cases suggest the judicial process may be used to target business figures and dissidents under the pretext of protecting national security. The prison system faces chronic overcrowding, poor conditions and reports of human rights violations, including the abuse of political detainees and staff corruption aiding illicit activity. During the reporting period, a draft law was introduced to reform detention practices and address judicial corruption, though it drew criticism for provisions granting immunity to enforcement officers.

Specialized units to combat drug and human trafficking, arms smuggling and financial crimes operate under the Ministry of Interior. They are supported by the National Security Agency and the Public Prosecutions Office, which coordinates prosecutions. Government funding and occasional international assistance cover operational costs, though implementation is impaired by limited resources. Despite efforts to strengthen policing standards through regulation and community initiatives, widespread allegations of police abuse and corruption undermine the public's trust. Intelligence-sharing with regional and international partners continues, though domestic intelligence capacity is weakened by corruption and technological shortcomings.

The country's strategic location and its long, porous borders make it highly vulnerable to cross-border organized crime. The borders with Sudan and Libya are particularly targeted for the trafficking of narcotics, arms, fuel, gold and people. Border control efforts are degraded by corruption, resource constraints and inadequate surveillance infrastructure. The revocation of the 'Four Freedoms' agreement with Sudan has heightened human smuggling risks, particularly for Sudanese refugees. While Egypt has boosted patrols, fencing and bilateral cooperation, its border management system remains under pressure. Disputes over control and security at the Gaza–Egypt border also complicate regional coordination.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The government has taken various steps to strengthen its anti-money laundering (AML) framework, including programmes to trace illicit wealth, monitor assets and pursue legal action. Egypt has also engaged in regional and international cooperation, hosting a key meeting aimed at building a regional asset recovery framework for Western Asia and North Africa. Specialized units investigate financial crimes, including those linked to organized crime. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of AML efforts is reduced by resource constraints, institutional capacity gaps, corruption and the complexity of financial transactions. Despite these issues, Egypt has not been added to major international money-laundering blacklists, suggesting some alignment with global standards. Measures have been introduced against the misuse of crowdfunding platforms and online gambling for laundering purposes, including enhanced due diligence requirements, transaction monitoring and reporting requirements. However, their success hinges on consistent implementation and inter-agency cooperation.

Egypt continues to face substantial economic and governance challenges, with persistent issues in economic freedom, political reform and regulatory consistency. The government has enacted legal reforms to improve the investment climate and prevent criminal infiltration of the economy, including amendments to investment laws and expanded oversight mechanisms. But dysfunctional bureaucracy and uneven enforcement often derail these efforts. Economic vulnerabilities have been worsened by regional conflicts, disrupting trade and straining public resources. While Egypt promotes private-sector transparency and international cooperation to curb financial crime, sectors like construction and informal finance remain susceptible to illicit activity.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Egypt lacks comprehensive legislation or formalized programmes to protect victims and witnesses of organized crime. Although constitutional provisions for victim protection do exist, they are vague and are not supported by clear implementation mechanisms. Civil society organizations provide some assistance, such as drug rehabilitation programmes, but stigmas and cultural barriers – particularly around gender-based violence – hinder access to services. Victims often face social ostracism and resistance when seeking justice. In response, the government approved a fund during the reporting period to support victims of human trafficking. Managed by the Prime Minister's office, the fund covers rehabilitation, education, psychological care and research, aligning with Egypt's broader anti-trafficking strategy. But the fund's effectiveness in delivering meaningful support to victims has yet to be demonstrated.

Egypt's national prevention strategies against organized crime span a variety of tools, including law enforcement efforts, public awareness campaigns and international cooperation. Community policing and youth engagement initiatives also contribute. Their reach is uneven, though, and their outcomes are diluted by corruption and resource shortages. Other initiatives include tobacco tax stamps to reduce smuggling and youth anti-corruption programmes. Digital campaigns have promoted awareness of cybercrime, and encouraged victims, especially women, to report crimes against them. It remains to be seen how effective these measures have been.

Civil society organizations and independent media in Egypt help combat organized crime through advocacy, awareness campaigns and investigative journalism. But their activities are constrained by restrictive legal frameworks, including burdensome registration and funding requirements. Press freedom remains severely limited, with Egypt ranking near the bottom of global indices. Journalists are often harassed, detained or violently attacked. During the reporting period, hundreds of press freedom violations were documented. While some non-state actors speak out about this in government forums such as the National Dialogue, critics argue these initiatives lack substantive impact. Threats and legal repercussions continue to hinder civil society and the media's efforts to resist organized crime effectively.