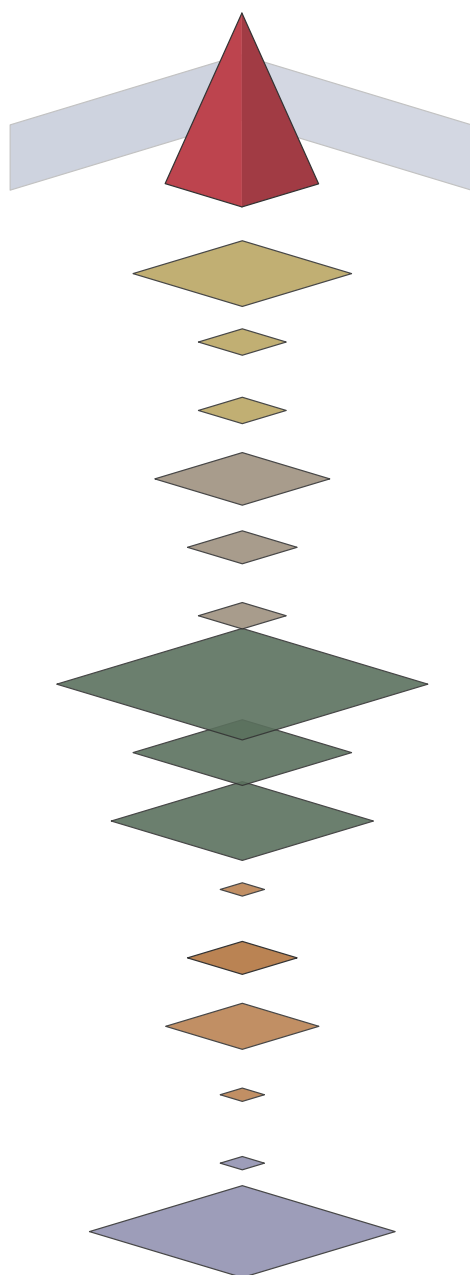




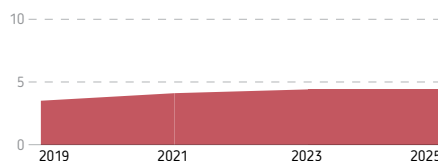
EQUATORIAL GUINEA



4.37 ± 0.02

CRIMINALITY SCORE

44th of 54 African countries ± 2
9th of 11 Central African countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS

3.53 ± 0.03

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.00 ± 0.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	2.00 0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00 0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00 ± 1.50
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	2.50 ± 0.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	2.00 0.00
FLORA CRIMES	8.50 ± 0.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00 0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	6.00 0.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.00 ± 1.00
COCAINE TRADE	2.50 ± 0.50
CANNABIS TRADE	3.50 0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.00 ± 0.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	1.00 ± 0.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7.00 ± 1.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

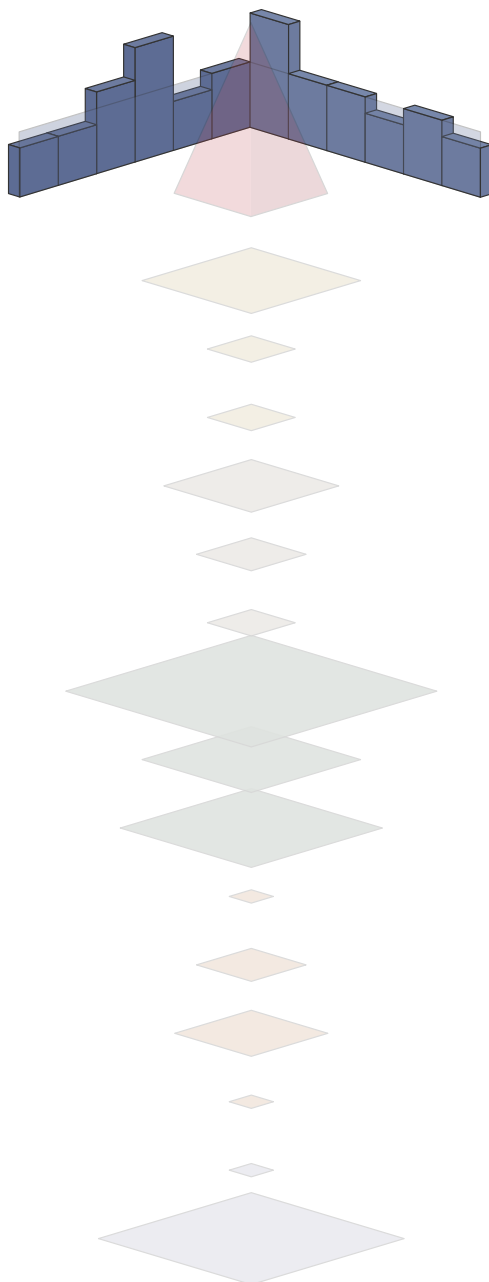
5.20 0.00

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00 0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	2.00 0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	9.00 0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50 0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	8.50 0.00





EQUATORIAL GUINEA

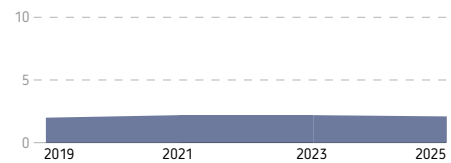


2.08 $\downarrow 0.12$

RESILIENCE SCORE

49th of 54 African countries

10th of 11 Central African countries $\downarrow 1$



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	1.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	1.50	$\uparrow 0.50$
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	2.50	$\uparrow 0.50$
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	3.50	$\downarrow 2.00$
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	1.50	$\downarrow 1.00$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	2.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	3.50	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	2.00	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	2.00	$\uparrow 0.50$
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	1.50	0.00
PREVENTION	2.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	1.50	0.00



CRIMINALITY

Criminal markets

PEOPLE

Equatorial Guinea is a destination and origin country for human trafficking. Victims, who include nationals from countries such as Brazil, Cuba and Ethiopia, are exploited in domestic servitude, hospitality and the sex industry. Nationals are also exploited abroad, particularly in Spain. Cities and towns such as Malabo, Bata, Mongomo and Ebebiyin are key areas of activity. Women, children and LGBTQI+ individuals are especially vulnerable. Trafficking networks involve local and foreign actors who use fraudulent recruitment and document confiscation to facilitate exploitation. Corruption, including alleged complicity of officials, exacerbates the problem, and falsified documents enable trafficking operations.

The country is a destination for migrant workers from Africa, China and Cuba but there is no clear evidence of an organized human smuggling market. Public investigations of smuggling are scarce and experts suggest its societal impact is limited. However, connections between human smuggling and trafficking networks have been observed, particularly involving victims of sex trafficking. Corruption in state institutions, including potential involvement of diplomatic officials, is believed to facilitate these activities. Smuggling-related crimes appear to be intertwined with broader illicit markets in the region.

Extortion and protection racketeering are reportedly linked solely to state actors, and there is no evidence of criminal group involvement. Maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a concern but has declined during the reporting period. Pirate groups, primarily from Nigeria, target oil tankers for crude oil theft and conduct kidnappings for ransom, increasingly operating farther offshore to evade detection.

TRADE

Equatorial Guinea has reported no recent arms trafficking cases, though foreign sources have supplied military equipment, reinforcing authoritarian governance and criminal networks. Arms typically transit through intermediary countries where profits are laundered. The country's unpublished military agreements with foreign entities raise concerns about transparency. While no direct link to local violence is confirmed, financial gains from arms sales are frequently laundered abroad. Corruption in this market reaches high levels of government and there are allegations of fraudulent transactions involving senior officials.

Counterfeit goods, particularly pharmaceuticals, are present, though reported cases are rare and available information is limited. Counterfeit electronics are the most common illicit products in informal markets and their presence has increased over time. Equatorial Guinea is not a major hub for illicit trade in excisable goods, but its port city of Malabo has been a transit point for cigarette smuggling into Nigeria. While customs controls are generally strong, high taxes and limited regulatory capacity contribute to smuggling, including alcohol and tobacco. Corruption in customs facilitates these activities and weak border enforcement allows illicit trade to persist.

ENVIRONMENT

Equatorial Guinea, part of the Congo Basin, has faced persistent illegal logging, primarily supplying okoume timber to China, Thailand and Malaysia. Corruption facilitates these activities and forest concessions are often awarded as political favours. Foreign actors from North Korea, China, Spain and Lebanon, some reportedly tied to Hezbollah, operate alongside domestic elites. Through forest concessions granted as political patronage, these elites use shell companies to diversify revenue streams and further entrench the Obiang regime's control. The government's response has been largely ineffective, corruption enabling continued exploitation and laundering of profits through international financial networks. Equatorial Guinea is a source and transit point for wildlife trafficking, and Bata is a major hub. While the local market focuses on bushmeat, high-value items such as pangolin scales are trafficked to Asian markets. The country also ranks high in illegal fishing risks, with its territorial waters targeted by foreign vessels. Organized crime networks manage trafficking operations, often overlapping with timber smuggling routes. The trade depletes biodiversity, affecting ecotourism and local economies. Equatorial Guinea's market is smaller than those of neighbouring nations, but it nonetheless integrates into regional trafficking networks.

The non-renewable resource crimes market is highly centralized, and political elites and military figures control illicit activities. Corruption and weak governance enable state-embedded actors, foreign entities and criminal networks to dominate resource exploitation. Quantifying the volume and frequency of illicit trade in non-renewable resources is challenging due to the clandestine nature of these activities and a lack of transparency. Violence is linked to competition over extraction sites and enforcement by armed groups.



DRUGS

There is no evidence of a significant heroin trade or widespread heroin consumption, and no recent data suggests notable activity in this market. Cocaine trafficking, however, is relatively common, indicating a local market, although the country is not a primary destination for the trade. Cocaine is typically trafficked by foreign nationals, including individuals from Nigeria and South Africa. While there is no confirmed link between high-ranking officials and cocaine trafficking, rumours of this persist, fuelled by several recent incidents. Cannabis plays a role in the local criminal economy, fuelled by notable consumption levels. The drug is mostly produced domestically, though trafficking also involves countries such as Benin, particularly in the border region with Cameroon, indicating local and transnational dynamics. Criminal actors involved include domestic organized networks and foreign entities. Despite these activities, the overall societal impact of cannabis is minimal. There is no recent data suggesting that synthetic drugs are prevalent in trade or consumption.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

There is no available information indicating the presence of a cyber-dependent crime market in Equatorial Guinea.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are pervasive, primarily involving political elites at the highest levels of government. Corrupt financial practices, including embezzlement and fraud, are widespread and numerous cases implicate former ministers, judicial figures and public officials. Despite laws targeting financial crimes, efforts to address them are ineffective due to systemic corruption. Scams such as pyramid schemes have risen, although investigations are rare. These criminal activities are fuelled by organized crime networks and political complicity, hindering progress towards financial accountability.

Criminal actors

Organized crime includes groups such as the 8 Machetes, which engage mainly in theft-related activities and use violent tactics. These groups operate with hierarchical leadership structures and members must pay fees to join or leave. While data on the number of such groups is

lacking, the organizations influence street violence, which fluctuates in response to military presence in certain areas. The group's impact on broader criminal markets is unclear.

Several unnamed criminal networks are primarily involved in local cannabis trade and financial crimes. There is no detailed information on their organization, violence levels and geographical spread. While some groups may have organized structures, their activities and affiliations are fluid, with common involvement of young individuals in petty theft. Transnational links and the extent of foreign influence on these networks have not been thoroughly documented, highlighting significant gaps in available data.

State actors play a central role in the criminal economy, particularly in financial crimes such as bribery, misappropriation of funds and embezzlement. High-ranking officials and close associates of the presidency are deeply involved in diverting public resources for personal gain, and state-owned entities are often implicated in scandals. Corruption is pervasive at all levels, from top officials to low-ranking employees. Investigations and political rhetoric against corruption do not lead to meaningful reform.

Equatorial Guinea hosts a large foreign diaspora, mainly from France, São Tomé and Príncipe and Spain, though their role in criminal markets is unclear. Individuals from Nigeria, Benin and Cameroon are involved in crimes such as human trafficking, oil theft and drug trafficking. Foreign private sector actors are suspected of financial crimes. European private citizens and companies, often tied to local elites, are key players in illicit activities. They also facilitate corruption, with roles played by professionals such as lawyers and accountants, some of whom are based in Equatorial Guinea.

Private sector criminal actors often use industries such as oil, forestry and aviation to launder illicit funds. Government corruption, particularly in the oil sector, enables opaque financial transactions that benefit state actors. The forestry sector exemplifies systemic corruption in which logging companies exploit regulations and community rights with impunity. Evidence also points to money being embezzled through payments of state funds to private companies with ties to the political elite. European investigations, especially in Spain, have uncovered money laundering and corruption involving the elite. However, the intertwining of public and private sectors, especially under the influence of the ruling elite, complicates efforts to trace criminal activities and their transnational connections.



RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Equatorial Guinea faces significant challenges in addressing organized crime, hindered by weak governance, political corruption and the dominance of the ruling elite. Despite strong rhetoric against criminal activities such as cannabis trafficking, piracy and cybercrime, the government's efforts are undermined by inconsistent enforcement and entrenched corruption. The political system is tightly controlled by the ruling party, limiting opposition and transparency. International assessments highlight poor governance, low democratic indicators and weak rule of law, reflecting persistent obstacles in combating organized crime and fostering effective reforms. Corruption and impunity are widespread and state officials are often implicated in illicit activities, further eroding public trust. Efforts to combat corruption include an independent anti-corruption body and an anti-corruption law, but these are undermined by political interference, reducing their effectiveness. While a new criminal code defines corruption more clearly, enforcement is inconsistent. The government has introduced e-payment systems to reduce corruption risks but their impact is limited. Transparency about government budgets and procurement is rare, and public access to relevant information is minimal, exacerbating governance challenges and the perception of ineffective reforms.

Equatorial Guinea has taken steps to align with international standards on organized crime, ratifying several UN conventions and participating in regional security initiatives. Gaps remain, however, including non-ratification of key drug-related conventions and lack of implementation of extradition agreements. Despite involvement in international frameworks, limited cooperation on asset seizures hampers effective enforcement. Corruption and governance issues hinder trust in Equatorial Guinea's commitment to combating organized crime, and foreign law enforcement agencies have expressed concerns. Russia's growing influence, including the deployment of military instructors, further complicates the situation.

Equatorial Guinea has various laws targeting criminal activities, including those regulating fishing, territorial waters, drug trafficking, human trafficking and corruption. Even so, the legal framework against organized crime is weak and there are gaps in the investigation, prosecution and punishment of offenders. The 2022 criminal code updates laws but contains inconsistencies with specialized legislation. During the reporting period, new bills were introduced to address cybercrime and flora crimes, but implementation is uncertain. Enforcement is inconsistent and many laws are poorly applied, often shielding corrupt state officials, highlighting the country's struggles to effectively combat organized crime.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The legal system is severely weakened by corruption, political interference and lack of specialized judicial units for organized crime. Judges often consult the president before making rulings and political pressures undermine judicial independence. Corruption in the judiciary and prison system fosters impunity for organized crime actors, while harsh prison conditions, overcrowding and abuse contribute to the spread of criminal activities. Human rights violations, including torture and arbitrary killings, persist and victims have limited legal recourse. In areas where state presence is weak, criminal groups have stepped in to provide informal justice or dispute resolution, further consolidating their power and influence. The state's control over prisons is weak, and criminal networks exert influence in prisons, further entrenching organized crime.

Law enforcement agencies focus on organized crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and financial crimes, but face significant challenges. Corruption in the police, involvement of political elites and limited resources hinder effective operations. The police are implicated in extortion, particularly targeting migrants, and use racial profiling, leading to arbitrary detentions in poor conditions. Intelligence agencies struggle due to insufficient resources and systemic corruption, limiting their ability to combat organized crime. While the country participates in regional and international security efforts, the capacity of its law enforcement to respond effectively is constrained by political interference, inadequate funding and corruption.

Equatorial Guinea also faces significant challenges in securing its borders due to its strategic location along major trafficking routes and porous borders. It struggles to control illicit activities such as illegal logging, wildlife trafficking and drug smuggling, which are exacerbated by corruption among border control officials. Despite military involvement and some regional cooperation on maritime security, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea remains a concern. Border security is hindered by inadequate infrastructure, limited resources and pervasive corruption, particularly in the oil sector. While there have been efforts to address piracy and human trafficking, cybersecurity is a weak area, overshadowed by physical security priorities.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Equatorial Guinea has faced growing legal scrutiny over money laundering, particularly involving the political elite and profits from the extractive sector. Several investigations have targeted individuals close to the presidency for embezzlement of public funds. The effectiveness of anti-money laundering



measures is limited by corruption and weak enforcement. The country is a member of the Action Group against Money Laundering in Central Africa but it has not undergone evaluations in recent years, highlighting gaps in enforcement. The operations of financial intelligence units are unclear and there are no measures to prevent money laundering through crowdfunding or online gambling.

The legislative environment is dominated by the ruling party, limiting meaningful economic reforms. The International Monetary Fund notes widespread issues with the implementation of laws. The economy, heavily reliant on offshore oil and gas, faces stagnation due to falling oil prices and depleted fields. Economic diversification and market liberalization have made little progress. Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies and unclear regulations hinder foreign investment and undermine economic growth. The lack of private-sector employment opportunities limits the development of a more inclusive and efficient economy.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The government offers minimal support for victims of organized crime and non-state actors play a larger role in victim care. Finalized standard operating procedures for victim protection remained unapproved during the reporting period. The government's anonymous reporting platform and hotline are inoperable, leaving no alternative for trafficking-related calls. Authorities depend entirely on two NGOs to shelter and care for adult and child victims. The state's approach to crime, particularly through campaigns such as Cleaning Operation, focuses on punitive measures,

including arbitrary arrests and torture, rather than victim support. Human rights concerns persist and there is a punitive stance towards drug users and crime victims.

Equatorial Guinea has developed national and regional strategies to combat organized crime, particularly targeting drug trafficking, human trafficking and illegal logging, and there is regional cooperation on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. However, these efforts are hindered by corruption, weak rule of law and human rights abuses. The government's anti-trafficking measures have been inconsistent, with limited progress in enforcing labour regulations and no operational hotline for trafficking reports. Community involvement is minimal, and trust in law enforcement is low due to the government's heavy-handed approach. While awareness programmes exist, they are rare and lack a proactive, community-based focus, undermining efforts to combat organized crime effectively.

Civil society organizations play a relatively limited role in combating organized crime due to a repressive political environment and restrictions on civil liberties. The government controls media outlets with censorship, harassment and arbitrary arrests of journalists, who are severely constrained by financial and political pressures. This climate undermines civil society organizations' efforts to address issues such as human trafficking and environmental crime, and the state's corruption and involvement in organized crime further complicates cooperation. While intergovernmental agencies provide technical assistance, their impact is minimal.

