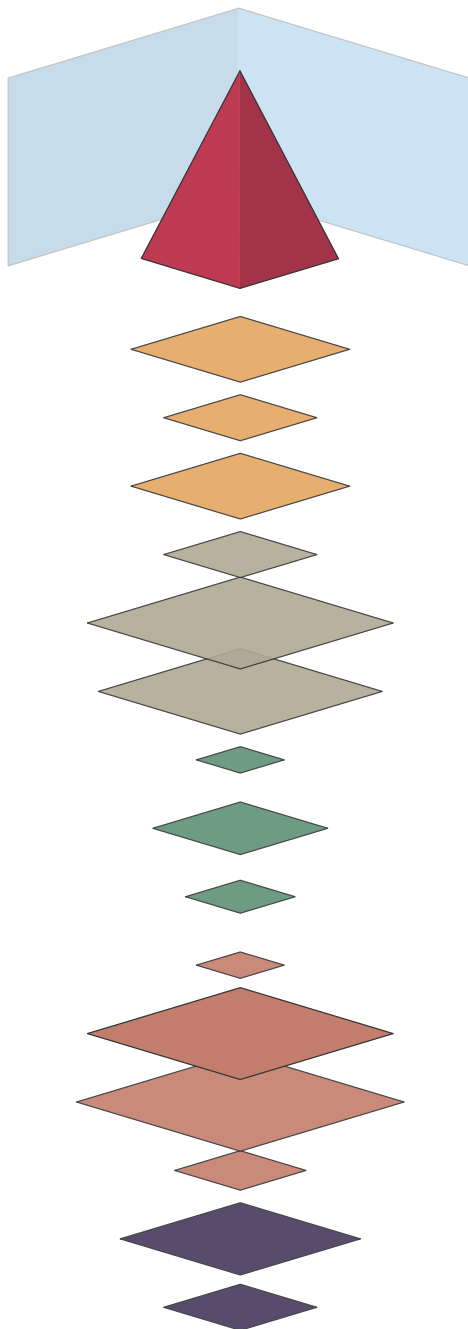




ARGENTINA



5.00

CRIMINALITY SCORE

95th of 193 countries

21st of 35 American countries

9th of 12 South American countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.50

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 5.00

HUMAN SMUGGLING 3.50

EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING 5.00

ARMS TRAFFICKING 3.50

TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS 7.00

ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS 6.50

FLORA CRIMES 2.00

FAUNA CRIMES 4.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 2.50

HEROIN TRADE 2.00

COCAINE TRADE 7.00

CANNABIS TRADE 7.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 3.00

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES 5.50

FINANCIAL CRIMES 3.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS

5.50

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 5.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 6.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 6.00

FOREIGN ACTORS 5.50

PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS 5.00



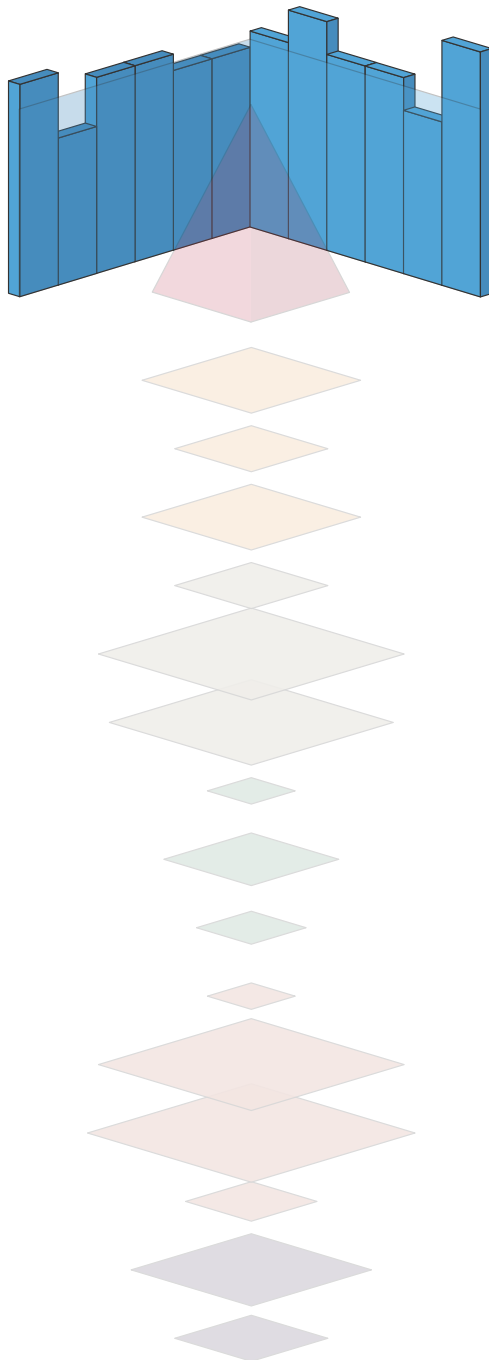
5.96

RESILIENCE SCORE





ARGENTINA



5.96

RESILIENCE SCORE

39th of 193 countries

6th of 35 American countries

3rd of 12 South American countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.00
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.50



5.00

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS 5.50



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking remains a moderate problem in Argentina, with labour exploitation in agricultural production zones being the most common form of this crime. Official data shows that most rescued victims are women from Argentina who are of legal age. However, many of the raids that aim to rescue trafficking victims result in the apprehension of smuggled individuals who have incurred significant debt to get to Argentina. Foreign criminal actors from various countries operate in Argentina, and corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes is a concern. Traffickers are increasingly using social media and youth sports clubs to reach victims.

Argentina is both a destination and a transit country for human smuggling, with people entering from Bolivia and Brazil. Smuggling activities are mainly facilitated by co-nationals and friends living in Argentina rather than criminal networks. Buenos Aires, Rosario, and Rio de la Plata are destinations for smuggled individuals, and women living in northern Argentina reportedly guide individuals smuggled into Argentinian territory from Bolivia. The smuggling of humans remains an issue in most land and sea border areas, particularly in the north-west on the Bolivian border and in the north-east on the triple border with Paraguay and Brazil. Chinese mafia-style groups and other hybrid actors are known to be involved in smuggling into Argentina. Transnational organizations linked to the smuggling of Venezuelan and Colombian nationals are also present in major cities.

Extortion and protection racketeering are prevalent in some regions of Argentina. In Rosario, criminal groups and family clan networks, coordinated from prison, have contributed to an increase in extortion cases, with these groups being emboldened by the violence exhibited by certain larger gangs. Extortion perpetrators, who may be part of a criminal group or may pretend to be, demand monetary favours from small businesses in exchange for protection or intimidate victims into surrendering their homes to be used as drug laboratories. Victims are often too afraid to seek help from authorities, and local law enforcement is inadequate. Protection racketeering has also increased in recent years, being one of the most important services mafia-style groups offer to foreign criminal organizations.

TRADE

The arms trafficking market in Argentina is less substantial than in other regions. However, the ban on arms imports in Paraguay has led to an increase in the local production of arms. These arms are smuggled through the porous border between the two countries, and criminal groups from Brazil are suspected of managing regional arms flows. Investigations have also revealed that some weapon parts from abroad are armed in Argentina in order to be smuggled into Brazil. Grenades and war surplus from the Falklands conflict have also occasionally been seized by Brazilian law enforcement.

Trade in counterfeit goods is a notable problem in Argentina. The number of informal physical marketplaces has increased in recent years, and a substantial portion of these sell fake goods. Social media and other websites are also used to sell counterfeit goods. Medicine, food, toys, accessories, and clothes are heavily counterfeited, with famous sports brands being among the most commonly counterfeited items. These goods originate mainly from China and India and are sold across the country, although two areas in Buenos Aires have been identified as the leading markets. Argentina is impaired by key deficiencies in its legal framework and poor law enforcement with regard to counterfeit goods. Counterfeit criminals rarely receive deterrent sentences, and the general public do not view the market as illegal.

Argentina is a source and destination country in the illicit trade of excise goods, with alcohol being one of the most illegally traded products. Argentinian alcoholic beverages are smuggled irregularly into neighbouring countries such as Bolivia and Brazil, where tonnes of illegally traded beer and wine are seized each year. The illicit trade of tobacco products is also prevalent. Legal tobacco processing factories in Argentina smuggle their product into Paraguay, where it is manufactured into cigarettes before being moved illegally back into Argentina under counterfeit or low-quality brand names. Owing to the quarantines and factory closures imposed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, cigarettes became scarce in Argentina, encouraging some drug trafficking groups to transition into this particular contraband market.

ENVIRONMENT

Deforestation is a major concern in Argentina, particularly in the Gran Chaco and Parana Delta regions, where thousands of hectares of forest are being cleared each year in violation of existing forestry laws. However, there is no evidence to suggest that organized crime groups are involved in these activities. The primary reason for deforestation is land clearance for farming.

Argentina is a source, transit, and destination country for wildlife trafficking, with animals often being sold in local markets or online. The lack of effective provisions and limited anti-trafficking efforts made by the Argentinian government complicates the fight against fauna crimes. Illegal fishing, conducted on a large scale by foreign vessels in the Argentine Sea, is one of the most substantial illicit activities. Despite the considerable reduction in available resources, the sanctions for these crimes are merely administrative in nature. Illegal wildlife also enters Argentina via Bolivia, Paraguay, and Chile, destined for the European Union or the Middle East. The most commonly trafficked non-native species are brown bears, birds, and felines such as jaguars. Among the native species recovered have been maned wolves, marsh deer, reptiles such as turtles and the Argentine boa, and yellow cardinals and other small birds.

Non-renewable resource crimes in Argentina are not common, and mostly occur in the informal economy, primarily in border areas. Corrupt officials are known to facilitate the theft of public assets, such as gasoline and copper cables. The smuggling of Argentinian gas tanks to Brazil and Paraguay, due to subsidized prices and a minor contraband gasoline market in Brazil, has also been reported. The state controls the mining industries of copper, gold, silver, and lithium, with the local or provincial administrative authorities intervening in cases of unauthorized mining, using their sanctioning powers. The well-regulated mining sector shows no indication of any widespread illegal mining networks in the country.

DRUGS

Heroin consumption and trafficking in Argentina remains a minor issue, and there is low demand for opioid addiction treatment in the country. However, Argentina is still a key destination and transit country for the regional cocaine trade, and its cocaine market has become a significant and growing concern over the last decade. Most of the cocaine smuggled into Argentina passes through its sparsely populated north-west region, with the Argentina–Bolivia border serving as a popular route. In fact, recent drug seizures have confirmed that Argentina has been gaining importance as a distribution hub for Bolivian cocaine. Reports further indicate that traffickers are increasingly using fluvial and maritime shipping as transport, and a route is emerging that connects Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, the Atlantic, Europe, and Africa. Drug-related organized crime groups in Argentina are small, although some maintain international links to organized crime groups in countries such as Brazil as well as Italian mafia groups. Drug trafficking activities contribute to a violent drugs market, specifically in Rosario, where geographic conditions amplify its strategic importance for criminal actors. In Rosario, homicides primarily occur owing to disputes between gangs over control of drug distribution points.

Argentina is a major transit and destination country for cannabis trade, with most of the supply coming from Paraguay. The legalization of cannabis for medical use has reduced prices in the illicit industry. The cannabis trade is the largest criminal market in Argentina, driven by local demand. In fact, Argentina has one of the highest per capita consumption rates of the drug in the world. Criminal organizations transport cannabis via trucks using alternative roads that converge in cities, a tactic that provides numerous escape routes. Authorities have seized thousands of cannabis plants in rural areas, revealing industrial-scale illegal cultivation. Corrupt police, security forces, judges, and politicians are reportedly involved in the cannabis trade, sometimes at the highest levels of trafficking networks.

Although the market is limited and overall consumption rates are low, national studies suggest that synthetic drug use is common among people between 25 and 34 years old, living in big cities. Most of the product is imported from Mexico and Europe, but ecstasy, amphetamine, and methamphetamine laboratories are reportedly present in the country. Locally produced and imported synthetic drugs are trafficked through the Parana Delta corridor towards Uruguay. Psychoactive substance intoxications are reported, as well as LSD seizures.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Argentina has emerged as a hub for cybercrime. The country has experienced a high number of distributed denial-of-service and ransomware attacks in recent years. Government and private institutions are the primary targets for these attacks, which are carried out by several hacker groups operating in the country. In addition, Argentina was recently targeted by a state-sponsored advanced persistent threat campaign aimed at government entities, diplomatic organizations, and the private sector. Argentina is also facing a surge in cyber-dependent financial crimes, with a growing number of entities being investigated for Ponzi schemes related to cryptocurrencies and NFTs.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Cyber-enabled financial crimes are common in the country with perpetrators taking advantage of online marketplaces and messaging platforms to steal credit card information. Scammers also pose as the employees of popular e-commerce platforms to obtain victims' personal information and banking details. Small businesses are being targeted as well, with purchased items being returned with missing parts for profit. Phishing is also one of the most common cyber-enabled financial crimes in Argentina. Tax evasion is another form of financial crime that poses a major concern in the country, exacerbated by Argentina's large informal economy.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Organized crime is a growing problem in Argentina, with family clans controlling specific areas in cities and engaging in a range of criminal activities such as drug trafficking, money laundering, extortion, black-market currency dealing, and the hiring of contract killers for the purpose of assassinating judges. Some of these clans operate from prisons and enjoy protection from politicians, judges, and deputies. Trade unions and soccer gangs are also involved in extortion, drug trafficking, and money laundering. Criminal networks in Argentina are known for supplying cocaine and marijuana to urban areas, and some have connections with the police and state actors. Car theft and car parts theft are also substantial sources of income for these groups. Some criminal groups operate in border regions, processing coca base into cocaine.

Foreign organized crime groups from Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil are connected to rising levels of violence in Argentina's illicit drug market and arms trafficking, but

their presence is limited due to the diversity of territories being controlled by different groups. Asian mafia-style groups are known to extort local businesses. Traditional mafia-style groups, including some members of the Italian mafia, are present in the country, more commonly in the northern regions. Private sector actors in Argentina are also involved in the illicit economy, in areas such as excise goods smuggling. In addition, private sector actors are known to engage in tax evasion and money laundering. Transportation companies are believed to engage in smuggling activities, and agricultural exporters may be involved in the trade of contraband goods. Corruption scandals are common in the regional and local sports industry, and high-profile cases have involved high-level officials in the Argentinian government and business entities such as money printers and construction companies. Corruption is a growing concern, as organized crime has infiltrated almost all levels of the state. While criminal state actors are not prevalent at the central state level, they do operate at the local level, with security forces, prison staff, and politicians facilitating crime, particularly trafficking activities.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Corruption and insecurity are the two most pressing issues facing Argentines, who have little confidence in state institutions due to a perceived lack of transparency and corruption. The presidency is seen as the most corrupt governmental body in the country, according to various polls. Although the federal government has made efforts to improve transparency, at the municipal level it remains a concern. The government has been accused of a lack of transparency in procurement related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as contracts bypassed bidding processes due to the emergency declaration. There are also indications that drug-trafficking money has been used to finance political campaigns, particularly at the local level.

Argentina is actively involved in international efforts to combat organized crime, collaborating with INTERPOL and other law enforcement agencies as well as regularly submitting reports on organized crime to international organizations. The country has been working to improve cooperation within the region and in Europe with regards to anti-organized crime strategies, and has signed extradition treaties with several countries. Argentina has a strong legal framework for combating organized crime, which incorporates various types of crimes. However, the country needs to update and strengthen its cybercrime laws and data protection regulations. Although legislation against new psychoactive substances is more advanced than in other countries in the region, its effectiveness has been questioned.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Argentina's judicial system does have specialized organized crime units, but it is considered to be corrupt and inefficient, especially at the level of lower and provincial courts. Allegations of politicization and political manipulation contribute to low trust in the judiciary among the population. In addition, there is a high rate of impunity, with few crimes being successfully prosecuted each year. The country's prison conditions are poor, being affected by issues such as overcrowding, poor hygiene, and deficient food. Criminal groups are believed to hold influence over prison officials and continue to conduct criminal activities from prison.

The Argentinian police force is generally considered to be more trustworthy than the government and judiciary, although public trust in the police remains relatively limited. There have been accusations of officers offering protection to drug traffickers and money launderers. The Argentine Federal Police is the second largest force in the country, after the Argentine National Gendarmerie, and maintains well-equipped special units.

The length of Argentina's land borders makes it difficult for the state to exert control, leading to porous borders that are vulnerable to drug trafficking and contraband trade. The Argentina-Bolivia and Argentina-Paraguay borders are the main routes for cocaine and marijuana trafficking, respectively. However, Argentina is also used as an alternative transit country for drugs bound for Spain, with the ports

of Buenos Aires and Rosario being the main transit points. Where cybercrime is concerned, the government has reported several hundred cybersecurity incidents against the public sector, including ransomware attacks.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Although Argentina has had anti-money laundering legislation in place for many years, its mechanisms for the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of the crime have been criticized for being deficient. The limited effectiveness of its legal regime makes Argentina a high-risk country for money laundering and terrorist financing. While individuals have been prosecuted, Argentina has been criticized for its lack of convictions, which number just a few in the past two decades. The country's judiciary lacks experience in this type of crime, and a lack of interinstitutional coordination may contribute to its ineffectiveness. The economic sectors at the highest risk for money laundering are trade and the informal currency exchange market.

Argentina's economic regulatory environment faces several challenges. The country's regulatory quality is low compared to the regional average, and business leaders have identified long-term stagnation, employment and livelihood crises, and state collapse as significant socio-economic problems. The informal employment rate is substantial, and inflation is extremely high. Although legitimate businesses mostly operate free from criminal activity, the country's constant economic crises hinder private sector development.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Argentina has a well-established system in place to provide psychological, social, medical, and legal assistance to trafficking victims. However, in recent years there has been a decline in prosecution and protection efforts due to

corruption hampering anti-trafficking measures. Moreover, the government has failed to improve witness protection measures and even disbanded the National Agency for the Protection of Witnesses and Defendants. The country does, however, maintain a successful interdisciplinary approach to drug addiction treatment, and during the pandemic the government created a plan to provide essential services and call-centre and videoconference assistance, with positive results.

The Argentinian government has implemented various strategies to prevent organized crime, human trafficking, and cybercrime. The Federal Plan includes measures such as strengthening border controls and making use of technology to improve border surveillance. The government has also drafted a plan to combat human trafficking, involving awareness campaigns, government-run working groups, and a trafficking telephonic hotline. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these prevention measures raises doubts.

Several NGOs are involved in the fight against organized crime in Argentina, and the national media operates relatively freely, although certain outlets critical of authorities have been targeted with defamation suits, putting them under financial strain. The national intelligence agency has been accused of collecting dossiers on journalists, but there have been no attacks on journalists in the past two decades.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.