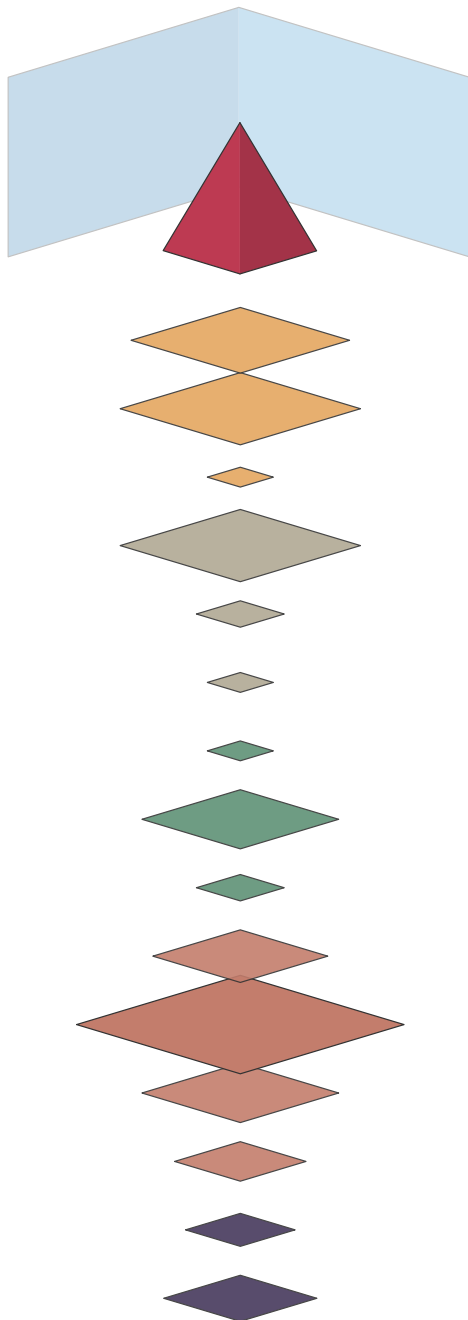




BAHAMAS



3.75

CRIMINALITY SCORE

161st of 193 countries

26th of 35 American countries

5th of 13 Caribbean countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

3.60

HUMAN TRAFFICKING **5.00**

HUMAN SMUGGLING **5.50**

EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING **1.50**

ARMS TRAFFICKING **5.50**

TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS **2.00**

ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS **1.50**

FLORA CRIMES **1.50**

FAUNA CRIMES **4.50**

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES **2.00**

HEROIN TRADE **4.00**

COCAINE TRADE **7.50**

CANNABIS TRADE **4.50**

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE **3.00**

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES **2.50**

FINANCIAL CRIMES **3.50**



CRIMINAL ACTORS

3.90

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS **4.00**

CRIMINAL NETWORKS **3.00**

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS **3.00**

FOREIGN ACTORS **6.00**

PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS **3.50**



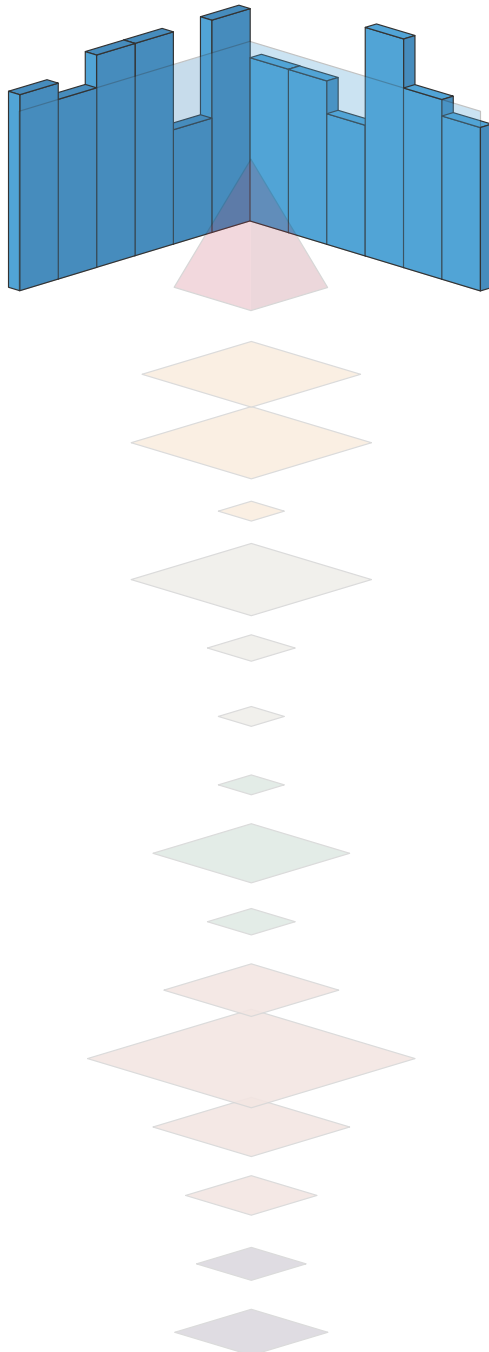
5.50

RESILIENCE SCORE





BAHAMAS



5.50

RESILIENCE SCORE

59th of 193 countries

10th of 35 American countries

3rd of 13 Caribbean countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	7.00
PREVENTION	5.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.00



3.75

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 3.60



CRIMINAL ACTORS 3.90



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Both locals and foreign nationals are exploited in The Bahamas, and citizens are also victimized abroad. Evidence suggests that migrant workers on the island, predominantly from Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, are lured to the country by advertisements promising employment, but often fall victim to human traffickers upon arrival. Most commonly, victims are exploited in domestic servitude, sex trafficking and other sectors that require low-skilled labour. Women, migrant children, irregular migrants and displaced people from the region appear to be most vulnerable to trafficking. In addition, depending on their parents' nationality, children born in The Bahamas may not be eligible for Bahamian citizenship or documentation, which increases their risk of becoming victims of trafficking.

Long-standing human smuggling routes transiting through The Bahamas are used by both regional migrants and those coming from other parts of the world, and the country is on the route taken by migrants trying to reach the US via Florida. Many migrants go to the far north-west corner of Grand Bahama Island and pay smugglers to take them by boat to Palm Beach County in Florida, a journey of about 95 kilometres. The well-established northward passage and other maritime routes in the southern Bahamas are commonly used for human smuggling. These entry points extend for more than 300 nautical miles, from the Turks and Caicos Islands to Cay Lobos. The sheer size of the corridor allows for relatively easy evasion of authorities that operate in the south. The island chain of Bimini is also well known as a site of human smuggling. As a result, The Bahamas has become an obvious transit country. Bahamian transporters have been accused of smuggling nationals from China, Haiti and some African nations into the US. Both foreign and domestic actors are involved, often working with Jamaicans and other island nationals to improve their chances of evading the authorities.

Despite an increase in extortion cases in the country, there is little evidence that organized crime groups are involved in extortion and protection racketeering there.

TRADE

The level of firearm and ammunition trafficking is moderate, but has increased in recent years, making an impact on other forms of criminality and violence. The number of murders, most of them involving firearms, has increased. The country is predominantly a destination market, with the US playing a central role. Gun runners often buy weapons

from legal US arms manufacturers or retailers, then send them to Nassau. Available information suggests that criminal networks engage in both arms and drug trafficking.

It is probable that the country exports or functions as a port of transit for counterfeit goods, although there is little evidence of this. Similarly, while there is scarce information available about the illegal trade in excise goods in The Bahamas, it is believed to occur on a very small scale, mainly involving tobacco products.

ENVIRONMENT

There is no indication of a flora crimes market in the country. However, in 2022, there have been several instances of pine forest destruction on the island of New Providence, but, at present, there is no proof of the involvement of criminal groups in these acts. Conversely, The Bahamas appears to be a source of illegal wildlife trafficked abroad. The most significant environmental threat, however, is illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, perpetrated mostly by commercial fishing fleets from the Dominican Republic. Commercial fishing of sharks in Bahamian waters has also recently been raised as an issue in local politics. Many other species, particularly exotic birds and iguanas, are endangered because of the illegal pet trade in the country.

There is little evidence to suggest that there is a non-renewable resource crimes market, but the island nation is on an illegal gold smuggling route that originates in Venezuela, which suggests vulnerability.

DRUGS

Seizures of heroin are rare in The Bahamas and local consumption is low. Nevertheless, the local heroin market is larger than that in other eastern Caribbean states. It is unclear whether heroin moves through the country towards larger consumer markets. On the contrary, there is a long history of cocaine moving through The Bahamas and this has continued as the eastern Caribbean route has re-emerged in recent years. The drug passes through the archipelago on its way to North America and Europe through the 'Medusa' route – from the Gulf of Mexico via The Bahamas to North America and Spain in containerized shipments. Traffickers also smuggle cocaine, primarily from Hispaniola, through The Bahamas into the US, using pleasure craft, including fishing and sailing vessels, blending in with legitimate traffic moving through these areas. Although it is attractive to cartels from Colombia and Venezuela that control the cocaine market, The Bahamas is not a significant cocaine-producing country and does not have a large consumer market. Some drugs destined for North America remain there as payment to collaborators for facilitating

the illicit drug trade. To an extent this has contributed to an increase in local use and a subsequent surge in cocaine and crack cocaine abuse. The demand remains low, with tourists apparently the primary consumers.

Cannabis, which is grown in the wild to satisfy the mainly domestic demand, is the most consumed illicit drug in the country, with individuals as well as loose networks running the market and selling it to local at-risk communities. The Bahamas also seems to be a transit country, with large 'go-fast' and sports fishing vessels transporting marijuana from Jamaica through the country into Florida. The synthetic drug trade is limited and relatively small. However, there is a local demand, generated mostly by tourists, and it is on the rise. Currently synthetic drugs are trafficked mainly by mail, making the market manageable, although traffickers may shift their modus operandi to reduce seizures of the goods.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crimes have been on the rise in The Bahamas in recent years, with individuals as well as critical infrastructure and government institutions increasingly targeted through hacking and ransomware attacks. There have also been reports about illicit activities involving cryptocurrencies. Despite the increasing number of incidents of cyber-dependent crimes, there is little evidence of the involvement of organized crime groups in this criminal market.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crime is prevalent in The Bahamas, with credit card fraud and other online scams increasing since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As it is considered a tax haven, the country is also vulnerable to tax evasion and other forms of financial crimes, such as Ponzi schemes, carried out by organized crime groups.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Bahamas is a stable country, with authorities respecting political rights and civil liberties. Nevertheless, criminality has been present on the government's agenda. Despite reforms of the criminal justice system and improved social justice and efforts to reintegrate offenders into society, the nation still faces relatively high levels of criminal activity. In 2022 the new government called on the public to fight gang crime, but these efforts have shown few results.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The influence of foreign criminal actors in The Bahamas, mainly cocaine traffickers, has been a significant recurrent theme for the past 40 years. Colombian crime syndicates that operate within the island's territories include Los Urabeños, Oficina de Envigado, Los Pachencia and the Clan del Oriente. Mexican mafia groups and the Italian 'Ndrangheta are thought to be the main organizations that use The Bahamas as a trans-shipment point for cocaine. There is moderate interaction between local and foreign criminal actors. Notably, foreign actors use fishing vessels as a central element in the trafficking of drugs between South America, The Bahamas and North America. Evidently foreign actors control the heroin trade and human trafficking as well as the cocaine business in the country.

Local gangs and mafia-style groups, which are an integral part of the criminal landscape, predominantly attract young people, as youth unemployment is high in the country. The influence of these groups is limited, largely involving the distribution of drugs to tourists and locals. Nevertheless, ties between gangs and foreign actors are well established. There has been an escalation in violence and even homicide, with local rivalries over turf emerging. Similarly, although criminal networks are present, their impact on the local population is limited.

In recent years there has been an increase in the prosecution of state-embedded actors, including police officers, prison officers and other government officials accused of corruption and abusing power. There is little evidence, however, that figures within the government exert control over the criminal markets. It is more likely that corrupt officials (mainly in law enforcement and immigration) are facilitating certain criminal activities or are involved in them. Private sector actors are known to be primarily engaged in financial crimes and money laundering activities. Those involved in such schemes include casinos and financial institutions.

Although levels of corruption are perceived as moderate compared to those in the rest of the region and there are mechanisms in place to reduce state corruption, the foundations of these measures are not robust and the oversight mechanisms are stagnating. The previous government failed to deliver on its anti-corruption campaign manifesto and the culture and circumstances that lead to corruption have remained unaddressed. The current administration promised to pass a comprehensive package of anti-corruption legislation in its first 100 days in office,

but that period has passed with little visible progress being made.

The Bahamas is party to all relevant international treaties and conventions pertaining to organized crime. There is significant engagement with, and information received from, bi-lateral and multilateral actors, which has heightened the country's response capacity. INTERPOL's National Central Bureaus in the Caribbean are the country's leading platform for sharing global data associated with regional crime. Generally, law enforcement agencies collaborate well with their counterparts, notably with regard to human trafficking and money laundering. The Bahamian legislative framework is well prepared to respond to contemporary trafficking threats and the country continues to enact relevant legislation in this area.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Apart from the Special Prosecutorial Unit on Trafficking in Persons no judicial units have the specific task of tackling organized crime. Nevertheless, the Bahamian justice system uses support from the US to develop better mechanisms that allow the authorities to investigate and prosecute criminal groups effectively. Efforts have been made to increase the capacity of the Department of Correctional Services to provide a safe and secure environment for inmates as well as rehabilitation services for former inmates. The long-term effects of these programmes are yet to be seen and The Bahamas remains among the countries with the highest incarceration rates in the world. Overcrowding is a major issue, prison conditions arguably violate human rights and recidivism rates are high.

The Royal Bahamas Police has a vast number of divisions and special branches throughout the archipelago, including a drug enforcement unit and a trafficking in persons unit. A Firearms and Gang Unit has been implemented in Grand Bahama in response to a spate of murders in 2022. Locally, however, law enforcement authorities are generally distrusted. Allegations against the police force of corruption and abuse of authority are under investigation, but the overall weaknesses of the system are not as glaring or problematic as those found in other regional forces.

The complex geography of The Bahamas – an archipelago of 700 islands and islets – impedes comprehensive monitoring and creates a significant challenge for the fight against drug trafficking and irregular migration. Border control is extremely difficult and staffing levels are inadequate. The country's vulnerability to criminal flows is largely due to its proximity to the US, where cocaine is in high demand. In March 2021 the government implemented the Computer Incident Response Team to protect the country's infrastructure and data, bolster the government's efforts to develop national cybersecurity expertise, close human resource gaps and support the elaboration of a cybersecurity framework and policies.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Banks and offshore companies in The Bahamas have long been linked to numerous cases of large-scale crime and corruption. The country's secrecy laws allow information about offshore accounts to be divulged only by order of the Supreme Court of The Bahamas, which means the country is still an attractive tax haven. However, the Bahamian authorities have made substantial efforts to ameliorate known anti-money laundering vulnerabilities, including measures to enhance international cooperation, initiating a supervision mechanism for non-banking financial institutions and strengthening its legislation on beneficial ownership. In December 2022, The Bahamas became the second jurisdiction in the region to achieve substantial compliance with the Financial Action Task Force's 40 Recommendations, which removed it from its list of countries requiring enhanced monitoring for money laundering risks. In January 2022, the European Commission approved the removal of The Bahamas from the list of countries the EU considers high risk because of strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime. However, the country's performance in combating financial crime remains a matter of concern, especially in relation to enforcing its anti-money laundering mechanisms, despite an operational financial intelligence unit tasked with obtaining and analyzing information about suspicious transactions.

The Bahamian economy relies heavily on offshore banking and tourism, with money often laundered through the acquisition of real estate, the purchase of precious metals or stones and through financial service companies. It does not appear that criminal groups are heavily involved in the private sector.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The authorities make serious and sustained efforts to protect victims and comply fully with minimum requirements for the elimination of modern slavery and the government recently increased its efforts in this area, creating witness protection programmes. In partnership with civil society, the government also implemented multifaceted substance-abuse interventions for at-risk adults and youth, providing treatment in a therapeutic environment.

In addition, a national action plan is in place to prevent trafficking, as is a formal victim-centred protocol to help frontline workers identify victims of human trafficking. Moreover, the government implemented a Citizens Security and Justice Program, which is a lending mechanism established through the Ministry of National Security to contribute to the goal of reducing crime. The programme aims to address the prevalence of violent crime in communities, reduce youth unemployment, strengthen justice services and decrease recidivism. Other supports include caring for victims by funding rent or housing, food, travel expenses, stipends, school supplies and uniforms.

There are NGOs operating in the country, some of them involved in the prevention of human trafficking and victim support. Although freedom of the press is generally respected, defamation remains a crime and the government reportedly favours certain media outlets. A Freedom of Information Act has been passed, but its implementation remains deficient.

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