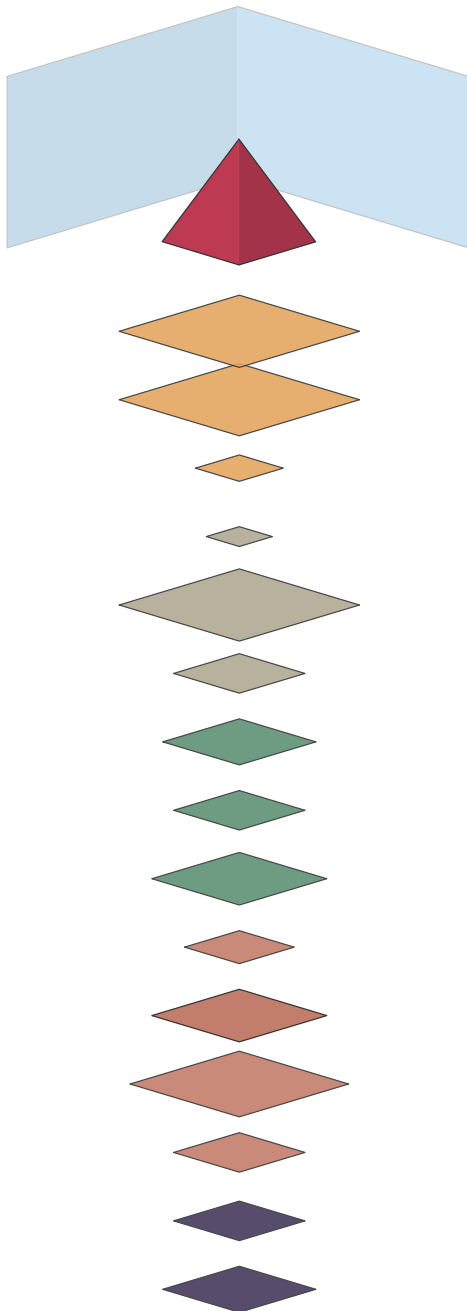


 **CUBA**



 **3.37**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

170th of 193 countries
29th of 35 American countries
8th of 13 Caribbean countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **3.63**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	1.50
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.50
FAUNA CRIMES	3.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.00
HEROIN TRADE	2.50
COCAINE TRADE	4.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	3.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	3.50

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **3.10**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	2.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	3.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	2.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.50

 **5.38**
RESILIENCE SCORE



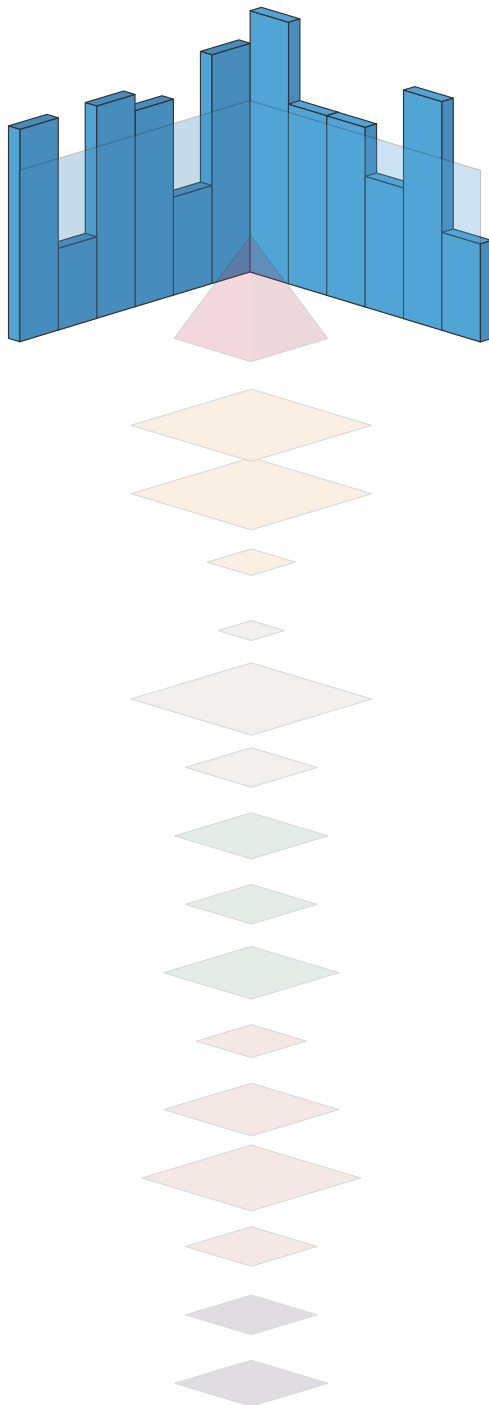
Funding provided by the United States Government.



Funded by the European Union

ENACT is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Institute for Security Studies and INTERPOL, in affiliation with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

CUBA



5.38
RESILIENCE SCORE

67th of 193 countries
12th of 35 American countries
5th of 13 Caribbean countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	2.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	7.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.00

3.37
CRIMINALITY SCORE

CRIMINAL MARKETS	3.63
CRIMINAL ACTORS	3.10



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking remains relevant in Cuba, especially in the form of sex trafficking and labour exploitation, such as in the construction industry. Sex tourism and sexual exploitation occur within the country, but the extent of the market is difficult to measure, as prostitution is legal in Cuba and sex workers are not always recruited by organized crime networks. Even though most of these criminal activities are carried out by individuals rather than articulated structures, there is also involvement of organized crime groups, both domestic and foreign, as well as state-embedded actors in this criminal market. These actors typically control male prostitution for sex tourism and exploit foreign nationals from African and Asian countries in the Cuban sex trafficking and forced labour markets to pay off travel debts. Moreover, there are allegations that Cuban authorities force or coerce professionals to participate and remain in labour export programmes.

Human smuggling occurs in Cuba and is closely linked to human trafficking. Cuba is a source country for people trying to reach the US via sea or by flying to a Latin American country and then attempting to reach the US overland to the north. In the latter case, the land journey is reportedly facilitated by transnational smuggling rings, while, in contrast, local organized crime groups are generally responsible for smuggling activities carried out by sea. In 2021, a route for human smuggling between Cuba and Uruguay was reported to be increasingly used, as it appeared to be safer compared to the dangerous routes in other checkpoints in Latin America.

Low-level extortion and protection rackets exist, especially in prostitution and black-market activities known as *jineterismo*, which can serve as a gateway to more sophisticated criminal enterprises.

TRADE

Although the illicit arms market in Cuba is negligible, evidence suggests an internal market and demand among street gangs, which is limited as most criminal activities inside the island are carried out with melee weapons, rather than firearms.

Due to rationing and shortages in local pharmacies, there has been a rise in the trade of counterfeit pharmaceutical products in Cuba. Some of these products arrive from Haiti and have had significant side effects for the population that consumed them. State health officials concluded that these medicines did not correspond to the name printed

on the box and have warned against taking medicines from abroad that have not been certified. In addition, there is a significant counterfeit market in the country that includes products ranging from perfumes and face creams, to textile goods, shoes and food items. The illicit trade in excise goods also occurs in the country, with the illicit production and trade of rums and cigars, albeit to a limited extent.

ENVIRONMENT

The illegal flora market in Cuba is relatively small. Due to the lack of legal frameworks and state resources, actors engage in this market, particularly in illegal logging, as the state is not dealing with the demand for wood efficiently. However, there is no evidence of illegal wood leaving the country for foreign markets as most of it is sold to state-licensed carpenters.

Poaching, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, as well as trafficking of wildlife, are the primary fauna crimes in Cuba. Local demand drives these crimes as eating bushmeat and keeping wild animals as pets are deeply rooted in the culture. The most commonly trafficked fauna are Cuban grassquits, endemic birds, Cuban snails, crocodiles, and hawksbill sea turtles. While the market is mainly driven by independent actors, an organized trafficking network is allegedly responsible for part of the illegal trafficking of Cuban painted snails. The demand for Cuban fauna is primarily driven by the US and possibly Spain, with most smuggled wildlife being trafficked to Miami due to its proximity.

Nonrenewable resource crime in Cuba is relatively minor but still present, with gasoline theft being the most prevalent, which is largely carried out by front-line employees from the supply chain, either during transport or by shorting customers at gas stations. Although the size of this illicit market could be considered small in comparison to others, gasoline theft is still an attractive source of income for low-paid workers who may sell it for extra cash or collaborate with robbers in exchange for a bribe. Another common form of nonrenewable resource crime is artisanal mining, particularly gold extraction. There is also evidence of water diversion and mercury trade.

DRUGS

Even though Cuba's location places it along transit routes for heroin produced in Latin America, its role in heroin trafficking is limited in the region. The local demand for heroin is also low in the country, which is created by tourists. The cocaine market in the country is also not particularly significant, with only a small quantity of the drug ending up in the local market, as Cuba is known for its strict drug

control and the government does not allow the island to be used as a storage location. Albeit to a limited extent, consumption mainly takes place among youth with high economic income in residential areas. Further, the tourist market also contributes to some of the local cocaine trade. In addition to organized crime groups involved in this market, reports suggest the involvement of corrupt police officers. Drugs are mainly introduced into Cuba through packages thrown at sea or seized by customs.

Cannabis is the most trafficked and consumed drug in Cuba, with, again, most of the demand coming from tourists. Locally produced cannabis is cheaper, but most of the supply comes from abroad due to strict governmental control. While Cuba is a transit country in the Caribbean, it is not as important to the global cannabis trade as Jamaica or the Dominican Republic. The authorities are effective at breaking up drug trafficking organizations, and high penalties for illicit drug sales or use disincentivize many on the island. The synthetic drug trade appears to have minimal influence on Cuban society due to limited disposable income and a smaller market compared to other drugs, such as cannabis and cocaine. There is, however, some evidence of consumption of stolen medicines, which, in many cases, are psychotropic drugs such as methylphenidate, a controlled substance, that can be considered a synthetic drug. Thefts of these medicines from state companies have been reported, leading to black market sales.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

There are instances of cyber-dependent criminal activities in Cuba, with an increase in the distribution of messages that aim to spread Trojan viruses in the country. In recent years, the Cuban government has reported that the Cuban University and the Ministry of Finance and Prices have been hacked.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Cuba's exclusion from the global financial system makes it unattractive for criminals carrying out financial crimes. However, in recent times, authorities have cautioned against engaging in financial operations offered by foreign private companies with 'little or no transparency' who have been involved in pyramid scams. Tax evasion is also prevalent in Cuba, especially among the small number of private sector workers, which has led to a high number of sentences in recent years. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest a link between tax evasion and criminal organizations.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

The growing private sector in Cuba is increasingly engaged in criminal activities, especially in tax evasion and trade in the black market. Many private sector actors under-report their taxes due to the high rates of taxes imposed

on the private market. Moreover, these entities also trade in the black market, where goods stolen from state supply chains are available, due to the limited wholesale market in the country, further aggravating product shortages. Also state-embedded actors in Cuba engage in a variety of illicit activities, including participating in the black market through the use of state-run enterprises for corrupt and personal profit. The prevalence of black market activities among corrupt state-embedded actors is exacerbated by inadequate salaries in the state sector. These actors use their businesses to gather intelligence and profit personally through corruption. Officials in the tourism sector are also involved in these activities.

The Cuban government does not publish crime statistics, making it challenging to know the exact number of mafia-style groups that are currently active in the country. While most groups tend to disintegrate quickly, some continue to carry out profitable criminal activities, such as human trafficking. Gangs in Cuba appear to have a limited but active presence in Havana and are primarily involved in the country's prostitution industry. They can also engage in drug trafficking, robberies, and homicides. In relation to smaller criminal networks, poverty continues to be the primary reason for young people to join crime in Cuba, with factors such as marginalization and unemployment exacerbating the phenomenon of criminal pandilla groups in recent years. Small gangs or loose criminal networks arise each year, mainly made up of adolescents living in poor areas of the capital. Most of these groups do not live long, but some of them may become more sophisticated. These youth gangs focus on common crimes like robbery and prostitution and do not have easy access to firearms or drug trafficking. Local and regional criminal networks involved in the black market are also widespread and resilient in the country. These networks are known to channel products, including agricultural produce as well as fuel, many stolen from state enterprises, into the informal sector.

Cuba is not an attractive market for foreign criminal groups due to its poor economy and the strict control of the state. However, there is some indication of Mexican organized crime involvement in a nascent internal drug market. Mexican organized crime networks see Cuba as an operation centre due to its proximity to the US as well as other Caribbean islands, which these groups often use as bridges to reach Europe or South America. However, law enforcement on drugs continues to be strong on the island.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Cuba is a single-party system with no democratic institutions or free and fair elections. In 2021, massive protests broke out on account of the lack of economic and health security, as well as the absence of freedom and fundamental rights. Crime is severely punished in Cuba, with harsh penalties applied to acts of violence. However, the public's zero-tolerance stance towards crime seems to depend on its nature, with black market activity being tolerated. Despite this, Cuba has increased efforts to address human trafficking and human smuggling, as well as drug trafficking, and works with the US to tackle the latter. Cuba's government lacks transparency and accountability, with the regime controlling the flow of information and suppressing criticism. Cuban institutions do not publish their budget or public procurement information, and laws do not require officials to disclose their assets. Corruption is a serious issue, with officials engaged in corrupt practices rarely punished, and petty corruption widespread throughout the public administration. Despite an anti-corruption mechanism being implemented, corruption risks remain due to the lack of civil rights, judicial transparency, and freedom of speech and media. These issues are compounded by the controlled and limited access to the internet, which prevents electronic processes or payments to prevent corruption. It is impossible to determine the extent of corruption, but it remains high, especially among the political and military elites.

Cuba has ratified most international conventions on organized crime, except for the Arms Trade Treaty. Cuba has also signed extradition treaties with 11 countries. While the country has improved its international cooperation against organized crime, its government has been criticized for obstructing independent NGOs from evaluating the human rights situation in the country. Cuba has implemented various laws to address criminal markets, including a criminal code, firearms regulation, environmental protection law, and wildlife trafficking law. The government has also passed plans to prevent and fight crimes against forests, and resources, as well as a cybersecurity regulation that criminalizes social subversion, cyberbullying, and cyberterrorism. However, the legal framework continues to lack due process guarantees.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Communist Party controls Cuba's judicial system, which often prosecutes political opposition. Despite the lack of judicial independence when dealing with the regime's political opponents, courts may rule fairly, holding mid-level administrators and state enterprises accountable for legal violations. Organized crime is also likely to be punished in

an efficient manner. However, Cuban prisons face poor conditions, overcrowding, physical abuse, forced labour, and a lack of medical care. Moreover, independent human rights groups are denied access to the country's prisons.

Cuba's police and military have control over transnational organized crime and have been active in fighting drug trafficking, often in collaboration with the US and other countries in the region. The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, a type of neighborhood association for surveillance with real power, have long been a key instrument to tackle groups of criminals before they become gangs. Additionally, severe punishments for what could be considered minor crimes, such as theft or petty drug sales, have served as a warning to those considering similar actions. Some critics have argued that the efficiency of the law enforcement sector has come at the expense of basic rights and have denounced the use of force by officers, regarded at times as too excessive. For instance, the July 2021 protests resulted in the arbitrary detention of more than a thousand individuals, who faced violence from law enforcement officers, including violent arrests, use of live ammunition, and physical abuse during detention.

Due to its geography, Cuba is difficult to access and leave. In most cases, entrance to the country is strictly controlled by the state, as is the exit of nationals. However, due to the precarious economic situation and the politically restricted environment of the country, people have found other means to escape, such as buying illegal passports and other fraudulent documents to facilitate travel to Latin American countries or constructing handmade boats to navigate them to the US. As a result, human smuggling and trafficking markets have profited from these circumstances over the years. Additionally, access to the internet is highly regulated in the country. The island has only one state-owned internet provider, which limits Cubans' access to the internet. Since 2021, the country has strengthened its cybersecurity and customer protection efforts.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Cuba's centrally controlled economy does not attract money laundering through financial institutions, but the country's significant black market operates in parallel with the state-dominated one. Although the risk of money laundering is low in the country, there are strategic deficiencies in the legal framework, including the lack of reporting by financial institutions to the Financial Intelligence Unit, weak supervision, and enforcement of designated non-financial businesses and NPOs. Moreover, the opaque national banking system hampers efforts to monitor the effectiveness and progress of Cuba's anti-money laundering efforts. In recent years, Cuba has made some efforts to address these

technical and strategic deficiencies but effective results are yet to be seen.

Even though the Cuban state owns and operates all significant enterprises and manages a centrally planned economy, there has been dramatic growth in the private sector in recent years. Nevertheless, the regulatory environment does not adequately offer private businesses legitimate opportunities to expand, leading to a significant black market operating parallel to the heavily subsidized and rationed formal market dominated by the state. While Cuba does welcome private direct investment in selected sectors, most of this investment must be in partnership with Cuban state enterprises, which foreign firms object to. Living conditions in Cuba have worsened, with the population facing shortages of food, medicines, and basic goods. This contributed to the protests in July 2021. Additionally, Cuba's dual monetary system creates possibilities for black market arbitrage, and every product available through the rationing system can be resold into the black market at a higher price. Intensified US sanctions have been squeezing the already tight Cuban economy and strangling the nascent private sector. The pandemic has also had a damaging impact on the Cuban economy, given that the tourism industry constitutes its main source of foreign revenue, and remittances decreased. This has led to more flexible restrictions on the private sector.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Although child protection and guidance centers for victims of all crimes have been established, no restitution orders have been reported in recent years, and comprehensive services such as housing and physical protection are not available to all crime victims. In terms of human trafficking and gender-based violence, Cuba has a low number of assisted victims and needs to implement measures to

identify and support them while respecting their human rights. Government-provided services for trafficking victims were only available to those not considered subversive.

The Cuban government's strategy for preventing organized crime and social issues involves providing universal access to education, culture, and sports. The public education system aims to raise awareness of anti-social behaviour from an early age. Minor crimes are punished severely, serving as a warning to the population to avoid involvement in illicit activities. Committees for the Defense of the Revolution are also essential instruments in tackling groups of criminals before they become gangs. However, reports of increased gang activity should be noted.

Although civil society is emerging in Cuba, most organizations are subordinated to the state, and independent organizations, and particularly those documenting human rights violations, are severely persecuted. Although the Cuban constitution guarantees freedom of expression, including for the press, laws banning criticism of government leaders and anti-government propaganda are strictly enforced. The government also directly owns all widely available sources of information. State security frequently harasses independent journalists, activists, and artists critical of the government, and the government targets social coalitions and movements. Consequently, Cuba is not considered a free country. Despite the restrictions, attempts are being made to strengthen civil society actors in combating organized crime and corruption.

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