

**4.15**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

**146<sup>th</sup>** of 193 countries  
**3<sup>rd</sup>** of 14 Oceanian countries  
**3<sup>rd</sup>** of 4 Melanesian countries

**CRIMINAL MARKETS** **4.30**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.50
FLORA CRIMES	3.50
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.50
HEROIN TRADE	2.50
COCAINE TRADE	5.00
CANNABIS TRADE	6.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	4.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.50

**CRIMINAL ACTORS** **4.00**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	3.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.50

**5.42**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**

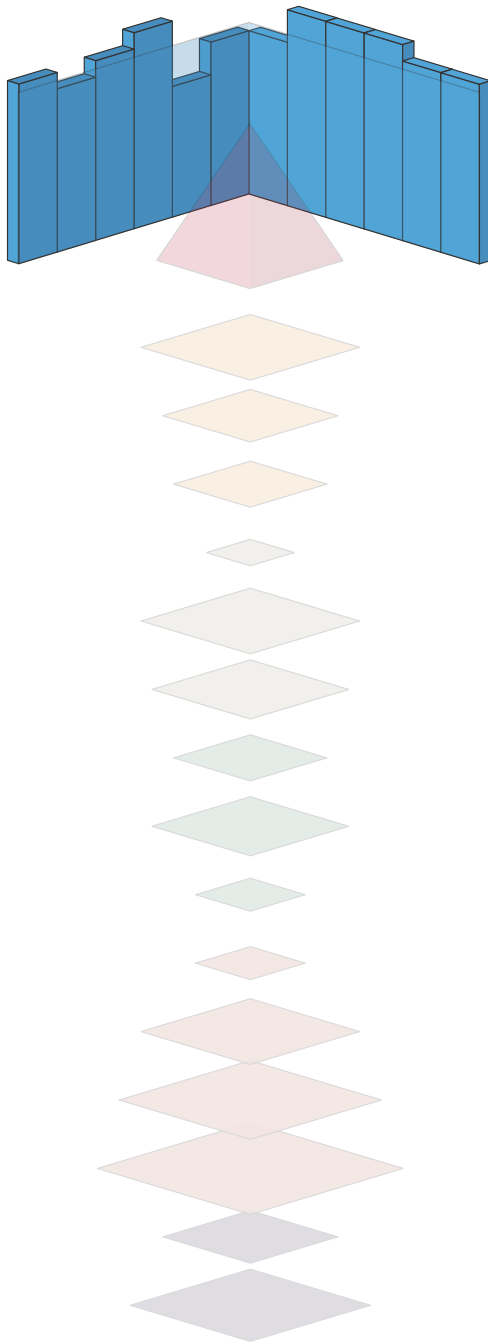


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**5.42**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**

62<sup>nd</sup> of 193 countries  
7<sup>th</sup> of 14 Oceanian countries  
1<sup>st</sup> of 4 Melanesian countries

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

**4.15**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.30
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.00

# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

Fiji continues to be a source, transit and destination country for both adult and child victims of sex trafficking. Children are the most vulnerable and are exploited in individual and organized operations, including agriculture, retail, brothels, clubs, massage parlours and hotels. The Fijian patriarchal family structure, cultural ideals of male dominance and poverty also contribute to children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Adult Fijians are also becoming victims of forced labour, particularly in the agricultural and construction sectors of richer countries, such as Australia and New Zealand. Trafficking of workers from India and Bangladesh into the agricultural sector and Indonesians into the fishing industry also occurs. Facilitators involved in this market include both domestic and foreign actors, including family members of victims, businesspeople, foreign tourists and crew members of foreign fishing vessels. Moreover, foreign actors, primarily Chinese groups, are known to operate brothels and engage in human trafficking. Although there has been some improvement in anti-trafficking efforts, low-level official complicity impedes the investigation of trafficking.

Fiji appears to be a transit point for human smuggling, with profits accrued by foreign actors who organize smuggling channels in the countries from which people are smuggled. Fiji's porous borders and lax visa requirements contribute to its status as a key transit point for workers from East and South East Asian countries attempting to reach the US. Fiji has the largest international airport in the region with regular flights to the US, Australia and some airports in Asia, which makes it an easier transit hub than other Pacific islands. Moreover, Fiji has a higher risk profile for human smuggling than any other country in Oceania given its corruption and porous borders.

Extortion and protection racketeering are prevalent in Fiji, with criminals using online blackmail scams to quickly gain financial rewards. The LGBTQ+ population has been targeted with scams using screenshots of messages and videos to blackmail victims for money.

### TRADE

Arms trafficking occurs in Pacific Island countries and territories, but is typically on a small scale. While Fiji is a strategic location and a hub for illicit markets, such as drug trafficking, there is no recent information for shipments of illicit weapons transiting the country, and arms trafficking overall does not seem to be a major

issue. Private gun ownership in Fiji is uncommon: civilian gun owners must be licensed and weapons individually registered. The manufacture of small arms, ammunition and their components is permitted only if the maker holds a valid license but this is not enforced in practice. Private firearms are restricted to hunting, sport shooting and firearms collecting. Seizures of arms have occurred on vessels in Fijian waters, but they are generally intended for personal protection at sea, rather than stockpiled for further distribution. While not all weapons used in the 2000 coup were recovered, there does not seem to be a demand for illicit weapons in Fiji.

Counterfeit goods are a concern in Fiji, with reports of fake products tarnishing the reputation of genuine brands. However, there is a lack of significant data on the level of counterfeit goods in circulation, their source and their markets. Similarly, while there is no specific data on the amount of illegal excise goods, smuggling is an ongoing problem, suggesting significant demand. Smuggling of alcohol and cigarettes on foreign fishing vessels is a recurring issue, and the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service has been profiling vessels and aircraft for restricted and prohibited goods to deter smuggling.

### ENVIRONMENT

Fiji is facing challenges related to illegal logging, wildlife crime and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Although illegal logging in Fiji appears to be mainly for local use and not for commercial export, the government has recently deployed legislation and equipment, such as drones, to monitor forestry resources. Meanwhile, Fiji is a source, transit and destination country for wildlife trafficking, with corrupt officials enabling the flow of illegal wildlife trade across borders. The trade in flora and fauna ranges from live species, such as parrots and plants, to products derived from them, for example, wooden musical instruments made from mahogany and ornaments such as turtle shell jewellery. Additionally, Fiji's heavy reliance on fisheries resources for both food and income has led to inshore and coastal IUU fishing. The fact that less than 1% of Fiji's Exclusive Economic Zone is declared a marine protected area furthers these activities.

The mining of non-renewable resources, such as gold, sand, bauxite, copper, silver and cement is a significant part of Fiji's economy. Sand and gravel extraction, dominated by small-scale and artisanal operations, is a major concern due to its global demand and shortage, leading to illegal operations. COVID-19 exacerbated this issue, leading the Fijian government to introduce a licensing system. However, controlling the problem remains a challenge.

## DRUGS

Fiji continues to be a transit country for heroin trafficking, even though the scale of the country's involvement is unknown. Despite its role in heroin trafficking in the region, there is no domestic heroin market in Fiji, suggesting that illicit flows primarily involve foreign criminal actors. Similarly, Fiji remains a transit area for cocaine trafficking, with growing evidence of a domestic market for cocaine. Trade to other parts of the region is largely organized by foreign actors, but Fijian criminal gangs have started to dominate the domestic market. The trans-Pacific cocaine trafficking route has been in use since 2014, with an increase in shipments and quantities of controlled substances being trafficked, partly due to the rise of cocaine production in South America and the higher prices paid for the drug in Australia and New Zealand.

Shipping routes vary, including cargo ships, cruise ships and airfreight, with larger nations like Fiji being among the most exploited transit countries. There are also growing concerns about the use of yachts and pleasure craft to smuggle drugs between Fiji and other parts of the Pacific. Despite inter-agency cooperation, it is challenging to police Fiji's maritime zone, as resources are scarce. Fiji's Substance Abuse Advisory Council reports that methamphetamine is more widespread than cocaine, but that the cocaine market is likely in the same value range due to the drug's higher price. The cocaine trade's overall trend is unclear, but trans-shipments to syndicates in Australia and New Zealand are definitely occurring. COVID-19 has made trans-shipments more difficult, but reduced monitoring has also contributed to increased shipments.

Regarding cannabis, Fiji is a source country with local production supplying local trade and demand. The drug is primarily sold on the streets in urban areas by local criminal networks, while production happens in rural areas. Creative ways to transport the drug between islands have been developed, but police work to identify illegal cannabis farms and eradicating plants continues to be the primary method of countering cannabis trafficking. While some argue for legislation to allow the legal trade of cannabis for medical use, the government maintains it has no immediate plans to legalize the production of marijuana for medical purposes.

Fiji is also a major Pacific trafficking hub for synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine, which has led to an increase in addiction, corruption and gang violence. Methamphetamine is increasingly being manufactured locally, with laboratories found in both the greater Suva area and Lautoka. Synthetic drugs are also trans-shipped through Fiji to New Zealand. Recent cases have shown that a key transit route for methamphetamine starts in the US, with the drug then moving on to Fiji.

## CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

As the largest, and one of the most influential countries within the South Pacific, Fiji acts as a financial and administrative hub for many countries in the region. More sophisticated financial services will likely result in Fiji becoming a more attractive target for cybercrimes than many of its neighbours.

In 2021, cyber abuse spiked shortly after the beginning of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports of cybercrimes in general more than doubled in comparison to the previous year. In the same year, the government of Fiji was also the recipient of a serious malware attack, which resulted in its systems being crippled for months.

## FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes pose a significant threat in Fiji, with tax evasion, tax fraud and fraudulent credit card transactions being some of the most prominent financial crimes observed in the country. Fiji's strategic location and cash-based economy make it a potential staging point for criminal activity in Australia and New Zealand.

Fiji's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has reported an increase in cyber-enabled crime activities facilitated by locals through their 'money-mule accounts'. Some fraud schemes observed in the country involve perpetrators gaining the trust of victims to get them to share their debit card information. There is also an increase in other forms of fraudulent schemes, including romance frauds and investment frauds. Tracing the identity of cybercriminals is challenging since they use multiple identities when communicating with their victims. Fiji remains blacklisted by the EU as a tax haven and is recognized to be 'non-cooperative'. Although corruption is pervasive, it is not considered to be a predicate offence for laundering.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

While there is little evidence of domestic mafia-style groups in Fiji, loosely organized criminal networks exist, primarily engaged in drug production and trafficking, money laundering and human trafficking. The country is a valuable trans-shipment point, and the largest Pacific-based outlaw motorcycle gang (OMCG) is the Fiji Rebels. Established by expatriates, this group has chapters in Suva and Nadi, consisting of both Australian and Fijian nationals. It is likely that the Fiji chapter is used as a conduit for drug shipments from South America to Australia and other countries in the region. Criminal activity is arguably widespread across the islands, occurring both in remote and densely populated areas.

Fiji is also home to various foreign criminal actors involved in illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution, cybercrime, narcotics distribution and human trafficking. Organized crime groups of Chinese origin are known to be the primary

foreign actors involved in these activities; they are often involved in drug trafficking and operate brothels where exploitation occurs. While Asian criminal syndicates and triads have been dominant, Latin American cartels are now challenging their presence. Australian OMCGs are also attempting to establish a presence in Fiji and may play a role in drug markets. Some low-level officials are involved

in facilitating human trafficking, primarily by preventing investigations. The increased trafficking of cocaine and methamphetamine through Fiji is also a contributing factor to police corruption. However, state actors only facilitate illicit markets, rather than taking an active part in criminal operations. Private sector actors in Fiji are mostly involved in tax evasion and money laundering.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The integrity of Fiji's political leadership and its commitment to fighting organized crime is dubious. The country has had three democratic elections since the 2006 coup, and its political instability – the result of ethno-political divisions – is a moderate concern. Following the country's first democratic elections in 2014, international observers reported that they have been largely credible, although the participation of civil society organizations was restricted. International organizations have identified human rights as a major issue in Fiji as well as the ruling party's interference with opposition activities. Organized crime and drugs have emerged as serious issues in recent years, mainly related to the increase in methamphetamine and cocaine trafficking in the country. The integrity of Fiji's administration is often questionable, and corruption is likely to be widespread. The anti-corruption agency is limited and somewhat ineffective, with high-profile cases not being successfully prosecuted. Budget transparency has improved in recent years, but Fiji still has yet to implement assets disclosure legislation. Corruption is also a big problem in the business sector.

The Fijian government is dedicated to international cooperation in areas that address transnational organized crime, and it has signed several agreements and participates in relevant regional fora. Fiji has shown its commitment by becoming the first Pacific Island state to propose global trade restrictions and sign agreements aimed at deterring and eliminating IUU fishing. The US has a longstanding partnership with the Pacific Islands on regional security and works with Fiji to train and equip its security forces. However, the lack of information-sharing between local and external agencies is a major drawback in the fight against transnational organized crime. Australia and New Zealand have significant law enforcement development projects in Fiji, which are focused on transnational crime as well. Fiji's laws relating to organized crime remain, for the most part, outdated or are often non-existent. Even though there are provisions pertaining to various types of crime, the regulatory framework continues to lack explicit reference to, and hence, direct focus on organized crime, despite it becoming an increasing concern in the country. Regardless of its limited capacity, Fiji has an extradition law.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Fiji's constitution guarantees an independent judiciary, but political interference continues, with the prime minister having significant appointment powers. In 2021, judicial advisors were removed from trials, leaving verdicts solely to judges, a move criticized by opposition leaders as reducing transparency. Due to resource shortages, lengthy pre-trial detentions are also common, and the law allows suspects to be arrested without a warrant, which leaves accused people vulnerable to excessive action. Since 2014, Fiji has refused entry to the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges. The country's prisons do not meet international standards, with overcrowding, deteriorating infrastructure and inefficient essential services. Abuse of inmates is also perceived as an issue by international observers.

The Fiji Police Force is severely under-resourced, and human trafficking cases are not handled due to the inactivity of the Human Trafficking Taskforce since 2012. Fiji primarily relies on international partners to obtain intelligence on transnational organized crime. However, efforts continue to tackle criminal networks and drug trafficking regionally. Police officers and military officials who commit abuses are rarely brought to justice, and those convicted of crimes are frequently pardoned or have their convictions overturned on appeal. The police force is perceived to be corrupt by a significant portion of the Fijian population. Moreover, torture and beatings by police in Fiji remain a serious issue.

Fiji's geography and infrastructure have made it a hub for transportation, business and trade in the Pacific region. However, these same factors have also made the country vulnerable to territorial threats, due to its porous borders and extensive maritime space. Fiji has only one large patrol boat, making monitoring the country's waters a difficult task. Furthermore, Fiji is along a major drug trafficking route, connecting the markets in Australia and New Zealand to the largest producers of drugs in the world.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Fiji has made progress in addressing anti-money laundering deficiencies, with the establishment of the Financial Intelligence Unit and a National Anti-Money Laundering Council. However, the resilience of the country to this crime remains poor, with it considered a non-cooperative tax jurisdiction. The Fijian financial and real estate sectors are vulnerable to money laundering, and hundreds of millions of Fijian dollars are believed to be laundered through financial institutions each year.

Fiji's government has secured funding from multilateral and bilateral development partners, which is intended to be used to finance policy reforms. Economic policy in the country currently aims to provide relief to Fijians struggling after the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most relevant measures is the removal of VAT on various essential items and an increase in the national minimum wage. There are no sectors that are controlled by organized crime, nor are such groups involved in market regulation.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victims of crime in Fiji lack adequate assistance despite the creation of units aimed at providing support and assistance to victims and witnesses, the activities of which are unknown due to a lack of information. Even though in 2021 the government identified more victims of human trafficking compared to previous years, it has not provided services to any of them. Furthermore, restrictive policies limiting law enforcement officials' access to child victims staying in government shelters hinders the ability of police and prosecutors in building a rapport with victims, obtaining statements and preparing them for trials against their traffickers. Moreover, training in this matter is lacking, with officers reporting only a one-day workshop.

Despite public awareness campaigns and seminars being carried out, primarily aimed at children and parents, public awareness of human trafficking is low. No efforts have been made on the part of the government to reduce the demand for the forced labour and sexual exploitation of children. Lack of awareness of drugs is similarly low, with islanders falling victim to addiction because of using cocaine washed ashore, mistaking it for toothpaste, baking powder or something similar. The government is again putting efforts into awareness campaigns, aimed mainly at schoolchildren; however, drug use and addiction are on the rise.

Currently, Fiji is considered to be the worst nation in the Pacific for journalists. Laws and regulations are restrictive and vaguely worded, and those who violate them can face imprisonment for up to two years. As a result, journalists who are critical of the regime are threatened with intimidation and imprisonment. However, NGOs and wider civil society groups operate relatively effectively, with partnerships with the local community, faith-based organizations and business operators contributing to reduce overall crime rates. While civil society in Fiji is well-developed and active, there are strict sedition laws that limit the initiatives that CSOs can undertake. Domestic CSOs in Fiji focus on a range of issues, including environmental protection and conservation, women's and children's rights, social services and education.

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