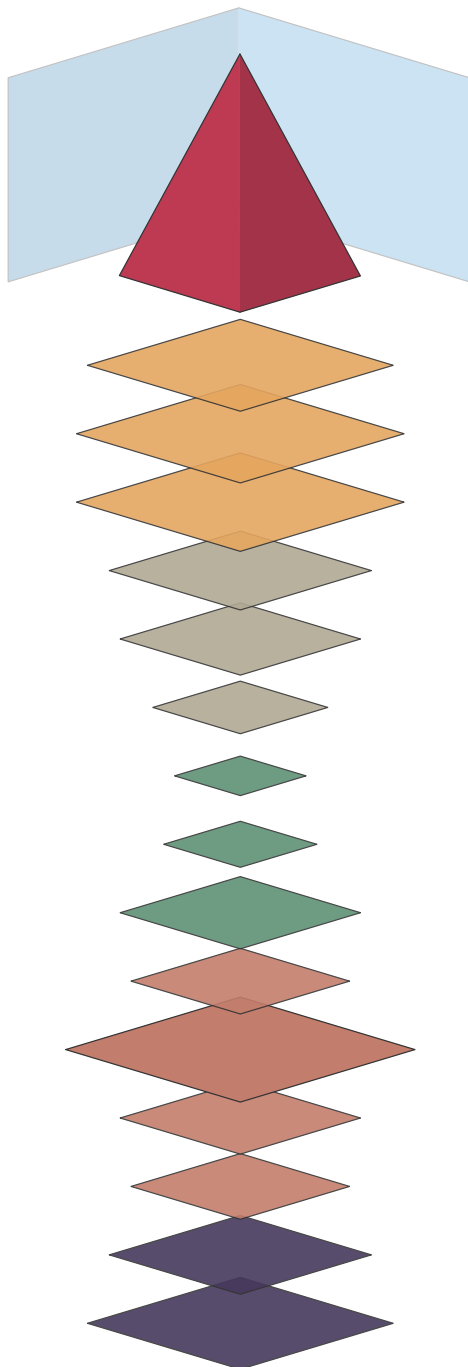




ITALY



6.22

CRIMINALITY SCORE

40th of 193 countries

3rd of 44 European countries

1st of 8 Southern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.73

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	7.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.00
FLORA CRIMES	3.00
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	5.50
HEROIN TRADE	5.00
COCAINE TRADE	8.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	6.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

6.70

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	9.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	3.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	6.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	7.00



6.46

RESILIENCE SCORE



Funding provided by the United States Government.

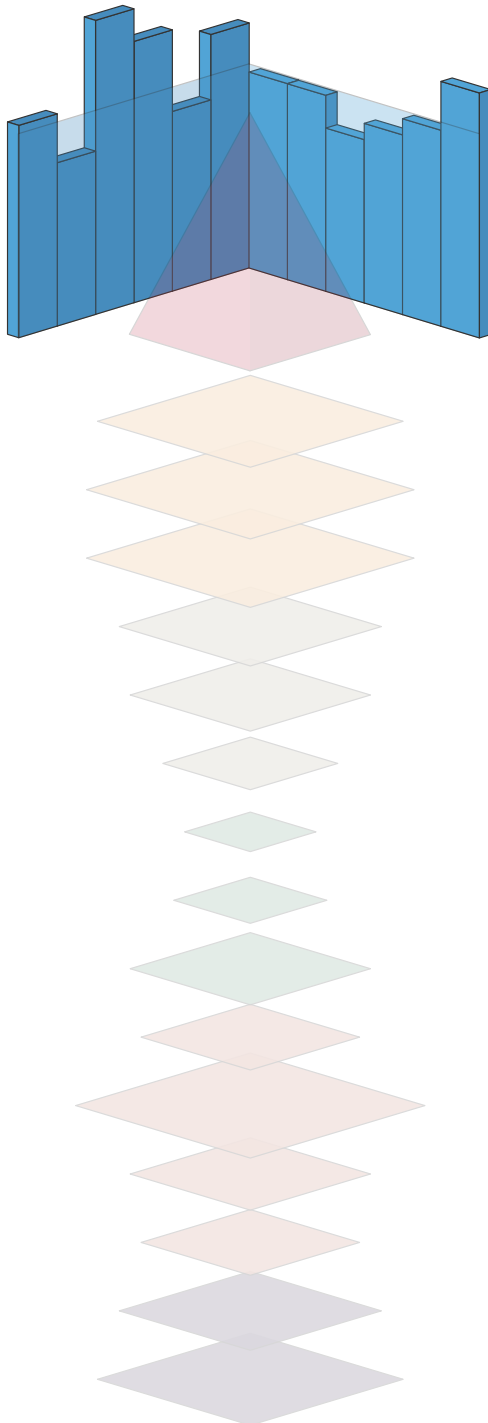


Funded by the European Union

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ITALY




6.46
RESILIENCE SCORE

31st of 193 countries
22nd of 44 European countries
3rd of 8 Southern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	9.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.50
PREVENTION	6.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.50



6.22
CRIMINALITY SCORE

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.73
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	6.70

CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking is prevalent in Italy, with both foreign nationals and local people being targeted for sexual and labour exploitation. Victims of trafficking primarily come from North and West Africa, Nigeria in particular; Eastern European countries, such as Albania and Bulgaria; Latin America and Asia, mainly China, India and Pakistan. In 2022, Ukrainian refugees, predominantly women and children fleeing the war, became one of the groups most vulnerable to trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated vulnerabilities for sex trafficking victims through the increased use of private residences and online recruitment. Virtual platforms are frequently being used to recruit victims, a tactic that has become even more widespread since COVID-19. Labour exploitation victims are often misled through fake job announcements posted on social media by fraudsters. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of people are trafficked into the agricultural industry, domestic work, and hospitality in both northern and southern Italy. While traditional Italian mafia groups are not heavily involved in human trafficking, cases indicating their involvement in caporalato schemes have emerged.

Italy is also a significant transit and destination country for human smuggling in the transnational market, playing a major role in the central Mediterranean migrant route. The majority of people smuggled into southern Italian ports come from North African countries, particularly Libya and Tunisia. There are also, however, a considerable number of smuggled individuals originating from the Middle East and Southern Asia. Most smuggling operations are small but sophisticated networks that organize routes within integrated criminal systems. In the main, the Italian mafia is not involved, and local smuggling organizations may be working with foreign criminal actors. Although, overall, the phenomenon of migrant smuggling has drastically decreased since the height of the refugee crisis, between 2014 and 2016, the amount of smuggling activity along the sea passages to Italy has been increasing steadily since COVID-19 regulations were relaxed. Migrants continue to be smuggled from Libya and Tunisia in precarious boats, while an increasing number of people from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria are being smuggled from Turkey and Greece to Italy using leisure and fishing boats. Some criminal networks involved in human smuggling combine this illegal activity with others, such as the trafficking of illicit commodities and the trafficking of people.

Extortion racketeering is commonly perpetrated by Italian mafia groups, who will usually demand a fixed payment from local shopkeepers, businessmen, and other operators of

legal economic activity in exchange for protection from potential threats of violence. Through the racket, the mafia group is able to penetrate legal economic activities, and can subsequently demand more beneficial exchanges, such as imposing specific suppliers and personnel, entering into co-partnerships with companies, or even appropriating them. The most targeted economic sectors appear to be agriculture, animal production, hunting (and related), retail trade, restaurant services, construction and trade and repair of vehicles. The approach usually taken in extortion racketeering involves invoking acts of intimidation, such as threats of bomb attacks on commercial activities, although most organized crime groups tend to avoid resorting to violence. In some regions, this crime has been commonly accepted within a pervasive culture of silence and fear, but also because of solid contiguity between victims and mafia clans in certain cities. This is confirmed by the fact that, despite the prevalence of this crime, very few victims step up and report it to the authorities.

TRADE

Arms trafficking is a significant issue in Italy, although it is not the most profitable area of illicit trade for organized crime groups. Italian mafia groups play key roles in the illicit arms trade in the country and in Europe, with local organizations involved in arms trafficking having strong connections to Balkan criminal groups. Illicit firearms, including military-grade assault rifles, are easily accessible, mainly to structured criminal groups that control their distribution. Italian criminal organizations play an active role in almost all stages of the arms trafficking supply chain, as traffickers, buyers, and intermediaries, usually bringing weapons in for their own use or smuggling them out of the country to be sold to foreign groups. The three main arms trafficking routes are the Balkan route, the Asian route, and the Middle East and North Africa route. A considerable share of illicit firearms enters Italian territory over land, hidden in cars, vans, and trucks, or via maritime routes. The war in Ukraine may pose a significant threat, as it is possible that arms from that conflict will end up in the hands of mafia groups and enter the illicit market.

Counterfeiting is also a major issue in Italy, with billions of euros of counterfeit and pirated goods being imported every year. The country is primarily a destination for counterfeit goods. Clothing, accessories, electronics, and electrical products are the most counterfeited products. Trade in counterfeit goods is a source of income for some mafia groups. Additionally, Chinese crime syndicates have become increasingly involved in the import and trade of counterfeit products in Italy. Rome is a key centre for the distribution of counterfeit goods from China, and Italian-Chinese gangs specialize in garment counterfeiting

and cigarette smuggling. The illicit trade of excise goods, particularly cigarettes, also remains a persistent issue in Italy. A problematic trend is the smuggling of cigarettes from North Africa to western Sicily, through the use of ferries and fast boats. Although there have been decreases in the value of smuggled cigarettes and the share of products of foreign origin, this is still a profitable market for criminal organizations. In addition to tobacco, alcohol smuggling is also a concern, as evidenced by seizures of alcoholic beverages, especially in the north.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes are not widely reported in Italy and the market is dominated by white-collar organized crime groups rather than traditional mafia organizations. Despite this, the country remains a significant importer and transit point for illegal timber, including from countries with high levels of illicit trade. Although the pervasive illegality of the timber trade seems to be declining, owing to strengthened import and export controls, some Italian companies continue to import timber from Myanmar in violation of the European Union Timber Regulation. Italian criminal networks involved in the illegal timber business infiltrate the legal economy in order to launder their illicit profits and use forged documents to disguise the origin or species of the timber in order to pass customs control.

Fauna crimes are present in Italy, and some organized crime groups have diversified into the illegal wildlife trade, particularly with regards to highly valued species being transported from Africa to Europe. The country also has a high rate of wildlife crime concerning certain species of birds. Poaching and bird trapping are some of the most widespread criminal activities in this context, and it is difficult to detect illegally imported animals once they are introduced into the legal market. Some Italian organized crime groups are involved in south-eastern and central European countries to carry out the smuggling of illegally hunted birds to the north of Italy, where they are consumed as a delicacy. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing also occurs in the country and is generally deemed as a socially acceptable practice. Italy is a source and transit country for European eel trafficking.

Italian organized crime groups are also involved in the illegal non-renewable resource market. Criminal organizations have indicated a growing interest in oil smuggling, and brokers in northern Italy have sought mafia protection to establish new gasoline routes from countries such as Kazakhstan into Italy and, more broadly, Europe. Moreover, Italian criminal groups reportedly continue to collaborate with Libyan militias to import fuel and illegally mix gasoline with Italian petroleum for export. There is also, albeit to a lesser extent, illegal activity pertaining to the importation of gold that involves criminal groups from Latin America and precious stones sourced illegally from the African continent. Ecomafias, facilitated by poor regulatory measures and by

common landowners hiding illegal soil mining, continue to grow and were not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Apparently, there was a decrease in building abuses in the construction industry but an assault on public procurement, as indicated by the increase in anti-mafia interdictions.

DRUGS

Italy's heroin market is growing, due to the low cost of the drug. Although COVID-19 restrictions led to a decrease in street-level drug dealing, they had no significant impact on the heroin trade, as criminal groups shifted their focus to online sales, using social networks and online platforms. A potential expansion of the illegal drug market on the dark web has also been noticed. Foreign criminal groups import heroin into Italy, and local criminal groups take over once it enters the country. The coastline along the Adriatic Sea has emerged as a key area for drug trafficking, with Balkan and Italian criminal groups cooperating to share the profits. Cocaine remains the most profitable and sought-after drug in Italy, owing to local demand and the interest of transnational criminal organizations. The country has one of the highest demands for cocaine among EU member states, and, although the criminal business is predominantly transnational, there is a sizeable local market. Mafia groups involved in cocaine trafficking are complex and fragmented. The landscape is largely dominated by the 'Ndrangheta, a powerful mafia group with strong ties to drug trafficking organizations in Latin America, primarily Colombia, as well as other countries in Europe, such as Albania. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a shift towards the consolidation and aggregation of networks, and a more complex national panorama for cocaine trade emerged. Other Italian mafia clans, as well as Western Balkan criminal groups, reportedly increased their role in the sale of imported cocaine. Despite increased seizures, the cocaine market is growing, and it is the most seized drug in Italian border areas. An increase in the consumption of crack cocaine in some cities has also been observed.

The cannabis market is also significant in Italy, and is primarily controlled by foreign criminal organizations, such as those from Morocco and Spain, with local groups playing a smaller role. The growth of legal hemp has however eroded criminal organizations' share of the market. Hashish is mainly sourced from Morocco, while marijuana enters Italy through the Adriatic Sea. Cannabis is the second-largest drug market after cocaine, despite being the most consumed drug. Currently, the recreational use of cannabis in Italy is an administrative offence, and the only permitted legal use is that of medicines based on cannabinoids under medical prescription. Italy is also a destination country for synthetic drugs, which are produced in Northern Europe, predominantly Belgium and the Netherlands, and Eastern European countries. Because of its low profit margins, this market does not significantly involve Italian criminal organizations, including mafia groups, and is not particularly integrated into Italy's

criminal economy, as people purchase synthetic drugs directly from sellers on the internet. However, there seems to be an increasing interest in the trade and mafia groups appear to be becoming more attracted by the sector. The most traded synthetic drugs in Italy are amphetamines, methamphetamines, and ecstasy, and the market primarily targets young people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a rise in the availability of amphetamines and the use of benzodiazepines, as well as an increase in the use of gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid and gamma-Butyrolactone substances, also known as 'rape drugs'.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crime is a growing problem in Italy, with distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, malware and the unauthorized use of information communication technology systems posing significant threats. More than half the malware attacks in Italy involve banking trojan malware. During the reporting period, Italian hospitals, critical infrastructure of national and regional interest, and large enterprises were targeted by cyber-attacks, as the COVID-19 pandemic further increased their vulnerability to cybercrime. Moreover, public institutions and their websites are increasingly becoming targets. Although mafia groups have not yet invested in cybercrime, there is a proven connection between the two, with cybercrime being used for ransom demands and the theft of personal data.

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Italy has experienced a surge in cyber-attacks and criminal ransomware attacks against medium to large Italian infrastructure facilities. Pro-Russian hacker groups have targeted several Italian institutions, including parliament, the military, and the National Institute of Health, using DDoS attacks.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Italian mafia groups are increasingly infiltrating the legal economy by interweaving legal businesses with illicit activities such as tax evasion and false invoicing. In some regions, mafia syndicates are reportedly increasing their capacity for tax evasion and abusive tax avoidance thanks to close collaborations with professionals and complacent entrepreneurs. These relationships also help them gain access to public funds and to divert them to fuel their illicit activities in various parts of Italy. Financial crime in Italy, however, is not perpetrated solely by traditional organized crime groups or mafia groups; there is also systemic corruption within the private sector, as well as the involvement of foreign criminal groups in some areas. Italy has a considerable tax evasion problem, which affects every sector of the economy and is considered to be organized and systemic. Among the various cyber-enabled financial crimes committed against Italian companies, phishing attacks were the most common, with over half of phishing attempts targeting the construction materials industry.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Italy has a longstanding association with traditional mafia groups, some of which remain the most powerful in the world. These groups exert significant territorial control over their regions of origin and are involved in numerous criminal markets. However, they have been lessening their use of violence in recent years to avoid detection by law enforcement and state authorities. As anti-mafia measures strengthen, these groups have also been increasingly seeking other European countries to launder their illicit proceeds. Despite the risk and illegality of their activities, these groups continue to infiltrate the democratic and political system. Foreign organized crime groups, such as West African and Balkan mafia-style groups, are also actively operating in Italy. The former have a strong presence in the drug trade, while the latter are historically known for their involvement in the illegal arms trade and human trafficking. Balkan mafia-style groups have also become heavily involved in the cocaine and cannabis markets, thanks to their established contacts in South America.

In Italy, a growing number of actors within the private sector, such as entrepreneurs and independent professionals, are being found to be involved in utilitarian collaborations with mafia groups, allowing them to infiltrate the legal economy and engage in economic and financial exploits that blur the lines between legality and illegality. While mafia organizations have a longstanding tradition in Italy, the presence of loose criminal networks is limited. There are, however, some criminal networks engaged in crime such as fraud, burglaries, and assaults. Young people from disadvantaged social groups are also involved in urban gangsterism, exhibiting mafia-like behaviour, an issue that was exacerbated during the pandemic through social media.

Corruption remains a significant problem, and there are growing concerns about traditional mafia groups' exploitation of public funds made available for economic recovery after COVID-19. While state actors generally do not control criminal markets in Italy, corruption is widespread within the state apparatus, allowing criminal actors to benefit from lucrative public contracts at the expense of the general population. Collusion between law enforcement officials and criminal actors, as well as the direct involvement of the former in criminal activity, is prominent.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Italy's political situation has remained relatively stable, but corruption and the influence of mafia groups continue to pose significant challenges. Despite the government's consistent rhetoric and efforts against organized crime, the presence of criminal actors within the state apparatus at the local level has made it difficult to eliminate mafia activities. Additionally, the lack of attention paid to these issues by political leaders in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has caused concern among Italians and eroded their faith in Italian institutions. Other issues that have concerned the public include the lack of a plan to control spending for COVID-19 recovery and the absence of regulation with regards to whistle-blowing and anti-mafia measures. While positive steps have been taken on the anti-corruption front in Italy, criminal infiltration into the public procurement process is pervasive.

Despite these challenges, Italy has a robust framework of international cooperation to tackle organized crime, and engages actively with the international community. The country is party to all relevant international treaties and conventions and has extradition agreements with numerous countries. Italy also has many cases of successful transborder drug seizures, and its law enforcement authorities participate in Europol cross-border operations. Italy's legislative framework is highly attuned to the pervasiveness of mafia organizations and organized criminal activity in the country. Its legal dispositions pursue several types of organized crime, including human smuggling and trafficking, corruption, and drug offences. However, some sections of the country's legislation are obsolete and need to be updated to take into consideration developments in organized crime in recent years.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Italian detention system is plagued with issues of overcrowding, poor detainee relations, and security deficiencies, and concerns have been raised about the number of registered suicides. Nevertheless, Italy has a unique system for fighting organized crime. Several institutions work together to coordinate investigations and share information with the courts. The numerous convictions for organized and mafia-related crime demonstrate that courts are able effectively to pass judgments against organized crime defendants.

Italy has a specialized law enforcement unit that focuses on mafia-related activity: the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia. The Guardia di Finanza, Italy's financial crime investigative unit, and the Raggruppamento Operativo Speciale, the special operations group of the Carabinieri,

also play a significant role in the fight against organized crime. Additionally, Italy has an effective intelligence agency that gathers information crucial for public security. The country's law enforcement is well resourced and their operations have played a significant role in tackling organized crime, leading to seizures and confiscations of huge amounts of illicitly accumulated assets. Italy faces a diverse array of pressures, however. Because of its location in the middle of the Mediterranean, the country is a conducive environment for organized crime activities such as drug trafficking and the smuggling of counterfeit goods. Italian ports are key locations for both lawful and illicit trade. Despite this, the country maintains adequate infrastructure to monitor and prevent illicit cross-border activity, and there is little evidence of corruption among Italian border control officials. In terms of cyber-defence and protection of cyberspace, the government is implementing measures to try to safeguard the country's cyber integrity, with the creation of the National Cybersecurity Agency and the adoption of a national cybersecurity strategy, for example. Nevertheless, cybercrime is a serious issue in the country and is reported to be growing at a pace that institutions are struggling to keep up with.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Italy has demonstrated a strong commitment to combating money laundering, and the Italian Financial Intelligence Unit is the leading reporting and investigation body within the EU. However, its anti-money laundering framework still has some weaknesses. Although Italy has made progress in reporting suspicious transactions and implementing sanctions, mafia groups continue to launder their illicit profits by infiltrating the legitimate economy. The country's banks, financial institutions, and secrecy laws facilitate these crimes. In response, Italy has placed limitations on cash payments and imposed sanctions on merchants who do not accept electronic payments.

Organized crime and mafia infiltration continue to have a significant impact on Italy's economic regulatory environment, especially in the south of the country, where local businesses are often extorted using intimidation and violence. Mafia groups use extortion as a means of territorial control, and while the traditional 'pizzo' took the form of a forced protection tax, many mafia groups now demand that businesses use a particular brand or supplier of goods controlled by criminal actors. Although Italy has a solid legal framework, implementation is not always effective, particularly in the south. The COVID-19 pandemic provided Italian mafia groups with additional opportunities to infiltrate the formal economy, with criminal actors exploiting the vulnerabilities of struggling businesses.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Italian government has implemented various programmes and initiatives to provide support and protection to victims and witnesses of crime. Italy has established specific laws that safeguard victims and witnesses during court proceedings and compensate them for crimes committed against them. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, affected the government's protection efforts, with some NGOs reporting uneven standards of quality in assistance programmes and concerns over fewer labour inspections. Despite this, the government continues to fund international organizations for anti-trafficking projects, mainly aimed at assisting African and Ukrainian refugees. Non-state actors, however, are the primary providers of support services to victims of various forms of organized crime, and the instrumentalization of migration by certain segments of the political class has impeded the effective roll-out of these services. Italy does maintain national prevention strategies targeting various crimes, such as human trafficking, money laundering, corruption, arms trafficking. These measures are heavily focused on the seizure and confiscation of criminal organizations' assets in order to prevent them from committing other organized-crime-related activity and to deprive them of the resources that enable them to conduct illicit activities.

Organized crime is a threat to press freedom in Italy, particularly in the southern regions of the country, where journalists often self-censor to avoid being subjected to intimidation, death threats, or attacks. Nonetheless, civil society and non-state actors have emerged that respond to the threat posed by organized crime, and the state supports their actions. NGOs are actively combating mafia groups, organized crime, and corruption, and promote a culture of legality by partnering with local municipalities, anti-corruption plans, and anti-mafia infiltration, as well as by supporting victims or potential victims of smuggling and trafficking. Civil society organizations are crucial in countering mafia extortion racketeering, supporting local entrepreneurs, and serving as intermediaries between victims and law enforcement authorities.

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