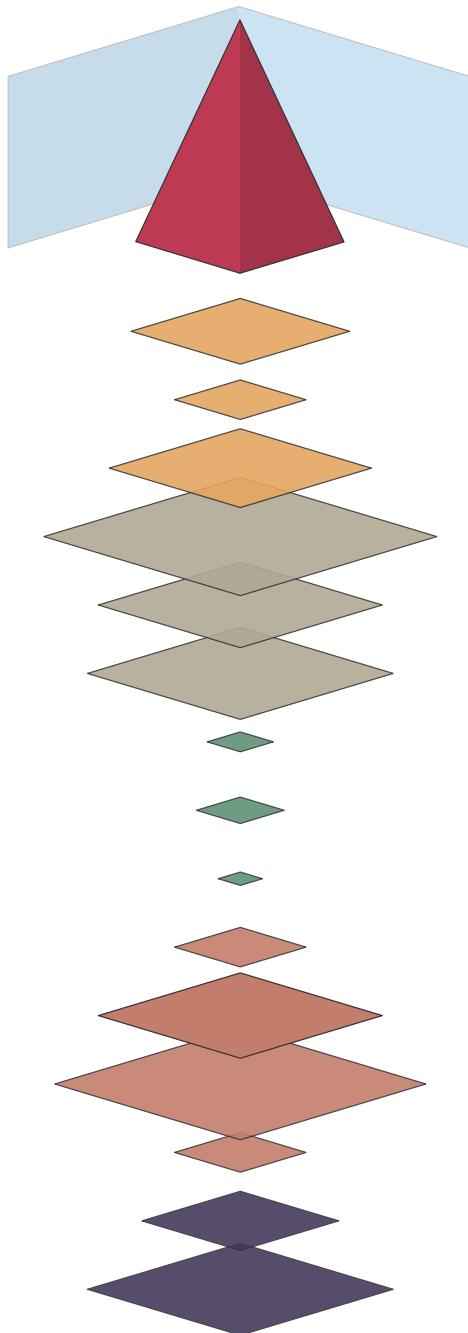




JAMAICA



5.80

CRIMINALITY SCORE

59th of 193 countries

14th of 35 American countries

2nd of 13 Caribbean countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.90

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 5.00

HUMAN SMUGGLING 3.00

EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING 6.00

ARMS TRAFFICKING 9.00

TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS 6.50

ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS 7.00

FLORA CRIMES 1.50

FAUNA CRIMES 2.00

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 1.00

HEROIN TRADE 3.00

COCAINE TRADE 6.50

CANNABIS TRADE 8.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 3.00

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES 4.50

FINANCIAL CRIMES 7.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

6.70

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 8.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 8.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 8.00

FOREIGN ACTORS 7.00

PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS 2.50

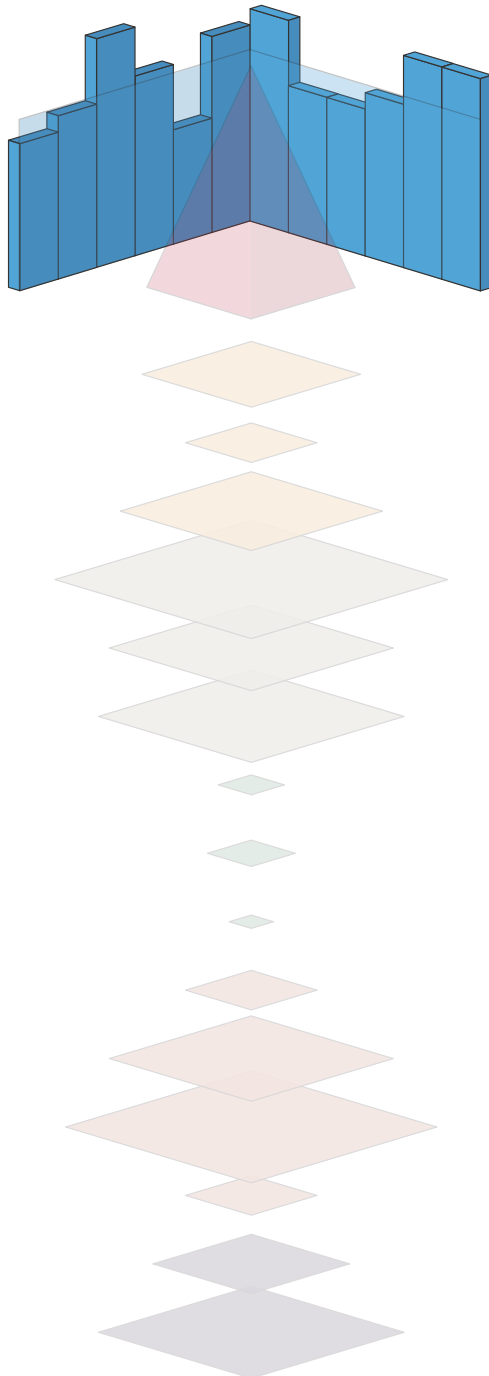


5.42

RESILIENCE SCORE



 **JAMAICA**





 **5.42**
RESILIENCE SCORE

62nd of 193 countries
11th of 35 American countries
4th of 13 Caribbean countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00
PREVENTION	6.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.50

 **5.80**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.90
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	6.70



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking in Jamaica is a highly organized criminal market linked to the drug trade, with mafia-style groups and foreign actors exploiting highly vulnerable populations. Most victims are women and minors who are forced into sex work, labour exploitation, selling drugs, or begging, while others are trafficked to neighbouring Caribbean countries, the US, and the UK. Foreign nationals trafficked to Jamaica tend to be victims of forced labour, particularly on foreign-flagged fishing vessels operating in local waters. Human trafficking is linked to high rates of violence in the country. Not only have traffickers been accused of murders, but victims have also been forcibly recruited as armed gunmen and drug or weapons couriers. The socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic – which disproportionately affected impoverished women, youth, and children – exacerbated vulnerability to human trafficking in rural and urban communities.

Jamaica's human smuggling market seems to be limited and linked mostly to passport fraud for migration purposes. Concerns over the development of a smuggling corridor between Jamaica and the US – largely rooted in a rapid increase of Jamaican travel to Mexico – have emerged in recent years. The reasons for this increase were identified as financial challenges, limited work opportunities, and safety concerns.

Private sector extortion, especially in the transport and construction industries, commonly occurs in Jamaica. However, extortion in the country may also target powerful elites and politicians. These activities are mostly carried out by prominent mafia-style groups active in the country as a means of accumulating funds for various purposes such as purchasing lethal weapons and ammunition, hiring legal representation, and financing illicit criminal markets. Often perpetrated by criminal gangs, extortion has been largely normalized in Jamaican society, rendering the issue more difficult to combat.

TRADE

Arms trafficking is one of Jamaica's largest criminal markets, with most illegal weapons entering the country from the US, which is home to many Jamaican crime groups. Because of lax US controls, tracking and tracing is challenging. The easy availability of weapons – including pistols, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and homemade guns – fuels an extremely high homicide rate in Jamaica, with arms being used to protect drug production and trafficking systems, as

payment for drugs, and to facilitate gang recruitment. The market benefits from police corruption, with officers often implicated in the disappearance of guns from police stations. Furthermore, with an increase in police-registered firearms being discovered at crime scenes, Jamaican police officials have been accused of diverting weapons from official stockpiles into the arms trafficking market through their sale and rental to criminal entities. In addition, a firearm licence corruption ring was exposed in February 2022, blurring the line between criminal and legal gun holders.

Counterfeit crimes are an ever-growing issue in Jamaica, with counterfeit products increasingly being sold on streets and in otherwise-legitimate shops. Jamaica is a notable transit point for Chinese-sourced counterfeit products destined for other parts of the Americas. Counterfeit crimes not only lead to substantial revenue loss, but also pose a significant threat to public health, as counterfeit products often contain harmful chemicals. Jamaica faces a considerable challenge in the illicit sale of tobacco products and the country serves as a transit point for the illegal trade of cigarettes smuggled across the Americas. The recent increase in taxes on excise goods has reportedly fuelled consumers' reliance on the illicit tobacco trade.

ENVIRONMENT

Although instances of illegal logging and the illicit trade of rare species have been documented, the flora and fauna crime markets are negligible, and there is no evidence to suggest that a market for non-renewable resource crimes exists in Jamaica.

DRUGS

The high quality and popularity of Jamaican marijuana has rendered the market highly lucrative and substantial in reach. The country is the largest producer and supplier of cannabis in the Caribbean. The drug is trafficked abroad to countries in Europe, as well as to Canada and the US. In Jamaica, marijuana is legal for consumption in low quantities and for religious purposes, although permits are required to cultivate and process the crop. Evidence suggests that growth in the cannabis trade has led to an escalation of violence in Jamaica. There seems to be a connection between organizations that traffic cannabis and those that traffic arms and cocaine, a drug that is prevalent in the country. Jamaica has become a trans-shipment and storage point for Mexican and Colombian organizations transporting cocaine to the US and Europe. Cocaine shipments tend to be dropped offshore by ships or small planes, and then picked up by boats to be taken to their final locations by foreign tourists (not always knowingly). Cocaine production within Jamaican borders remains negligible.

Heroin and synthetic drugs are prevalent in the country, although to a much lesser extent than cocaine. They are used as commodity drugs, traded with marijuana, and then shipped in small quantities to overseas markets through immigrant networks. The local market is believed to be very small.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jamaican criminal groups have reportedly taken advantage of cyberspace to conduct malicious attacks through the dark web. Jamaican public sectors experienced significant data security breaches, but the market appears not to have experienced major growth yet.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Lucrative lottery scams are very common in Jamaica, often used by criminal gangs seeking funding to expand territorial control, purchase lethal weaponry, and execute various other organized crime-related activities. They often target elderly Americans, and Jamaican nationals residing abroad facilitate these crimes. Lottery scams contribute to Jamaica's high rate of violence, especially in Montego Bay and Saint James Parish, which are both known as lethal violence hotspots. Jamaica suffers from multiple other finance-related criminal activities such as smishing and phishing fraud schemes. An increase in phone scams has been observed, with scammers often using phone calls to request token codes, subsequently adding themselves as beneficiaries on victims' bank accounts in order to transfer funds without authorization. Moreover, tax evasion and fraud, as well as false reporting, allegedly cost the Jamaican government billions of Jamaican dollars in annual revenue. In addition to being fuelled by rampant poverty, financial fraud has increasingly been perceived as an attractive – and even morally justified – alternative for Jamaican youth struggling to secure legitimate employment in a constrained economic environment.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Dozens of mafia-style gangs operate across Jamaica. The larger groups are involved mostly in international drug trafficking, while the smaller, more loosely organized ones engage in more violent crimes, particularly turf wars, to exert control over communities. Most of these criminal groups are believed to use extortion, particularly of informal sellers and small businesses, in exchange for protection, as a form of control and a way to finance their operations. In recent years, criminal gang membership among children and youth has been exacerbated by deteriorating living conditions attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are different categories of mafia-style groups in the country with varying levels of centralized power structures and

leadership. These gangs are reported to have deep links to both corrupt state officials and transnational counterparts.

Criminal networks in Jamaica tend to be loosely knit organizations made up of young people who engage predominantly in robberies and lottery scams. Reports indicate that these groups have been developing more sophisticated and organized structures in recent years. Jamaica's drug trafficking networks are highly intertwined in wider transnational criminal activities, and Jamaican criminal entities have developed deep connections with foreign counterparts over time. Foreign criminal organizations, most notably from Colombia and Mexico, use the country as a trans-shipment and storage point for drugs on their way to international markets, including the US.

Political tribalism in Jamaica is a manifestation of corrupt state-embedded actors' involvement in – as well as control over – organized criminal markets. They are believed to benefit from state collusion. There are corrupt police officers who facilitate their activities and politicians who award them contracts in exchange for support, as well as pay them to carry out crimes for political gain. The involvement of private sector actors in organized criminal activity is negligible. Data regarding the extent of private sector involvement in money laundering in Jamaica remains relatively limited. Some professions, such as used-car dealers, hardware merchants, and real estate agents, among others, seem to be more prone to occasionally act as facilitators of money laundering, but their collaboration with groups engaged in organized and systemic criminal operations is currently rare.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Jamaica has made efforts to improve accountability and transparency in recent years and has made fighting organized crime a priority, but its overall governance, high levels of violence, low public trust in authorities, and lack of accountability and transparency remain substantial challenges. Jamaica is not perceived as having successfully strengthened its capacity to combat organized crime and the government has been criticized for its failure to focus on combating the socio-economic roots of rampant criminal activity and violence across the country. Although the country has established institutions to fight corruption, persistent deep-seated corruption across the country – along with rampant misconduct among security officials – illuminates the inefficacy of these initiatives.

Jamaica has ratified a number of international conventions and protocols on organized crime, including drug and human trafficking. Jamaica is also party to relevant wildlife protection agreements. It benefits from international cooperation in the form of financial support for community programmes, as well as from coordination with law enforcement agencies in other countries, particularly the US, to stop the transit of illegal drugs by sea. Although Jamaica possesses a relatively robust anti-organized crime legislative framework, the implementation of its related policies remains a notable challenge. Nonetheless, recent anti-gang legislation aimed at reducing high levels of gang-related violence across the country targets people responsible for criminal activities and those with whom they conspire. Although cannabis consumption has been partially legalized in recent years, police officials remain authorized to seize larger amounts.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Jamaica's efforts to bring criminal networks to justice, including through the implementation of a justice sector reform programme, are hampered by an under-resourced and overburdened judiciary, leading to repeated trial delays, significant case backlogs, frustration among police, witnesses, jurors, and the public, and impunity for many offenders. In addition, deep-rooted corruption – including allegations of police officers working directly with criminals and committing extra-judicial executions – overshadows some of the positive initiatives that have been put in place to try and tackle criminal markets involving human trafficking, gang recruitment, and scamming. Nevertheless, law enforcement in Jamaica is making efforts to root out internal corruption, in particular through the Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency. Further efforts were made to tackle certain criminal markets through the establishment of specialized units and divisions.

Jamaica's location in the Caribbean, its difficult-to-patrol coastline, its status as a tourist destination, and its favourable position as a major containerized cargo trans-shipment hub have all contributed to its appeal to drug- and arms-trafficking organizations. Although Jamaican authorities' efforts to increase territorial integrity have reportedly increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – and many initiatives are being monitored by donors – the country continues to serve as a key drug trafficking corridor, especially for cocaine and marijuana destined for North America and Europe.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Since publicly declaring its intent to fortify its anti-money laundering/countering financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime in 2020, the Jamaican government has made improvements aimed at integrating Financial Action Task Force and Caribbean Financial Action Task Force recommendations into its AML/CFT strategy, and has acquired a more comprehensive understanding of the risks associated with such crimes. Although Jamaican legislators have recently reinforced provisions in the Proceeds of Crime Act, a general lack of resources allocated towards the prosecution of financial crimes in the country has hindered the law's implementation. At present, Jamaica benefits from two EU-funded projects aimed at combating trade-based money laundering and cash smuggling, primarily through efforts to strengthen Jamaican law enforcement capacity to prevent, detect, investigate, and contribute to the prosecution of such crimes, as well as to ensure financial compliance and asset recovery within the bounds of international financial regulations.

Informal savings mechanisms among the Jamaican population are prevalent, and many people have been excluded from basic financial services including credit. In recent years, the Jamaican government has increased its investment in programmes aimed at repairing and boosting the country's economy as well as tackling criminal actors' economic influence. Nevertheless, the country continues to work with the World Bank to strengthen its private sector business environment by addressing critical business competition and regulatory problems.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support in Jamaica remain significant challenges. Victims are meant to receive support from prosecutors, as well as through the justice ministry's victim-support unit (including being allowed to provide video testimony from abroad), but this has not happened in any trafficking cases. In terms of witness support, the Jamaican

government maintains a witness protection programme. Prevention programmes, however, are active across the country and focus on issues such as human trafficking and drug use, although funding remains a challenge. Other initiatives have been implemented in recent years, such as the National Consensus on Crime, which aim to transform the country into a safe, secure, and investment-friendly society through the dismantling of criminal gangs and the combating of corruption.

Jamaica's private sector plays a key role in advocating for resilience, economic growth, and citizen security. Although civil society is highly active, cooperation initiatives between civil society and state actors on issues such as crime prevention and victim support nonetheless remain limited. However, NGOs have cooperated with state agencies on several initiatives. Jamaica has one of the freest press environments globally. Media outlets in the country are considered fairly independent, and journalists are able to work free from threats of violence or censorship.

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