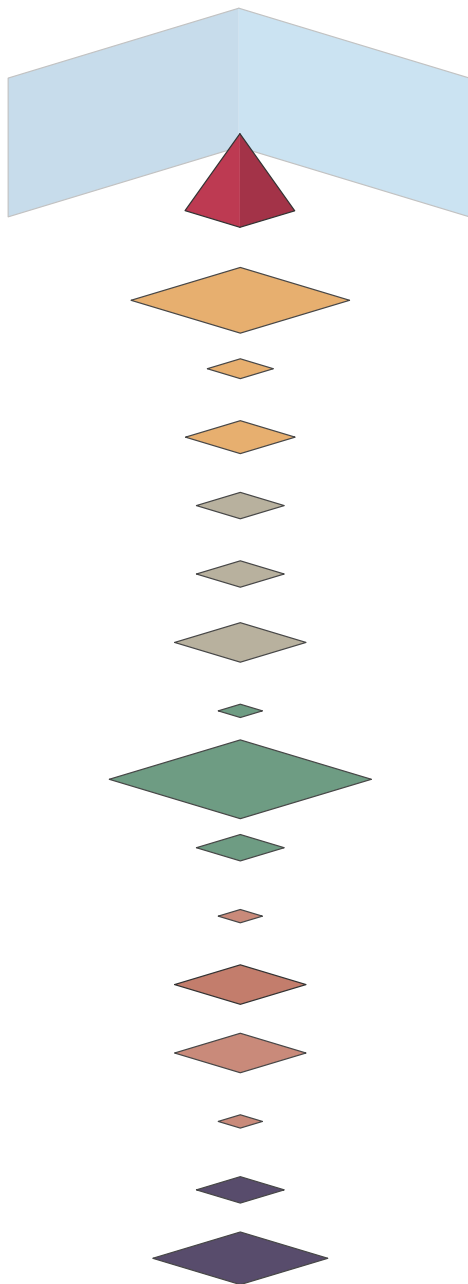


 **KIRIBATI**



 **2.45**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

187th of 193 countries
10th of 14 Oceanian countries
4th of 5 Micronesian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **2.60**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	1.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	2.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	2.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	6.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.00
COCAINE TRADE	3.00
CANNABIS TRADE	3.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	2.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	4.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **2.30**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	1.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	3.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	2.00

 **4.33**
RESILIENCE SCORE



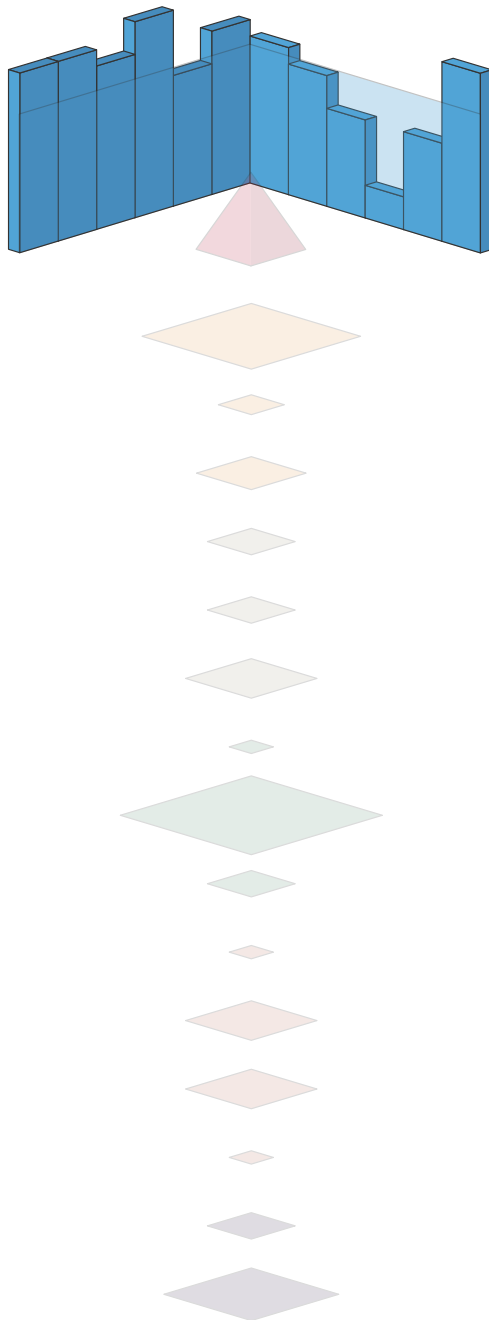
Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

 **KIRIBATI**





 **4.33**
RESILIENCE SCORE

122nd of 193 countries
13th of 14 Oceanian countries
5th of 5 Micronesian countries

<u>POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</u>	5.50
<u>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	5.50
<u>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION</u>	5.00
<u>NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS</u>	6.00
<u>JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION</u>	4.00
<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT</u>	5.00
<u>TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY</u>	4.50
<u>ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING</u>	4.00
<u>ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY</u>	3.00
<u>VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT</u>	1.00
<u>PREVENTION</u>	3.00
<u>NON-STATE ACTORS</u>	5.50

 **2.45**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	2.60
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	2.30



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking in the forms of forced labour, modern slavery and sexual exploitation is increasingly prevalent in Kiribati. While mostly men and children are being targeted for forced labour and modern slavery mostly observed in the fishing industries, construction sector and street vending, women and children are more often victimized in sexual exploitation. Due to the relative poverty among the population, victims are introduced into this market by family members wanting to secure basic needs. The problem of human trafficking in the country appears to be domestic and does not cross international borders, with profits therefore most likely accrued by domestic actors. The lack of local media, the fact that the islands are scattered across a sizeable territory, and Kiribati's poor communications environment make it easy for this type of criminal activity to be concealed. At the same time, there is little evidence suggesting the existence of human smuggling in the country, with a minimal risk of it emerging in the short and medium term. Even though there is no significant research or data indicating the extent of extortion in Kiribati, recent instances suggest an increasing trend in this market.

TRADE

Fishermen who are unable to find work due to low stocks are lured by criminal networks into using their boats for arms trafficking. It can be inferred that foreign actors are largely responsible for the movement of illicit arms in Kiribati waters. Notably, long guns are often carried on fishing vessels and may be prone to theft. Besides these cases, the illicit arms market in Kiribati is negligible, with low to no demand and no major transit trade. There is no indication of a significant market for counterfeit goods in Kiribati. However, recently, with demand growing, there has been an increase in the trade of these goods in the region. Counterfeited items, such as textile goods, foodstuffs and pharmaceutical products are increasingly becoming prevalent in the country. Similarly, illicit trade in excise goods, specifically tobacco products and alcohol, has been on the rise in the region and hence in Kiribati, due to the increasing levels of excise taxes. However, the extent of this trade, the sources of goods and the market for them are unknown.

ENVIRONMENT

While there is no evidence to suggest the existence of flora crimes in Kiribati, the country's limited natural forests may increase its vulnerability to imported illegally harvested timber. In contrast, the most significant form of organized crime that has historically affected Kiribati is systematic illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. As authorities have little capacity to monitor the vast fishing grounds in the Pacific, the country is unable to protect against or detect illegal activities taking place in this domain. Indeed, there is still a presence of foreign fleets, with many families previously relying on artisanal fishing not only facing difficulties in finding fish for local consumption but also becoming vulnerable to being recruited by criminal actors. Coral and reef fish are sought-after species due to their high market value. Despite the current threats, the state of overfishing in Kiribati appears to have improved due to law enforcement efforts supported by international cooperation. The recent re-opening of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) to commercial fishing, however, raises concerns about a resurgence of IUU fishing practices. There are no non-renewable resource crimes in Kiribati related to organized crime. Aggressive illegal mining of sand, gravel and other aggregates for construction purposes, while currently at a small scale, could become an issue in the country.

DRUGS

Overall, drug trafficking cases in Kiribati are rare, with the country probably being used as a transit point by foreign cartels. There are no reports suggesting the presence of a heroin market. Regarding cocaine, a small number of ships transporting the drug to Australia have been identified in Kiribati waters, but there is no evidence of it being offloaded and consumed in Kiribati. Similar to arms trafficking, there are also reports of fishermen being involved in drug trafficking through the use of their vessels. Cocaine washing up on Kiribati shores has been an occasional sight for police officers patrolling in the area. In contrast, Kiribati is a small destination for cannabis imported from Fiji. There is no evidence of local cannabis production, thus foreign actors are the main drivers of this market. There is no evidence of a market for synthetic drugs in the country.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

There is a lack of information pertaining to cyber-dependent crimes occurring in the country. However, the rise in internet connectivity throughout some communities in Kiribati has probably increased the risk of cyber-dependent crimes.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Even though there is limited data pertaining to financial crimes occurring in the country, recent reports suggest that financial crimes in the form of tax evasion as well as cyber-enabled financial crimes, such as internet scams and phishing, are common in Kiribati. Moreover, Kiribati has been affected by the 'de-risking' of international banks that have withdrawn from many countries in the region due to a combination of commercial interests and perceived risks linked to levels of financial crime. This de-risking reflects a negative assessment of the adequacy of measures in the Pacific to enhance compliance-related tools, capabilities and technical competence.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Overall, Kiribati seems to have a relatively low presence of organized crime, but it is not immune to it. The presence of

mafia-style groups has not been identified in Kiribati. Small, loosely organized criminal networks do exist in the country, but no prominent figureheads have been identified. These networks appear to operate locally, and are prevalent in human trafficking and fauna crime, particularly IUU fishing. These networks sometimes operate on foreign vessels off the shores of Kiribati. There is no evidence of organized crime within Kiribati's state apparatus, but corruption is a problem, particularly regarding resource access. Foreign criminal actors are not attracted to Kiribati due to its remoteness, poor banking services and lack of accessibility. The only known involvement of foreign actors in Kiribati criminal markets is in the cocaine trade and overfishing. The extent to which the private sector contributes to transnational organized crime is unknown; however, there is a need to maintain an appropriate regulatory posture relative to the finance sector.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Kiribati is politically stable, but the government has not given sufficient oversight to prevent corruption. Kiribati's reliance on foreign donors can also be an opportunity to enhance compliance and improve governance. While petty corruption and nepotism is widespread, there is virtually no large-scale corruption with the exception of that occurring within Kiribati's fishing industry. However, results of a 2021 survey indicate that more than a half of I-Kiribati citizens had paid a bribe within the previous year. There appear to be noticeable efforts and changes to improve anti-corruption measures, though some community structures and the small population base can obstruct more profound institutional change. Kiribati is a party to several international conventions, but it has not ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), nor the UN Firearms Protocol. Overfishing of endangered/vulnerable species such as the bluefin tuna is the most prevalent form of organized crime in the country. However, the government lacks the capacity to combat the overfishing issue on its own. Kiribati works with other countries to identify drug trafficking, given a lack of equipment and skills to accurately assess seizures. Transnational crime units are spread across Kiribati's territorial waters and share intelligence and investigation information. The legislative framework of Kiribati is sufficiently sound and adequately addresses organized crime. The laws reflect model provisions developed by the Pacific Islands Forum and New Zealand and meet many of the standards set

by relevant international treaties. In 2021, a law was introduced to allow commercial fishing in the PIPA, which was originally a no-fishing zone. This decision was designed to help the country's struggling fishing industry by boosting it through tuna fishing; however, many consider it a blow to conservation efforts and an open call for IUU fishing.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Levels of wrongdoing within Kiribati's judicial system may not be high, but they do exist. A 2022 investigation launched against a High Court judge by the president revealed not only corruption and conflicts of interests, but intervention from the executive in the judiciary as well. The detention system in Kiribati lacks adequate resources, resulting in poor conditions (albeit not harsh or inhumane) and security issues within prisons. Prisoners enjoy freedom of movement, escaping overnight to visit their families and returning in the morning. This makes prisons vulnerable to the influence of criminal groups. The police force in Kiribati has established units to counter organized crime, and steps to counter it have resulted in positive changes in recent years. Despite this, Kiribati law enforcement is seen as inadequate to deal with major threats, mainly the poaching of marine resources. Also, the police lack equipment and skills to identify drug types, relying on collaboration with partners for drug seizures. The country participates in relevant regional initiatives to counter transnational organized crime, and most enhancements are driven by external pressure and foreign donors rather than national

initiatives. Kiribati consists of 32 atolls in the southern Pacific Ocean, making its territorial waters difficult to patrol and vulnerable to IUU fishing and other organized crimes. Furthermore, the country has no army and relies on defence assistance from Australia and New Zealand under bilateral agreements.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Kiribati has limited resources to fight money laundering and terrorist financing effectively. Carrying out a mutual evaluation report is costly for the government, and implementing recommendations often strains the legal capacities of countries such as Kiribati. Despite these limitations, Kiribati is making efforts to strengthen its anti-money laundering system and has established a financial intelligence unit (FIU), as well as a system for reporting suspicious transactions. Currently, Kiribati is not a jurisdiction identified as having strategic anti-money laundering deficiencies. The country remains highly dependent on foreign aid, suggesting that a portion of the economic regulation is conducted by foreign actors. The economic regulatory environment in Kiribati is possibly its least resilient 'building block' in fighting organized crime. Due to the money received by donors and remittances from overseas workers, the country is vulnerable to state capture by economic predators. Moreover, economic development is constrained by a shortage of skilled workers, weak infrastructure and remoteness from international markets. The public sector dominates economic activity, with ongoing capital projects in infrastructure including road rehabilitation, water and sanitation projects, and renovations to the international airport, spurring some growth.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

No victim and witness support structures have been identified in Kiribati. Although it may be non-existent in law, there is a long common law practice of affording protection to court witnesses. However, one challenge for the country is that communities are small and therefore difficulties arise in ensuring witness privacy and the prevention of reprisals. There has been no evidence that Kiribati has applied any preventive methods to countering organized crime. However, Kiribati participates in international crime prevention programmes and receives support from New Zealand to develop a more preventive approach to policing, though the effectiveness of these initiatives is not clear. The primary focus of the Kiribati Police Service, along with other institutions, remains community crime prevention. The lack of resources being devoted to countering organized crime is due to the absence of serious organized crime in the country. Kiribati is only recently becoming aware of cybercrimes due to the absence of online banking, online shopping and other e-commerce systems. Kiribati collaborates with NGOs to fight against overfishing and to protect endangered fish and coral species. However, partnerships are sometimes unclear and selective. The media sector is free of interference, although it is neither large nor diverse. Nevertheless, citizens have access to information, including from foreign radio services. Kiribati signed an agreement so as to establish a high-speed internet connection in 2018, potentially allowing for more diverse media content. Currently, there are no significant restrictions on the flow of news and information, and NGOs operate freely through the Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organizations.

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