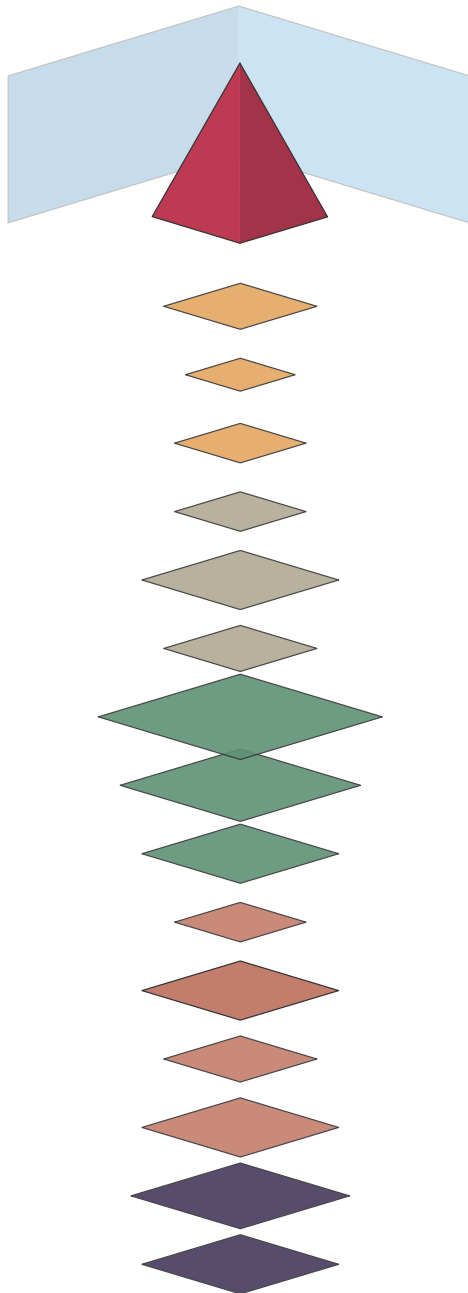




NAMIBIA



4.30

CRIMINALITY SCORE

141st of 193 countries

47th of 54 African countries

10th of 13 Southern African countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.10

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	3.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	2.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	4.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.50
FLORA CRIMES	6.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	4.50
HEROIN TRADE	3.00
COCAINE TRADE	4.50
CANNABIS TRADE	3.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	4.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	4.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.50

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	5.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.50



4.54

RESILIENCE SCORE



Funding provided by the United States Government.

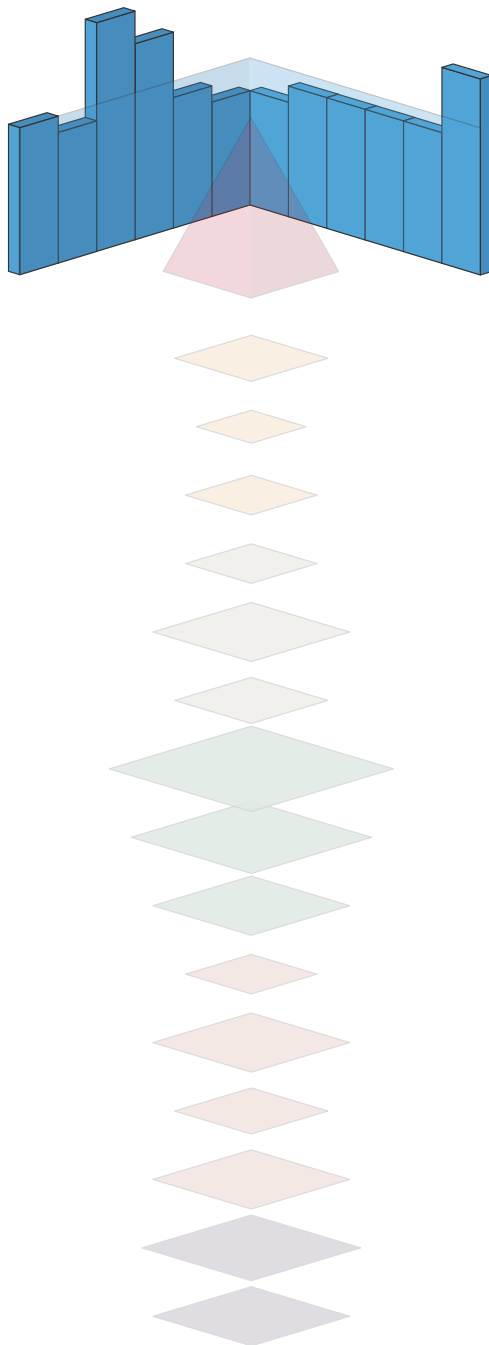


Funded by the European Union

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.



NAMIBIA



4.54

RESILIENCE SCORE

110th of 193 countries

17th of 54 African countries

6th of 13 Southern African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	3.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	3.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	4.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.00



4.30

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.10



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.50



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Namibia is not seriously affected by the human trafficking market. However, the issue persists in specific groups and areas (notably Windhoek and Walvis Bay), with children being the most vulnerable to labour and sexual exploitation. The charcoal industry is particularly susceptible to human trafficking, as locals hire Angolans without papers and subject them to forced labour. In some cases, Namibia experiences trafficking from neighbouring countries, especially children, such as from Angola, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Even though the human smuggling market in the country remains limited, voluntary migration continues to occur via smuggling routes, especially through the Namibian-Zambian border, with reports of law enforcement officers being involved. Namibia is increasingly becoming a destination country in the region for migrants such as Congolese citizens, as well as those of other African countries. Due to the food and water shortages caused by persistent droughts and economic crises experienced in Angola, many individuals have fled to Namibia, and there are reports of Angolans living in squatter settlements and of children as young as seven selling goods on the streets. Zimbabwe's political conflict has also led to migration to Namibia. The country has also become a flag of convenience for fishing vessels, which could facilitate the smuggling of people to South Africa.

Organized crime groups do not typically engage in systematic extortion schemes in Namibia. However, there are anecdotal incidents relating to the extortion of vulnerable communities in the country such as irregular migrants. There are also reports of protection racketeering carried out by Chinese criminal groups operating in the country, mostly targeting Chinese businessmen.

TRADE

Despite not being a major hub for arms trafficking, Namibia has a high prevalence of illegal firearms, with unlicensed gun ownership almost as high as licensed ownership. Firearms are often used in cattle theft and other crimes, and theft of firearms owned by civilians is common. Even police officers have been involved in firearm theft, and there are ongoing investigations into the intentional diversion of police weapons and ammunition. In 2022, arms traffickers moving weapons from Namibia into Angola were arrested. Parastatal forces have been accused of illegal arms transfers to Zimbabwe, and there are concerns that arms trafficking

may be happening through Namibia under the guise of legitimate government-to-government business or false listings of end-users for arms shipments.

Recent confiscations indicate that trade in counterfeit goods is a considerable market in Namibia. The demand for fake and cheap products seems to be driven by poverty in the country, with the trade of counterfeit goods not being regarded as illegal among traders or the Namibian population. Corruption, weak law enforcement and poor implementation of intellectual property rights also create a favourable environment for the trade of counterfeit goods in Namibia. Counterfeit products are primarily imported from Asia and are an integral part of the inward flow in the Chinese Flying Money trade-based settlement system, indicating the possible involvement of organized crime groups.

The illicit trade of excise goods, such as cigarettes and alcohol, is a persistent issue in Namibia. The country's porous borders, coupled with high taxes on cigarette imports, make it a prime target for smugglers. Namibia primarily serves as a transit country for the illegal cigarette trade, with the majority of smuggled cigarettes being destined for South Africa. Discrepancies in trade data suggest that Namibia may be also used as a hub for re-importing cigarettes back into South Africa or for ghost exports. The illicit trade of alcohol is also a common issue in Namibia, which was especially widespread during the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been repeated cases in Namibia where goods destined for cross-border markets were 'lost' in transit, indicating a commonly applied strategy of smuggling.

ENVIRONMENT

Namibia, even with very little tree cover, is a significant transit country for illegal logging and timber industries. Lax border control compounds the issue, and the market for exotic hardwood runs parallel to legal markets for timber and charcoal. Chinese cartels and local criminal actors are believed to be facilitating the trade, which is stimulated by high demand in East Asia. The ecosystem of southern African countries is changing due to the poaching of rare plants, which are taken to South Korea and the US and sold at a high price. This illegal trade is enabled by state-embedded actors at the highest level in Namibia.

In addition, Namibia faces challenges with poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, particularly with rhino, big cats and abalone. Rhino poaching has experienced a substantial surge in recent years, with a nearly twofold increase since 2021. The illegal trade in fauna products is often hidden among illegal timber, and there is evidence of ministerial staff involvement in poaching. Although Namibians, particularly

from poor communities, constitute the majority involved in poaching, citizens from other countries and foreign syndicates are also involved. While wildlife populations such as elephants, cheetahs, crocodiles and lions appear to be increasing in the country, regional poaching still occurs, and conservation programmes suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, there is no fence between the tourist and trophy-hunting zones, risking wildlife crossing the boundary and being legally shot.

Namibia also has a significant market for illicit diamonds and gemstones, and much of the small-scale mining activity in the country is illegal. One of the most significant issues with the smuggling of semi-precious gemstones is the strict export licensing requirement, which artisanal miners ignore due to excessive regulations. The government has failed to make changes to the legislation, resulting in a lack of control over the smuggling of these gems. While no major diamond smuggling syndicates appear to operate in the country, illegal diamond buying is likely to be rampant. Namibia is also rich in other minerals, including uranium, copper, gold, lead, lithium and zinc. The extraction of these resources is sometimes dubious, with the country's elites and political parties reportedly benefitting from illegal extraction, resulting in a lack of political will to address these issues.

DRUGS

Namibia has emerged as a trans-shipment point for heroin which usually enters through sea routes and is shipped to destination markets in Europe. Heroin is also typically moved from East African ports by trucks and long-distance taxis to Namibia and beyond in a network controlled by Tanzanian operators. Its consumption in the country is not as widespread compared to other drugs and no foreign organized criminal groups have yet succeeded in establishing a foothold in the heroin market. Moreover, this drug is not as commonly seized as cocaine, synthetics or cannabis.

Namibia is also a trans-shipment point for cocaine, with onward shipping going to South African consumer markets by land and air routes. Although the domestic market remains small, the use of both cocaine powder and crack cocaine has reportedly grown recently. Several foreign nationals, mainly Angolans and Congolese, are reported to be involved in this market. Though there are no drug cartels overseeing territories in the country, cocaine dealers take advantage of the friendly environment enjoyed in Namibia, using it as a transit point to distribute their cocaine.

Cannabis remains the most widely used illicit substance in Namibia. Cannabis entering the country appears to be primarily for local consumption as Namibia is neither a grower nor a noteworthy transit hub. Cannabis that does make its way into the country comes predominantly from Eswatini, having travelled through South Africa, and from the South African regions of Transkei and Kwazulu-Natal.

Cannabis usage among the younger generations of the middle class is widespread and growing.

Namibia's synthetic drug market is gradually expanding, with synthetic opioids, along with cannabis, leading the market. The availability and use of these drugs is increasing, particularly in urban tourist centres, influenced by cross-border supplies from South Africa. A sedative drug consisting largely of methaqualone is commonly used and increasingly seized by officials. Authorities have reported that the use of synthetics, like crystal meth, has grown as users seek more potent illicit substances. However, synthetic opioid use is marginal due to well-regulated pharmacies and medical doctors, and robust distribution networks. Namibia's infrastructure and potential growth as a drug transit point pose a risk for synthetic drug trafficking. The country is also a transit hub for precursor chemicals sourced from India and China and used to make synthetic drugs produced in South Africa.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Namibia is currently experiencing a surge in cyber-dependent crimes, which include hacking and ransomware attacks, among others. The lack of specialized law enforcement units and technical skills in the country is exacerbating the problem, putting state institutions and businesses at risk. In fact, Namibian companies faced a high number of cyber-attacks in recent years. Additionally, Namibian banks reported that an increasing number of their clients have fallen for cryptocurrency scams. Currently, there are no identified organized crime groups behind cyber-dependent crimes in Namibia.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are a growing concern in Namibia. COVID-19 has exacerbated the issue, with financial crime incidents reportedly increasing during and after the pandemic. Commercial banks have lost millions of Namibian dollars due to fraudulent cases, with tens of thousands of cases reported each year. Incidents of Ponzi schemes and bank fraud have been reported, with some bank employees cooperating with criminal groups to defraud clients. In addition, the Namibian police has reported instances of individuals being defrauded by fake service providers who sell non-existent products or services via the internet. Suspected cyber-enabled fraud attempts from Namibia are increasing every year.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Foreign actors are involved in a range of criminal activities in Namibia, including the smuggling of wildlife products, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking and human smuggling. Chinese, Vietnamese, Zambian and Angolan actors are most visible in the smuggling of rhino

horn, ivory and pangolin scales. Foreign fishing vessels engage in IUU fishing, as well as evading taxes. South African gangs allegedly operate in the trafficking of synthetic drugs into Namibia, while Chinese nationals and companies are involved in the smuggling of exotic hardwood and animal parts. Some Congolese nationals are known to be complicit in the smuggling of other nationals into the country.

Regarding smaller domestic criminal networks, these are well-established and have a continuing and increasingly negative impact on parts of society. The networks are particularly prevalent in major illicit trades such as wildlife crimes, and human smuggling and trafficking. Syndicates smuggling hardwood to East Asia appear to be well-organized, operating on an industrial scale, and using Namibia mainly as a transit hub. The presence of mafia-style groups in Namibia is limited compared to loose criminal networks. However, gangs have been reportedly engaged in various communities in major urban areas over time. Many are still active in prisons. These gangs allegedly exert considerable control over the penitentiary system and dominate the prison economy. These actors also have some links to outside street gangs, but such relationships are not as prevalent as in neighbouring South Africa. There is insufficient information to conclude that these groups currently collaborate in the trade or distribution of drugs or other organized crime activities.

Corruption is widespread in Namibia, especially at the executive level where state concessions are allocated, and it is used as a political tool within the ruling party. This corruption also extends to law enforcement and the military, where oversight is blocked in the name of national security. Corruption becomes systemic in the allocation of high-value contracts in industries such as mining and fishing and it encourages criminal networks and foreign actors to operate in the country. Lower-level state officials have also been found to be complicit in criminal activity, with border officials, for example, accepting bribes to allow contraband to cross borders.

The private sector in Namibia has been repeatedly involved in corruption scandals, with many companies and individuals engaging in illegal activities to secure business opportunities. Companies involved in oil and gas exploration activities have been accused of ignoring laws and regulations, while Namibian mining companies have been investigated for illegal mining. Private sector actors active in the real estate sector are also known to be involved in fraudulent activities, defrauding buyers. Money laundering is also a significant issue, with criminal activities leading to earnings that are laundered through various means, including real estate, minerals and gems.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Namibia is considered a multi-party democracy, but only one party has dominated the political scene in the country since its independence, leading to dissatisfaction amongst the population due to slow service delivery and various socio-economic issues that are intertwined with corruption. While political dissent is allowed, the presidency often criticizes it. Moreover, the ruling party has designed a system to undermine the efficacy of opposition factions. Overall, Namibia's government has a certain level of legitimacy in the country, but its image has recently been tainted by corruption scandals. Despite the allocation of more funds to combat organized crime, the public lacks confidence in the country's leadership, resulting in a severe fall in the current government's popularity. Namibia has been facing challenges in transparency and accountability since gaining independence. Access to official information is limited, and most government institutions reportedly do not respond to requests for data and information. Fiscal transparency is a problem in both the public and private sectors, and the country's perception of corruption is high due to the political patronage system within the ruling party. The Anti-Corruption Commission is seen as inconsistent, and

corruption scandals have affected the image of the current government. The media has been uncovering corruption in various ministries, but the justice system rarely goes after those linked to these cases.

Namibia is committed to maintaining good relations with international organizations. Namibia has ratified most major international treaties related to organized crime and has good relationships with neighbouring countries to combat human trafficking. However, there are concerns that the actual implementation of these agreements falls short of their intended aims. Namibia has several policies and laws in place to combat organized crime, but these laws have limitations, such as the lack of a definition of 'corruption' and the inadequate addressing of the trafficking of animal parts. Namibia also lacks specific policies and legislation to deal with contemporary cybercrime and data privacy. Namibia's commitment to fighting organized crime is questionable as there is a lack of consistent application of the laws and the capacity to enforce them. Additionally, some of Namibia's laws are outdated, with these dating back to the colonial period.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Namibia's judiciary is regarded as fairly effective and independent, although concerns about the appointment of judges and corruption scandals have eroded public trust in the ethics of judges. The justice system is burdened by backlogs, and criminal cases are often delayed, with inadequate resources and under-resourcing contributing to these problems. The issue of detention is also a major concern, with police officers accepting bribes to keep people in custody, and those with money and access to the legal system able to pay their way out of detention. While judicial effectiveness has increased, capacity problems persist, and access to justice remains limited to a privileged group. Prison standards are generally substandard and mafia-style groups allegedly exert considerable control over the penitentiary system and dominate the prison economy. Prisoners are also vulnerable to sexual abuse by other detainees.

Namibia's law enforcement faces a range of challenges, including inadequate training, skills shortages, lack of resources, and corruption. Low salaries and poor accommodation for junior police officials have been identified as factors that impede their ability to perform their duties effectively. The mistreatment of citizens by police officers is also common. There have been some recent successes in tackling wildlife crime, human trafficking and financial crimes. Namibia's borders are not fully secure, with weak border controls and porous areas, particularly along the Angolan and Zambian borders. Smuggling of illegal goods such as fuel, liquor and hardwood is widespread, with drug trafficking increasing. Border officials are often complicit in smuggling, creating opportunities for criminal economies to thrive.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Namibia has legislation in place to combat money laundering, but the country still struggles with under-resourcing and a failing judiciary, which hampers efforts to prosecute criminals. The effectiveness of anti-money laundering programmes in Namibia is questionable, and law enforcement is highly selective, especially when it comes to politically connected individuals. Despite being active in international organizations to combat this crime, Namibia is still regarded as having medium to high vulnerability to money laundering.

Namibia's economic regulatory framework is adequate, but the over-reliance on government subsidies has resulted in slow economic growth. The country suffers from a highly uneven distribution of income and wealth, making illicit activity attractive to the poorer parts of the population. Despite constitutional guarantees of property rights, movements towards land expropriation pose a threat. Namibia also faces obstacles to trade freedom, and uneven financial intermediation.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Namibia has made efforts to protect victims of trafficking, but many facilities for victims are under-staffed and under-resourced. While standard operating procedures and referral mechanisms for victim services are well-implemented, victims who file police reports against perpetrators lack protection and are often assaulted or killed. Frontline workers require further training, and there are no official shelters for victims of human trafficking, although the authorities and NGOs provide shelter-related services. The government has not allocated funds to establish a whistleblowers office, and commitment to doing so is low. Social stigmas continue to limit resources for victims of crime despite coordinated efforts by various ministries and NGOs.

Namibia has not reported any major successes in crime prevention, and criminal activity continues largely uncontrolled due to massive under-funding in enforcement across all sectors. The effectiveness of strategies and projects implemented to protect species in hotspots of illegal activity is not publicly evaluated. Despite implementing a national action plan on gender-based violence, fewer public awareness-raising activities were conducted due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and no efforts were put into reducing the demand for commercial sex.

Namibia has a conducive legislative environment for unbiased journalism. However, the actual capacity of some media institutions, particularly the state-run broadcaster, has been in decline for years due to mismanagement, especially at the state-owned broadcaster. Social media has proven to be far more effective at exposing wrongdoing due to its prevalence, while print media sales are in decline. Pro-government media organizations are receiving an ever-larger share of advertising revenue, threatening the financial prospects of privately owned media and independent news coverage. Civil society in Namibia is considered stable, with an evolving organizational capacity and advocacy, but impeded financial viability. NGOs have been actively involved in providing support to victims of human trafficking and fighting corruption at both the public and private levels. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on civil society has been evident and, despite the economic downturn and corruption scandals, non-governmental social organizations seem to have had a greater influence on public decisions and held the government accountable. The support and work of communities towards social and governmental organizations have influenced the fight against wildlife trafficking in Namibia.

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