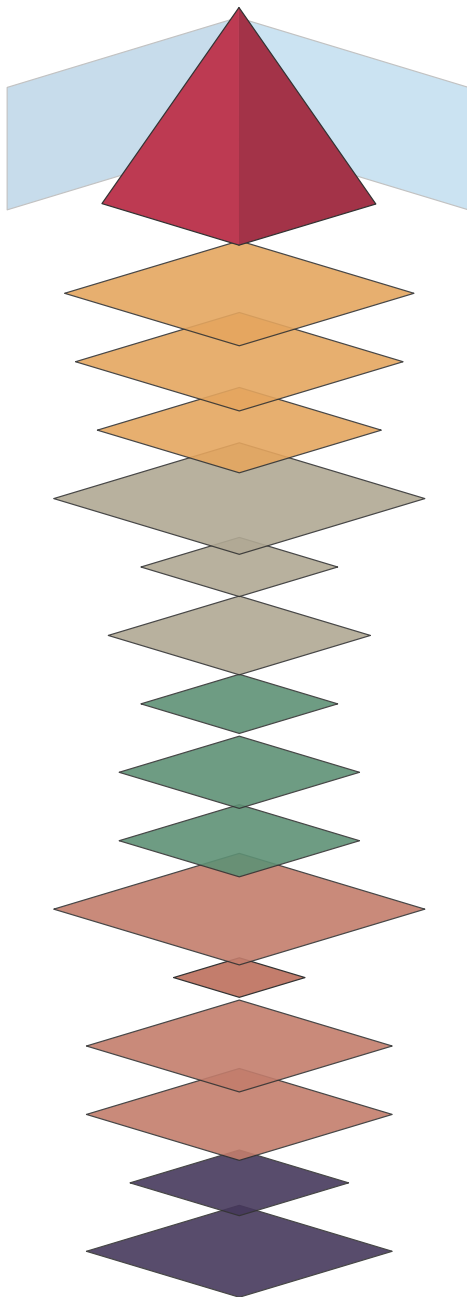


 **PAKISTAN**



 **6.03**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

47th of 193 countries
20th of 46 Asian countries
3rd of 8 Southern Asian countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **6.27**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	8.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	6.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	8.50
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	4.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.00
FLORA CRIMES	4.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	5.50
HEROIN TRADE	8.50
COCAINE TRADE	3.00
CANNABIS TRADE	7.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7.00

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **5.80**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.50

 **3.96**
RESILIENCE SCORE



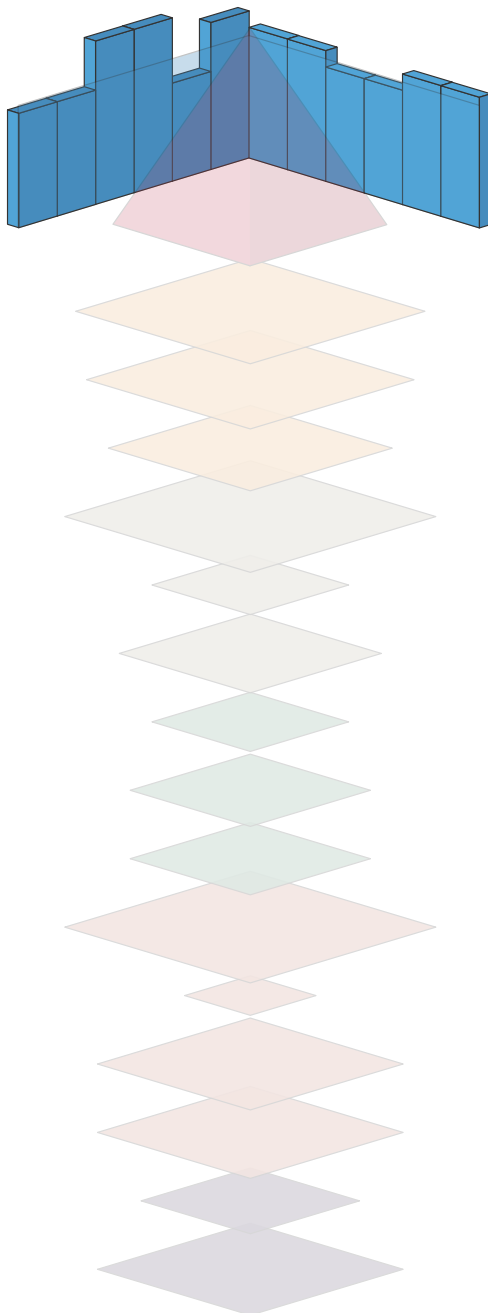
Funding provided by the United States Government.



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.

 **PAKISTAN**



 **3.96**
RESILIENCE SCORE

134th of 193 countries
28th of 46 Asian countries
6th of 8 Southern Asian countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	3.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	4.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	3.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.50
PREVENTION	4.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.00

 **6.03**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	6.27
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	5.80



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Human trafficking is a significant problem in Pakistan, mainly in the areas of forced labour and sexual exploitation. Forced labour frequently occurs in the agricultural, construction, fisheries and textiles industries, where debt bondage is used to exploit victims. Victims of trafficking include men, women and children – domestic and foreign – with a large percentage of forced labourers being children. Children are also exploited in begging, domestic work, small shops and sex trafficking. Similarly, Pakistan is a destination country for men, women and children who are subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking, particularly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Some Pakistani men and women are also subjected to trafficking abroad, especially in the Gulf states and Europe, after they migrate voluntarily for low-skilled employment.

Pakistan is a source and transit country for human smuggling. Tens of thousands of Pakistanis attempt to illegally migrate to the West each year, with many using the services of smugglers via land routes in Balochistan, or by air. Human smuggling is the largest revenue generator in some villages in this province, where corrupt officials reportedly participate in smuggling operations. Since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, Pakistan has also served as a major transit country for hundreds of thousands of Afghans. The increase in demand has led to a price hike for human smuggling along this route.

Extortion and protection racketeering are prevalent in the country, mostly carried out by mafia-style groups and militias with ties to the Taliban. These groups not only extort money from affluent locals but also target vulnerable citizens in slums, where they engage in racketeering practices like demanding payment for access to drinking water. Another common form of extortion is land grabbing carried out by the so-called 'land mafia': such groups illegally take possession of public land or land owned by other private individuals. These groups are known to have close ties to state actors who facilitate their illicit activities.

TRADE

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, Pakistan has become a destination for US weaponry and military accessories seized by Taliban militants. The increased flow of arms has resulted in a drop in prices. Although Pakistani law requires gun-owners to obtain licenses, illegal firearms are widely available throughout the country and millions of them are unregistered. There has been a surge

in demand for small arms in recent years due to rising incidents of terrorist attacks, extortion and street crime. Arms trafficking has been reported in the wider region, from Pakistan to Sri Lanka.

There is a wide range of counterfeit products available in the market. These include medicines, digital content, software and printed works. Pakistan's law enforcement and regulatory bodies have limited ex officio authority to act, resulting in the seizure of only a small fraction of smuggled and counterfeit goods. Pakistan's use of unlicensed software exposes its enterprises and government to higher security vulnerabilities.

The illicit trade in excise goods, particularly tobacco, is also a concern. The trade is facilitated by organized crime groups who are responsible for the smuggling of one in six packs of cigarettes in the market. While tobacco smuggling from Afghanistan has stopped, Pakistan has a large market for locally produced, untaxed cigarettes. This is due to underreporting of production by transnational companies, and tax evasion by local companies. The sale of smuggled tobacco products continues despite the implementation of a track and trace system. Pakistan also has a market for illegal car trading. Japan is the main source of used car imports, under the misuse of gift schemes or baggage rules. Corrupt state officials, particularly excise and tax officers, facilitate the country's illegal car market.

ENVIRONMENT

Pakistan is facing challenges regarding illegal logging. The so-called 'timber mafia' is responsible for extracting illicit timber, particularly in the forests of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. Although efforts have been made to counter the problem, such as deploying paramilitary forces, the lack of infrastructure in these regions, as well as understaffing of the country's forestry department, continue to pose issues. Some of the illegal timber is smuggled into Afghanistan and back to Pakistan to evade taxes, while a notable amount is sent to Gulf countries. In recent years, residents have become increasingly determined to curb deforestation and there is a growing political will to address the issue as a result. A crackdown on the timber mafia in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has led to improvements in the area, and there is now a policy-level effort in place to discourage flora crimes in the context of climate degradation. However, the effects of these efforts are yet to be seen in the criminal market.

Poaching and wildlife trafficking affect a number of exotic and endangered species in Pakistan. Falcons are often targeted for trade, driven largely by a demand from wealthy Gulf-state residents who engage in trophy hunting. Pakistan

is also a hub for the distribution of Shahtoosh scarves – wool garments made from the hair of the endangered chiru antelope. These are primarily sent to European markets. Additionally, driven by demand for their scales and meat among Asian middle classes, the illegal trade of pangolins has caused a considerable decline in the population in Pakistan. Despite routine arrests by the wildlife department, the trade remains relatively unchecked, with limited resources and facilities available, and concerns about personnel being unarmed when facing armed poachers. Wild animals are often booked in advance and delivered using special codes and luxury vehicles to avoid attention.

Pakistan might not be a major exporter of natural resources, but the country has vast mineral resources including gems and metals like gold and copper, and coal. The country's extractive industries have been plagued by corruption and security issues, leading to a flourishing illicit mining sector. Recently, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a crackdown on illegal mining plants was announced. However, corruption in local government persists, which has enabled the trade of gems and other precious stones to thrive. Similarly, in Balochistan, where there is an enabling environment for illicit mining, the coal industry operates largely without regulation and is connected to corrupt and criminal interests. Illegal mining is rampant and various Baloch nationalist insurgent groups have violently targeted foreign companies, which they view as aiding Pakistani occupation.

DRUGS

Pakistan has become a leading transit point for drug trafficking due to its proximity to Afghanistan. The country has also experienced high rates of addiction and domestic demand for heroin, making it a destination country for the drug trade. Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan, there has been an increase in heroin seizures. The COVID-19 pandemic did little to disrupt heroin manufacturing and trafficking: shipments trafficked via Pakistan were less frequent but larger in volume. There have also been reports of heroin transiting through Pakistan to other parts of South Asia, as well as to Eastern- and Southern Africa.

In contrast, Pakistan is not a major country for cocaine transit or destination. Although occasional cocaine seizures have been reported, the drug is smuggled largely to meet the demand by the upper class living in cities. Some networks that trade in heroin also trade in cocaine as a side business. Domestic drug consumption, including cocaine, has grown among upper-class youth since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Pakistan is a significant player in the global cannabis trade, serving as both a source and transit country. Cannabis consumption is widespread and socially acceptable in the country. A substantial amount of cannabis is believed to be grown in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region; the Tirah Valley in particular is known for producing high quality

cannabis. While armed groups in the region rely financially on cannabis cultivation and distribution, domestic cultivation has reportedly declined in recent years. Pakistan has one of the world's highest cannabis seizure rates.

Pakistan has become a destination country for synthetic drugs, which are increasingly popular among younger generations. Methamphetamine is largely sourced from Afghanistan; the use of the local ephedra plant as a starting material for its manufacture has resulted in greater proportions of the drug transiting through Pakistan. There has also been a rise in production of crystal methamphetamine, particularly in Peshawar and Karachi. The COVID-19 pandemic did not disrupt the supply of synthetic drugs in the region: there are reports of K-tablets, a drug containing both methamphetamines and opioids, being produced in Peshawar, Pakistan, and trafficked to Afghanistan.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime is becoming increasingly prevalent in Pakistan, as a result of the growing use of mobile technologies, digital banking and remote access to company networks. The most common complaints related to cyber-criminality are harassment, fake profiles and hacking. Young people living in urban areas make up the majority of cybercrime victims – and the majority of perpetrators. The Pakistani government has been accused of being involved in cyber-espionage against India, while cyber criminals in India have also committed crimes against Pakistan.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes are widespread in Pakistan, occurring across major industries such as petroleum and sugar, and involving fraud and forgery in the banking sector. Tax evasion is rampant: businesses in industries such as tea, tobacco, tyres, automobile lubricants, pharmaceuticals and real estate are cited as top offenders, resulting in annual losses amounting to billions of dollars. Embezzlement is a notable problem too, with politicians and military leaders accused of moving millions of dollars out of the country through offshore companies. The criminal market is dominated by cartels made up of businessmen, political leaders, bureaucrats, military leaders, media owners and judges from superior courts. These groups use their influence over the government and judiciary system to their advantage.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

State corruption related to criminal markets is a considerable problem in the country: political parties and politicians reportedly form relationships with gangs to influence political process, mostly at the provincial level. Accusations of embezzlement, levelled at politicians and military leaders, are commonplace. There are also allegations of

military officials being complicit in certain criminal markets, including drug trafficking.

Criminal networks in Pakistan are also prevalent. These networks engage in various markets such as human smuggling, illegal logging and fauna crimes; they are also involved in human smuggling in Balochistan. In major urban centres, unorganized criminal gangs engage in extortion, kidnapping and fraud. The lack of information about these actors makes it difficult to determine the extent of their operations, but there are likely transnational links to foreign criminal networks, especially in human smuggling.

Pakistan also has a notable presence of mafia-style groups that engage in criminal activities, such as heroin trafficking, non-renewable resource crimes, flora crimes, racketeering and extortion. These groups hold considerable sway in areas like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Karachi. They have influence over political decisions before and after elections, as well as the prison system. With the blurring of actor categories between terrorist, mafia and political groups, coupled with the widespread availability of firearms, mafia-style crime remains a serious issue.

Private sector actors are also involved in criminal markets in various ways. They support human trafficking through bonded labour schemes prevalent in industries like agriculture, workshops and brick kilns. In addition, by concealing illicit activities among legitimate ones, they facilitate criminal markets such as arms trafficking, illegal mining and logging. Businesspeople in profitable sectors like textiles and sugar evade taxes and engage in money laundering using offshore entities, or by using the accounts of low-wage employees. Licensed foreign currency dealers in every city participate in illegal hawala/hundi practices (an alternative remittance system that operates outside formal banking channels) which also contributes to money laundering.

Foreign actors in criminal markets have minimal economic and/or financial power, and there is little information available about the extent to which they may extract state resources. There are also growing concerns of the Taliban increasing its support for the insurgency in Pakistan of an affiliated group called Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Chinese gangs in the country are also reported to be 'very organized' – these human trafficking gangs operate with the support of Pakistani counterparts, luring Pakistani women to China through marriage proposals, where they are forced into the sex trade or domestic servitude.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Pakistani government has demonstrated a willingness to respond to organized crime, but its efforts have been incoherent and biased towards distinguishing between anti-Indian extremist groups and others. The country's military has historically wielded a strong influence on democratic institutions, and multiple high-ranking military officers have been appointed to government positions. In fact, the military is considered more powerful than elected politicians and able to influence the outcome of elections. A deteriorating economy, increasing political instability and the resurgence of terrorism and violence have all led to weak political leadership, poor governance and – due to galloping inflation and unemployment – an increasingly resentful public. Pakistan has a number of integrity systems in place to safeguard against corruption. However, following a change in government, these systems were compromised due to drastic amendments made to accountability laws, which limit the jurisdiction of agencies and reduce their role in investigating corruption. The military runs its own parallel anti-corruption and accountability institutions, but these are considered to be woefully inadequate. Corruption is seen as undermining the government's ability to address criminal markets, as bribed public servants may facilitate

the movement of illicit goods or interfere with arrests and prosecutions.

Pakistan has signed several international conventions against transnational crime, but the country has yet to ratify the three UN protocols on Trafficking in Persons, Migrant Smuggling and Firearms Trafficking. Pakistan has formed strong relationships with China and Turkey through the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative (a global infrastructure development project), although the country has also had a history of complicated relationships with its allies due to Pakistani policies that often have more than one objective. Policies are often influenced by Pakistan's hostility towards India – the dominance of this issue has led to complications in international cooperation against organized crime and violent extremism. Pakistan's penal code covers several forms of organized crime, including participation in organized crime, unlawful assembly, and human trafficking. There is also legislation pertaining to sex and labour trafficking: both practices have been criminalized, with prescribed prison sentences. The government is working to revise narcotics legislation. The Torture and Custodial Act, which criminalizes torture and ill-treatment carried out by security officials, was enacted in 2022. Despite the existence of a robust legal framework and continuous efforts

to update existing legislation, the effective enforcement of these laws continues to be problematic.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Pakistan's judicial system is plagued by inefficiency and corruption, with political and military influences often exerting undue pressure on the courts. The judiciary is widely perceived to be corrupt, ranking as the second-most corrupt institution in the country. Pakistan lacks dedicated courts for addressing organized crime. Conviction rates for human trafficking cases are low as a result, but also because prosecutors are overburdened and judges lack adequate training. The country's prison system is heavily criticized for overcrowding, for being understaffed, and for its lack of medical facilities. Prisons are more punitive than rehabilitative: inmates are often subjected to physical beatings and torture. Different types of offenders are often mixed, which is problematic especially for those linked to organized crime and violent extremist organizations. In prison, these individuals can easily recruit and radicalize new members.

The police force is widely regarded as the most corrupt institution in Pakistan. Political interference and a lack of operational autonomy are cited as key factors. Despite various efforts, law enforcement agencies struggle to combat organized crime due to a shortage of resources, the investigating agencies' limited understanding of the syndicates involved, and a lack of a comprehensive combat strategy. Additionally, official complicity in human trafficking remains an ongoing concern.

Pakistan's western borderlands are particularly challenging to monitor and enforce due to rugged terrain and the presence of armed opposition groups, resulting in limited federal authority in the region. Balochistan, especially, is affected by a low-grade insurgency among Baloch sub-nationalists. The province is also affected by human rights violations by state security institutions, which has led to increased lawlessness and insecurity. Pakistani officials have encouraged violent Islamist extremist groups to suppress Balochi resistance, which has further fuelled criminality and terrorism. In addition, reports of Indian involvement and support for Balochi resistance organizations has complicated the conflict even more. Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, deadly clashes along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border have increased, as the Taliban seeks to challenge Pakistan's construction of a security fence. On the India-Pakistan border in Kashmir, the two countries have been engaged in a territorial dispute since 1947, with both sides accusing each other of using proxies to promote violence in the region.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Pakistan has been removed from the grey list for having strategic deficiencies in its anti-money laundering and terrorism financing regulations, but it is still considered a high-risk country. Remittances comprise a substantial proportion of Pakistan's financial sector; only a small portion of the Pakistani population holds a formal bank account. There have been several cases of cash smuggling, illegal money service businesses and drug trafficking, yet few money laundering prosecutions or convictions have been recorded.

Despite efforts to improve the economic regulatory environment, poverty remains a significant challenge in Pakistan, with over a quarter of the population living in poverty and nearly three quarters experiencing some form of poverty in certain regions. While Pakistan has made progress in improving its business climate, it remains an import-dependent economy and was therefore adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in problems related to the balance of payments, currency depreciation, trade deficits and supply chain disruptions. Pakistan is currently struggling with the worst financial crisis since its independence in 1947, which has prompted the country to seek financial and technical assistance from the International Monetary Fund.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Pakistani government has made efforts to increase identification and support for trafficking victims. However, support services are still lacking in many regions, particularly for male victims, and the quality of victim care is often low. This puts victims at risk of being targeted again or returning to their exploitative situation. Pakistan meets few of the mechanisms identified to support victims exiting modern slavery, and witnesses are often unwilling to testify against their traffickers due to threats of violence against them and their families.

In terms of prevention, law enforcement agencies in Pakistan have not adopted a strong preventive approach towards crime. While the response to organized crime tends to be heavy-handed, there is little trust in the police due to the partial application of laws. Pakistan's drug treatment capacity is insufficient, with few clinics nationwide, and there is a need for more non-residential treatment options at provincial level. Moreover, labour inspectors lack training to identify trafficking and have insufficient funding to conduct inspections, with no standard procedures to refer possible cases to the police.

Pakistan has a large number of civil society organizations. These organizations work towards peace advocacy, inter-religious and inter-group dialogue, and they engage in livelihood projects in vulnerable and conflict-affected areas. However, the Pakistani government has been systematically harassing independent journalists, curbing press freedom

and targeting critics of state agencies (particularly the military establishment). Pakistan is considered one of the deadliest countries for journalists, who often face surveillance that could lead to detention and abduction. Female journalists in Pakistan are especially targeted with harassment and online abuse, making it difficult for them to continue their professional work. While a law aimed at protecting journalists has been introduced, it includes vague provisions that could be used to stifle free speech.

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