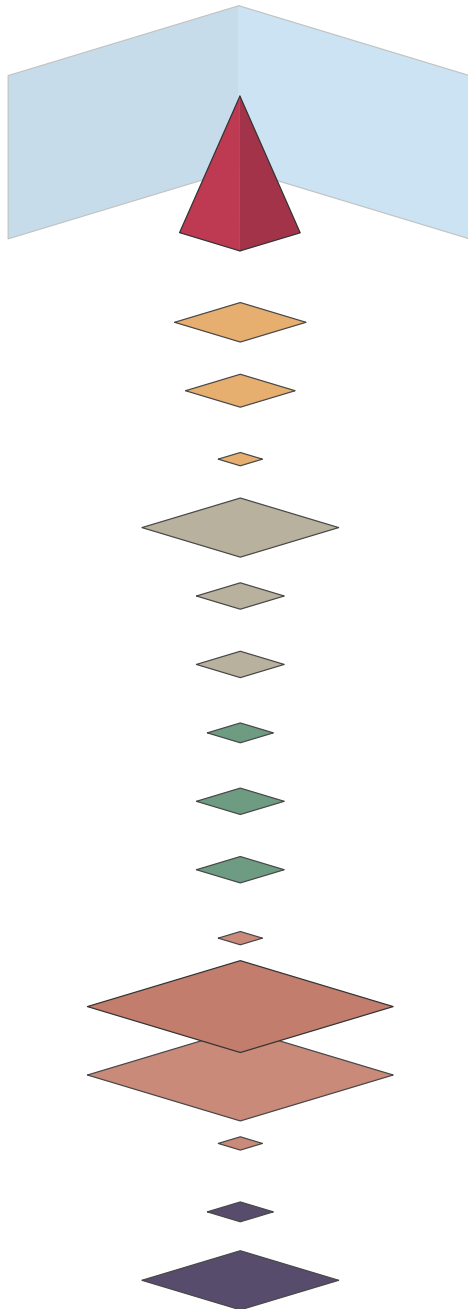




# ST. KITTS AND NEVIS



**3.52**  
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

**167<sup>th</sup>** of 193 countries  
**28<sup>th</sup>** of 35 American countries  
**7<sup>th</sup>** of 13 Caribbean countries



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** **2.83**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	<b>3.00</b>
HUMAN SMUGGLING	<b>2.50</b>
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	<b>1.00</b>
ARMS TRAFFICKING	<b>4.50</b>
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	<b>2.00</b>
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	<b>2.00</b>
FLORA CRIMES	<b>1.50</b>
FAUNA CRIMES	<b>2.00</b>
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	<b>2.00</b>
HEROIN TRADE	<b>1.00</b>
COCAINE TRADE	<b>7.00</b>
CANNABIS TRADE	<b>7.00</b>
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	<b>1.00</b>
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	<b>1.50</b>
FINANCIAL CRIMES	<b>4.50</b>



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** **4.20**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	<b>1.00</b>
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	<b>6.00</b>
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	<b>6.50</b>
FOREIGN ACTORS	<b>5.50</b>
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	<b>2.00</b>

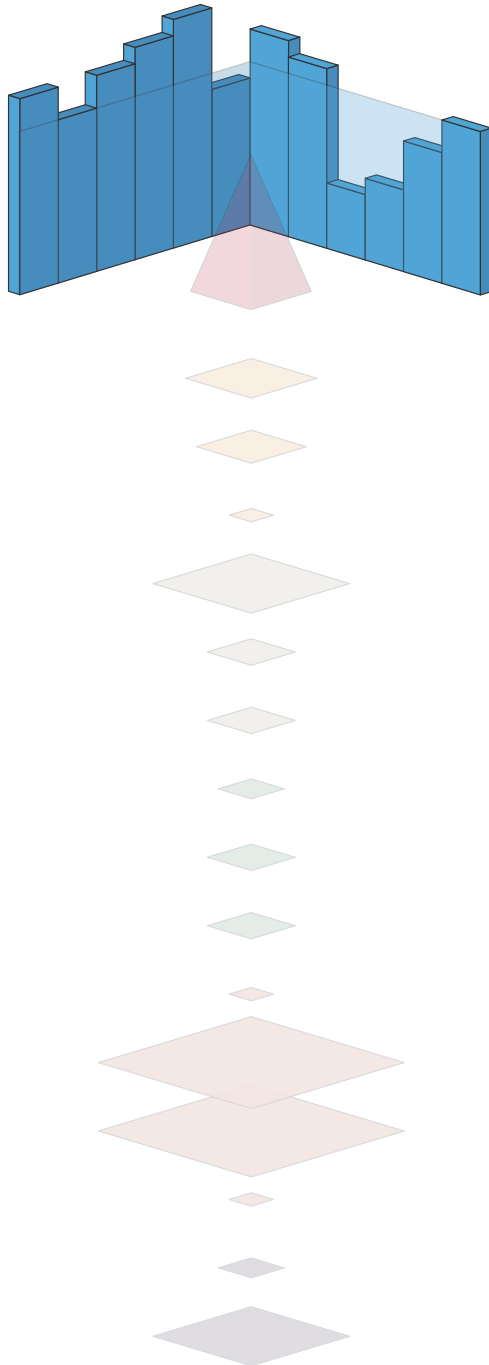


**5.00**  
**RESILIENCE SCORE**





# ST. KITTS AND NEVIS



5.00

## RESILIENCE SCORE

91<sup>st</sup> of 193 countries

17<sup>th</sup> of 35 American countries

10<sup>th</sup> of 13 Caribbean countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	2.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	2.50
PREVENTION	4.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	5.00



3.52

## CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 2.83



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.20



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# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

St. Kitts and Nevis serves as a transit point as well as a destination country for human trafficking, primarily for a relatively small forced-labour and sexual-exploitation market, with victims often coming from other countries in the Caribbean. In particular, human trafficking for the purpose of child sexual exploitation constitutes a serious problem. However, there is no evidence of consolidated networks or structured groups working in this market.

There is little evidence of human smuggling in the country, although some reports suggest St. Kitts and Nevis might be used as a transit point for such operations. Similarly, there is limited indication supported by data or research that extortion and protection racketeering take place within St. Kitts and Nevis.

### TRADE

St. Kitts and Nevis is a destination and transit country for illegal arms, mostly trafficked into the country hidden in commercial shipping vessels from the US. Strong economic links with the US diaspora facilitates this trade. Internally, illegal arms are smuggled into St. Kitts and Nevis, mainly to meet the demands coming from local gangs. However, an amnesty offered in 2019 led to these groups cooperating with authorities and handing over guns, which resulted in a drop in the homicide rate in the country.

Counterfeit goods appear to be in circulation within St. Kitts and Nevis. There is a lack of data indicating the level in circulation, their source and their markets. Overall, however, the market presents a low-level threat, perhaps sustained only by the tourism industry. Similarly, while there may be some alcohol and tobacco products in circulation due to an illicit trade in excise goods, the market is not considered to be notable.

### ENVIRONMENT

There is no evidence to suggest a flora crime market exists in St. Kitts and Nevis, with limited and sporadic flora crimes reported in the country. Fauna crimes do take place on the country's islands, mainly in the forms of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and sea-turtle poaching. The scale of these and their impact, however, is limited. There is no information available to indicate the presence of a non-renewables criminal market, but some risk of the purchase of precious metals and gems facilitating money laundering does exist.

### DRUGS

St. Kitts and Nevis' strategic geographic location makes the country a key trans-shipment hub for cocaine shipments originating in South America on their way to the US and Europe. Regular direct flights to the UK have also established a new opportunity for criminal networks to traffic cocaine to Europe. Traffickers transport cocaine through the Caribbean Corridor, primarily by maritime and aerial smuggling methods. This has led to a significant cocaine market in St. Kitts and Nevis, with foreign actors controlling the most pervasive criminal economy in the country and local groups organizing transport and logistics. However, local cocaine consumption is very limited.

The cannabis trade is well established and contributes towards other criminality regarding the supply both within the islands and onwards. The level of drug-related violence is very high. Cannabis is decriminalized for recreational, religious and medicinal use, with reports suggesting the vast majority of the domestic crop is consumed locally. With the global decriminalization of the drug, a wider client base will likely develop within visiting tourists.

There is no evidence to suggest that other drug markets, either heroin or synthetic drugs, exist in St. Kitts and Nevis.

### CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

It is possible that the increasing digitalization of St. Kitts and Nevis could open vulnerabilities to cyber-dependent crimes or the opportunity for criminals to utilize cyberspace to facilitate crime, although there is no data to suggest this. Moreover, the proliferation of virtual assets and virtual assets service providers has also resulted in further vulnerabilities to cyber-dependent crimes. Overall, however, the level of cyber-dependent crimes affecting St. Kitts and Nevis is relatively unknown given the lack of research and data available on this threat.

### FINANCIAL CRIMES

St. Kitts and Nevis, a small international financial centre considered as a tax haven, has provided a fertile environment and regulatory framework for major tax evasion schemes, which present the most prevalent form of financial crime in the country.

### CRIMINAL ACTORS

While there is no evidence of mafia-style groups operating in St. Kitts and Nevis, criminal markets seem to be controlled by loose criminal networks and small gangs, all of which tend, mostly, to operate around the country's borders and

have links to South American crime organizations. While these networks and their activities generate violence in the country, the firearms amnesty initiative has led to a decrease in tension amongst gangs. Whilst this has not led to a reduction in criminal networks, it has reduced the negative impact on society.

State actors are actively involved in enabling money laundering in the country, a crime that is also facilitated by the Citizenship by Investment programme, which has provided organized crime groups with the opportunity to purchase local passports. In addition, some foreign nationals

who choose St. Kitts and Nevis as a holiday or residential destination are involved in drug trafficking. Even though these groups do not have a significant influence over the criminal landscape of the country, they are reported to have established semi-permanent operation bases to facilitate drug trafficking activities. As for the private sector actors, while there is no available information to suggest their involvement in criminal markets in St. Kitts and Nevis, they are known to be involved in financial crimes, especially tax evasion.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Although authorities in St. Kitts and Nevis have been somewhat successful in curbing violence, the use of the country as a safe haven for money laundering is still a considerable challenge to governance, particularly due to the country's strong bank-secrecy laws and lack of transparency when it comes to legal entities. The country's Citizenship by Investment programme, which also allows travel to 140 countries – including Canada, the UK and those within the EU – without a visa, is believed to facilitate systematic corruption and fraud. Nevertheless, St. Kitts and Nevis has a set of anti-corruption laws in place, which for the most part appear to be enforced adequately. Assessments also point to fair transparency in governance. Legislation on freedom of information has been passed rather recently in the country and an anti-corruption body, the Integrity Commission, has a mandate in raising public awareness and in promoting the fight against corruption. According to St. Kitts and Nevis' January 2021 National Security Strategy, eradicating corruption in the private sector is one of the government's key strategic goals.

St. Kitts and Nevis has signed and ratified a number of international treaties pertaining to organized crime. The country is also open to international cooperation, as illustrated by the programmes currently in place, funded by the UK, the US and the EU, to improve law-enforcement and intelligence-gathering capacities. National laws also cover crimes related to organized crime, although many pieces of legislation need revising.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

St. Kitts and Nevis' justice system seems to be independent and not affected by high levels of corruption, although investigations and successful prosecutions against organized crime groups are still rare. The penitentiary system suffers

a number of challenges, including overcrowding, mainly due to the high numbers of inmates in pre-trial detention.

Although St. Kitts and Nevis has no law enforcement unit specializing in organized crime, with the exception of one for narcotics, the police boast good levels of public trust. Nevertheless, there are indications of law enforcement in the country being influenced by the political elite. Despite the natural vulnerabilities to organized crime it faces, St. Kitts and Nevis is broadly capable of policing its borders.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

St. Kitts and Nevis has an operational financial intelligence unit, along with established law-enforcement cooperation mechanisms related to money laundering and a mechanism for the identification and forfeiture of assets obtained illegally. Nevertheless, the country remains vulnerable to money laundering because of the lack of transparency regarding the beneficial ownership of legal entities and its strict secrecy laws. Moreover, illegal cash continues to move across the country predominantly through air travel, creating further vulnerabilities for money laundering. Thus, the overall risk of money laundering is very high.

The economy in St. Kitts and Nevis is reliant on tourism, its Citizenship by Investment programme, and offshore banking. Nevertheless, St. Kitts and Nevis uses transparent policies and effective laws to foster competition and establish clear rules for foreign and domestic investors in the areas of tax, labour, environment, and health and safety.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness protection in St. Kitts and Nevis is minimal, although these are both considered essential due to the relatively high number of murders of witnesses. The country has, however, several prevention programmes aimed at tackling the root causes of crime, including the social environment in which the perpetrators live, with these having yielded positive results in reducing the homicide rate over time.

Civil society organizations play a key role in crime prevention, particularly in areas including human trafficking, drug consumption, arms trading and law-enforcement training. Although the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, the state owns the only television channel in the country and the opposition is said to face some restrictions to its access. Defamation is a criminal offence and some journalists reportedly self-censor in order to avoid pressure from the authorities.

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