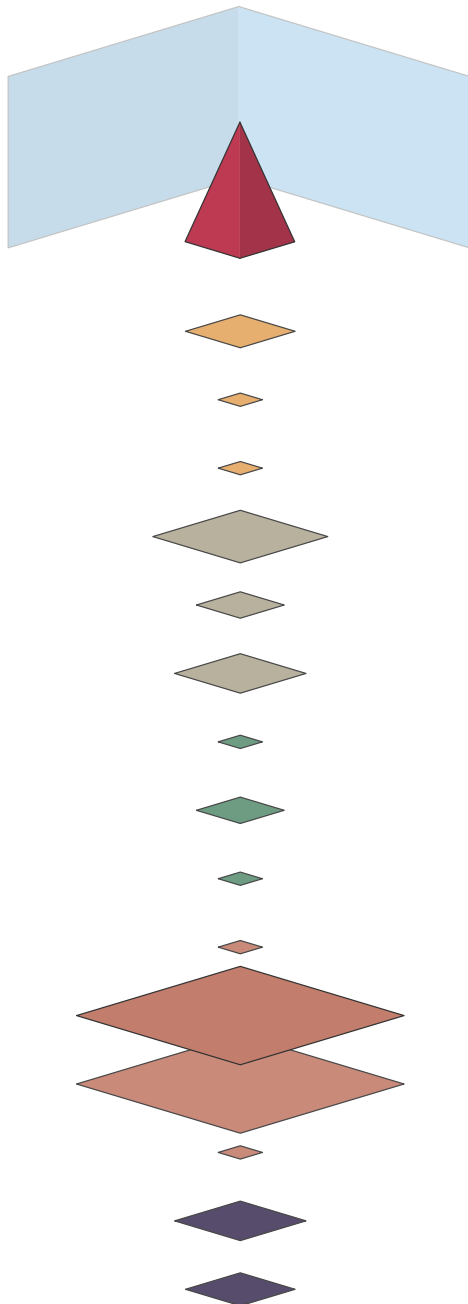




ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



3.08
CRIMINALITY SCORE

174th of 193 countries
31st of 35 American countries
9th of 13 Caribbean countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS **2.67**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	2.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	1.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	1.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	2.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.00
FAUNA CRIMES	2.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	1.00
HEROIN TRADE	1.00
COCAINE TRADE	7.50
CANNABIS TRADE	7.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	1.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	3.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	2.50



CRIMINAL ACTORS **3.50**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	2.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.00

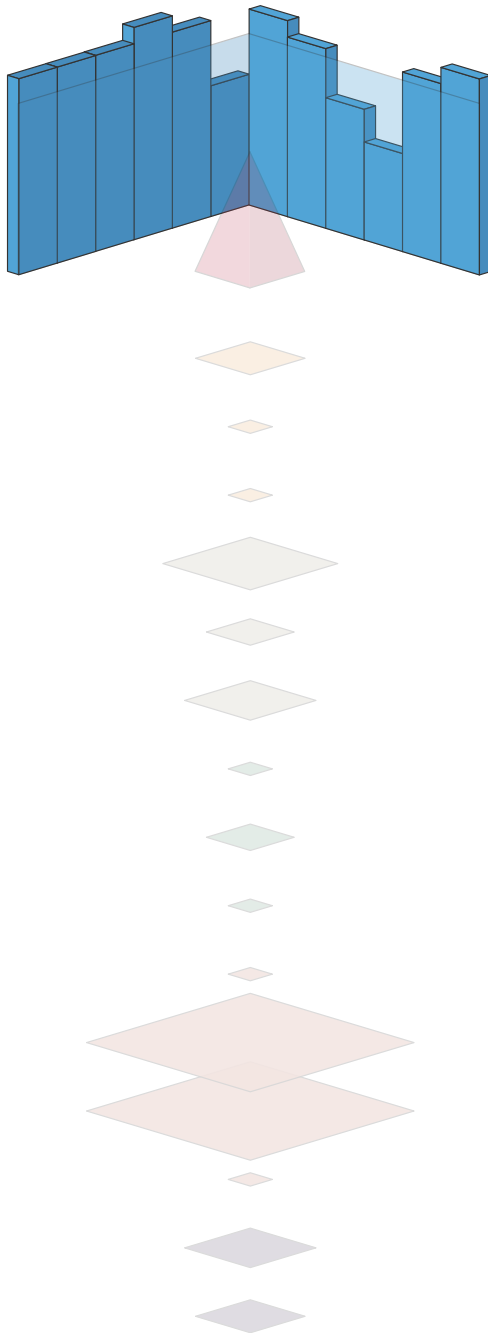


5.38
RESILIENCE SCORE





ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



5.38

RESILIENCE SCORE

67th of 193 countries

12th of 35 American countries

5th of 13 Caribbean countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	6.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	4.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	6.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.00
PREVENTION	5.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	6.00



3.08

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 2.67



CRIMINAL ACTORS 3.50



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Although traffickers exploit Vincentian and foreign victims domestically and abroad, the human trafficking market appears to be limited in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Reportedly, women from abroad are sexually exploited in the country, and there are concerns regarding the facilitation of child sex trafficking by parents and caregivers. Foreign workers originating in the Caribbean, South America or Asia may be subjected to forced labour in St. Vincent and the Grenadines or while in transit. Both men and women have allegedly been forced into labour, mostly in agriculture, and the potential use of forced labour in cannabis production by drug traffickers has been flagged. Employees of foreign-owned companies in the country may also be vulnerable to labour exploitation.

Due to its small population, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is not an important market for human smuggling in the Caribbean. There is very little evidence to suggest the presence of human smuggling as a criminal market. Moreover, there are no reports of extortion or protection racketeering in the country.

TRADE

Arms trafficking exists, but has not reached a significant level in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic reportedly shifted the arms trafficking dynamics, with cannabis increasingly being bartered in exchange for high-quality arms from Trinidad and Tobago. Currently, however, arms trafficking is mostly driven by the cocaine trade and the necessity of those involved to protect their drug stockpiles. The country is also used as a transit point in trafficking arms from the US and Canada to South America. As with other countries in the region, the availability of weapons is related to violence and high homicide levels. The country has no legislation criminalizing the possession of unlicensed firearms or ammunition, which facilitates a parallel market and possession of firearms.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, like other Caribbean countries, is affected by a moderate flow of counterfeit goods including, but not limited to, pharmaceutical items, jewellery, clothing, food, cosmetics and electronics that are available both offline and online. However, it remains a relatively small-scale activity. Slightly more prominent is the illegal trade of excise goods, as local smuggling networks use the country's porous borders to illicitly land contraband products on the coast of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and transport them within the country.

However, the scope and scale of this criminal market is still small with limited impact.

ENVIRONMENT

While the country has suffered from deforestation and poor land use, there is minimal evidence to suggest that a flora crimes market exists in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Fauna crimes are not a large market by regional standards, but do nonetheless exist. In particular, mainly foreign actors are known to travel to St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the purpose of trafficking Union Island geckos abroad, mostly to Europe. Moreover, although some individuals have been accused of illegally importing diesel from Venezuela with the help of Venezuelan fishermen, an organized illegal market for non-renewable resource crimes has not been consolidated in the country.

DRUGS

While there are no indications to suggest that a heroin trade exists in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the cocaine trade is well established. The island chain's sparse population and limited law enforcement presence makes it vulnerable to cocaine trafficking. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a transit for cocaine coming from South America and bound for Europe, the US and other parts of the Caribbean. The Grenadine islands continue to be a stronghold for Venezuelan crime groups, with cocaine shipments from Venezuela to the Grenadines increasing at the expense of shipments to St. Lucia, likely due to groups trying to minimize the risk of interception. For the most part, crime groups organize Venezuelan fishing vessels to offload bulk quantities of cocaine in coastal waters. The drugs are then collected and stockpiled for onward loading onto pleasure crafts that are predominantly destined for Europe.

The country is also a transshipment point of South American cannabis to the US, Europe and other parts of the Caribbean. This specifically relates to specialist high-grade South American cannabis known as 'Creepy'. In addition, St. Vincent and the Grenadines maintains cannabis cultivation for traditional, medicinal and religious purposes, which was regulated in 2018. It is also the largest cannabis producer in the Caribbean, after Jamaica. While possession and consumption of small quantities of marijuana was decriminalized in the country, most cannabis grown in St. Vincent is smuggled to other Caribbean countries via maritime routes because no legal regional market exists.

As a transshipment point for drugs to the US and Europe, it can be inferred that the synthetic drug trade in the country uses and benefits from the same structure of larger cocaine and cannabis relationships and flows. However,

the market continues to be locally negligible and confined to tourist areas only.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

In line with the global trend, the rate of cyber-dependent crime is increasing every year. Some of the most common cyber-dependent crimes in the country are cyber-attacks, online hacking, cryptocurrencies fraud and ransomware attacks. Cryptocurrency fraud is increasingly in the country. However, the relatively slow internet networks and limited technology, combined with a small population that has little wealth, make this jurisdiction an unattractive target for cybercriminals.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has had several cases of financial fraud, although the impact is still limited compared to that of other criminal markets. Syndicates of criminals have deprived people of money through misleading, deceptive or other non-violent illegal practices. In particular, online scammers have advertised fake high-yield, low-risk investment opportunities in newspapers and radio promotions, or on the internet. Citizenship by investment schemes also create vulnerabilities for illicit financial activities in the country.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The international community has at times accused St. Vincent and the Grenadines of not doing enough to combat organized crime. However, the government has introduced considerable changes in cannabis legislation and has focused on youth policies and environmental issues. As emphasized earlier, corruption in the country is low. The government is perceived as open and transparent, with leadership holding sessions with citizens on matters of concern. Nevertheless, access to information is rather poor, as legislation passed in 2003 on freedom of information has not yet been fully implemented. Notably, there is no active legal mechanism that requires public officials to declare income, assets or gifts.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is party to key international conventions and treaties pertaining to organized crime, with the exception of the UNCAC. Nevertheless, the country has ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The country is open to international cooperation and is working to improve intelligence sharing with counterparts. Furthermore, the country is a member

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Foreign actors – primarily Venezuelan groups specializing in cocaine trafficking – are prominently involved in crime in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. They often arrive in the country illegally by sea and work exclusively with local traffickers to avoid detection. They allegedly have a stronghold in some communities, as they offer people financial rewards in exchange for facilitating offshore to onshore transportation of cocaine shipments.

While there are many gangs operating in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, very few are mafia-style groups with a hierarchical structure and territorial control. The organized crime landscape in the country is dominated instead by loose criminal networks. Prior to the 2018 reforms, criminal networks were mainly linked to trafficking of cannabis, but this has since changed. Currently, less structured networks operating predominately on the Grenadine islands are engaged in human and drug trafficking.

High-level corruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines appears to be minimal, if present at all. There is no evidence to suggest that state-embedded actors are directly involved in criminal markets or organized crime more generally. Private sector actors are reportedly engaged in illicit activities, including financial crimes and money laundering.

of the Regional Security System, under the framework of which Caribbean partner states work together to prevent smuggling, control immigration, protect fishing, control pollution and prevent threats to national security. The country's laws on human, drug and arms trafficking face criticism for not fully complying with international standards and for allowing inadequate sentencing. However, St. Vincent and the Grenadines recently passed legislation regarding cannabis production and consumption including medicinal, traditional and religious practices.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines builds on UK law, but is antiquated and in need of reform. Limited financial resources and institutional weakness put a strain on the system's capacity, including that of law enforcement, to effectively counter organized crime. Even though the judicial system is relatively independent and due processes and legal rights are respected in practice, there is a significant case backlog, which has led to prolonged pretrial detention. The protracted judicial process is

believed to have allowed some criminals to reoffend while out on bail awaiting trial. There are no reports of gangs controlling either of the country's two prisons. However, prison facilities remain understaffed and have little space to separate non-compliant and juvenile prisoners.

Police forces have limited human and financial resources and reports of police abuse have been registered. Nevertheless, dedicated maritime intelligence and vessel search units have been established with funding from the EU and training provided by UK's border force. Moreover, the Enforcement Division of the Customs and Excise Department has been applying preventative and enforcement measures to protect intellectual property rights, which includes the detention, seizure and forfeiture of counterfeit goods. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit is mandated to investigate human trafficking – not an easy task given that the country's geography and topography make its borders vulnerable and difficult to monitor and police.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The authorities have made efforts to tackle money laundering. Arguably, the country has comprehensive anti-money laundering legislation, with a medium risk of money laundering. The government has established a Financial Intelligence Unit to prevent and counter money laundering, terrorist financing and other serious financial crimes in the country. However, doing business in the country is difficult, with trade and customs regulations posing the biggest constraints to the country's integration into the global market.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The country has been criticized for its lack of programmes to protect human trafficking victims. There is very limited data available, despite the fact that some improvements have been registered. Although the government does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it is making efforts to do so. Among these are increased training of the police, the addition of an NGO as a member of the anti-trafficking unit, the updating and funding of an anti-trafficking national action plan and expanded public-awareness campaigns. Civil society groups seem to actively participate in assistance and prevention activities. However, the lack of legislation that complement protection programmes is a major obstacle. Regarding drug use, St. Vincent and the Grenadines does not promote national prevention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation or social integration measures and programmes. The country neither has a comprehensive and balanced drug demand reduction approach, nor does it promote nationally recognized standards on drug use prevention.

Freedom of media and expression are usually upheld in practice. The state owns the main local broadcaster and concerns have been raised about the level of access given to the political opposition. However, several private newspapers operate consistently, and news consumers also have access to foreign media and online outlets. Nevertheless, journalists remain vulnerable to vaguely worded criminal and civil defamation laws, which stipulate significant fines and prison time for those who are found guilty.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.