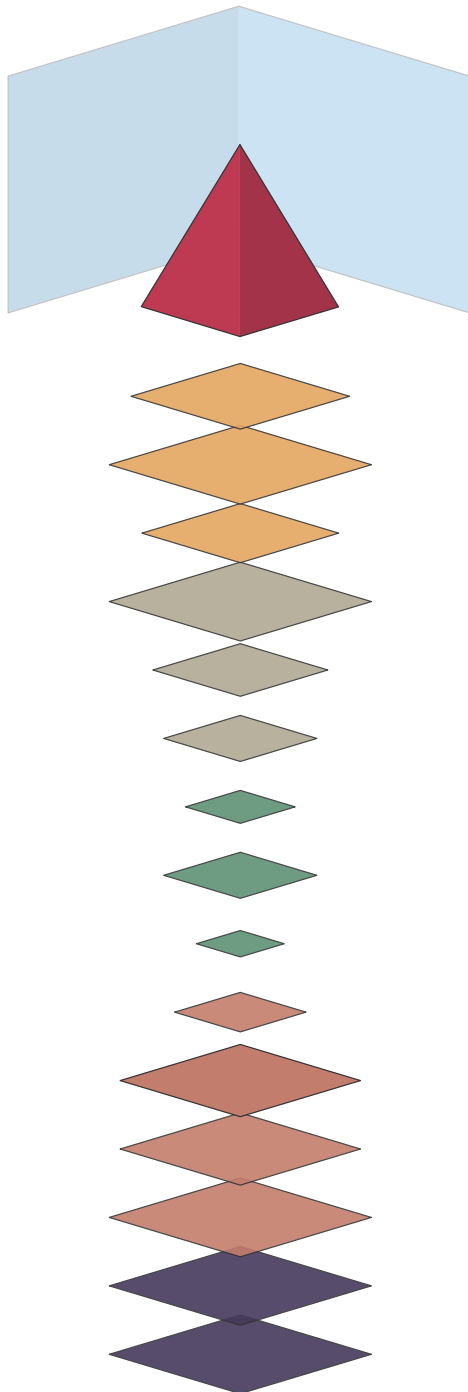


SWEDEN



4.70

CRIMINALITY SCORE

118th of 193 countries

24th of 44 European countries

1st of 8 Northern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

4.60

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 5.00

HUMAN SMUGGLING 6.00

EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING 4.50

ARMS TRAFFICKING 6.00

TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS 4.00

ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS 3.50

FLORA CRIMES 2.50

FAUNA CRIMES 3.50

NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES 2.00

HEROIN TRADE 3.00

COCAINE TRADE 5.50

CANNABIS TRADE 5.50

SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE 6.00

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES 6.00

FINANCIAL CRIMES 6.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.80

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS 5.00

CRIMINAL NETWORKS 6.00

STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS 2.50

FOREIGN ACTORS 6.50

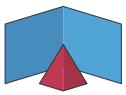
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS 4.00



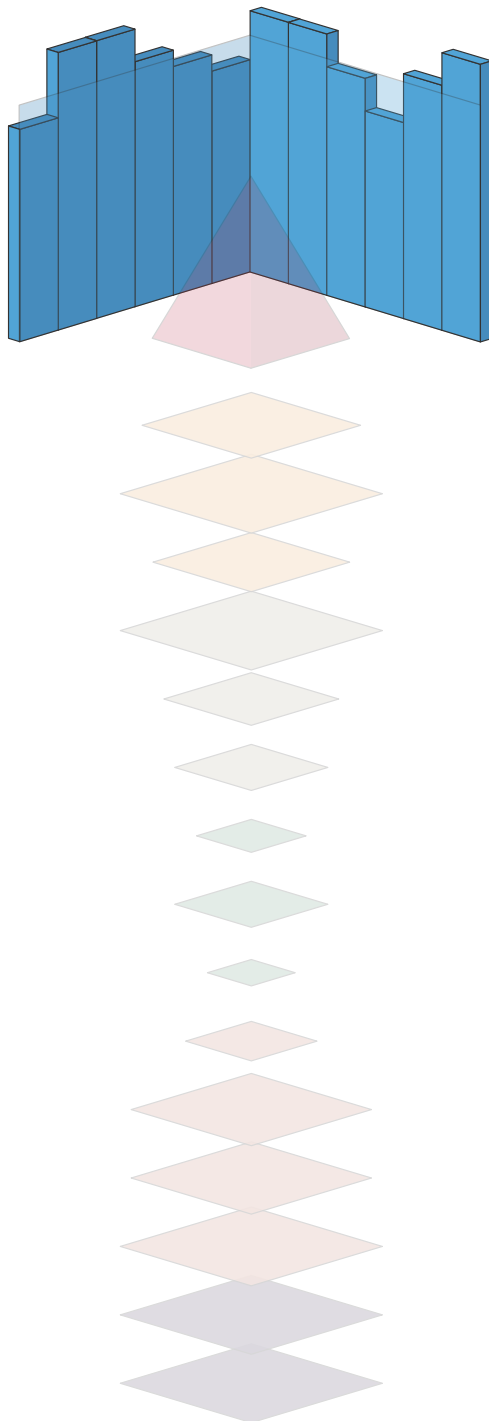
7.46

RESILIENCE SCORE





SWEDEN



7.46

RESILIENCE SCORE

17th of 193 countries

13th of 44 European countries

7th of 8 Northern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	8.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	6.00
PREVENTION	7.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	8.50



4.70

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.60



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.80



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Sweden has a moderate human trafficking market. Cases of forced prostitution and abuse of smuggled individuals working under sub-standard conditions have been noted in the country. Sex trafficking remains the most prevalent form of trafficking: most cases involve women and children from West Africa and Eastern Europe. Victims of labour trafficking, who largely originate from Eastern Europe, East Asia, and West Africa, face exploitation in the service, cleaning, and construction industries, as well as in the agricultural sector. Additionally, the private delivery industry (messengers and food delivery drivers) has seen an increase in exploitative practices. Asylum-seekers from Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and South America (and many stateless individuals) are at risk of trafficking. Unaccompanied children are especially vulnerable: the majority of suspected child trafficking victims arrive in Sweden from Africa and the Middle East. Historically, most traffickers have the same nationality as their victims and have been part of criminal networks engaged in multiple criminal activities, but recent reports involve traffickers who are actual family members of their victims without any ties to organized crime groups.

Human smuggling is a prevalent issue in Sweden – especially when it comes to political discourse – and the practice has increased over the last few years. Sweden is a popular destination for refugees and asylum seekers due to favourable family reunification policies, support for integration and a generous welfare state. However, the growth of irregular migration and the failure of integration policies have strained social cohesion and created discontent within immigrant populations, causing rising levels of violence between immigrant and host communities. Criminals who are Swedish residents continue to provide a base for the human smuggling market, often aided by the foreign diaspora in the country. Extortion and protection racketeering are relatively limited in Sweden. Such activities are mostly carried out by gangs and family-based criminal networks. Victims of systematic extortion are often entrepreneurs and people with foreign backgrounds.

TRADE

The impact of the arms trafficking market in Sweden remains significant. Organized gangs in major cities frequently use illegal arms and explosives. The increased availability of arms on the black market, and a rising demand for illegal firearms among criminal gangs, are evidenced by a growing number of police seizures and increased reports of illegal

possession and gun crimes. Arms are trafficked into Sweden mostly from the western Balkans, albeit on a relatively small scale. Arms trafficking appears to be inextricably linked to drug trafficking. In late 2022, for example, gang conflicts in Stockholm arising from a drug turf war, evolved into a cycle of revenge attacks.

The sale of counterfeit medicine via illegal online pharmacies is an increasing concern in Sweden. These fake drugs can be completely ineffective or they can contain substances that are dangerous to people's health. Most imported counterfeit and pirated products come from China, followed by Thailand and Turkey. There is no evidence of a prominent market for the trade in excise goods in Sweden, but an increase in excise duty on alcohol and tobacco has created incentives to bring in these products illegally. There have been reports of cross-border smuggling of alcoholic beverages, often coming from Germany, but the relation of these operations to organized crime is uncertain.

ENVIRONMENT

The market for flora crimes in Sweden is limited, with exotic timber and other rare plant species being occasionally smuggled into the country, albeit on a limited scale. More importantly, there are allegations of Swedish companies failing in their due diligence and sourcing illegally harvested wood from Ukraine. Wildlife crimes, such as the theft and export of eels and protected bird eggs (including rare owl and falcon species) are the most prevalent fauna crimes in the country. Wolf poaching is also a persistent issue, which has caused a decline in wolf numbers. Fishing without permits and illicit hunting also occur. That being said, incidents pertaining to flora and fauna crimes are met with a strong state response.

The illegal non-renewable resources market in Sweden is considered to be small. Oil is an important source of income for crime groups in the south. Illegal activities are mainly carried out by partly legitimate companies with open and legal operations. Furthermore, Swedish-owned companies have been accused of corrupt practices related to non-renewable resources, and involvement in illicit activities abroad.

DRUGS

The heroin market has declined in the past few years as a result of synthetic opioid alternatives. This is part of a decreasing trend since 2018, and a consequence of Swedish law enforcement's hardline approach to combat the heroin trade. Criminal networks that smuggle heroin hide their criminality behind seemingly legal companies and use their flow of goods for smuggling.

The heroin trade might be in decline, but the trade of cocaine in Sweden has steadily increased. That said, the cocaine market is still relatively small compared to other countries in Western Europe. Cocaine is largely shipped into Sweden via the Netherlands, originating in South America. In ports like Rotterdam, the drugs are moved to smaller cargo boats that head to Scandinavian markets. Shipments are offloaded at destination ports like Gothenburg and Uddevalla or dropped overboard en route to be fished out of the water.

Cannabis is the most commonly used drug in Sweden. Local cultivation has increased in recent years, but for the most part, the drug continues to be imported from abroad. The price of hashish and marijuana has remained relatively stable over time. Hashish is mainly smuggled from Morocco and the trade is estimated to generate between €1–1,5 billion per year. Profits from the illegal trade are claimed by organized criminal groups, with foreign actors controlling trafficking channels and smaller domestic groups handling the distribution.

The country's synthetic drug trade is rapidly expanding. Drugs like crystal and 3-CMC have become increasingly common and can easily be bought on the internet. Most seizures have been made at the Toftanäs postage terminal in Malmö, but Swedish customs staff have also stopped large quantities of 3-CMC at terminals in Gothenburg, Jönköping, Västerås and Arlanda. The availability of amphetamines remains high and prices have been slightly declining over the past few years. Synthetic opioid use far exceeds heroin use; deaths attributed to heroin overdose and fentanyl overdose are approaching parity.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crime is a considerable threat in Sweden; ransomware attacks are the most prevalent type of offence. Such attacks (comprising almost half of all severe cyber-attacks in the country) reportedly saw an increase in recent years. There has also been a growing tendency among cybercriminals to threaten the release of sensitive corporate data stolen during illegal cyber operations. Criminal actors are mostly foreigners operating in Russia, North Korea, China and Iran.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The market for financial crime in Sweden is continuously growing. Some of the most common types of financial crimes include attacks on the Swedish value added tax (VAT) system, seizing money in the form of subsidies, and tax evasion. Involvement of organized criminals is also on the rise – these criminals operate through tax-evading companies that use false claims on the national welfare system.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Most organized crime groups and gangs in Sweden are dominated by non-ethnic Swedes from the Balkans and the Middle East, among others. According to reports, foreign-born individuals and their offspring are significantly overrepresented in crime, while foreign groups not based in Sweden – predominantly from eastern Europe – enter the country to conduct burglaries and theft. Organized Roma groups are also increasingly prevalent. However, domestic criminal networks continue to dominate areas in Swedish cities, adding to growing insecurity about their influence in Swedish society. Loose networks mainly operate in larger cities but also maintain a strong foothold in disadvantaged rural areas and smaller cities. The escalation in shootings and explosions in the last few years indicates these groups' propensity towards violence, which has led to a heightened risk for security services.

Biker gangs in Sweden have a history of conflict and criminal activity – such gangs are the most prominent mafia-style group in the country. However, there are a number of other organized groups across the territory – some with ethnic, clan-type structures and others with recognised branding. State-embedded criminal actors are not a problem in Sweden. Corruption is present at municipal level and within central government, but it is limited and its connections to organized crime are questionable. Private-sector criminal actors are not very active in the country, but allegations of money laundering within Sweden's banking sector cast a shadow on the country's financial institutions.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Sweden is among the most stable countries in the world. However, the government has been criticized for its slow response to growing problems related to organized crime. Lack of strategies to prevent violence, shortage of police officers and a lack of resources to address low-priority crimes are some of the gaps that remain unaddressed. That said, the government recently expanded measures to combat gang crime by enhancing collaboration between various government agencies. Still, organized crime and violence are spreading across the suburbs of Sweden's largest cities – a trend that shows little signs of abating. Similarly, although transparency and accountability in the Swedish state apparatus remains high, recent surveys suggest that corruption is increasing. Since organized crime was largely absent in Sweden's history and has been identified as a recently expanding phenomenon, mechanisms to prevent corruption and the influence of organized crime remain largely underdeveloped compared to states that have a greater historical experience of dealing with such crimes.

Sweden is considered a reliable and cooperative international partner. Since the recent increase in gang shootings, there is a growing willingness for international cooperation. Given the international characteristics of the crime areas in Scandinavia, and their links with other networks around the world, the role of INTERPOL's National Central Bureau (NCB) is integral to maintaining national and regional security in Sweden. Sweden is also party to several international anti-corruption conventions, NATO policies and collaborative agreements that address data governance, privacy, digital security and cyber defence. Sweden's legal framework, although strong, has some significant deficiencies. For example, there are no laws addressing racketeering, corruption and identity protection for witnesses. Additionally, the penal code only criminalizes acts by individuals, meaning that companies cannot be prosecuted. With low criminal sentences and limited historical experience of dealing with serious organized crime, Sweden is an attractive haven for organized crime groups. Updates were made to cyber security laws, which will hopefully translate national strategy into tangible actions. The majority of government measures aim to approach cyber security with a systematic and comprehensive approach: enhancing networks and system security; and boosting law enforcement's capability to prevent, detect and manage cyber-attacks and other IT incidents.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

While largely viewed as incorruptible, Sweden's law enforcement and judiciary bodies remain understaffed, which has contributed to a decrease in public trust in the police. To resolve this, judicial capacity is currently being expanded. There is a shortage of space in the prison system and the government remains committed to increasing resources. While structures focusing on organized crime are in place, the police seem to have problems exercising authority. More police officers have been hired in an attempt to address the issue of understaffed forces, but the ratio of police officers to inhabitants in Sweden remains low. This is amplified by a lack of interest among young people to be part of law enforcement.

Sweden's control of its borders is relatively free from corruption. However, as part of the Schengen Area, there is free movement between member states and the very large border areas make it difficult to control illicit trafficking activities. To curb this, the Swedish government has reintroduced internal border controls based on existing threats to internal security and general order. Sweden's high-income economy, advanced technological infrastructure and large-scale urbanization and digitalization make it more prone to cybercrime. In order to increase the protection of its digital endeavours, the government has established a national cyber security centre to coordinate efforts to prevent, detect and manage cyber-attacks and other IT incidents.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Sweden is highly resilient against money laundering and terrorist financing. It complies with all relevant EU anti-money laundering (AML) directives and has a legal framework in place that requires identification and review of clients, and monitoring of ongoing mandates and separate transactions. This framework enables deviant activities to be uncovered and deepens the examination of circumstances that may indicate money laundering. A government committee has also been appointed to review the capacity of the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority (the information exchange between banks and government authorities) and whether the methods of cooperation and delegation of responsibilities are adequate. As technology changes and new instant payment apps and electronic identification systems are used to conduct fraud and money laundering, the government's work to prevent these crimes is constantly being reinforced.

According to research, over half of Swedish businesses see crime, unemployment and gang presence as a problem for their actives. Extortion in Sweden has grown over the last

few decades: increasing incidents of bombings reported in the media are likely indicators of this problem. Criminals are increasingly starting companies to abuse the Swedish welfare system for money. They often move in a grey area between illegal and legal activities.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim support is not a primary focus in Sweden. There are serious shortcomings in the government's approach to supporting people with drug problems – as a result, the country has one of the highest proportions of overdose deaths in Europe. When it comes to decriminalization and the legalization of certain drug use, discussions are far less advanced than in most other Western European states; and these discussions tend to be more moralizing in nature rather than pragmatic. Witnesses show increasing unwillingness to participate in criminal court cases, which suggests shortcomings in witness protection measures. That said, the government has initiatives and institutions in place that offer the same witness support services usually given through local organisations, with offices in district and appeal courts throughout the country.

Politically, the will to combat organized crime is high, even if the legislation still falls short. Positive developments include a range of new national initiatives aimed at addressing the issue of children and adolescents who commit crimes. In 2021–22, measures to support authorities and professionals involved with social care for children and young people were also introduced. Other preventive focus areas include the drug trade, the prevention of violence, economic crime and cybercrime. Measures to prevent cybercrime (sensitizing citizens to the risks, improving security measures in

information systems and reporting incidents) are also in place. Additionally, Sweden has regulatory institutions to monitor and analyse economic crime trends, initiate joint action between authorities, and propose legislative changes to curb economic crime. The evasion of excise duties is taken seriously in Sweden: the government has various institutions and regulatory bodies to prevent the illegal handling of excise goods and improve existing legislation.

Civil society in Sweden is free to operate. Moreover, in the wake of a recent increase in shootings, societal groups like religious and ethnic organisations have begun to play a more active role in helping to reduce violence. Local and international NGOs are active in supporting crime victims and promoting developments in crime prevention, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and various women's shelters. Media in Sweden is generally independent but private ownership is highly concentrated: six owners control more than 90% of the daily press. The government usually subsidizes daily newspapers regardless of their political affiliation. Reporters covering organized crime are usually subjected to intimidation, and during the pandemic Swedish authorities prevented the media from accessing state documents about how the crisis was being managed. Despite this, Sweden ranks very highly with regard to media independence – there is a media ombudsman to address complaints and ethical issues.

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.