

PRESS RELEASE

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GAP BETWEEN CRIMINALITY AND RESILIENCE IS WIDENING, SAYS 2025 GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

Resilience is plateauing amid the growth of non-violent crime and a drug market duopoly. But evidence shows that resilience can have a measurable impact on criminality.

10 November 2025, Geneva, Switzerland – Just over a third of all 193 UN Member States (66 countries, or 34%) are characterized by high criminality and low resilience (up from 57 countries in 2023) according to the new Global Organized Crime Index (ocindex.net) released by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). A unique, expert-led assessment of criminal markets, actors, and resilience dynamics worldwide, the third edition of the Index is an x-ray of organized crime in 2024.

Criminal markets are intersecting with global mega-trends, such as dramatic changes in geopolitics, technology, the environment, as well as conflict and instability. “We now have five years of data that enables us to measure trends. This information shows us that organized crime is not only expanding, it is reorganizing”, warns Mark Shaw, Executive Director of the GI-TOC.

While state-embedded actors remain the most pernicious type of criminal actor, foreign criminal groups are gaining ground. Financial crime is the most prevalent criminal market in Africa and Europe and is in the top five markets on all continents.

Central America, South America and Western Asia are the regions most impacted by criminality. While organized crime is getting worse, resilience is plateauing. This is opening a dangerous gap, an opportunity space in which organized crime is flourishing.

“Resilience is not keeping pace with criminality”, warns Laura Adal, Director of the Global Organized Crime Index. “Despite this, the Index data shows us where concrete steps can be taken to close this dangerous and widening gap”.

Key findings:

- Financial crime remains the most prevalent criminal market globally and saw the greatest expansion of any criminal market since 2023.
- Synthetic drugs and cocaine are rapidly transforming world drug markets into a duopoly. Synthetic drugs exert significant to severe influence in around 40% of all countries worldwide, with the situation worsening in 77 out of 193 states since 2023.
- While violence associated with organized crime poses serious threats to security and public safety, there is also a significant increase in non-violent crimes such as financial and cyber-dependent crimes.
- Since 2023, 18 out of 22 regions in the world experienced a worsening of cyber-dependent crime, which shows a growing global footprint of this tech-driven type of crime.
- Counterfeiting, another relatively “invisible” form of crime, is also on the rise, and may continue in this upward trend as consumers with less purchasing power seek cheaper products.
- State-embedded actors remain the most prevalent type of criminal actor. In 80 out of the 193 countries included in the Index data, state-embedded actors exercise severe influence (with a score of 7.5 of out of 10, or higher). This has serious consequences for governance in these countries and the threat of state-led weaponization of organized crime.
- Foreign criminal actors registered the sharpest overall increase since the last Index in 2023. This suggests that criminal groups are increasingly mobile and that there is closer transnational cooperation between them.
- The Index shows that trajectories of crime can be changed. For example, statistically, by strengthening key areas of resilience – such as the judicial system and detention, prevention, and victim and witness support – the influence of state-embedded actors on illicit economies can be reduced in a measurable way.

“The world is at a crossroads when it comes to dealing with illicit economies,” says Shaw. “In addition to being an x-ray of illicit economies, this report should be used as a basis for action to change course in how we deal with the growing harms caused by organized crime.”

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