

A WORLD «DROWNING» IN CRIME...

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A criminal remains a criminal whether he uses a convict's suit or a monarch's crown.

Victor Hugo

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In the tangled maze of global socio-economic relationships, crime is a constant and serious threat, undermining the foundations of societies and hindering social and economic progress. The problem crosses national borders, manifesting itself in different forms and degrees of severity, influenced by various economic, political and social factors.

Although it is recognized that poverty and low living standards are favorable conditions for crime, research shows that the leading developed countries of the world are not only not excluded from the list of countries with high crime rates, but also occupy leading positions in some organized crimes.

The world has undergone significant changes since the onset of the global health crisis triggered by COVID-19. The society gradually adopted a prolonged state of crisis, characterized by sustained instability and insecurity. The resulting situation is characterized by a newly coined term, "permacrisis"¹. This resurgence unveiled a world more fragmented than before, providing fertile ground for illicit economies to thrive. Organized crime swiftly adapted to and was influenced by these fractures in society.

Transnational crime indeed operates as a highly profitable business, with financial gain serving as the primary motivation for engaging in illegal activities.

¹ A new term used to characterize an extended period of instability and insecurity, especially, one resulting from a series of catastrophic events.



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TABLE 1
The overall size of criminal markets²

<i>N</i>	<i>Transnational Crime Category</i>	<i>Estimated annual value (in USD)</i>
1.	Counterfeiting	\$923 billion to \$1.13 trillion
2.	Drug Trafficking	\$426 billion to \$652 billion
3.	Illegal Logging	\$52 billion to \$157 billion
4.	Human Trafficking	\$150.2 billion
5.	Illegal Mining	\$12 billion to \$48 billion
6.	IUU Fishing	\$15.5 billion to \$36.4 billion
7.	Illegal Wildlife Trade	\$5 billion to \$23 billion
8.	Crude Oil Theft	\$5.2 billion to \$11.9 billion
9.	Small Arms & Light Weapons Trafficking	\$1.7 billion to \$3.5 billion
10.	Organ Trafficking	\$840 million to \$1.7 billion
11.	Trafficking in Cultural Property	\$1.2 billion to \$1.6 billion
Total		\$1.6 trillion to \$2.2 trillion

The majority of global crimes are driven by greed, with transnational criminal networks capable of generating substantial profits. Similar to any legitimate business, these networks require access to the international financial system to execute their intricate and widespread operations. However, law enforcement efforts often concentrate on intercepting physical items, such as smuggled drugs or counterfeit goods, rather than tracing and confiscating the profits amassed by criminal networks. Here we can distinguish unorganized (petty fraud, counterfeiting, economic violations in the form of shortchanges, forgery, bribery, etc.) and organized crime, including those associated with corrupt government and municipal officials.

According to a March 2017 report by Global Financial Integrity titled "Transnational Crime and the Developing World", the global transnational crime industry is estimated to be worth between \$1.6 trillion and \$2.2 trillion annually. The report evaluates the size of criminal markets in 11 categories, including drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, trafficking of human organs, trafficking of cultural property, counterfeiting, illegal wildlife crime, illegal fishing, illegal logging, illegal mining, and crude oil theft (Table 1).

Among the illicit activities studied, counterfeiting emerges as the most lucrative, with estimated values ranging from \$923 billion to \$1.13 trillion. Following closely behind is drug trafficking, with estimates ranging from \$426 billion to \$652 billion. Among natural resource crimes, illegal logging is identified as the most valuable, estimated to be worth between \$52 billion and \$157 billion annually. These staggering figures underscore the substantial economic incentives driving transnational criminal enterprises.

Regardless of the illicit industry or security threat, ranging from arms trafficking to illegal timber trade to terrorism, money serves as the common thread. Addressing the challenge at its core — by impeding the movement and concealment of illicit funds — provides a comprehensive solution to these interconnected problems, often treated separately by law enforcement agencies.

The criminal economy³ is a system of economic relations, which is based on providing a small group (structure) of people with excess income coming from criminal activity that arises due to the presence of "blind spots" in the legislation. In economically stable countries, organized crime exploits mainly criminal sources (drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, gambling, prostitution,

² Channing May, Transnational Crime and the Developing World. Global Financial Integrity, March 2017, p. xi, <https://gfinegrity.org/report/transnational-crime-and-the-developing-world>

³ The criminal economy is illegal activities prohibited by criminal law.

TABLE 2

Criminality by continent⁴

REGION	CRIMINALITY	CRIMINAL MARKETS	CRIMINAL ACTORS	RESILIENCE
Asia	5.47 (+0.18)	5.41 (+0.20)	5.53 (+0.15)	4.34 (-0.12)
Africa	5.25 (+0.08)	5.05 (+0.11)	5.45 (+0.05)	3.85 (+0.05)
Americas	5.20 (+0.13)	4.89 (+0.19)	5.51 (+0.08)	4.80 (-0.03)
Europe	4.74 (+0.26)	4.60 (+0.40)	4.88 (+0.12)	6.27 (+0.04)
Oceania	3.23 (+0.18)	3.28 (+0.30)	3.19 (+0.02)	5.55 (+0.09)
GLOBAL AVERAGE	5.03 (+0.16)	4.88 (+0.22)	5.19 (+0.09)	4.81 (-0.00)

etc.). At the same time, a strong and stable state strictly controls the legal sources of excess profits.

The criminal economy, in contrast to the shadow economy, creates products and services that are either fundamentally unacceptable to society (production of counterfeit goods, counterfeiting, pimping, etc.) or are permitted to be produced only by a narrow circle of agents (for example, the state monopoly on the production of a number of toxic substances). This activity, in principle, cannot be legalized; it can only be liquidated.

However, there is a transition over time from local forms of crime to the criminalization of the economic system.

The global trend indicates an increase in levels of criminality, while measures to counteract these threats often fall short. Transnational organized crime is evolving and adapting to exploit vulnerabilities in various regions and markets worldwide.

Moreover, the 2023 Global Index on Transnational Organized Crime results show that the crime rate has increased not only worldwide, but also at the level of individual regions. (Table 2.). The Global Index on Transnational Organized Crime provides insights into these dynamics at both macro and micro levels, allowing for a nuanced

understanding of how criminal economies develop and how resilience measures are implemented in different contexts.

According to the results of the index, the crime rate is the highest in Asia, followed by Africa and the Americas. Europe and Oceania are characterized by more modest crime rates, also falling below the world average.

Indeed, crime rates can vary significantly from one country to another and are influenced by a multitude of factors. For instance, high poverty levels and unemployment rates often correlate with higher crime rates, as individuals facing economic hardship may resort to illegal activities as a means of survival or opportunity. Conversely, countries with strict law enforcement measures and severe penalties for criminal behavior tend to experience lower crime rates due to the deterrent effect of such measures.

Another factor influencing crime statistics in many countries is strong interaction between age and crime, with a peak in criminal activity typically occurring among individuals aged 20 to 30 years old. This age group is often associated with impulsivity, risk-taking behavior, and the search for identity, factors that can contribute to involvement in criminal acts. Other factors

⁴ The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Global Organized Crime Index 2023, Geneva, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Global-organized-crime-index-2023-web-compressed-compressed.pdf>, p. 46.

TABLE 3

The ten countries with the highest and lowest crime index in 2022



Countries with the highest crime index

N	2022 ⁵		N	2024 ⁶	
	Country	Value		Country	Value
1.	Venezuela	83.6	1.	Venezuela	82.1
2.	Papua New Guinea	81.2	2.	Papua New Guinea	80.4
3.	Afghanistan	77.0	3.	Afghanistan	78.4
4.	South Africa	76.1	4.	Haiti	78.3
5.	Honduras	74.2	5.	South Africa	75.5
6.	Trinidad and Tobago	71.4	6.	Honduras	74.3
7.	Guyana	68.9	7.	Trinidad and Tobago	70.8
8.	El Salvador	68.6	8.	Syria	69.1
9.	Jamaica	67.8	9.	Guyana	68.8
10.	Syria	67.5	10.	Peru	67.5



Countries with the lowest crime index

N	2022		N	2024	
	Country	Value		Country	Value
1.	Qatar (#142)	13.8	1.	Qatar (#141)	14.3
2.	United Arab Emirates (#141)	15.1	2.	United Arab Emirates (#140)	14.6
3.	Taiwan (#140)	15.9	3.	Taiwan (#139)	16.1
4.	Isle Of Man (#139)	18.6	4.	Oman (#138)	19.6
5.	Oman (#138)	20.0	5.	Armenia (#137)	21.6
6.	Switzerland (#137)	21.7	6.	Hong Kong (#136)	21.7
7.	Hong Kong (#136)	21.9	7.	Japan (#135)	22.9
8.	Japan (#135)	22.1	8.	Singapore (#134)	23.1
9.	Armenia (#134)	22.1	9.	Bahrain (#133)	24.2
10.	Slovenia (#133)	22.7	10.	Slovenia (#132)	24.2
World average crime index			2024		46.67

such as social inequality, access to education and healthcare, cultural norms, drug availability, and community cohesion also play significant roles in shaping crime rates within a society.

Table 3 shows the 10 countries with the highest crime rates and the 10 countries

with the lowest crime rates in the world. The list of countries with the highest crime rate in the world has been topped by Venezuela (141th place) for years, followed by Papua New Guinea, Afghanistan, Haiti, South Africa, Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, Syria, Guyana and Peru.

⁵ Crime Rate by Country 2024 / <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/crime-rate-by-country> (Date of access: 11.12.2023).

⁶ Data Pendas, Crime Rate by Country - <https://www.datapandas.org/ranking/crime-rate-by-country#map> (Date of access: 12.12.2023).

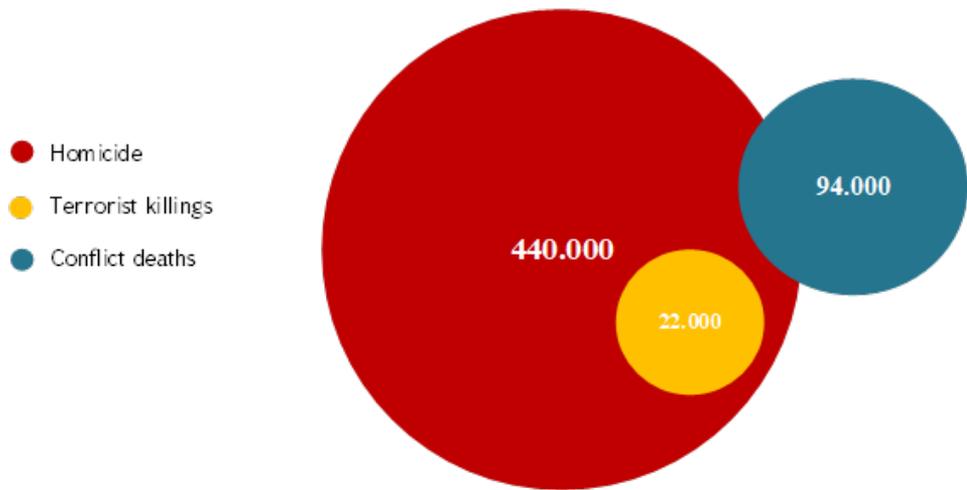


CHART 1

Average annual number of deaths caused by homicide, terrorism and conflict, 2019–2021⁷

Meanwhile, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Taiwan have the lowest crime rates in the world. In addition to Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Slovenia, Armenia (137th place) is also included in the top ten countries with low crime rates, noticeably surpassing bordering neighboring countries in terms of the index. According to the crime index, Georgia ranked 126th in the world, Azerbaijan - 103rd, Turkey - 88th and Iran - 48th.

World experience shows that any crime, in addition to financial and economic losses, is accompanied by a large number of human victims and persecution.

For more than 15 years the absolute number of homicide victims at the global level has fluctuated between some 400,000 and 450,000 victims annually. The year 2021 was considered exceptionally lethal with an estimated 458,000 intentional homicides globally, and an average of 52 people lost their lives to homicidal violence every single hour.

Globally, homicide accounts for many more deaths than conflict-related killings and

terrorist killings combined. An annual average of around 440,000 deaths worldwide were caused by intentional homicide in 2019–2021, of which an estimated 22,000 can be attributed to terrorism. Due to crime-related activities at least a quarter of all homicides were accomplished in 2021. During 2019–2021 the annual average number of conflict-related deaths was 94,000, lives lost in the Ukraine conflict were not included in it⁸.

Even under the current conditions of global development, a large part of the world's population is still subjected to human trafficking or slavery.

Forced labor is widely used in almost all manifestations of organized crime.

Modern slavery manifests in various forms and is referred to by multiple names, including forced labor, forced or servile marriage, debt bondage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, and the sale and exploitation of children. Regardless of its form, modern slavery entails the systematic deprivation of an individual's freedom — such as their ability to choose or reject employment, switch

⁷ UNODC, GLOBAL STUDY ON HOMICIDE 2023, United Nations, New York 2023, pp. 18-19. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/Global_study_on_homicide_2023_web.pdf.
⁸ UNODC, GLOBAL STUDY ON HOMICIDE 2023, United Nations, New York 2023, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/2023/Global_study_on_homicide_2023_web.pdf, pp. 18-19.

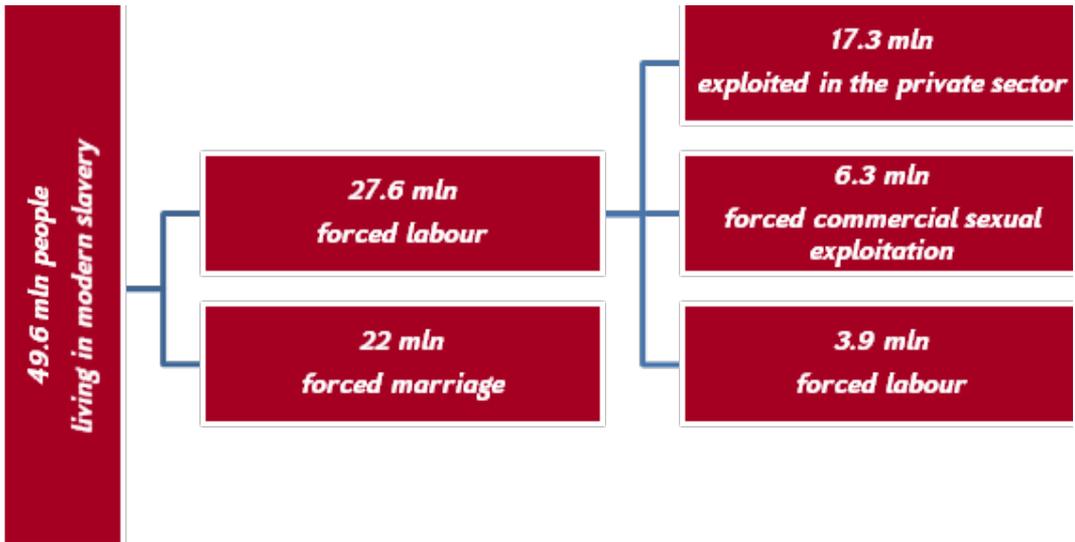


CHART 2

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery in 2021⁹

employers, or make decisions about marriage — in order to exploit them for personal or financial gain.

Geographically, the Asia and Pacific region have the highest absolute number of individuals in modern slavery, while the Arab States exhibit the highest prevalence rates. It is noteworthy that modern slavery persists across all regions, regardless of their economic status. This indicates the pervasive and widespread nature of this human rights violation, necessitating concerted efforts on a global scale to combat and eradicate it.

According to the Global Slavery Index (GSI) 2023, an estimated 50 million people were living in modern slavery worldwide in 2021, equating to a prevalence rate of 6.4 individuals per thousand globally. Alarmingly, over 12 million of these victims are children. Moreover, women and girls represent more than half (54%) of those trapped in modern slavery.

These global estimates, developed by the collaborative efforts of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and

the International Organization for Migration (IOM), serve as the basis for national estimates of modern slavery in 160 countries.

In 2021, among the 10 countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery (per 1,000 of population) were North Korea, Eritrea, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. These countries share similar political, social, and economic traits, with limited safeguards for civil liberties and human rights. Many are located in unstable regions with political turmoil, conflict, or authoritarian rule. Some governments force citizens into labor, including in private prisons or through conscription. Additionally, they often host large refugee or migrant populations vulnerable to exploitation due to lack of legal protections.

The countries with the highest estimated absolute numbers of people in modern slavery are India, China, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey, Bangladesh, and the United States (Figure

⁹ Structured by the author according to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 2022 ISBN: 978-92-2-037483-2, p. 20.

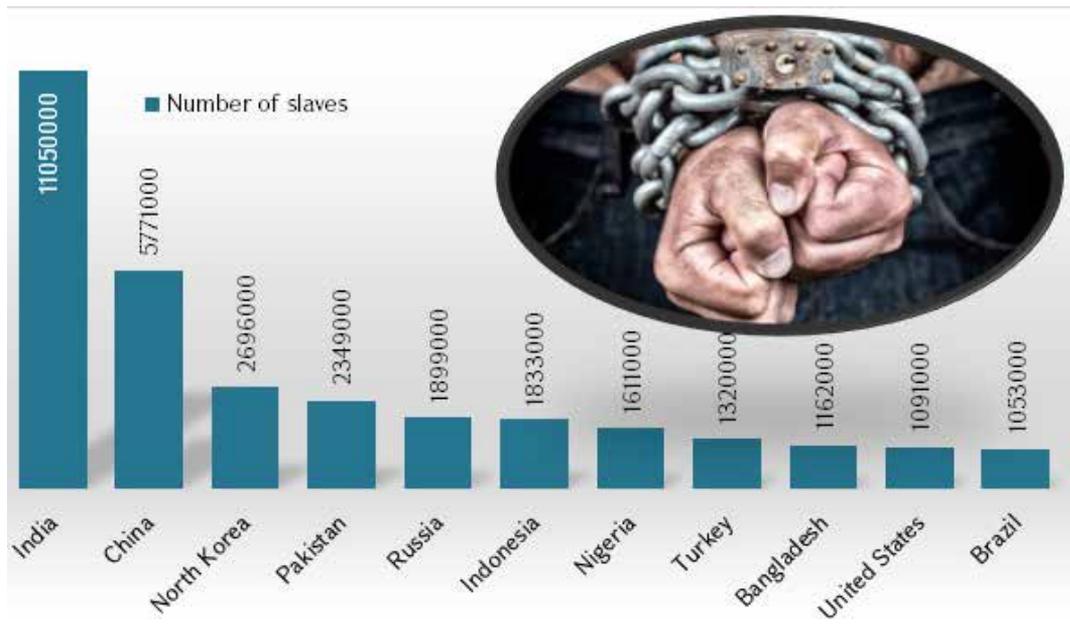


CHART 3

Countries with more than million people in modern slavery¹⁰

3). As the report highlights, six of the countries listed are G20 nations, including India (11 million), China (5.8 million), Russia (1.9 million), Indonesia (1.8 million), Turkey (1.3 million), and the United States (1.1 million), all of which have significant numbers of individuals living in modern slavery. It is noteworthy that most of the countries with lowest prevalence of modern slavery — Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, Japan, and Finland — are also members of the G20¹¹.

Collectively, the G20 countries account for more than half of the global population affected by modern slavery and import approximately US\$468 billion worth of at-risk products annually. Among the G20 nations, the United States stands out as the largest importer of at-risk products, totaling

US\$169.6 billion. Electronics constitute the highest value of at-risk products at US\$243.6 billion, followed by garments (US\$147.9 billion), palm oil (US\$19.7 billion), solar panels (US\$14.8 billion), and textiles (US\$12.7 billion)¹².

It seems that along with the intellectual and spiritual development of society, the scope of criminal activities should have been pushed back, but now and then they have also developed, adapting to modern conditions and challenges. It is noteworthy that, apart from poor and socially disadvantaged countries, a number of leading countries with high incomes also play a serious role in the manifestations of large-scale organized crime.

However, the world needs a rethinking of moral values more than ever.

¹⁰ Walk Free 2023, The Global Slavery Index 2023, Minderoo Foundation. Available from: <https://walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/>, pp. 203-205.
¹¹ Walk Free 2023, The Global Slavery Index 2023, Minderoo Foundation. Available from: <https://walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/>, pp. 2-3.
¹² Walk Free Foundation, The Global Slavery Index 2023: New report links compounding global crises to modern slavery, published 16 June 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-slavery-index-2023>

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Աննա ՓԱԽԼՅԱՆ

«Ամբերդ» հեղափոխական կենտրոնի ավագ հեղափոխող, ՀՊՏՀ, փնտրեսագիտության թեկնածու, դոցենտ

ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԵՎ ՄԱՐՏԱՀՐԱՎԵՐՆԵՐ

ՀԱՆՑԱՎՈՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ «ԽԵՂԴՎՈՂ» ԱՇԽԱՐՀ...

Գլոբալ սոցիալ-տնտեսական փոխհարաբերությունների խճճված թնջուկում հանցագործությունը մշտական և լուրջ վտանգ է ներկայացնում՝ խարխուլելով հասարակությունների հիմքերը և խոչընդոտելով սոցիալական և տնտեսական առաջընթացը: Խնդիրը հատում է ազգային սահմանները՝ դրսևորվելով տարբեր ձևերով և ծանրության աստիճաններով, որոնք ազդում են տնտեսական, քաղաքական և սոցիալական զանազան գործոնների վրա:

Թեև ընդունված է ասել, որ աղքատությունը և բնակչության ցածր կենսամակարդակը նպաստավոր պայմաններ են հանցավորության համար, ուսումնասիրությունները ցույց են տալիս, որ աշխարհի զարգացած առաջատար երկրները ոչ միայն դուրս չեն մնում հանցավորության բարձր մակարդակ ունեցող երկրների ցանկից, այլև որոշ կազմակերպված հանցատեսակներում առաջատար դիրք են զբաղեցնում:

Հիմնաբառեր. *հանցագործություն, հանցավոր շուկաներ, մարդկանց թրաֆիքինգ, ժամանակակից ստրկություն*

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БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ И ВЫЗОВЫ

МИР, «ТОНУЩИЙ» В ПРЕСТУПНОСТИ...

В запутанном лабиринте глобальных социально-экономических отношений преступность представляет собой постоянную и серьезную угрозу, подрывающую основы общества и препятствующую социальному и экономическому прогрессу. Проблема пересекает национальные границы, проявляясь в разных формах и степени остроты под влиянием различных экономических, политических и социальных факторов.

Хотя и признается, что бедность и низкий уровень жизни населения являются благоприятными условиями для преступности, исследования показывают, что ведущие развитые страны мира не только не исключены из списка стран с высоким уровнем преступности, но и занимают лидирующие позиции в некоторых организованных преступлениях.

Ключевые слова: *преступность, криминальные рынки, торговля людьми, современное рабство*