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- NAMIBIA'S CRIME LEVELS 'RELATIVELY LOW'



Suider-Afrika ervaar die grootste uitdagings met fauna-misdaad. FOTO VERSKAF

- **CRIME**

NAMIBIA'S CRIME LEVELS 'RELATIVELY LOW'

Low score for law enforcement, legal system

Despite the fact that Namibia is one of African countries that experiences the least crime, much still needs to be done to improve law enforcement, among other things.

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Namibia is one of the countries in Africa where crime occurs the least, with a crime score of just 4.3 out of 10. Only seven other African countries have lower crime levels.

In addition, Namibia managed to shrink the figure by 0.3% over the past year.

This is according to the Africa Organised Crime Index, which was officially released on 24 November. Namibia is 47th on the list of 54 African countries, where the first place represents the country with the worst crime rate.

The index is compiled by, among others, Interpol, the Institute for Security Studies as well as the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, and is financed by the European Union (EU).

Namibia received just 4.54 for resilience against crime. In terms of this, law enforcement received only 3.5, the legal system four, political leadership and management 4.5 and government's reliability and transparency also only four.

However, Namibia is singled out as one of the countries where an active civil society and the freedom of the media help with resilience against crime. The country also has excellent international cooperation and received a score of seven for this, while local policies and laws are well developed (six).

Foreign elements

Still, it seems foreign criminal elements are causing a headache for Namibia, alongside criminal networks and elements in the state that also seem to be an issue.

Like the wider region, Namibia also suffers from crime when it comes to plant (6.5 out of 10) and animal products (5.5), with a low score when it comes to crime prevention and resilience.

However, Namibia compares favourably to almost all the countries in southern Africa, with only Lesotho's crime score being lower with 3.97. In contrast, the crime scores of countries such as South Africa (7.18), Mozambique (6.2), Zimbabwe (5.47), Zambia (4.73) and even Botswana (4.35) are higher than Namibia's.

South Africa is third on the index of African countries with the most crime, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo in first place and Nigeria in second.

The African country where the least crime occurs is apparently the islands of Sao Tome and Principe, then Ruanda and then Seychelles.

Regional outlook

Southern Africa is the region in Africa that has the lowest levels of crime, despite certain individual countries within the region measuring high on the crime score.

This year, the index awarded the entire region a score of 4.83 out of 10.

Southern Africa is the worst affected by wildlife crimes, probably precisely because it is one of the world's largest homes to wild animals.

Financial crimes are the second largest crime industry in the region, with a widespread occurrence of money laundering, fraud and tax evasion.

However, it is worrying that the most common criminal in the region is apparently connected to the state. Namibia has a score of five, with foreign crime elements and networks being a worse headache and for which a crime score of six and 5.5 have been awarded respectively.

According to the report, it is mainly organised crime syndicates - mostly from countries in Southeast Asia - who work with local representatives and corrupt officials to establish highly organised routes for the smuggling of wildlife products.

While wildlife crimes experienced a temporary hiatus during the Covid-19 pandemic, they increased by 0.3% between 2021 and 2023. All countries in southern Africa, with the exception of Lesotho and Mauritius, experience high levels of wildlife crime.

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