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Southern Africa experiences the greatest challenges with wildlife crime. PHOTO PROVIDED

- **CRIME**

RELATIVELY LITTLE CRIME IN NAMIBIA

Low score for law enforcement, legal system

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

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Namibia is one of the countries in Africa where crime occurs the least, with a crime score of only 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 Index for Organized Crime for 2023, which was officially released on 24 November this year. 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 (ISS) as well as the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime and is financed by the European Union (EU).

This comes despite Namibia receiving just 4.54 out of 10 for resilience against crime. In terms of this, law enforcement only received 3.5 out of 10 points, the legal system 4 out of 10, political leadership and management 4.5 out of 10 and the government's reliability and transparency also only 4 out of 10.

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 7 out of 10 for this, while local policies and laws are well developed (6/10).

FOREIGN ELEMENTS

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

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

However, Namibia compares favorably with almost all the countries in Southern Africa, with only Lesotho's crime score being lower than Namibia's with 3.97/10. In contrast, the crime scores of countries such as South Africa (7.18/10), Mozambique (6.2/10), Zimbabwe (5.47/10), Zambia (4.73/10)

and even Botswana (4, 35/10) much 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 place.

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

REGION

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 fauna crimes (crimes when it comes to animals and products), probably precisely because it is one of the world's largest home of wild animals. Financial crimes are the second largest crime industry in the region, with widespread occurrences 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 5 out of 10 for this, with foreign crime elements and networks being a worse headache and awarded a crime score of 6 out of 10 and 5.5 out of 10 respectively.

FAUNA

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

However, 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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