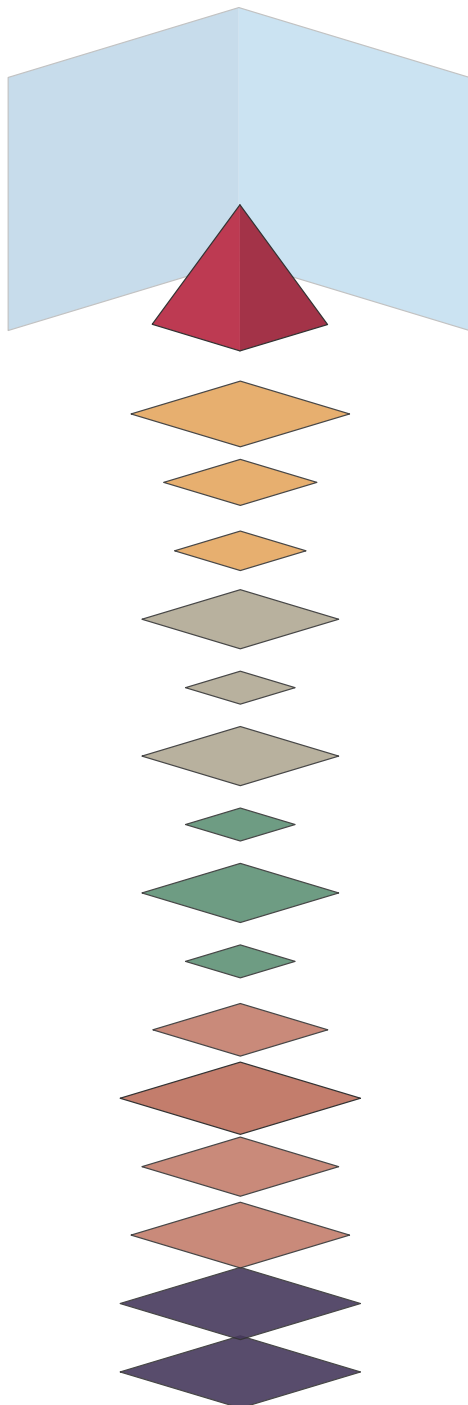
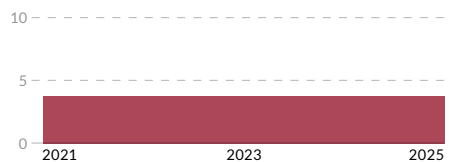


# NORWAY



**3.83**  $\nearrow 0.08$   
**CRIMINALITY SCORE**

**161<sup>st</sup>** of 193 countries -  
**37<sup>th</sup>** of 44 European countries -  
**6<sup>th</sup>** of 8 Northern European countries -



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** **4.17**  $\nearrow 0.07$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	2.50	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.50	$\searrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	2.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FAUNA CRIMES	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.50	$\searrow 0.50$
HEROIN TRADE	4.00	$\searrow 1.00$
COCAINE TRADE	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** **3.50**  $\nearrow 0.10$

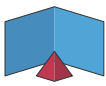
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	1.50	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	2.00	0.00



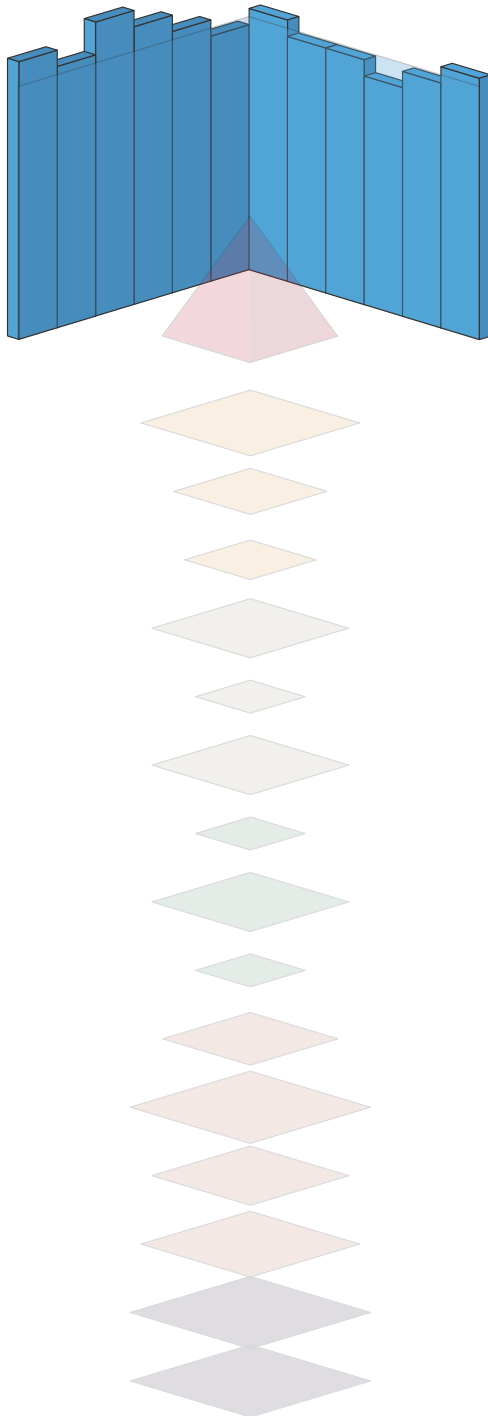
This project was funded in part  
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States Department of State.



ENACT is funded by the European Union  
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# NORWAY



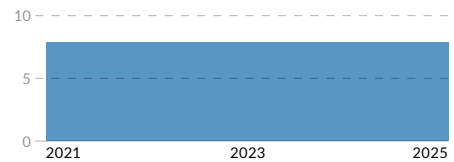
7.92 ↘0.00

## RESILIENCE SCORE

8<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries ↘1

7<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries ↘1

5<sup>th</sup> of 8 Northern European countries ↘1



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	8.50	↗0.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8.00	↘0.50
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	9.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.50	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50	↘0.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	7.50	↗0.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.50	↘0.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	7.00	0.00
PREVENTION	7.50	↗0.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	8.00	0.00



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Funded by  
the European Union

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# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

Norway is both a destination and transit country for human trafficking, which remains a notable illicit market in terms of size and value. Victims of sexual exploitation primarily originate from Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Ukraine and, increasingly, Thailand and Nigeria. Some are further trafficked from Norway to other European countries. Most are women, many with intellectual disabilities, making them particularly vulnerable to abuse. Labour trafficking affects men, women and children, who are exploited in domestic service, construction, restaurants, car repair shops, agriculture and, more recently, the offshore fishing industry. Foreign criminal actors dominate the sex trafficking market, while Norwegian employers and businesses are often implicated in labour exploitation. Traffickers frequently share the same nationality as their victims and lure them through social media and false job advertisements. Links between trafficking and other illicit markets, such as human smuggling and illegal fishing, have intensified labour exploitation, particularly among undocumented migrants. Legitimate Norwegian businesses struggle to compete with those exploiting trafficked workers, distorting economic conditions.

Norway is primarily a destination for human smuggling, which, although considered small-scale, is difficult to quantify due to limited research and the clandestine nature of these operations. The country's cold climate, dispersed urban centres and historically restrictive immigration policies make it less attractive to irregular migrants compared to other parts of Europe. Nevertheless, vulnerable populations from Eastern Europe, West Asia and, more recently, Ukraine, are frequently targeted by smugglers. Many pay high fees to enter Norway covertly, often using fraudulent identification documents, which complicates detection. Foreign criminal networks – often originating from the same regions as their clients – dominate the market, with recent cases involving smugglers from Syria, Morocco and Egypt. The smuggling frequently intersects with human trafficking, as some migrants are later exploited in sectors such as illegal fishing. In response, Norway has implemented measures to detect forged documents and funded awareness campaigns in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Morocco. However, the impact of these efforts on reducing human smuggling remains unclear.

Extortion and protection racketeering in Norway remain relatively limited, mostly confined to criminal networks involved in other illicit activities such as drug trafficking and illegal gambling. Outlaw motorcycle gangs, particularly those affiliated with broader European networks, have been

implicated in financial crimes and isolated extortion cases, although their overall influence in Norway remains moderate.

### TRADE

Although Norway enforces strict gun laws, it remains both a source and destination for illicit firearms, with a small but persistent arms trafficking market. The country's strong hunting and sport shooting culture contributes to the availability of legally owned weapons, some of which are diverted to the illicit market. Organized crime groups and outlaw motorcycle clubs, including the Hells Angels, have been linked to arms trafficking. Law enforcement and military personnel have also been implicated in the illegal trade of guns, grenades and other weapons. Despite existing strict regulations on gun ownership and increased collaboration with INTERPOL and Europol, gun violence among young gang members is reportedly increasing.

The trade in counterfeit goods is small but consolidated, primarily involving luxury items such as designer clothing, footwear, handbags, cosmetics and electronic devices. The market also includes counterfeit car parts, toys and pharmaceuticals. While Norway enforces patent and design protection laws, loopholes allow small-scale private imports of counterfeit goods for personal use. Although the market poses a limited criminal threat overall, it undermines legitimate businesses, reduces tax revenue and poses health risks, particularly through counterfeit medicines. Luxury knockoffs also affect brand owners and consumer confidence.

Norway's illicit trade in excise goods, mainly alcohol and tobacco, remains moderate. High domestic taxes on these products incentivize smuggling, primarily from Eastern Europe and the Baltic states. Contraband cigarettes from Lithuania, Poland and Romania often enter via Sweden and are occasionally re-exported to Denmark. Although the market has declined in recent decades, this trend is attributed to shifting consumer habits and declining smoking rates as much as enforcement efforts. Loose trafficking networks continue to supply illicit tobacco and alcohol, contributing to government revenue losses and undercutting legitimate businesses.

### ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging in Norway is an increasing concern, exacerbated by limited enforcement of forestry regulations. Although violations of the Forestry Act are treated as serious environmental offences, legal ambiguities and weak oversight have resulted in few convictions. Enforcement is further constrained by the limited investigative capacity of

district police. Environmental organizations have criticized the government for its inadequate response to illegal logging and for overlooking the broader environmental consequences of land development projects.

Fauna crimes in Norway include wildlife trafficking and illegal fishing. The wildlife trafficking market has been expanding, with Norway increasingly serving as both a source and destination country. Trafficked species include exotic birds from Africa and South America, reptiles from Germany, and local bird species and eggs smuggled from Norway to other countries. The illegal hunting of protected predators, such as wolves and bears, continues to pose challenges, driven largely by tensions between farming communities and wildlife conservation authorities. Illegal fishing, particularly of king crab, and overfishing remain a concern with some Norwegian fishing companies accused of misreporting catch volumes. Allegations of Norway's involvement in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing have surfaced, particularly in relation to mackerel quota trades with non-EU countries.

Non-renewable resource crimes are not highly organized in Norway, despite the country's vast oil, gas and mineral reserves. Isolated incidents of oil smuggling and environmental violations have been reported in the past, including a Norwegian vessel detained in Nigeria for allegations over crude oil theft.

## DRUGS

Norway maintains a small but persistent heroin market, supplied via smuggling routes from the Balkans, the Netherlands and Spain. West African networks are involved in distribution, with street-level sales carried out by both Norwegian and foreign actors. There has been a shift in demand toward synthetic opioids in Norway, leading to a decline in heroin consumption and a continued contraction of the heroin trade.

Cocaine use has increased in recent years, driven by greater availability and lower prices. Norway functions as both a transit and destination point for cocaine, primarily trafficked through the Netherlands and Belgium. Ethnic Albanian and other Balkan criminal groups control major supply routes, while Norwegian gangs manage domestic distribution. Recent large-scale seizures at ports point to the growing role of maritime smuggling.

Cannabis remains the most widely used illicit drug in Norway, sourced through both domestic cultivation and international imports. Hashish from Morocco, typically trafficked through Spain and Denmark, dominates the market, though imports of cannabis from the Netherlands are rising. Organized crime groups and smaller distributors continue to compete for market control. Legislative debates on decriminalization and harm reduction have influenced public attitudes and enforcement strategies.

Norway's synthetic drug market includes MDMA, amphetamines and new psychoactive substances. Amphetamines are mainly sourced from clandestine laboratories in the Netherlands and Poland, while MDMA is brought in via established Western European routes. Online sales through dark web platforms and encrypted apps have complicated enforcement. The spread of synthetic opioids, including Fentanyl analogues, poses growing challenges for public health and policing.

## CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Norway has experienced a high incidence of cyber-dependent crimes, with ransomware attacks growing in frequency and sophistication. Russian and Eastern European hacking groups have targeted Norwegian businesses and infrastructure, particularly through data breaches. While the government has launched public awareness campaigns, expanded international cooperation and strengthened private sector partnerships, the rapid evolution of cyber threats continues to expose vulnerabilities. Municipalities and private enterprises have been frequent ransomware targets, and cyber-attacks on the energy and shipping sectors have caused significant financial losses.

## FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes in Norway include phishing, fraud and tax evasion, perpetrated by both domestic actors and transnational criminal networks. Offshore financial activities and opaque corporate structures continue to shape Norway's tax evasion landscape. Financial fraud and identity theft remain widespread in the country, with nearly 20% of the population targeted in 2024. The issue has escalated significantly, with incidents reaching record levels following a 47% surge that year.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

Outlaw motorcycle gangs such as the Bandidos and Hells Angels exhibit similar hierarchical structures to mafia style groups in Norway and engage in organized crime. Both maintain active chapters across the country, with involvement primarily in drug and arms trafficking. Reports also link them to financial crimes, extortion and kidnapping. These groups are associated with violent incidents, including shootings and stabbings, particularly in Oslo, which remains a hotspot for organized crime. Nonetheless, their influence appears to be waning due to recruitment challenges, as many members are now in their 50s and 60s. The Bandidos are reported to be more actively involved in criminal activity than the Hells Angels, though both retain ties to organized crime. In October 2024, Norway's Supreme Court banned the Satudarah motorcycle club for its role in violent crime, extortion, drug trafficking and arms dealing.

Domestic criminal networks play a significant role in various illicit markets, including human trafficking, human smuggling, drug trafficking, and the trade in arms and counterfeit goods. These networks are loosely structured but highly adaptable with a focus on financial gain. While they are not typically associated with high levels of violence, their business-oriented operations have expanded across multiple sectors. Most activity is concentrated in urban centres, with Oslo remaining the epicentre. Law enforcement views these groups as an increasing threat due to their growing professionalization, transnational partnerships and sophisticated business models. Rising tensions between domestic networks and Swedish criminal actors, who are expanding into Norway, have heightened concerns about potential conflict.

Norway maintains strong democratic institutions, with no significant evidence of state-embedded actors controlling criminal markets. While isolated cases of corruption within law enforcement have been reported in previous years, such incidents are rare. There is also no indication that state-embedded actors have attempted to influence the democratic process. Norway continues to uphold its reputation as transparent and accountable, with low levels of public sector corruption. Ongoing efforts to combat financial crime and ensure regulatory compliance have further reinforced institutional integrity, limiting opportunities for organized crime to infiltrate government structures.

Foreign groups, particularly Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Swedish and Syrian, have been identified as active in various criminal markets in Norway. However, none of them control a market outright. Instead, they play significant roles in drug trafficking, human smuggling and financial crimes. Lithuanian and Polish networks are especially active in the drug trade, while Ukrainian actors have been linked to human smuggling and trafficking, a situation exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Syrian networks are also implicated in human smuggling operations. The collaborative nature of Norway's criminal landscape suggests moderate interaction between foreign and domestic actors, particularly in major cities like Oslo, where transnational ties are strongest. In August 2024, concerns about the influence of Swedish gangs escalated as Norwegian authorities noted their growing involvement in violent crime and drug trafficking. This has prompted calls to curb the spread of gang-related violence and organized crime.

Private-sector actors in Norway have been implicated in money laundering, tax evasion and illicit financial transactions. Industries such as freight, grocery stores, construction, pubs, restaurants and used car dealerships have been linked to financial crimes, with some establishments serving as fronts for laundering. Despite these concerns, there is no evidence that organized crime groups exercise direct control over the private economy.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Norway maintains one of the world's most robust and stable democratic systems, consistently ranking highly in global governance indices. It upholds free and fair elections, with power rotating regularly between political parties. The government maintains a firm stance against organized crime, particularly in relation to human trafficking and drug markets. However, political parties differ in their approach, with some framing immigration policy as central to crime prevention. While the political system remains well-protected from direct infiltration, concerns about conflicts of interest and cronyism have emerged in recent years, especially regarding the allocation of municipal funds and private-sector influence on policymaking. In September 2024, Norway launched a national campaign against organized crime, including increased police funding, stricter legal provisions and stronger collaboration between local and national law enforcement. The Justice Minister emphasized the need to address the root causes of criminal behaviour, with a focus on prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. These measures reflect Norway's continued efforts to uphold strong governance and public safety.

Norway maintains a high level of government transparency, regularly publishing budgets, procurement contracts and other public documents. While corruption is generally viewed as a minor issue, recent political scandals involving conflicts of interest have raised concerns. The country has robust legal provisions for prosecuting corruption but lacks a dedicated anti-corruption strategy and an independent oversight body. Although several institutions help manage integrity risks, international bodies have urged Norway to strengthen domestic oversight in response to these scandals. The Constitution recognizes the right to access to information, but implementation lags behind other Nordic countries, with broad legal exceptions limiting access to government data.

Internationally, Norway collaborates in security and resilience-building efforts. It adheres to major international conventions, actively participating in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and other treaties targeting organized crime. The country cooperates with Europol, INTERPOL, the Schengen Information System and Nordic security networks. Its contributions include

financial support for transnational anti-trafficking, anti-corruption and counterterrorism operations. Enhanced collaboration with EU partners and financial intelligence units has strengthened Norway's capacity to detect and disrupt financial crime networks. Norwegian authorities also play a key role in international criminal justice, taking part in joint law enforcement operations and policy development within the Council of Europe. Norway actively participates in Eurojust, the Baltic Sea Task Force and Nordic police cooperation. However, resource allocation remains a challenge, particularly for cross-border financial crime investigations.

Norway's legal framework comprehensively addresses organized crime, with national legislation covering corruption, counterfeiting, cybercrime, drug offences, money laundering, human trafficking and environmental crime. The penal code criminalizes participation in organized criminal groups and imposes strict penalties for financial and cyber-related offences.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Norway's judiciary is independent, with adequate resources allocated for prosecuting organized crime. The country upholds due process, ensuring fair trials and access to legal representation. Its correctional system is among the most humane globally, emphasizing rehabilitation and reintegration. However, extended pre-trial detention and high rates of solitary confinement have been criticized by the UN Committee Against Torture and the World Health Organization. While Norway is known for progressive sentencing, drug-related offences can carry harsh penalties, with serious cases resulting in prison terms of at least 10 years. International observers have also noted persistent disparities in judicial outcomes, particularly in the prosecution of financial crime.

Norwegian law enforcement agencies are well-resourced, with specialized units targeting drug trafficking, cybercrime and financial crime. Key bodies include the national criminal investigation service, the national cybercrime centre and the national authority for investigation of economic crime. However, police agencies face staffing shortages and budget reallocations have reportedly weakened anti-human trafficking efforts, with funds diverted to other enforcement priorities. Additionally, enforcement has been criticized for overlooking cases of forced labour, with offenders often prosecuted under minor labour violations instead.

Norway's long coastline and position within the Schengen area presents challenges in detecting smuggling and illicit trafficking. While enhanced surveillance technology has improved monitoring, organized crime networks continue to exploit land borders with Sweden, Finland and Russia. In August 2024, Norwegian customs officials reported difficulties in implementing sanctions against Russia, citing sophisticated smuggling methods and limited resources. Rising geopolitical tensions have strained border security

efforts, prompting Norway to strengthen customs and immigration measures in response to increased illicit flows.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Norway has made substantial progress in anti-money laundering (AML) compliance, introducing enhanced financial monitoring systems. Its adherence to international AML standards has led to greater scrutiny of high-risk transactions, particularly those involving politically exposed persons. However, law enforcement continues to struggle with complex financial flows, often focusing on minor cases rather than major illicit networks. Efforts to address this shortcoming have intensified, with dedicated teams committed to tracing illicit funds and dismantling money laundering networks. However, enforcement challenges remain, particularly in identifying and prosecuting facilitators operating within the legal and accounting sectors. Furthermore, the Financial Action Task Force has criticized Norway for weaknesses in suspicious transaction reporting, especially among major banks. Økokrim, the national economic crime agency, has acknowledged a lack of resources to process the growing volume of money laundering cases. Despite compliance with EU AML directives, Norway has yet to implement comprehensive regulations for crowdfunding and virtual asset transactions.

Norway maintains strong regulatory oversight of real estate, banking and financial services, helping to prevent misuse by organized crime. country's well established economic freedom is supported by a transparent business environment and strict corporate due diligence requirements. However, the regulatory framework lacks dedicated mechanisms to address emerging financial crimes such as cryptocurrency fraud and high-risk investment schemes. Major financial institutions have raised concerns about delays in enforcement, highlighting persistent gaps in inter-agency coordination.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Norway provides extensive support services for crime victims, including legal aid, shelters and psychological counselling. However, the focus of law enforcement on immigration violations has resulted in the deportation of potential trafficking victims, limiting their access to protection.

Norway has implemented a variety of prevention strategies targeting specific criminal markets, including human trafficking and smuggling, drug and arms trafficking, fisheries crimes, counterfeit goods, and cyber and financial crimes. These efforts primarily focus on awareness-raising and training initiatives, particularly for vulnerable populations and youth. Although significant resources have been allocated – especially for anti-trafficking and arms control – the effectiveness of these measures remains insufficiently assessed. In the area of drug prevention, Norway stands out for its strong harm reduction initiatives. However, while

preventative policing is a central pillar of the country's approach, there is an overreliance on outdated punitive methods, particularly in the context of organized crime.

Norwegian NGOs and civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring corruption and preventing organized crime, but funding shortages continue to hinder their efforts. Additionally, Norway ranks among the top countries globally for media freedom, with strong protections for journalists reporting on organized crime.

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*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.*