TRANSNATIONAL ALLIANCE TO COMBAT ILLICIT TRADE
TRACIT.ORG

COUNTRY PROFILE

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador stands at a critical juncture in its fight against illicit trade shaped by recent shifts in organized crime and capacity constraints in its trade infrastructure. While traditional gang-related extortion has declined in some areas, criminal networks have adapted by shifting toward economically integrated activities including smuggling, counterfeiting, and illicit trade in excisable goods

AT A GLANCE

96th
GLOBAL RANK

3rd
REGIONAL RANK

45.8
SCORE OUT OF 100

STRONGEST AREA
Taxation and Economic Environment

WEAKEST AREA
Supply Chain Intermediaries

OVERVIEW

El Salvador's moderately high-risk assessment can be attributed to its relatively low scores across the six categories reviewed by the TRACIT Illicit Trade Index, which evaluates the country's vulnerability to illicit trade. El Salvador's total score of 45.8, placing it in the bottom 61% of countries on the Index and indicating significant room for improvement in its ability to combat illicit trade to better match international standards and best practices.

KEY VULNERABILITIES

- Widespread exploitation of informal financial channels
- High levels of corruption at all levels of governance
- Poor border enforcement along both land & coastal borders

KEY SECTORS AFFECTED

- Illicit Tobacco
- Illicit Alcohol
- Counterfeit Goods
- Illicit Medicines

MAJOR DRIVER

Organized Crime Networks

A large informal economy combined with a historical presence of criminal networks enables illicit trade to persist despite regulatory changes.

Illicit Trade Profits → Reinvestment in illicit activities

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen anti-corruption safeguards across enforcement and judicial institutions
- Enhance border and customs controls to target vulnerabilities
- Amend the Customs Law to extend ex-officio authority
- Expand risk-based customs capacity by strengthening infrastructure, resources and analytics
- Reinforce anti-money laundering controls and financial oversight