

6.5. Drug trafficking and organised crime

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Since 2019, Lebanon has been grappling with a deepening economic and humanitarian crisis that has severely affected security and safety across the country.485 By 31 January 2025, the security situation had rapidly deteriorated with rising crime, escalating clashes between political and sectarian groups, and weakened security institutions, particularly the underfunded and understaffed army and police, which struggled to maintain stability amid increasing unrest and internal disorganisation.486 Meanwhile, Lebanon has been experiencing a significant surge in violent incidents, including attempted murders, killings over trivial disputes, and a wave of robberies, creating an atmosphere of fear and tension across the country.487

In both Beirut and Tripoli, the inability of the state to maintain order has enabled organised crime to expand, with crimes such as burglaries, carjackings, thefts, kidnappings and homicides on the rise.488 As of March 2025, Lebanon's drug trafficking networks have reportedly evolved beyond traditional clan-based traffickers into a system deeply embedded in local politics and security forces, with operations in Captagon (amphetamine-based drug) production and smuggling increasingly intertwined with regional militant financing and sustained by institutional weaknesses.489 According to the UNODC World Drug Report (June 2025), Lebanon is identified as one of the countries of origin of Captagon, though to a lesser extent than Syria, with the Near and Middle East as a whole remaining the region most affected by the trafficking and use of this substance.490

Since the early years following its independence in 1943, Lebanon's drug production has centred on hashish (cannabis) and opium, mainly in the northern Bekaa Valley along the eastern border with Syria,491 where the LAF has reportedly faced persistent difficulties in controlling cross-border activities.492 According to Daher, who was interviewed by the EUAA for this report, 'in north-eastern Lebanon, a region marked by strong clan structures and extensive cannabis cultivation, clans and large families maintain heavily armed groups made up of men aged roughly 18 to 50. Some of these groups, while mostly apolitical, may be engaged in drug trafficking, while drug networks or cannabis producers also employ private armed companies'. 493 According to International Crisis Group, Hezbollah and Amal reportedly coordinate with state security forces in areas they dominate, helping to handle violent crime and patrol the streets, though both generally defer to powerful local clans.494

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