

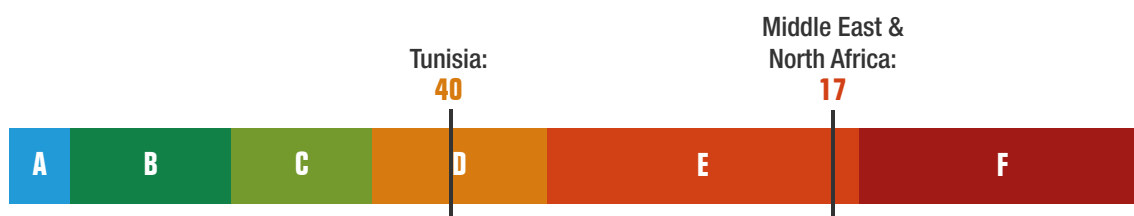


# COUNTRY OVERVIEW: **TUNISIA**

  
2020 Government Defence Integrity Index

# OVERVIEW: TUNISIA

As a nascent democracy, Tunisia has enacted a number of legislative reforms in pursuit of good governance and greater institutional integrity since its 2011 Jasmine Revolution. The Tunisian defence sector has benefitted from these wider governmental reforms by way of robust access to information and whistleblower protection legislation, the creation of a National Anti-Corruption Authority (INLUCC), and the establishment of two defence oversight committees within the democratically elected legislature. The Ministry of Defence has publicly committed to promoting integrity within the armed forces and regularly participates in anti-corruption trainings and workshops. However, it is not always clear that these commitments have led to concrete action on reform. Following a string of terrorist attacks on Tunisian soil, the country entered a state of emergency in 2015, which has been continually renewed by the President over the past four years. Counter-terrorism remains a key priority for the government, resulting in the use of national security exemptions that obscure access to information and limit transparency. This culture of secrecy within the defence sector has persisted from the country’s authoritarian era, which now seems incongruous with the political transition and the push from Tunisian civil society for greater accountability across all public institutions.

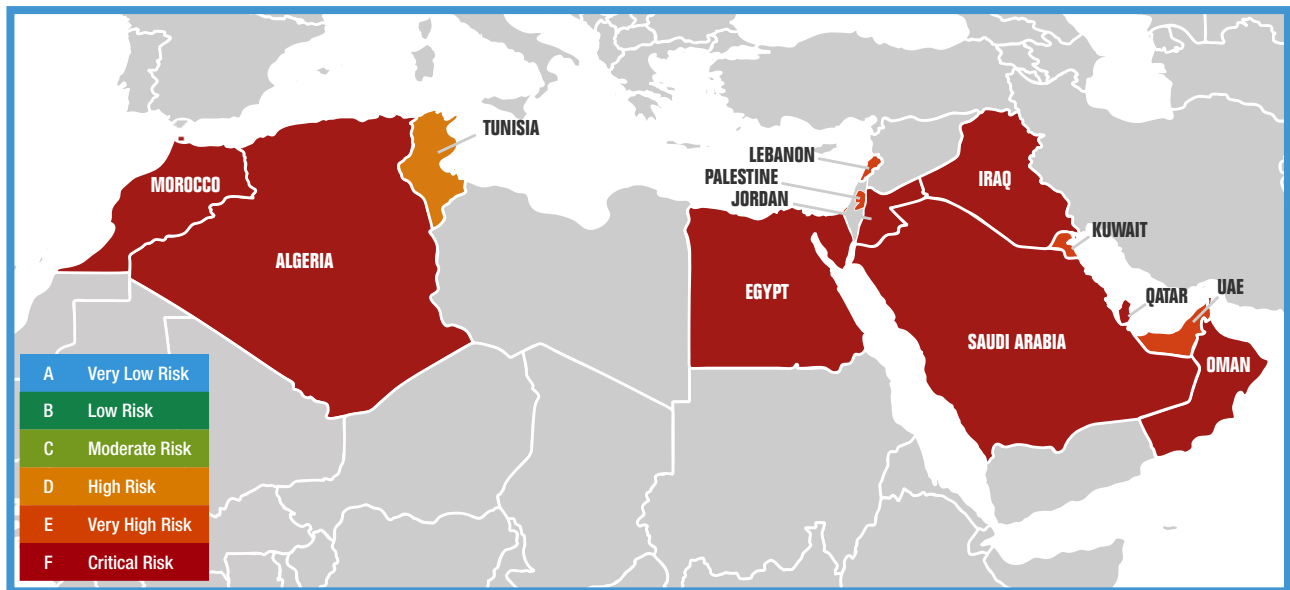


## Tunisia Quick Facts

OECD fragile state	No
Significant defence exporter*	No
Significant defence importer*	No
Volume of arms trade 2015-2018 (US\$ mil)*	0
Defence Budget (US\$ mil)*	844
Defence Budget as % of GDP*	2.1%
Total armed forces personnel#	48,000
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2008
Arms Trade Treaty	Not signed

\*SIPRI, #World Bank

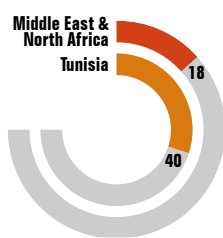
## Middle East & North Africa: Regional Issues in Defence Integrity



Defence sectors across the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region continue to face a high risk of corruption. At the same time, protracted armed conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Yemen persist, while public protests against corruption and authoritarianism continue in a number of countries – reflecting an overall context of insecurity and fragility. Although some governments have publically committed to stepping up anti-corruption efforts, there remains a gap between existing legislation and implementation in practice. Military institutions in the region are characterised by a high degree of defence exceptionalism, resulting in a lack of transparency that precludes oversight actors from effectively scrutinising defence budgets and policies at a time when defence spending and arms imports continue to surge. These concerns are further compounded by authoritarian governance systems seen in many MENA countries. Resurgent protests and uprisings in the region after the 2011 Arab Spring demonstrate that corruption is a central and persistent public grievance. Continuing to treat the defence sector as an exception and failing to meet public expectations of transparency and accountability could further fuel public distrust, result in a loss of legitimacy for defence institutions, and facilitate the recruitment efforts of non-state armed groups. It is therefore crucial that governments in the region disclose more information about defence spending and strategy, make decisions that serve the public interest, and rectify loopholes that allow for corruption to thrive, in turn bolstering national security and stability.

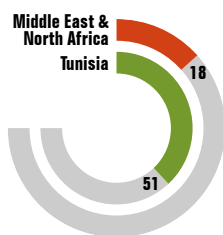
Tunisia is considered a regional leader when it comes to governance reform, particularly in the realm of enacting an ambitious and comprehensive legislative framework. However, the defence sector still shares similarities with other MENA countries in terms of excessive secrecy, limited transparency, and a growing defence budget.

## RISK AREAS



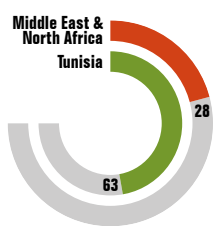
### Political Risk

There are two defence committees specifically mandated to review laws related to security and defence and to scrutinise the Ministry of Defence budget. In practice, these committees have had limited success in performing effective oversight due to gaps in members' technical capacity and knowledge of the defence sector, and a tendency to defer to defence officials regarding matters of national security. The Ministry of Defence signed a partnership agreement with INLUCC in 2018, signalling a commitment to strengthening anti-corruption efforts in the Ministry. However, it is unclear whether anti-corruption measures are being implemented effectively as a result of this partnership.



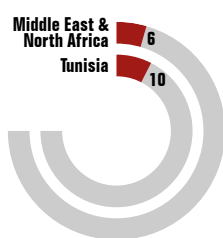
### Financial Risk

Tunisia demonstrates several good practices in addressing key financial risk areas. For example, the military establishment does not have beneficial ownership of any commercial businesses generating financial revenues of a significant scale, and there was no evidence found of off-budget military expenses. Additionally, the government has a legal framework in place for managing asset disposal, including a mechanism for legislative oversight. However, a key vulnerability concerns a lack of transparency in how the framework is implemented. There is also a lack of parliamentary debate around audits of the security sector, largely due to a lack of reporting to parliament or the broader public about any internal auditing that may have occurred.



### Personnel Risk

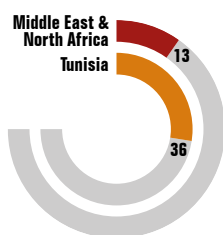
There are internal policies in place to regulate personnel management and conduct within the Tunisian defence sector. A military code of conduct exists, and the military also adheres to the Tunisian Penal Code, which clearly outlines offences like bribery and payment facilitation. The MoD publishes pay rates and allowances, and pays salaries accurately and on time. However, there was no evidence found of external scrutiny of military personnel appointments at middle and top levels based on objective selection criteria, nor was there available information suggesting that sensitive positions – such as those in procurement, contracting, or financial management – are recognised or subject to greater oversight.



### Operational Risk

Tunisian armed forces work in cooperation with the United States and NATO on counter-terrorism and border security operations. However, there is no explicit acknowledgement of corruption as a risk to operations, nor is there evidence to conclude that corruption risks are considered during forward planning of operations. Although the Tunisian war academy, Ecole supérieure de la Guerre, has held several anti-corruption workshops for senior officials in recent years, there is little other evidence to suggest that corruption is viewed as a strategic concern in military operations.

Tunisia does, however, demonstrate good practice in prohibiting the use of private military contractors under Article 17 of its constitution.



### Procurement Risk

The main decree governing procurement calls for a process that is transparent and open to the public, and stipulates the use of an e-procurement platform, TUNEPS, which was launched in 2018. However, sources found that the MoD has yet to use TUNEPS in a substantive manner. Little information regarding large-scale and strategic procurements are made available publicly, and the government does not publish notices of planned purchases. Moreover, sources indicated that procurements are not always aligned with the strategic plan, which is lacking in detail. This lack of transparency limits the capacity of defence oversight committees or the wider public to scrutinise purchases and determine whether they are indeed in line with a defence acquisition policy and broader national defence interests.

# THEMATIC FOCUS

The following section presents discussion of important challenges facing Tunisia, and suggests areas of reform that are possible, based on GDI findings.

## Transparency

Transparency facilitates more effective government, not only by allowing oversight mechanisms to function effectively, but also by creating opportunities to streamline processes for greater impact and efficiency. Its absence is marked by mistrust in government and insecure political power. A lack of transparency over military capability, defence budgets, and acquisitions can increase the risk of arms proliferation, which in turn creates the potential for instability and pressure to increase defence spending. While some items may need to remain classified, opacity should be a well-founded exception, not a rule.

*Enhancing transparency is a cross-cutting solution to addressing public accountability challenges across Tunisia's defence institutions. This includes proactive disclosure of accurate figures on civilian and military personnel and disaggregated data on defence spending, including how budgetary decisions are linked to broader defence policy and national security strategy. Details on larger operational procurements and the publication of contract awards are also warranted.*

## Oversight

Oversight functions exist in the form of anti-corruption bodies, audit functions, and/or parliamentary committees, but defence institutions have historically been exempt from this degree of scrutiny. Oversight mechanisms instil confidence that systems are resilient against undue influence and efficient in the face of resource challenges. Well-functioning oversight mechanisms ensure that national defence decisions around operations, budgets, personnel management, and arms acquisitions are robust and aligned with strategic needs, and can note problems at an early stage, before they threaten to hollow out defence and security institutions.

*Well-resourced and empowered parliamentary defence committees would bolster external oversight of the Tunisian defence sector. Appointments should prioritise prior experience in the defence and security sectors. Capacity building training based on international best practice on effective oversight, in addition to MoD-led trainings on how the ministry and armed forces function, would support newly appointment committee members in ensuring they have the requisite knowledge to perform their duties.*

## Operations

Since many military operations, both domestic and international, take place in fragile and (post)-conflict states where corrupt practices can be widespread, planners and leaders need to contend with the risk that corruption can pose. Corruption in operations wastes resources, empowers criminal networks, and contributes to conflict and insecurity. Equally, inserting missions – which come with financial resources and can grant political support to local stakeholders – can exacerbate corruption risks as much as it can diminish them. Military doctrines, pre-deployment training and monitoring in the field can all help prepare troops to counter these risks.

*Given Tunisia's important role in regional security and global peacekeeping, an explicit doctrine recognising corruption as a strategic risk and a plan for mitigation is critical. Another tool for mainstreaming this core concept is to integrate anti-corruption and integrity courses into standard military academy curricula, in addition to existing workshops targeted at senior leadership. Broadening access to this content to young recruits and officers based outside of central command in Tunis will help foster a bottom-up commitment to anti-corruption and a culture of transparency throughout the institution.*

# COUNTRY SCORECARD: TUNISIA

<b>Overall Country Score</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
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<b>Political Risk</b>		<b>D</b>	<b>40</b>
Q19	Organised Crime Links	A	100
Q18	Natural Resources	A	92
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	B	75
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	B	75
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	C	63
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	C	63
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	C	50
Q14	Budget Availability	C	50
Q8	Compliance and Ethics Units	C	50
Q11	Acquisition Planning	D	42
Q15	Defence Income	D	42
Q6	Public Debate	D	38
Q16	Internal Audit	D	33
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	E	31
Q2	Defence Committee	E	30
Q17	External Audit	E	25
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	E	25
Q4	CSO Engagement	E	25
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	E	17
Q10	Risk Assessments	F	0
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	F	0
Q76	Lobbying	F	0
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	

<b>Financial Risk</b>		<b>C</b>	<b>51</b>
Q29	Off-budget Spending	A	100
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	A	100
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	A	100
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	A	100
Q30	Access to Information	B	75
Q25	Asset Disposal Scrutiny	B	67
Q24	Asset Disposal Controls	E	17
Q26	Secret Spending	F	0
Q27	Legislative Access to Information	F	0
Q28	Secret Program Auditing	F	0
Q77	Defence Spending	F	0

<b>Personnel Risk</b>		<b>C</b>	<b>63</b>
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	A	100
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	100
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	A	100
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	A	88
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	A	83
Q50	Facilitation Payments	A	83
Q40	Payment System	B	75
Q42	Objective Promotions	B	69
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	B	67
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	C	50
Q36	Whistleblowing	C	50
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	C	50
Q48	Anticorruption Training	C	50
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	D	44

Q38	Numbers of Personnel	D	42
Q41	Objective Appointments	E	25
Q37	High-risk Positions	F	0

<b>Operational Risk</b>		<b>F</b>	<b>10</b>
Q52	Operational Training	C	50
Q51	Military Doctrine	F	0
Q53	Forward Planning	F	0
Q54	Corruption Monitoring in Operations	F	0
Q55	Controls in Contracting	F	0
Q56	Private Military Contractors	NS	

<b>Procurement Risk</b>		<b>D</b>	<b>36</b>
Q57	Procurement Legislation	A	100
Q73	Agents and Intermediaries	A	100
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	B	75
Q62	Business Compliance Standards	C	63
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	C	58
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	D	44
Q59	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	D	42
Q65	Tender Board Controls	D	38
Q58	Procurement Cycle	D	33
Q63	Procurement Requirements	D	33
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	E	25
Q60	Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q61	Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q64	Competition in Procurement	F	13
Q70	Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71	Offset Contract Monitoring	F	0
Q72	Offset Competition	F	0
Q74	Financing Packages	F	0
Q75	Political Pressure in Acquisitions	NS	

Legend	Range of Scores	Corruption Risk
A	83 - 100	Very Low
B	67 - 82	Low
C	50 - 66	Moderate
D	33 - 49	High
E	17 - 32	Very High
F	0 - 16	Critical

## Key

NEI - Not enough information to score indicator.

NS - Indicator is not scored for any country

NA - Not applicable

## Transparency International Defence & Security

[www.ti-defence.org/gdi](http://www.ti-defence.org/gdi)

[twitter.com/ti-defence](https://twitter.com/ti-defence)