



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



2020



Country Brief:

BURKINA FASO



BURKINA FASO

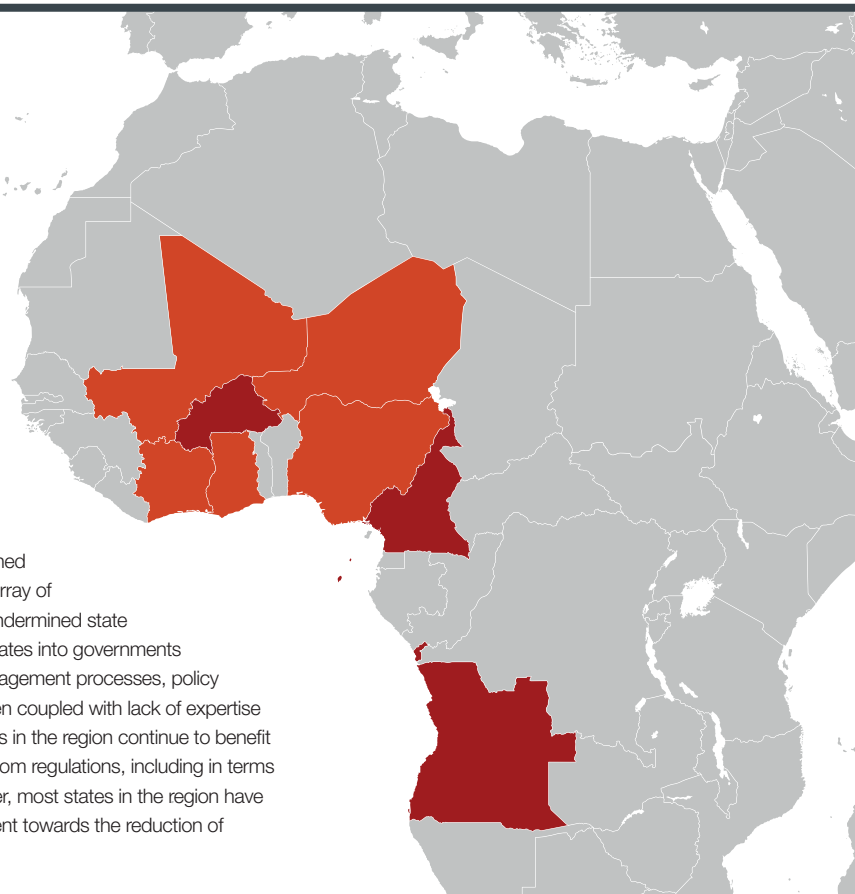
Long-afflicted by extreme poverty, endemic corruption, and political instability, Burkina Faso is also having to contend with the Sahel's protracted security crisis. In 2019 alone, 1,295 civilians were killed, a 650% increase from the previous year,¹ and a million of Burkina Faso's population of 20.5 million people have been forced to flee their homes.² Violence endured throughout 2020 and swathes of the country are out of government control and jihadist groups have gained a strong foothold in the North.

Member of Open Government Partnership	Yes
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2006.
Arms Trade Treaty	Ratified in 2014.

The state's inability to protect civilians, coupled with mounting accusations of human rights abuses from Burkinabé forces,³ have fuelled the rise of self-defence militias, further complicating security dynamics.⁴ With a history of military coups, the political situation is volatile, although the country avoided outright crisis in the November 2020 presidential elections, which were deemed the most open in years, won by the incumbent President Kaboré.⁵ The government's response to mounting insecurity and loss of authority has largely consisted of using security forces to subdue the armed groups militarily. However, their ability to do so is severely undermined by extensive corruption risks throughout the defence and security apparatus. A legacy of the overtly political and powerful role of the military, the sector is largely devoid of oversight with democratic institutions having little control over the security forces. Procurement and budgetary processes are highly opaque and there is very little financial information available on the sector. Finally, corruption risk is critical in regards to military operations and ethics frameworks, raising significant concerns as to the conduct and effectiveness of troops during deployments.

West Africa

In recent years, corruption and weak governance have fuelled popular grievances and diminished the legitimacy of national institutions across West Africa. For some states, including Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, corruption has underpinned armed conflict and the proliferation of violent extremist groups that have gained a foothold in the region. These groups are now beginning to threaten West Africa's coastal states, who themselves are confronted with rising piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. In turn, these conflicts are fuelling a rise in intercommunal violence and exacerbating tensions linked to climate change and resource scarcity. Meanwhile, trafficking and smuggling in small arms, drugs, natural resources, and human beings continue to pose a significant threats to regional stability. Poorly governed national defence forces have struggled to contend with this array of security challenges and their vulnerability to corruption has undermined state responses to insecurity. Extremely limited transparency translates into governments releasing incomplete information on budgets, personnel management processes, policy planning, and acquisitions of military assets. This, in turn, often coupled with lack of expertise and resources, undermines civilian oversight. Defence sectors in the region continue to benefit from a defence exceptionalism in which they are exempted from regulations, including in terms of procurement or freedom of information legislation. However, most states in the region have signed and/or ratified the UNCAC, showing some commitment towards the reduction of corruption risk within their borders.



¹ The New Humanitarian, 'In the News: Burkina Faso Shows Almost 650% Increase in Civilian Conflict Deaths', 27 February 2020.

² Al-Jazeera, 'Burkina Faso President Says Security Priority after Swearing-in', 28 December 2020.

³ Human Rights Watch, 'Burkina Faso : Residents' Accounts Point to Mass Executions', 8 July 2020.

⁴ Sophie Douce, 'Au Burkina Faso, l'Essor Périlleux des Milices Villageoises Face aux Djihadistes', *Le Monde*, 12 November 2020.

⁵ Deutsche Welle, 'Burkina Faso Incumbent Kaboré Wins Presidential Election, Preliminary Results Show', 26 November 2020.



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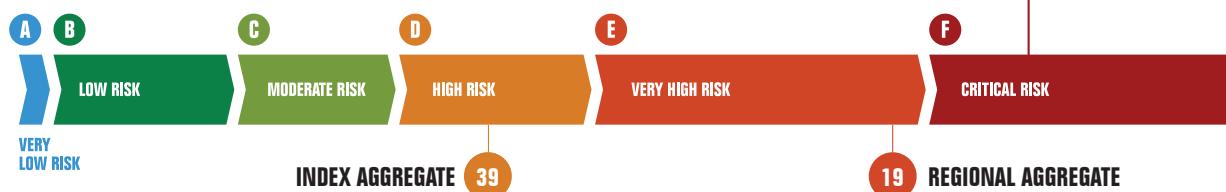
Overall scores

The size of the colour band corresponds to number of countries that fall into that category.

BURKINA FASO SCORE CRITICAL RISK

F

13



A > 83-100 VERY LOW

B > 67-82 LOW

C > 50-66 MODERATE

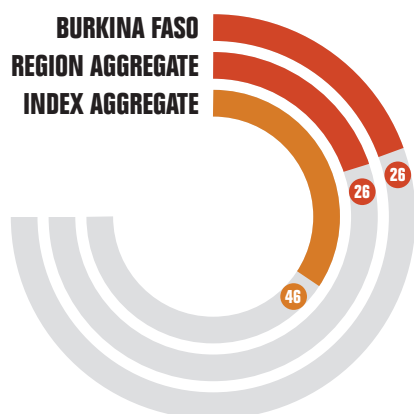
D > 33-49 HIGH

E > 17-32 VERY HIGH

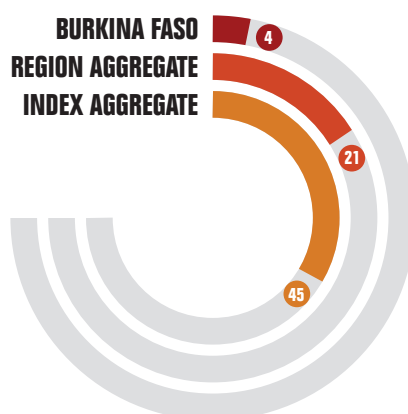
F > 0-16 CRITICAL

Risk Comparison

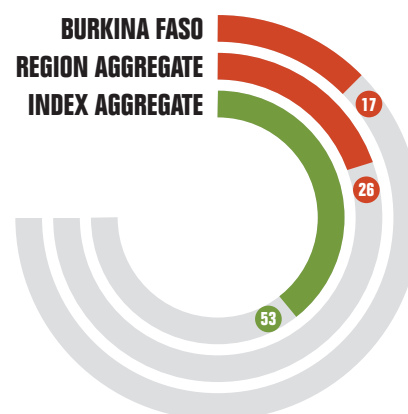
POLITICAL



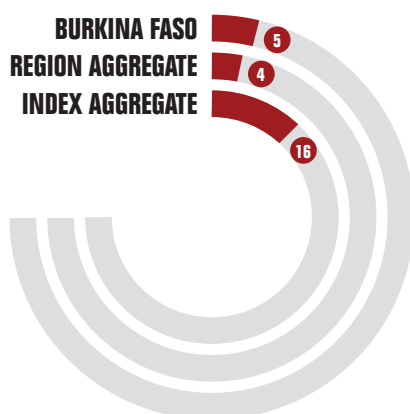
FINANCIAL



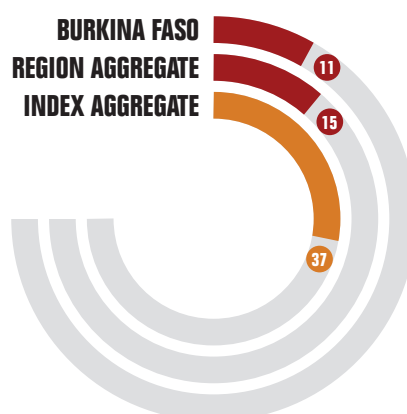
PERSONNEL



OPERATIONAL



PROCUREMENT





BURKINA FASO

Parliamentary Oversight

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2019)	43/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2020)	8.5%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	Exact data is not available.
# of meetings/year	Data is not publicly available.
Last review of defence policy/strategy	2010

Under the regime of Blaise Compaoré (1987-2014), the National Assembly's influence, oversight and decision-making powers were stripped back, reducing the legislature to a rubber stamp for the government's propositions.⁶ Whilst this has improved slightly since 2014, the National Assembly remains weak, particular in relation to defence issues. After a long history of political involvement, throughout which the army viewed its involvement in politics as one of its fundamental missions, bringing it under civilian democratic control has proved challenging.⁷ Though the Assembly's formal rights have been established, their implementation lags behind and the power imbalance with the executive is striking with the latter exerting significant influence over the Assembly.⁸ The authority and decision-making capabilities of the Assembly are very weak and its role is largely limited to offering questions in debates and voting on legislation. The parliamentary defence committee (CODES) for instance, has formal rights to exercise oversight but its remit excludes management issues, policy planning, and procurement as the government considers these executive prerogatives, significantly limiting the committee's scope. It has experienced resistance from defence actors who view its work as a threat to historic privileges, while the committee's lack of expertise hamper its ability to influence policy. It does not conduct any long-term investigations nor does it formulate recommendations for the government to implement. The evidence base necessary to inform parliamentary oversight, derived from audit reports for instance, is also severely lacking. There is no internal audit function within the Ministry of Defence, while external auditing falls to the Court of Accounts and the Anti-Corruption body (ASCE-LC).⁹ However, there is no evidence of these institutions having reviewed the finances or performance of the defence sector in the past five years. Their independence is also questionable as the executive is free to appoint and dismiss their directors without justification.

Financial Transparency

Defence-related access to information response rates	(1) % granted full or partial access: Data is not publicly available. (2) # subject to backlog: Data is not publicly available.
Defence-related complaints to ombudsman/information commissioner #	Data is not publicly available.
Does the information commissioner have authority over the MoD?	Data is not publicly available.
Audit reports on defence (2015-2020) #	0
Open Budget Index (IBP, 2019)	31/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2021)	37th out of 180.

The successful 2015 elections and installation of a civilian government marked an improvement in government transparency, although it remains poor, particularly with regards to the defence sector. There persists a consensus within the armed forces that transparency translates to vulnerability, with secrecy continuing to be prized as a pillar of security.¹⁰ This attitude is evident in regard to the budget, which contains little useful information. There is no breakdown of expenditure by functions and figures are highly aggregated, revealing little about priorities for the upcoming financial year, and presenting only resources and expenditures in top-line terms. In the past, the legislature has often just allotted a lump sum to the Ministry of Defence, without any regard as to what purchases were planned by the Ministry. Public access to financial information is also weak. Article 6 of the Law on Access to Public Information exempts all defence-related documents from release,¹¹ making it exceedingly difficult to obtain data. Further, an amendment to the criminal code was passed in 2019 that severely punishes "false information" and coverage of the armed forces that is deemed compromising, effectively granting authorities close control over reporting and imposing serious restrictions on the media.¹² The financial picture is further clouded by the existence of off-budget income and expenditure. The income, derived from public works and international assistance, is subject to neither publication nor institutional scrutiny. Off-budget expenditures meanwhile were a hallmark of the Compaoré regime and have continued under Kaboré.¹³ These are not officially recorded and fall under "secret item" spending, exempting them from oversight.

⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2020 Country Report – Burkina Faso*, Gutersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020, p. 13.

⁷ Abdoul Karim Saidou, 'Burkina Faso: Ou en est la Réforme de l'Armée Deux Ans Après l'Insurrection Populaire?', *Le Faso*, 13 January 2017.

⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Burkina Faso*, p. 11.

⁹ Autorité Supérieure de Contrôle d'Etat et de Lutte Contre la Corruption, 'Regulations'.

¹⁰ L'Economiste du Faso, 'Dépense Sécuritaire: Le Budget de l'Armée est "Sous Contrôle"', 25 November 2019.

¹¹ Republic of Burkina Faso, *Loi N° 051-2015 Portant Droit d'Accès A L'Information Publique et Aux Documents Administratifs*, Ouagadougou, 2015.

¹² Reporters Without Borders, 'Fight Against Terrorism Tests Media Freedom', 2020.

¹³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2018 Country Report – Burkina Faso*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gutersloh, 2018.



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Personnel Ethics Framework

Whistleblowing legislation	None.
# defence-sector whistleblower cases	None.
# Code of conduct violations	Military: Data is not publicly available.
	Civilian: Data is not publicly available.
Financial disclosure system	# submitted: Data is not publicly available.
	# of violations: Data is not publicly available.

Burkina Faso's armed forces ethics and integrity frameworks are coming under increased scrutiny in the face of spiralling violence in the North and reports of torture, extra-judicial killings and exactions against civilians committed by defence and security forces.¹⁴ A review of existing policies and codes reveals significant corruption risks within personnel management systems. Whilst the military does have a code of conduct,¹⁵ high rates of illiteracy mean that it is not widely understood or acknowledged. Regardless, corruption is not mentioned once in the code and it does not contain any useful guidance on how to proceed when dealing with issues of bribery, conflicts of interests, or corruption more broadly. Moreover, its enforcement is also very weak with high levels of impunity amongst military commanders and only the most high profile breaches resulting in investigations, usually due to external pressure.¹⁶ Professionalism is also undermined by external influence during recruitment and promotion processes, especially at middle and upper command levels. Formal processes are often circumvented, and promotion boards can be pressured during decision making to favour candidates with specific ethnic, political or kinship ties, while nepotism in appointment processes across the public sector is frequent.¹⁷ Finally, a further key obstacle to integrity-building measures in the military is the absence of any legislation on whistleblowing in Burkina Faso. There is also no evidence of this being considered, or of the Ministry of Defence putting in place programmes to promote the practice or educate personnel on what whistleblowing entails. This exposes whistleblowers to retaliation and acts as a disincentive to raising concerns whilst in service.

Operations

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2018)	11,200
Troops deployed on operations #	1,080 in Mali (MINUSMA), Unknown number deployed on internal operations

Corruption risk levels for Burkinabé forces on military operations are critically high, a serious cause for concern given their extensive deployment within Burkina Faso alongside their strong presence in Mali with MINUSMA.¹⁸ This raises the risk of mission objectives being undermined by corruption and legitimacy crumbling in the face of abuses. Fundamentally, the lack of appreciation for corruption as a strategic issue for the success of operations within military planning and training processes mean that the issue is not addressed at any stage of deployment. The military doctrine makes no reference to corruption and there is no evidence of corruption being included in the forward planning of operations. Pre-deployment training does not have a specific emphasis on corruption risk in the operating theatre and commanders receive no specific guidelines on countering such risks while deployed. There is no evidence of any monitoring and evaluation policy related to corruption, or that the armed forces deploy personnel charged with monitoring and reporting on corruption risk during deployments. This is all the more concerning given how Burkinabé forces are deployed in the northern border regions and in Mali's north, areas with very weak state presence and strong illicit economies that increase the risk of corruption.¹⁹

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, 'Burkina Faso – Events of 2020', 2021.

¹⁵ Armed Forces of Burkina Faso, 'Decree N° 2008-700 On general discipline in the Armed Forces', 2009.

¹⁶ US State Department, 'Burkina Faso 2020 Human Rights Report', p. 1, 2021.

¹⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Burkina Faso 2020*.

¹⁸ United Nations, 'Troop and Police Contributors – Burkina Faso', 31 December 2020.

¹⁹ William Assanvo, 'Is Organised Crime Fuelling Terror Groups in Liptako-Gourma?', *ISS Africa*, 10 December 2019.



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Defence Procurement

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2020)	368
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2016-20)	N/A
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2016-20)	Russia, Turkey, Italy, Bulgaria, Qatar

Burkina Faso's defence spending has more than doubled since 2016, with expenditure representing 9% of total government spending in 2019, the highest rate since the 1990s.²⁰ Given the country's pressing development, educational, and economic challenges, combined with the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial that these funds are utilised correctly in order to enhance the armed forces' efficiency and professionalism. However, significant corruption vulnerabilities within the procurement process risk wasting scarce public resources and hindering operational effectiveness. Though acquisition planning for the sector is a legal requirement,²¹ there is no evidence of such a plan existing or of a link between purchases being made and requirements laid out in a defence strategy. As a result, acquisitions appear to be made in an ad-hoc manner with little regard for strategic requirements and how different purchases contribute to overarching objectives. The 2018 purchase of 59 military

vehicles is emblematic of this as they were not included in the budget and had no strategic justification.²² In addition, defence exceptionalism remains strong and defence-related goods are exempted from the provisions of the Public Procurement Act.²³ Consequently, defence acquisitions are almost entirely shielded from oversight, as bodies such as the Public Procurement Regulator (ARMP) and the State Audit Institution (SAI) either do not have the mandate or the required security clearance to access the necessary information to scrutinise these purchases.²⁴ This confidentiality means there is no data published on defence acquisitions, even minor ones, underlining how defence procurement is overwhelmingly conducted through restricted tenders and single-sourcing from preferred suppliers, exposing such procedures to significant corruption risk.

²⁰ SIPRI, 'Military Expenditure as a Percentage of Government Spending, 1988-2019'.

²¹ Republic of Burkina Faso, 'Law No 039 - On the general regulation of the public order,' 2016.

²² Gaspard Bayala, 'Nouveaux véhicules du gouvernement: 'Une nécessité et non un luxe,' *Burkinaonline*, May 2018.

²³ Republic of Burkina Faso, 'Law No. 039'.

²⁴ Republic of Burkina Faso, 'Law No. 039'.

Version 1.0, October 2021

GDI data collection for **Burkina Faso** was conducted February 2018 to March 2019. The narrative discussion in this GDI brief was produced at a later time with the most recent information available for the country, which may not be reflected in the GDI country assessments or scores.



BURKINA FASO 2020 GDI Scorecard

		Grade	Score
Political Risk		E	26
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	D	33
Q2	Defence Committee	E	21
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	F	0
Q4	CSO Engagement	C	50
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	B	75
Q6	Public Debate	E	25
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	C	63
Q8	Compliance and Ethics Units	E	17
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10	Risk Assessments	F	0
Q11	Acquisition Planning	E	25
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	F	13
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	C	50
Q14	Budget Availability	D	42
Q15	Defence Income	E	17
Q16	Internal Audit	F	0
Q17	External Audit	F	13
Q18	Natural Resources	C	55
Q19	Organised Crime Links	E	25
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	F	0
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	C	50
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	NEI	
Q76	Lobbying	F	0
Financial Risk		F	4
Q24	Asset Disposal Controls	F	0
Q25	Asset Disposal Scrutiny	F	0
Q26	Secret Spending	F	0
Q27	Legislative Access to Information	F	0
Q28	Secret Program Auditing	F	0
Q29	Off-budget Spending	F	0
Q30	Access to Information	F	13
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	F	0
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	F	0
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	E	25
Q77	Defence Spending	F	6
Personnel Risk		E	17
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	F	8
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	C	63
Q36	Whistleblowing	F	0
Q37	High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	F	0
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	F	0
Q40	Payment System	NEI	
Q41	Objective Appointments	E	17
Q42	Objective Promotions	E	31
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	F	0
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	F	0
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	C	50

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE CRITICAL RISK

F
13

RISK GRADE

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



		Grade	Score
Personnel Risk		E	17
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	C	50
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	E	17
Q48	Anticorruption Training	F	0
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	F	0
Q50	Facilitation Payments	D	33

		Grade	Score
Operational Risk		F	5
Q51	Military Doctrine	E	25
Q52	Operational Training	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	

		Grade	Score
Procurement Risk		F	11
Q57	Procurement Legislation	F	0
Q58	Procurement Cycle	F	8
Q59	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	F	8
Q60	Potential Purchases Disclosed	E	25
Q61	Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q62	Business Compliance Standards	F	0
Q63	Procurement Requirements	F	8
Q64	Competition in Procurement	F	13
Q65	Tender Board Controls	E	19
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	F	8
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	F	0
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	D	33
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	C	50
Q70	Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71	Offset Contract Monitoring	F	0
Q72	Offset Competition	F	0
Q73	Agents and Intermediaries	E	25
Q74	Financing Packages	F	0
Q75	Political Pressure in Acquisitions	NS	

KEY

NEI Not enough information to score indicator
NS Indicator is not scored for any country
NA Not applicable



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