



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



2020



Country Brief:

JORDAN



JORDAN

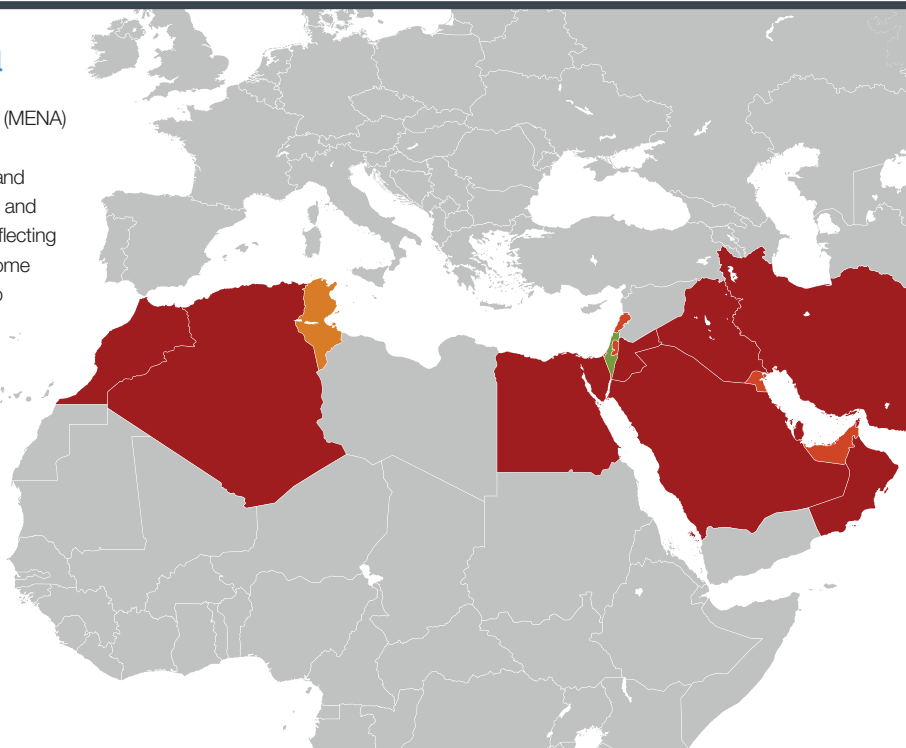
Political, economic and security challenges have combined to create an atmosphere of instability in Jordan. Economic contraction resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded high unemployment and chronic economic stagnation,¹ which have fuelled political instability and nationwide protests that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Hani Mulki in 2018.² Externally, too, Jordan has been walking a tightrope. Poor economic resources have made the country heavily dependent on foreign aid, with US economic support alone representing around 8% of the Kingdom's annual budget.³ However, divergence with the Trump administration's policy on the Israel-Palestine conflict seriously strained the relationship, though the election of Joe Biden could help soothe concerns.

The Kingdom's geographic position, wedged between Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia make it vulnerable to the whims of its powerful and oftentimes volatile neighbours.⁴ Israeli threats to annex the West Bank, the proliferation of armed groups and violent extremist organisations, the explosion of cross-border trafficking, and the continuing instability in Syria,⁵ from which Jordan hosts 660,000 refugees,⁶ represent challenging and complex security dynamics. Central to Jordanian responses to this are the defence and security forces, which are highly active, especially in the northern and eastern borders areas. However, their effectiveness is threatened by structural weakness that expose the armed forces to high levels of corruption risk. External oversight is extremely limited, with parliament and audit bodies largely excluded from intervening on defence matters. Defence exceptionalism is prevalent in relation to procurement and budgets which are devoid of substantial scrutiny and vulnerable to external influences. Weak access to information and whistleblowing mechanisms further heighten corruption risk, while military operations have very poor anti-corruption measures in place.

Member of Open Government Partnership	Yes
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2005
Arms Trade Treaty	Has not signed.

Middle East & North Africa

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.



¹ Alexander Werman, 'Jordan's Rising Economic Challenges in the Time of COVID-19', *Middle East Institute*, 27 August 2020.

² Oliver Holmes, 'Jordan's Prime Minister Steps Down After Large Anti-austerity Protests', *The Guardian*, 4 June 2018.

³ Tobias Borck, 'Jordan After Trump: Between Hope and Uncertainty in the Middle East', *RUSI*, 29 January 2021.

⁴ Jeremy M. Sharp, 'Jordan: Background and US Relations', *Congressional Research Service*, 18 June 2020, pp. 1-2.

⁵ Jumana Kavar, 'Jordan: US Security Assistance and Border Defense Capacity Building', *Middle East Institute*, 6 October 2020.

⁶ UNHCR, 'Syrian Refugees in Jordan', 28 February 2021.



JORDAN

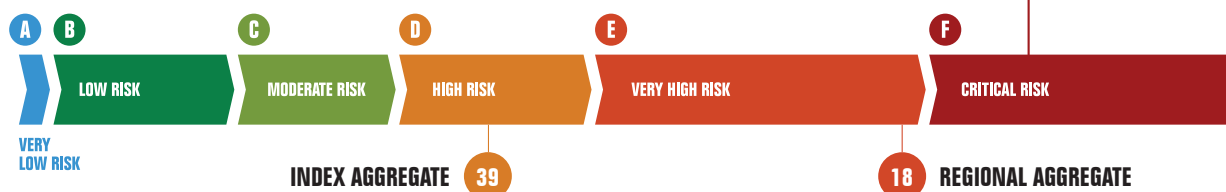
Overall scores

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

JORDAN SCORE CRITICAL RISK

F

14



A > 83-100 VERY LOW

B > 67-82 LOW

C > 50-66 MODERATE

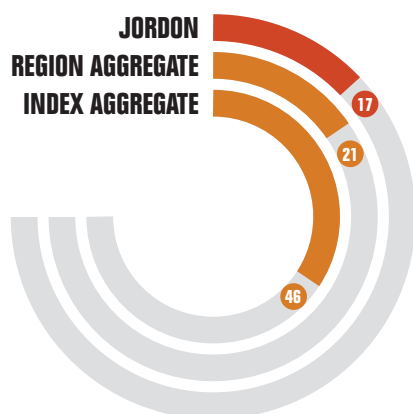
D > 33-49 HIGH

E > 17-32 VERY HIGH

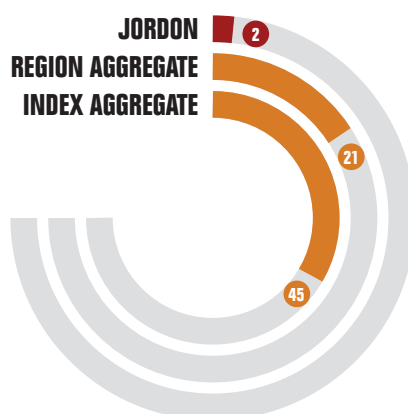
F > 0-16 CRITICAL

Risk Comparison

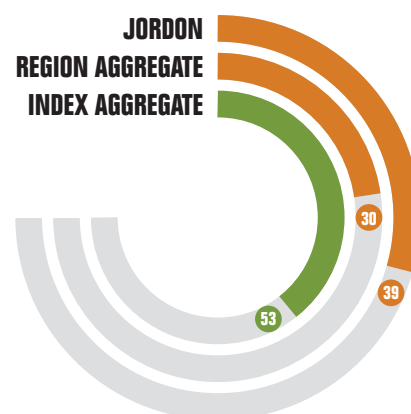
POLITICAL



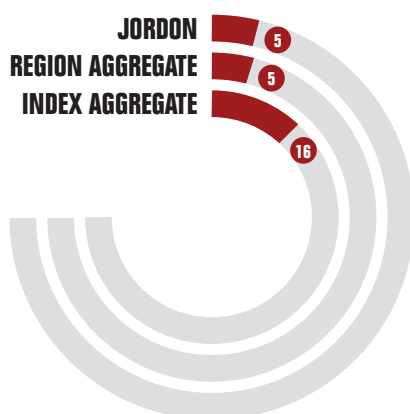
FINANCIAL



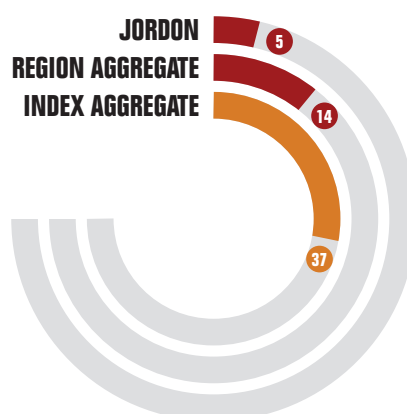
PERSONNEL



OPERATIONAL



PROCUREMENT





JORDAN

Parliamentary Oversight

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2019)	43/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2020)	14.8%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	No such committee exists.
# of meetings/year	No such committee exists.
Last review of defence policy/strategy	The strategy is not public.

A constitutional monarchy, King Abdullah II enjoys considerable constitutional protections,⁷ and broad executive powers, including the appointing of the Prime Minister and nomination of the crown prince, senior military leaders, cabinet ministers and all 75 members of the senate.⁸ He also enjoys powers of parliamentary dissolution and has the ability to circumvent the legislature through constitutional mechanisms that allow the cabinet to legislate when parliament is dissolved or not sitting. Successive parliaments have complied with royal policies and their independence has been curtailed by electoral laws designed to produce pro-palace majorities.⁹ Within this constitutional framework, parliamentary powers are limited, particularly in terms of defence. Parliament's formal functions do not extend to the armed forces, where the constitution grants the King extensive powers,¹⁰ and it can only vote on approving the defence budget, which it regularly passes without amendment.¹¹ Aside from budget approval, parliament has no mandate to approve or veto laws on defence and when defence debates do occur, they are not followed through by the executive. The exclusion of defence matters from parliamentary prerogatives is evidenced by the absence of a specialised defence committee. Though the Financial or Integrity and Transparency committees have formal rights of oversight over budgets, they systematically defer to defence institutions and approve defence budget proposals with very few checks.¹² The absence of parliamentary oversight is mirrored by the weakness of auditing practices. Though the armed forces have internal auditors, they do not report externally nor share their reports or summaries with other oversight bodies or the Ministry of Finance. The Audit Bureau does not have access to defence budgets and the armed forces are beyond the scope of the Bureau's auditing powers. Furthermore, the absence of an established Ministry of Defence means that centralised auditing of the sector is impossible. With management split between the Prime Minister and Armed Forces, there is no single government entity responsible for administering and managing the defence sector, making it difficult to carry out substantive financial and performance assessments.

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/commissioner #	None.
Does the commissioner have authority over the MoD?	No
Audit reports on defence (2015-2020) #	None.
Open Budget Index (IBP, 2019)	61/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2021)	129th out of 180.

Though general budget transparency in Jordan is considered relatively strong,¹³ an assessment of the defence budget reveals some glaring issues. The published budget excludes significant information related to procurement, asset disposal and maintenance budgets. On top of this, the budget receives no oversight from the legislature, while the lack of an effectual Ministry of Defence makes accounting processes highly opaque. These issues are heightened by the strict government controls around the publication of information on the defence forces. In 2016, the Armed Forces prohibited publishing news about the force, except for official statements by military spokespeople, adding to already tight restrictions on freedom of information.¹⁴ Indeed, Jordan's freedom of information legislation does not apply to the defence sector as all defence matters are considered highly confidential.¹⁵ These prohibitions, coupled with the restrictive environment for media and civil society,¹⁶ make it exceedingly difficult to request defence information, particularly related to sensitive issues related to expenditure and acquisitions. Further financial risks are associated with the prevalence of opaque military-owned businesses. These businesses are involved in various sectors of the economy,¹⁷ and are not subject to audit by the Audit Bureau,¹⁸ nor do they report their earnings or ownership structures. There have been numerous corruption scandals involving these companies, concerning the preferential treatment they receive in relation to contracting.¹⁹ Though these revenues are a significant source of off-budget income, the government does not publish any information on the funds they generate, ensuring that they risk being used as slush funds for spending off the books.

⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI Country Report 2020 – Jordan, Gutersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, p. 9.

⁸ Sharp, 'Jordan', p. 2.

⁹ Washington Post, 'How Jordan's Election Revealed Enduring Weaknesses in Its Political System,' 3 October 2016.

¹⁰ The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Amman, 2016.

¹¹ See for instance, The Jordan Times, 'Senate endorses budget draft law without changes', 16 January 2018.

¹² Amman News, 'Financial Committee's Recommendations to General Budget', 24 December 2017.

¹³ See for instance, International Budget Partnership, 'Jordan'.

¹⁴ Arabi, 'Armed Forces Prohibit Publishing Its News- Why?' 30 November 2016.

¹⁵ Kingdom of Jordan, 'Access to Information Act', No.47 of 2007, *Official Gazette*, 27 June 2007, vol. 4831, p. 4142.

¹⁶ Reporters Without Borders, 'Jordan'.

¹⁷ Jordan Armed Forces, 'Development Role of the Jordanian Armed Forces', 2021.

¹⁸ Jordanian Audit Bureau, 'Audited Entities'.

¹⁹ Abul-Magd, Zeinab and Grawert, Elke, Businessmen in Arms: *How the Military and Other Armed Groups Profit in the MENA Region*, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield: 2016).



JORDAN

Personnel Ethics Framework

Whistleblowing legislation	Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law
# 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.

The security forces' ethics and anti-corruption norms have been called into question by allegations of human rights abuses,²⁰ and reports of corruption involving military officials.²¹ Despite public commitments to countering corruption, tangible improvements in personnel management systems remain sparse. The military's code of conduct was created in 2017 and, though it is reported to contain regulations on corruption-related offences, it is not publicly available. There are question marks around its enforcement too, as corruption-related prosecutions are exceedingly rare in the sector and the overall lack of transparency makes it impossible to assess whether breaches are investigated. Accountability and anti-corruption enforcement are also undermined by ineffective protections for whistleblowers. According to the 2016 Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law, the Anti-Corruption Commission is responsible for providing protection to whistleblowers.²² However, these protections are not explicitly extended to the defence sector, which is regulated by other laws that are in direct opposition to the tenets of the Anti-Corruption Law.²³ The absence of a strong legal framework has restricted the growth of a culture of reporting and anti-corruption due to a lack of trust in existing mechanisms. Further issues exist with personnel recruitment and promotion procedures. Formal procedures for the appointment of personnel at senior positions are unclear and depend largely on kinship and personal relationships. The process is inherently political as the King is the sole authority who can nominate senior military officers. Similarly, promotion processes, though administered by officers' committees, are also vulnerable to the same influences and personal connections and a culture of 'wasta' are prevalent,²⁴ undermining meritocratic procedures and due process.

Operations

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2018)	101,500
Troops deployed on operations #	97 in Mali (MINUSMA), 4 in Sudan (UNAMID), 4 in DRC (MONUSCO), 2 in Western Sahara (MINURSO), 1 in CAR (MINUSCA)

With troops deployed on multiple United Nations operations and Jordan's avowed commitment to peacekeeping operations,²⁵ it is crucial for the military to have appropriate anti-corruption safeguards in place, relating to strategy, planning, and training, in order to avoid undermining mission objectives. However, this is far from the case and corruption risks are critically high in terms of military operations. At a strategic level, the Armed Forces do not recognise corruption as a threat to operational success and the issue is not considered an issue in the sector and corruption is not even mentioned in the Military Penal Code.²⁶ As a result, there is no evidence that corruption is included in operational forward planning, ensuring that appropriate mitigation strategies are also neglected. At the level of training, there is no evidence of specific anti-corruption training for commanders before deployments. Some training does occur, however it is ad-hoc and voluntary, and largely led by NGOs and the Anti-Corruption Commission, indicating that it has not been integrated into military structures. Additionally, the Armed Forces do not have a policy of monitoring corruption risk during deployments and do not deploy personnel to counter such risks.

²⁰ United States Department of State, 'Jordan 2019 Human Rights Report', 2020, p. 1.

²¹ Ziad Muna, 'Jordan's General Businessmen in Military Attire: On Corruption and Destruction in the Armed Forces', *Al-Akhar Opinions*, 28 March 2018.

²² Integrity and Anti-Corruption Committee, 'Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law of 2016,' *Official Gazette*, Issue No. 5397 (2016): pp. 2578.

²³ See for instance, the 1971 Protection of State Secrets and Classified Documents Law, the 1998 Defence Law and the 1998 Jordan Press Association Law.

²⁴ Transparency International, 'Wasta: How Personal Connections Are Denying Citizens Opportunities and Basic Services', 11 December 2019.

²⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping, 'Country Contributions by Mission and Personnel Type – Jordan,' 2021.

²⁶ Jordanian Armed Forces, 'Military Penal Code,' 2006.



JORDAN

Defence Procurement

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2020)	2083
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2016-20)	United States, Egypt, Armenia, Kenya, Philippines
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2016-20)	United States, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Russia, Germany

Jordan's precarious geographic position and strong security cooperation with the US have fuelled sustained investment in defence procurement. Between 2015 and 2020, arms imports have increased by 38%, over a third of which are sourced from the United States.²⁷ The significance accorded to military investment meant that even during strict anti-austerity measures in 2018, military spending continued to increase.²⁸ Nevertheless, significant corruption vulnerabilities in the defence procurement process risk diluting this investment and wasting scarce public funds. At the planning stage, there is little defined process for acquisition planning, although one aspect of US military assistance to Jordan is the development of a five-year

procurement plan for the Armed Forces.²⁹ However, the plan is confidential and a 2016 SIGMA report underlined how Jordan was still lacking a clear public acquisition strategy.³⁰ The secrecy surrounding the acquisition plan and actual defence purchases means it is impossible to ascertain whether purchases are linked to strategic requirements. Furthermore, Jordan's dependence on foreign aid makes the country susceptible to influence and for defence acquisitions to be based on political influence rather than on objective needs assessments. Defence and security procurement legislation is also patchy. The Military Supplies Law of 1995 defines a procurement cycle,³¹ however it omits important aspects such as needs assessments and contract implementation and sign off procedures. Moreover, neither the Audit Bureau, nor the parliament are authorised to provide oversight of defence procurement and there appears to be no formal oversight mechanisms in place. Though the Military Supplies Law establishes that defence procurement should be done through open competition, in practice, the armed forces do not have a public tendering system and there is no transparency whatsoever in the tendering process. As a result, it would appear as though the vast majority of defence procurement is single-sourced or obtained through restricted procedures with favoured, politically connected suppliers.

²⁷ Pieter D. Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman 'Trends in international Arms Transfers, 2020', *SIPRI*, March 2021, p. 6.

²⁸ Kirk H Sowell, 'Slowing Jordan's Slide Into Debt', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 22 March 2018.

²⁹ Jeremy M. Sharp, 'Jordan: Background and US Relations', *Congressional Research Service*, 26 February 2018.

³⁰ SIGMA, 'Corruption Risk Assessment of the Public Procurement System in Jordan,' 2016.

³¹ National Assembly of the Kingdom of Jordan, 'Military Supplies System', Law No. 3 of 1995, Amman.

Version 1.0, October 2021

GDI data collection for **Jordan** was conducted July 2018 to September 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.



JORDAN 2020 GDI Scorecard

		Grade	Score
Political Risk		E	17
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	E	25
Q2	Defence Committee	F	0
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	F	8
Q4	CSO Engagement	E	17
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	B	75
Q6	Public Debate	E	25
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	NEI	
Q8	Compliance and Ethics Units	D	42
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10	Risk Assessments	F	0
Q11	Acquisition Planning	F	0
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	B	75
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	F	0
Q14	Budget Availability	E	25
Q15	Defence Income	F	0
Q16	Internal Audit	E	17
Q17	External Audit	F	0
Q18	Natural Resources	E	20
Q19	Organised Crime Links	E	25
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	F	0
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	E	25
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	F	0
Q76	Lobbying	F	0

Financial Risk		F	2
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	0
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	E	25
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	F	0
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	F	0
Q77	Defence Spending	F	0

Personnel Risk		D	39
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	D	42
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	C	63
Q36	Whistleblowing	E	17
Q37	High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	C	50
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	D	38
Q40	Payment System	B	67
Q41	Objective Appointments	F	8
Q42	Objective Promotions	C	50
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	83
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	C	50
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	D	42

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE

CRITICAL RISK

F
14

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**



Personnel Risk		D	39
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	D	44
Q48	Anticorruption Training	F	8
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	F	0
Q50	Facilitation Payments	B	67

Operational Risk		F	5
Q51	Military Doctrine	F	0
Q52	Operational Training	E	25
Q53	Forward Planning	F	0
Q54	Corruption Monitoring in Operations	F	0
Q55	Controls in Contracting	F	0
Q56	Private Military Contractors	NS	

Procurement Risk		F	5
Q57	Procurement Legislation	F	0
Q58	Procurement Cycle	E	25
Q59	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	F	0
Q60	Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q61	Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q62	Business Compliance Standards	F	0
Q63	Procurement Requirements	F	0
Q64	Competition in Procurement	F	0
Q65	Tender Board Controls	F	0
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	F	0
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	E	25
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	F	0
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	F	0
Q70	Offset Contracts	E	25
Q71	Offset Contract Monitoring	F	0
Q72	Offset Competition	F	0
Q73	Agents and Intermediaries	F	0
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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GDI@transparency.org

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Series editor: **Stephanie Trapnell**, *Senior Advisor*

Author: **Matthew Steadman**, *Research Officer*

Project Manager: **Michael Ofori-Mensah**, *Head of Research*

Design: **Arnold and Pearn**



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