



Government Defence
Integrity Index



2020

Country Brief:

MOROCCO



MOROCCO

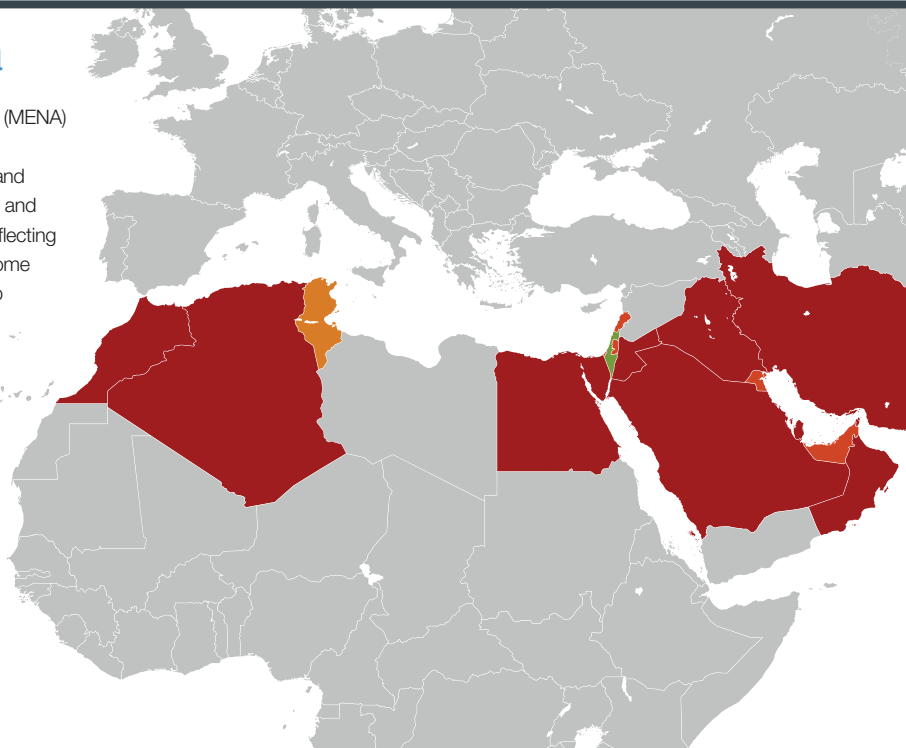
Growing discontent, fuelled by political and economic challenges and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, are causing echoes of the mass protests Morocco experienced during the Arab Spring in 2011. Then, King Mohammed VI weathered the unrest by proposing a new constitution and devolving executive powers to elected officials.¹ Yet, these measures have failed to fully resolve grievances. The monarchy retains strong policymaking power and evidence of cronyism and corruption have catalysed public frustration in the face of poor employment opportunities and public services.² Morocco's main international partners in the United States and European Union have shifted their focus towards counter-terrorism and migration, and the monarchy has prioritised military and security objectives over political liberalisation.³

Morocco's military budget increased by 29% between 2019 and 2020, with an additional 4% increase for 2021, in spite of the contraction resulting from the pandemic,⁴ in order to counter a host of national and regional security challenges. The unresolved issue of Western Sahara and the Polisario Front's calls for independence, has returned to the international agenda amid tensions with European partners,⁵ while concerns over terrorism and the issue of returning fighters are key priorities.⁶ Meanwhile, tensions with neighbouring Algeria, both a regional rival and the Polisario's main supporter, continue and have long stymied regional security and economic cooperation in the region.⁷ In a fraught regional context, the increasingly well-supplied military is due to play a critical role. Yet, significant governance weaknesses threaten to undermine such efforts and fuel corruption. External oversight of defence is non-existent, with parliament and audit bodies restricted from such matters. Defence exceptionalism is prevalent in relation to procurement and budgeting, which are conducted in complete secrecy. Access to information is extremely poor, as are safeguards to corruption in operations, and personnel management systems are highly vulnerable to nepotism and favouritism.

Member of Open Government Partnership	Yes
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2007.
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 Alexis Arieff, 'Morocco: Background and US Relations', *Congressional Research Service*, R45387, 23 June 2020, p. 1.

² Amnay Idir, 'Le Maroc de Nouveau Face a la Contestation Populaire: Manifestation Contre les Inégalités et Pour le Démocratie à Casablanca', *El Watan*, 24 February 2020.

³ Arieff, 'Morocco', p. 5.

⁴ Hassan Benadad, 'Le Budget de la Défense Augmentera de 4%, Voici Pourquoi', *Le 360*, 26 November 2020.

⁵ Graham Keeley, 'Spain Calls for UN-brokered Solution to Western Sahara Dispute', *VOA*, 11 March 2021.

⁶ Kathya Kenza Barrada, 'Dealing with Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Insights from the Moroccan Experience', *European Eye on Radicalization*, 25 March 2020.

⁷ Arieff, 'Morocco', p. 4.



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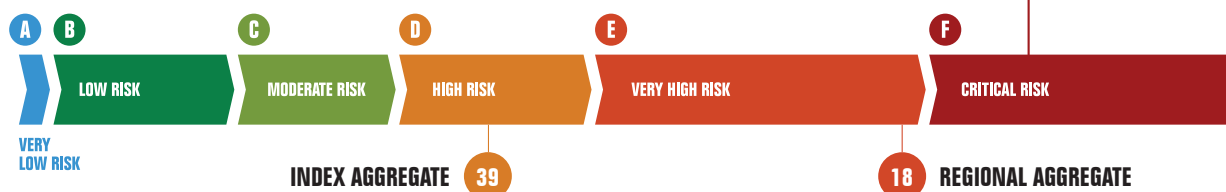
Overall scores

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

MOROCCO SCORE CRITICAL RISK

F

10



A > 83-100 VERY LOW

B > 67-82 LOW

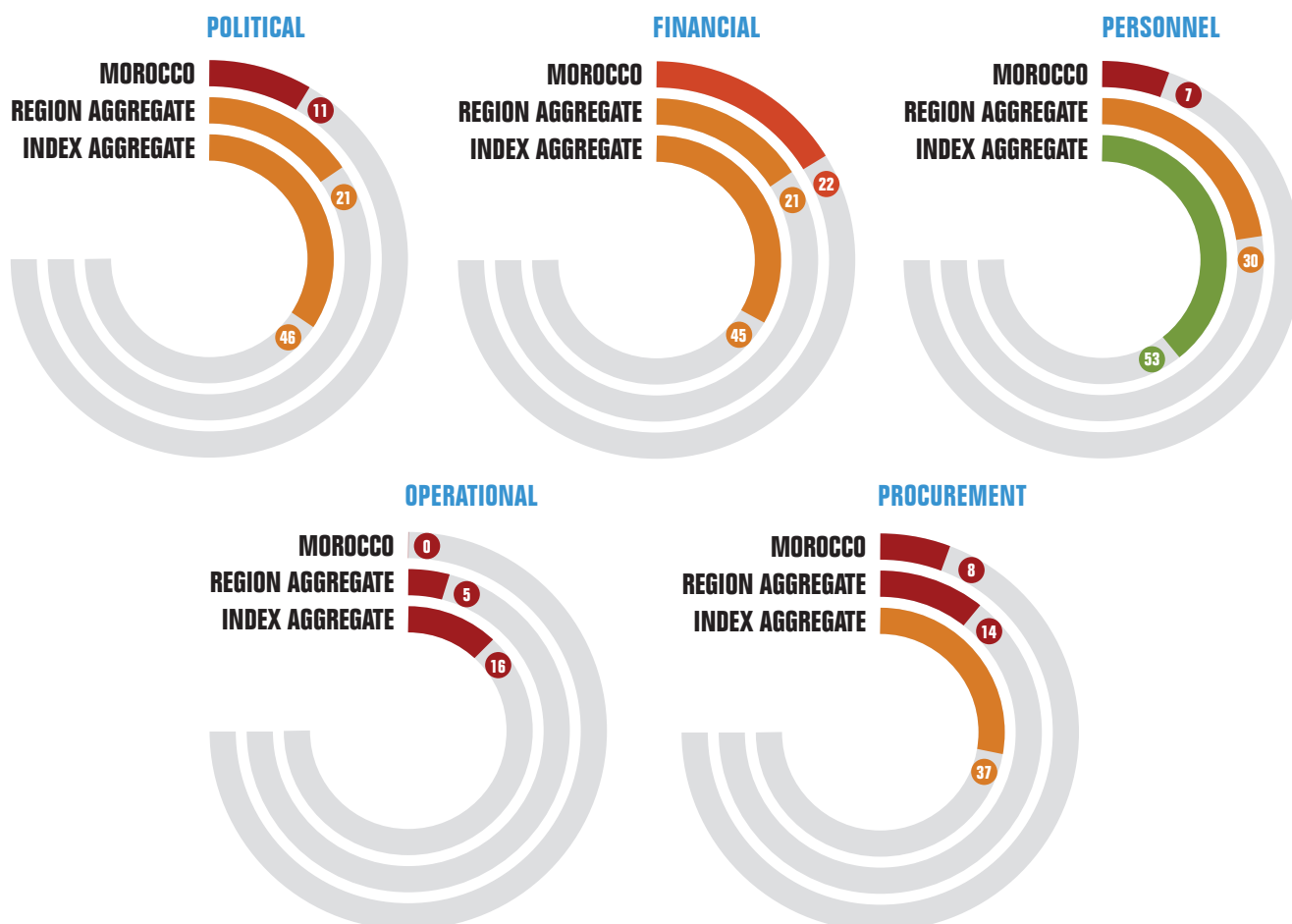
C > 50-66 MODERATE

D > 33-49 HIGH

E > 17-32 VERY HIGH

F > 0-16 CRITICAL

Risk Comparison





MOROCCO

Parliamentary Oversight

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2019)	44/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2020)	12.2%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	Data is not publicly available.
# of meetings/year	27 (2020), 23 (2019), 34 (2018)
Last review of defence policy/strategy	Defence strategy is not public.

Though some form of political liberalization was granted as a result of the mass protests in 2011, the monarchy continues to hold overwhelming policymaking power. While the 2011 constitution requires the king to appoint a head of government from the majority party in the Chamber of Representatives, the king remains the arbiter of decision-making and continues to shape policy-making.⁸ Reforms supposedly allowed for greater representation by opposition groups, but the king has sought to limit the influence of the main Islamist political group, the Justice and Development Party (PJD), rendering it unable to implement the elements of its political agenda that run counter to the monarchy's interests.⁹ As the head of the military, the king's powers of decision-making extend to military matters, from which parliament is largely excluded. The 2011 constitution reserves security as an area that remains the exclusive domain of the king, essentially obstructing any parliamentary involvement in such matters.¹⁰ As a result, the parliamentary commission on Foreign Affairs and National Defence is significantly limited in its ability to exercise oversight and be involved in decisions on such matters, essentially rendering it a purely consultative body with no policymaking powers.¹¹ There is no evidence of the commission initiating investigations, reviewing documents and budgets, or questioning ministers on defence issues, and no record of any debates or votes on defence policy either.¹² Instead, it appears as though the commission serves to merely approve executive-sponsored initiatives without interference or scrutiny.¹³ Defence exceptionalism from parliamentary oversight is mirrored in relation to audits. No information can be found in relation to internal auditing of defence expenditure, while the Court des Comptes, the entity responsible for external auditing of government expenditure, is prohibited from auditing military expenditure.

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 #	Data is not publicly available.
Does the commissioner have authority over the MoD?	N/A
Audit reports on defence (2015-2020) #	None
Open Budget Index (IBP, 2019)	43/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2021)	136th out of 180.

Morocco's government transparency has improved in some respects in recent years, including in relation to administrative processes, budgets and public registers,¹⁴ however much needs to be done for transparency to become the norm. This is particularly true of policy areas that are considered the king's prerogatives, which include security and defence. Financial transparency is severely limited by institutionalised defence exceptionalism and an absence of oversight mechanisms. The published defence budget is divided into just two broad categories, 'staff' and 'equipment and various spending,' neither of which contains a breakdown or any further information or justifications.¹⁵ Additionally, the king's extensive powers allow him to authorise extra-budgetary expenditure without the need to draft legislative measures, essentially ensuring that such spending is not recorded anywhere and is completely exempted from oversight. As a result, the published defence budget is likely only a fraction of the total resources dedicated to defence. The poor financial transparency of the defence sector is also exacerbated by extremely weak access to information mechanisms. The constitution imposes limits on access to information rights for any information touching on national defence, ensuring blanket classification for all defence data.¹⁶ The defence sector was entirely exempted from a government initiative to enhance transparency through a government e-data platform, and the National Defence Administration does not even have a website, making it extremely difficult to request any information. Furthermore, restrictions on civil liberties ensure that journalists and citizens face harassment and prosecution for even enquiring about sensitive subjects such as the military.¹⁷

⁸ Arieff, 'Morocco', pp. 4-5.

⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI Country Report 2020 – Morocco*, Gutersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, p. 5.

¹⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI Morocco*, p. 9.

¹¹ Morocco Chamber of Representatives, '2013 Internal regulations of the Lower Chamber of Parliament (Chambre des Représentants)'.

¹² Morocco Chamber of Representatives, 'Commission on Foreign Affairs, National Defence, Islamic Affairs and Moroccan Residents Abroad.'

¹³ Morocco Chamber of Representatives, 'Summary and full text of the Draft N°62.16 concerning the approval of an international agreement pertaining to military cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Popular Republic of China,' 11 May 11 2016.

¹⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI Morocco*, p. 22.

¹⁵ Finance Ministry, '2018 Budget Law', p. 1538.

¹⁶ Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, 'Constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco', 2011, Article 27.

¹⁷ Arieff, 'Morocco', pp. 1-2.



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Personnel Ethics Framework

Whistleblowing legislation	None.
# defence-sector whistleblower cases	1
# Code of conduct violations	Military: No such code exists.
	Civilian: No such code exists.
Financial disclosure system	# submitted: Data is not publicly available.
	# of violations: Data is not publicly available.

Significant investment in relation to equipment and hardware has created an imbalance between the military's operational capabilities on the one hand, and the outdated institutional frameworks that regulate basic functions on the other. Nowhere is this more evident than in personnel management. The Armed Forces do not have a unified code of conduct, with behaviour instead guided by the Military Justice Code and general regulations on discipline.¹⁸ However, neither of these covers any corruption-related issues despite providing detailed accounts of the behaviour personnel should observe before, during and after operations, betraying a refusal to acknowledge corruption as a significant issue. Moreover, even when corruption cases come to light, political connections between commanders and the monarchy can ensure that charges are dropped and personnel reintegrated into the military, even if they have been sentenced.¹⁹ Mechanisms through which to report abuses of power and corruption within the military are also absent. Morocco has no legislation on whistleblowing that would guarantee protection for those reporting wrongdoing. When abuses have been reported, ensuing investigations have been superficial and have not resulted in convictions or prosecutions.²⁰ As a result, personnel are extremely reluctant to come forward given the lack of faith in the system and the perception of impunity for senior officers. Furthermore, weaknesses in the promotion and recruitment processes expose them to significant corruption risk. There is no evidence of a clear and objective appointment process for personnel at senior levels, which is instead decided solely by the king, who has great discretionary powers to appoint officers as he sees fit, without justification.²¹ Similarly, the king is also responsible for officer promotions at lower levels, ensuring that such decisions are political, rather than based on objective and meritocratic processes.

Operations

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2018)	245,800
Troops deployed on operations #	924 in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), 749 in Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

Morocco has a long tradition of deploying troops on United Nations peacekeeping operations,²² and has recently deployed troops in operations in the Western Sahara border zone.²³ However, these operations are highly vulnerable to corruption given the complete lack of anti-corruption safeguards in Morocco's planning, training and execution of military operations. There is no evidence of an explicit military doctrine addressing corruption as a strategic issue on operations, and none of the government's recent anti-corruption initiatives have mentioned corruption risks on operations.²⁴ As a result, corruption is not included in the forward planning of operations, nor are relevant mitigation strategies drawn up in order to counter related risks should they arise. This failure to acknowledge the risks at a strategic level has a knock-on effect in terms of training. There is no evidence of commanders receiving specific anti-corruption, human rights, or governance training prior to deployments, nor of corruption modules being included in basic training courses in the military academy. Moreover, there is no policy of monitoring corruption during deployments and no evidence that personnel are provided with guidelines to help them identify and address corruption-related issues in the field.

¹⁸ Dahir n°1-56-270 du 6 rebia II 1376 (10 novembre 1956) formant code de justice militaire, *Bulletin Officiel* n° 2299-bis du 21/11/1956 (Military Justice Code); Dahir n° 1-74-383 du 15 rejab 1394 (5 août 1974) portant approbation du règlement de discipline générale des Forces armées royales (Regulations on General Discipline of the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces).

¹⁹ MM, 'Le Baroud d'Honneur.'

²⁰ MM, 'Le Baroud d'Honneur.'

²¹ Kingdom of Morocco, 'Constitution', Article 53.

²² The North Africa Post, 'Morocco, a Key Partner in UN Peacekeeping Missions – Official', 2 June 2019.

²³ Al-Jazeera, 'Morocco Troops Launch Operation in Western Sahara Border Zone', 13 November 2020.

²⁴ See for instance, Maroc.ma, 'Adoption du projet de la stratégie nationale de lutte contre la corruption' (Announcement of the adoption of a project of national fight against corruption), 28 December 2015; Commission Nationale Anti-corruption (CNAC), *Stratégie nationale de lutte contre la corruption* (National strategy for the fight against corruption), 2016.



MOROCCO

Defence Procurement

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2020)	4,794
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)	United States, France, United Kingdom

As the second largest importer of arms in Africa, representing 0.9% of global imports between 2016 and 2020, Morocco's investment in defence equipment is considerable.²⁵ Despite a recent drop in acquisitions, imports are forecast to increase once more after the COVID-19 pandemic and once outstanding deliveries of major arms are completed.²⁶ The recent military modernisation is driven as much by concerns of instability in the region, as it is by a desire to outstrip its rival Algeria to become the continent's leading military.²⁷ However, critical corruption vulnerabilities in Morocco's defence procurement process risk undermining these objectives and wasting substantial public funds. The highly secretive nature of the military ensures that procurement procedures are almost entirely shrouded in secrecy. There is no evidence of a defined process for acquisition planning and no transparency whatsoever surrounding actual purchases and the defence strategy, making it impossible to assess whether purchases are linked to

specific strategic objectives. There is also evidence of such decisions being influenced by seller nations, historically France but more recently the United States, which makes some of Morocco's economic aid conditional on the purchase of military equipment. Accordingly, Morocco sources 90% of its military equipment from the United States, which exerts great influence over strategic procurement decisions.²⁸ Moroccan legislation around defence procurement is extremely weak, essentially giving complete autonomy to the Ministry of Defence and the military regarding the contracting process. Military procurement contracts are not required to be put out for tender as opposed to all other public procurement contracts.²⁹ Moreover, the National Defence Administration is exempted from publishing offers, market audits, and external controls over equipment, weapons and ammunition contracts.³⁰ There is also no reference to external oversight of the process in any of the relevant legislation on procurement, nor is there any evidence that this occurs in practice, a significant corruption risk that exposes the entire process to abuse of power and siphoning of funds.

²⁵ Pieter D. Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2020', *SIPRI*, March 2021, p. 7.

²⁶ Wezeman et al, 'Trends in International', p. 8.

²⁷ The North Africa Post, 'Morocco Maintains Army Modernisation Plan', 3 June 2020.

²⁸ Abdellah El Hattach, 'Maroc: Les Dessous d'une Offensive Américaines pour Contrer les Russes et les Chinois', *Middle-East Eye*, 14 October 2020.

²⁹ Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, 'Code of Public Procurement Contracts (Décret No. 2-12-349)', Article 86, 20 March 2013.

³⁰ 'Code of Public Procurement,' Articles 17, 36; 165; 156.

Version 1.0, October 2021

GDI data collection for **Morocco** 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.



MOROCCO 2020 GDI Scorecard

Grade Score

Political Risk		F	11
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	F	0
Q2	Defence Committee	F	0
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	F	6
Q4	CSO Engagement	E	17
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	A	100
Q6	Public Debate	F	0
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	E	25
Q8	Compliance and Ethics Units	F	0
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10	Risk Assessments	F	0
Q11	Acquisition Planning	F	0
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	NEI	
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	F	0
Q14	Budget Availability	E	17
Q15	Defence Income	F	8
Q16	Internal Audit	NEI	
Q17	External Audit	F	0
Q18	Natural Resources	F	13
Q19	Organised Crime Links	E	25
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	E	25
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	F	0
Q76	Lobbying	F	0

Financial Risk		E	22
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	A	100
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	A	100
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	D	38
Q77	Defence Spending	F	0

Personnel Risk		F	7
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	F	0
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	F	13
Q36	Whistleblowing	F	0
Q37	High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	D	33
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	F	13
Q40	Payment System	C	50
Q41	Objective Appointments	F	8
Q42	Objective Promotions	F	0
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	F	0
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	F	0
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	F	0

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE

CRITICAL RISK



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		F	7
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	F	0
Q48	Anticorruption Training	F	0
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	F	0
Q50	Facilitation Payments	F	0

Operational Risk		F	0
Q51	Military Doctrine	F	0
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	

Procurement Risk		F	8
Q57	Procurement Legislation	F	0
Q58	Procurement Cycle	F	0
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	13
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	F	0
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	F	0
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	E	25
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	C	63
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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