



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



2020

Country Brief:

QATAR

QATAR

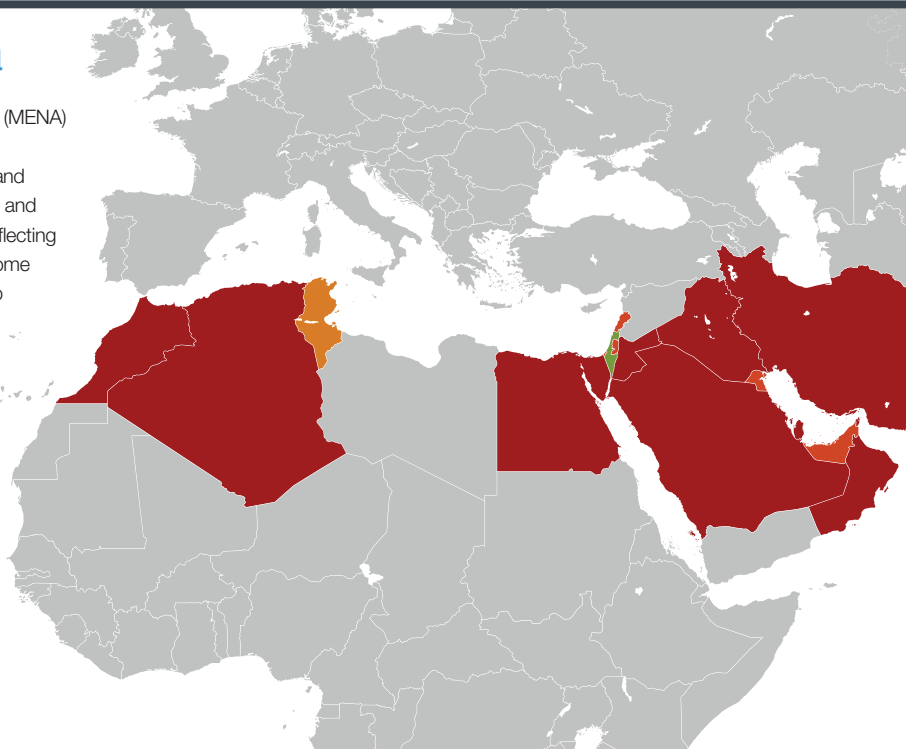
High-level internal and regional scandals and disputes have propelled Qatar to the forefront of international debates in recent years. At the national level, the run up to the 2022 FIFA World Cup has been marked by human rights issues, related to outdated labour laws and inhumane conditions for migrant workers.¹ At the regional level, the 2017 rift between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members over Qatar's support for Muslim Brotherhood organisations and its Al Jazeera media network, saw Saudi Arabia and the UAE lead a blockade against Qatar, severing diplomatic ties in the process.² Though the blockade has since been lifted,³ the crisis has sparked a significant geopolitical shift that could have ramifications for decades to come. Qatar has significantly increased its arms imports and the size of its military, which has nearly doubled since 2015.⁴

The crisis has caused a re-evaluation of the military, which has benefitted from considerable investment and is growing into a significant regional force.⁵ Equally, Qatar's deepening relationships with Iran and Turkey, intensified due to its isolation from GCC states, and its withdrawal from OPEC, are significant trends that could have a huge long-term regional impact.⁶ One constant is the relationship with the United States, which remains a key military partner, supplying around half of Qatar's weaponry and stationing thousands of troops in the country that provide training to Qatari forces.⁷ Nevertheless, Qatar's military build-up is occurring in a context of extremely weak defence governance that exposes the sector to extremely high levels of corruption risk. External oversight of procurement, budgeting, and policymaking is non-existent, creating an entirely secretive defence apparatus that is beyond the reach of even modest scrutiny. Access to information and whistleblowing restrictions further limit transparency and heighten corruption risks, while nepotism and impunity undermine personnel management processes.

Member of Open Government Partnership	No
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 Amnesty International, 'Qatar World Cup of Shame'.

² Kenneth Katzman, 'Qatar: Governance, Security and US Policy', *Congressional Research Service*, 31 August 2020, pp. 7-9.

³ Samuel Ramani, 'The Qatar Blockade is Over, but the Gulf Crisis Lives On', *Foreign Policy*, 27 January 2021.

⁴ The World Bank, 'Total Armed Forces Personnel – Qatar', 2018.

⁵ Alex Gatopoulos, 'How the Gulf Crisis Spurred Qatar to Expand its Military', *Al Jazeera*, 5 January 2021.

⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI Country Report 2020 – Qatar*, Gutersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, p. 4.

⁷ Katzman, 'Qatar', pp. 12-13.

QATAR

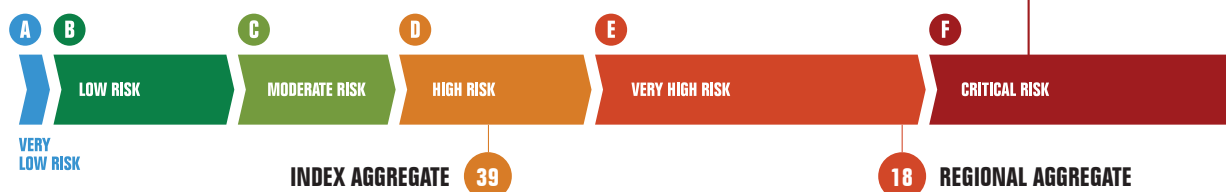
Overall scores

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

QATAR SCORE CRITICAL RISK

F

12



A > 83-100 VERY LOW

B > 67-82 LOW

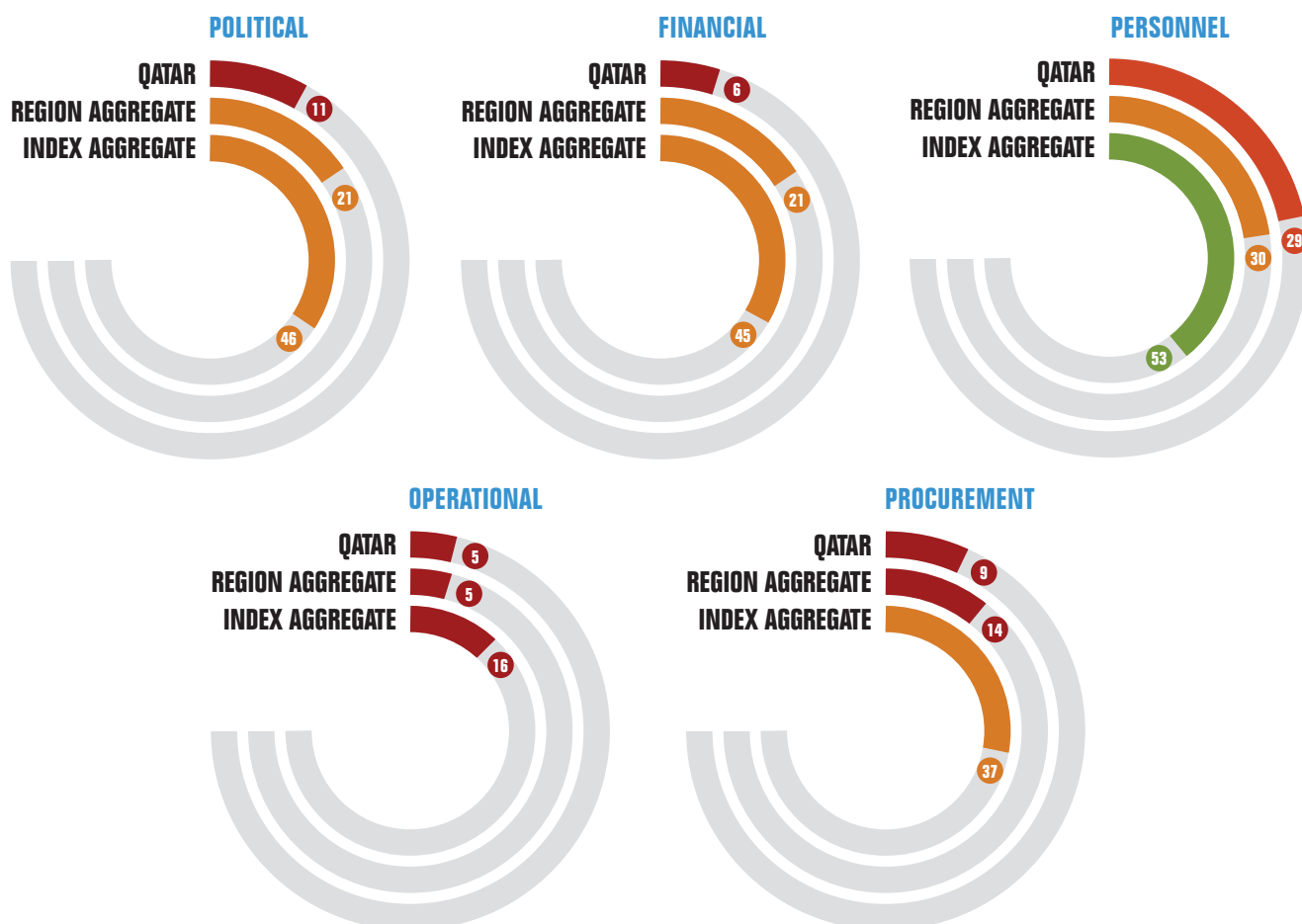
C > 50-66 MODERATE

D > 33-49 HIGH

E > 17-32 VERY HIGH

F > 0-16 CRITICAL

Risk Comparison



QATAR

Parliamentary Oversight

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2019)	6/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2010)	4.9%*
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 publicly available.

*Last available data is from 2010.

Qatar is a hereditary monarchy, with Emir Shaykh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani as the head of state, who is accorded absolute powers and authority over Qatari governance. Political parties are banned and there is no separation of powers, as there is no legislative branch of government and the Emir selects judges despite the constitution providing for an independent judiciary.⁸ The closest body to a legislative assembly is the Advisory Council, composed of 41 members who are selected directly by the Emir and serve more as advisors than legislators. A 2003 constitutional referendum provided for elections for two thirds of council members although these were repeatedly postponed until October 2021.⁹ Regardless, the Advisory Council has no mandate to oversee defence policy, with defence policymaking the sole responsibility of the Emir and his closest advisors.¹⁰ Since its establishment in 2014, the Council has never debated any defence-related issues, nor does it have a designated standing committee charged with such matters, including related to the defence budget.¹¹ The complete absence of parliamentary scrutiny is mirrored by similarly in-existent auditing practices. Though there is an internal auditing unit within the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces, the unit is chronically understaffed and its audits are highly superficial and irregular, restricting its audits to minor purchases and financial checks. External audit institutions, such as the State Audit Bureau and the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority (ACTA), are either explicitly prohibited from auditing defence spending,¹² or simply have no mandate to scrutinise it, leaving all military spending and financial management without external auditing checks.

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 #	No such body exists.
Does the commissioner have authority over the MoD?	No such body exists.
Audit reports on defence (2015-2020) #	None.
Open Budget Index (IBP, 2019)	1/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2021)	128th out of 180

Official information is tightly controlled by the authorities and decision-making process are extremely opaque, largely a product of the highly centralised governance system.¹³ Financial information is exceedingly difficult to obtain, as the State Audit Bureau does not make public the budgets and accounts of government institutions, or even share them with the Advisory Council. As a result, budget transparency is exceptionally limited, particularly in the defence sector. The published general budget contains only a top line figure for different ministries, with no breakdown, and figures for the defence sector are entirely absent. It is extremely difficult to obtain even an overall figure of defence expenditure for a given year, as such information is considered highly secretive and not shared publicly, or even with many senior level officials. A similar lack of transparency surrounds the defence sector's sources of off-budget income, including those generated by the Ministry of Defence-owned Barazan Holdings and the military-owned Qatar Armed Forces Investment Portfolio, which generate income through real estate. However, these holdings are not subject to scrutiny and there is no publication of the income generated by these companies, nor of how that income is spent. The secrecy surrounding the sector's finances is compounded by the complete absence of an access to information framework. The government does not provide any information related to defence as it is considered entirely classified, and the public has no mechanisms through which to request such data. The media are also under stringent government restrictions that make it extremely difficult and risky to report on defence matters, with a number of news organisations having been shut down for breaking strict censorship rules.¹⁴

⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI Qatar*, p. 11.

⁹ Alexander Cornwell & Lisa Barrington, 'Qatar Plans First Ever Advisory Council Elections in 2021', *Reuters*, 3 November 2020; Alexander Cornwell & Lisa Barrington, 'Qatar's first legislative elections see 63.5% voter turnout', *Reuters*, 2 October 2021.

¹⁰ Government of Qatar, 'The Qatari Constitution', Article 65, Doha.

¹¹ Government of Qatar, 'Publishing the Formation of the Five Permanent Committees of the Qatari Consultative Council', 2013.

¹² Government of Qatar, 'Law No. 11 of 2016 Concerning the State Audit Bureau', Contracts Bureau, Doha, 2016.

¹³ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World – Qatar', 2020, C3.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, 'Qatar: Blocking of Doha News Website 'an Outright Attack' on Media Freedom', 1 December 2016.

QATAR

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: No such disclosures exist.
	# of violations: No such disclosures exist.

The sudden increase in the size of the Qatari Armed Forces, which have grown from around 11,800 troops in 2015 to 21,500 in 2018,¹⁵ has drawn attention to its personnel management systems and existing safeguards against corruption and abuses of power, which are highly vulnerable to corruption. Though military and civilian personnel are subject to codes of conduct, the military code of conduct is classified, and evidence suggests that the codes are rarely enforced. Prosecutions for corruption-related crimes and abuses of power are exceedingly rare and the only cases that have been prosecuted are minor infractions that did not result in significant penalties. Integrity-building measures are also held back by the absence of whistleblower legislation. Though personnel are encouraged to report wrongdoing through the ACTA website, ACTA has no authority over the defence sector and is compelled to transfer such calls to the Ministry of Defence. The practice is not encouraged by the government, which prizes defence secrecy very highly. As a result, personnel are dissuaded from coming forward with concerns or to report wrongdoing, especially as there is a lack of trust toward senior officers. Significant corruption risks also exist in relation to military recruitment and promotion processes. There is no formal process for the recruitment of officers at senior levels, which take place through decrees from the Emir and are heavily political, being used to reward loyalty and disburse patronage. Personnel promotions are also rarely meritocratic, but nepotistic in nature, where tribal connections and personal connections play an outsized role, undermining objective procedures.

Operations

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2018)	21,500
Troops deployed on operations #	None

Though Qatar does not currently deploy troops on operations, it recently had troops stationed in Eritrea and Yemen, and its military strengthening has been heavily focused on responding to territorial threats that would require significant troop deployments. However, an overview of the military's strategic planning for operations reveals significant deficiencies that expose such deployments to critical levels of corruption risk. Qatar does not consider corruption a strategic issue for the success of military operations and does not include corruption in any strategic documents. Corruption issues are not considered in the forward planning for operations and the military does not develop strategies to mitigate and counter corruption risks in the field. The omission of corruption at the strategic level is replicated at the training stage. Anti-corruption training is not systematically included in basic and pre-deployment training for troops at all levels. Instead, this relies on irregular courses run by ACTA which are not compulsory and do not cover all units. Equally, evidence from previous deployments suggests there is no operational monitoring of corruption risks in the field and no process for assessing how risks are evolving and how to counter them, as missions are not provided with monitoring and evaluation guidance.

¹⁵ The World Bank, 'Qatar'.

QATAR

Defence Procurement

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2010)	2142*
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	0%
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2016-20)	Somalia, Mali, Burkina Faso
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2016-20)	United States, France, Germany, China, Turkey

*Last available data is from 2010.

In the face of mounting regional tensions, Qatar has invested heavily in its defence forces over the last five years. Arms imports have increased by 361% since the period 2011-2015,¹⁶ with imports from the US alone increasing by 208%.¹⁷ Qatar's investment has focussed heavily on its navy and air force, which has grown from 12 to 96 fighter jets in a little over five years.¹⁸ However, these high value items are particularly susceptible to corruption if appropriate institutional safeguards are not in place, as is the case in Qatar. The near-total secrecy with which procurement is conducted makes it almost completely devoid of oversight. The acquisition planning process for instance is kept entirely secret and is not subject to any external scrutiny. No information is released on planned and actual purchases, and it is impossible to ascertain whether purchases are intended to answer to

specific strategic objectives because the defence strategy is confidential. The absence of planning framework and risk assessment procedures for procurement also means that the procurement process is highly susceptible to political influence, driven by top government officials and seller nations. Qatar's procurement decisions are in large part driven by political considerations, especially when sourcing from powerful western allies such as the United States, United Kingdom and France. The highly secretive nature of procurement is strengthened by the absence of a legal framework to regulate the process, allowing top officials to manage acquisitions on an informal basis. The defence sector is excluded from the 2015 Tender Law that governs public procurement.¹⁹ Procurement decisions are instead made directly by the Emir and top military officials, with no external oversight, and each department in the defence sector having their own informal and secretive procurement practices that are actioned by the Emir's decision. There is no evidence of public tenders ever occurring in defence procurement, with all defence goods instead single-sourced from preferred suppliers with political considerations paramount. Defence institutions exemptions from the Audit Law also guarantee a complete absence of external scrutiny at every stage of the procurement process.²⁰

¹⁶ Peter D. Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2020', *SIPRI*, March 2021, p. 12.

¹⁷ Wezeman et al, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers', p. 3.

¹⁸ Gatopoulos, 'How the Gulf Crisis'.

¹⁹ Government of Qatar, 'Central Tender Committee Law', Doha, 2015.

²⁰ Government of Qatar, 'Law No. 11 of 2016'.

Version 1.0, October 2021

GDI data collection for **Qatar** 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.

QATAR 2020 GDI Scorecard

		Grade	Score
Political Risk		F	11
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	F	0
Q2	Defence Committee	F	0
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	F	0
Q4	CSO Engagement	F	0
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	C	50
Q6	Public Debate	E	25
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	F	0
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	F	13
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	F	0
Q14	Budget Availability	F	0
Q15	Defence Income	F	0
Q16	Internal Audit	F	8
Q17	External Audit	F	0
Q18	Natural Resources	D	35
Q19	Organised Crime Links	A	100
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	E	17
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	F	0
Q76	Lobbying	F	0
Financial Risk		F	6
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	8
Q30	Access to Information	F	0
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	F	13
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	F	0
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	C	50
Q77	Defence Spending	F	0
Personnel Risk		E	29
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	F	0
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	E	25
Q36	Whistleblowing	F	0
Q37	High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	D	33
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	C	50
Q40	Payment System	B	67
Q41	Objective Appointments	F	0
Q42	Objective Promotions	F	8
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	C	50
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	B	75
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	C	50
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	E	25

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE

CRITICAL RISK

F
12

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		E	29
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	E	31
Q48	Anticorruption Training	F	8
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	F	8
Q50	Facilitation Payments	C	58

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	9
Q57	Procurement Legislation	F	0
Q58	Procurement Cycle	E	17
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	6
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	F	0
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	E	19
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	D	33
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	F	0
Q70	Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71	Offset Contract Monitoring	F	0
Q72	Offset Competition	F	0
Q73	Agents and Intermediaries	B	75
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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