



**Government Defence  
Integrity Index**



**2020**



Country Brief:

**SUDAN**



# SUDAN

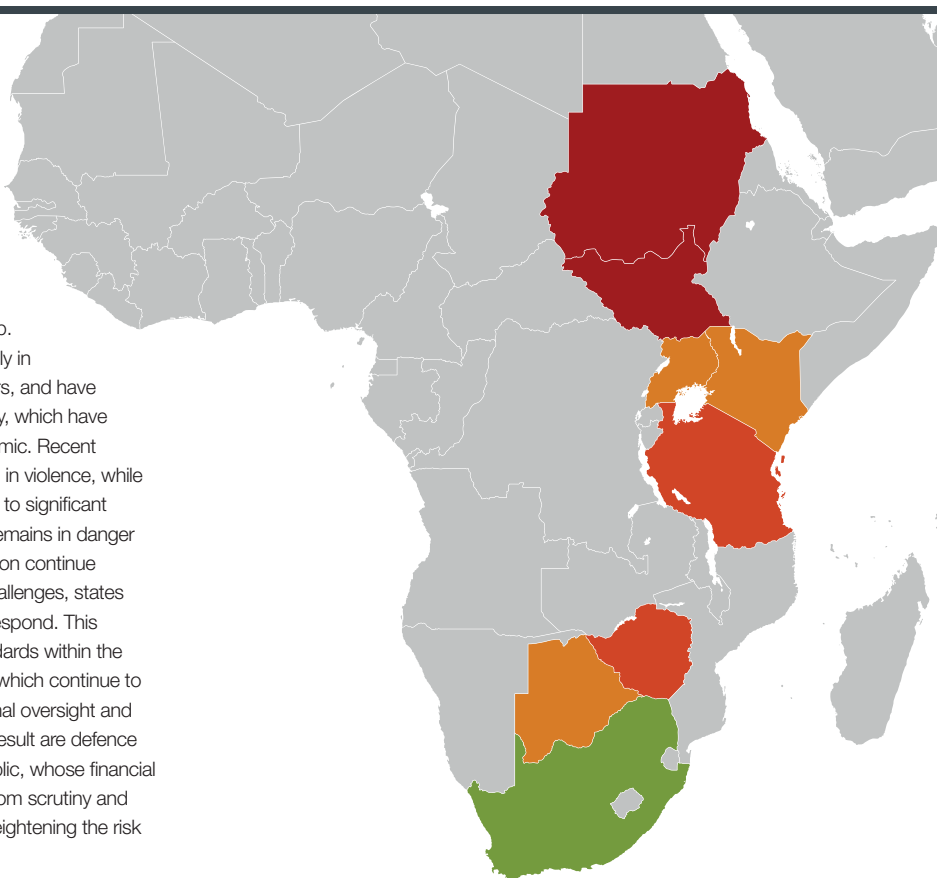
Sudan is undergoing a seismic political transition following the ousting of long-time strongman leader Omar al-Bashir in 2019. His removal after a sustained and peaceful protests campaign, raised hopes that the country could make a transition from a repressive military regime to more inclusive, transparent and civilian-led rule.<sup>1</sup> While the democratisation process is ongoing and the country's first elections are forecast for 2022, the transition has been stuttering and fraught with "staggering" challenges.<sup>2</sup> Chief among these is the old military regime and its reticence to forego the privileges and power it had amassed under President Bashir.

While the Sudanese Armed Forces have so far adhered to the 2019 transition agreement, which created the Sovereignty Council consisting of civilian and military representatives, the future of civil-military relations remains in the balance with military officials working to entrench their political and economic influence over a post-transition government.<sup>3</sup> Within this transitional context, formal defence governance mechanisms have been largely suspended, raising significant questions around how defence actors are being governed. Even where mechanisms are in place, they are products of an authoritarian ruler who used defence actors for regime protection at the expense of citizens. Parliamentary oversight and independent financial scrutiny of defence have historically been non-existent. Endemic corruption is widely accepted within defence institutions who benefit from near total secrecy in their activities, especially in relation to procurement and their commercial activities. Elsewhere, there are no anti-corruption safeguards in terms of operations, and personnel management systems significantly increase the risk of defence actors engaging in corruption.

|                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Member of Open Government Partnership | No                |
| UN Convention Against Corruption      | Ratified in 2014. |
| Arms Trade Treaty                     | Has not signed.   |

## East & Southern Africa

Two of the most stable regions on the continent, the Eastern and Southern African regions have nevertheless had to contend with a series of significant challenges in recent years. Instability in the Horn of Africa continues to present protracted security challenges in the region, including the growth of Islamist movements, such as Al-Shabaab. Civil unrest and protests have increased dramatically in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya amongst others, and have been fuelled by anger at police brutality and poverty, which have increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent elections in Tanzania and Uganda have been mired in violence, while the upcoming Kenyan elections in 2022 could lead to significant unrest. Elsewhere, Sudan's democratic transition remains in danger of stalling and armed conflict and endemic corruption continue unabated in South Sudan. In response to these challenges, states have increasingly sought to deploy the military to respond. This has increased attention on weak governance standards within the defence sectors across East and Southern Africa, which continue to contend with very limited transparency, poor external oversight and limited anti-corruption controls for personnel. The result are defence forces that are frequently unaccountable to the public, whose financial management and acquisitions are largely hidden from scrutiny and where corruption vulnerabilities are pronounced, heightening the risk of abuses of power.



<sup>1</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Sudan'.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council, 'Sudan Faces Staggering Challenges to Democracy Despite Significant Advances on Political Transition', SC/14460, 9 March 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Ramani, 'Sudan's Imperiled Political Transition', in Yezid Sayigh & Nathan Toronto (eds.), *Politics of Military Authoritarianism in North Africa*, Carnegie Middle East Centre, 2021.



# SUDAN

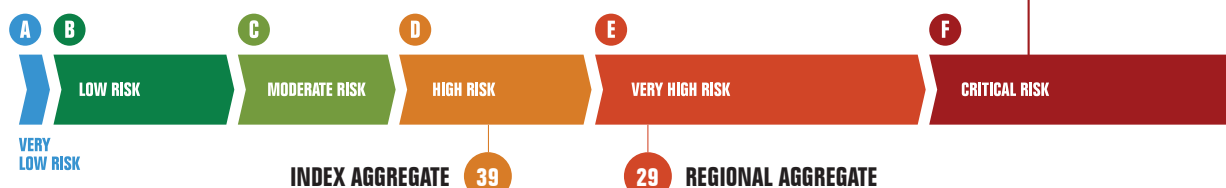
## Overall scores

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

## SUDAN SCORE CRITICAL RISK

F

5



A > 83-100 VERY LOW

B > 67-82 LOW

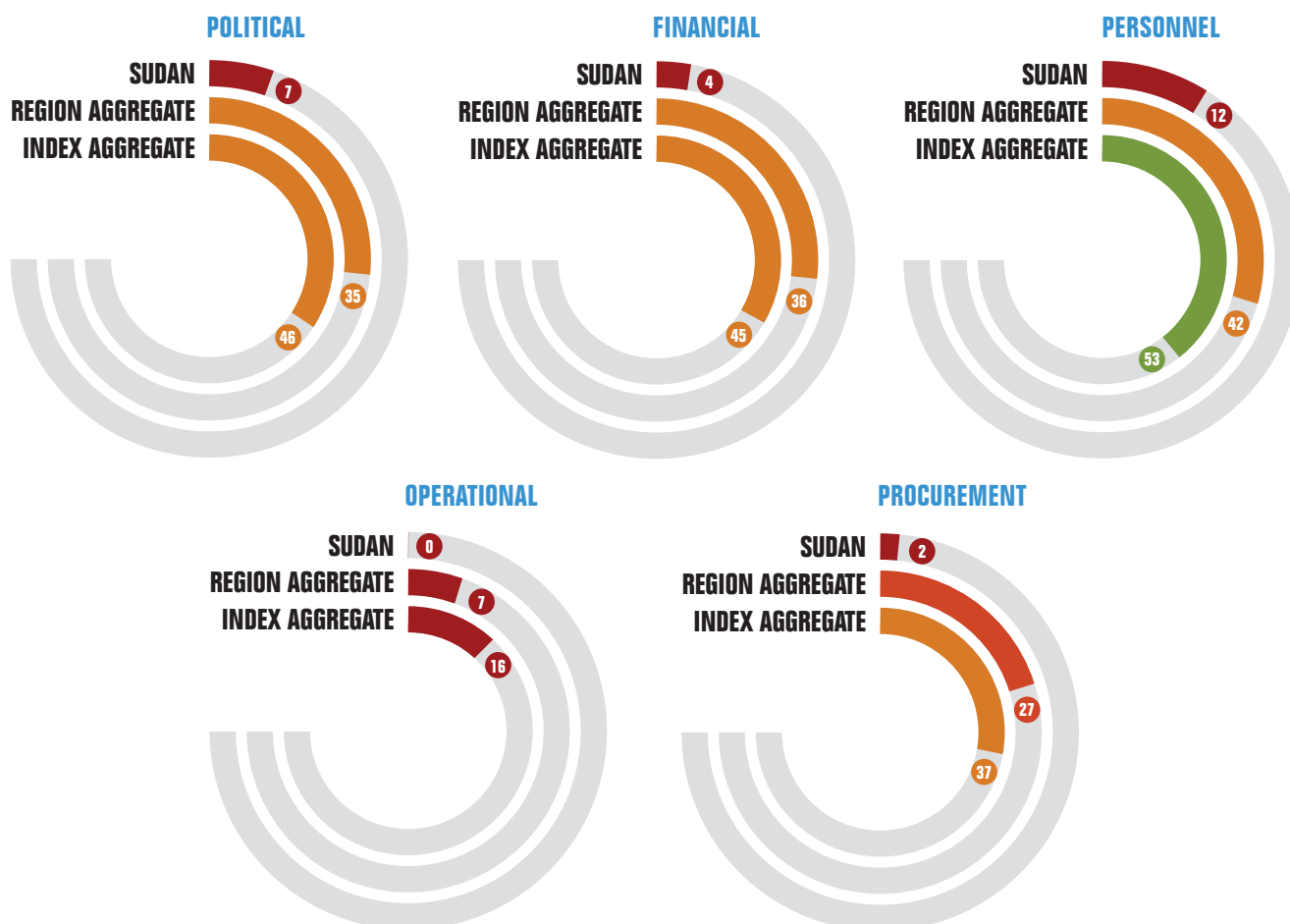
C > 50-66 MODERATE

D > 33-49 HIGH

E > 17-32 VERY HIGH

F > 0-16 CRITICAL

## Risk Comparison





# SUDAN

## Parliamentary Oversight

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2019)         | 33/100                                |
| Military expenditure as share of government spending (SIPRI, 2020) | 8.3%                                  |
| Committee members with defence expertise (%)                       | No legislative body currently exists. |
| # of meetings/year   | No legislative body currently exists. |
| Last review of defence policy/strategy                             | Data is not publicly available.       |

The constitutionally mandated formation of a Transitional Legislative Council (TLC) has suffered repeated setbacks despite being initially scheduled for November 2020.<sup>4</sup> As a result, Sudan has not had a legislative body since President Bashir dissolved parliament in February 2019, although even prior to that, parliament's capacity to exercise oversight of the defence sector was extremely limited. Under Bashir, the Security and Defence Committee nominally oversaw defence and security sector policy. However, the Committee had little power to access information from the Ministry of Defence or intelligence services and some committee members had financial interests in the defence sector, inherently undermining the committee's independence and effectiveness. In a similar fashion to pre-transition dynamics, military members of the transitional Sovereignty Council have continued acting largely independently of any oversight, for instance in relation to the normalisation of ties with Israel which civilian leaders decried as being unilaterally military-driven.<sup>5</sup> While it remains to be seen how parliamentary oversight of defence activities will function post-transition, it should be noted that the transitional constitution makes no mention of a requirement for a legislative defence committee to exercise scrutiny over defence actors.<sup>6</sup> This raises significant questions as to the future strength of parliamentary control over the sector and risks leading to a situation similar to pre-transition civil-military relations, with a military completely beyond civilian control. In parallel, defence auditing practices are virtually non-existent. There is no internal audit unit charged with conducting expenditure reviews within the Ministry of Defence. External audits are supposed to be carried out by the National Audit Chamber, however it is subject to consistent political influence,<sup>7</sup> and there is no evidence it has ever conducted an audit of defence expenditure. The Audit Chamber's website does not contain a single reference to the security sector or military-owned businesses. Regardless, the Chamber never releases its reports publicly, making the quality and scope of its assessments impossible to judge.

## Financial Transparency

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Defence-related access to information response rates   | (1) % granted full or partial access: Data is not publicly available.<br>(2) # subject to backlog: Data is not publicly available. |
| Defence-related complaints to ombudsman/commissioner # | Public Grievances Chamber  |
| Does the commissioner have authority over the MoD?     | Data is not publicly available.  |
| Audit reports on defence (2015-2020) #                 | None.  |
| Open Budget Index (IBP, 2019)                          | 2/100  |
| World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2021)                  | 159th out of 180.  |

Under President Bashir's kleptocratic regime, the Sudanese state was hollowed out to feed a vast patronage network of paramilitary and proxy forces that helped keep the regime in power for decades.<sup>8</sup> A key enabler of these networks was the practice of deliberately obscuring the true size and scale of defence spending to ensure funds could be secretly channelled to government-backed militias and paramilitaries who operated in a parallel structure to the regular military and with even less oversight.<sup>9</sup> Defence budget figures were extremely difficult to get a hold of during Bashir's tenure, although the transitional government did announce a defence budget for 2020.<sup>10</sup> However, the latter still showed defence representing roughly 8 per cent of government spending, which is in direct contradiction to external analysis which puts the figure at closer to 50-70 per cent.<sup>11</sup> A key factor in making defence expenditures so difficult to trace is the prevalence of off-budget sources of funding for security actors, which is entirely unreported and unregulated. Individual security units, including the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), have built up significant investments that enable them to accrue their own off-the-books revenue. Security actors' involvement in the gold and oil sectors is so profitable that the leader of the RSF pledged over \$1bn to help stabilise the Central Bank in the aftermath of the fall of President Bashir in 2019.<sup>12</sup> Another major source of funding is derived from mercenary activities, where Sudanese units are contracted by foreign governments including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Turkey and deployed to conflicts in Libya and Yemen.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, ineffective access to information mechanisms further compound the sector's non-transparency. Though legislation is in place to guarantee citizens' rights to access government data, in practice defence information is almost entirely inaccessible.<sup>14</sup> Broad classification of security-related data and the imposition of fees and penalties for anyone requesting access to sensitive information, coupled with the threat of repercussions from Sudan's feared intelligence services, are powerful disincentives.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Security Council, 'Situation in Sudan and the Activities of UNITAMS', 17 May 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Mohammed Alamin, 'Sudan Minister Says Army Forging Israeli Ties Without Oversight,' *Bloomberg*, 6 December 2020.

<sup>6</sup> The Transitional Military Council and Forces of Freedom and Change, *Draft Constitutional Charter for the 2019 Transitional Period*, 4 August 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Roberto Martínez B. Kukutschka, 'Sudan: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption,' *U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre*, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Small Arms Survey, 'Remote-control Breakdown: Sudanese Paramilitary Forces and Pro-government Militias', HSBA Issue Brief 27, April 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Global Witness, 'Exposing the RSF's Secret Financial Network', 9 December 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Sudan Tribune, 'Sudan Passes 2020 Budget as Deficit Widens', 27 December 2019.

<sup>11</sup> US Department of State, 'Sudan Integrated Country Strategy', 13 September 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Global Witness, 'Exposing the RSF's'.

<sup>13</sup> Alex De Waal, 'Sudan: A Political Marketplace Framework Analysis,' Occasional Papers (19), *World Peace Foundation*, Somerville, MA, August 2019, p. 15-16.

<sup>14</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Freedom of Information in Sudan', 2019.





# SUDAN

## Personnel Ethics Framework

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

The Sudanese defence and security forces were used as instruments of state repression by President Bashir and have been accused of egregious war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Darfur since 2002.<sup>15</sup> More recently, military and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) units have been responsible for the murder of pro-democracy protesters in 2019 and have continued to brutally repress protests under the transitional government.<sup>16</sup> The scale and frequency of human rights abuses, coupled with the evidence of military involvement in corruption, are indications of completely inadequate ethics and sanctions frameworks for personnel. There is no evidence that civilian or military personnel are subject to any codes of conduct, while the enforcement of existing anti-corruption frameworks such as the Penal Code is extremely poor, particularly for senior and politically-connected individuals. In fact, even the fall of President Bashir has not resulted in a rise in convictions, with many senior security officers maintaining positions in the transitional government.<sup>17</sup> Further risks relate to promotion and recruitment processes which are informal and rely heavily on individual commanders. This enables them to promote and recruit personnel as they see fit, opening the door for bribery, corruption and nepotism to become key factors in such processes.<sup>18</sup> Commanders also exercise influence through the salary payment process as they receive cash payments that they distribute to soldiers at their discretion. As a result, salaries can easily be skimmed by unscrupulous commanders, pushing soldiers to seek alternative means to complement their truncated pay.<sup>19</sup> Avenues for reporting wrongdoing within the defence sector are extremely limited. Sudan has no legislation in place to protect defence sector whistleblowers and criminalises the disclosure of information relating to national security or military matters. This exposes whistleblowers to potentially severe consequences, especially when reporting corruption.

## Operations

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2018) | 124,300                         |
| Troops deployed on operations #                 | Data is not publicly available. |

Under President Bashir, many military operations, including those led by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Darfur, aimed to secure control over lucrative gold and oil fields to sustain the regime's extensive patronage networks.<sup>20</sup> Correspondingly, anti-corruption safeguards are non-existent, as corruption was a key source of enrichment for senior military and political figures. Sudan has no doctrine that addresses corruption as a strategic issue for operations and there is no evidence that corruption issues have ever been integrated in the forward planning of military operations. There is also no evidence of any anti-corruption training taking place for commanders or more generally, including as part of pre-deployment training. This is a further by-product of the institutionalised nature of corruption within the defence sector, which was widely sanctioned under President Bashir. Though his overthrow has generated hopes for reform, the presence of the head of Sudan's RSF as one of the five military leaders on the transitional Sovereignty Council could undermine such prospects. Finally, Sudan has often relied on private military security contractors (PMSCs), such as the Russian Wagner Group, to train its forces and help secure its interests, particularly in Darfur.<sup>21</sup> However, these contractors are not subject to any oversight, nor are details of their activities and objectives made available to the public, seriously increasing the risk of corruption and abuses of power.

<sup>15</sup> International Criminal Court, 'Darfur, Sudan', ICC-02/05.

<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch 'Sudan: Lethal Force Used Against Protesters', 19 May 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World – Sudan', 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Luka Biong D. Kuol, 'Reforming the Security Sector in Sudan: The Need for a Framework,' *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 2 November 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Alex de Waal, 'Sudan: A Political Marketplace', p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Global Witness, 'Exposing the RSF's'.

<sup>21</sup> Mustapha Dalaa and Halime Afra Aksoy, 'Russia's Wagner Group Reportedly Deployed in Africa', AA, 5 March 2021.



# SUDAN

## Defence Procurement

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2020) | 457                             |
| Open competition in defence procurement (%)   | Data is not publicly available. |
| Main defence exports – to (SIPRI)             | N/A                             |
| Main defence imports – from (SIPRI)           | China, Russia, Belarus          |

The past five years have seen a significant drop in terms of military expenditure, with the total in 2020 equivalent to only a third of what it was just three years prior.<sup>22</sup> There has long been speculation around what percentage of this spending is devoted to arms acquisitions given the total opacity with which such procurement is done. Historically, Sudan's defence sector institutions and associated proxies have obtained revenue via licit and illicit transactions conducted directly or through military-owned businesses. As a result, procurement has never been centralised under the Ministry of Defence, but fragmented between individual factions or elements, including the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), who acquire weapons without recourse to a centralised management entity. The secrecy with which procurement is conducted is likely also motivated by the fact they violate the various arms embargos the US and EU

have imposed on Sudan, although independent analysis has shown the government's continued ease of access to military imports.<sup>23</sup> For instance, arms deals were signed with Russia in exchange for Russian companies being given preferential access to mine gold in Sudan, build military bases and provide training through private military security contractors.<sup>24</sup> The informal and fragmented nature of defence procurement, coupled with the extreme secrecy it is conducted within, means that there is no centralised oversight of arms acquisitions. The National Audit Chamber has never audited any aspect of the defence sector, and Parliament, prior to its dissolution, was powerless to scrutinise such sensitive dealings. The paucity of information available on Sudanese arms procurement is testament to how closely guarded a secret it was under Bashir. The new civilian authorities will have a significant task at hand to formalise the process, bring it under civilian control, and ensure it is properly regulated and subjected to external scrutiny.

<sup>22</sup> SIPRI, 'Military Expenditure in Constant (\$USm.), 1988-2020'.

<sup>23</sup> Conflict Armament Research, *Sudanese Stockpiles and Regional Weapon Diversion*, London, CAR Ltd, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Will Johnston, 'More than just oil and gold informing Russia decision to back Bashir,' *The East African*, 12 March 2019.

Version 1.0, October 2021

GDI data collection for **Sudan** was conducted April 2020 to April 2020. 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.

# SUDAN 2020 GDI Scorecard

|                       |                                     | Grade    | Score     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Political Risk</b> |                                     | <b>F</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| Q1                    | Legislative Scrutiny                |          | NA        |
| Q2                    | Defence Committee                   | F        | 0         |
| Q3                    | Defence Policy Debate               | F        | 6         |
| Q4                    | CSO Engagement                      | D        | 33        |
| 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                      | E        | 17        |
| Q16                   | Internal Audit                      | F        | 0         |
| Q17                   | External Audit                      | F        | 0         |
| Q18                   | Natural Resources                   | F        | 10        |
| Q19                   | Organised Crime Links               | F        | 0         |
| Q20                   | Organised Crime Policing            | F        | 0         |
| Q21                   | Intelligence Services Oversight     | F        | 0         |
| Q22                   | Intelligence Services Recruitment   | F        | 0         |
| Q23                   | Export Controls (ATT)               | F        | 0         |
| Q76                   | Lobbying                            | F        | 0         |
| <b>Financial Risk</b> |                                     | <b>F</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| Q24                   | Asset Disposal Controls             | F        | 13        |
| Q25                   | Asset Disposal Scrutiny             | F        | 0         |
| Q26                   | Secret Spending                     | F        | 0         |
| Q27                   | Legislative Access to Information   |          | NA        |
| Q28                   | Secret Program Auditing             | F        | 0         |
| Q29                   | Off-budget Spending                 | F        | 0         |
| Q30                   | Access to Information               | F        | 13        |
| Q31                   | Beneficial Ownership                | F        | 13        |
| Q32                   | Military-Owned Business Scrutiny    | F        | 0         |
| Q33                   | Unauthorised Private Enterprise     | F        | 0         |
| Q77                   | Defence Spending                    | F        | 0         |
| <b>Personnel Risk</b> |                                     | <b>F</b> | <b>12</b> |
| 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                | F        | 0         |
| Q39                   | Pay Rates and Allowances            | F        | 0         |
| Q40                   | Payment System                      | E        | 17        |
| Q41                   | Objective Appointments              | F        | 0         |
| Q42                   | Objective Promotions                | F        | 0         |
| Q43                   | Bribery to Avoid Conscription       | C        | 63        |
| Q44                   | Bribery for Preferred Postings      | B        | 67        |
| Q45                   | Chains of Command and Payment       | F        | 0         |
| Q46                   | Military Code of Conduct            | F        | 0         |

## OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE

### CRITICAL RISK



|                         |                                     | Grade    | Score     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Personnel Risk</b>   |                                     | <b>F</b> | <b>12</b> |
| Q47                     | Civilian Code of Conduct            | F        | 0         |
| Q48                     | Anticorruption Training             | F        | 0         |
| Q49                     | Corruption Prosecutions             | F        | 8         |
| Q50                     | Facilitation Payments               | D        | 33        |
| <b>Operational Risk</b> |                                     | <b>F</b> | <b>0</b>  |
| 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        |
| <b>Procurement Risk</b> |                                     | <b>F</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| Q57                     | Procurement Legislation             | F        | 13        |
| Q58                     | Procurement Cycle                   | F        | 8         |
| Q59                     | Procurement Oversight Mechanisms    | F        | 0         |
| Q60                     | Potential Purchases Disclosed       | F        | 0         |
| Q61                     | Actual Purchases Disclosed          | F        | 0         |
| Q62                     | Business Compliance Standards       | F        | 0         |
| Q63                     | Procurement Requirements            | F        | 0         |
| Q64                     | Competition in Procurement          |          | NEI       |
| Q65                     | Tender Board Controls               | F        | 0         |
| Q66                     | Anti-Collusion Controls             |          | NEI       |
| Q67                     | Contract Award / Delivery           | F        | 0         |
| Q68                     | Complaint Mechanisms                | F        | 13        |
| 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           | 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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