



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



2020



Country Brief:

ZIMBABWE



ZIMBABWE

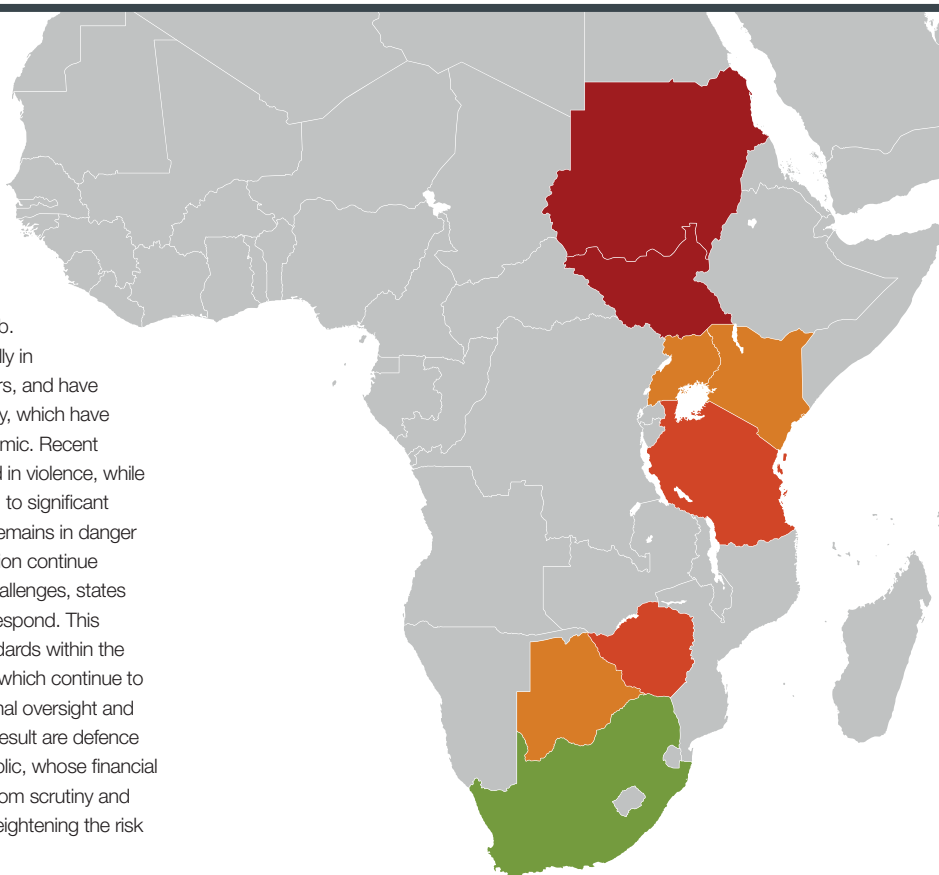
The political situation in Zimbabwe has become increasingly strained since the military's overthrow of long-standing strongman President Robert Mugabe in November 2017. Chronic infighting within the ruling ZANU-PF party delayed the installation of a new president by nearly a year, before former spy chief Emerson Mnangagwa was elected in Zimbabwe's first elections since the coup, which were marred by violence and allegations of vote-rigging.¹ Hopes of the election signalling a break from the corruption, cronyism and violence of the Mugabe-era have so far proved short-lived.

Member of Open Government Partnership	No
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2007.
Arms Trade Treaty	Has not ratified.

The debilitating economic crisis that has tanked the currency since 2008 shows no signs of abating, and Zimbabwe's dire health crisis has plunged new depths under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.² Against this backdrop, Mnangagwa's economic and social policies have failed to turn the tide and harsh austerity measures have sparked mass protests in major cities,³ which have been met with violence and increasingly brazen abuses by security forces.⁴ State repression, a hallmark of the Mugabe years that contributed to making Zimbabwe an international pariah, has escalated over the past few years and corruption remains endemic, with promised governance and political reforms stagnating.⁵ Defence and security sector actors have increased their political power as a result of the coup, which reconfigured state power dynamics and saw senior officers rewarded with Cabinet positions for their support of Mnangagwa.⁶ As a result, they are increasingly accountable only to the President and have increased their control over governance processes. Civilian oversight, which was already compromised, has been weakened further and the inclusion of senior military figures in the government and ruling party ensure that they are untouchable. The defence sector remains extremely opaque, particularly in relation to procurement and financial management, where off-budget income and murky arms deals represent critical corruption risks. Anti-corruption norms and safeguards are extremely weak in relation to operations and personnel management, contributing to a cycle of violence and human rights abuses.

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.



¹ Tafi Mhaka, 'How Did Mnangagwa Win Zimbabwe's Landmark July 30 Election?', *Al-Jazeera*, 6 August 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/8/6/how-did-mnangagwa-win-zimbabwes-landmark-july-30-election>.

² Anita Powell, '2020 Marked by Economic and Health Crises in Zimbabwe', *VOA*, 18 December 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/2020-marked-economic-and-health-crises-zimbabwe>.

³ Jason Burke, "'Hungry Kids Collapse as Looters Take Millions': Life in Today's Zimbabwe", *The Guardian*, 10 August 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/10/zimbabwe-emmermann-mnangagwa-battle-to-survive>.

⁴ Dewa Mavhinga, 'Mnangagwa's Broken Human Rights Promises Two Years On', *Human Rights Watch*, 4 September 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/04/mnangagwas-broken-human-rights-promises-two-years>.

⁵ Burke, "'Hungry Kids Collapse'".

⁶ Andrew Meldrum, 'AP Explains: Why Zimbabwe's Military Supports Mnangagwa', *AP News*, 14 January 2019, <https://apnews.com/article/ba79e9d05b24deb3225290f6efb7e>



ZIMBABWE

Overall scores

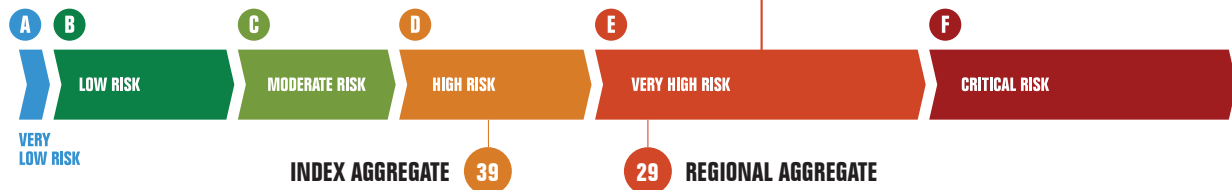
The size of the colour band corresponds to number of countries that fall into that category.

ZIMBABWE SCORE

VERY HIGH RISK

E

20



A > 83-100 VERY LOW

B > 67-82 LOW

C > 50-66 MODERATE

D > 33-49 HIGH

E > 17-32 VERY HIGH

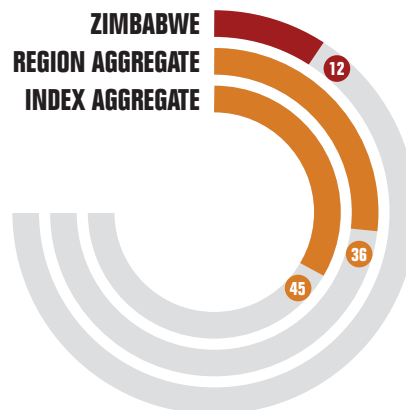
F > 0-16 CRITICAL

Risk Comparison

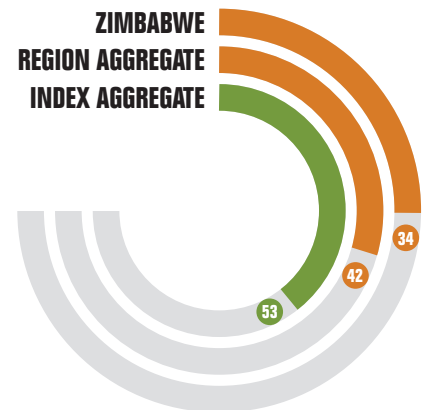
POLITICAL



FINANCIAL



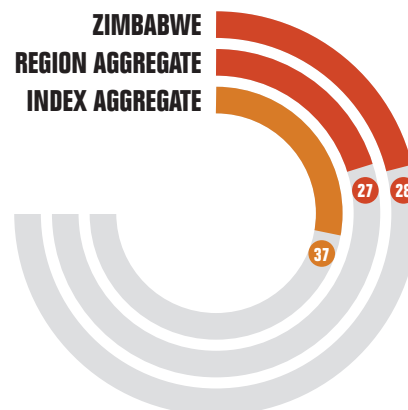
PERSONNEL



OPERATIONAL



PROCUREMENT





ZIMBABWE

Parliamentary Oversight

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2019)	41/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2019)	2.1%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	15% (3 of 20)
# of meetings/year	Data is not publicly available.
Last review of defence policy/strategy	Strategy is not publicly available.

Despite the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judiciary being a foundational principle of Zimbabwe's constitution, in practice the executive has amassed and centralised political authority and has control of all the major levers of power.⁷ This has severely weakened parliamentary checks and balances on the executive and the defence sector in particular. Despite having formal powers of oversight over defence policy, budgets and arms acquisitions through the Defence, Home Affairs and Security Services Committee of the House of Representatives,⁸ the committee's ability to exercise such scrutiny is extremely limited. Owing to the highly secretive nature of the military's functioning, parliament has very little information to work with and its power to summon witnesses to appear before it is routinely undermined by military officers simply refusing to attend hearings.⁹ As a result, parliamentary oversight is largely restricted to reviewing the annual defence budget and working on welfare issues, as opposed to the more sensitive operational and financial aspects of the sector. Superficial parliamentary oversight is compounded by the weakness of defence auditing mechanisms. Though the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has an internal audit unit, its reports are not made available to the defence committee and there are question marks over how it operates and its levels of staff expertise. The Auditor General is mandated to scrutinise public accounts, including those of the MoD. However, its access to information is extremely limited and it receives only aggregated financial data, making an accurate audit of spending impossible. Though reports are made publicly available, the information deficit the Auditor General is forced to work within renders the assessments superficial and of limited value to the public and Parliament.¹⁰

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)	Annual State Budget audits.
Open Budget Index (IBP, 2019)	49/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2021)	130th out of 180.

Government processes are extremely opaque in Zimbabwe, with the military particularly non-transparent.¹¹ This opacity is partly a product of the Official Secrets Act, a draconian piece of colonial-era legislation that prohibits the disclosure of any information to an enemy which could endanger the security and interests of Zimbabwe.¹² However, the law makes no clear distinction between what constitutes a state secret and what information is in the public interest, giving the authorities great leeway in restricting access to any security-related information, making it extremely difficult and dangerous for anyone to gain access.¹³ In July 2020, new freedom of information legislation was enacted to replace the restrictive Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and make more information freely available. However, barring changes to the repressive laws that guarantee state secrecy, it is unlikely that the new legislation will lead to significant changes in the access to information landscape, particularly for defence. Given the difficulties in accessing defence information, the public and media rely almost entirely on data the government makes openly available. However, the comprehensiveness and reliability of this information is severely lacking. The defence budget is purely top-line and does not provide specific figures on training, construction, procurement, asset disposal or maintenance. Aside from top-line numbers, there is no further breakdown of expenditures across functions nor are there explanations or justifications for different items. Though the parliamentary Defence Committee has the power to submit budget amendments, there is no record to suggest it has ever exercised this right, and there is no evidence that the committee has ever received disaggregated budget figures from the MoD. On top of this, the military's numerous sources of off-budget funding and extra-budgetary spending undermine the reliability of budget figures as an accurate gauge of defence finances. The Defence Forces are involved in several illicit mining ventures, including in the Marange diamond. These holdings are not publicly declared, not subject to audit, and the income derived from these activities is not registered anywhere, allowing it to serve as a slush fund for top military officials and a means for private enrichment.¹⁴ Though accurate figures of the revenue these ventures generate are unavailable, it is believed that they exceed the total value of the defence budget.

⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2020 Country Report: Zimbabwe*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020, p. 11, https://www.bti-project.org/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2020_ZWE.pdf.

⁸ Parliament of Zimbabwe, 'Profile of Portfolio Committees', <https://www.parl.zim.gov.zw/about-parliament/committee-system/portfolio-thematic-committees>.

⁹ The Tabloid, 'Parliament summons Nikuv over Command Agriculture', 20 October 2019, <https://thetabloid.co.zw/parliament-summons-nikuv-over-command-agriculture/>.

¹⁰ Auditor General of Zimbabwe, <https://www.auditorgeneral.gov.zw/downloads/category/3-ministries-and-departments>

¹¹ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World – Zimbabwe', 2021, C3, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/zimbabwe/freedom-world/2021>.

¹² Government of Zimbabwe, *Official Secrets Act*.

¹³ Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), 'Position on government media law reforms progress update', 22 May 2019, <https://zimbabwe.misa.org/2019/05/22/position-on-government-media-law-reforms-progress-update/>.

¹⁴ Global Witness, 'Zimbabwe's Vast Diamond Riches Exploited by Secretive Political and Military Elites', 11 September 2017, <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/zimbabwes-vast-diamond-riches-exploited-secretive-political-and-military-elites-report-shows/>.



ZIMBABWE

Personnel Ethics Framework

Whistleblowing legislation	Prevention of Corruption Act (2005) – partial protection
# defence-sector whistleblower cases	Data is not publicly available.
# Code of conduct violations	Military: No such code exists.
	Civilian: Data is not publicly available.
Financial disclosure system	# submitted: No disclosure system exists.
	# of violations: No disclosure system exists.

Under President Mugabe, the defence and security forces were key actors in institutionalising a system of impunity and systematic human rights abuses.¹⁵ Despite hopes that the Mnangagwa administration would have a transformative approach to civil and human rights violations, the continued abuses by security forces and brutal crackdowns on dissent and military involvement in the killings of protesters point to deep systemic issues within the security apparatus.¹⁶ Impunity remains a key issue and the lack of a code of conduct for military personnel is a significant gap, as there are few behavioural regulations and norms to enforce. The enforcement of more general laws related to bribery, corruption and theft is also weak. Though some arrests have been made, the political influence of the military brass ensures that prosecutions are extremely rare and only happen in cases where it would not stand against military interests.¹⁷ This influence, coupled with the absence of comprehensive legislation protecting whistleblowers, makes it extremely difficult and dangerous for personnel to come forward and report wrongdoing.¹⁸ The Defence Act does not contain any provisions on whistleblowing and there have been no attempts from defence institutions to promote the practice. Prominent whistleblowers who have exposed state and military corruption have been persecuted, arrested and imprisoned, underlining just how dangerous the practice remains.¹⁹ Moreover, the current promotion and recruitment processes are heavily skewed in favour of politically-connected regime loyalists. At senior positions, the President and Minister of Defence are responsible for promotions and the civil service and Parliament have no role in the process, ensuring a high degree of political bias in nominations.²⁰ At lower levels, promotions rely heavily on the discretion of individual commanders who make recommendations to the Ministry of Defence before Presidential sign off, ensuring that political motivations are central to many promotion decisions, undermining objective performance-based selection criteria.

Operations

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2018)	51,000
Troops deployed on operations #	Data is not publicly available.

Vulnerability to corruption during military operations is extremely high, owing to a near total absence of anti-corruption safeguards for Zimbabwe Defence Forces deployments. There is no specific military doctrine addressing corruption as a strategic issue for operations and no evidence that corruption issues are included in the forward planning of such operations, including in major civil relief operations such as the response to cyclone Idai.²¹ The ripple effect of this oversight at a strategic level is a paucity of relevant anti-corruption training at all levels. Commanders do not receive training in corruption issues ahead of deployments and there are no strategies to monitor, evaluate and mitigate corruption risk during operations. Furthermore, the regular deployment of the army to maintain law and order presents risks of its own. Soldiers are being deployed to carry out civilian policing functions without the necessary training or briefings on upholding human rights and due process when conducting law enforcement activities. Equally, the lack of anti-corruption safeguards for operations indicates that deployed personnel could be susceptible to corruption while conducting such activities.

¹⁵ Lovejoy Mutongwiza, 'Zimbabwe's "New Dispensation" Destroys Hope on Human Rights', LSE, 28 February 2020, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/02/28/zimbabwe-new-dispensation-hope-human-rights-violence/>.

¹⁶ Jason Burke, 'Zimbabwean Police Files Implicate Army in Widespread Abuses', *The Guardian*, 30 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/30/zimbabwe-police-documents-army-abuses>.

¹⁷ CITE, 'Zimbabwe's Anti-corruption Efforts Highly Politicised', 13 March 2020, <https://www.cite.org.zw/zimbabwes-anti-corruption-efforts-highly-politicised/>.

¹⁸ Whistleblowers are currently afforded some protection under the terms of section 14 of the Prevention of Corruption Act [Chapter 9:16] which criminalises retaliation against whistleblowers. However, it does not cover all aspects of whistleblowing and does not provide the institutional modalities for whistleblower protection. See, *Prevention of Corruption Act [Chapter 9:16]*, 1 July 2005.

¹⁹ BBC News, 'Hopewell Chin'ono: Whistle-blowing Zimbabwean journalist arrested', 20 July 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-53477423>.

²⁰ Ministry of Defence, *Defence Act*, Section 15.

²¹ Africa News, 'Zimbabwean Soldiers Support Victims of Cyclone Idai', 19 March 2019, <https://www.africanews.com/2019/03/19/cyclone-idai-zimbabwean-soldiers-hand-out-food-while-accessing-damage/>.



ZIMBABWE

Defence Procurement

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2019)	547
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI)	N/A
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI)	N/A

Zimbabwe's capacity to procure arms has been heavily constricted by international sanctions and arms embargos from the EU and the USA.²² This has narrowed the supplier market considerably, with Russia and China emerging as the main suppliers of weapons to both the Mugabe and Mnangagwa governments.²³ These deals are highly opaque and typify the secrecy that characterises Zimbabwe's defence procurement process. There is no specific legislation covering defence procurement and, while general procurement regulations supposedly cover defence acquisitions, these are regularly excluded by other laws such as the Official Secrets Act.²⁴ The Ministry of Defence does not publish any strategic defence reviews or white papers that detail potential defence purchases and the defence strategy is confidential, making it impossible to assess whether purchases

respond to specific strategic needs. The lack of strategy ensures that arms acquisitions are largely ad-hoc, informal and weighted in favour of seller nations. For instance, arms deals with Russia have been negotiated in exchange for concessions related to the extraction of significant natural resources.²⁵ For non-sensitive goods such as food, sundries and uniforms, formal procurement procedures are in place and contracts are supposed to be awarded through public tenders under the direction of the Department of Procurement. However, the process is undermined by corruption and favours politically-connected companies and those who pay bribes to secure contracts.²⁶ The paucity of information released by authorities on defence procurement also makes oversight impossible. Though parliament is supposed to be presented with non-redacted reports from the MoD's Procurement Board for scrutiny,²⁷ in practice this does not occur, owing to the military's privileged position within the administration and the fact it remains partly outside of civilian control.

²² SIPRI, 'EU Arms Embargo on Zimbabwe', 7 April 2021, https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/eu_arms_embargoes/zimbabwe.

²³ Tatiana Kondratenko, 'Russian Arms Exports to Africa: Moscow's Long-term Strategy', *Deutsche Welle*, 29 May 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/russian-arms-exports-to-africa-moscows-long-term-strategy/a-53596471>; Viola Zhou, 'Five Ways China is Building Influence in Zimbabwe', *South China Morning Post*, 15 November 2017, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2120094/five-ways-china-building-influence-zimbabwe>.

²⁴ Government of Zimbabwe, *Official Secrets Act*, Section 6, 1970, <http://www.veritaszim.net/node/230>.

²⁵ Kondratenko, 'Russian Arms Exports'.

²⁶ *Newsday*, 'Zacc Nabs Top Army Officer', January 2020, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/01/zacc-nabs-top-army-officer/>.

²⁷ Government of Zimbabwe, *Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act*, Section 11, 2017, https://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/Public%20Procurement%20Act%20r.pdf.

Version 1.0, October 2021

GDI data collection for **Zimbabwe** was conducted March 2020 to May 2021. 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.



ZIMBABWE 2020 GDI Scorecard

		Grade	Score
Political Risk		E	26
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	B	75
Q2	Defence Committee	E	20
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	F	6
Q4	CSO Engagement	F	8
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	B	75
Q6	Public Debate	C	50
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	NEI	
Q8	Compliance and Ethics Units	C	58
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10	Risk Assessments	F	0
Q11	Acquisition Planning	D	33
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	C	50
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	D	38
Q14	Budget Availability	E	25
Q15	Defence Income	E	25
Q16	Internal Audit	E	25
Q17	External Audit	E	25
Q18	Natural Resources	F	0
Q19	Organised Crime Links	F	13
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	F	0
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	C	50
Q76	Lobbying	F	0
Financial Risk		F	12
Q24	Asset Disposal Controls	C	50
Q25	Asset Disposal Scrutiny	E	25
Q26	Secret Spending	F	0
Q27	Legislative Access to Information	F	0
Q28	Secret Program Auditing	F	0
Q29	Off-budget Spending	D	33
Q30	Access to Information	F	0
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	F	0
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	F	0
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	F	0
Q77	Defence Spending	E	25
Personnel Risk		D	34
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	E	25
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	A	88
Q36	Whistleblowing	E	17
Q37	High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	E	25
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	F	0
Q40	Payment System	B	67
Q41	Objective Appointments	F	8
Q42	Objective Promotions	E	31
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	B	75
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	A	100
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	F	0

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE

VERY HIGH RISK

20

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		D	34
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	A	94
Q48	Anticorruption Training	F	0
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	F	8
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		E	28
Q57	Procurement Legislation	E	25
Q58	Procurement Cycle	C	58
Q59	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	E	17
Q60	Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q61	Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q62	Business Compliance Standards	NEI	
Q63	Procurement Requirements	F	13
Q64	Competition in Procurement	NEI	
Q65	Tender Board Controls	E	19
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	B	81
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	E	31
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	B	67
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	A	88
Q70	Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71	Offset Contract Monitoring	E	25
Q72	Offset Competition	NEI	
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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Series editor: **Stephanie Trapnell**, *Senior Advisor*

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

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

Design: **Arnold and Pearn**



Foreign, Commonwealth
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