

**Government Defence  
Integrity Index**



**COUNTRY  
BRIEF**

**BENIN**

**2025**





# BENIN

Considered a model for democratic governance in the region, Benin's political environment has been marked in the last few years by a decline of freedoms, oppression of opposition parties and lack of open and inclusive elections.<sup>1,2</sup> President Patrice Talon's re-election in 2021 was marred by violence and the arrest of key opponents, with critics accusing him of using prosecutions to sideline political opponents.<sup>3</sup> Despite peaceful parliamentary elections in January 2023, they offered only temporary hope for stability as insecurity along Benin's borders with Burkina Faso and Niger intensified.<sup>4, 5</sup> Furthermore, a coup attempt occurred in December 2025, as a group of Beninese soldiers briefly seized state television and attempted to overthrow President Patrice Talon. They were quickly defeated by loyalist forces, backed by regional support from Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).<sup>6</sup>

Since 2020, the legal and institutional framework for the prevention and control of corruption has undergone significant changes following the repeal of the 2011 anti-corruption law and the dissolution of the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANLC), developments that have substantially weakened the national anti-corruption governance framework. The

ANLC was replaced by the High Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (HCPC), which does not benefit from comprehensive legal guarantees ensuring its institutional independence.<sup>7</sup>

The Government Defence Integrity Index GDI (2025) shows encouraging signs in Benin's defence governance, including internal and independent financial oversight, safeguards preventing military commercial ventures, and integrity training within the armed forces. However, significant weaknesses persist as defence spending and procurement remain opaque, and access to information is often restricted and personnel management lacks transparency, with weak whistleblower protections and discretionary appointments. Operational corruption risks also remain high, as corruption is not integrated into doctrine or planning despite pre-deployment monitoring efforts.

<b>Member of Open Government Partnership</b>	Yes
<b>UN Convention Against Corruption</b>	Ratified in 2004
<b>Arms Trade Treaty</b>	Ratified in 2016

## WEST AFRICA

The security environment in West Africa has deteriorated markedly over the past decade, driven by the expansion of jihadist insurgencies, political instability, and transnational organised crime. Armed groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP) have generated unprecedented violence, with the Sahel now accounting for nearly half of global terrorism-related deaths. These violent extremist groups have expanded southward, placing increasing pressure on coastal states including Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Insecurity is further compounded by piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, trafficking in arms, drugs, and natural resources, and climate-related competition over resources. The cumulative effect has worsened the humanitarian crisis and widespread displacement across the region. These security challenges have unfolded alongside military coups in Benin, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Guinea between 2020 and 2023, which have further weakened civilian control and democratic oversight.



Weak defence sector governance has significantly undermined states' ability to respond effectively to these threats. Defence institutions across West Africa remain characterised by limited transparency, weak accountability, and entrenched defence exceptionalism. Parliamentary oversight is constrained by executive dominance, and limited technical capacity, reducing civilian control over defence policy, budgets, and procurement. Limited budget transparency has weakened accountability and fuelled public mistrust. Simultaneously, non-transparent and discretionary procurement systems have increased corruption risks, distorted capability development, and diverted resources away from operational needs. While most states in the sub-region have ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), uneven implementation has arguably continued to expose defence sectors to corruption (risks), undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of security responses.

1 BTI, "2024 Benin Country Report", 2024.  
 2 Freedom House, "Freedom in the world 2024: Benin Country Report".  
 3 Al Jazeera, "One protester killed in Benin days before polls: Health official", April 8, 2021.  
 4 ISS Africa, "Can West African nations come together to stop terrorism spreading?", March 31, 2025.  
 5 Freedom House, "Freedom in the world 2024: Benin country report".  
 6 BBC, "A coup too far: Why Benin's rebel soldiers failed where others in the region succeeded", December 9, 2025.  
 7 IMF, "Benin Diagnostique de la Gouvernance", [Governance Diagnostic], February 2023.



# BENIN

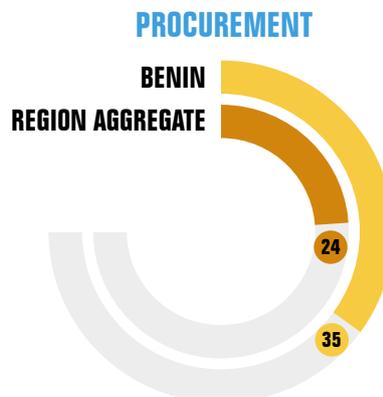
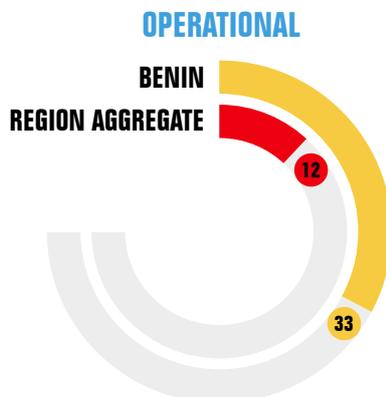
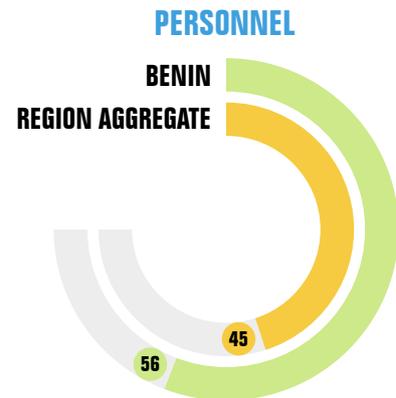
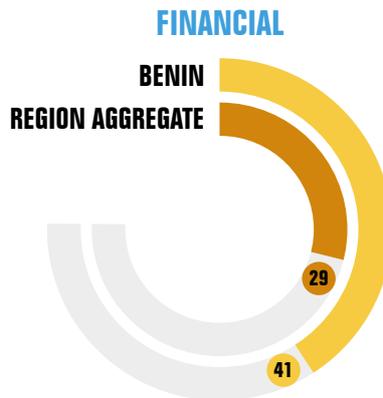
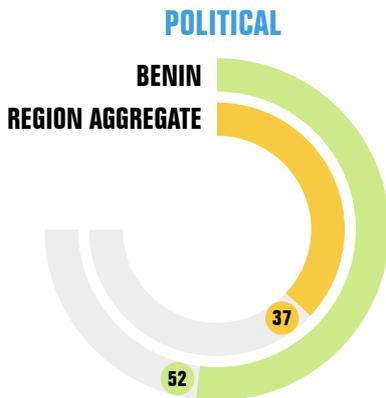
## RISK COMPARISON

The Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI) assesses five key risk areas: political, financial, personnel, operational, and procurement. This section compares Benin's performance in each area with the regional average (Sub-Saharan Africa).

**HIGH RISK**

**D**

**44**





## PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2023)	67/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2024)	3.80%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	Data is not publicly available.
# of meetings/year	Data is not publicly available.
Last review of defence policy/strategy	Strategy is not publicly available.

In the legislative elections held in January 2026, parties aligned with the President won all 109 seats in the National Assembly, consolidating executive influence over the legislature ahead of the April presidential election.<sup>8</sup> The country operates under a presidential system, granting the President significant control over policymaking, particularly in defence matters, constraining parliamentary oversight. Although the Parliament and its Defence Committee possess formal powers these are not comprehensively exercised in practice.<sup>9 10 11</sup> Parliamentary debates on defence policy are almost inexistent, and committee members generally lack sectoral expertise. There is no evidence of sustained short- or long-term oversight of the defence sector. While the Parliament's work is influenced by presidential dominance, it remains largely free from military.<sup>12</sup> In Benin, political corruption risks are moderate with good compliance to international instruments and comprehensive and regular corruption risks assessment at the MOD level, but parliamentary oversight of the sector is not fully effective.

Despite these weaknesses, expenditure oversight is exercised by internal bodies such as the Ministerial Internal Audit Committee and the General Inspectorate as well as by independent authorities including the Court of Auditors.<sup>13 14</sup> Reports produced by these institutions are rarely publicly available or proactively shared with Parliament, but internal audits report may be incorporated into the reports submitted by the ministries or the Court of Auditors to Parliament. Parliamentary committees may also request additional information.<sup>15 16</sup>

## 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?	Data is not publicly available.
Audit reports on defence (2020-2025) #	None
Open Budget Index (IBP, 2023)	79/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2025)	92nd out of 180.

Financial risks in the sector remain high as transparency in defence expenditure is limited despite consistent budget increases in the past 5 years to \$154.1 million in 2024.<sup>17</sup> Benin publishes its defence budget, providing comprehensive information on some functional spending but omits details on the acquisition and maintenance of military equipment.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, no data is released on actual defence expenditures or non-central government sources of income.<sup>19</sup>

Transparency is further constrained by limited access to information mechanisms. Although the 2015 Code grants citizens the right to access public information,<sup>20</sup> requests directed to defence institutions are frequently denied. Information is often classified as a defence secret or withheld on administrative grounds.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, no evidence of off-budget spending has been reported, and Benin has established robust safeguards to prevent the involvement of defence institutions or military personnel in commercial activities.<sup>22 23</sup> There are no known military-owned enterprises, indicating some progress in preventing conflicts of interest and financial misuse within the defence establishment.

8 Al-Jazeera, "Benin's opposition loses all parliamentary seats, provisional results show", January 18, 2026.  
 9 Republic of Benin, "Constitution of the Republic of Benin, December 10, 1990 as modified by Law 2019-40 of November 7, 2019".  
 10 Republic of Benin, "Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, July 14, 2020".  
 11 Republic of Benin, "Law No. 2025-20 of 17 December 2025 amending and supplementing Law No. 90-32 of 11 December 1990 on the Constitution of the Republic of Benin, as revised by Law No. 2019-40 of 7 November 2019".  
 12 Interview with a journalist at the TV Hemicycle, Cotonou, May 27, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.  
 13 Interview with an Auditor at the Ministry of Defense, June 24, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.  
 14 Republic of Benin, "Law No. 2022-05 of June 27 on the Organic Law on the Court of Auditors".  
 15 Interview with an Auditor at the Ministry of Finances, June 24, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.  
 16 Interview with an Auditor at the Ministry of Defense, June 24, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.  
 17 SIPRI, Military expenditure database, Benin.  
 18 Ministry of Finance, "Presentation of the MoD's expenditure for 2025, December 2024".  
 19 Ministry of Finance and Economy, "Report on budget execution of September 30th 2024".  
 20 Republic of Benin, "Law N°2015-07 of 20 March 2015 on the Information and Communication Code".  
 21 Interview with an Activist in a civil society organisation having asked public documents to the administration, September 1, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.  
 22 Republic of Benin, "Law No. 2020-19 of July 3, 2020 relating to the special status of personnel of the Beninese Armed Forces".  
 23 Interview with a Colonel at the General Staff of the Army, Cotonou, June 17, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.



## 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: None. # of violations: None.

Benin has comprehensive and effective anti-bribery policies and payment system, but structural weaknesses continue to undermine integrity in personnel governance leading to moderate corruption risks in the defence sector.

The number of defence personnel remains unpublished, limiting accountability. The MOD reportedly encourages whistleblowing but confidence among personnel remains low due to inadequate protection mechanisms. Indeed, the repeal of the 2011 Anti-Corruption Law in 2020 effectively dismantled formal whistleblower safeguards.<sup>24 25</sup>

Recruitment and promotion procedures for military personnel are formally established but not implemented with presidential discretion prevailing in appointments to senior positions.<sup>26 27</sup> Benin's armed forces currently operate without a Code of Conduct for military personnel. However, a Code of Ethics and Values applies to civilian staff covering issues such as conflicts of interest and corruption.<sup>28</sup> Breaches by civilian personnel are reportedly addressed through disciplinary action.<sup>29</sup>

The Ministerial Committee for Risk Management delivers anti-corruption and integrity training to military personnel, focusing on organizational values, professional standards, risk identification, and corruption reporting.<sup>30</sup>

## OPERATIONS

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2020)	12,000
Troops deployed on operations #	27 (as of 31 May 2025)

In 2022, Benin deployed nearly 3,000 troops to reinforce security in the northern region, while 27 soldiers are currently serving in United Nations missions as of May 2025.<sup>31</sup> Corruption risks in military operations remain high, representing the most vulnerable area across the 2025 GDI assessment. Corruption is not recognised as a strategic concern within military doctrine and is absent from operational planning processes.

Despite this gap, military personnel receive pre-deployment training on corruption prevention, and provost officers are deployed in all missions to monitor and report on corruption risks.<sup>32</sup> Their reports, however, are not publicly available and are transmitted solely to the Ministerial Committee for Risk Management, as well as to administrative and judicial authorities responsible for enforcing sanctions in cases of misconduct.<sup>33</sup>

24 Republic of Benin, "Law No. 2011-20 on the fight against corruption".

25 Republic of Benin, "Law N° 2020-23 of September 29th 2020".

26 Republic of Benin, "Law No. 2020-19 of July 3, 2020, relating to the special status of personnel of the Beninese Armed Forces".

27 Interview with a Colonel at the General Staff of the Army, Cotonou, June 17, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

28 Republic of Benin, "Decree 2022-388 of July 13, 2022 approving the Code of Ethics and Values of the Public Administration".

29 Interviews with civil personnel, Cotonou, November 20, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

30 Interview with a Colonel at the General Staff of the Army, June 17, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

31 BBC, "Beninese army suffers 'hard blow' in border attack", January 10, 2025.

32 Interview with retired General Police Controller, June 24, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

33 Interview with a Colonel at the General Staff of the Army, June 17, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.



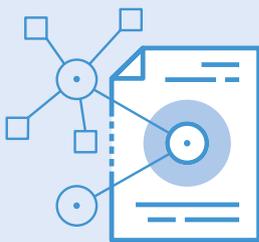
## DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2024)	\$154.1
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2020-2024)	N/A
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2020-2024)	Jordan (41%) France (17%); South Africa (17%); China (16%); Spain (3.4%)

Benin’s defence budget remains modest compared to its West African neighbours. The country has no strategic defence review or white paper to guide the assessment of capability needs or long-term acquisition planning. Ministry of Defence (MOD) expenditures are included in the national budget, based on identified operational needs, yet no public information is provided on military equipment acquisitions, which are classified as secret.<sup>34</sup>

External oversight of defence procurement is nominally conducted by the National Directorate for the Control of Public Procurement, but limited information is available regarding its activities. The Parliament does not exercise scrutiny over defence procurement decision.<sup>36</sup> Benin maintains close military cooperation with France, particularly in counter-terrorism efforts and broader initiatives to strengthen the operational capacity of the Beninese armed forces.<sup>37</sup>

Defence and security procurement fall outside the scope of the 2020 Public Procurement Law, which establishes special commissions to manage defence and security contracts.<sup>35</sup> These commissions oversee contract awards and monitor implementation, though their procedures lack transparency.



GDI data collection for **Benin** was conducted from May 2024 to August 2025.

34 Interview with a Colonel at the General Staff of the Army, June 17, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

35 Republic of Benin, "Law No. 2020-26 of September 29, 2020 on the Public Procurement Code".

36 Interviews with personnel responsible of Public Procurement, September 15, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

37 L'Opinion, "La France prête à livrer des drones au Bénin pour aider le pays face aux groupes armés," [France ready to deliver drones to Benin to help the country combat armed groups] 28 July, 2022.

# BENIN 2025 GDI SCORECARD

		Grade	Score
<b>POLITICAL RISK</b>		<b>C</b>	<b>52</b>
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	C	58
Q2	Defence Committee	E	21
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	F	0
Q4	CSO Engagement	D	42
Q5	Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	B	75
Q6	Public Debate	C	50
Q7	Anticorruption Policy	E	25
Q8	Compliance and Ethics Units	A	92
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10	Risk Assessments	A	92
Q11	Acquisition Planning	D	42
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	A	88
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	F	0
Q14	Budget Availability	B	75
Q15	Defence Income	F	0
Q16	Internal Audit	B	75
Q17	External Audit	B	69
Q18	Natural Resources	A	100
Q19	Organised Crime Links	A	100
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	A	92
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	A	100
Q76	Lobbying	F	0

<b>FINANCIAL RISK</b>		D	41
Q24	Asset Disposal Controls	F	0
Q25	Asset Disposal Scrutiny	F	0
Q26	Secret Spending	F	0
Q27	Legislative Access to Information	E	25
Q28	Secret Program Auditing	F	0
Q29	Off-budget Spending	A	100
Q30	Access to Information	C	50
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	A	100
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	A	100
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	B	75
Q77	Defence Spending	F	6

<b>PERSONNEL RISK</b>		C	56
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	C	58
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	A	100
Q36	Whistleblowing	D	42
Q37	High-risk Positions	D	33
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	C	50
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	F	13
Q40	Payment System	B	75
Q41	Objective Appointments	E	17
Q42	Objective Promotions	B	69
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	100
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	A	100
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	F	0
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	A	94
Q48	Anticorruption Training	B	75
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	C	50
Q50	Facilitation Payments	E	25

**OVERALL  
COUNTRY  
SCORE**

**HIGH RISK**

**D**

**44**

## RISK GRADE

<b>A</b>	<b>83–100</b>	<b>VERY LOW RISK</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>67–82</b>	<b>LOW RISK</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>50–66</b>	<b>MODERATE RISK</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>33–49</b>	<b>HIGH RISK</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>17–32</b>	<b>VERY HIGH RISK</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>0–16</b>	<b>CRITICAL RISK</b>

		Grade	Score
<b>OPERATIONAL RISK</b>		<b>D</b>	<b>33</b>
Q51	Military Doctrine	F	0
Q52	Operational Training	B	75
Q53	Forward Planning	F	0
Q54	Corruption Monitoring in Operations	D	42
Q55	Controls in Contracting	C	50
Q56	Private Military Contractors	NS	

<b>PROCUREMENT RISK</b>		D	35
Q57	Procurement Legislation	C	63
Q58	Procurement Cycle	B	67
Q59	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	B	67
Q60	Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q61	Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q62	Business Compliance Standards	B	75
Q63	Procurement Requirements	D	33
Q64	Competition in Procurement	F	0
Q65	Tender Board Controls	C	50
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	C	56
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	B	81
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	A	88
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	NEI	
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

# GDI

## Government Defence Integrity Index



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