

**Government Defence
Integrity Index**

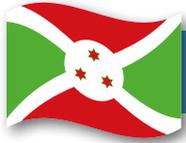


**COUNTRY
BRIEF**

BURUNDI

2025





BURUNDI

Marred by violence and opposition intimidation, President Évariste Ndayishimiye's 2020 election marked the start of yet another tumultuous period in Burundi's recent political history. This trajectory was reinforced in June 2025, when the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) secured another electoral victory, further consolidating its hold on power in a political environment defined by practically non-existent opposition and media freedom.¹ Endemic corruption continues to drain critical state resources, with the country losing an estimated US\$3.7 billion in illicit financial flows. At the same time, over half of Burundi's population (51.4%) continues to live in poverty, while economic forecasts point that approximately 1.4 million people have faced acute food insecurity in 2022.^{2,3} Impunity for human rights abuses is widespread with numerous reports of enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture, and extrajudicial killings.⁴

Since 2023, Burundi has deployed thousands of troops to eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to support Congolese forces against the M23 rebellion, reflecting its security concerns over cross-border instability and armed group

activity near its western frontier. The deployment is also shaped by wider regional politics, including tensions with Rwanda, Burundi's alignment with Kinshasa, and shifting regional security arrangements involving the East African Community and SADC efforts to stabilise eastern DRC.^{5,6}

The Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI) 2025 assessment found very high corruption risks in the defence sector. Despite the existence of formal rights, there is no parliamentary scrutiny of the defence policy, and the Supreme Audit also fails to perform its role further limited by no financial transparency. Payment systems are transparent and relatively strong promotions processes are in place. Operational practices and defence procurement are plagued with critical risk as procurement plans and purchases remains opaque, not competitive and unscrutinised.

Member of Open Government Partnership	No
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2006
Arms Trade Treaty	Signed 2013-Not yet ratified

EAST AFRICA

East Africa's security environment is shaped by overlapping conflicts, violent extremism, organised crime, and structural fragilities that cut across borders. Weak state presence in peripheral regions, porous borders, and the circulation of small arms continue to enable armed groups and criminal networks to operate across the region. Climate stress, food insecurity, and demographic pressures intensify competition over land and resources, fuelling intercommunal violence and displacement. While primarily active in Somalia, al-Shabaab remains the most significant transnational threat in the region, attacking neighbouring countries, particularly Kenya and Uganda, targeting civilians, security forces, and critical economic infrastructure.



Security dynamics vary across countries. South Sudan continues to face instability driven by communal violence and the fragile implementation of peace agreements, resulting in persistent humanitarian crises. While the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not part of East Africa, the conflict in its eastern provinces pose a significant external risk, with spillover effects through cross-border armed activity, displacement, and regional security involvement. Burundi experiences ongoing political repression, and violence from activities of armed groups and criminal networks linked to regional trafficking routes. Madagascar struggles with banditry, cattle rustling, and illicit natural resource exploitation, especially in remote areas with limited state control.

These overlapping threats have strained defence forces across East Africa. Weak coordination, uneven capacity, and governance shortcomings within defence institutions have limited the effectiveness of security responses. Across East Africa, defence sectors remain characterised by limited financial transparency, weak civilian oversight, opaque procurement processes and limited competition. Defence forces are thus often unaccountable to the public increasing corruption risks and abuses of power.

1 Human Rights Watch, "Burundi: elections without oppositions", June 12, 2025.
2 Bertelsmann Stiftung, "BTI 2024 Country Report Burundi", 2024.
3 UNICEF, "National Budget Brief", 2023-2024.
4 UN Committee Against Torture, "Alternative civil society monitoring report on the implementation of the four priority recommendations made by the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) in Burundi", March 2025.
5 AA, "Rwanda's president says Burundian troops in DR Congo shelling civilians", December 12, 2025.
6 African Security Analysis, "Burundi Intensifies Its Military Involvement in Eastern DRC", February 8, 2025.

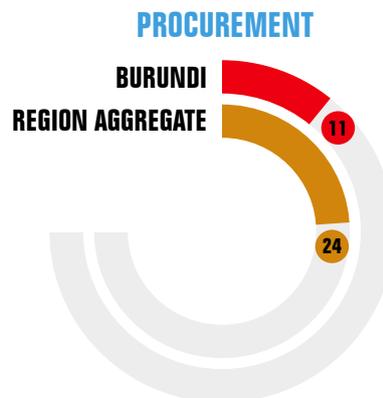
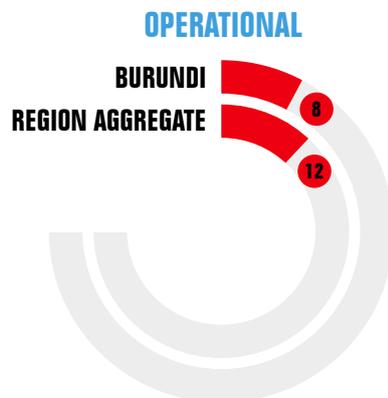
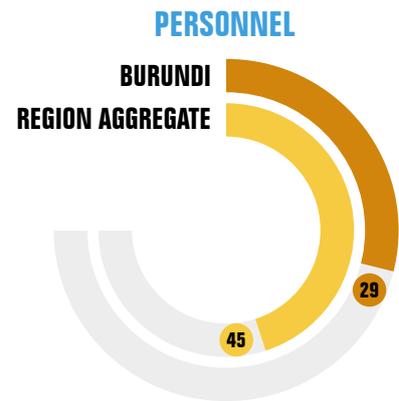
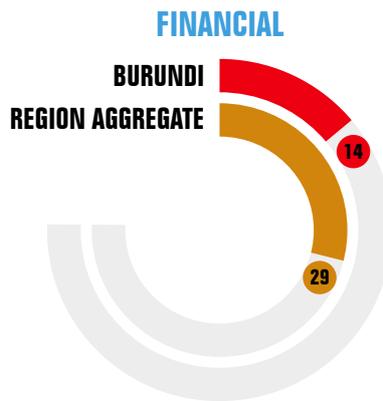
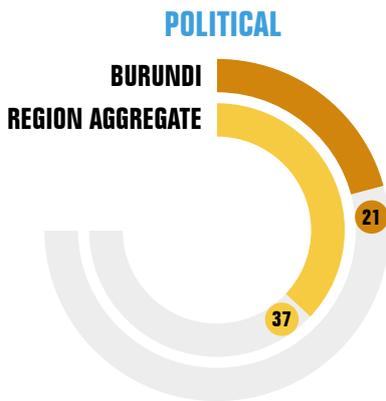


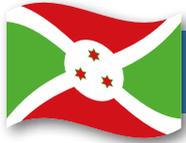
BURUNDI

RISK COMPARISON

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

VERY HIGH RISK





PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2023)	25/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2024)	12.50%
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.

Following the adoption of the 2018 Constitution, the President was granted expanded powers that significantly strengthen the executive's ability to override or neutralise parliamentary actions that run counter to presidential priorities.⁷ Parliamentary oversight of the defence sector in Burundi is thus extremely limited, and corruption risks linked to the political governance the sector are very high. The National Assembly benefits from strong formal rights to review the defence policy and budget but in practice it has not debated defence related issues since 2011, and most parliamentary inquiries remain unanswered under defence secrecy reasons.⁸⁻⁹ Similarly, the rights of the Defence Committee to scrutinise defence policy and budgets are rarely exercised, with no evidence of short or long-term oversight. Oversight is further constrained by strong executive and military influence over both parliamentarians and committee members.¹⁰

Challenges of implementation also extend to other oversight institutions. Bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Court, the Court of Auditors, the Anti-Corruption Brigade, and the Inspectorate General within the Ministry of Defence have mandates on paper but face serious limitations in practice.¹¹⁻¹³

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)	14/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2025)	125th out of 180.

According to the Open Budget Index, Burundi has one of the lowest transparency scores in the region. Indeed, financial risks in Burundi's defence sector are critical. Budget transparency is extremely limited, with defence allocations presented in broad, aggregated terms that lack detail by functions.¹⁴ Actual expenditures are not disclosed, and non-central sources of income remain unknown, complicating financial oversight. However, off budget spending are rare. The absence of transparency is compounded by a lack of effective internal and external monitoring of financial management within the defence and security institutions.

Defence and security institution operate income-generating activities, including officers' and non-commissioned officers' messes. While the management of these establishments appears partially transparent, profits from commercial ventures entrusted to individuals are poorly documented, raising accountability concerns.¹⁵

Access to information on defence finances is highly restricted. There is no legislation governing public access to defence-related information, and citizens rarely obtain details on defence spending or management. Information is typically accessible only through personal networks with insiders, reinforcing the opacity of the sector.

7 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "After Burundi's Referendum, a Drive to Dismantle the Arusha Accords", July 20, 2018

8 Constitution of the Republic of Burundi, 2018.

9 Iwacu, "Parliament: difficile contrôle du secteur de la sécurité", [Parliament: Hard control of the security sector], July 15, 2011.

10 Bertelsmann Stiftung, "BTI 2024 Country Report Burundi", 2024.

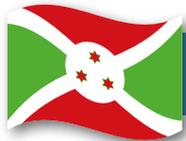
11 Interview with a member of the Defence and Security Committee of the National Assembly of Burundi, June 28, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.

12 Interview with a member of the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Defence, June 25, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.

13 Interview with a magistrate from the Court of Auditors, June 22, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.

14 Ministry of Finance, "Budget and Economic Planning, Various annual financial laws".

15 Interview with a member of the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Defence, June 25, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.



PERSONNEL ETHICS FRAMEWORK

Whistleblowing legislation	Law No. 1/12 of 18 April 2006 on the measures for the prevention and repression of corruption and related offence.
# 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.

Personnel management risks in Burundi are very high. The anti-corruption law includes limited provisions for whistleblower protection, but none specifically tailored to the armed forces.¹⁶ Lack of safeguards discourages personnel from reporting misconduct due to fears of retaliation. Cases of corruption or mismanagement involving personnel are rarely met with serious disciplinary measures, with transfers serving as the most common form of sanction.¹⁷

Moreover, the official number of military personnel is not disclosed and appointments to senior or sensitive positions are made at the discretion of the President and the head of the armed forces, with no transparent selection criteria.¹⁸ The process is widely viewed as influenced by favouritism and clientelism, and public information on appointments is scarce.

The absence of a code of conduct for both military and civilian personnel further weaken integrity standards within the sector. Anti-corruption training is irregular and primarily initiated by external partners, often as part of pre-deployment preparations for peacekeeping missions, rather than systematically embedded in professional development frameworks.¹⁹

OPERATIONS

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2020)	31,000
Troops deployed on operations #	746 (as of 31 May 2025)

Since 2023, around 20,000 Burundi National Defence Forces have been deployed in the neighbouring conflict in North Kivu conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, helping Congolese government forces combat the M23 rebel group. Rwanda's president says Burundian troops in DR Congo shelling civilians.^{20 21} This sustained external engagement underscores the importance of robust operational integrity frameworks; however, corruption risks in military operations remain critical in Burundi. The defence and security sector lacks a military doctrine addressing corruption during operations, and no formal training on integrity or anti-corruption is provided to commanders prior to deployment. Corruption is not integrated into strategic or operational planning, and no mechanisms exist to monitor or mitigate related risks. Awareness of integrity standards is provided only to personnel participating in peacekeeping missions, reflecting compliance with international deployment requirements rather than a systematic national policy on anti-corruption within military operations.²²

16 Republic of Burundi, "Law No. 1/12 of 18 April 2006 on the measures for the prevention and repression of corruption and related offence".

17 Interview with an officer working in the human resources department of the army headquarters, June 29, 2024, Bujumbura & Interview with an officer from Burundi's Ministry of National Defence, June 8, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 AA, "Rwanda's president says Burundian troops in DR Congo shelling civilians", December 12, 2025.

21 African Security Analysis, "Burundi Intensifies Its Military Involvement in Eastern DRC", February 8, 2025.

22 Interview with an officer from Burundi's Ministry of National Defence, June 8, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.



DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

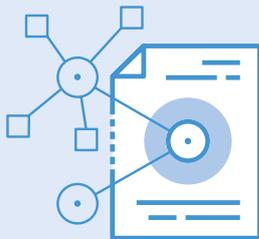
Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2024)	\$171.8
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2020-2024)	N/A
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2020-2024)	No data available on SIPRI database

Procurement risks in Burundi’s defence sector are critical, characterised by the absence of an effective legal framework as well as non-existent acquisition planning processes and oversight. Although a Public Procurement Code adopted in 2008 formally applies to all public services,²³ including defence and security, most procurement activities are conducted in secrecy.

Burundi lacks a defence and security strategy to guide the assessment of needs, and procurement decisions remain opaque, made exclusively by the President and the Head of the National Defence Force. Neither the public nor elected representatives have access to information on acquisitions, which are frequently justified under defence secrecy

provisions. Procurement appears to align with broader geopolitical relationships, notably with Russia and China, rather than with transparent national planning.^{24 25}

Oversight mechanisms remain largely inactive. Institutions such as Parliament, the Anti-Corruption Unit, and the Court of Auditors have formal powers to oversee public procurement but lack authority and access to scrutinise defence contracts.²⁶ The sector also suffers from an absence of competition.²⁷ Tender notices are rarely published, and no procedures exist to guide supplier selection, which occurs on a discretionary basis. As a result, defence procurement remains entirely non-transparent.



GDI data collection for **Burundi** was conducted from June 2024 to August 2025.

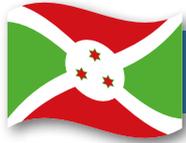
23 Republic of Burundi, “Law no. 1/04 of 29 January 2018 amending Law no. 1/01 of 4 February 2008 on the Public Procurement Code”.

24 BurundiEco, “Chine : un nouveau départ dans la coopération bilatérale”, [China: a new start in bilateral cooperation], September 29, 2023.

25 Jeune Afrique, Burundi : « La Russie nous a soutenus quand nous étions dans la difficulté et nous en tenons compte » [Burundi: “Russia supported us when we were in difficulty, and we appreciate that.”], May 5, 2022.

26 Interview with a former officer of the Anti-Corruption Brigade, June 22, 2024, Bujumbura & Interview with a member of the Defence and Security Committee of the National Assembly of Burundi, June 28, 2024, Bujumbura. Government Defence Integrity Index.

27 UNCAC, “Burundi Parallel Report: OLUCCOME”, October 2023.



BURUNDI 2025 GDI SCORECARD

	Grade	Score
POLITICAL RISK	E	21
Q1 Legislative Scrutiny	D	33
Q2 Defence Committee	E	21
Q3 Defence Policy Debate	F	6
Q4 CSO Engagement	F	8
Q5 Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	C	63
Q6 Public Debate	E	25
Q7 Anticorruption Policy	F	0
Q8 Compliance and Ethics Units	D	33
Q9 Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10 Risk Assessments	D	42
Q11 Acquisition Planning	F	0
Q12 Budget Transparency & Detail	D	38
Q13 Budget Scrutiny	C	50
Q14 Budget Availability	E	17
Q15 Defence Income	E	17
Q16 Internal Audit	E	19
Q17 External Audit	E	25
Q18 Natural Resources	F	5
Q19 Organised Crime Links	F	0
Q20 Organised Crime Policing	D	42
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	14
Q24 Asset Disposal Controls	F	8
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	D	33
Q30 Access to Information	F	0
Q31 Beneficial Ownership	C	63
Q32 Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	E	25
Q33 Unauthorised Private Enterprise	E	25
Q77 Defence Spending	F	0
PERSONNEL RISK	E	29
Q34 Public Commitment to Integrity	E	25
Q35 Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	D	38
Q36 Whistleblowing	F	8
Q37 High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38 Numbers of Personnel	F	0
Q39 Pay Rates and Allowances	E	25
Q40 Payment System	B	75
Q41 Objective Appointments	E	17
Q42 Objective Promotions	C	50
Q43 Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44 Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	83
Q45 Chains of Command and Payment	C	50
Q46 Military Code of Conduct	F	0
Q47 Civilian Code of Conduct	F	0
Q48 Anticorruption Training	D	33
Q49 Corruption Prosecutions	E	17
Q50 Facilitation Payments	C	50

**OVERALL
COUNTRY
SCORE**

**VERY HIGH
RISK**

E
17

RISK GRADE

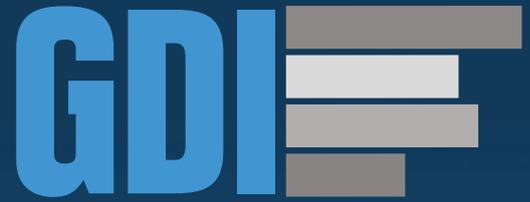
A	83–100	VERY LOW RISK
B	67–82	LOW RISK
C	50–66	MODERATE RISK
D	33–49	HIGH RISK
E	17–32	VERY HIGH RISK
F	0–16	CRITICAL RISK

	Grade	Score
OPERATIONAL RISK	F	8
Q51 Military Doctrine	F	0
Q52 Operational Training	F	0
Q53 Forward Planning	D	38
Q54 Corruption Monitoring in Operations	F	0
Q55 Controls in Contracting	F	0
Q56 Private Military Contractors	NS	

	Grade	Score
PROCUREMENT RISK	F	11
Q57 Procurement Legislation	C	50
Q58 Procurement Cycle	E	17
Q59 Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	F	8
Q60 Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q61 Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q62 Business Compliance Standards	F	0
Q63 Procurement Requirements	F	8
Q64 Competition in Procurement	F	0
Q65 Tender Board Controls	F	6
Q66 Anti-Collusion Controls	F	13
Q67 Contract Award / Delivery	F	13
Q68 Complaint Mechanisms	D	33
Q69 Supplier Sanctions	D	33
Q70 Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71 Offset Contract Monitoring	E	25
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



Government Defence Integrity Index



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