



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



**COUNTRY
BRIEF**

CAMEROON

2025





CAMEROON

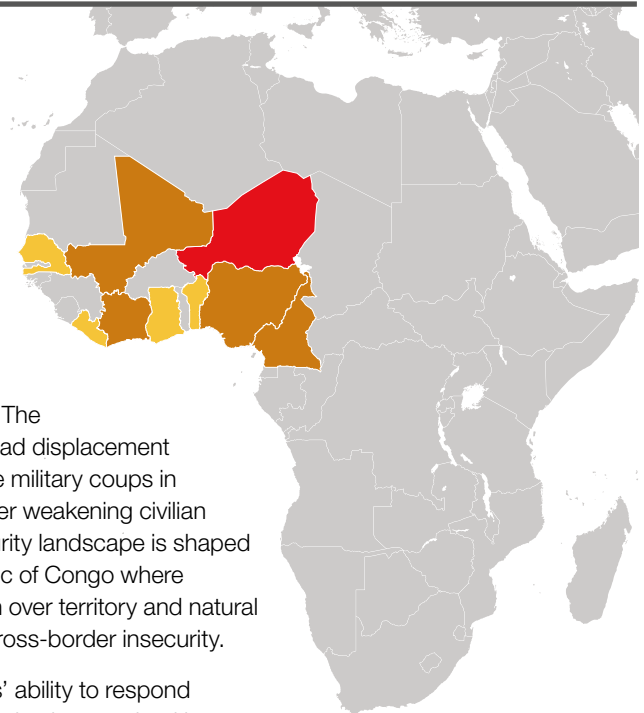
After more than four decades as head of state and government, President Paul Biya was re-elected for his eighth term in October 2025, sparking further polarisation in an already ethnically divided.¹ At the same time, armed separatist insurgencies in the Anglophone North-West and South-West regions and the growing Boko Haram jihadist threat in the Far North have led to widespread violence, with thousands killed.² The ongoing conflicts have led to a humanitarian crisis as UN estimations show that over 1.5 million people need aid.³ Moreover, rampant corruption among state officials remains a critical issue, while anti-graft campaigns are widely seen as politically motivated tools aimed at targeting opposition.^{4,5} The country's economy returned to growth in 2023, yet limited access to clean water, unemployment, healthcare and quality education, as well as rising poverty, continue to weigh heavily on Cameroonians with 4 people in 10 living below the poverty line.⁶ These socioeconomic pressures are compounded by governance weaknesses in key state institutions, a trend

reflected in the Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI) 2025 findings which found very high corruption risks in Cameroon's defence sector. Results show limited but notable strengths, including internal inspections, formal codes of conduct, and comprehensive anti-bribery framework. However, parliamentary and financial oversight are minimal, transparency is low, and procurement is dominated by opaque "special contracts" and politically connected suppliers. Weak whistleblower protection, politicised appointments, and limited accountability further entrench corruption risks across operations, personnel management, and procurement.

Member of Open Government Partnership	No
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2006
Arms Trade Treaty	Ratified in 2018

WEST AND CENTRAL 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 extremist groups have expanded southward, placing increasing pressure on coastal states. Insecurity is further compounded by arms, drugs and natural resources trafficking 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 Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea between 2020 and 2023, further weakening civilian control and democratic oversight. Similarly, in Central Africa, the security landscape is shaped by the persistent armed conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo where multiple armed groups, regional military involvement, and competition over territory and natural resources continue to fuel widespread violence, displacement, and cross-border insecurity.



Weak defence sector governance has significantly undermined states' ability to respond effectively to these threats. Defence institutions across the region remain characterised by limited transparency, weak accountability, and 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.

1 International Crisis Group, "Preventing Unrest in the Run-up to Cameroon's Presidential Poll", August 8, 2025.

2 Ibid.

3 Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "Cameroon Country Profile", November 14, 2025.

4 International Crisis Group, "Preventing Unrest in the Run-up to Cameroon's Presidential Poll", August 8, 2025.

5 BTI 2024, "Country Dashboard: Cameroon", 2024

6 World Bank, "Country Overview Cameroon", 2025.

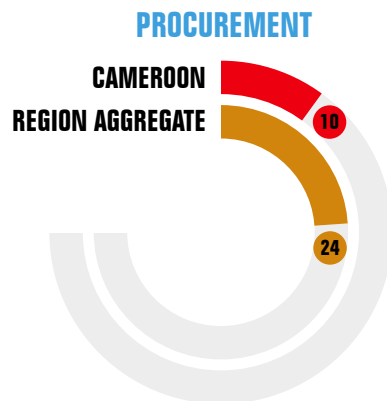
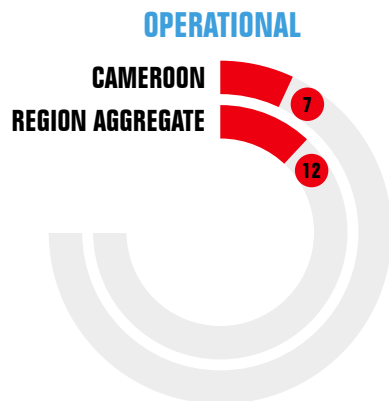
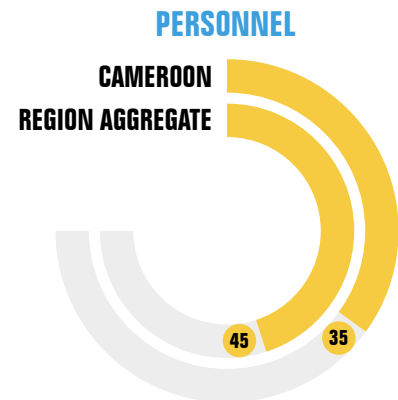
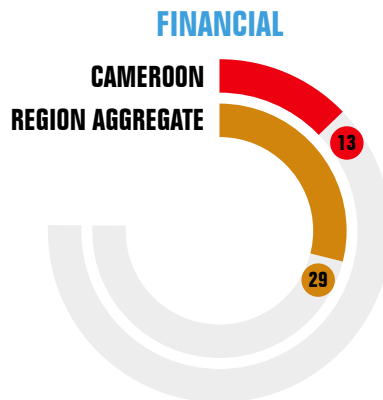
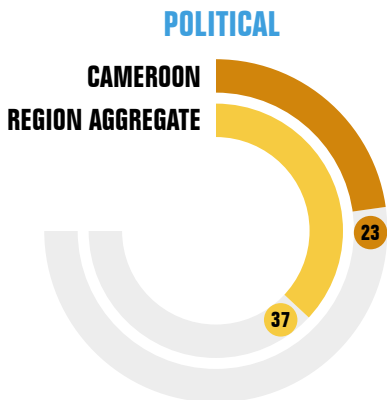
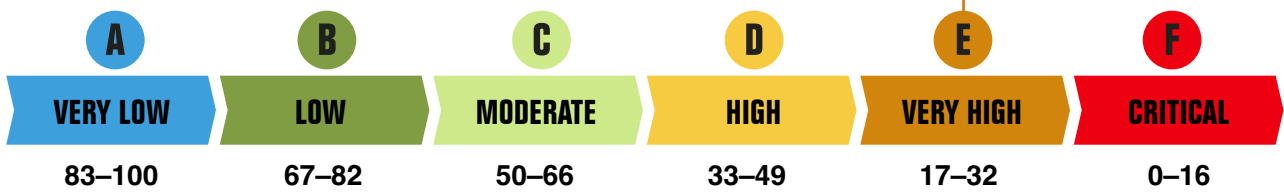


CAMEROON

RISK COMPARISON

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

VERY HIGH RISK





CAMEROON

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2023)	33/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2024)	6.12%
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.

Cameroon operates under a highly centralised political system dominated by President Paul Biya and his ruling party, the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM). In power since 1982, Biya has strengthened executive authority, weaken institutional checks and balances, and limited political alternation. Constitutional reforms, including the 2008 removal of presidential term limits, have entrenched presidential dominance and reinforced the longevity of the regime.⁷

Political risks in the defence sector are very high. The country shows relatively good implementation of international agreements, and the MOD has been active in addressing the implication of organised crime in the sector but parliamentary oversight and civilian control over defence activities remain weak. Although the Defence Committee is formally mandated to oversee defence policy and budgets, it rarely exercises its powers.⁸ Its effectiveness is constrained by the limited members’ expertise and the political influence—with 18 of its 20 members belonging to the ruling party CPDM.⁹ This political alignment makes it virtually impossible for the committee to challenge the executive, particularly in defence matters that fall under the direct authority of the President.¹⁰

Similarly, institutional oversight is minimal, and the Court of Auditors does not review defence expenditures.¹¹ There is evidence of internal auditing by the General Inspectorate, yet its impact is undermined by frequent turnover among senior officers, limiting continuity and effectiveness.¹²

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)	50/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2025)	131st out of 180.

Transparency in Cameroon’s defence finances remains extremely limited with the sector plagued with critical financial risks. While the defence budget is published, it contains minimal detail. Information on actual defence spending and non-central sources of funding is not publicly disclosed.¹³

Off-budget expenditures are legally permitted for national security purposes, The conditions governing their use are vague resulting in widespread use frequently associated with corrupt practices.¹⁴ Significant portions of the defence budget are also diverted without justification.¹⁵

Defence institutions are also involved in commercial ventures such as transportation, real estate, and construction, though details remain opaque and no independent audits are conducted.¹⁶ Additionally, military officers’ participation in private businesses, including security firms and logistics companies, presents serious conflicts of interest.¹⁷

Requests for information and defence-related documents in Cameroon are often met with silence or delays, with no appeal mechanism, and journalists frequently denied access citing confidentiality reasons. Public officials frequently deny requests on the grounds of protecting national security or other political interests.¹⁸

7 BTI 2024, “Country Dashboard, Cameroon”, 2024.

8 National Assembly Secretariat General, “Republic of Cameroon, “Standing Order of the National Assembly”, last amended by law N° 2014/016 of 09 September, 2014”.

9 Website of the National Assembly, “Functioning of the National Assembly: Members of the Committee on national defence and security”.

10 Belomo Essono Pélagie Chantel, “Security and political order in Cameroon: between internal dynamics and international connections”, 2009, pp. 39-80 .

11 Court of Auditors, “Annual Report”, 2022.

12 Interview with a researcher specialised on the defence sector, July 5, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

13 Ministry of Finance, “State Budget Execution Report for the Fiscal Year 2023”, July 25, 2024.

14 Interview with Journalist specialising in security affairs, October 20, 2024, & Interview with Financial Expert, International Monetary Fund (IMF), November 2, 2024. Yaoundé. Government Defence Integrity Index.

15 Interview with the Director of the Budget and Finance Department, Ministry of Defence, October 30, 2024, Yaoundé & Interview with Political Analyst, University of Yaoundé, October 22, 2024, Yaoundé. Government Defence Integrity Index

16 Interview with Defence Analyst, Centre for Strategic Studies, Yaoundé, November 3, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

17 Interview with a Researcher at the University of Yaoundé, October 16, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

18 Ateki S. Caxton, Ndzi Derick Jitzi, Ngega Vanessa, Robinson S. Fontenbo, “The Right to Access of Information in Cameroon (RAIC) - 2024 Report”, November 2024.



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.

Amid President Biya's continued consolidation of power and top-level military reshuffles ahead of the 2025 election, Cameroon faces high personnel risks.¹⁹ The country has a legal framework to punish corruption and bribery, but cases are rarely investigated and/or disciplined.²⁰ Moreover, there are no comprehensive legal safeguards for whistleblowers leading to a fear by defence personnel to report corrupt practices, which could lead to professional harassment, job loss, or even physical threat.^{21 22} The number of civilian and military personnel in Cameroon is not accurately known or publicly accessible.

Appointments at senior levels in the military are frequently influenced by political considerations, ethnic affiliations, and personal networks rather than merit-based criteria.²³

Code of conducts are in place for both military and civilian personnel including some elements of corruption risks mitigation.^{24 25} However, breaches are rarely investigated or prosecuted. Some sporadic anti-corruption training has been introduced. New recruits may receive initial anti-corruption briefings during induction, but there is little follow-up with more advanced or continuous education on the topic.^{26 27}

OPERATIONS

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2020)	34,000
Troops deployed on operations #	750 (as of 31 May 2025)

Cameroon deploys an annual contingent of military and gendarmerie personnel as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Apart from UN peace missions, the Cameroon Defence Forces also operate in active conflict on the Cameroonian territory: "Anglophone" conflict, the war against Boko Haram in the Far North and the fight against Central African insurgents in the eastern border.²⁸ Military operations represent critical corruption risks with almost no frameworks in place. Despite the defence forces' extensive involvement in military operations, corruption risks are not considered in the military doctrine or planning of these operations nor addressed in pre-deployment training for armed personnel.²⁹ The country deploys no trained personnel for corruption monitoring, but some units such as the BIR (Rapid Intervention Battalion) informally monitors corruption with non-expert personnel.³⁰

19 Reuters, "Cameroon's Biya, 92, reshuffles military top brass ahead of vote", July 16, 2025.

20 Interview with a Political Analyst Specializing in Governance and Security, November 14, 2024, Government Defence Integrity Index.

21 John W Fooks & Co, "Whistleblowing in Africa: A Brief Overview of Legal Frameworks in Madagascar, Mauritius, Senegal, Guinea and Cameroon", 2024.

22 Interview with a senior Ministry of Defense Official, November 10, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

23 Interview with a Researcher in Military Governance, November 10, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

24 Republic of Cameroon, "Regulations governing general discipline in the armed forces, derived from Decree no. 2007/199 of 07 July 2007".

25 Republic of Cameroon, "General Status of Civil Service, Decree No. 94/199 of October 7, 1994, and amended by Decree No. 2000/287 of October 12, 2000".

26 Interview with a Corruption Expert, Cameroon, November 10, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

27 Interview with a senior official of Ministry of Public Service, April 15, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

28 BTI 2024, "Country Dashboard, Cameroon", 2024.

29 Interview with a Professor at a Military School in Cameroon, June 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

30 Interview with a Lieutenant Rapid Intervention Battalion, June 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.



CAMEROON

DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

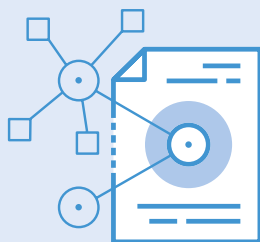
Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2024)	\$534.9
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2020-2024)	NA
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2020-2024)	France (51%) South-Africa (37%) United States (4.8%) Unknown supplier(s) (4.8%) UAE (2.7%)

Defence procurement remains largely opaque and weakly regulated, with no dedicated legal framework governing the sector. Defence acquisitions are excluded from public procurement regulations, creating a regulatory gap that limits transparency and accountability.³¹

Moreover, Cameroon lacks a publicly articulated defence acquisition strategy or long-term planning framework. Procurement decisions are not systematically aligned with clearly defined capability requirements or strategic priorities. Instead, acquisitions appear largely ad hoc and reactive, with limited institutional oversight.³² Information on both planned and actual defence purchases is routinely withheld on grounds of national security.³³

Procurement practices are characterised by limited competition and the absence of transparent decision-making procedures. Under the public procurement framework, all defence acquisitions are classified as “special contracts,” effectively exempting them from ordinary procurement rules and safeguards.³⁴ Defence procurement contracts—including those awarded through single-source arrangements—are approved through discretionary and unilateral processes.

There is no control by oversight bodies, such as the Court of Auditors or Parliament, both of which lack the legal authority to scrutinise defence procurement decisions. Procurement oversight is further undermined by strong political interference, particularly from the Presidency, which retains exclusive control over the execution of public contracts within the Ministry of Defence.³⁵



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

31 Republic of Cameroon, “Public Procurement Code, 2018, Decree No. 2018/366”.
 32 Interview with a focus group of Army Officers, Yaoundé, February 2025. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 33 Interview with a Journalist, August 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 34 Articles 30 and 31, Public Procurement Code, 2018, Decree No. 2018/366.
 35 Interviews with a Senior Officer and a Former Head of Public Procurements Department, August 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.



CAMEROON 2025 GDI SCORECARD

	Grade	Score
POLITICAL RISK	E	23
Q1 Legislative Scrutiny	E	17
Q2 Defence Committee	E	17
Q3 Defence Policy Debate	F	6
Q4 CSO Engagement	F	8
Q5 Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	B	75
Q6 Public Debate	F	13
Q7 Anticorruption Policy	C	63
Q8 Compliance and Ethics Units	D	33
Q9 Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10 Risk Assessments	F	0
Q11 Acquisition Planning	D	33
Q12 Budget Transparency & Detail	D	38
Q13 Budget Scrutiny	C	63
Q14 Budget Availability	E	17
Q15 Defence Income	F	8
Q16 Internal Audit	E	31
Q17 External Audit	F	0
Q18 Natural Resources	E	20
Q19 Organised Crime Links	C	50
Q20 Organised Crime Policing	E	17
Q21 Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22 Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23 Export Controls (ATT)	NEI	
Q76 Lobbying	F	0
FINANCIAL RISK	F	13
Q24 Asset Disposal Controls	F	8
Q25 Asset Disposal Scrutiny	E	17
Q26 Secret Spending	F	0
Q27 Legislative Access to Information	F	0
Q28 Secret Program Auditing	F	0
Q29 Off-budget Spending	E	25
Q30 Access to Information	E	25
Q31 Beneficial Ownership	E	25
Q32 Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	F	0
Q33 Unauthorised Private Enterprise	D	38
Q77 Defence Spending	F	0
PERSONNEL RISK	D	35
Q34 Public Commitment to Integrity	F	8
Q35 Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	C	50
Q36 Whistleblowing	E	17
Q37 High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38 Numbers of Personnel	F	0
Q39 Pay Rates and Allowances	B	75
Q40 Payment System	D	33
Q41 Objective Appointments	F	8
Q42 Objective Promotions	E	31
Q43 Bribery to Avoid Conscription	A	100
Q44 Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	100
Q45 Chains of Command and Payment	E	25
Q46 Military Code of Conduct	E	31
Q47 Civilian Code of Conduct	D	44
Q48 Anticorruption Training	E	17
Q49 Corruption Prosecutions	F	8
Q50 Facilitation Payments	C	50

**OVERALL
COUNTRY
SCORE**

**VERY HIGH
RISK**



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	7
Q51 Military Doctrine	F	0
Q52 Operational Training	F	0
Q53 Forward Planning	F	13
Q54 Corruption Monitoring in Operations	F	8
Q55 Controls in Contracting	F	13
Q56 Private Military Contractors	NS	

PROCUREMENT RISK	F	10
Q57 Procurement Legislation	NS	
Q58 Procurement Cycle	F	8
Q59 Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	E	25
Q60 Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	0
Q61 Actual Purchases Disclosed	E	25
Q62 Business Compliance Standards	F	0
Q63 Procurement Requirements	F	8
Q64 Competition in Procurement	F	0
Q65 Tender Board Controls	E	25
Q66 Anti-Collusion Controls	F	13
Q67 Contract Award / Delivery	E	17
Q68 Complaint Mechanisms	E	25
Q69 Supplier Sanctions	E	17
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



Government Defence Integrity Index



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Registered charity number 1112842
Company number 2903386

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for their generous financial support of the production of the Government Defence Integrity Index. Thanks are also extended to the many country assessors and peer reviewers who contributed the underlying data for this index.

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