

**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



**COUNTRY
BRIEF**

LIBERIA

2025





LIBERIA

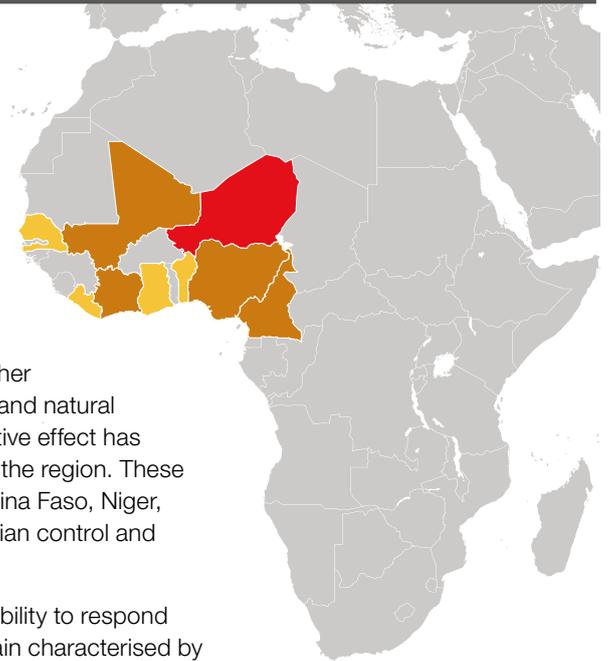
Despite its history of civil conflict, Liberia has achieved two decades of peace and democratic transitions since the end of its civil wars in 2003. The 2023 presidential election was highly competitive leading to a change of government and a peaceful transition. Liberia’s democratic institutions remain fundamentally intact, but elite dominance, limited opposition strength, and weak internal party democracy continue to undermine democratic consolidation.^{1 2} While political rights and civil liberties have gradually strengthened, governance effectiveness, economic inequality, and endemic corruption persist as major obstacles.³ Liberia is considered one of the world’s poorest countries, with a workforce dominated by the informal sector and heavy dependence on natural-resource exports. The United States remains Liberia’s principal bilateral partner and donor, providing significant security and development assistance - including support for defence reform, peacekeeping readiness, and public finance management.⁴ The fiscal space for social

and institutional investment remains narrow, reinforcing the dependence of key sectors, including defence, on donor and external support. Against this backdrop, findings from the Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI) indicate that corruption risks remain high across Liberia’s defence institutions. Parliamentary influence over defence policy and spending is limited, procurement systems rely heavily on exemptions and single-sourcing, and accountability mechanisms are undermined by executive dominance and secrecy. While formal rules exist across most functional areas, uneven implementation, weak enforcement, and politicised personnel practices sustain elevated corruption risks.

Member of Open Government Partnership	Yes
UN Convention Against Corruption	Accession in 2005
Arms Trade Treaty	Ratified in 2015

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 Liberia. 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 Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, 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 Transformation Index, Liberia Country Report 2024.
 2 Global State of Democratic Initiative, International IDEA, 2024.
 3 Freedom in the World 2025, Freedom House, Liberia.
 4 Dounard Bondo, "Liberia's complex relationship with the United States," The Republic, September 14, 2025.



LIBERIA

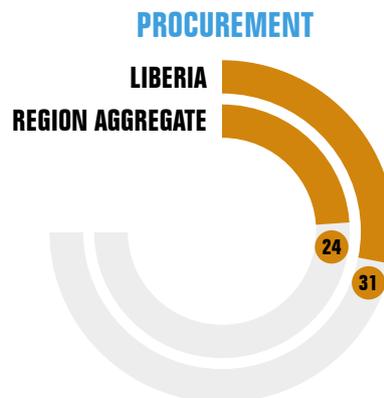
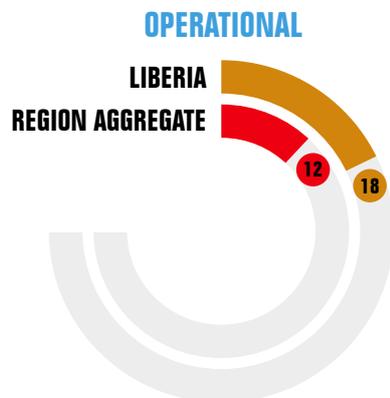
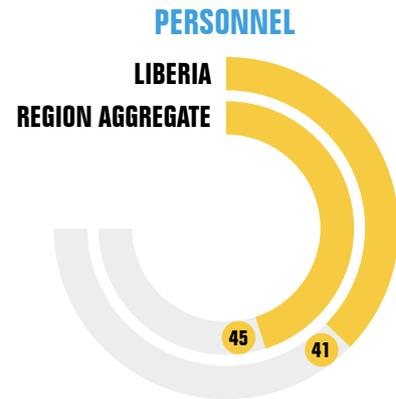
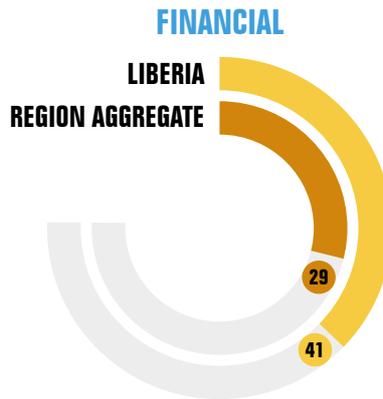
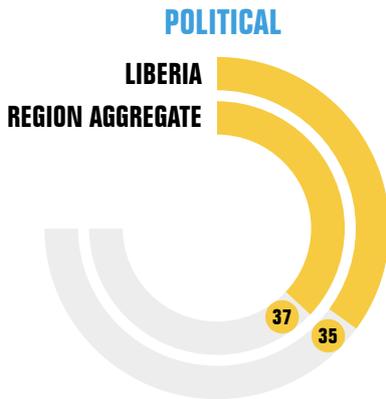
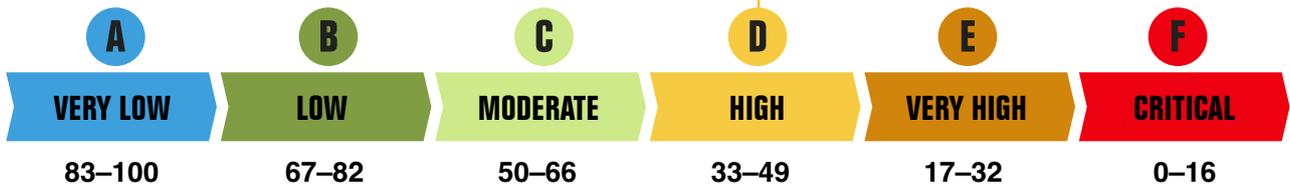
RISK COMPARISON

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

HIGH RISK

D

33





PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2023)	22/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2024)	3.20%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	Data is not publicly available.
# of meetings/year	Data is not publicly available.
Last review of defence policy/strategy	2017

Since taking office in January 2024, President Joseph Boakai has consolidated influence over key political institutions, including the Legislature.⁵ The removal of the House Speaker in late 2024, followed by the election of a Unity Party member to the position, reinforced perceptions of closer executive alignment within parliamentary leadership. This episode reflects a broader pattern in which party loyalty limits the Legislature's independence.

Defence and security oversight committees exist, and legislators engage in budget hearings and amendments. In December 2024, Parliament amended and approved the national budget following months of hearings that included defence allocations.⁶ However, oversight remains irregular, opaque, and constrained by executive dominance.⁷ Committee sessions are typically held behind closed doors, sustained public scrutiny of defence matters is rare,⁸ and political influence over committee structures weakens legislative autonomy.⁹ Although committees meet frequently for short-term budget review, long-term oversight is almost absent: revisions of the National Security Strategy have largely proceeded without committee engagement.¹⁰

Internal audit capacity within the Ministry of National Defense (MoD) remains constrained. Although the Internal Audit Agency has strengthened its professional capacity, cooperation from the MoD is weak and auditors have reportedly been denied access.¹¹ While the General Auditing Commission (GAC) reports to Parliament, audits are frequently delayed and enforcement is inconsistent,¹²⁻¹³ leaving Liberia's parliamentary scrutiny formally established but weak in practice and reinforcing high corruption risks in the defence sector.

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)	52/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2025)	54th out of 180.

Recent audit reports flagged multi-million-dollar undocumented or unsupported expenditures, including roughly US \$2.8 million processed without legislative approval or sufficient documentation, and highlighted systemic gaps in asset, revenue, and expenditure controls across government accounts.¹⁴ These broader audit findings underscore structural challenges to defence spending and fiscal governance.

Liberia faces high corruption risks in defence financial transparency. Defence spending is presented in broad terms with minimal line-item detail, largely justified on national security grounds. Although the defence budget is published, key components are not publicly accessible.¹⁵ Budget submissions are frequently delayed, reducing legislative review timelines. Off-budget spending is prohibited in law but continues to occur in practice across the wider security sector, including covert allocations later identified through external audits.¹⁶ The GAC conducts independent audits and has uncovered undocumented and unsupported expenditures, but reports are often delayed,¹⁷ and enforcement remains weak.¹⁸ Access to information is further constrained by broad national security exemptions, the absence of a formal information-classification framework, and inconsistent use of the Freedom of Information Act.¹⁹

5 BTI Transformation Index, Liberia Country Report 2024.

6 Obediah Johnson, "Liberia: USD 880m Budget Passed Amid Leadership Crisis in Liberia," Front Page Africa, December 20, 2024

7 Smart News, "Is the Legislature a puppet of the Executive: the President's alleged disregard for law raises concern," July 7, 2024.

8 Interview with a Former National Security Adviser, Republic of Liberia, Monrovia, July 9, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

9 The Liberian Investigator, "Koffa's Removal is Boakai's Handywork," December 14, 2024.

10 DCAF, "Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in Liberia".

11 Interview with a Senior Audit Manager, Internal Audit Agency, April 12, 2025. Government Defence Integrity Index.

12 FPA Staff Reporter, "Liberia: GAC Report Nails Ministry of Defense for Questionable Spending of US\$5.8 Million Between Fiscal Years 2013/2014 to 2016/2017".

13 International Budget Partnership, Open Budget Index 2023, Liberia.

14 Gerald C Koinyeneh, "Liberia: Finance Minister Ngafuan Dismisses GAC Report 'Misinterpretation' as Smear Tactic; CDC Counters with \$115M Unaccounted Claims," FPA, September 9, 2025.

15 For full access to the national budget (and the Ministry of Defence budget) Ministry of Finance and Development Planning website, "National Budget," Fiscal Year 2025.

16 Gerald Koinyeneh, "Audit Reveals FIA, MFDP, NSA Exceeded budgets by US\$90.2 million without Legislative Approval in FY2023," Frontpage Africa, September 2, 2024.

17 International Budget Partnership, Open Budget Survey 2023, Liberia.

18 Auditor General's Report On the financial statement audit of consolidated fund account for fiscal period January 1, 2022.

19 Interview with Senior Officer of the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Liberia, July 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.



PERSONNEL ETHICS FRAMEWORK

Whistleblowing legislation	The Whistleblowers Act (2022)
# 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.

Liberia’s defence personnel system faces high corruption risks, with mixed performance across indicators. Formal disciplinary and ethical frameworks exist for military and civilian staff. The Defence Act (2008), the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and internal rules prohibit bribery and professional misconduct, while the National Code of Conduct and asset declaration requirements apply to civilian personnel. Anti-corruption training is conducted at least annually for military personnel,²⁰ and whistleblower protections were strengthened under the Whistleblower Act (2022), supported by outreach from the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission.

In practice, however, enforcement is selective and uneven. Disciplinary action is applied more consistently to lower-ranking personnel than to senior officers,²¹ despite rare exceptions.²² Whistleblowing remains weak, with no independent MoD reporting unit and a strong internal culture that discourages disclosure.²³ Personnel numbers are not publicly available, and appointment and promotion processes remain vulnerable to politicisation, with limited transparency and external scrutiny.²⁴ While Codes of Conduct exist formally, gaps around post-separation activities and conflicts of interest persist, leaving the system regulated on paper but weakly enforced and exposed to elevated corruption risks.

OPERATIONS

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2020)	2,000
Troops deployed on operations #	21 (as of 31 October 2025): 16 in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Following the post-civil war restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia (2003–2009), defence operations have been shaped by United States support, particularly through U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and partnerships with the Michigan National Guard. These reforms produced Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) and operational doctrine to guide planning and deployments, including Liberia’s participation in UN peacekeeping missions.

Notwithstanding these reforms, defence operations record the lowest risk area score in the GDI assessment. While doctrine and training emphasise professionalism, human rights, and the rule of law, corruption is not treated as a strategic operational risk. There is no explicit doctrine on corruption prevention, and the National Defence Strategy offers only high-level guidance.²⁵ Internationally supported training has improved general ethical standards among commanders, but there is no clear evidence that corruption risks are consistently embedded in pre-deployment preparation. SOPs support disciplined conduct in peacekeeping missions, but there is little transparency on how corruption risks are managed in practice, particularly in procurement and asset management.²⁶ Monitoring and evaluation systems exist but operate behind closed doors, with no public reporting on corruption risks, misconduct, or mitigation outcomes.²⁷

20 Ministry of National Defence, “Defence Holds Technical Capacity-building Training for Staff,” September 12, 2024.
 21 Interview with Former Chief of Logistics, Armed Forces of Liberia, Monrovia, July 24, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 22 FPA Staff Reporter, “Convicted Ex-Defence Minister Brownie Samukai Raises Integrity Issues with Nominated Associate Justice of The Supreme Court,” Front Page Africa, September 8, 2022.
 23 Interview with Executive Director, Civil Society Organisation, Liberia, Monrovia, July 24, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 24 Interview with Senior Role, Independent National Commission of Human Rights Liberia, Monrovia, July 19, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 25 National Defense Strategy, 2004.
 26 Interview with Audit Manager, General Auditing Commission, Republic of Liberia, July 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 27 Interview with Former Director, Internal Audit Agency, Republic of Liberia, July 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.

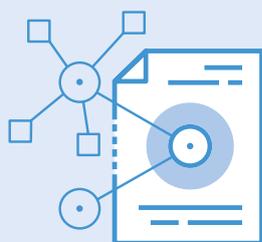


DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2024)	\$33.8
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to (SIPRI, 2020-24)	N/A
Main defence imports – from (SIPRI, 2020-24)	UAE (69%); USA (31%)

Liberia’s defence procurement system presents very high corruption risks, characterised by broad national security exemptions, weak public disclosure, and inconsistent oversight.²⁸ Although laws require separate procurement units and alignment with national defence priorities, in practice the MoD does not publish detailed procurement plans, line-item purchase information, or clear links between acquisitions and strategic needs.²⁹ Statutory exemptions under the Public Procurement and Concessions Act (2010) allow defence contracts to bypass standard competitive procedures.³⁰ Formal oversight bodies are in place but struggle to act independently and consistently.³¹ The Public Procurement and Concessions Commission, General Auditing Commission,

and legislative committees all hold legal supervisory roles, and the introduction of the national e-procurement platform signals an institutional commitment to greater transparency in principle. In law, corruption-related offences in procurement are criminalised, with provisions for debarment and contract cancellation. However, in practice, defence procurement continues to rely heavily on single sourcing, with audit findings confirming repeated violations of required methods and limited justification for restricted tendering.³² Forward visibility of defence purchases is minimal, audit findings frequently highlight irregular planning and execution, and sanctions remain rare. These gaps leave Liberia’s defence procurement framework formally regulated but largely opaque in practice.



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

28 Gerald C. Koinyeneh, "Liberia: CENTAL Urges President Boakai to Revoke PPCC Appointments Due to 'Procedural Breach'," Front Page Africa, September 3, 2024.
 29 Interview with Former Chief of Logistics, Armed Forces of Liberia, Monrovia, July 24, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 30 Interview with Executive Director, Civil Society Organisation, Liberia, Monrovia, July 24, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 31 Interview with Senior Role, Independent National Commission of Human Rights Liberia, Monrovia, July 19, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 32 Interview with a Senior Manager, General Auditing Commission, Republic of Liberia, July 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.



LIBERIA 2025 GDI SCORECARD

	Grade	Score
POLITICAL RISK	D	35
Q1 Legislative Scrutiny	C	58
Q2 Defence Committee	D	38
Q3 Defence Policy Debate	E	17
Q4 CSO Engagement	C	50
Q5 Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	C	63
Q6 Public Debate	C	50
Q7 Anticorruption Policy	C	63
Q8 Compliance and Ethics Units	D	42
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	25
Q15 Defence Income	F	0
Q16 Internal Audit	F	13
Q17 External Audit	C	63
Q18 Natural Resources	D	35
Q19 Organised Crime Links	C	50
Q20 Organised Crime Policing	F	0
Q21 Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0
Q22 Intelligence Services Recruitment	F	0
Q23 Export Controls (ATT)	A	100
Q76 Lobbying	F	0

	Grade	Score
FINANCIAL RISK	D	41
Q24 Asset Disposal Controls	E	17
Q25 Asset Disposal Scrutiny	B	67
Q26 Secret Spending	F	0
Q27 Legislative Access to Information	F	0
Q28 Secret Program Auditing	C	50
Q29 Off-budget Spending	D	33
Q30 Access to Information	E	25
Q31 Beneficial Ownership	A	100
Q32 Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	A	100
Q33 Unauthorised Private Enterprise	E	25
Q77 Defence Spending	E	31

	Grade	Score
PERSONNEL RISK	D	41
Q34 Public Commitment to Integrity	E	25
Q35 Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	C	63
Q36 Whistleblowing	D	33
Q37 High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38 Numbers of Personnel	C	50
Q39 Pay Rates and Allowances	F	13
Q40 Payment System	E	25
Q41 Objective Appointments	D	42
Q42 Objective Promotions	E	25
Q43 Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44 Bribery for Preferred Postings	B	75
Q45 Chains of Command and Payment	C	50
Q46 Military Code of Conduct	A	83
Q47 Civilian Code of Conduct	C	56
Q48 Anticorruption Training	D	33
Q49 Corruption Prosecutions	E	17
Q50 Facilitation Payments	B	67

**OVERALL
COUNTRY
SCORE**

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	E	18
Q51 Military Doctrine	F	0
Q52 Operational Training	E	25
Q53 Forward Planning	D	38
Q54 Corruption Monitoring in Operations	E	17
Q55 Controls in Contracting	F	13
Q56 Private Military Contractors	NS	

	Grade	Score
PROCUREMENT RISK	E	31
Q57 Procurement Legislation	D	38
Q58 Procurement Cycle	D	33
Q59 Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	D	42
Q60 Potential Purchases Disclosed	E	25
Q61 Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q62 Business Compliance Standards	D	38
Q63 Procurement Requirements	D	42
Q64 Competition in Procurement	F	13
Q65 Tender Board Controls	D	44
Q66 Anti-Collusion Controls	B	69
Q67 Contract Award / Delivery	D	38
Q68 Complaint Mechanisms	C	63
Q69 Supplier Sanctions	C	58
Q70 Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71 Offset Contract Monitoring	F	0
Q72 Offset Competition	F	0
Q73 Agents and Intermediaries	E	25
Q74 Financing Packages	E	25
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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