



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



**COUNTRY
BRIEF**

NIGERIA

2025





NIGERIA

Nigeria’s political context is marked by persistent insecurity, contested democratic processes, and increasing strain on state institutions. While formal democratic structures remain in place, public confidence has been weakened by disputed electoral outcomes, executive dominance, and limited accountability across key governance sectors.¹ Recent national elections reinforced concerns about electoral credibility and civic trust ahead of the next electoral cycle.² At the same time, widespread violence, including insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, and farmer–herder conflict in the Middle Belt, continues to challenge state authority and the effectiveness of public institutions.³ Nigeria remains a central regional security actor and a major recipient of international security assistance, yet defence governance reforms have advanced unevenly. Civilian oversight of the armed forces is constrained by weak enforcement, outdated/contradictory legal provisions, inadequate technical capacity, restricted transparency, and recurring allegations of human rights violations during security operations. Although incremental initiatives point to a formal commitment to reform, structural weaknesses persist, particularly in defence

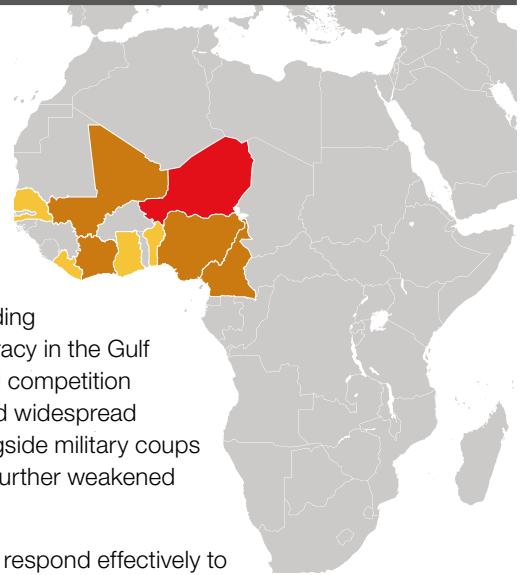
procurement, financial management, and operational accountability.

This combination of insecurity, opaque governance, and weak oversight directly informs the defence integrity risks captured in the Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI). Corruption risks remain deeply embedded across Nigeria’s defence sector, characterised by weak short- and long-term oversight from the Defence Committee and limited engagement from internal and external audit bodies. Financial scrutiny is especially fragile, with major gaps in defence spending transparency, secret expenditures, and military-owned enterprises. Although anti-bribery sanctions exist in law, enforcement is uneven, personnel processes lack objectivity, and operational risk management and procurement practice remain weak despite a legal framework that recognises corruption risks.

Member of Open Government Partnership	Yes
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2004
Arms Trade Treaty	Ratified in 2013

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 Nigeria. 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, Nigeria Country Report 2024.

2 International Crisis Group, “Restoring Nigeria’s Leadership for Regional Peace and Security,” ICG Africa Briefing No 203, December 11, 2024.

3 Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), US Security Assistance to Nigeria: Civilian Protection Gaps and Opportunities, June 2024.

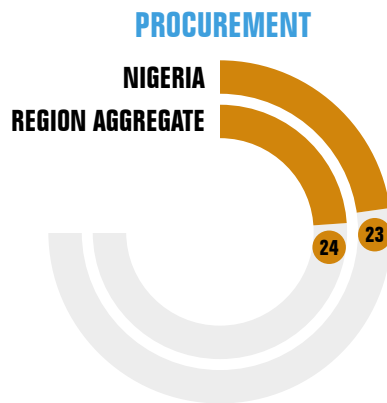
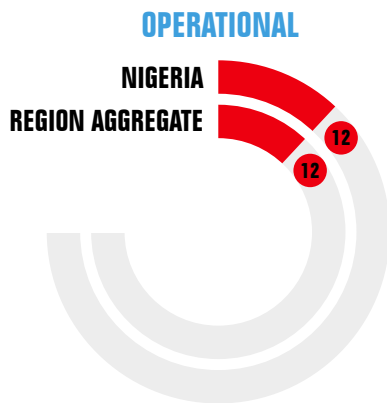
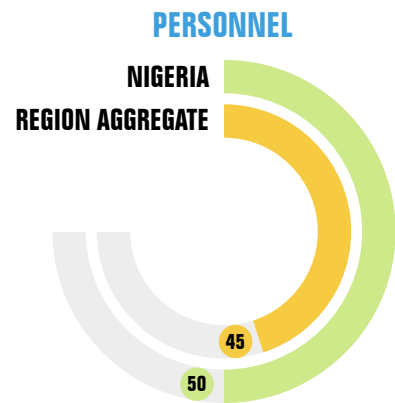
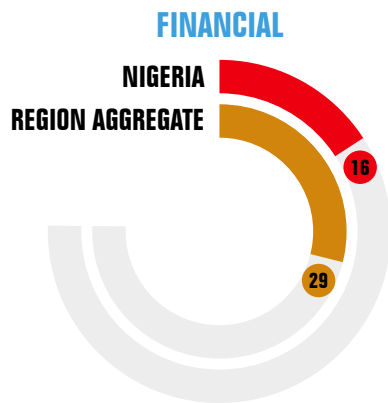
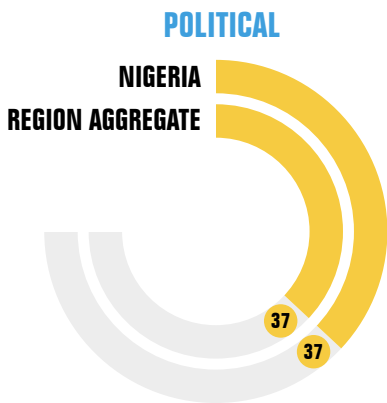
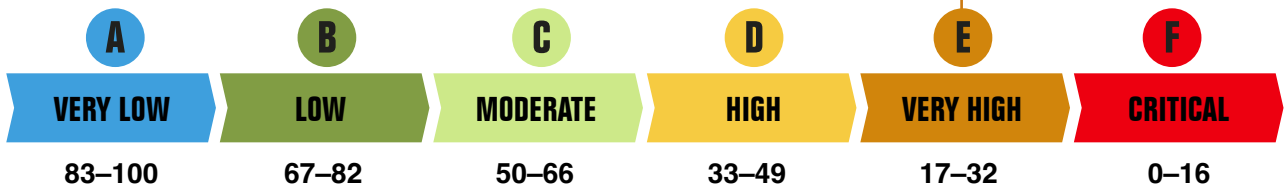
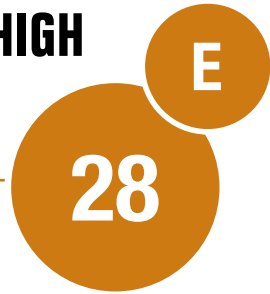


NIGERIA

RISK COMPARISON

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

VERY HIGH RISK





NIGERIA

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2023)	56/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2024)	3.10%
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

In December 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari declined to appear before the House of Representatives to brief lawmakers on security, and in November 2023 service chiefs similarly failed to attend a security briefing in person.^{4 5} These incidents illustrate the limits of parliamentary authority and the practical constraints on enforcing defence oversight. This pattern directly informs the performance of parliamentary oversight in the defence sector. Despite robust formal powers, defence oversight remains uneven and reactive, sustaining moderate corruption risks. The National Assembly has formal authority to scrutinise defence policy and spending through hearings, summons of defence officials, and approval of the defence budget, supported by defence committees in both chambers.⁶ The Auditor-General is constitutionally mandated to audit defence expenditure and report to Parliament, providing a formal, though limited in practice, external check on defence finances. In practice, however, these mechanisms are weakened by structural and capacity constraints. Oversight effectiveness is limited by limited defence-sector expertise among legislators, frequent committee turnover, conflicts of interest, and patronage-driven appointments.⁷ Audit scrutiny is further undermined by persistent delays in the publication of Auditor-General reports, outdated legal provisions, weak follow-up on findings, and chronic under-resourcing of the audit office.^{8 9} As a result, Parliament struggles to exercise sustained, proactive oversight over defence policy and spending, reinforcing high corruption risks across the 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)	31/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2025)	122nd out of 180.

Financial transparency in Nigeria's defence sector presents critical corruption risks. Large portions of defence and security spending are shielded from public scrutiny through extensive use of classification, security votes, and off-budget mechanisms.¹⁰ Actual expenditure data are rarely published, and defence-linked commercial enterprises operate with minimal disclosure or audit visibility.¹¹ Access-to-information laws exist but are routinely overridden by broad security exemptions and conflicting secrecy legislation, leaving citizens, civil society, and the media with little practical access to defence financial information.¹²

Within this high-risk environment, formal transparency mechanisms do exist but remain insufficient to mitigate these vulnerabilities. Nigeria publishes its defence budget and submits it to the National Assembly broadly within constitutional timelines, with aggregate allocations disclosed.¹³ Approved budgets are publicly accessible, and civil society platforms help interpret published figures. However, these disclosures focus on planned allocations rather than actual spending, while supplementary budgets and classified expenditures receive limited scrutiny.

4 Tonnie Iredia, "National Assembly should avoid distracting the military," Vanguard, April 1, 2021.
5 TVC News, "Reps fume as Service Chiefs fail to honour invitation, reject representatives," November 17, 2024.
6 Obinna Osiogun, "Understanding Legislative Committees in the Nigerian Legislature," Plural, May 6, 2024.
7 Freedom C. Onuoha & Joseph C. Akogwu, "Executive-legislative relations, state security forces and national security management in Nigeria's fourth republic," In S. Hassan & A. M. Okolie (Eds.) Executive-Legislative Relations in Nigeria: Theoretical Issues and Praxis. Ibadan; Nigerian Political Science Association, 2022.
8 Ayo Olukotun, "Budgetary travails of the auditor-general," Punch, December 2, 2022.
9 Iniobong Usen, "Bonus: Audit Delay and the Timeliness of Reporting," Budget, August 29, 2023.
10 Murtala Abdullahi, "Nigeria's Opaque Military Budget Culture Increases Risks of Corruption," HumAngle, September 13, 2021.
11 Senator Iroegbu, "Special Report: Tracking Nigerian Military's Commercial Ventures?," Global Sentinel, December 3, 2022.
12 Chioma Obinna, "FOI: CISLAC/TI demands reform to provisions impeding civilian oversight of defence and security," Vanguard, January 12, 2024.
13 Olawale Ajimotokan, Sunday Aborisade and Juliet Akoje, "Senate Passes N2.17 Trillion 2023 Supplementary Budget," November 3, 2023.



NIGERIA

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.

Nigeria’s military personnel system shows active but uneven disciplinary enforcement. Between 2019 and 2023, hundreds of personnel have faced courts-martial, including senior officers convicted for abuse of office and procurement-related offences,^{14 15 16} while more routine cases—such as the dismissal of soldiers for theft at the Dangote Refinery—continue to occur.¹⁷ At the same time, concerns persist around personnel transparency and payroll integrity, including continued parliamentary scrutiny of military participation in the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIIS).

Within this context, Nigeria’s personnel ethics framework presents moderate corruption risks overall. Formal disciplinary mechanisms are in place and occasionally enforced across ranks, with documented investigations, court-martials, dismissals, and convictions for corruption and misconduct. Codes of conduct apply to military and civilian personnel, and asset declaration requirements exist. However, significant weaknesses persist; despite these requirements and various directives, compliance with asset declaration remains alarmingly low. Whistleblowing is high risk, as protections are policy-based, poorly trusted, and weakened by secrecy norms and fear of retaliation.¹⁸ Transparency around personnel numbers is limited, with ongoing concerns about ghost workers, while appointment and promotion processes, especially at senior levels, remain opaque and vulnerable to patronage.¹⁹ Anti-corruption training occurs but is irregular, leaving overall corruption risks at a moderate level despite formal safeguards.²⁰

OPERATIONS

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2020)	223,000
Troops deployed on operations #	240 (as of 31 October 2025): 171 in Abyei (UNISFA).

Operations represent the weakest area of Nigeria’s defence governance and present critical corruption risks. Although corruption is widely acknowledged as undermining military effectiveness, there is no explicit operational doctrine, or framework that treats corruption as a strategic risk in planning, deployment, or command practice.²¹ Anti-corruption considerations are not clearly integrated into forward operational planning, and there is no evidence that commanders consistently apply corruption-risk awareness in the field.²² Training on corruption for commanders is limited, despite repeated cases of procurement corruption, diversion of operational funds, and substandard equipment directly affecting troop safety.²³ Monitoring of corruption risks during operations is irregular, lacks specialised expertise, and is not guided by defence-specific procedures, while reports remain opaque. There are no dedicated guidelines addressing corruption risks in contracting during deployments or peacekeeping, and oversight of private military contractors and external security providers is minimal.²⁴ These problems leave Nigeria’s defence operations highly exposed to corruption, directly undermining operational effectiveness and integrity.

14 Solomon Odeniyi, "Army court-martialed two generals, 642 others in four years – Report," Punch, October 17, 2023.
 15 Benny Ark, "Army Court-Martial Sends General to Seven Years in Prison," Channels TV, October 10, 2023.
 16 Media & Publicity, "Court Jails Ex-Air Force Chief, AVM Mamu Over Corruption," EFCC, July 28, 2020.
 17 Army probes commander accused of diverting soldiers' benefits", Punch, October 10, 2024.
 18 EJemen Ojubo, "A Review of the Effectiveness of the Nigerian Whistleblowing Stopgap Policy of 2016 and the Whistleblower Protection Bill of 2019," Journal of African Law. 2023;67(3):487-494.
 19 Idowu Isamotu, "Military Pencils Down Over 50 Names for Promotion As Generals Bow Out Today," Daily Trust, July 3, 2023.
 20 CPC News "ICPC graduates 246 Newly Recruited Officers from Training Academy," January 26, 2022.
 21 Agency Report and Sumaila Ogbaje, "Successes, Challenges of Military Operations Across Nigeria in 2023," Premium Times, December 21, 2023.
 22 Kingsley Nweze, "Corruption by Military Responsible for Nigeria's Worsening Insecurity, Says ICPC," Arise, September 10, 2022.
 23 Interview with a Former Instructor, at a Peacekeeping Centre, August 16, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 24 Rotimi Agbana, "Peacekeeping: Army dismisses corruption report as smear campaign," Punch, May 16, 2023.



DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

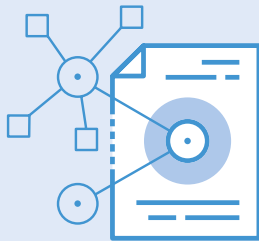
Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2024)	\$1133.3
Open competition in defence procurement (%)	Data is not publicly available.
Main defence exports – to SIPRI, 2020-24	NA
Main defence imports – from SIPRI, 2020-24	China (40%) Turkiye (11%) Brazil (9.3%) Pakistan (9.1%) Netherlands (7.1%)

Since 2020, major defence purchases linked to operations against Boko Haram, banditry, and other internal threats have been conducted with limited public disclosure, reinforcing long-standing secrecy around military spending.²⁵

Defence procurement in Nigeria presents very high corruption risks, characterised mainly by pervasive secrecy, extensive legal exemptions, and weak external scrutiny. While procurement is formally governed by the Public Procurement Act (2007) and integrated into Ministry of Defence planning, most defence acquisitions are exempted on national security grounds and treated as classified.²⁶ Links between procurement decisions and defence strategy are not publicly disclosed.²⁷ The procurement cycle is largely opaque from needs assessment through contract execution and asset disposal, and potential purchases are rarely made public in advance. Open competition is uncommon, with direct sourcing widely enabled by statutory exemptions,²⁸

particularly during counter-insurgency operations. Oversight bodies, including parliamentary committees, the Bureau of Public Procurement, audit institutions, and anti-corruption agencies, exist in law but face restricted access to information, limited transparency, and weak enforcement capacity in practice.²⁹

At the same time, Nigeria has established formal legal recognition of procurement-related corruption risks and compliance mechanisms. The Public Procurement Act criminalises procurement fraud, provides for supplier sanctions, and mandates observer participation by civil society and professional bodies. However, these safeguards remain largely *de jure* rather than *de facto*: broad defence exemptions, pervasive secrecy, and limited audit enforcement mean that procurement controls function largely on paper, leaving corruption risks in defence procurement among the highest across the sector.



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

25 Premium Times, "Dubious Contracts: How fugitive arms broker made millions of dollars from Nigeria," November 9, 2024.

26 Vanguard, "CISLAC, others seek increased transparency, accountability in defence, security expenditure," May 30, 2023.

27 Ekene Lionel, "Nigerian Army Aviation gets funding, reveals its aerial assets," Military Africa, March 22, 2024.

28 African Centre for Strategic Studies, "Nigeria Defence and Security Governance Forum," May 2024.

29 Sunday Adelani & Mba Ukweni, "Governance and defence sector management in Nigeria: X-raying legislative oversight of the defence sector," World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 23(02), 570–578.



NIGERIA 2025 GDI SCORECARD

	Grade	Score
POLITICAL RISK	D	37
Q1 Legislative Scrutiny	C	50
Q2 Defence Committee	D	33
Q3 Defence Policy Debate	F	8
Q4 CSO Engagement	D	33
Q5 Conventions: UNCAC / OECD	C	63
Q6 Public Debate	C	50
Q7 Anticorruption Policy	D	38
Q8 Compliance and Ethics Units	A	83
Q9 Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10 Risk Assessments	F	0
Q11 Acquisition Planning	E	25
Q12 Budget Transparency & Detail	B	75
Q13 Budget Scrutiny	B	75
Q14 Budget Availability	D	33
Q15 Defence Income	E	17
Q16 Internal Audit	E	25
Q17 External Audit	E	25
Q18 Natural Resources	D	35
Q19 Organised Crime Links	E	25
Q20 Organised Crime Policing	D	42
Q21 Intelligence Services Oversight	E	25
Q22 Intelligence Services Recruitment	E	17
Q23 Export Controls (ATT)	B	75
Q76 Lobbying	F	0
FINANCIAL RISK	F	16
Q24 Asset Disposal Controls	D	33
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	E	17
Q30 Access to Information	C	50
Q31 Beneficial Ownership	E	25
Q32 Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	F	0
Q33 Unauthorised Private Enterprise	C	50
Q77 Defence Spending	F	0
PERSONNEL RISK	C	50
Q34 Public Commitment to Integrity	C	50
Q35 Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	A	88
Q36 Whistleblowing	E	17
Q37 High-risk Positions	F	0
Q38 Numbers of Personnel	F	0
Q39 Pay Rates and Allowances	E	25
Q40 Payment System	C	50
Q41 Objective Appointments	E	25
Q42 Objective Promotions	C	56
Q43 Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44 Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	92
Q45 Chains of Command and Payment	A	100
Q46 Military Code of Conduct	B	69
Q47 Civilian Code of Conduct	C	56
Q48 Anticorruption Training	B	67
Q49 Corruption Prosecutions	D	42
Q50 Facilitation Payments	B	67

**OVERALL
COUNTRY
SCORE**

**VERY HIGH
RISK**

E
28

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	12
Q51 Military Doctrine	F	13
Q52 Operational Training	F	0
Q53 Forward Planning	F	13
Q54 Corruption Monitoring in Operations	F	8
Q55 Controls in Contracting	E	25
Q56 Private Military Contractors	NS	

PROCUREMENT RISK	E	23
Q57 Procurement Legislation	C	50
Q58 Procurement Cycle	E	25
Q59 Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	D	42
Q60 Potential Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q61 Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q62 Business Compliance Standards	E	25
Q63 Procurement Requirements	E	17
Q64 Competition in Procurement	F	13
Q65 Tender Board Controls	E	31
Q66 Anti-Collusion Controls	E	31
Q67 Contract Award / Delivery	E	19
Q68 Complaint Mechanisms	C	50
Q69 Supplier Sanctions	C	58
Q70 Offset Contracts	F	0
Q71 Offset Contract Monitoring	F	0
Q72 Offset Competition	E	25
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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