



**Government Defence
Integrity Index**



**COUNTRY
BRIEF**

UGANDA

2025





UGANDA

Although Uganda operates under a multiparty framework, political power is highly centralised in the Executive and the ruling National Resistance Movement. The 2021 general elections reaffirmed the government’s control, but were marked by allegations of intimidation, irregularities, and restrictions on opposition activities. Civil society groups and independent media continue to face legal and administrative constraints - with arrests, censorship, and surveillance undermining freedom of expression and association.¹

Uganda plays a key role in regional security, contributing troops to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia and conducting joint operations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo against armed groups in the east. These interventions have positioned the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) as a pivotal security actor in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions.^{2 3} However, Uganda’s military presence has also raised questions locally as the expanding influence of the defence establishment increasingly overlaps with political decision-making. The country’s security apparatus remains a key pillar of regime stability, with limited civilian oversight and allegations of politicisation within the defence establishment.⁴

Fiscal consolidation remains a government priority under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) supported programme, but governance challenges, corruption, and limited budget transparency continue to weaken the effectiveness of public spending.⁵

These political and security dynamics shape defence governance in practice - reinforcing executive control, limiting independent scrutiny, and placing pressure on oversight institutions tasked with managing corruption risks in the defence sector. Uganda shows moderate oversight of defence policy, but internal audit functions offer limited support for effective scrutiny. External bodies provide clearer institutional evidence, highlighting repeated failures to implement key procurement recommendations. Sanctions are strong on paper but only moderately enforced, while oversight of high-risk positions and appointment processes remains weak. Procurement and operations continue to face high exposure to corruption risks.

Member of Open Government Partnership	No
UN Convention Against Corruption	Ratified in 2004
Arms Trade Treaty	Not yet joined the ATT

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 (DRC) 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 Freedom House. Uganda. Washington, DC: Freedom House.
2 Institute for Security Studies, "Overcoming Security Dilemmas in the Great Lakes Region," ISS Today, February 11, 2025.
3 International Crisis Group, "Deadly Escalation by Ugandan ADF Rebels in Eastern DRC," Africa Briefing, September 12, 2025.
4 All Africa, "Uganda: Military Controls All Fabrics of Uganda," Says New Report, July 15, 2025.
5 World Bank. Uganda: Overview. Washington, DC: World Bank.



UGANDA

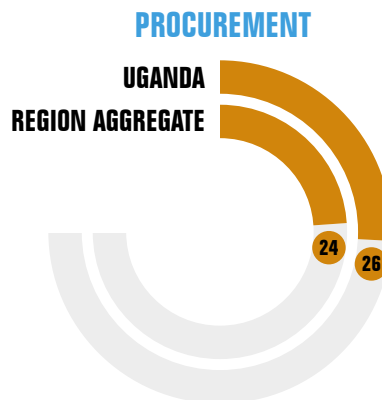
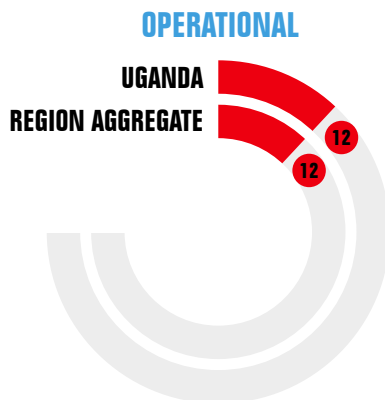
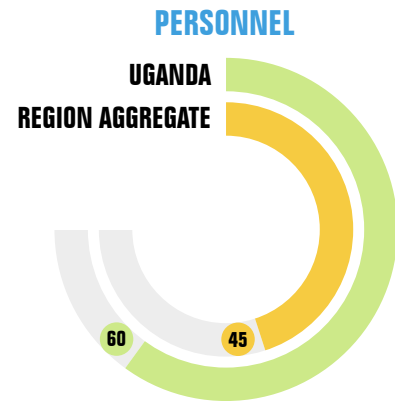
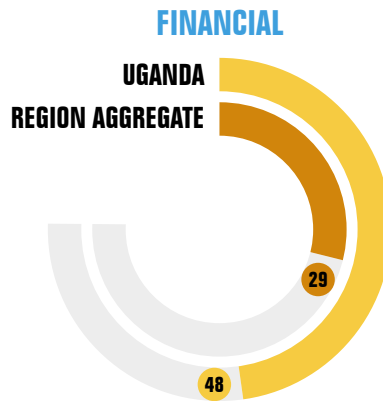
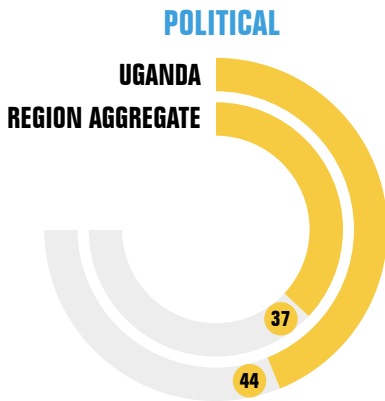
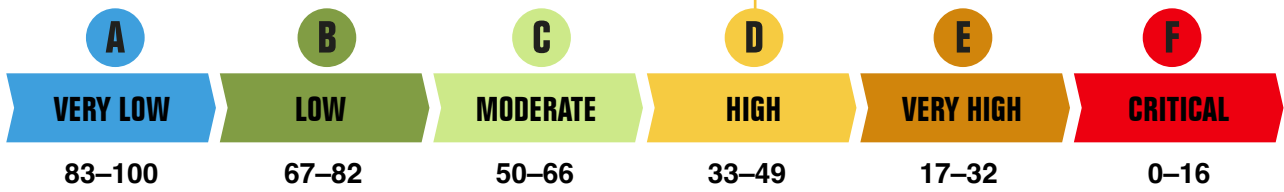
RISK COMPARISON

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

HIGH RISK

D

38





UGANDA

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislative oversight of budget (Open Budget Survey, 2023)	61/100
Military expenditure as a share of government spending (SIPRI, 2024)	1.88%
Committee members with defence expertise (%)	Data is not publicly available.
# of meetings/year	Data is not publicly available.
Last review of defence policy/strategy	2016

In 2021, the UPDF was deployed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo under Operation Shujaa before parliamentary authorisation, with budget approval sought only after troops were already in place.⁶ Parliamentary independence is further complicated by the presence of UPDF representatives appointed to Parliament by the President, whom the Commander-in-Chief has described as “listening posts”, reinforcing executive and military influence within the legislature.⁷

Despite relatively robust formal mandates and active committee structures, parliamentary oversight in Uganda’s defence sector remains exposed to high corruption risks, reflecting a persistent gap between institutional design and effective accountability. Parliament is constitutionally mandated to scrutinise defence policy, budgets, and military deployments, primarily through the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, which regularly reviews ministerial policy statements and questions defence officials. In practice, however, oversight remains constrained by extensive classification of defence expenditure, executive dominance over security decision-making,⁸ and the sidelining of Parliament in operational deployments.⁹ Parliamentary scrutiny is therefore largely reactive and advisory, with limited ability to amend, block, or enforce changes to defence policy or operations¹⁰ Oversight effectiveness is further weakened by gaps in audit-enabled accountability and limited follow-through on findings. While the Office of the Auditor General functions independently and publishes audit reports, internal audit within the Ministry of Defence lacks clear independence and is not transparently shared with Parliament. Audit findings are routinely discussed but inconsistently acted upon, resulting in weak institutional outcomes and limit scrutiny.¹¹

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)	59/100
World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2025)	143rd out of 180.

Fiscal transparency in Uganda’s defence sector remains highly vulnerable to corruption risks, despite the formal publication of defence budgets and adherence to statutory budget timelines. While overall allocations are publicly disclosed and submitted to Parliament in a timely manner, the defence budget remains highly aggregated, with limited or no disaggregation of expenditure lines.¹² A substantial share of defence spending is classified and approved as single-line items, preventing Parliament, civil society, and the public from assessing how funds are allocated or used. Broad secrecy provisions under the Official Secrets Act (1964) and Access to Information Act (2005) further restrict access to defence-related financial information. These risks are heightened by opaque management of secret expenditure and military involvement in commercial activities.¹³ Classified spending is audited through closed procedures with minimal parliamentary or public visibility. In parallel, defence institutions maintain wide-ranging commercial interests across many sectors. Although some audits occur, comprehensive financial data on these enterprises, their revenues, and their integration into the defence budget are not publicly available.¹⁴ The scale of these off-budget commercial activities, combined with limited scrutiny of classified funds, undermines fiscal transparency and sustains high corruption risks.

6 Parliament Watch, “MP’s query UPDF deployment to DR Congo,” December 2021.
7 Job Bwire, “You’re Listening Posts in Parliament, Museveni Tells New UPDF MPs”, Daily Monitor, January 30, 2021.
8 The National Budget Framework Paper FY 2023/24-FY 2027/28.
9 Interview with a Retired General, July 15, 2024 at Ninda. Government Defence Integrity Index.
10 Parliament Watch, “Defence Ministry asks Parliament for UGX 89.7 towards Operation ‘Shujaa’ in the DRC,” 2021.
11 Chemonges M. Timothy, “Striving for Integrity: Addressing Institutional Redundancy in Uganda’s Fight Against Corruption,” 2024.
12 The National Budget Framework Paper for FY2024/25-FY2028/29.
13 Interview with a Senior Journalist, Naalya, August 18, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
14 The Office of the Auditor General of Uganda. Report of the Auditor General to Parliament for the Financial Year Ended 30th June 2023, 2023.



PERSONNEL ETHICS FRAMEWORK

Whistleblowing legislation	The Whistleblower Protection Act (2010)
# 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.

Corruption-related cases involving high-ranking personnel have remained unresolved for extended periods, raising concerns about the credibility of enforcement mechanisms.¹⁵ Questions about merit-based decision-making have been further reinforced by the 2024 promotion of President Museveni’s son to Chief of Defence Forces, which generated concerns about the concentration of authority over senior military appointments.¹⁶

Personnel ethics in Uganda’s defence sector entail moderate corruption risks, operating within a comparatively robust formal regulatory framework whose implementation and enforcement remain uneven. The UPDF Act criminalises corruption, bribery, and misconduct. Codes of conduct exist for both military and civilian staff, and anti-corruption training is integrated into recruitment and professional development. In practice, however, accountability is applied inconsistently across ranks, with senior officers rarely facing timely or transparent consequences, undermining trust in enforcement mechanisms.¹⁷ While whistleblowing is legally protected under the Whistleblowers Protection Act (2010) and supported by the Inspectorate of Government, fear of retaliation and hierarchical command structures significantly deter reporting.¹⁸ ¹⁹ Appointment and promotion processes remain largely internal, opaque, and closed to external scrutiny. As a result, these weaknesses counterbalance otherwise solid legal and training frameworks, resulting in sustained moderate corruption risks in this area.

OPERATIONS

Total armed forces personnel (World Bank, 2020)	46,000
Troops deployed on operations #	658 (as of 31 October 2025): 625 in Somalia (UNTMIS).

In 2023, President Museveni publicly attributed a deadly attack on UPDF forces in Somalia to corruption within the army, highlighting failures in logistics, supply chains, and internal discipline during external deployments.²⁰ More recently, UPDF leadership has continued to caution logistics officers against corruption and mismanagement, including through internal retreats and directives in 2024, underscoring persistent concerns about how resources are managed during operations.²¹ Within this context, operations in Uganda’s defence sector show critical corruption risks, reflecting a persistent gap between doctrine, oversight mechanisms, and operational practice. While the UPDF has an established military doctrine and senior leadership regularly emphasises integrity, corruption is not explicitly treated as a strategic operational risk in publicly available doctrine or forward planning.²² Anti-corruption training for commanders is irregular and largely advisory.²³ Some internal mechanisms exist, including the role of the Internal Security Organisation (ISO) in investigating misconduct, as well as integrity-focused initiatives linked to peacekeeping deployments. However, ISO’s findings are not publicly reported or shared with oversight bodies.²⁴ In peacekeeping and external operations, trained personnel may be deployed to monitor risks, but there is no evidence of consistent risk assessments, standardised reporting. These gaps collectively maintain critical corruption risks in military operations.

15 Monitor, "High Court halts trial of suspects in ghost pilot case," September 2020.
 16 Kupemba, Danai Nesta, "Muhozi Kainerugaba: Ugandan president promotes his son to the military chief," 2024.
 17 Interview with UPDF Legal Department member at Mbuya, July 31, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 18 Ruth Kimeze, "Ugandan corruption whistleblowers call for protection from govt.," News Uganda, April 22, 2022.
 19 Samuel Amanya, "Whistleblowers in Kigezi Decry Death Threats, April 30, 2022.
 20 Samilu Busein, "Corruption caused UPDF Somalia attack – Museveni," the Daily Monitor June 02, 2023.
 21 Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces, "UPDF Logistics Officers Cautioned Against Corruption and Mismanagement," UPDF, May 17, 2024.
 22 Interview with UPDF Legal Department member at Mbuya, July 22, 2024. Government Defence Integrity Index.
 23 "Senior UPDF/ Defence Leaders Partner with British Defence Academy on Training of Building Integrity," October 06, 2022.
 24 Interview with a UPDF Legal Department member, July 22, 2024, at Mbuya. Government Defence Integrity Index.



UGANDA

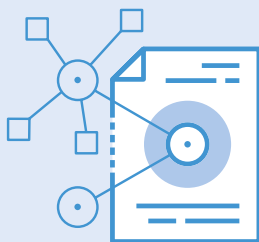
DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

Military expenditure (US\$ mil) (SIPRI, 2024)	\$1116.8
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)	Russia (39%); Belarus (22%); Bulgaria (9.4%); Serbia (9.1%); Czechia (9.0)

Defence procurement in Uganda has repeatedly drawn public attention due to controversies involving executive intervention and irregular contracting. Concerns have been raised about procurement directives issued by the Executive that reportedly override or bypass The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) Authority procedures, as well as the expanding role of the UPDF in undertaking civilian infrastructure projects outside standard procurement frameworks.^{25 26} Defence procurement in Uganda’s defence sector remains exposed to very high corruption risks, reflecting persistent gaps between formal regulation and practical accountability. Acquisition planning, procurement, and oversight are formally regulated through the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (2015), the UPDF Act (2005), and multiple oversight bodies, including the PPDA Authority, the Auditor

General, Parliament, and the Inspectorate of Government. However, these systems are undermined in practice by extensive use of classification, frequent single-sourcing, and limited public disclosure across the procurement cycle.²⁷ Acquisition planning and procurement decisions are not transparently linked to defence strategy, procurement cycles are not publicly disclosed in full, and forward planning for defence purchases remains largely opaque.²⁸

While the PPDA framework includes supplier sanctions, blacklisting provisions, and formal complaints mechanisms, representing the strongest elements of integrity in this area, these safeguards have not prevented repeated allegations of collusion, single source contracting, inflated contracts, and politically influenced procurement decisions.



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

25 The Independent., "Gov't to explain Museveni's procurement directives contravening PPDA law," October 29, 2021.
 26 Andrew Bagala, "Museveni orders army to build schools, health centres," The Daily Monitor, July 09, 2021.
 27 Mihaly Fazekas, Isabelle Adam, Olena Nikulina, "Study on the Coast of Corruption in Uganda," Inspectorate of Government, December 2021.
 28 Consolidated Audit Findings, Annual Report of The Auditor General 2024.



UGANDA 2025 GDI SCORECARD

		Grade	Score
POLITICAL RISK		D	44
Q1	Legislative Scrutiny	D	42
Q2	Defence Committee	C	63
Q3	Defence Policy Debate	E	31
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	C	50
Q9	Public Trust in Institutions	NS	
Q10	Risk Assessments	C	58
Q11	Acquisition Planning	C	50
Q12	Budget Transparency & Detail	B	75
Q13	Budget Scrutiny	C	50
Q14	Budget Availability	B	75
Q15	Defence Income	E	17
Q16	Internal Audit	E	25
Q17	External Audit	C	50
Q18	Natural Resources	C	50
Q19	Organised Crime Links	E	25
Q20	Organised Crime Policing	D	42
Q21	Intelligence Services Oversight	D	38
Q22	Intelligence Services Recruitment	D	42
Q23	Export Controls (ATT)	F	0
Q76	Lobbying	F	0

		Grade	Score
FINANCIAL RISK		D	48
Q24	Asset Disposal Controls	C	58
Q25	Asset Disposal Scrutiny	C	50
Q26	Secret Spending	F	0
Q27	Legislative Access to Information	C	50
Q28	Secret Program Auditing	C	50
Q29	Off-budget Spending	B	75
Q30	Access to Information	D	38
Q31	Beneficial Ownership	D	38
Q32	Military-Owned Business Scrutiny	C	63
Q33	Unauthorised Private Enterprise	B	75
Q77	Defence Spending	D	38

		Grade	Score
PERSONNEL RISK		C	60
Q34	Public Commitment to Integrity	B	67
Q35	Disciplinary Measures for Personnel	C	63
Q36	Whistleblowing	D	42
Q37	High-risk Positions	E	17
Q38	Numbers of Personnel	E	17
Q39	Pay Rates and Allowances	C	50
Q40	Payment System	B	67
Q41	Objective Appointments	D	33
Q42	Objective Promotions	B	69
Q43	Bribery to Avoid Conscription	NA	
Q44	Bribery for Preferred Postings	A	83
Q45	Chains of Command and Payment	A	100
Q46	Military Code of Conduct	C	56
Q47	Civilian Code of Conduct	C	56
Q48	Anticorruption Training	B	75
Q49	Corruption Prosecutions	A	83
Q50	Facilitation Payments	B	75

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

		Grade	Score
PROCUREMENT RISK		E	26
Q57	Procurement Legislation	E	25
Q58	Procurement Cycle	D	33
Q59	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	C	50
Q60	Potential Purchases Disclosed	E	25
Q61	Actual Purchases Disclosed	F	13
Q62	Business Compliance Standards	C	50
Q63	Procurement Requirements	F	8
Q64	Competition in Procurement	F	13
Q65	Tender Board Controls	D	44
Q66	Anti-Collusion Controls	C	50
Q67	Contract Award / Delivery	D	38
Q68	Complaint Mechanisms	C	58
Q69	Supplier Sanctions	B	67
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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