

BICC's Global Militarization Index (GMI) 2012

What is the Global Militarization Index (GMI)?

The Global Militarization Index (GMI) depicts the relative weight and importance of the military apparatus of one state in relation to its society as a whole. For this, the GMI records a number of indicators to represent the level of militarization of a country:

- the comparison of military expenditures with its gross domestic product (GDP) and its health expenditure (as share of its GDP);
- the ratio of the total number of (para)military forces to the number of physicians and to the overall population;
- the ratio of the number of heavy weapons to the total population.¹

The GMI is based on aggregated data from the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Institute for Strategic studies (IISS) and BICC. It shows the level of militarization since 1990. BICC provides yearly updates.

The latest yearly update, the GMI 2012, is based on data from the year 2010 (i.e. the most recent year for which data has been available) and comprises 149 states.² BICC's GMI is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

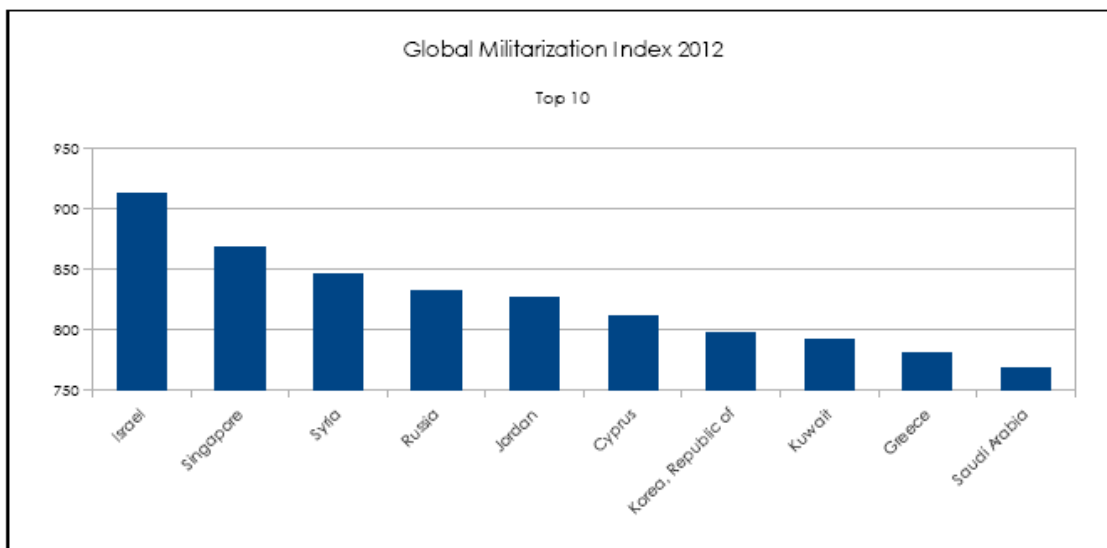
Global Militarization: Top Ten

In 2010, **Israel, Singapore, Syria, Russia, Jordan, Cyprus, South Korea, Kuwait, Greece,** and **Saudi-Arabia** were the top ten scorers on the GMI.³ Five of these ten states are in the Middle East. No African or Latin American country can be found in the top ten. Compared to the year before (2009), only minor changes have occurred amongst the top ten. Russia moved from rank four to five and replaced Jordan. Similarly, South Korea and Cyprus changed positions as well as Greece and Kuwait. Belarus left the top ten and was replaced by Saudi Arabia.

¹ A more detailed description of the method can be found at: Grebe, Jan. 2011. "The Global Militarization Index (GMI) – A tool for evaluating development orientation of states as well as regional developments." *Occasional Paper*, February 2011, Bonn: BICC.

² The GMI 2012 has been recalculated for all previous years, which results in changes if compared to calculations of previous years.

³ There is no reliable data on military spending, number of armed forces, and number of heavy weapons systems on North Korea. This makes a calculation of its level of militarization impossible.



The GMI determines the level of militarization by means of a scale from 0 to 1,000.

Regional Militarization

Middle East

Five of the top ten countries in the GMI can be found in the Middle East: **Israel** (ranked 1), **Syria** (ranked 3), **Jordan** (ranked 5), **Kuwait** (ranked 8), and **Saudi Arabia** (ranked 10). Amongst the first twenty states of the GMI, **Oman** (ranked 12), **Bahrain** (ranked 14), and the **United Arab Emirates** (ranked 17) complement the countries of that region. Proof of the overall high level of militarization in that conflict-prone region in general—**Iran**, for instance is at position 32—is the fact that nearly all countries in the Middle East are amongst the first 40 ranks on the GMI.⁴ Against the background of the Arab Spring, the continuing unrest and the political conflicts in some states, the inherent danger of high levels of militarization is a continued destabilization of the region. High levels of militarization can contribute to turning already existing internal and external conflicts into violence.

Europe and the United States

Looking at NATO and Russia as well as the rest of Europe, the trend of past years continues. Compared to the **United States** (ranked 30), **Russia** (ranked 4) continues to show a higher level of militarization even though in absolute terms, the military budget of the United States is markedly higher and, with US \$687 billion, is still number one in the world. The high militarization level of greatly indebted Greece (ranked 9) stands out while the level of militarization in Turkey (ranked 27) has fallen. In Eastern Europe, **Belarus** (ranked 16) remains one of the most highly militarized countries in the region. **Germany** fell from rank 73 to rank 81 in 2010. The reduction of defense procurement and budgetary constraints in Western Europe will have a likely impact on militarization in the future, yet no downward trend was visible in 2010.

⁴ Exception: **Qatar** (ranked 42)

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa generally shows low levels of militarization. Exceptions are **Angola** (ranked 31), **Mauretania** (ranked 43) and **Djibouti** (ranked 44). Since 2007, no data has been available for Eritrea. One can assume, however, that the country still is highly militarized. Despite numerous armed conflicts and unrest in many countries of the region, 19 countries show low levels of militarization (below 549 points), for example the **Central African Republic** (ranked 97), **Mali** (ranked 107) and **Nigeria** (ranked 125). The *Failed State Index* evaluates the highly volatile situation in the Central African Republic and in Nigeria as critical. These circumstances point to the fact that some state security apparatuses are incapable of preventing violence and conflicts precisely because the country concerned shows a low level of militarization.

Asia

Two of the countries with the highest levels of militarization in 2010 can, again, be found in Southeast Asia and East Asia: **Singapore** (ranked 2) and **South Korea** (ranked 7). **Brunei** (ranked 11) and **Vietnam** (ranked 19), too, are high up on the list. It is true that no position could be determined for North Korea; however, one can safely assume that it shows the highest level of militarization of all countries in the world. Overall, the region shows great variations in the levels of militarization: While **China** (ranked 83) and **India** (ranked 75) are characterized by a moderate level of militarization, China's military expenditures in absolute terms amount to US \$114 billion—and have been increasing for years. At present, the Chinese budget is the second highest in the world after that of the United States. The reaction of many countries in the region to Beijing's armament efforts may have an effect on the level of militarization in some countries. It remains to be seen how militarization in the region will develop against the backdrop of numerous unsolved territorial conflicts, comprehensive defense procurement programs, and further increases in military expenditure. In view of the weak regional security architecture, maritime incidents also give rise to potential for conflict.

Middle and South America

Most countries in Middle America show quite a low level of militarization. Yet even in this region, this is not necessarily a clear sign for a stable and friendly situation. **Mexico**, for instance, which is tormented by drug wars, is at position 126 of the GMI 2012. This can be explained by the fact that in most part, it is not the military but the police who intervene in the armed internal conflicts; their expenditure is only marginally taken up in the calculations for the GMI.

In South America, levels of militarization are rather constant, some of which are quite high. **Chile** (ranked 34) and **Ecuador** (ranked 36) as well as **Peru** (ranked 48) and **Colombia** (ranked 49) are countries with the highest levels of militarization in the region. Possible causes for this could be unsolved territorial conflicts or the internal conflict in Colombia. While **Brazil** shows quite moderate levels of militarization (ranked 76), its absolute military expenditures in 2010 of around US \$28 billion were much higher than those of all other Latin American states and have been growing in recent years. Here again, the question poses itself whether there are tendencies towards a regional arms race led by Brazil.

Jan Grebe