

GLOBAL MILITARIZATION INDEX 2018

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SUMMARY

Compiled by BICC, the Global Militarization Index (GMI) presents on an annual basis the relative weight and importance of a country's military apparatus in relation to its society as a whole. The GMI 2018 covers 155 countries and is based on the latest available figures (in most cases data for 2017). The index project is financially supported by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Israel, Singapore, Armenia, Cyprus, South Korea, Russia, Greece, Jordan, Brunei and Belarus are the top 10 worldwide. These countries allocate particularly high levels of resources to the military in comparison to other areas of society.

The GMI 2018 has a regional focus on Europe. The pressure exercised by the United States on European NATO countries to increase their military budgets has resulted in the fact that nearly all European member states have spent more on the military than in the previous year. The number of military personnel and major weapons systems has also increased in many European countries. While Russia, again, is one of the most militarized countries worldwide, it drastically reduced its military spending in 2017 compared to the previous year.

Despite dwindling revenues from the oil trade, militarization in the Middle East remains, by international standards, at a very high level. All countries in the region, with the exception of Iraq (position 41), can be found among the 30 most heavily militarized countries in the world. Algeria (position 15) and Morocco (position 24) are among the heavily militarized countries in North Africa. But most African countries, particularly those of Sub-Saharan Africa, can be found in the bottom part of the ranking.

This year's GMI also examines the connection between particularly high or low militarization and the political system of the respective countries. In doing so, it refers to the data from the Freedom House Index and the Polity IV Project of the Center for Systemic Peace. A quite ambiguous picture can be found: It is true that there are significantly more Not Free countries and autocracies among the countries with particularly high militarization levels than among those with particularly low levels. But, conversely, a low level of militarization, does not automatically go along with a high level of freedom of political system but often points to weak state structures and, thus, less control by the state.

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THE METHODOLOGY OF 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 contrast between the total number of (para)military forces and the number of physicians and the overall population;
- \ the ratio of the number of heavy weapons systems available and the number of the overall population.

The GMI is based on 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 levels of militarization of more than 150 states since 1990. BICC provides yearly updates. As soon as new data is available, BICC corrects the GMI values retroactively for previous years (corrected data on gmi.bicc.de). This may have the effect that current ranks may differ in comparison to previous GMI publications.

In order to increase the compatibility between different indicators and to prevent extreme values from creating distortions when normalizing data, in a first step every indicator has been represented in a logarithm with the factor 10. second, all data have been normalized using the formula $x=(y-\min)/(\max-\min)$, with min and max representing, respectively, the lowest and the highest value of the logarithm. In a third step, every indicator has been weighted in accordance to a subjective factor, reflecting the relative importance attributed to it by BICC researchers (see Graph below). In order to calculate the final score, the weighted indicators have been added up and then normalized one last time on a scale ranging from 0 to 1,000. For better comparison of individual years, all years have finally been normalized.

The GMI conducts a detailed analysis of specific regional or national developments. By doing so, BICC wants to contribute to the debate on militarization and point to the often contradictory distribution of resources.

GMI indicators and weighing factors

Category / Indicator	Factor
 Expenditures Military expenditures as percentage of GDP 5 Military expenditures in relation to health spending 3	
 Personnel Military and paramilitary personnel in relation to population. ¹ 4 Military reserves in relation to population 2 Military and paramilitary personnel in relation to physicians 2	
 Weapons Heavy weapons in relation to population 4	



Expenditures

Military expenditures as percentage of GDP **5**

Military expenditures in relation to health spending **3**



Personnel

Military and paramilitary personnel in relation to population.¹ **4**

Military reserves in relation to population **2**

Military and paramilitary personnel in relation to physicians **2**



Weapons

Heavy weapons in relation to population **4**

1 \ The main criterion for coding an organizational entity as either military or paramilitary is that the forces in question are under the direct control of the government in addition to being armed, uniformed and garrisoned.




BICC GMI 2018

Militarization is a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, regional and internal conflicts drive global militarization. On the other, the resources available to the entire society also play a role when states make decisions on how much money to invest in their national military. The Global Militarization Index (GMI) shows the results of these decisions by determining the relative weight of a state's military apparatus in relation to society as a whole. In doing so, the GMI deliberately differentiates itself from the normative assumption that the allocation of a large amount of resources for the benefit of the military sector also represents an over-emphasis on the military—producing negative effects for international security and the overall societal development of the country in question.

This year's GMI looks at global militarization and identifies regional trends. It also takes a more detailed look at the significance of a political system for the militarization of a country by investigating the individual political systems of countries that have particularly high or low levels of militarization. Comparing the BICC GMI with data from the Freedom House Index and the Polity IV Project at the Center for Systemic Peace, we find significantly more autocracies and Not Free countries among the particularly heavily militarized countries than among those that have an especially low level of militarization. This could be because the military in authoritarian states often tend to occupy a position of strength, which in turn leads to the fact that a relatively high level of society's resources flows into the military sector. However, this does not mean that a lower degree of militarization is automatically accompanied by a high degree of freedom in the political system. On the contrary, at the lower end of the GMI rankings, we find a number of countries in which the governmental structures tend to be weak, making the state apparatus incapable of demonstrating strength.

In the following, the GMI 2018 presents and analyzes selected trends in militarization. Most of the data used relates to the year 2017.

Table 1
Top 10

Country				GMI Score	Rank
Israel	6.5	6.2	3.5	911.0	1
Singapore	6.5	6.1	3.2	885.7	2
Armenia	6.4	6.1	2.9	860.1	3
Cyprus	6.2	5.9	3.2	849.7	4
Korea, Republic	6.3	5.9	2.9	838.5	5
Russia	6.5	5.3	3.2	838.5	6
Greece	6.2	5.5	3.2	833.2	7
Jordan	6.6	5.4	3.0	833.0	8
Brunei	6.5	5.6	2.7	820.7	9
Belarus	6.0	5.8	3.0	819.1	10

The Top 10

The ten countries that have the highest levels of militarization for the year 2017 are Israel, Singapore, Armenia, Cyprus, South Korea, Russia, Greece, Jordan, Brunei and Belarus. These countries allocate particularly high levels of resources to the military in comparison to other areas of society. The same countries occupy the top positions in the GMI ranking as last year with one exception: Kuwait is in position 11, while Belarus now occupies position 10. Russia is now in position 6 of the global GMI ranking (position 4 previous year). This is due in particular to the reduction in its military spending ([\> page 7](#)).

For some other countries, however, we have no reliable data with which we could analyze the distribution of resources between the military and society as a whole. Yet, based on previous surveys, it must be assumed that some countries—in particular Syria, North Korea and Eritrea—have a very high level of militarization.

With the exception of Russia, which spent US \$66 billion on its military in 2017, placing it in position 4 globally (behind the United States, China and Saudi Arabia), those states that invest the most in their military—measured in absolute figures—are

Focus on regional militarization




not among the top-ranked countries of the GMI.¹ Thus, the United States only occupies position 34 of the BICC GMI, despite military spending of almost US \$610 billion (35 per cent of a global 1,739 billion). Even with a military spend of US \$228 billion, China only comes 95th in the GMI. The reason is that if this expenditure is set against the individual gross domestic product (GDP) figures, the United States comes in at 3.1 per cent, China at 1.9 per cent. A similar situation arises with regard to the GMI's other sub-indicators. The very high figures for these two countries, which have the two largest military apparatuses in the world, become relative when viewed in comparison to macrosocial financial and personnel resources.

The figure of US \$610 billion mentioned above means that military spending in the United States in 2017 barely changed compared to 2016, after it had previously dropped continuously since 2010. For 2018, an increase to slightly below US \$700 billion has been earmarked in the US budget. This will likely mean a significant increase in the level of militarization for the United States in the near future.

Europe

In the course of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the violent conflict in eastern Ukraine, relations between NATO and Russia have deteriorated severely. This can also be seen in the alternating demonstrations of military strength during large military exercises in 2018. As a result of this growing mistrust, we can see clear tendencies towards an arms build-up in both eastern and western Europe. In 25 of the 28 EU member states, there was an increase in militarization. While this had also been the case for Russia in previous years, its level of militarization fell in 2017 following a significant reduction in military spending.

Table 2
The 10 most heavily militarized countries in Europe

Country				GMI Score	Rank
Armenia	6.4	6.1	2.9	860.1	3
Cyprus	6.2	5.9	3.2	849.7	4
Russia	6.5	5.3	3.2	838.5	6
Greece	6.2	5.5	3.2	833.2	7
Belarus	6.0	5.8	3.0	819.1	10
Azerbaijan	6.5	5.5	2.8	815.7	12
Ukraine	6.4	5.2	2.6	785.1	14
Finland	6.0	5.2	2.9	773.8	18
Turkey	6.3	5.0	2.7	766.1	20
Estonia	6.2	4.9	2.8	758.1	25

NATO- and EU countries

In 2014, the heads of state and governments of the NATO countries agreed that each member state would aim to spend at least two per cent of its gross domestic product on the military by 2024. In the meantime, the pressure brought to bear by the United States on European NATO states to increase their military budgets appears to have had its first effects. Almost all European member states invested more in the military than in the previous year. The only exceptions were Austria (position 70), Belgium

1 \ Unless otherwise stated, all details on military spending given in this publication come from the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

(position 90), France (position 59) and Greece (position 7) whose military spending largely stagnated in 2017.

In Great Britain and Italy, for example, military spending grew by more than US \$200 million; in Spain even by 1.7 US \$14 billion (2016 to 2017). With an additional investment of US \$1.4 billion, the military budget in Germany (position 100) for 2017 was US \$43 billion. However, the share of gross domestic product (GDP) largely stagnated in these countries and remained at the level of the previous year. By contrast, the proportion of GDP spent on the military in Romania (position 29) rose significantly—compared to other European countries—by 0.6 per cent of its GDP. Military spending there rose by about 50 per cent (from US \$2.6 billion to US \$4 billion), which is also the largest relative increase worldwide. This is due in particular to the start of the 2017 to 2026 military procurement and modernization programme.

The number of military personnel and major conventional weapons has increased considerably in many EU countries. This especially applies to heavy weapons systems, such as tanks and armoured personnel carriers. The numerical strength of the armed forces was expanded in the eastern NATO countries in particular. Thus, the total strength of the armed forces in Lithuania (position 32) grew from approx. 17,000 to over 18,300 soldiers; Estonia (position 25) increased its air force by 200 soldiers. Poland (position 64) enlarged the army, which is an important military branch for securing its eastern land border, by 13,000 soldiers, and the air force by a further 2,000 soldiers.

Turkey (position 20) also invested a comparatively high level of resources in the military in 2017. Turkish military spending rose from US \$17.9 (2016) to US \$19.6 billion, which is most likely due to military operations against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and its affiliated groups in Syria, Iraq, and in Turkey itself. However, increased tensions between the two NATO countries, Turkey and Greece, must also be taken into account here. Greece is investing 2.5 per cent of GDP in the defence sector despite persistent economic difficulties; this is more than all the other NATO states, after the United States. Both Turkey and Greece have asserted claims to islands in

the eastern Aegean Sea. The border demarcation is unclear, and mutual verbal and military provocations frequently occur in the area. The fact that former members of the Turkish Armed Forces, who had fled to Greece following the failed coup in July 2016, are not being extradited to Turkey is aggravating the tensions. Both countries expanded an already larger number of heavy weapons systems. Thus, Greece's armaments currently include more than 1,340 battle tanks; Turkey has almost 4,500 of these weapons systems. (For comparison: The German military currently has around 240 battle tanks.)

The natural gas deposits discovered in the Greek-ruled southern part of Cyprus are another potential area of conflict. Turkey has also asserted a territorial claim to large areas of the sea and demands a share in the profits for the Turkish-populated north. More and more frequently, Turkish battleships have blocked the extraction company's exploratory expeditions. Subsequently, Cyprus (position 4), Europe's second most militarized country, expanded its national guard, which also has a further 50,000 reservists available, by 3,000 soldiers and increased its military spending by 0.3 per cent. It must be noted, however, that the true potential for escalation between Turkey and Greece is quite low. In fact, the conflict situation points to the mutual protracted threat perceptions, which also fulfil certain domestic political roles.

Eastern Europe

Since 2001, Russia has landed continuously in the GMI's global Top 10, and in 2018 was ranked sixth. A key factor for this is, besides the relatively high number of military personnel, the very high number of heavy weapons systems. Despite active participation in the combat operations in Syria and Donbass, the level of militarization in Russia decreased somewhat compared with the previous year (position 4). The difficult economic situation, which is primarily due to low commodity prices and Western sanctions, has had a marked impact on Russian military spending for the first time. Expenditure was reduced from around US \$69.2 (2016) to US \$55.3 billion. If we look

at military spending as a proportion of GDP, we can see a reduction from 5.5 per cent (2016) to 4.4 per cent (2017). In addition, the number of paramilitary personnel decreased significantly. In Belarus (position 10), too, which has held one of the top spots among European countries for several years, a slight decrease in militarization is visible (2016: position 9). Military spending fell slightly, and the army and air force were each downsized by several thousand soldiers.

The considerable increase in Ukrainian military spending since 2014 and the resulting high number of newly initiated procurement measures (e. g. modern battle tanks and armoured personnel carriers) have started having an impact on the military equipment of the armed forces. This is a continuation of the trend towards an increasing militarization of Ukraine (position 14) since 2014.

Despite a ceasefire having been negotiated following the bloody escalation of violence in April 2016, there have been exchanges of fire and one Azerbaijani drone attack in the Caucasus region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the past two years. As a result of the ongoing tension in this area, Armenia (position 3) and Azerbaijan (position 12) continued to invest an excessive amount of resources in their armed forces.

Middle East

Despite dwindling revenues from the oil trade, militarization in the Middle East remains, by international standards, at a very high level. All countries in the region, except Iraq (position 41), can be found among the 30 most heavily militarized countries in the world. Political and religious rivalries, as well as several high-intensity armed conflicts (among others in Yemen, Iraq, and Syria) led to a regional increase in military spending of 6.2 per cent in total; on average, the share of GDP was 5.2 per cent.²

Table 3

The 10 most heavily militarized countries in the Middle East

Country	\$	👤	🚁	GMI Score	Rank
Israel	6.5	6.2	3.5	911.0	1
Jordan	6.6	5.4	3.0	833.0	8
Kuwait	6.7	5.0	3.1	818.0	11
Bahrain	6.5	4.5	3.1	780.1	17
Oman	7.0	4.3	2.7	766.6	19
Saudi Arabia	6.9	4.2	2.8	765.8	21
Iran	6.4	5.1	2.5	763.7	22
Lebanon	6.5	4.4	3.0	762.1	23
UAE	6.7	4.0	3.1	755.3	26
Egypt	6.1	5.1	2.6	753.6	28

Following a reduction in military spending in Saudi Arabia (position 21) in 2016 in the wake of falling oil prices, it rose again last year by 9.2 per cent, which constitutes 10.3 per cent of GDP (2016: 9.9 per cent). At US \$69.4 billion, the Gulf Kingdom lies in third place, behind the United States and China, for military spending globally. Saudi Arabia, which has the best-equipped military in the region after Israel, also increased the number of its armoured personnel carriers to over 5,000 and imported eight new Apache combat helicopters, seven Eurofighter Typhoons and 20 F-15SA fighter jets. Significant growth in military expenditure for 2017 can also be observed in Iran (position 22) and Iraq (Iran: 19 per cent; Iraq: 22 per cent). In the case of Iran, this increase is presumably also related to an improvement of the economic situation, triggered by the suspension of international sanctions in the wake of the nuclear agreement signed in 2016.

There is currently no reliable data for some countries in the region, which means they cannot be included in the rankings. This includes the Republic of Yemen, Qatar, and Syria. In previous surveys, however, the latter was among the most heavily militarized states and was always found between the second and fourth position of the GMI.

Israel remains the most heavily militarized country in the world. With a comparatively small population of 8.3 million, the country maintains a military with around 176,500 soldiers and a further

2 \ Tian, N. et al. (2018, May). Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2017. *SIPRI Fact Sheet*. Stockholm: SIPRI.

465,000 reservists. It also has more than 9,300 modern major weapons systems (including 1,600 heavy battle tanks) at its disposal. This massive investment in the military is due to the ongoing strained security situation in Israel. In light of its geographical closeness to and active participation in the Syrian civil war in the north of the country (especially through air and artillery strikes), attacks by the Tehran-supported Shiite Hezbollah militia from Lebanon, and reciprocal attacks between the Palestinian Hamas and the Israeli army, the Israeli state relies on a strong and operational military.

As a result of high revenues from the export of fossil fuels, many countries in the Middle East have vast financial resources to maintain high levels of personnel in the long-term and to import modern weapons systems. The UAE (position 26), for instance, increased the number of armoured personnel carriers by 30 US-American MaxxPros and more than 450 Caimans from the British company, BAE. To rebuild its air force, Iraq increased the number of fighter jets from 29 to 60. In 2019, an additional 13 F-16s are to be imported from the United States.

Other oil-exporting countries, however, are no longer in a position to compensate for the drop in revenues recorded in the wake of the fall in oil prices which began in 2014. In countries such as Oman (position 19) and Bahrain (position 17), military spending declined significantly.

Many countries in the region are intensifying the search for new fossil fuel deposits. In 2018, Bahrain discovered the biggest oil field in more than 80 years. Such discoveries, which are often made in unsolved economic zones located off-shore, provide additional fuel for territorial conflicts. For example, the most recent discovery of important off-shore gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean is heating up the border dispute between Israel and Lebanon. Israel claims the new hydrocarbon deposits while Beirut, with support from Tehran, is protesting against these steps. The Lebanese Hezbollah is also threatening to attack Israeli ships and facilities participating in the offshore exploitation. Arising from economic pressures, these geopolitical conflicts over new oil and gas deposits could further intensify the high level of militarization in the Middle East in future.

Africa




All in all, the level of militarization in African countries is fairly low. More than half of the 30 least militarized countries are located in Sub-Saharan Africa. These 17 countries also include Swaziland (position 153), Gambia (position 148), Lesotho (position 135) and, interestingly, Nigeria (position 137), whose armed forces participate in both regional and international peace missions as well as being deployed domestically to fight rebels in the Niger Delta and Boko Haram in the north. In absolute figures, the Nigerian military—with 118,000 active soldiers—is one of the largest armed forces on the African continent. In addition, there are 82,000 paramilitaries. However, when viewed relatively to the overall population, these numbers can be put into perspective: With over 190 million inhabitants, the most populated country in Africa has only 0.6 soldiers per resident. At 0.4 per cent of GDP, military spending is also at a low level. There are some countries that do have a relatively high degree of militarization, such as Botswana (position 44), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (position 47), Namibia (position 48) or Angola (position 49).

In North African countries, the level of militarization is substantially higher. Only Tunisia (position 82) is located in the mid-range of the GMI ranking.³ Algeria (position 15) is the most heavily militarized country in Africa. With 130,000 active soldiers, it has a well-staffed army and, in addition, a very high number of paramilitary militias. It also spends a comparatively high portion of its GDP on the military (5.7 per cent in 2017). The high military spending reflects the strong position of the military in Algerian society. The armed forces play an important role in Algerian politics, and many former military players occupy top political and economic positions. This is not least a result of the civil war in the 1990s from which the Algerian military emerged stronger and in 1999 was able to achieve success for Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika, its preferred candidate (and

3 \ There is no reliable data for Libya. Egypt (position 28) is also heavily militarized, however is counted among the Middle East group of countries.

Militarization and political system

Table 4
The 10 most heavily militarized countries in Africa

Country				GMI Score	Rank
Algeria	6.6	5.1	2.6	784.9	15
Morocco	6.4	5.2	2.3	761.5	24
Botswana	6.4	4.0	2.6	703.5	44
Mauritania	6.5	4.3	2.1	700.1	46
Congo, Republic of	6.8	3.9	2.2	693.0	47
Namibia	6.4	4.3	2.2	690.2	48
Angola	6.4	4.2	2.3	689.0	49
Sudan	6.4	3.9	2.3	673.7	60
Gabon	6.3	4.0	2.2	672.8	61
Guinea-Bissau	6.1	4.1	2.3	666.4	66

the incumbent at the time) for the office of president. As Algeria has only a relatively small national arms industry, the country has been among the biggest arms importers of the last few years.⁴ In Morocco (position 24), military spending as a share of GDP is, at 3.2 per cent, indeed significantly lower than the corresponding figure for its neighbour, Algeria. Nonetheless, Morocco is Africa's second most militarized country. This is, in particular, due to the relatively high number of 195,800 active soldiers, which can be attributed to the decades-long territorial disputes with the Polisario Liberation Front in Western Sahara. The relationship with Algeria is strained, and arms procurements in both states fuel tensions. For some years, now Morocco has been striving to modernize the partially outdated equipment of its armed forces to counteract the clear military superiority of the Algerian armed forces.

There are different possibilities for classifying political systems. Among the most common is the distinction between Free and Not Free political systems, and between democracies and autocracies. Freedom House, an international non-governmental organization located in Washington, DC, which aims to promote freedom and democracy, differentiates between "Free", "Partly Free" and "Not Free" countries. Countries are rated on a scale from one to seven with respect to political rights and citizens' freedoms, with one being the highest level of freedom and seven the lowest. Countries with a score of 1.0 to 2.5 are categorized as Free, countries with a score of 3.0 to 5.0 as Partly Free and countries with a score between 5.5 and 7.0 as Not Free. In its most recent report, Freedom House evaluated 195 countries. Of those, 88 (45 per cent) were identified as Free, 58 (30 per cent) as Partly Free, and 49 (25 per cent) as Not Free.⁵

The Polity IV Project at the Center for Systemic Peace examines political systems with regard to democratic and autocratic tendencies. The scale ranges from -10 to +10 and distinguishes between autocracies (-10 to -6), anocracies (-5 to +5) and democracies (+6 to +10). An "anocracy" is an intermediate form, an incoherent political system of sorts that demonstrates both democratic and autocratic features. In these cases, the state frequently has only minimal functions, and political competition is weakly institutionalized. The current Polity IV dataset assesses 166 countries for 2017; of which 96 are classified as democracies, 49 as anocracies and 21 as autocracies.⁶

A comparison of the figures from the GMI 2018 and the figures from Freedom House paints the following picture: Among the 30 most heavily militarized countries, 14 are assessed as Not Free. Seven are deemed to be Partly Free and nine to be Free. The average score for these 30 countries is 4.3 on the Freedom House scale. Interestingly, the corresponding figures for the 30 least militarized countries differ considerably. Here, the average score is 3.0 and only two countries are categorized as Not Free: Tajikistan (GMI position 126) and Swaziland (GMI position 153). On the other hand, twelve of these countries are classified as Free, and 16 as Partly Free. Hence, in the

4 \ According to the SIPRI Arms Transfer Database Algeria took 7th place among global importers of weapons between 2013 and 2017.

5 \ Freedom House (2018), Freedom in the World 2018, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2018_Final_SinglePage.pdf.

6 \ Center for Systemic Peace (2018), Polity IV Annual Time-Series, 1800 - 2017, The Polity Project, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

uppermost range of the GMI, we find substantially more Not Free countries than in the lowest range, which is dominated by political systems classified as Partly Free.

A look at the data of the Polity IV Project leads to a very similar conclusion. Accordingly, there are ten democracies, nine anocracies and ten autocracies among the 30 most highly militarized countries. Here, we see a relatively even distribution of the three categories. Conversely, among the 30 least militarized countries, we find 18 democracies, seven anocracies and only one autocracy (Swaziland, GMI position 153). It is also interesting to take a look at the respective average of the Polity IV assessments: For the group of the 30 most heavily militarized countries it is only 0.3 and is therefore clearly in the spectrum for an anocracy, whereas for the group of the 30 least militarized countries it is 6.2 and thus only just in the lower range for a democracy.

Thus, among the most heavily militarized countries, we find on average more Not Free and autocratic political systems than for the least militarized countries. How can this finding be interpreted? One possible explanation is that the autocratic elites in Not Free countries often rely on a strong military to secure their power. This would explain why there are so many authoritarian states in countries that have a particularly high level of militarization, such as Belarus, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Oman and Saudi Arabia. At the very least these figures suggest that the military in more authoritarian states tends to occupy a powerful position and that, accordingly, relatively large amounts of societal resources flow into the military sector—to finance military spending, military personnel or armaments⁷.

However, we must exercise caution here. A military that is too strong can also be dangerous for autocratic rulers, as a long history of military coups—particularly on the African continent after the end of colonial rule—shows. This could explain why Freedom House classifies so many of the countries with a low level of militarization as Partly Free, and why the Polity IV Project categorizes so many of them as either anocracies or on the lower end of the democratic spectrum (countries such as Mozambique, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Liberia and

Table 5
The 30 most heavily militarized countries

Freedom House		Polity IV*	
Free	9	Democracy	10
Partly Free	7	Anocracy	9
Not Free	14	Autocracy	10

* not all countries recorded

Haiti). In such countries, state structures tend to be weaker—this factor alone diminishes their ability to act in a particularly repressive way. It follows that the creation of security in those countries is understood to be more of a private asset than a public one. It can, therefore, be assumed that societal resources are invested in private security firms or militias rather than in the official armed forces. In contrast to strong states in which the military is also strongly institutionalized and closely tied to or supporting the autocratic system, the ruling elites of these countries here must fear armed forces that are too autonomous, and thus too strong.

Table 6
The 30 least militarized countries

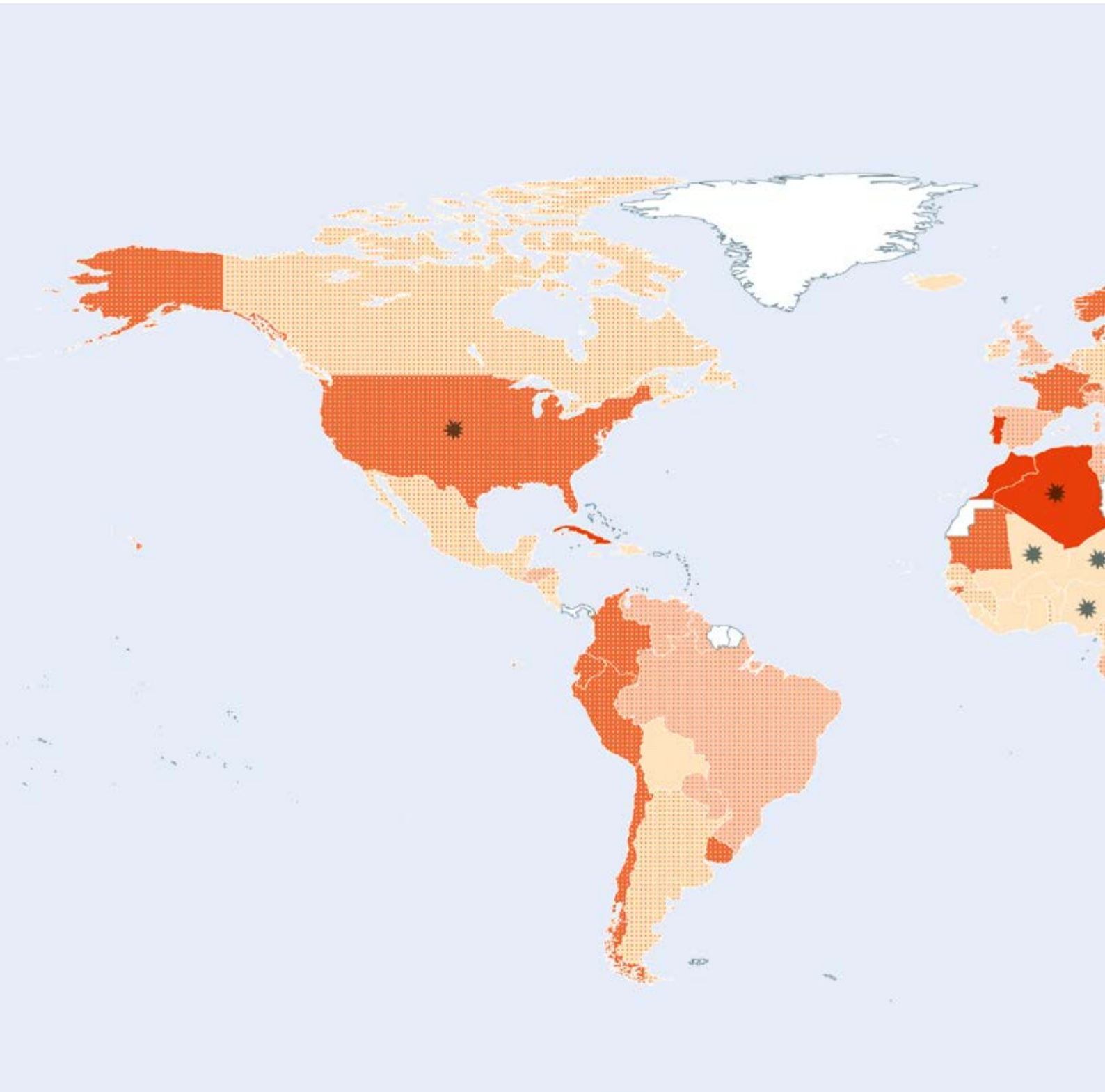
Freedom House		Polity IV*	
Free	12	Democracy	18
Partly Free	16	Anocracy	7
Not Free	2	Autocracy	1

* not all countries recorded

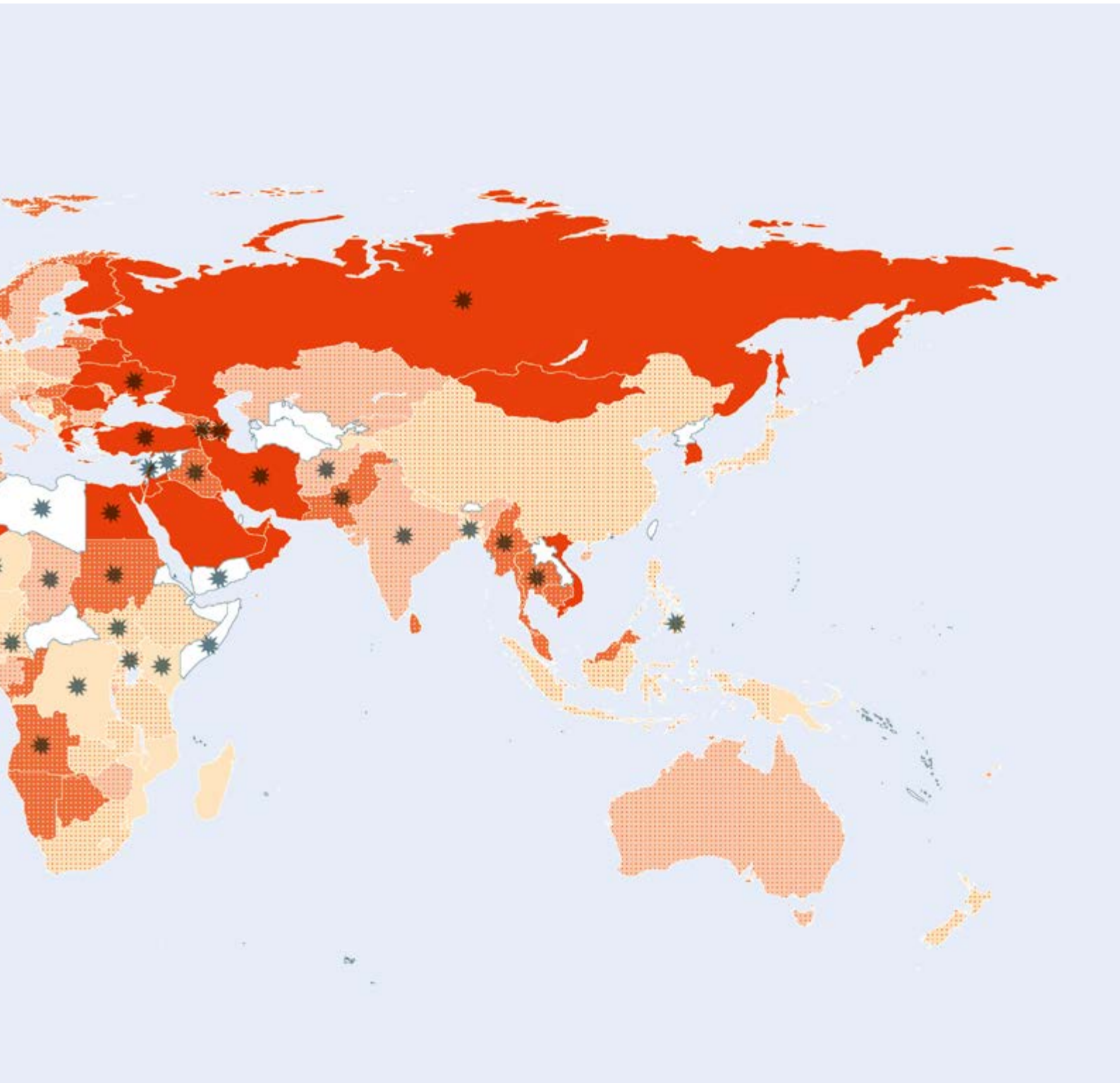
7 \ Cf. Grawert, E., & Abul-Magd, Z. (Eds.). (2016). *Businessmen in Arms: How the Military and Other Armed Groups Profit in the MENA Region*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

The depiction and use of boundaries or frontiers and geographic names on this map do not necessarily imply official endorsement or acceptance by BICC.

Map 1
Overview GMI-ranking worldwide



Source conflict data: *UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset* Sources of administrative boundaries: *Natural Earth Dataset*



Rank 1-30 Rank 31-60 Rank 61-90 Rank 91-120 Rank > 120
no data available Participation as a main actor in armed conflicts

MILITARIZATION INDEX RANKING

Rank	Country						
1	Israel	45	Peru	90	Belgium	135	Lesotho
2	Singapore	46	Mauritania	91	Nepal	136	Mauritius
3	Armenia	47	Congo, Republic of	92	Canada	137	Nigeria
4	Cyprus	48	Namibia	93	Slovakia	138	Malawi
5	Korea, Republic	49	Angola	94	Indonesia	139	Seychelles
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