

UPDATE: 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 degree 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 available and the number of the overall population.¹

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 degrees of militarization of 153 states since 1990. BICC provides yearly updates.

This update of the GMI 2012² is based on data from the year 2011 (i.e. the most recent year for which data has been available) and comprises 135 states³. BICC's GMI is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Global Militarization: Top Ten

In 2011, Israel, Singapore, Syria, Russia, Jordan, Cyprus, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Saudi-Arabia were amongst the top ten of the GMI⁴. Six of these ten states are situated in the Middle East. No country in the top ten is in Africa or Latin America.

Compared to the year before (2010), some changes have occurred amongst the top ten. South Korea and Greece left, while Bahrain joined the top ten. Azerbaijan, too, entered the top ranks again due to major arms imports and an increase in military spending.

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.

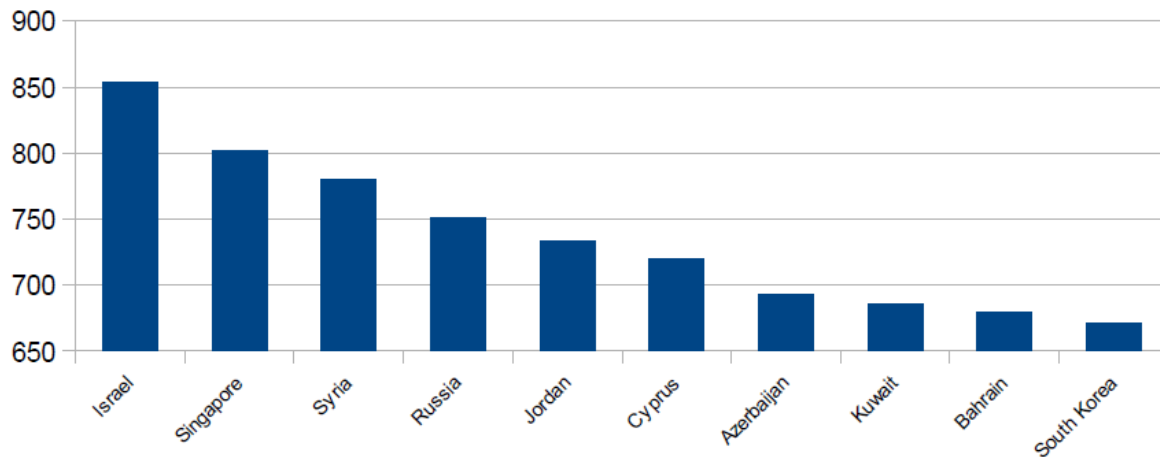
² The GMI 2012, published in January 2012, was based on data from the year 2010. As new data is available it has been updated.

³ The GMI 2012 has been recalculated for all previous years, which results in changes if compared to calculations of previous years.

⁴ 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 degree of militarization impossible.

Global Militarization Index 2012 update

Top 10



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

Regional Militarization

Middle East

Six of the top ten countries in the GMI can be found in the Middle East: Israel (position 1), Syria (position 3), Jordan (position 5), Kuwait (position 8), Bahrain (position 9) and Saudi Arabia (position 10). Amongst the first twenty states of the GMI, Oman (position 11), the United Arab Emirates (position 14) and the Lebanon (position 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 34—is the fact that all countries in the Middle East are amongst the 40 highest positions in the GMI.⁵ Against the background of political uprisings, the continuing unrest and political conflicts in some states, the inherent danger of high degrees 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. Extensive arms procurements increase the flow of weapons in the region and fuel the level of militarization.

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 (position 30), Russia (position 4) continues to show a higher level of militarization in 2011 even though the absolute military budget of the United States is markedly higher and, with US \$689 billion, is still number one in the world. The high militarization level of Cyprus (position 6) and the greatly indebted Greece (position 14) stands out while the degree of militarization of its direct neighbor Turkey (position 24) is constantly lower. Germany is in position 86 in year 2011—possibly a first effect of the austerity measures taken by the government that intends to cut the budget of the Bundeswehr by up to euro 8.3 billion by 2015. The reduction of defense procurement and budgetary constraints in all of

⁵ Exception: Qatar (position 43)

Western Europe will have a likely impact on militarization in the future, yet it is still too early to speak of a general downward trend.

In Eastern Europe, apart from Russia (position 4) and Azerbaijan (position 8), Belarus (position 16) continues to show a high degree of militarization. The worrying arms race between the two Caucasian neighbors caused Azerbaijan to rise up into the top ten militarized countries and Armenia to arrive at position 23. In view of this increase in military capacities on both sides, a heated diplomatic rhetoric, and the danger of the long-lasting and violent conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh flaring up again it is time to reinforce prevention measures and to push for disarmament talks.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa generally shows low degrees of militarization. Exceptions are Angola (position 30), Mauretania (position 39) and Djibouti (position 42). 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, 32 countries show low degrees of militarization, for example the Central African Republic (position 93), Mali (position 110) and Nigeria (position 117). The Failed State Index⁶ evaluates the highly volatile situation in the Central African Republic and in Nigeria as critical. Mali, in particular, is an example for the fact that an insufficiently equipped security apparatus can often not guarantee security within and outside of the country. The state security apparatus can neither rein in the activities of the rebel group of the Tuareg nor restore public order and internal security in those areas where the rebel group operates—let alone to prevent the spread of global terrorism.

These circumstances point to the paradox that some state security apparatuses are incapable of preventing violence and conflicts precisely because the country concerned shows a low degree of militarization.

Asia and Oceania

One of the countries with the highest levels of militarization in 2011 can, again, be found in Southeast Asia and East Asia: Singapore (position 2). South Korea (position 18) has a markedly lower degree of militarization as in the past years due to changes in its military reserve. Due to the lack of reliable data no position could be determined for North Korea; however, one can safely assume that it shows the highest degree of militarization of all countries in the world.

All in all, the region shows great variations in the degree of militarization: China (position 82) and India (position 71) are characterized by an average degree of militarization. Australia (position 75) has been showing a moderate degree of militarization for years. Japan's degree of militarization (position 112), however, is comparatively low due to the fact that its constitution decrees that its military spending must be limited to one percent of its Gross Domestic Product. Nevertheless, Japan has modern and well-equipped armed forces.

In absolute terms, China's military expenditures amount to US \$129 billion—and have been increasing for years. Presently, they are the second highest in the world after the United States. The reaction of many countries in the region to Beijing's armament efforts may have an effect on the degree of militarization in some countries. It remains to be seen how militarization in the region will develop against the backdrop of numerous unsolved territorial

⁶ <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=fs>

conflicts, comprehensive defense procurement programs, and further increases in military expenditure. Maritime incidents also give rise to potential for conflict as the disputes at the Scarborough-Reef (China / Philippines) and the Senkaku/ Diaoyu-Islands (Japan / China) have shown in 2012. A weak regional security architecture is unlikely to contain such conflicts.

Middle and South America

The degree of militarization is quite low in most countries in Middle America. 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 123 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, degrees of militarization are rather constant, some of which are quite high. Chile (position 31), Ecuador (position 36) and Colombia (position 38) as well as Peru (position 48) are the countries with the highest degrees 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 degrees of militarization (position 76), its constantly expanding military expenditures in 2011 of around US \$31 billion were much higher than those of all other Latin American states. Here again, the question poses itself whether there are tendencies towards a regional arms race which Brazil is leading.

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