

PRESS RELEASE  
4 December 2017

## Global Militarization Index 2017 \ Regional trends, militarization and corruption

More information:

SUSANNE HEINKE

Head of Public Relations

Leiterin Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit

+49 228 911 96-44, Fax -22

[pr@bicc.de](mailto:pr@bicc.de)

[twitter.com/BICC\\_Bonn](https://twitter.com/BICC_Bonn)

The link between the drop in oil prices and the degree of militarization in 2017 is clearly visible in Central and South America in particular as well as in the Middle East. The [Global Militarization Index \(GMI\) 2017](#) not only examines these and other regional trends but also compares its data for the first time with the Transparency International Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index.

The top ten countries of the Global Militarization Index (GMI) 2017 are **Israel, Singapore, Armenia, Russia, South Korea, Kuwait, Jordan, Cyprus, Greece and Brunei**. These countries allocate particularly high levels of resources to the armed forces in comparison to other areas of society. Even though Israel spends markedly less in absolute figures on its military (just under US \$18 billion) than, for instance, Russia (US \$69.2 billion) or South Korea (US \$36.8 billion), it can be found again on position one of the GMI. With the ratio of heavy weapons to the total population, it is leading the field. **"The Israeli system of compulsory military service, too, results in a very high number of military personnel compared to the total population. And this clearly reflected in the GMI"**, author **Max M. Mutschler** illustrates.

### The Americas

At more than US \$611 billion, the United States spent by far the most money for its military in 2016. For the first time since 2009, the United States' military spending rose again. It is the second-highest militarized country of the region at position 31 after Cuba (position 27). Even though the Trump administration has not yet presented a national security strategy, it has already made clear that it is aiming to strengthen the military and wants to significantly increase funds for the Pentagon. **"If comparative figures (such as GDP or total population) do not rise equally as much as the planned military expenditure, this will markedly increase the US' militarization in the coming years"**, is **Max Mutschler's** forecast.

While the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, except Cuba, show a relatively low level of militarization, the South American states can be found more in the upper mid-range. In contrast to the United States, military spending between 2015 and 2016 fell in South America (by 7.7 per cent) as well as in Central America and the Caribbean (by 9.1 per cent). The drop in oil prices in particular curtailed the respective budgets

available of Venezuela (position 100), Ecuador (position 58), Peru (position 46) and Mexico (position 123)—all oil exporting countries.

### Middle East

Except Iraq, all countries in the region can be found in the top 30 most militarized countries. **"The Gulf States above all profited from the export of fossil fuels and were, therefore, able to spend a lot on the military. The drop in the oil price since 2014 has changed this—at least in part", Max Mutschler** comments. In Saudi Arabia, military spending fell between 2015 and 2016 by 30 per cent after having risen since 2002. **"With military spending of US \$63.7 billion, which corresponds to 10.4 per cent of GDP, Saudi Arabia still has the highest military expenditure in the region. Globally, it is in fourth place, behind the United States, China and Russia", Mutschler** concedes. While military spending in Iraq, Bahrain, Egypt and Oman decreased slightly, it rose by 16 per cent in Kuwait and by 17 per cent in Iran, whose economic situation improved following the lifting of international sanctions.

### Militarization and corruption

This year's GMI also positions the degree of militarization relative to Transparency International's [Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index \(GI\)](#). The defence sector is particularly opaque and vulnerable. **"Corrupt elites negotiate arms deals which, even though they frequently make little sense from a military point of view, help to make them rich", Max Mutschler** assesses. On the one hand, countries, such as Kuwait (position 6), Jordan (position 7), Azerbaijan (position 11), Oman (position 13), Algeria (position 14), Bahrain (position 15) or Saudi Arabia (position 17) can be found right up on the GMI while on the other hand, the GI names them as countries with a particularly high risk of corruption.

Having compared these two indices, however, it becomes clear that corruption is by no means limited to highly militarized countries but can also be witnessed in many states that have a comparatively low degree of militarization pointing to deficits in the security sector and weak state institutions. **"The Democratic Republic of the Congo (position 118 of the GMI), Cameroon (position 120), Equatorial Guinea (position 129), Burkina Faso (position 132), Sierra Leone (position 140), Malawi (Position 146), Gambia (position 149) or Liberia (position 150) are countries that show a critical GI-ranking and a low GMI-value at the same time", Max M. Mutschler** points out.