

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 population¹.

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 161 states since 1990. BICC provides yearly updates.

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 states². BICC's GMI is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

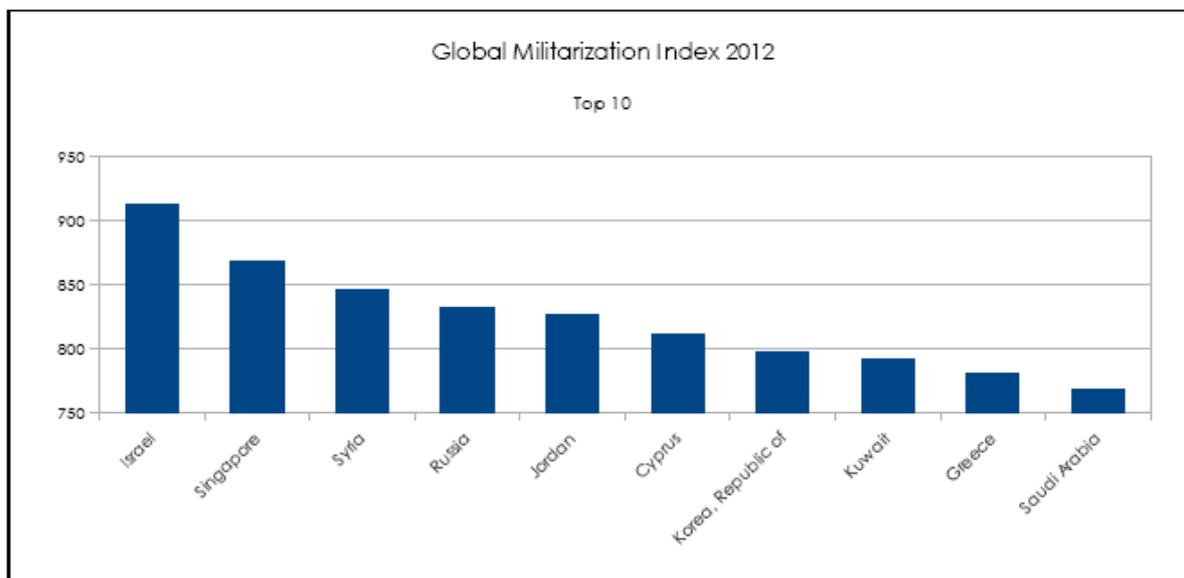
Global Militarization: Top Ten

In 2010, Israel, Singapore, Syria, Russia, Jordan, Cyprus, South Korea, Kuwait, Greece and Saudi-Arabia were amongst the top ten of the GMI³. Five 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 (2009), only minor changes have occurred amongst the top ten. Russia moved from position 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 degree of militarization impossible.



The GMI determines the degree 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 (position 1), Syria (position 3), Jordan (position 5), Kuwait (position 8), and Saudi Arabia (position 10). Amongst the first twenty states of the GMI, Oman (position 12), Bahrain (position 14), and the United Arab Emirates (position 17) complement the countries of that region. Proof for an overall high militarization in that conflict-ridden region in general—Iran, for instance is at position 32—is the fact that nearly all countries in the Middle East are amongst the 40 highest positions in 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 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.

Europe and the United States

Looking at NATO and Russia as well as the rest of Europe, the trend of the past years continues. Compared to the United States (position 30), Russia (position 4) continues to show a higher degree of militarization even though the absolute 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 the greatly indebted Greece (position 9) stands out while the degree of militarization in Turkey (position 27) is falling. In Eastern Europe, Belarus (position 16) remains one of the most militarized countries in the region. Germany fell from position 73 to position 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 downwards trend was visible in 2010.

⁴ Exception: Qatar (position 42)

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa generally shows low degrees in militarization. Exceptions are Angola (position 31), Mauretania (position 43) and Djibouti (position 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 (position 97), Mali (position 107) and Nigeria (position 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

In 2010, two countries, Singapore (position 2) and South Korea (position 7), which were in the top ten of the countries with the highest level of militarization, are, again, situated in Southeast Asia and East Asia. Brunei (position 11) and Vietnam (position 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 degree of militarization of all countries in the world. All in all, the region shows great variations in the degree of militarization: While China (position 83) and India (position 75) are characterized by an average degree of militarization, China's military expenditures amounted to US \$114 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 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

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 on 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, degrees of militarization are rather constant, some of which are quite high. Chile (position 34) and Ecuador (position 36) as well as Peru (position 48) and Colombia (position 49) are the countries with the highest levels of militarization in the region. Possible causes for this could be unsolved territorial conflicts or the conflict in Colombia. While Brazil shows quite moderate levels of militarization (position 76), its constantly expanding military expenditures in 2010 of around US \$28 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.

Jan Grebe