bicc report

GMI 2025

Global Militarisation Index

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At the regional level, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) remain the world's most militarised regions.

Summary

Despite rising military spending worldwide, not all states are following the trend in militarisation. Whilst certain countries—particularly in Europe—are substantially expanding their armed forces, the relative allocation of state resources to the military sector is stagnating or even declining in countries elsewhere—measured against civilian benchmarks such as economic output, population size or health spending. The Global Militarisation Index (GMI) 2025 thus reaffirms the uneven nature of global armament dynamics.

At the regional level, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) remain the world's most militarised regions. South America and Sub-Saharan Africa, by contrast, continue to rank among the least militarised—even where they experience high levels of violent conflict and state fragility. The GMI 2025 once again underlines that armed conflict need not go hand in hand with high militarisation. Low militarisation is not always the result of deliberate disarmament; it frequently reflects weak state capacity that is no longer able to contain societal conflict effectively.

In most countries financial resources are the central driver of high levels of militarisation. Military personnel, by contrast, plays a subordinate role in most cases. Countries tend to rank highest in the GMI where population size is relatively small. Conversely, large populations and strong economic output reduce the level of militarisation, even where defence budgets dwarf those of all other nations. Ukraine—which has topped the GMI since the outbreak of war—is a case apart. Alongside exceptionally high military expenditure, military personnel also play a central role. Ukraine's high level of militarisation reflects a comprehensive mobilisation and war economy that, since Russia's war of aggression, has absorbed a very substantial share of state resources.

METHODOLOGY

bicc's Global Militarisation Index (GMI) maps the relative weight and importance of a country's military apparatus in relation to its society as a whole. For this, the GMI records a number of indicators to represent the level of militarisation 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 militarisation 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.

To increase the compatibility between different indicators and to prevent extreme values from creating distortions when normalising data, in a first step, every indicator has been represented in a logarithm with the factor 10. Second, all data have been normalised 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, each indicator has been weighted and attributed a subjective factor, reflecting the relative importance attributed to it by bicc researchers. To calculate the final score, the weighted indicator values have been added up and then normalised one last time on a scale from 0 to 500.

The GMI conducts a detailed analysis of specific regional or national developments. By doing so, bicc wants to contribute to the debate on pros and cons of militarisation.

The ΔGMI indicator reflects the trend in militarisation by means of a moving average. The average of the GMI values for the last two years (2022 and 2023) is calculated and compared with the average from the previous year (2021 and 2022). As a result, temporary changes caused mainly by fluctuations in the reference values (such as GDP) are minimised.

GMI INDICATORS AND WEIGHING FACTORS

Sub-index/ 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	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

The GMI currently covers 151 countries. A considerable number is not included in the index. This encompasses countries with no armed forces of their own. The GMI also excludes countries for which no current data on the level of militarisation are available

GMI 2025: The Top 10

The ten most heavily militarised countries in the GMI 2025 are Ukraine (1), Israel (2), Qatar (3), Armenia (4), Russia (5), Algeria (6), Saudi Arabia (7), Brunei (8), Oman (9) and Azerbaijan (10). In all these countries, the state allocates a very high proportion of its resources to the military relative to other areas of society. The reasons for their high levels of militarisation differ and include active armed conflict (Ukraine, Russia, Israel), recent armed conflict (Armenia, Azerbaijan) and regional threat perceptions (the Gulf states). The structural effects of smaller population sizes (Armenia, Israel, Oman, Qatar, Brunei) push militarisation levels higher still.

The GMI is not a normative index. In the cases of Israel, Armenia and Ukraine in particular, there is a plausible argument that the high level of militarisation is understandable given the evident threats these states face.

TABLE 1: TOP 10

Country	$			GMI	ΔGMI	Rank	
Ukraine	6,3	1,7	2,0	**338,4**	**101,3**	1	(0)
Israel	3,6	1,6	2,9	**274,9**	**17,1**	2	(0)
Qatar	4,1	0,6	2,2	**234,0**	**-0,3**	3	(0)
Armenia	2,6	1,6	2,2	**219,9**	**14,4**	4	(0)
Russia	3,2	0,9	2,2	**213,4**	**12,9**	5	(+6)
Algeria	3,9	0,7	1,6	**212,7**	**29,6**	6	(+2)
Saudi Arabia	3,5	0,7	2,1	**211,6**	**1,0**	7	(-1)
Brunei	3,1	1,3	1,8	**210,2**	**0,8**	8	(+5)
Oman	3,4	0,8	1,9	**209,7**	**-5,1**	9	(-2)
Azerbaijan	3,0	0,9	2,2	**209,0**	**10,6**	10	(-1)

As in the two preceding years, **Ukraine** remains by far the most heavily militarised country in the world for which reliable data are available. The ongoing Russian war of aggression compels the state to mobilise virtually all available resources for military purposes. Military expenditure accounted for as much as 34 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024.[1] At the same time, no other country imported more weapons: almost ten per cent of all global arms transfers went to Ukraine in 2024.[2] Unlike many other highly militarised countries, Ukraine's militarisation is driven by financial and material, as well as personnel factors.

Israel again occupies second place in the GMI. The country topped the index continuously from 2007 to 2021. Since the terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023, Israel's military expenditure has risen sharply again, reaching almost nine per cent of GDP in 2024—compared with 4.9 per cent in 2021.[3] Israel has also recruited tens of thousands of additional reservists. This reflects the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, armed clashes with Hezbollah militias along the northern border with Lebanon and the persistent threat from Iran, which prompted Israeli military strikes against that country in 2025 and 2026.

Three Arab Gulf states feature among the ten most heavily militarised countries in the world: **Qatar** (3), **Saudi Arabia** (7) and **Oman** (9). Kuwait (11) and Bahrain (12) follow close behind. This is partly due to the fact that we use population as a key benchmark for the personnel and armaments indicators: A small population can, under certain conditions, result in high militarisation scores. In the case of the Gulf states,

[1] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2025). *Trends in world military expenditure, 2024* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2504_fs_milex_2024.pdf

[2] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2026). *Trends in international arms transfers, 2025* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2026-03/fs_2603_at_2025.pdf

[3] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2025). *Trends in world military expenditure, 2024* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2504_fs_milex_2024.pdf

heavy weapons systems are the primary driver, rather than the comparatively modest personnel strength of their armed forces. Combined with very high levels of military expenditure, this accounts for their top GMI scores. Saudi Arabia maintains the world's seventh-largest defence budget.[4] All three states have invested heavily in modern weapons systems over recent years. Between 2020 and 2024, the small emirate of Qatar was the world's third-largest arms importer in absolute terms, behind Ukraine and India, absorbing almost seven per cent of all international arms transfers. Saudi Arabia ranked fourth.[5]

Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman are situated in a region marked by conflict and shaped by numerous interstate and intra-societal, as well as religious tensions. The reasons for high militarisation nevertheless vary from country to country. Saudi Arabia lays claim to regional leadership in direct rivalry with Iran and, together with Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, it has most recently been engaged in a war against the Iran-backed Houthi militias in Yemen. Qatar, by contrast, seeks to position itself as a mediator between rival powers in the region, with high militarisation serving to underpin this difficult balancing act. The Iranian attacks against the Gulf states in March and April 2026 further underscore the particular threat environment of the region.

Armenia (4) and **Azerbaijan** (10) rank among the most heavily militarised countries in the world. The two neighbouring countries went to war over the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2020 and again most recently in 2023, after which Azerbaijan regained full control of the territory. Around 100,000 Armenians were forced to flee. Although the fighting has ended and both governments signed a peace agreement in October 2025, their relationship remains marked by tension and mutual mistrust. Azerbaijan's military expenditure remains high at just under five per cent of GDP even after the signing of the peace treaty[6] , with no reductions planned at the time of writing. Armenia has announced a reduction in military expenditure of around 15 per cent for 2026[7] —spending that stood at approximately 5.5 per cent of GDP in 2024—along with a reduction in armed forces personnel, which is high relative to its population. In contrast to many other countries, Armenia's high GMI score is also driven by the personnel indicator. The intended downsizing of the Armenian armed forces is, however, less an expression of genuine disarmament than a step towards professionalisation—specifically, the transition from a conscript to a professional army.

Russia ranks fifth in the GMI 2025, up one place from the previous year. For a country of its size and large population, the high ranking is notable. The United States, for instance, ranks only 29th despite outspending all other countries on defence by a considerable margin in absolute terms. China ranks 98th, in the lower middle of the table. Here, strong economic output and large populations dampen the level of militarisation—in the case of the United States, very high health expenditure is an additional factor. Russia maintains the world's third-largest defence budget after the United States and China, yet its ranking among the top ten shows that the military sector occupies a significantly larger share of Russian society by comparison. Whilst military expenditure in Russia probably exceeded seven per cent of GDP in 2024, the figure stood at 3.4 per cent in the United States and at an estimated less than two per cent in China.[8]

[4] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2025). *Trends in world military expenditure, 2024* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2504_fs_milex_2024.pdf
[5] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2026). *Trends in international arms transfers, 2025* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2026-03/fs_2603_at_2025.pdf
[6] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2025). *Trends in world military expenditure, 2024* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2504_fs_milex_2024.pdf
[7] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. (2025). *Armenia to cut defence spending by 15% in 2026*. Azatutyun. https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33540760.html
[8] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2025). *Trends in world military expenditure, 2024* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2504_fs_milex_2024.pdf

Algeria (6) nearly doubled its military expenditure between 2022 and 2024, reaching approximately eight per cent of GDP in 2024.[9] Algeria now has the largest defence budget on the African continent. The drivers of this high level of militarisation are, on the one hand, regional instability—above all jihadist groups in the Sahel—and, on the other, heightened tensions with Morocco over Western Sahara. A fully-fledged arms race between the two states has become apparent in recent years, with Morocco ranking 24th in the GMI and thus also classified as heavily militarised.

Brunei (8) is the sole East Asian country among the ten most heavily militarised states. The small, oil-rich sultanate has been substantially increasing its military expenditure since 2022, driven by growing tensions in the South China Sea, where Brunei's territorial claims partly conflict with those of China.

[9] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2025). *Trends in world military expenditure, 2024* (Fact Sheet). https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2504_fs_milex_2024.pdf

The 10 Lowest-ranked Countries

The lowest-ranked countries in the GMI 2025 are Haiti (151), Malta (150), Papua New Guinea (149), Mauritius (148), Cape Verde (147), Trinidad and Tobago (146), Guatemala (145), Sierra Leone (144), Ireland (143) and Ghana (142). A low ranking in the GMI does not automatically indicate a high degree of security or stability—this much is clear. The data reveal two fundamentally different patterns: Some states have deliberately chosen to invest only very limited resources in their military. Others are fragile states whose low level of militarisation reflects weak state capacity.

Five of the ten least militarised states fall squarely into the second category: Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago, Guatemala and Sierra Leone. In these countries, the state‘s monopoly on the use of force is either severely curtailed or regionally fragmented. Gang and drug-related crime has been a defining feature of many Caribbean and Latin American societies for decades. In many places, criminal organisations openly compete with state authorities for territorial control. This

TABLE 2: THE 10 LOWEST-RANKED COUNTRIES

Country	$			GMI	ΔGMI	Rank	
Ghana	0,7	0,5	0,1	**39,9**	**-0,2**	142	(-1)
Ireland	0,4	0,4	0,4	**39,7**	**-1,1**	143	(+1)
Sierra Leone	0,2	0,2	0,8	**39,6**	**-4,4**	144	(-2)
Guatemala	0,4	0,4	0,4	**38,0**	**-1,4**	145	(0)
Trinidad and Tobago	0,8	0,3	0,0	**37,6**	**2,7**	146	(0)
Cape Verde	0,4	0,5	0,0	**36,7**	**3,2**	147	(0)
Mauritius	0,5	0,4	0,0	**32,5**	**1,3**	148	(+1)
Papua New Guinea	0,2	0,2	0,5	**32,0**	**-2,4**	149	(-1)
Malta	0,5	0,3	0,0	**23,5**	**1,1**	150	(0)
Haiti	0,1	0,1	0,0	**19,2**	**5,5**	151	(0)

is best illustrated in **Haiti** (151), which has mostly ranked last in the GMI since the 1990s. Armed gangs there control large parts of the capital, whilst state security structures have been severely weakened and are dependent on international support missions. Haiti‘s extremely low GMI score reflects the near-total collapse of the state‘s capacity to enforce order.

Trinidad and Tobago (146) and **Guatemala** (145) also suffer from high crime rates, though not to the same degree as Haiti. Faced with spiralling gang violence, Trinidad and Tobago imposed a national state of emergency from July 2025 to early 2026. Following a wave of prison riots and the murder of police officers, the Guatemalan government declared a state of emergency in January 2026. In both countries, the challenge is primarily one of law enforcement, yet the boundary between internal security and military responsibilities frequently blurs where organised crime systematically undermines the authority of the state.

Papua New Guinea (149) represents a further case of structural state weakness. Difficult terrain and historically limited central state authority have long restricted the reach of government into remote areas. Outside major urban centres, the state is frequently unable to guarantee public security reliably. Local armed groups and tribal conflicts shape complex patterns of organised violence. The country‘s low GMI score points to the limits of effective state control.

Sierra Leone (144) also records low military expenditure and limited military capacity. It is less fragile than some of the other states at the bottom of the GMI, and its post-conflict reconstruction following the civil war that ended in 2002 is widely regarded as a model process. Nevertheless, Sierra Leone continues to struggle with significant political instability and polarisation. An attempted coup in November 2023 prompted the government to impose curfews, and high levels of corruption and crime compound an already fragile situation.

A second group among the ten least militarised states comprises countries that are both stable and have deliberately opted for low military investment. Low militarisation does not, therefore, necessarily go hand in hand with fragile statehood. Some countries—Iceland, Costa Rica and several smaller Pacific island nations among them—maintain no armed forces at all and are therefore not covered by the GMI. Among the countries the index does cover, Malta, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Ireland and Ghana stand out. Notably, many of these are small island states that face no direct military threat. Heavy weapons systems play virtually no role in countries such as **Cape Verde** (147) or **Mauritius** (148), where military responsibilities are largely confined to maritime surveillance. In both cases, security challenges such as drug smuggling are handled primarily by the civilian police force.

Malta (150) and **Ireland** (143) have deliberately pursued a security policy built on international cooperation, neutrality, civilian crisis prevention and only a small military. However, in the wake of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the new security situation in Europe, both countries have begun to chart a new course, with defence spending in both set to rise significantly in 2026.

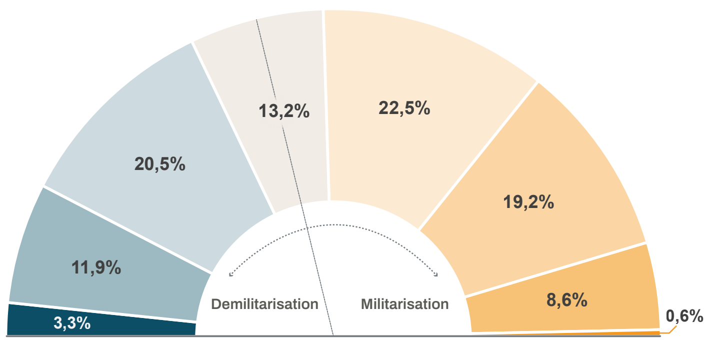
Ghana (142) also began substantially increasing its investment in the armed forces in 2025, driven in this case by growing security challenges in West Africa—above all from jihadist groups in the Sahel. The broader finding thus holds: Many countries with traditionally low levels of military expenditure are currently rearming significantly in response to emerging threats.

Global Trends in (De-) Militarisation

In absolute terms, global military expenditure has repeatedly broken new records since the late 1990s. The world is rearming. Yet this dynamic is far from uniform. In some parts of the world, the trend points in the opposite direction: Of the 151 countries covered by the GMI 2025, 54—or 35.7 per cent—recorded at least a demilitarisation trend over the past two years (below Δ-1). This does not necessarily mean actual disarmament. In some cases, economic growth may have simply outpaced the rise in military expenditure. The United States, for instance, shows a very slight demilitarisation trend (Δ-0.6) despite continuously increasing its defence spending in absolute terms. In other cases, the number of heavy weapons systems or military personnel has fallen as a result of armed conflict—as is probably the case in Sudan (Δ-13). In these countries, the relative weight of resources allocated to the military has tended to decline against civilian benchmarks. And yet, 77 countries—the majority worldwide—recorded at least a low trend in militarisation (above Δ1).

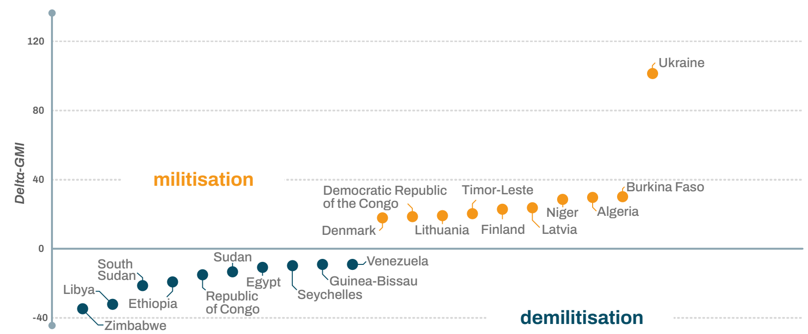
Rising ΔGMI values are most pronounced in northern and eastern Europe. Ukraine remains not only the most heavily militarised country in the world but also the one with the greatest momentum in militarisation over recent years, recording a value of Δ101.4—though this represents a slowdown compared with Δ156.1 in the GMI 2024. In Russia, the militarisation trend has conversely gathered pace despite the destruction of large numbers of weapons systems, climbing from Δ7.3 in the previous GMI to Δ13 in the GMI 2025. A marked acceleration is equally apparent in Lithuania (Δ19.2), Estonia (Δ17.5), Latvia (Δ23.7), Finland (Δ22.9), Denmark (Δ17.9) and Poland (Δ16.4).

FIGURE 1: GLOBAL TRENDS IN (DE)MILITARISATION



Trend in (De-)Militarisation		2-Year Delta GMI	Countries
Very high demilitarisation		< -45	0
High demilitarisation		< -15	5
Significant demilitarisation		< -5	18
Low demilitarisation		< -1	31
Neutral		(-1<1)	20
Low militarisation		>1	34
Significant militarisation		>5	29
High militarisation		>15	13
Very high militarisation		>45	1

FIGURE 2: COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT TO VERY HIGH TRENDS IN (DE)MILITARISATION



Several Middle Eastern countries are also showing a downward trend. Oman (Δ-5.2), Kuwait (Δ-7.8) and Bahrain (Δ-7) show a clear trend in demilitarisation, whilst Qatar (Δ-0.3) and Saudi Arabia (Δ1) show no discernible movement in either direction. Despite very high military expenditure, militarisation in these countries appears to have plateaued. Greece (Δ-6.7) presents a different but equally striking case: Ranking 14th in the GMI 2025—the most heavily militarised country among European NATO members—it is nevertheless one of the few European countries that did not embark on a substantial rearmament drive following Russia's attack on Ukraine, reflected in a clear trend in demilitarisation. Such trends are not confined to some highly militarised countries, however; they are equally apparent in fragile states and those marked by civil war, particularly on the African continent. These include Sudan (Δ-13.3), South Sudan (Δ-21.3), the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) (Δ-15), Ethiopia (Δ-19.1), Zimbabwe (Δ-34.6) and Libya (Δ-32). As with the least militarised states, these figures most likely point to dwindling state capacity going hand in hand with growing insecurity and instability.

Militarisation According to Regions

The weight accorded to the military varies considerably across the world's regions. Some are shaped by intense interstate rivalries and arms races; in others, the military plays a comparatively modest role despite high levels of violent conflict. The GMI 2025 brings these regional differences into sharp relief.

The Americas

The Americas remain a region in the GMI 2025 with a relatively low level of militarisation. Of the 23 countries on the continent covered by the index, 17—around 74 per cent—record only little or very little militarisation, and ten (43 per cent) rank in the lowest quintile of the GMI. This by no means indicates low levels of violence. On the contrary, Latin America is increasingly the setting for so-called non-state violent conflicts—armed confrontations between criminal groups in which state security forces play only a secondary role. At the same time, Colombia (59, strong) illustrates that even a relatively high level of militarisation is no guarantee against internal conflict and endemic violence.

The United States (29, very strong) remains the most heavily militarised country in the Americas. Its defence expenditure totalled US $997 billion in 2024, equivalent to 37 per cent of global military spending and far exceeding that of any other country. The United States also leads by a wide margin in heavy weapons systems, whilst China and India top the rankings for total military personnel. Its comparatively modest GMI ranking relative to these absolute figures reflects the moderating effect of the country's enormous economic output and very high health expenditure—most recently 16.5 per cent of GDP.

TABLE 3: THE AMERICAS

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
1	29	United States of America
2	34	Uruguay
3	59	Colombia
4	68	Chile
5	87	Ecuador
6	89	Bolivia
7	91	El Salvador
8	94	Peru
9	96	Venezuela
10	101	Canada
11	102	Nicaragua
12	110	Honduras
13	116	Guyana
14	121	Jamaica
15	125	Brazil
16	132	Mexico
17	134	Paraguay
18	135	Dominican Republic
19	136	Argentina
20	141	Belize
21	145	Guatemala
22	146	Trinidad and Tobago
23	151	Haiti

- very strong
- strong
- moderate
- little
- very little

Europe

The GMI 2025 shows that Europe remains one of the most heavily militarised regions in the world. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has shaped the continent's security landscape since 2022 and is the principal driver of rising defence expenditure across the majority of the 41 European countries covered by the Index. Twenty-three European countries—just over half (56 per cent)—show high or very high levels of militarisation. These include Ukraine (ranked first in the GMI, very strong) and Russia (5, very strong), but also every country sharing a border with Russia or its ally Belarus (17, very strong): Finland (22, very strong), Estonia (24, very strong), Lithuania (20, very strong), Latvia (37, strong) and Poland (26, very strong). All these countries regard Russia as a direct threat to their territorial sovereignty and are building up their armed forces to deter and, as a last resort, defend themselves against a Russian attack.

By contrast, six European countries (around 15 per cent) record only little or very little militarisation. Most, however, have announced substantial increases in defence spending in the years ahead—even Ireland (143, very little) and Malta (150, very little), which had until now deliberately kept their military expenditure low in line with a civilian-oriented foreign and security policy. Notably, Germany (92, little) still ranks among the less heavily militarised countries despite significant increases in its

TABLE 4: EUROPE

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
1	1	Ukraine
2	4	Armenia
3	5	Russia
4	10	Azerbaijan
5	14	Greece
6	17	Belarus
7	20	Lithuania
8	21	Cyprus
9	22	Finland
10	24	Estonia
11	26	Poland

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
12	31	Serbia
13	33	Romania
14	37	Latvia
15	39	Georgia
16	40	Montenegro
17	46	Norway
18	49	Bulgaria
19	50	Croatia
20	52	Denmark
21	57	France
22	58	Sweden
23	60	Hungary

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
24	66	Slovakia
25	69	Italy
26	71	Slovenia
27	72	Switzerland
28	75	United Kingdom
29	78	Czech Republic
30	81	Portugal
31	82	Netherlands
32	83	Luxembourg
33	84	Moldova
34	88	Spain
35	90	Albania

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
36	92	Germany
37	95	Austria
38	98	Belgium
39	99	Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
40	143	Ireland
41	150	Malta

very strong
strong
moderate
little
very little

defence budget in recent years. As with the United States, this is partly due to its high GDP: Germany is the world's third-largest economy after the United States and China, and the largest in Europe, which means that investment in the military carries less relative weight than in, for instance, France (57, strong) or the United Kingdom (75, moderate). Germany has nonetheless climbed 13 places since 2021 and may soon cross into the category of moderate militarisation—potentially surpassing the trajectory projected in the GMI 2022, which forecast a ranking of 89th by 2027.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

The MENA region retains its position as the most militarised region in the world in the GMI 2025. It is affected by numerous violent conflicts, most notably the war between Iran, its allied terrorist militias and Israel—a confrontation that has escalated since the terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023 and intensified further with the joint US–Israeli strikes against Iran, which have since drawn the Gulf monarchies into the line of Iranian attack. With the exception of Libya—politically divided and largely controlled by armed militias—every country in the region shows at least a strong militarisation, and 12 of the 16 (75 per cent) a very strong militarisation. The region remains one of the world's most important markets for arms exports, particularly for the United States and Europe.

TABLE 5: THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
1	2	Israel
2	3	Qatar
3	6	Algeria
4	7	Saudi Arabia
5	9	Oman
6	11	Kuwait
7	12	Bahrain
8	15	Jordan
9	16	Lebanon
10	23	Morocco
11	27	Iraq
12	28	Turkey

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
13	44	Iran
14	51	Tunisia
15	56	Egypt

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
16	67	Libya

very strong
strong
moderate

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more armed conflicts than any other region in the world. Across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, jihadist militias are steadily eroding the states' claim to a monopoly on the use of force. Yet Sub-Saharan Africa is, alongside South and Latin America, one of the least militarised regions in the world. More than half of its states record only low or very low levels of militarisation—meaning that not only in absolute terms, but also relative to their own economic output and population, these countries allocate significantly fewer resources to the military than is the case in Europe or the MENA region. Even regional heavyweights such as Nigeria (137, very little), Kenya (130, very little), Ethiopia (107, little) and South Africa (129, very little) all of which record comparatively low GMI scores. The only country in Sub-Saharan Africa with very strong militarisation is Botswana (25). Despite the prominent role of the military in its society, Botswana is one of the most stable, secure and least corrupt countries in the region. High militarisation and high levels of security do not, however, go hand in hand across the board: Mali (36), Burkina Faso (41) and South Sudan (43) all show strong militarisation yet are struggling with acute internal fragility and insecurity.

TABLE 6: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
1	25	Botswana

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
2	36	Mali
3	38	Chad
4	41	Burkina Faso
5	43	South Sudan
6	45	Namibia
7	47	Mauretania
8	48	Burundi
9	53	Niger
10	55	Gabon

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
11	61	Togo
12	63	Angola
13	65	Republic of Congo
14	70	Central African Republic
15	74	Guinea
16	77	Rwanda
17	79	Uganda
18	80	Guinea-Bissau
19	85	Equatorial Guinea
20	86	Senegal

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
21	93	Sudan
22	100	Mozambique
23	106	Cameroon
24	107	Ethiopia
25	108	DR Congo
26	111	Zambia
27	113	Zimbabwe
28	117	Somalia
29	119	Swaziland

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
30	122	Tanzania
31	126	Lesotho
32	127	Malawi
33	128	Benin
34	129	South Africa
35	130	Kenya
36	131	Cote D'Ivoire
37	133	Gambia
38	137	Nigeria
39	138	Seychelles
40	139	Madagascar
41	140	Liberia
42	142	Ghana
43	144	Sierra Leone
44	147	Cape Verde
45	148	Mauritius

- very strong
- strong
- moderate
- little
- very little

Asia, Australia and Oceania

The GMI 2025 reveals highly uneven levels of militarisation across Asia, Australia and Oceania. Of the 26 countries covered, high and low levels of militarisation are quite evenly matched—though the majority lean towards the lower end of the scale. This includes China (97, little), which fields the world's largest armed forces by personnel strength—a figure that its population size moderates considerably. A similar dynamic applies to India (76, moderate). Conversely, the small populations of Brunei (8, very strong) and Singapore (13, very strong) are a significant factor behind their high militarisation levels.

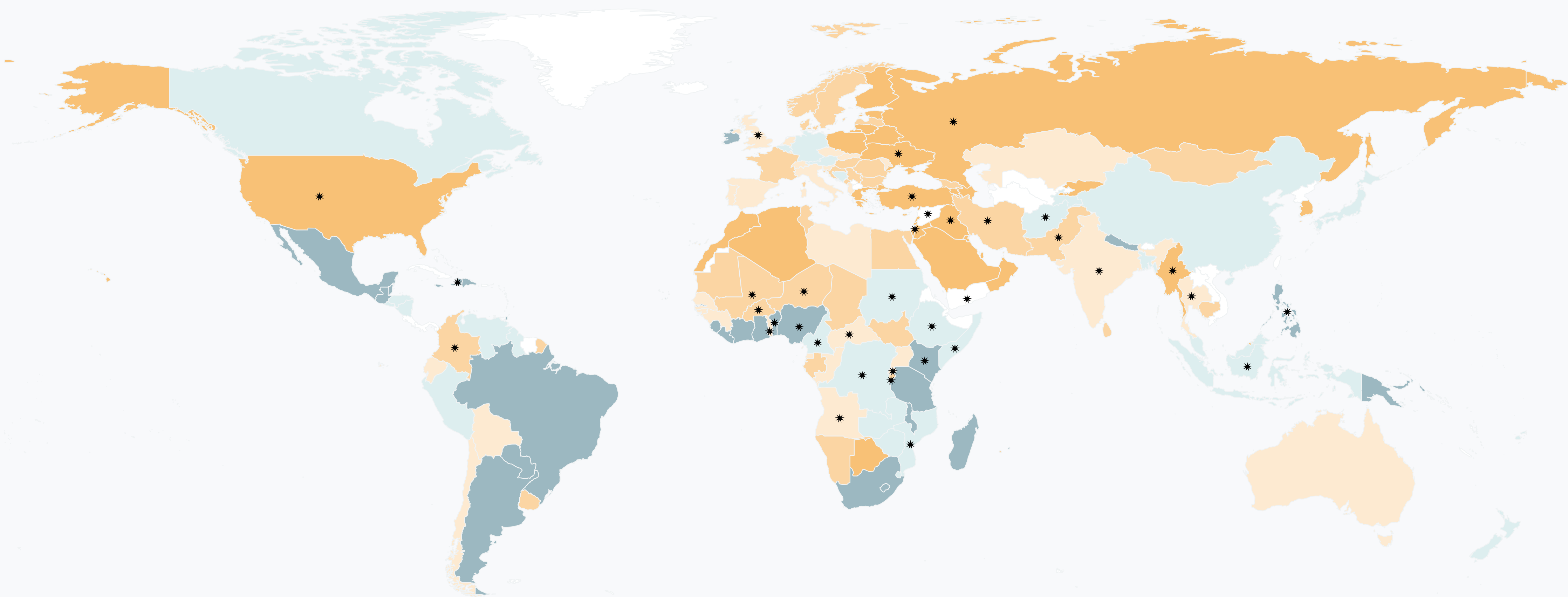
As in the MENA region, high militarisation in parts of Asia goes hand in hand with violent conflict and regional tensions. South Korea has a very strong militarisation (18). No reliable data on military expenditure or heavy weapons systems are available for North Korea, though it is in all likelihood one of the most heavily militarised countries in the world—in bicc's own estimate (GMI 2022), it ranked first globally. Myanmar (19, very strong) has been engulfed in a bitter civil war against the military regime since 2021; before the outbreak of conflict, it ranked 45th (strong).

TABLE 7: ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA

Rank	GMI Rank	Country
1	8	Brunei
2	13	Singapore
3	18	South Korea
4	19	Myanmar
5	30	Kyrgyzstan
6	32	Cambodia
7	35	Pakistan
8	42	Mongolia
9	54	Sri Lanka
10	62	Australia
11	64	Thailand
12	73	Kazakhstan
13	76	India
14	97	China
15	103	Malaysia
16	104	Fiji
17	105	Tajikistan
18	109	Afghanistan
19	112	Timor-Leste
20	114	New Zealand
21	115	Japan
22	118	Bangladesh
23	120	Indonesia
24	123	Phillipines
25	124	Nepal
26	149	Papua New Guinea

- very strong
- strong
- moderate
- little
- very little

MAP 1: GLOBAL MILITARISATION 2025



Source conflict data: Based on *UCDP25.1 data*

Sources of administrative boudaries: *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 (2024)

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

TABLE 8: MILITARISATION INDEX RANKING 2025

	Rank	Country	Rank	Country	Rank	Country
Very strong	1	Ukraine	11	Kuwait	21	Cyprus
	2	Israel	12	Bahrain	22	Finland
	3	Qatar	13	Singapore	23	Morocco
	4	Armenia	14	Greece	24	Estonia
	5	Russia	15	Jordan	25	Botswana
	6	Algeria	16	Lebanon	26	Poland
	7	Saudi Arabia	17	Belarus	27	Iraq
	8	Brunei	18	Korea, Republic of	28	Turkey
	9	Oman	19	Myanmar	29	United States of America
	10	Azerbaijan	20	Lithuania	30	Kyrgyzstan
Strong	31	Serbia	41	Burkina Faso	51	Tunisia
	32	Cambodia	42	Mongolia	52	Denmark
	33	Romania	43	South Sudan	53	Niger
	34	Uruguay	44	Iran	54	Sri Lanka
	35	Pakistan	45	Namibia	55	Gabon
	36	Mali	46	Norway	56	Egypt
	37	Latvia	47	Mauritania	57	France
	38	Chad	48	Burundi	58	Sweden
	39	Georgia	49	Bulgaria	59	Colombia
	40	Montenegro	50	Croatia	60	Hungary
Moderate	61	Togo	71	Slovenia	81	Portugal
	62	Australia	72	Switzerland	82	Netherlands
	63	Angola	73	Kazakhstan	83	Luxembourg
	64	Thailand	74	Guinea	84	Moldova
	65	Republic of Congo	75	United Kingdom	85	Equatorial Guinea
	66	Slovakia	76	India	86	Senegal
	67	Libya	77	Rwanda	87	Ecuador
	68	Chile	78	Czech Republic	88	Spain
	69	Italy	79	Uganda	89	Bolivia
	70	Central African Republic	80	Guinea-Bissau	90	Albania
Weak	91	El Salvador	101	Canada	111	Zambia
	92	Germany	102	Nicaragua	112	Timor-Leste
	93	Sudan	103	Malaysia	113	Zimbabwe
	94	Peru	104	Fiji	114	New Zealand
	95	Austria	105	Tajikistan	115	Japan
	96	Venezuela	106	Cameroon	116	Guyana
	97	China	107	Ethiopia	117	Somalia
	98	Belgium	108	DR Congo	118	Bangladesh
	99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	109	Afghanistan	119	Swaziland
	100	Mozambique	110	Honduras	120	Indonesia
Very weak	121	Jamaica	131	Cote D'Ivoire	141	Belize
	122	Tanzania	132	Mexico	142	Ghana
	123	Philippines	133	Gambia	143	Ireland
	124	Nepal	134	Paraguay	144	Sierra Leone
	125	Brazil	135	Dominican Republic	145	Guatemala
	126	Lesotho	136	Argentina	146	Trinidad and Tobago
	127	Malawi	137	Nigeria	147	Cape Verde
	128	Benin	138	Seychelles	148	Mauritius
	129	South Africa	139	Madagascar	149	Papua New Guinea
	130	Kenya	140	Liberia	150	Malta
					151	Haiti

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Its multidisciplinary approach covers the topics of
- building peace and social cohesion
- militarisation and arms control
- agents and patterns of security and war
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