

Afghan Government losing the fight against defence corruption

More support needed for fight against defence corruption, Transparency International warns

Despite spending billions of pounds in trying to combat corruption, Afghanistan's defence sector remains as open as ever to defence corruption. Afghanistan is at a "very high risk" of defence corruption, according to the 2015 Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index, produced by Transparency International Defence and Security (TI-DSP). Failure to properly deal with corruption in the defence sector leaves Afghanistan in a precarious position, particularly in the face of the ongoing threat from Al Qaeda, as well as the Islamic State.

Transparency International warned that a failure to invest in anti-corruption efforts could undermine efforts to strengthen Afghan security institutions, but more scrutiny and transparency of donor funds is needed.

Katherine Dixon, TI-DSP Programme Director said:

"The Afghanistan Government has clearly made efforts, but these are going to waste in the face of weak institutions that simply can't cope with the threat of defence corruption. There is a real and immediate danger that Afghanistan will collapse further without seriously addressing this problem."

"Afghanistan cannot afford their defence forces to be eroded from the inside, as this is how extremism takes root. Denying Al Qaeda and IS a safe haven in Afghanistan means professionalising the military and ensuring it is accountable to the people, not corrupt elites."

"The international community should get more actively involved too. Alongside training and working with the Afghan government on reform efforts, we need to task and resource our law enforcement agencies so they can go after corrupt officials hiding their stolen assets in places like London or New York."

Despite the very high risk of defence corruption in Afghanistan there are also signs that President Ghani has taken some positive steps, including the establishment of the National Procurement Commission which provides weekly oversight of major public procurement contracts, including in defence. The body claims that at one of its latest sessions it saved approximately AFN 65 million (c.a. \$915,000) on MoD contracts for items such as food, services and maintenance for provincial Army Corps when compared to previous years. The report also acknowledged the development of anti-corruption training by the Marshal Fahim National Defense University, which has been delivered following a secondment of Afghan MOD personnel to Transparency International.

However, overall the findings paint a worrying picture. The government fails to provide transparent and accountable to both national and international taxpayers, which is vital for building confidence that Afghanistan can successfully manage international donor funding as international troops withdraw.

There is very limited evidence to indicate that policing on corruption is effective and extends to defence forces and officials. The Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) is the primary organisation working to identify and arrest criminal networks and assists in prosecuting corruption. However, the body has been plagued by the interference of senior Afghan officials and despite issuing referrals to the Attorney General's Office, outcomes of prosecutions are not made public. Although the AGO has a Military Anti-Corruption Unit within it, the report could find no evidence of effective prosecutions of defence personnel in recent years for crimes related to corruption.

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Results

NATO members: overall

Country	Band	Corruption risk
United Kingdom	A	Very low
Belgium	B	Low
Canada		Low
Denmark		Low
Germany		Low
Latvia		Low
Netherlands		Low
Norway		Low
Poland		Low
USA		Low
Bulgaria		Moderate
Croatia		Moderate
Czech Republic		Moderate
France	C	Moderate
Greece		Moderate
Hungary		Moderate
Italy		Moderate
Lithuania		Moderate
Spain		Moderate
Portugal	D	High
Turkey		High

Partner states: overall

Country	Band	Corruption risk
Finland	B	Low
Sweden		Low
Switzerland		Low
Austria	C	Moderate
Bosnia & Herz.		Moderate
Georgia		Moderate
Serbia		Moderate
Armenia	D	High
Ukraine		High
Afghanistan	E	Very high
Azerbaijan		Very high
Uzbekistan		Very high
Uzbekistan		Very high

Full results available at government.defenceindex.org on 00:01 (GMT) Thursday 3 December 2015.

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Notes for editors:

The Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index (GI) assesses the existence and effectiveness of institutional and informal controls to manage the risk of corruption in defence and security institutions and of their enforcement. Transparency International's team of experts draws together evidence from a wide variety of sources and interviewees across 77 indicators to provide the government with a detailed assessment of the integrity of their defence institutions.

The 2015 NATO report publishes the country risk rankings derived from this data and examines the trends across 33 states, encompassing 22 NATO members and 11 partner states.

The report follows the G20 report published on 4 November 2015. Forthcoming reports based on the 2015 index will be on Africa, the Americas, and Fragile States.