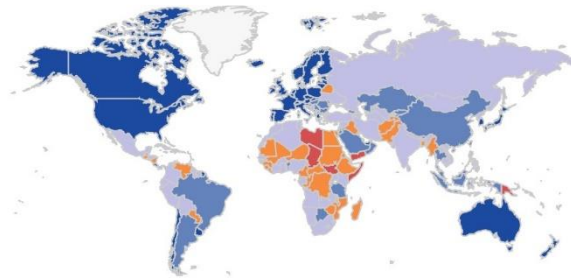


Country Overview

Year 2023 | Context Measurement



● Collapsed State ● Profound defective State ● Defective State ● Moderate functioning State ● High functioning State

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StIx Report: The World of States in 2023

*The **Stateness Index StIx** is a tool for measuring stateness and state quality through aggregated and disaggregated data. One exceptional strength of StIx rests on both country and year coverage that surpasses existing Indices that measure stateness. Drawing on data from the Varieties-of-Democracy-Project (V-Dem), the index offers data for more than 170 countries between 1950 and 2023.*

*The innovation of the **Stateness Index** is the distinction between two layers of conceptualization and operationalization: the first layer of the concept*

presents the formal state and stateness that is measured through a set of indicators that represent formal or “official” institutions. The second layer of informality enriches the formal concept with informal institutions that exist alongside the formal institutional framework of a state. The inclusion of the second layer of measurement enhances the concept and captures the “reality” of stateness more accurately than the sole measurement of formal institutions.

Concept: The State

The state is an institutionalized social and political order and organization of hierarchical authority that is in exclusive control of the monopoly of law, monopoly of violence and monopoly of administration throughout a given territory and its inhabitants. The three dimensions capture the central functions of the state: legislative, judiciary and executive. While the first two dimensions are linked to parliament (rulemaking) and courts (rule control and in

terpretation), the executive is divided into the function of enforcement (military, police) and implementation (government and state bureaucracy).

Stateness as the performance of institutions denotes that a state can insert and uphold the laws enacted by the regime across its territory, possesses the means necessary to control both territory and population and commands a bureaucratic infrastructure to implement and exert territorial sovereignty throughout the state territory.

The Typology of StIx

StIx uses a theoretically grounded typology of states: The *first* threshold at 0.7 separates the “full” presence of components and attributes in line with the root concept of a functioning state from empirical patterns that, although not completely corresponding to the concept of stateness, still fulfil criteria with some minor deficits, i.e., moderate functioning states. The *second* threshold is located between moderate functioning and defective states at 0.5. The *third* threshold at 0.3 is located within diminished subtypes to further differentiate between defective and profound defective states that differ regarding the severity of defects. The *fourth* threshold specifies at which point attributes and components are no longer sufficiently given, i.e., when the minimal standards are no longer existent (non-functional/collapsed state; 0.1).



State fragility as a continuous phenomenon encompasses states with small defects (defective states), severe defects (profound defective states) and situations of institutional collapse (non-functional/collapsed states), where (formal) stateness is de facto absent.

The global distribution of stateness 2023

State collapse/ non-functional States

Six states are collapsed or non-functional in 2023: Yemen, South Sudan, Libya, Chad, Somalia and Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea’s stateness is highly unbalanced with the defects among the monopoly of administration exceeding the defects among the monopoly of violence and law by far. The Monopoly of Law and Monopoly of Violence fall within the thresholds of a somewhat moderate functioning state although non-state actors frequently challenge the monopoly of violence of the state.

Informality and the politization of the state administration hamper the state’s abilities to implement its policies. More importantly, Papua New Guinea

suffers from a profound urban bias (“paper state”), i.e., the absence of the state within the periphery: public services and infrastructure are highly deficient to absent outside of major towns and capitals.

Chad is a non-functional/collapsed state affected by poly-crisis: as an environmental fragility hotspot, Chad is especially vulnerable to climate change and floods are creating substantial displacement.¹The absence of the state generates opportunities for armed groups, while poverty, social tensions and insecurity continuously rise. Administration is poorly funded, highly susceptible to corruption and basic infrastructure is not provided in rural areas.

The monopoly of violence is frequently contested by armed groups, gangs and rebels that operate from Libya and Chad, taking advantage of the absence of the state. The monopoly of law is impaired by corruption at all societal levels, especially the “power circle” and security forces. The judiciary and the state are absent in areas of the territory; in rural regions customary law prevails. Law enforcement is limited to the major cities and remains geographically and functionally limited.²

Somalia returned to the category of non-functional/collapsed states in 2023 due to a decline of the monopoly of administration. Postcolonial fragmentation, clan-based politics, the polarization and exclusion of societal segments during the Barre regime and the rise of Al-Shabaab lead to Somalia’s “complex descend [in]to anarchy and fragmentation”.³ Patronage, corruption and conflict driven by violent non-state actors and the militarization of conflict with the proliferation of arms in the absence of a functioning government for more than 20 years, while political leaders are “driven by internal clan rivalries and leadership squabble”,⁴ prevent both peace and the re-institutionalisation of the state’s monopolies.

Profound defective States

In 2023, 37 States are classified as profound defective states. The majority of this type of stateness is found in eastern Africa, middle Africa, western Africa and Southern Asia.

Haiti is a profound defective state on the brink of state collapse: After the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse the political and security crisis has

¹ OECD (2022): Environmental Fragility in the Sahel.

² Global Organized Crime Index (2023): Chad.

³ Mustapha and Yerima (2021): Somalia: State Collapse and the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

⁴ Mustapha and Yerima (2021).

severely deteriorated. The monopoly of violence is contested by gangs that control large parts of the territory, including the capital. The administration and infrastructure are concentrated in the capital, while rural and poor urban areas depend on non-state organizations to provide services; the situation further deteriorated since the state has lost territorial control to the gangs. The judiciary is “in a state of total dysfunction”⁵, corruption and collusion between state officials and gang members transferred significant political power of the gangs. The near absence of the state has left a vacuum of lawlessness that is filled by the gangs that control both inhabitants and territory.

Defective States

57 states are classified as defective states in 2023, making this category the predominant type of global stateness. Defective states are found around the globe, except for western and northern Europe, as well as northern America.

The majority of defective states are stable within this category, contradicting the assumption that defective stateness is inherently unstable. An institutional equilibrium between the monopolies of law, violence and administration in combination with informal networks within the state generate the necessary stability.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a defective state due to its unique institutional configuration, i.e. a defective state by design: The Dayton Agreement of 1995 established a decentralized and fragmented state with weak, dysfunctional central institutions and two sub-state entities: the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (and the local self-governing unit Brčko District). Both sub-state entities have significant autonomy with a constitutional system that emphasises division and favours political blockade.⁶

Consequently, the monopolies of violence, administration and law are decentralized and fragmented. Instead of a coherent state identity, the Dayton Agreement and Constitution incorporate mutually exclusive state concepts. The inevitable polarization has fuelled a secessionist narrative in the Republika Srpska.

Moderate functioning states

Moderate functioning states deviate from the ideal-type of stateness, but do not pass the thresholds of defective states. Rather, they show (minor) deficits that do not conglomerate to state fragility. In 2023, 31 countries are categorized as moderate functioning states. 14 of those countries (e.g., Argentina, Qatar or Kuwait) are classified as high functioning states without the incorporation of the context measurement, leading to the conclusion, that at least within this group, informality bends some rules and procedures of the formal state.

In **Argentina**, the monopoly of violence is established throughout the country but frequently undermined by criminal organizations. The state’s basic infrastructure, judiciary and law enforcement encompasses the entire national territory, with a functional bias in peripheral regions and a prevalence of administrative corruption.

High functioning states

43 states correspond to the legal-rational ideal-type of a state, leading to the classification as high functioning states. Unsurprisingly, this type of stateness is mainly found in Europe, possibly affirming a western bias of measurement. But: countries like Singapore, Costa Rica, Botswana, the United Arab Emirates, Chile or Uruguay also fall into the category of high functioning states, contradicting both a democratic and western bias.

Uruguay’s monopoly of violence is well established throughout the state territory. Although criminal networks of drug trafficking are on the rise, the state has intensified police activity and increased drug related penalties. The monopoly of law is high functioning without significant informal institutions that undermine it. The state’s infrastructure is developed and encompasses the entire state territory and inhabitants.

⁵ BTI (2024): Haiti Country Report.

⁶ Usvatov and Muharemović (2022): A Gridlocked State.

Regional Distribution of Stateness 2023

Comparing Stateness across World Regions 2023					
Region	CS	PD	DS	MF	HF
Caribbean	-	1	2	-	3
Central America	-	2	3	1	1
Central Asia	-	1	2	2	-
Eastern Africa	2	9	4	2	1
Eastern Asia	-	-	2	1	3
Eastern Europe	-	1	2	4	3
Middle Africa	1	5	3	-	-
North America	-	-	-	-	2
Northern Africa	1	2	3	-	-
Northern Europe	-	-	-	-	10
Oceania (including Australia and the Pacific)	1	1	2	-	2
South America	-	2	6	2	2
South-Eastern Asia	-	1	5	3	1
Southern Africa	-	-	4	1	-
Southern Asia	-	3	4	2	-
Southern Europe	-	-	1	5	7
Western Africa	-	7	8	1	-
Western Asia	1	2	6	7	1
Western Europe	-	-	-	-	7
Total	6	37	57	31	43

CS = Collapsed State, PD = Profound defective State, DS = Defective State, MF = Moderate functioning State, HF = High functioning State

State Transformation: Changes between 2022 and 2023

State transformation includes any movement along the state-spectrum, i.e., between functioning and non-functional/collapsed states. *Fragilization* is a process of declining stateness, covering all transformations towards the pole of a non-functional state, even though this process is not determined to end in a collapsed state. While the starting point can be a functioning state, it is more likely that states with already pre-existing signs of defects become more fragile.

Improvements of stateness, meaning any shift closer to the pole of a functioning state with the above defined features, are labelled *strengthening of stateness*.⁷

State Transformation 2022- 2023

Declines in StIx Total Value (context)					
Top 5 Countries	2022		2023		Change
	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	
Suriname	0.70	58	0.52	121	-0.18
Burundi	0.47	131	0.38	148	-0.09
Gabon	0.50	119	0.41	146	-0.09
Ecuador	0.61	83	0.53	117	-0.08
Sudan	0.40	141	0.33	162	-0.07
Gains in StIx Total Value (context)					
Top 5 Countries	2022		2023		Change
	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	
Tanzania	0.63	82	0.74	51	0.11
Azerbaijan	0.44	142	0.54	106	0.10
Tunisia	0.55	114	0.62	85	0.07
Syria	0.28	165	0.35	155	0.07
Moldova	0.56	103	0.62	86	0.06

Stateness is deteriorating in many countries, but the number of states that experienced a strengthening of stateness between 2022 and 2023 (92) outweighs those states that experienced a decline of stateness (78).

Gains: State strengthening

The five countries that show the most pronounced signs of *state strengthening* between 2022 and 2023 are *Tanzania*, *Azerbaijan*, *Tunisia*, *Syria* and *Moldova*.

After losing control over part of its territory with a descent of the monopoly of violence between 2021 and 2022, **Tanzania** had regained its control with a subsequent strengthening of the monopoly of violence and remains a moderate functioning state.

In 2022, **Azerbaijan** was downgraded to a profound defective state, after a decline of both monopoly of law and monopoly of administration. In 2023, it restored its status as a defective state due to improvements of all monopolies. After the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan launched “local anti-terrorist activities” in Nagorno-Karabakh, 30 years of de-facto independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic officially ended.

Although the democratic developments in **Tunisia**, the former most hopeful offspring of the 2011 Arab uprisings, have regressed, the state saw improvements of the monopolies of violence and law between 2022 and 2023. After the strengthening of

⁷ Stawski and Lemm (2024, forthcoming).

the security apparatus, the state is in control of its territory, except for some enclaves that are under the control of terrorist groups. The administrative infrastructure is effective, but the provision of services is geographically differentiated: the coastal cities receive preferential treatment over the marginalised interior regions.

Syria, a collapsed state between 2017 and 2019, shows continuous improvements of the state, leading to a classification as a defective state. Yet, Syria only controls around 65% of its territory and external actors limit Syria's state sovereignty (monopoly of law). Furthermore, administrative capacities are limited because of the war that destroyed large parts of the infrastructure.

Moldova saw an improvement of the monopoly of violence and, for the first time, is classified as a moderate functioning state in 2023. Apart from the de-facto-state Transnistria, the state controls its territory with legal and administrative jurisdiction and structures established across the country. The administration's efficiency is somewhat hampered by corruption and lack of quality, especially in rural areas.

Declines: Loss of Quality and State Fragilization

The most pronounced declines of stateness between 2022 and 2023 are found in *Suriname, Burundi, Gabon, Ecuador* and *Sudan*

Suriname received a downgrading to a defective state as a result of increasing defects among the monopolies of law, violence and administration. The monopoly of violence became defective, corruption within the police and other public offices is increasing. The borders are porous or non-existent.⁸ Basic public services, such as order and security, primary education, clean water, and healthcare became more unequally distributed across urban and rural areas between 2022 and 2023. The monopoly of law decreased due to a growing dependence on other states with respect to the conduct of Suriname's foreign policy.

Although **Burundi's** stateness deteriorated, it remains a profound defective state. Burundi's administration and infrastructure are characterized by an aggravated urban-bias, corruption, and public theft. The monopoly of violence is moderately functioning, although the borders are porous, with armed groups crossing into Burundi from neighbouring Rwanda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of

the Congo. The monopoly of law is defective, corruption at all levels of the government and private sector and misuse of public office persists with impunity.

Gabon remains a defective state although the state's monopolies of law and violence deteriorated. There is no interference from external actors and the state's sovereignty is undisputed, but widespread corruption and the neglect of the executive for the constitution, as well as the political and legislative turmoil after the military intervention following the presidential election in 2023 led to the impairment of the monopoly of law. Gabon's stateness also declined due to the rising political violence and loss of control over the territory in 2023.

Ecuador continues to be a defective state although all three monopolies of the state declined between 2022 and 2023. According to the BTI, the monopoly of violence "significantly deteriorated [...], as an increasing number of criminal organizations are emerging".⁹ There is also an increasing conflict between state and between criminal organizations, that strive to control the prisons and the associated drug trafficking. The decline of domestic autonomy as a result of widespread corruption within the legislative and judiciary, and rising threats by criminal organizations as well as collaboration between judges and criminal organizations result in the worsening of the monopoly of law.

Sudan declined from a defective to a profound defective state in 2023 because both the monopoly of law and the monopoly of violence deteriorated. Ongoing confrontation between the Sudanese National Army (SNA) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) after the ousting of former president Omar al-Bashir in 2019 ended in a stalemate in Khartoum, furthering the disintegration of the Sudanese state. While SNA controls much of the east, RSF asserts its dominance in the west and most of the capital Khartoum. The conflict is characterized by extreme levels of violence, including ethnic violence in Darfur. Furthermore, power sharing negotiations between SNA and RSF and the attempted institutionalization of a civilian leadership have failed, aggravating the struggle for political and military control across the country. The borders have become particularly precarious regions where militias control territory and population due to the absence of state authority.

⁸ Global Organized Crime Index (2023): Suriname.

⁹ BTI (2024): Ecuador Country Report.

Top 10 and Worst 10 Performer in 2023

With a total Index value of 0.92 **Singapore** leads the ranking of 2023, placing an electoral autocracy at the top of all states. The monopoly of violence is undisputed, the highly trained and skilled personnel in both administration and armed forces implement and execute the laws enacted by the regime. The state is fully capable to fulfil its jurisdictional functions to enforces the laws within its territory. The infrastructure encompasses the whole territory, and due to the ruling Party's (People's Action Party) rigorous fight against corruption most corruption cases end with conviction.

Estonia, Denmark, Germany and Luxembourg complete the ranking of the Top five performing states in 2023.

Libya, a non-functional/collapsed state, is the worst performing state in 2023. The armed factions work largely for their own interest, and the fragmentation between the east and the west after the power vacuum from Ghaddafi's removal, has left the country "almost ungovernable".¹⁰ Armed forces are parochial and have close ties to their local leaders, while the ideological dispute between political authorities fuels conflict between warring militias.

The latent civil war and the reoccurring institutional and geographical splits of the country continue to undermine administrative structures and capacities. The judiciary is unable to function, corruption is endemic, and informal courts are the main source of conflict resolution between citizens and between militias and the government.

Yemen, Haiti, South Sudan and the Central African Republic are also among the Top five of the worst performing states in 2023.

Top 10 Performer 2023 (context measurement)					
	Total	ML	MV	MA	Rank
Singapore	0,92	0,87	0,96	0,93	1
Estonia	0,92	0,93	0,96	0,86	2
Denmark	0,91	0,91	0,92	0,89	3
Germany	0,90	0,94	0,91	0,86	4
Luxembourg	0,90	0,87	0,97	0,87	5
Netherlands	0,90	0,90	0,93	0,88	6
New Zealand	0,90	0,91	0,93	0,85	7
Seychelles	0,89	0,91	0,92	0,84	8
United Kingdom	0,89	0,90	0,93	0,83	9
Belgium	0,88	0,89	0,91	0,85	10
Worst 10 Performer 2023 (context measurement)					
	Total	ML	MV	MA	Rank
Libya	0,03	0,00	0,09	0,31	174
Yemen	0,12	0,17	0,16	0,06	173
Haiti	0,17	0,27	0,20	0,10	172
South Sudan	0,18	0,42	0,17	0,09	171
Central African Republic	0,22	0,29	0,30	0,12	170
Somalia	0,24	0,57	0,29	0,08	169
Chad	0,25	0,41	0,39	0,09	168
Papua New Guinea	0,28	0,65	0,60	0,06	167
Venezuela	0,27	0,36	0,38	0,15	166
Afghanistan	0,31	0,34	0,37	0,24	165

ML = Monopoly of Law, MV = Monopoly of Violence, MA = Monopoly of Administration

Executive Summary

The study of stateness in global comparison substantiates that functioning states are in the minority. Most of the world's states are on the deficit spectrum. Although the various deficits of the state have an impact on the functioning of governance systems, these distortions are often not sufficiently recognised in research and policy.

Moreover, the research shows that stateness is in a state of flux, without a clear trend in one direction (improvements or declines). Furthermore, while there are isolated phases of rapid state transformation, the more common emergence of state transformation is gradual, like the continuous erosion of stateness over the years. Likewise, state-building is a non-linear, continuous process in which periods of improvements are oftentimes followed by periods of set-back.

¹⁰ Abubakar and Wapmuk (2021): Libya: The Proliferation of Small Arms Post-Ghaddafi.

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