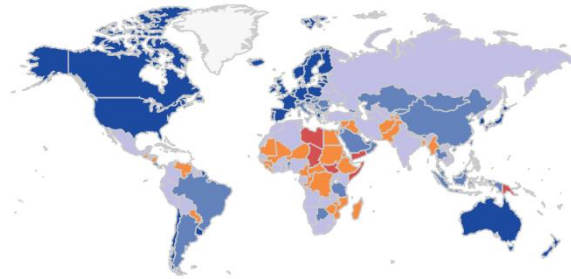


Year 2024 | Context Measurement



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

StIx Report: The World of States in 2024

The Stateness Index (StIx) is a tool for measuring stateness and state quality using both aggregated and disaggregated data. One of StIx's exceptional strengths is its country and year coverage, which surpasses that of existing indices that measure stateness. Based on data from the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), the index provides data on over 170 countries from 1950 to 2024.

The Stateness Index innovates by distinguishing between two conceptual and operational

layers: the first layer presents the formal state and stateness, which is measured through a set of indicators representing 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. Including the second layer of measurement enhances the concept, capturing the 'reality' of stateness more accurately than measuring formal institutions alone.

Concept: The State

The state is an institutionalised social and political order and organisation of hierarchical authority that has exclusive control over the monopoly of law, violence and administration throughout a given territory and its inhabitants. These three dimensions encapsulate the state's central functions: the legislative, the judiciary, and the executive.

The first two dimensions are linked to parliament (rule-making) and the courts (rule control and interpretation), while the executive is divided into enforcement (military and police) and implementation (government and state bureaucracy).

The performance of institutions denotes that a state can enact and uphold laws across its territory, possesses the means to control territory and population, and commands a bureaucratic infrastructure to implement and exert territorial sovereignty.

The Typology of StIx

StIx uses a theoretically grounded typology of states. The first threshold, at 0.7, distinguishes between the 'full' presence of components and attributes, in line with the root concept of a functioning state, and empirical patterns that, while not fully corresponding to the concept of stateness, still fulfil certain criteria despite exhibiting minor deficits; that is to say, moderate functioning states. The second threshold, located at 0.5, separates moderate functioning states from defective states. The third threshold, at 0.3, is located within the diminished subtypes, and is used to differentiate between defective and profoundly defective states, which differ in terms of the severity of the defects. The fourth threshold specifies the point at which attributes and components are no longer sufficiently present, i.e. when minimal standards are no longer met (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 2024

State collapse/ non-functional States

Six states are classified as collapsed or non-functional in 2024: 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

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

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

Libya, the fourth-biggest country on the African continent and home to Africa’s largest reservoirs of hydrocarbons, is classified as a collapsed/non-functioning state since 2011, with separate governments and state institutions in the west and the east of Libya (Government of National Unity and Government of National Stability). The Monopoly of Law and the Monopoly of Violence are non-functioning, while limited capacities of the Monopoly of Administration remain. The armed forces are factionalized with some parochial ties to local leaders. In the absence of the state with ongoing violent conflict, the importance of regional leaders and tribal identities increased, fostering exclusive neopatrimonial structures. The latent civil war has forced citizens “to resort to militias to access essential services, which have increasingly been weaponized in the internal competition for power by several opposing armed and political factions in the country”.³

A state encompassing monopoly of law is non-existent and without a constitution that regulates rights and responsibilities of governing institutions, the judiciary cannot function effectively. The ongoing conflict and political divisions of the state results in an inflation of methods of informal adjudication. Corruption in Libya is endemic and encompasses all branches of the state, the proliferation of weapons, autonomous militias, criminal networks, regional de facto rulers, and extremist groups are both the result and reason for the ongoing state collapse.

Yemen is a collapsed/non-functioning state, riddled by civil war and a history of violent conflict since the unification of the two Yemeni states in 1990. After the failure of the Yemeni “Arab Spring” in 2011 and the National Dialogue Conference 2013/14, the Saudi-led operation “Restoring Hope” accelerated a humanitarian catastrophe and civil war in Yemen since 2015. The internal division has also turned into a proxy war, prolonging the conflict: Iran-backed Houthi rebels against a multinational coalition led by Saudi Arabia.⁴

Causes for the Yemeni state collapse are the armed insurgency by the Houthis in the north, the power vacuum of the central government after the mass protests 2011 that was ultimately filled by both domestic and foreign non-state actors that contributed further to the chronic economic weakness, social fragmentation along tribal lines and the regional disparities of the country.

The monopoly of violence is absent, no central government exists to hold control over the state territory. Different factions and armed groups effectively control different regions. The monopoly of law is inoperative in most parts of the state territory; hence citizens turn to tribal forms of law and courts. The monopoly of administration is destroyed, and networks of corruption and patronage are endemic to state institutions.

With its independence in 2011, **South Sudan** became the world’s “first pre-failed state” due to the dysfunctionality of its rump-state, the profound defective state Sudan.⁵ The state is marked by inter-ethnic violent conflicts, multi-rebellions against the government and the eth-

² Global Organized Crime Index (2023): Chad.

³ BTI (2024): Libya Country Report.

⁴ Robinson (2023): Yemen’s Tragedy: War, Stalemate, and Suffering.

⁵ Chol (2022): State Dysfunctionality: The Role of Political Elites in South Sudanese State-Crafting and Collapse.

nicization of politics as well as the politicization of ethnicity,⁶ producing a profoundly polarized society.

The monopoly of administration is non-functional, the territorial administration lacks funding, capacities and personnel; hence, the administration is incapable of implementing the law or providing services to the population. The monopoly of law is highly dysfunctional, the population has no regular access to state-based courts, relying instead on local customary courts. The monopoly of violence is contested by armed groups and militias and only small parts of the state territory are under the state's control. Political and military power are intertwined, while high-ranking military have accumulated wealth through corruption and embezzlement.

Profound defective States

In 2024, 38 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.

As a profound defective state, **Mozambique's** state institutions are severely dysfunctional. While the monopoly of law is semi-functioning, the monopoly of violence and especially the monopoly of administration are absent. The regime, that still caters primarily to clientelist networks and interests, failed to implement geographically balanced and inclusive development. The "youth bulge" with little economic prospects provided a fertile ground for militant Islamist groups, that challenge the state in the northern province of Cabo Delegado. Alt-

hough the Wagner Group was deployed to intervene in Capo Delgado, it had to withdraw after two months, since its engagement in the absence of governance measures to address the volatile situation led to more violence.⁷ Corruption is endemic, and large-scale impunity has "allowed organized crime to infiltrate the Mozambican state".⁸ A profound urban-rural bias shapes both the Administration and Judiciary.

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 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"⁹, 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

55 states are classified as defective states in 2024, 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.

⁶ Chol (2022): State Dysfunctionality: The Role of Political Elites in South Sudanese State-Crafting and Collapse.

⁷ Ramani 2023, cited in: OECD (2025): States of Fragility 2025, p. 76.

⁸ BTI (2024): Mozambique Country Report.

⁹ BTI (2024): Haiti Country Report.

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.

Iran is a stable defective, at times even moderately functioning (2000-2004) state. Iran's stateness is well balanced, implying a strong institutional equilibrium between the state's monopolies. The monopoly of violence is a "complex institutional arrangement",¹⁰ held by state and semi-state entities like vigilante groups that operate with the state's approval. The administration is highly centralized, and basic services are provided throughout the state territory, however corruption is widespread among the local administration. The monopoly of law is semi-functioning, corruption and the politicization of the judiciary lead to large-scale abuses of public offices.

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.¹¹

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 fall below thresholds of defective states. Rather, they show (minor) deficits that do not conglomerate to state fragility. In 2024, 33 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.

Georgia is a moderate functioning state since 2013. The state is in control of the monopoly of violence, although conflicts with the aspiring separatist territories Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain. Hence, Georgia controls about 80% of its state territory, while the de facto authorities of these territories have – with the help of Russia – managed to stabilize their authority within their provinces. The state administration is established throughout the territory, but clientelist networks remain. The monopoly of law is decreasing due to Georgia's dependence on foreign actors to implement domestic and international policies, as well as growing corruption within the judiciary and legislation.

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

¹⁰ BTI (2024): Iran Country Report.

¹¹ Usvatov and Muharemović (2022): A Gridlocked State.

regions and a prevalence of administrative corruption.

High functioning states

42 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.

The **United Arab Emirates** are classified as a high functioning state since 2005. The UAE is a federation of seven emirates that grants these entities autonomy with regards to local administration and economic and social policies, while foreign policy and national security are under the control of the federal government. With a small population, the eighth-largest oil reserves and the investment of the oil rent in infrastructure and services, the UEA have successfully averted the “resource curse”, with the non-oil sector accounting for 70% of the GDP. The UAE state has “a complete monopoly on the use of force across all of its territory” with “omnipresent” security services.¹²The administration is “sophisticated” and differentiated, the monopoly of law is well established and functioning throughout the state’s territory.

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 with-

out significant informal institutions that undermine it. The state’s infrastructure is developed and encompasses the entire state territory and inhabitants.

Regional Distribution of Stateness 2024

Comparing Stateness across World Regions 2024					
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	-	-	1	2	3
Eastern Europe	-	-	3	5	2
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	1	1
Southern Europe	-	-	1	6	6
Western Africa	-	7	8	1	-
Western Asia	1	4	4	7	1
Western Europe	-	-	-	-	7
Total	6	38	55	33	42

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

¹² BTI (2024): United Arab Emirates Country Report.

State Transformation: Changes between 2023 and 2024

State transformation includes any movement along the stateness spectrum, i.e. between functioning and non-functional/collapsed states. Fragilization is the process of a state declining, covering all transformations towards a non-functional state. However, this process is not necessarily determined to end in a collapsed state. While the starting point may be a functioning state, states with pre-existing signs of defects are more likely to become fragile. Any shift closer to the pole of a functioning state with the above-defined features is labelled a 'strengthening of stateness'.¹³

State Transformation 2023-2024

Declines in StIx Total Value (context)			
Top 5 Countries	2023	2024	Change
	Total	Total	
Malawi	0.50	0.41	0.09
Syria	0.35	0.27	0.08
Saudi Arabia	0.70	0.63	0.07
Georgia	0.63	0.58	0.05
Iran	0.52	0.47	0.04
Gains in StIx Total Value (context)			
Top 5 Countries	2023	2024	Change
	Total	Total	
Niger	0.33	0.42	0.09
Iceland	0.81	0.89	0.08
Gabon	0.41	0.48	0.07
Guinea-Bissau	0.37	0.42	0.05
Italy	0.70	0.75	0.05

Stateness is deteriorating in many countries, but the number of states that experienced a strengthening of stateness between 2023 and 2024 (88) outweighs those states that experienced a decline of stateness (80).

Gains: State strengthening

The five countries that show the most pronounced signs of state strengthening between 2023 and 2024 are Niger, Iceland, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau and Italy.

Niger, a profound defective state since its independence 1960, is marked by political instability and two recent failed military coups in 2015 and 2021. Still, Niger was able to regain some control over its territory, although multiple non-state actors continue to challenge the monopoly of violence in the border regions with Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

Gabon, a defective state, shows signs of improvement of the monopoly of law, due to sinking levels of corruption within the judiciary and legislation. The main weak point of the state is the administration, that, although it offers services to citizens, is characterized by an urban-rural bias, leaving some communities cut off from the state.

Guinea-Bissau continues to be a profound defective state. Marginal improvements of the monopoly of violence can't remedy the increasingly disintegrating, underfunded state structures, as well as high levels of corruption, the proliferation of drug-trafficking networks or the barely effective administration.

Declines: Loss of Quality and State Fragilization

The most pronounced declines of stateness between 2023 and 2024 are found in Malawi, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Georgia and Iran.

In **Malawi**, a profound defective state since its independence from British colonial rule 1964, the monopoly of violence deteriorated between 2023 and 2024. A possible reason is the wave

¹³ Stawski and Lemm (forthcoming).

of refugees from Mozambique and growing political violence.

Syria, a collapsed state in 2014 and 2019, previously showed improvements of stateness, leading to a classification as a defective state in 2023. 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.

Although **Saudi-Arabia’s** stateness deteriorated, it remains a moderate functioning state. Saudi-Arabia is highly urbanized, and the state administration is only gradually extending to remote rural areas. The proxy war with Iran in Yemen and Syria does not challenge the monopoly of violence, even though there have been some militia attacks on Saudi-Arabia. The monopoly of law is well functioning.

Top 10 and Worst 10 Performer in 2024

Top 10 Performer 2024 (context measurement)					
	ML	MA	MV	Total	Rank
Singapore	0,88	0,94	0,95	0,92	1
Estonia	0,94	0,86	0,96	0,92	2
Denmark	0,91	0,89	0,92	0,91	3
Luxembourg	0,87	0,87	0,97	0,90	4
Norway	0,89	0,90	0,91	0,90	5
Netherlands	0,90	0,88	0,92	0,90	6
Germany	0,93	0,86	0,90	0,90	7
Iceland	0,91	0,82	0,97	0,90	8
Uruguay	0,92	0,80	0,96	0,89	9
New Zealand	0,87	0,83	0,96	0,89	10
Worst 10 Performer 2024 (context measurement)					
	ML	MA	MV	Total	Rank
Libya	0,00	0,31	0,09	0,03	174
Yemen	0,20	0,06	0,12	0,12	173
Haiti	0,43	0,10	0,19	0,20	172
Somalia	0,58	0,08	0,21	0,21	171
South Sudan	0,40	0,09	0,31	0,22	170
Central African Republic	0,36	0,11	0,38	0,25	169
Chad	0,41	0,09	0,41	0,25	168
Papua New Guinea	0,67	0,06	0,49	0,27	167
Syria	0,21	0,31	0,32	0,27	166
Sudan	0,48	0,26	0,19	0,29	165
ML = Monopoly of Law, MV = Monopoly of Violence, MA = Monopoly of Administration					

As in previous years, with a total Index value of 0.92 **Singapore** leads the ranking of 2024, placing an electoral autocracy¹⁴ 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

¹⁴ V-Dem (2024): Regimes of the world.

against corruption most corruption cases end with conviction.

Estonia, Denmark, Luxembourg and Norway complete the ranking of the top five performing states in 2024.

As in 2023, **Libya**, a non-functional/collapsed state, is the worst performing state in 2024. The armed factions primarily operate in pursuit of their own agendas, and the division that has emerged between the eastern and western regions in the aftermath of the power vacuum consequent to Ghaddafi's removal has rendered the nation almost ungovernable.¹⁵ The armed forces are known to exhibit strong localised allegiances and have historically maintained close ties with their respective local leaders. Meanwhile, ideological differences between political authorities have been identified as a significant contributing factor to the ongoing conflict between warring militias.

The ongoing civil war, coupled with the persistent institutional and geographical divisions that have become characteristic of the nation, have a detrimental effect on administrative structures and capacities. The judiciary is unable to function effectively, corruption is endemic, and informal courts are the primary source of conflict resolution between citizens and between militias and the government.

Yemen, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan are also among the top five of the worst performing states in 2024.

For more information including online analysis visit our website:

<https://www.stateness-index.org>

¹⁵ Abubakar and Wapmuk (2021): Libya: The Proliferation of Small Arms Post-Ghaddafi.

What´s new?

The indicator “Judicial accountability” (Monopoly of law) that examines if judges are disciplined when they are found responsible of serious misconduct is now transformed on a scale from 0.1 to 1 (former transformation 0 to 1).

Cautionary notes:

The time series for the indicators “Regime interregnum” and “Access to public services distributed by urban-rural location” encompasses the years 1900-2023. We filled in missing values using the most recent preceding value.

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