Global Governance Risk Report

1 October 2026

IN BRIEF	
WHAT'S HAPPENING	Governance risk concentrates in six collapsed or consolidating autocracies (V-Dem, 2026) [4]
HOW BIG	20 monitored countries sit in the fragile or strained integrity bands, 0.232–0.433 of 1.0 [1]
WHERE	Sudan, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar rank worst on the integrity index and on the five V-Dem component indices [1] [4]
WHAT CHANGED	Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Venezuela and Ethiopia each closed a civic-space band since 2018 [3]
CONFIDENCE	The integrity ranking is structural-only and provisional; per-country post-vintage reporting is carried for Sudan alone [1] [17]

1. Executive read

Six uncontested-power states anchor the crisis, but divergence matters most. Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen and Venezuela occupy the bottom of both the State Integrity Index (0.232–0.338) [1] and the five V-Dem component indices [4]. Those two lenses share inputs by construction: the integrity index's political dimension is built from the same V-Dem components [2]. Their agreement is therefore one reading seen twice, not confirmation from a second source. The independent lens, the CIVICUS Monitor, adds direction: Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Venezuela and Ethiopia have each closed a band since 2018, and closing civic space is a recognised leading indicator of crackdown and unrest [3]. What moved most in this vintage is not the level but the shape. Several mid-tier states show pillars disagreeing sharply inside a single country — El Salvador, Iran, Chad and Burundi — which is how democracies die in a way an average score cannot show. The divergences, not the country order, carry the findings. The five component readings are listed for each country, so they can be re-ordered any other way [4]. Verified post-vintage reporting exists for Sudan alone [17]; for the rest, movement claims cannot be made.

2. The ranked countries

Ordered by the equal-weighted mean of the five V-Dem component indices (V-Dem, 2026, 0–1, higher = more democratic) [4]. This ordering is computed for this report and is not a published V-Dem league table. Each country row below carries the five component readings, so the reader can re-order them any other way [4]. The set covers the 14 worst rows shown; six deeper rows are not covered here, so "worst" claims describe the 14 visible.

Afghanistan — electoral 0.069, liberal 0.055, participatory 0.184, deliberative 0.033, egalitarian 0.048; mean 0.078 [4]. No component rescues it: the row is uniform closure, not a facade. State integrity 0.238, fragile [1]. CIVICUS rates civic space closed at 8/100, worsened one band since 2018 [3]. The integrity index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1]. The food-crisis alert data used in this report [7] rests on hunger assessments more than 12 months old for 8 countries, so today's food-security picture here cannot be characterised from it [7].

Myanmar — electoral 0.08, liberal 0.04, participatory 0.139, deliberative 0.118, egalitarian 0.200; mean 0.115 [4]. The egalitarian component is the country's best pillar, roughly double liberal and electoral — the coup destroyed procedure faster than distribution [4]. Integrity 0.288, fragile [1]. Civic space closed, worsened since 2018 [3]. The index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1].

South Sudan — electoral 0.133, liberal 0.199, participatory 0.136, deliberative 0.101, egalitarian 0.080; mean 0.130 [4]. The egalitarian component is the floor while liberal sits highest — a collapsed state, not a closed one [4]. Integrity 0.248, fragile [1]. CIVICUS moved it up one band from closed to repressed, which the source explicitly warns is a move up from the worst rating, not a real opening [3].

Sudan — electoral 0.13, liberal 0.09, participatory 0.152, deliberative 0.045, egalitarian 0.251; mean 0.134 [4]. The deliberative component is the striking pillar: 0.045 against an egalitarian reading of 0.251, the largest proportional gap in the set — power makes distributional claims while abandoning justification [4]. Integrity 0.232, the worst in the universe, fragile [1]. Civic space closed, stable since 2018 [3]. Corruption: Worldwide Governance Indicators control of corruption 16.3 of 100 (2025 data) [15]. Since the index date, the verified record is the fullest in the set [17]. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) puts 19.47M people in Phase 3 or worse, for the analysis period January to May 2026 [9]. A second figure of 21.2M is dated 1 September 2025, over a year old and not current [18]. Inflation stands at 100.2% year on year [10] [11]. A UN fact-finding mission has determined that genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity took place [17]. Relief channels are rated impermeable [17]. Dated reporting stops at 10 July 2026 — August and September are a coverage gap, not calm [17].

Yemen — electoral 0.127, liberal 0.125, participatory 0.230, deliberative 0.111, egalitarian 0.086; mean 0.136 [4]. A flat, collapsed profile [4]. Integrity 0.301, fragile [1]. IPC reports 5.0M in crisis or worse, 48% of the assessed population, as of 31 May 2026 [25]. Yemen's civic-space rating is not covered by the CIVICUS rows used here [3].

Nicaragua — electoral 0.151, liberal 0.023, participatory 0.310, deliberative 0.016, egalitarian 0.262; mean 0.152 [4]. The component spread is extreme: participatory and egalitarian run ten to twenty times liberal and deliberative [4]. This is an elected executive that dismantled every check while keeping mobilisation machinery. Integrity 0.412, strained [1]. CIVICUS scores civic space 5/100, the lowest in the monitored set, worsened one band since 2018 [3]. The index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1].

Venezuela — electoral 0.181, liberal 0.089, participatory 0.463, deliberative 0.021, egalitarian 0.225; mean 0.196 [4]. The widest internal disagreement in the set: the participatory component is more than twenty times the deliberative one [4]. The regime organises participation while never arguing — the participatory figure is a control instrument, not a democratic asset [4]. Integrity 0.338, fragile [1]. Civic space closed, worsened since 2018 [3]. The index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1].

Palestine — electoral 0.08, liberal 0.362, participatory 0.192, deliberative 0.173, egalitarian 0.388; mean 0.239 [4]. The mirror case: the liberal and egalitarian components sit far above the electoral one because elections have not been held, under occupation and institutional fragmentation [4]. Integrity 0.419, strained [1]. CIVICUS does not rate Palestine — a coverage gap in the source, not a statement that civic space is open [3].

Chad — electoral 0.242, liberal 0.114, participatory 0.337, deliberative 0.322, egalitarian 0.185; mean 0.240 [4]. The cleanest facade-democracy signature: space to associate and speak sits well above any free contest at the ballot [4]. Integrity 0.427, strained [1]. Nearly a third of the population lives below the international extreme poverty line (2022) [42]. The index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1].

Burundi — electoral 0.185, liberal 0.150, participatory 0.437, deliberative 0.168, egalitarian 0.277; mean 0.243 [4]. Dense party and local-committee structures score high on the participatory component while elections are not competitive — the same pairing of a high participatory reading with a dead contest that appears in Venezuela [4]. Integrity 0.357, fragile [1]. Civic space closed, stable since 2018 [3]. The index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1].

El Salvador — electoral 0.321, liberal 0.141, participatory 0.350, deliberative 0.254, egalitarian 0.246; mean 0.262 [4]. The electoral component is the highest of the five — elections still run while courts, the constitutional chamber and the legislature have been bent [4]. This is the classic early autocratisation signature: the liberal component falls first, the ballot box last [4]. Integrity is not covered here [1]. No near-term national contest appears in the election calendar through April 2027 [57].

Central African Republic — electoral 0.293, liberal 0.206, participatory 0.289, deliberative 0.289, egalitarian 0.241; mean 0.264 [4]. The most even profile in the set: degraded across the board but with no pillar annihilated, consistent with a weak state rather than a destroying regime [4]. Integrity 0.348, fragile [1].

Iran — electoral 0.159, liberal 0.320, participatory 0.101, deliberative 0.284, egalitarian 0.497; mean 0.272 [4]. The loudest disagreement in the table: the egalitarian component is the highest in the visible set while the participatory component is the lowest [4]. The state tolerates more public deliberation than organised citizen autonomy, and delivers broader basic services than any country near this rank [4]. Civic space closed at 9/100, stable since 2018 [3]. Integrity 0.433, strained [1]. The index reflects lasting structures, not events, so any change since its date is not known [1].

Cameroon — electoral 0.260, liberal 0.270, participatory 0.203, deliberative 0.216, egalitarian 0.478; mean 0.285 [4]. Essentially flat on four components with a strong egalitarian reading — a coordinated autocracy where no procedural dimension escapes but distribution holds [4]. Civic space repressed, stable [3].

3. The divergences that matter

Facade signatures — participation without contest. Venezuela (participatory 0.463 against deliberative 0.021), Burundi (participatory 0.437 against electoral 0.185) and Nicaragua (participatory 0.310 against liberal 0.023) all show dense formal participatory machinery over a dead contest or dead courts [4]. Each of these readings is a two-component divergence: the other three components are not part of the claim. The practical meaning is direct [4]. Any programme counting "community structures" as access channels in these countries is counting instruments of regime control, not civic infrastructure [4].

The mirror — constraint without election. Palestine (liberal 0.362 against electoral 0.08) and, differently, Chad (participatory 0.337 and deliberative 0.322 against electoral 0.242) score well on non-electoral components while the ballot is absent or unfree [4]. For Palestine the gap reflects occupation and fragmentation rather than regime design; treating it as a governance score risks blaming the governed [4].

The squeeze — Iran. Iran's five components span 0.101 to 0.497 [4]. Averaged, Iran sits thirteenth in the visible set; read component by component, it is a regime with real factional argument and comparatively broad service distribution, no independent civic life, and a vetted ballot [4]. The average is a navigation device, and on Iran it points in both directions at once.

The early warning — El Salvador. The reading rests on two components: electoral 0.321 over liberal 0.141 [4]. The other three components — participatory 0.350, deliberative 0.254, egalitarian 0.246 — remain healthy, and this claim does not rest on them [4]. In Nicaragua the same two components, at terminal stage, read 0.151 over 0.023; in Venezuela, 0.181 over 0.089 [4]. El Salvador's two-component gap points in the direction that preceded consolidation in both [4]. It is the one profile in the set that looks like a country in motion [4].

Institutional absence versus institutional destruction. Afghanistan and South Sudan score liberal 0.055 and 0.199 — above Nicaragua's 0.023 [4]. A failed state scores better on formal constraints than a consolidated regime that deliberately destroyed them [4]. The liberal component is the earliest-moving indicator for elected governments turning on their own courts [4].

4. Watch list

Each item states what would confirm it.

El Salvador — the liberal component continues to fall. Confirm with: a dated court-packing or constitutional-chamber action, an opposition disqualification before the next national contest, or a 2027 V-Dem liberal reading materially below 0.141. None of these is reported in the figures this report carries [4] [57].

Venezuela — participatory machinery activated as coercion. Confirm with: a commune-level mobilisation tied to an official campaign, or closure of the last remaining independent electoral-observation channel. CIVICUS already shows the band closing since 2018 [3].

Nicaragua — civic-space floor tested. The score is 5/100 [3]; confirm with any further banning of association, further mass exile of civil-society figures, or a CIVICUS downgrade below the current rating [3].

Sudan — the reporting blackout lifts or persists. Dated reporting ends 10 July 2026 [17]. Confirm deterioration with renewed atrocity or famine-phase IPC classification after the gap; confirm improvement with a dated ceasefire and reopened corridor access [17]. The integrity data rates relief channels as closed to humanitarian operations [1].

Iran — the participatory floor breaches the electoral one. At 0.101 against 0.159 [4] the two are close; a 2027 V-Dem read with participatory below electoral would mark the closing of the last non-electoral channel [4]. Near-term: any mass-arrest wave targeting associations rather than public speech.

Sudan's 8 stale-assessment peers. Eight countries still have large populations in Phase 3 or worse hunger on assessments older than a year, and they are left off the alert list because the data is stale, not because the crises ended [7]. Confirm with a current IPC round naming them.

Planning instruction: Program leads and regional advisers should treat the two-component divergences — not the country order — as the planning guide. Before any programme decision this quarter, they should re-check Venezuela, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Iran against the watch-list confirmation criteria.

Sources

What this report was written from, numbered as the run retrieved it and cited in the text. Nothing here was supplied from memory; 44 further items were retrieved and not used, which is why some numbers are absent.

[1] State Integrity Index rankings (structural-only, 42/42 rows) — Watchfloor

[2] State integrity composite from the V-Dem component indices — V-Dem via Our World in Data, composed by Watchfloor — https://ourworldindata.org/democracy

[3] Civic space rating by country — CIVICUS Monitor — https://monitor.civicus.org/

[4] Electoral democracy index and its component indices — V-Dem via Our World in Data — https://ourworldindata.org/democracy

[7] Shock severity across monitored countries — Watchfloor shock-severity scan (computed over the monitored sources, not a publication)

[9] Population in IPC Phase 3+ (Crisis or worse) — IPC Official / Cadre Harmonisé — first-party consensus assessment — https://www.ipcinfo.org/

[10] GDP per capita, current USD — World Bank NY.GDP.PCAP.CD (WDI), 2025 — https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=SDN

[11] Mean year-over-year inflation across local staples (rice, maize, wheat, sorghum) averaged over admin2 markets — World Bank Microdata RTFP (Real-Time Food Prices), 2026-08 — https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/4218

[15] World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), 2025 — https://databank.worldbank.org/source/worldwide-governance-indicators

[17] Verified conflict context — SDN — Watchfloor curated conflict notes (human-reviewed; not a live measurement), 2026-10-01

[18] IPC food-security assessment: SDN — 21.2M people in crisis or worse (famine evidence) — World Bank Data360 (IPC), 2025-09-01T12:00:00 UTC

[25] IPC assessment: YEM — 5.0M people in crisis or worse (48% of assessed) — HDX HAPI (IPC), 2026-05-31T12:00:00 UTC

[42] Share of population below the international extreme poverty line — World Bank SI.POV.DDAY (WDI), 2022 — https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY?locations=TCD

[57] Elections ahead and how past calls scored — Watchfloor election watch (computed from the forecast ledger, not a publication)

Technical annex — how this report is made

The country order comes from the electoral democracy index and its four component indices as published by V-Dem (2026), combined here equal-weighted for navigation; V-Dem does not publish this table as a ranking, and every finding in the body rests on the published component readings, not the computed order [4]. The State Integrity Index is used as published, structural-only, and its political dimension is built from the same V-Dem components, so the two are not independent confirmations [1] [2]. Civic-space bands and their direction come from the CIVICUS Monitor as of 4 June 2026 [3]. Post-vintage verified reporting exists for Sudan only, ending 10 July 2026 [17]; for all other countries, no dated institutional event since the index vintage has been established, and none is asserted. Six of twenty requested V-Dem rows are not covered here, so rankings describe the 14 visible [4]. Confidence is high for published figures, medium for the provisional integrity ordering, and low for any post-vintage movement claim outside Sudan — which is why the watch list states confirmation criteria rather than findings [1] [17]. The two conflicting Sudan food-security figures are reported with their dates and not merged [9] [18]. Divergence claims name the two components they rest on; where a claim covers one component only, the component is named in the sentence [4].

Where the figures come from

1. State Integrity Index rankings, 20 lowest-ranked countries, structural-only values — Watchfloor, snapshot of 1 October 2026.
2. State Integrity Index methodology note on the political dimension's inputs — Watchfloor, snapshot of 1 October 2026.
3. CIVICUS Monitor civic-space ratings and band direction — CIVICUS Monitor, 4 June 2026.
4. V-Dem Democracy Report 2026, Table A2 component indices (electoral democracy index and its four components) — V-Dem, 2026.
5. Impact-aware shock leaderboard coverage disclosure on stale food-security assessments — Watchfloor, 1 October 2026.
6. "Sudan — IPC acute food insecurity analysis, 2026-01-19", analysis period January–May 2026, 19.47 million people in Phase 3 or worse — Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), official consensus, 19 January 2026.
7. Sudan inflation, 100.2% year on year — International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, 2025.
8. Sudan food-price and parallel-exchange indicators — World Bank Microdata price series, August 2026.
9. Worldwide Governance Indicators, Sudan control of corruption 16.3 of 100 — World Bank, 2025 data.
10. Country report: Sudan, including the UN Fact-Finding Mission determination, the holds rating and the coverage limit dated 10 July 2026 — Watchfloor, 1 October 2026.
11. Data360 IPC crisis alert, Sudan, 21.2 million people in Phase 3 or worse, dated 1 September 2025 — over one year old and not current.
12. Yemen IPC analysis, 5.0 million people in crisis or worse as of 31 May 2026 — Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 2026.
13. Chad poverty share below the international extreme poverty line, 2022 — World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2025.
14. Election calendar, national contests through April 2027 — Watchfloor Election Watch, 1 October 2026.