



**AFRICA CENTER**  
**FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

**National Security Strategy  
Development Workshop:  
Western Africa**

**SYLLABUS**

**Dakar, Senegal**  
**6-10 August 2018**





# AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

## NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP: WESTERN AFRICA

6-10 August 2018  
Dakar, Senegal

### SYLLABUS

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# ABOUT THE AFRICA CENTER

Since its inception in 1999, the Africa Center has served as a forum for research, academic programs, and the exchange of ideas with the aim of enhancing citizen security by strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of African institutions, in support of U.S.- Africa policy.

## VISION

*Security for all Africans championed by effective institutions accountable to their citizens.*

Realizing the vision of an Africa free from organized armed violence guaranteed by African institutions that are committed to protecting African citizens is the driving motivation of the Africa Center. This aim underscores the Center's commitment to contributing to tangible impacts by working with our African partners – military and civilian, governmental and civil society, as well as national and regional. All have valuable roles to play in mitigating the complex drivers of conflict on the continent today. Accountability to citizens is an important element of our vision as it reinforces the point that in order to be effective, security institutions must not just be “strong,” but also be responsive to and protective of the rights of citizens.

## MISSION

*To advance African security by expanding understanding, providing a trusted platform for dialogue, building enduring partnerships, and catalyzing strategic solutions.*

The Africa Center's mission revolves around the generation and dissemination of knowledge through our research, academic programs, strategic communications, and community chapters. Drawing on the practical experiences and lessons learned from security efforts on the continent, we aim to generate relevant insight and analysis that can inform practitioners and policymakers on the pressing security challenges that they face. Recognizing that addressing serious challenges can only come about through candid and thoughtful exchanges, the Center provides face-to-face and virtual platforms where partners can exchange views on priorities and sound practices. These exchanges foster relationships that, in turn, are maintained over time through the Center's community chapters, communities of interest, follow-on programs, and ongoing dialogue between participants and staff. This dialogue—infused with real world experiences and fresh analysis—provides an opportunity for continued learning and catalyzes concrete actions.

## MANDATE

The Africa Center is a U.S. Department of Defense institution established and funded by Congress for the study of security issues relating to Africa and serving as a forum for bilateral and multilateral research, communication, exchange of ideas, and training involving military and civilian participants. (10 U.S.C 342)

## **Introduction**

### **Program Overview**

Very few West African countries have a written, comprehensive and coordinated strategy to pursue their strategic national security goals. Even where written strategies exist, they do not tend to align with current and emerging security challenges across the sub-region. In some cases, countries have sectoral policies and plans with no overarching coordinating document. This workshop aims to examine, and emphasize the value of, a vision-led national security strategy that provides a nation with a clear framework for addressing multifaceted security threats and sustaining human, societal and state security. In this context, participants will consider appropriate definitions, methodology, processes, and mechanisms for the development and implementation of national security strategies. Guiding questions will include:

1. What security, whose security and what is national security? How to identify and prioritize security threats and opportunities and divide labor among security institutions and agencies?
2. What is the rationale for national security strategies? What are the desirable methodology, processes and elements of national security strategy development?
3. How to link national security strategy formulation with strategic leadership, national vision and ownership, resources management, civilian oversight, interagency coordination, and external partnership?
4. What national security strategy development and implementation lessons could countries in Western Africa share?

### **Academic Approach**

Recognizing the diversity of challenges and opportunities in security sector governance, this workshop will seek to more intentionally capture important lessons and sound practices through:

- a) Plenary sessions that reinforce peer learning by focusing on practical applications and sound security sector governance principles;
- b) Small group discussions that reinforce the learning objectives and challenge participants to address both whole of government and more specific technical issues.

The workshop will be conducted in English, French, and Portuguese. The program will be conducted under a strict policy of non-attribution.

## The Syllabus

This syllabus provides an overview of academic goals and key policy questions related to national security strategy development in Africa. For each session, we provide a brief introduction and list questions for discussion. We also include selected articles, whose primary purpose is to help frame the issues within the context of available scholarship and policy documents. The syllabus likely covers more issues and materials than can be sufficiently discussed in the available time. We hope that you use these materials as resources even after the program concludes.

We encourage you to bring questions and suggestions about the materials and the course in general to our attention. The quality of our programs and courses has greatly benefited from the enthusiastic willingness of past participants to offer constructive criticisms and suggestions. We are quite willing to discuss specific topics with you. We encourage you to call upon them, as we also encourage you to read the assigned material and actively participate in your discussion groups.





# Map of Africa



Map No. 4015 Rev. 7 UNITED NATIONS  
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## Session 1: Conceptual Evolution of Security and Strategy in Western Africa

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Consider the evolving nature of security, and examine its implications for national security strategy development in West Africa.
- Discuss the security-development nexus, and examine the synergetic relationships between human, societal and state security.

### **Background:**

Over the last two decades, the nature of insecurity in West Africa has evolved dramatically. On a number of fronts, the region has made significant progress. Nevertheless, many of the key drivers of instability— including fragile institutions, pervasive corruption, and weak governance— persist. A youth bulge has the potential to unlock economic dividends. However, unchecked population growth can destabilize regions with chronically high unemployment. Unprecedented economic growth has given rise to a growing middle class, but wealth distribution remains uneven. Desertification threatens to upend pastoralist grazing patterns in the Sahel, where networks of bandits and terrorists operate with impunity. The regional security architecture is also evolving. ECOWAS has succeeded in reinforcing democratic norms where they have threatened fallen short.

Thus, there is growing recognition that security challenges are interconnected. In West Africa, insecurity also cuts across multiple dimensions. Hence the notion of “human security,” which upholds the protection of the individual at its core, has risen to the fore. Human security acknowledges the shortcomings of the state- or regime-centric approach. Today’s security paradigm therefore unites traditional and non-traditional security perspectives. In a resource-constrained environment, every decision bears a significant opportunity cost. A broader definition of security could justify more investment in poverty reduction programs. State and citizen security should be complementary and mutually reinforcing (the *security-development nexus*).

The word “strategy” originates from the Greek *stratēgia*, meaning the “art of troop leader; office of general, command, generalship.” It has been long been defined as a high-level plan to achieve an objective under conditions of uncertainty. However, given the complexity of West Africa’s security landscape, a military approach is no longer sufficient. A national security strategy must address the region’s multi-faceted security challenges. The process, and the stakeholders, must therefore reflect a “whole-of-society” approach. Thus civil society, the media, and the private sector must also be included in the conversation. A strategic framework prioritizes security challenges and guides instruments of national power. In its absence, state and citizen security will remain elusive.

Success is rarely accidental. Achievements in warfare, chess, politics, sports, or business result from a strategic approach. In a rapidly changing security environment, resources alone do not assure success. Tackling Africa’s security challenges requires a combination of skills, wit, resources, and creativity.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Is there a need to reform security governance in your country? In the sub-region?
- How has the definition of “security” evolved in Africa to reflect the changed security environment? What changes have taken place in your country and sub- region?
- How have you applied the concepts of security and strategy in your work?
- Has your understanding of security and strategy changed over time in your country/region and why?
- Has your understanding of the concepts of security and strategy after the first session changed? How and why?

**Readings:**

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, “National Security Policies,” SSR Backgrounder Series (Geneva: DCAF, 2015). *Also available in French.*

[https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF\\_BG\\_9\\_National%20Security%20Policies.11.15.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_9_National%20Security%20Policies.11.15.pdf)

“World Bank. 2011. World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development. Open Knowledge Repository. *Also available in French.*

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389>

“La sécurité humaine en Afrique de l’Ouest: Défis, synergies et actions pour un agenda régional,” Club du Sahel et de l’Afrique de l’Ouest/OCDE, Lomé (Togo), 2006.

<https://www.oecd.org/fr/csao/evenements/38523001.pdf>

## Session 2: National Security Leadership in Africa

**Format:** *Plenary Presentation and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Examine the role of leadership in Africa.
- Evaluate how these changing patterns may affect future security sector leadership.
- Discuss the perils and challenges of crafting national security strategy in a complex security environment.

### **Background**

Building leadership capacity is key to delivering security in West Africa. What constitutes excellent and ethical “African” leadership, however, is still up for debate. According to House et al, leadership is “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members.”<sup>1</sup> Ethics, meanwhile, are the specific and expected values of an organization. Max Weber defined ethics as “psychological sanctions which give a direction to practical conduct and [hold] the individual to it.” Leadership and ethics, in the context of peace and security in West Africa, are collaborative processes in pursuit of citizens’ collective aspirations.

West Africa is replete with examples of successful and influential leaders. Challenges remain, however, and it is inherent to reexamine common attributes expected of “good” and “effective” leaders. Effective leaders garner the trust of their subordinates and enable them to follow guidance to effectively complete a mission. They serve as examples, setting the tone of their unit and guiding members of the team to make decisions in accordance with a set mandate.

States and organizations in West Africa must strategically nurture relevant leadership competencies in current and future generations. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, also points to the importance of fostering “accountability and transparency in the exercise of leadership functions.”

In Africa, leadership challenges abound. Chief among these is the ability to manage personnel and assets in a manner that allows them to meet day-to-day requirements, while maintaining readiness and the flexibility to respond to major contingencies. Other challenges include ethical decision-making; resource scarcity; transparency; and operating in a high stress or dangerous environment. Salim has also spoken to transcending “the notion of leadership being a personalized fixation.” This means building a culture of leadership as an institution.

Security and development challenges are likely to proliferate in the years ahead. African leaders must be able to adapt to change, drive innovation, and thrive in uncertain, chaotic conditions. They must create an environment that rewards innovation, where conventional wisdom is not dogma, and where creativity is not only allowed, but encouraged.

<sup>1</sup>Robert J. House et al., *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, Sage Publications, 2004.

**Readings:**

Bulley, Cynthia A., Noble Osei-Bonsu, and Hassan Adedoyin Rasaq. "Attributes of leadership effectiveness in West Africa." *AIB Insights* 17, no. 1 (2017): 11  
[https://documents.aib.msu.edu/publications/insights/v17n1/v17n1\\_Article3.pdf](https://documents.aib.msu.edu/publications/insights/v17n1/v17n1_Article3.pdf)

Ouédraogo, Emile. *Advancing military professionalism in Africa*. No. NDU/ACSS-RP-6. National Defense Univ Fort Mcnair Dc Africa center for strategic studies, 2014. *Also available in French*.

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, "Security Sector Governance: Lessons from West Africa", SSR Backgrounder Series (Geneva: DCAF, 2015). *Also available in French*. <https://www.dcaf.ch/gouvernance-du-secteur-de-la-securite>

## Session 3: Key Elements of National Security Development (NSSD) Process I

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Understand some key elements of the national security strategy development process.
- Discuss practical steps for initiating, drafting and approving a national security strategy.

### **Background:**

One of the core functions of a nation-state is to provide for the security and safety of its citizens. Many African states have enshrined this commitment in their constitutions. However, they often fail to uphold it in practice. A shifting security landscape, and a revolution in the definition of security itself, demands a fundamental rethinking of national security strategy development. Decision-makers must prioritize and manage security threats within the context of this new paradigm. A well-designed formulation process is critical to meeting this objective.

A state's unique set of national interests and values will shade the contours of its national strategy. However, these principles are never in stasis. As noted in Session 1, the notion of national security continues to evolve. Some nevertheless caution against an overly expansive definition of national security. Caudle remarks, for instance, that security can be "mean all things to all people or nothing to no one" (Caudle, 2009:8). It should also be noted that policy and strategy are distinct. While national security policy lays out broad priorities within the context of a national vision, the strategy describes how, including with what resources, it means to achieve them.

It is also worth remarking that the process is as least as important as the product. States that have outsourced their National Security Strategies have often failed to implement them. A well-designed process also builds internal and external support for the document itself. Other important elements include a clear understanding of the purpose, scope of coverage, and drafting process. In addition to delivering a baseline for shared principles across security sector institutions, the process provides a framework for cross-government coordination. Other challenges include problems achieving consensus, and difficulty prioritizing security challenges.

In preparation for this Workshop, the Africa Center commissioned a series of case studies. These documents examine national security strategy development processes in a number of African states. These will serve to deepen your understanding of effective approaches to national security and strategic thinking in Africa. You will note that the practices for crafting national security strategies differ across countries. All nevertheless share common features that provide opportunities for peer learning.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- Are national values and interests well defined in your country?
- Based on the national values and interests of your country, how would you define the "national security"?
- Do you see any rationale for crafting a national security strategy for your country? If yes, what would be the purpose and scope of coverage of the national security strategy development?

- What steps would you follow in terms of initiation, drafting, consultation and approval of national security strategy document of your country?
- How does traditional/military security fare in providing security to ordinary citizens?

**Readings:**

Cancian, M., Schaus, J., Shah, H. and Hopkins, A. (2017). *“Formulating National Security Strategy: Past Experience and Future Choices.”* Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/formulating-national-security-strategy>

Caudle, S. (2009). “National Security Strategies: Security from what, for Whom, and by What Means”. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* Vol. 6(1): pp: 1-26).

<https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/jhsem.2009.6.1/jhsem.2009.6.1.1526/jhsem.2009.6.1.1526.xml>

Stolberg, A. (2012). *“How Nation-States Craft “National Security Strategy Documents”*. Carlisle: US Army Strategic Studies Institute (SSI).

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1128>



## Session 4: Key Elements of National Security Development Process II

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Understand how security threats and risks are assessed and prioritized.
- Examine how the goals and objectives of a national security strategy are formulated and prioritized.

### **Background:**

An effective strategy must prioritize vulnerabilities, risks, and threats to the state and its citizens. While these terms often used interchangeably, there are important distinctions. *Threats* may be natural or manmade, and carry active potential for harm. *Vulnerability* denotes weaknesses or gaps in defense or security efforts. They may be economic, physical, social, or environmental. *Risk*, meanwhile, lies at the intersection of the two. That is, a risk signifies the likelihood a negative event will occur, and its consequences. A potential threat such as the military *capability* of an adversary must also carry with it the *intention* to use such capability. As such, threats are better understood in the context of their risk potential. Strategic-level documents will specify acceptable levels of risk. These are expressed at the state, societal, and individual level.

Countries used various metrics to classify national security threats and risks. These include: (i) external or internal, (ii) global, regional and national, (iii) short-term and long term, (iv) security interests (vital and strategic) or (v) dimensions of security (state, societal, and human). Simply charting security threats, however, is not sufficient. Threats need to be prioritized to ensure resources and priorities are in alignment. This process also serves to guard against the tyranny of the immediate. This reactive stance, whereby states respond to threats as they arise, is neither effective nor efficient.

Once threats (military and non-military) are listed and prioritized, the national security strategy will designate the institutions charged with defending against them. Policies, regulations, and legislation typically frame division of labor in security sector bodies. However, today's theater demands collective, cooperative and coordinated responses (as discussed in Session 7). The next step is to formulate core security objectives. These are informed by the country's security *vision* (the desired future situation), values, and interests.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What are the security threats (military and non-military, actual and potential) facing your country/region? How would you rank these threats and why?
- On the basis of these security threats facing your country/region, what would be the security *vision* (the desired future situation) for your country/region? How can you link such a vision to the national/regional vision, values and interests (if available) of your country/region?
- If your country/region were to develop its own national security strategy, what would be the core national security goals and objectives to be achieved?

**Readings:**

“Build NATIONAL vision and strategy.” ISSAT/DCAF (2018).

<https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-Methodology-Guidance/National-Reform-Process/Reform-Phases/Formulate-Vision-and-Strategy/Build-NATIONAL-vision-and-strategy>

## Session 5: National Security Strategy Document

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Discuss what a national security strategy document should look like.
- Demonstrate the integrated/holistic nature of the document.
- Explore how it should relate to sectoral, regional and international strategies.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of making the document public or classified.

### **Background:**

A national security strategy is a powerful strategic communications tool. It articulates the strategic vision for the country, and clearly conveys intent to both friends and foes alike. This vision should provide a clear picture of national goals to be achieved over a given time period. The document should be based on a realistic assessment of current and projected internal and external threats.

In West Africa, formal, publicly-accessible national security strategy documents are the exception. Many states have defense policies, military strategies, or defense white papers. These are developed by the Ministry of Defense, and directed towards state security. Countries may also have sectoral strategies to address, for instance, maritime insecurity or terrorism. In many cases, these sectoral policies and plans lack coherence. They're developed in the absence of an overarching, coordinating strategy.

Many West African states are also party to ECOWAS's regional peace and security architecture. For example, ECOWAS inaugurated its Integrated Maritime Strategy in 2008. The Africa Union, meanwhile, has developed a corresponding document (2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy). ECOWAS has also published strategic documents aimed at countering illicit trafficking, transnational terrorism, and unchecked population growth.

While national security strategy documents should allow for regional and sectoral strategies, it must be noted that these documents are not sectoral. They should be comprehensive, reflecting threats to both state and citizen. Their development follows a standard and near-universal cycle including initiation, drafting, conciliation, and approval phases. Because of hard choices about resource allocation, the document must reflect principles of suitability, sustainability and feasibility.

Even when a strategy is developed and announced, the document itself is often classified. This poses a number of challenges, not least among which are: inadequate national ownership; poor management and use of security sector resources; and fragmented coordination. When strategic objectives are defined by the state alone, the final product will reflect narrow, state-centric interests. In a citizen-centric document, security priorities will be known, shared, and owned by all citizens.

While national security strategies vary from state to state, they share three overarching themes: perceived domestic and international threats, challenges and opportunities; roles and responsibilities of implementing agencies; and the state's role in the international system. Above

all, a national security strategy should be the product of a collaborative process. If the goal is to realize a more inclusive document, then the citizen must be at the center of its development.

**Discussion Questions:**

- How are sectoral strategies integrated into a national security strategy? Why?
- Have you engaged in drafting any aspect of your country's security strategy? If so, can you describe the contours of the document? Is the strategy public or classified? Is it integrated with other sectoral strategies and sub-national levels?
- If you were charged with drafting or reviewing your country or (sub)regional security strategy, what would the document look like? How would you integrate other sectoral strategies and sub-national level?
- How often should the document be revised? Should the review process follow a schedule?

**Reading:**

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, "Tool 2: Security Sector Reform Programming", International Security Sector Advisory Team. (Geneva: DCAF, 2015). *Also available in French.*

<https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library2/Tools/Tool-2-Security-Sector-Reform-Programming>

## Session 6: Resources for National Security Strategy

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Understand how resources are mobilized and allocated for the development of national security strategy and its implementation.
- Probe how national security strategy development helps in aligning resources (internal and external) and leveraging partnership (regional and international) to achieve national security objectives.

### **Background:**

Resource management has far-reaching implications for national security in Africa. An effective national security strategy will align spending with security. When spending and procurement decisions are not grounded in strategy, scarce resources may be squandered on unnecessary equipment and inappropriate ventures.

In West Africa, efficient resource management is especially important. Twice the size of Europe, West Africa lays claim to vast hydrocarbon fields, fishing stocks, and mineral deposits. These natural resources have the potential to generate tremendous wealth in the form of corporate taxes, royalties, and fees. However, effective rates in West Africa are a fraction of the global average. Moreover, as recent years have demonstrated, commodity-based revenues are at the mercy of global shocks. Domestic revenue generation also remains anemic. It is therefore important to enhance the tax effort and improve domestic resource management.

Budgeting processes should be also transparent. State-sanctioned secrecy has underwritten spiraling and often unsustainable spending sprees. Budget opacity is also inefficient. It drives weak procurement systems and wasteful personnel spending. These have dramatically eroded security sector efficiency and operational effectiveness. Transparency also provides for public buy-in of defense policy and spending objectives. This allows constituents to shape the trajectory of their state's security strategy.

Many African countries require some level of support to sustain their security sectors. External security assistance therefore represents a crucial source of revenue. This can take the form of grants, equipment transfers, soft loans or technical assistance. However, these revenue flows can be counterproductive without a credible national security strategy process. Indeed, several country case studies indicate that the national security strategy itself was externally financed. Outside funding threatens to undermine ownership and sustainability.

Some practitioners believe that security objectives should determine resources. The finance minister will bring the necessary resources to bear for their implementation. Others support a means-driven model. They argue that security strategy should be tailored to resource availability (both national and donor resources). Ultimately, the process should be collaborative and iterative. A national security strategy without resources (institutions, people, budgets, equipment) will not be worth the paper it is written on unless it is subjected to budgetary planning and proper oversight.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How are resources (internal and external) mobilized for, and allocated to, security institutions and agencies in your country/region?
2. How does a national/regional security strategy help to align resources with security threats?
3. What are some of the challenges associated with external security assistance? How does a national security strategy facilitate alignment of external assistance with domestic priorities?
4. Should resource availability drive strategic objectives, or vice versa?

**Readings:**

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, "Tool 4: Effective Management of External Support to Security Sector Reform," International Security Sector Advisory Team. (Geneva: DCAF, 2015). *Also available in French.*

<https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Tools/Tool-4-Effective-Management-of-External-Support-to-Security-Sector-Reform>

Harborne, B., Dorotinsky, W. and Bisca, P. (2017). *Securing Development: A Guide to Public Expenditure Reviews in the Security and Criminal Justice Sectors*. Washington: World Bank Group. *Also Available in French.*

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/784781496312346560/Securing-development-public-finance-and-the-security-sector-a-guide-to-public-expenditure-reviews-in-the-security-and-criminal-justice-sectors>

## Session 7: Implementation of National Security Strategy

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### **Objectives:**

- Understand how national security strategy defines responsibilities for its implementation.
- Discuss the mechanisms and institutions for security sector interagency collaboration, coordination, harmonization and decision-making.
- Recognize the importance of flexibility and capacity for adaptation in the implementation of a national security strategy.

### **Background:**

The previous sessions examined various aspects of the strategic formulation process, from drafting to dissemination. This session will discuss its implementation. A national security strategy will designate the roles and responsibilities of the institutions charged with carrying out objectives. The document will also designate mechanisms to coordinate their activities and decisions. As discussed in previous sessions, a comprehensive review of national security threats will inform division of labor. Certain roles are defined constitutionally or via legislation. However, the national security strategy development process provides an opportunity to collectively assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of relevant institutions in addressing security challenges.

Once roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, commanding and subordinate roles must be delineated. In lieu of a detailed implementation plan, some countries have developed separate, sectoral implementation strategies. These contain key performance indicators and verification methods for specific security institutions and agencies.

Whatever form a specific implementation plan takes, it must have flexibility and adaptability built into it. The document must acknowledge the changing nature of West Africa's security landscape, and provide relevant ministries and agencies with the resources to adapt and react accordingly.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- Have you ever been involved in drafting any security strategies for your country/region? If yes, does said strategy have an implementation plan and what are its key elements?
- How are roles and responsibilities assigned to security institutions and agencies in your country/region? Are there overlaps in these roles and responsibilities, and how are they addressed?
- Do you think national security strategy development may help in assigning roles and responsibilities and improving coordination in security sector, and if so, how?

### **Readings:**

Caudle, S. (2009). "National Security Strategies: Security from what, for Whom, and by What Means". *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* Vol. 6(1): pp: 1-26).

<https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/jhsem.2009.6.1/jhsem.2009.6.1.1526/jhsem.2009.6.1.1526.xml>





## Session 8: Oversight Mechanisms and Institutions

**Format:** *Plenary Presentations and Moderated Question-Answer Session*

### Objectives:

- Explore how effective oversight of the security sector enhances democratic control, accountability, and transparency.
- Demonstrate the need to improve information flows between civilian authorities and military officials while also building capacity on both sides.

### Background:

In West Africa, security sector governance remains a highly political endeavor. Security bodies thus remain susceptible to a culture of *military exceptionalism*: the notion that national security is a no-go zone for civil authorities. The challenge, then, is to provide for effective oversight of security institutions within the context of inclusive, democratic processes. This can prove to be a delicate balancing act. Professional military establishments must be willing to submit to civilian oversight. At the same time, they must be strong enough to resist being sucked into politics. A national security strategy can establish, and reinforce, baseline standards of accountability and transparency.

Formal oversight institutions can be internal or external. External mechanisms include watchdog agencies, parliamentary subcommittees, auditors and accountants general, and the judiciary. Internal agencies consist of departmental ombudsmen, internal affairs, and internal whistleblower protection offices. Parliament and other external agencies serve to generate political will for effective enforcement. Internal mechanisms, meanwhile, are better positioned to detect infractions. In this sense, the two should be mutually-reinforcing. Informal organizations, such as the media and civil society, serve an equally important function. They expose conflicts of interest, corruption, and waste. By guarding the guardians, they provide another layer of redundancy in the oversight architecture. These bodies also facilitate information flows, educate the public, and monitor the efficacy of the oversight process.

A number of challenges arise from the over-classification of security activities. In 2015, only seven African states published disaggregated defense figures, and 40% released nothing at all. Coordinated oversight and empowered parliamentary committees could provide a solution for monitoring classified issues. The *Transparency International* Defense Corruption Index identifies five risk areas (political, financial, personnel, operations and procurement) and 29 sub-categories. These can be used as benchmarks for monitoring progress.

Parliamentary committees play a central role in security sector oversight. Too often, however, interaction between military and civilian institutions is adversarial and unproductive. In Africa's nascent democracies, some elected parliamentarians see this forum as an opportunity to "control" the security forces. Unfortunately, most elected representatives understand little about security or strategy. Security forces are equally ill-informed on issues like national budgetary parameters. Some states have taken steps to empower independent audit and investigative committees to oversee the security realm, but challenges remain.

### Discussion Questions

- Which institutions play security sector oversight roles? Is civil society engaged in such oversight, and how? Are there feedback mechanisms between and among these oversight institutions?
- How would you describe the relationship between security sector bodies and parliament and civil society?
- How could an inclusive national security strategy improve the oversight of security sector institutions and agency?

### Readings:

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, “Parliaments,” SSR Backgrounder Series (Geneva: DCAF, 2015). *Also available in French.*

[https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF\\_BG\\_8\\_Parliaments.11.15.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_8_Parliaments.11.15.pdf)

Transparency International. “Government Defense Anti-Corruption Index.” Transparency International Defense and Security, 2015. <https://government.defenceindex.org/#close>