



AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

African Parliamentarians' Forum 2021: Oversight of the Security Sector

SYLLABUS

March 2021

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

The balance of powers between branches of government is a fundamental principle underlying most democracies, but a successful balance demands empowerment of all branches. This balance can be especially important – and especially difficult – when it comes to issues of national security. Legislators can serve as an important bridge between security services and citizens and play key roles in overseeing security policy, budgets, and personnel. This program is intended to provide a forum to consider the African security environment, to examine the legislative role in the national security process, and to share experiences and engage with experts regarding the tools of parliamentary oversight.

Week 1: Parliament’s Role in National Security

Through plenary and discussion, this week we will take up key questions about the roles of members of the legislative branch in the security arena. Participants and speakers can share experiences and explain practices in various systems to explore questions such as:

- What are the security threats that your government confronts?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the legislator in national security and in addressing those dangers?
- What makes for an effective legislator, even in a system where there may be an imbalance of power between branches of government?

Suggested Readings:

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. “Spike in Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Underscores Shifting Security Landscape,” January 29, 2021. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/spike-militant-islamist-violence-africa-shifting-security-landscape/>

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. “Analyzing Africa's Second Wave of Covid-19,” January 5, 2021. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/analyzing-africas-second-wave-of-covid-19/>

Centre d’études stratégiques de l’Afrique. “Analyse De La Seconde Vague De COVID-19 En Afrique.” Centre d’Études Stratégiques de l’Afrique, January 26, 2021. <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/analyse-de-la-seconde-vague-de-covid-19-en-afrique/>

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. “Parliaments: Roles and Responsibilities in Good Security Sector Governance,” 2015. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_8_Parliaments.11.15.pdf

Centre pour le contrôle démocratique des forces armées – Genève. “Les Parlements: Rôles Et Responsabilités Dans La Bonne Gouvernance Du Secteur De La Sécurité,” 2015. http://www.dcaf-tunisie.org//adminDcaf/upload/ejournal/documentfr_10273.pdf

Week 2: Security Sector Oversight

Through plenary and discussion, this week we will examine more specifically the oversight of military, police and gendarmerie, and other security services. By sharing best practices and insights, we will explore questions such as:

- What are some key tools of oversight to promote accountability and combat corruption?
- What is the role of parliamentarians in terms of oversight of police and gendarmerie? Of uniformed military?
- How can parliaments help serve as a bridge between the police and the public, including women and youth? Why are such segments of society important to security?
- How does oversight differ if one belongs to the ruling party or an opposition party?

Suggested Readings:

Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Global Parliamentary Report 2017 Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's Power to Hold Government to Account," pages 99-108.

<https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2017-10/global-parliamentary-report-2017-parliamentary-oversight-parliaments-power-hold-government-account>

Union Interparlementaire. "Rapport Parlementaire Mondial 2017 – Le Contrôle Parlementaire : Le Pouvoir Du Parlement De Demander Des Comptes Au Gouvernement," pages 114-123.

<https://www.ipu.org/fr/ressources/publications/propos-de-luip/2018-03/rapport-annuel-dactivites-de-lunion-interparlementaire-2017>

Week Three: Security Spending Analysis and Accountability

This week we will discuss the subject of the oversight of security sector resources, including budget, procurement, and personnel. Drawing on the experiences of participants and speakers, it will seek to address questions such as:

- What are the roles and tools for parliament to oversee accountable security budgets?
- How can parliamentarians balance the need for both transparency and security in a democracy?
- What are the roles and tools for parliament in the procurement process?
- What are some useful lessons learned from your experience? Do whistleblower protections exist and are they helpful? How public is information about security spending?

Suggested Readings:

Transparency International, "Weaponising Transparency: Defence Procurement Reform as a Counterterrorism Strategy in Nigeria, May 2017. http://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Weaponising_Transparency_Web.pdf

Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Uganda's Experience," November 28, 2018. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/parliamentary-oversight-of-the-security-sector-ugandas-experience/>

Le Centre d'études stratégiques de l'Afrique Contrôle parlementaire dans le secteur de la sécurité : L'expérience ougandaise,"14 décembre 2018.

<https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/controle-parlementaire-dans-le-secteur-de-la-securite-lexperience-ougandaise/>

National Democratic Institute, Le control le budgétaire du secteur de a sécurité par les parlements du burkina faso, du mali et du niger: guide des commissions de defense et de sécurité," 2017.

https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Guide%20Controle%20Budgetaire%20Secteur%20Securite_CDS.pdf

Week Four: Communicating with Constituencies, Communities, and Civil Society

In this final discussion, we will consider citizen perceptions of security, public trust in government, and communicating with constituents, civil society, and communities. Questions will include issues such as:

- How do you engage with the public?
- How do citizen or constituent priorities for security influence the work of parliament?
- What have been the most effective tools for outreach and engagement with the public?
- How can legislators act as a bridge to communities and how can this improve security?
- How do technology and social media affect security and the role of a member of parliament?
- How has COVID-19 affected the security situation in your country? How are you engaging with the public about these issues?

Suggested Readings:

Afrobarometer, Christiaan Keulder, "Africans aren't satisfied with government efforts to fight corruption," 9 February 2021. <https://afrobarometer.org/blogs/africans-arent-satisfied-government-efforts-fight-corruption>

Afrobarometer, Gildfred Asiamah, Ousmane Djiby Sambou, and Sadhiska Bhoojedhur, "Are African governments doing enough to help young people? Here's what Afrobarometer surveys reveal," 8 February 2021. <https://afrobarometer.org/blogs/are-african-governments-doing-enough-help-young-people-heres-what-afrobarometer-surveys-reveal>

Afrobarometer, Christiaan Keulder, "Les Africains jugent la corruption en hausse, craignent des représailles s'ils en parlent," 26 January 2021.

https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ad421-la_corruption_en_hausse_en_afrique-depeche_afrobarometer-francais-24jan21.pdf

Afrobarometer, Gildfred Asiamah, Ousmane Djiby Sambou, and Sadhiska Bhoojedhur, "AD418: Selon les Africains, leurs gouvernements négligent la jeunesse," 8 February 2021.

[https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ad421-la corruption en hausse en afrique-depeche afrobarometer-francais-24jan21.pdf](https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ad421-la%20corruption%20en%20hausse%20en%20afrique-depeche%20afrobarometer-francais-24jan21.pdf)

Additional Resources:

Inter-parliamentary Union. "Evaluating parliament: A self-assessment toolkit for parliaments," 2008. <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/toolkit/2016-07/evaluating-parliament-self-assessment-toolkit-parliaments>

Union interparlementaire. "Evaluer le Parlement: Outils d'auto-évaluation à l'intention des parlements, 2008." <https://www.ipu.org/fr/ressources/publications/reference/2016-07/evaluer-le-parlement-outils-dauto-evaluation-lintention-des-parlements>

Ebo, Adedeji, and Boubacar N'Diaye. "Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges." Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, June 2008. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/bm_parliament_oversightss_rafica_en.pdf

Ebo, Adedeji, and Boubacar N'Diaye. "Contrôle Parlementaire Du Secteur De La Sécurité En Afrique De l'Ouest: Opportunités Et Défis." Centre pour le Contrôle Démocratique des Forces Armées – Genève (DCAF), June 2008. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/bm_parliament_oversightss_rafica_fr.pdf