



**AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

**African Parliamentarians Forum 2022:
Parliamentary Pathways to Democratic
Security Governance**

SYLLABUS

March 2022



AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

African Parliamentarians Forum 2022: Parliamentary Pathways to Democratic Security Governance

**1-2 March 2022
8-9 March 2022
15-16 March 2022
22-23 March 2022**

SYLLABUS

Table of Contents

About the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Week 1: Roles of Parliament in Democratic and Civilian Security Sector Governance.....	8
Week 2: Oversight – Overseeing Security and Defense Budgets.....	11
Week 3: Accountability – Fostering Security Sector Professionalism and Transparency.....	14
Week 4: Outreach – Bringing Civil Society and Constituents into Security Policymaking.....	18

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

Parliaments are critical to democratic and civilian control of the security sector in African countries. The balance of powers between branches of government is a fundamental principle underlying many regimes with multiparty political competition, but a successful balance demands empowerment of all branches of government. Legislators can be an important bridge between security services and citizens that facilitates a broader system of checks and balances between different branches of government. Achieving a healthy balance can be especially important – and especially difficult – when it comes to issues of national security.

On the one hand, parliamentary institutions and actors have great potential to play several critical security governance roles. Ideally, they oversee security budgets and spending, foster security force transparency and accountability, and work towards advancing people-centered security policies that reflect the interests of constituents and incorporate civil society voices and expertise. There are promising examples of parliamentarians and their staff doing such work diligently and tenaciously, even when adaptations are necessary to navigate barriers like a “culture of secrecy” surrounding access to information about defense and security, or limitations in resources for parliamentary capacity building, logistical support, or independent research and analysis. Recent empirical analysis of African parliaments also emphasizes their increasing agency, vibrancy, and relevance in shaping development and security outcomes.

On the other hand, African parliaments are often depicted as weak counterparts to powerful executive branches, or as vehicles prone to rubber stamping defense budgets and other national security measures. Since independence from colonial rule, certain African legislatures have had more opportunities than others to develop the institutional autonomy that can make them effective at oversight, both generally and in relation to defense and security. In some cases, military and civilian officials or African parliamentarians themselves have noted that parliamentarians have few opportunities to hone practical skills and obtain sufficient resources to fulfill their oversight, accountability, and outreach functions comprehensively. Furthermore, the legal authority of parliaments to do this work has been threatened in several countries in light of recent military coups.

Even across countries with varied histories and experiences with legislative development, however, there is notable demand for the kinds of governance that parliaments have the potential to enhance. Although each country is unique, in aggregate, the latest Afrobarometer public opinion surveys done in over thirty African countries demonstrate that African citizens are favorable to executive branch oversight, and expect transparent and accountable governance.¹ At the same time, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance shows that public perceptions of the actual quality of governance are in decline. Strong parliamentary oversight of security and defense force budgets, actions, and policies – coupled with transparent and accountable outreach by parliamentarians to constituents concerned about security policies and challenges in their everyday lives – are tools for building further trust between Members of Parliament and citizens. That trust is, in and of itself, a critical ingredient of sustainable democratic and civilian security sector governance.

¹ See E. Gyimah-Boadi and Joseph Asunka, “[Do Africans want democracy – and do they think they’re getting it?](#)” *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2021.

This four-week virtual program seeks to provide a forum for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from a variety of African legislatures to examine the role of their branch of government in the national security process and to share experiences and engage with academic and practitioner experts about the tools of parliamentary oversight in the current African security environment. The forum is designed to catalyze the honorable participants' collective analysis of current trends, challenges, and innovations in the work of legislatures to foster democratic and civilian control of the security sector. Thanks to the multi-country and cross-regional nature of the forum, participants will have different political, contextual, and technical experiences to share. The countries included in the forum differ in the depth of their legislature's involvement in security governance, the electoral rules/political institutions/legal systems that they use, and the strength of the ruling and opposition blocs in parliament. These similarities and differences will facilitate fruitful comparisons, as well as targeted identification of common and practical approaches and tools for parliamentary involvement in the oversight, accountability, and outreach aspects of security sector governance.

Program Objectives

The objectives of the Parliamentarians Forum are to:

1. Deepen understanding of the roles that parliaments play in providing checks and balances to foster democratic and civilian security sector governance, and contextualize these roles in relation to current African security trends.
2. Foster discussion of practical approaches, skills, and tools for parliamentary involvement in the oversight, accountability, and outreach aspects of security sector governance, including as they relate to public and secret information.
3. Consider examples of how African parliamentarians have exercised their responsibilities, through posing parliamentary questions to security officials, reviewing security budgets/expenditures, conducting side visits, consulting civil society and academia for empirical information, and engaging in constituency service on citizen security issues.

Academic Approach

The Parliamentarians Forum will seek to facilitate cross-country networking, catalyze peer learning and experience sharing from different African parliaments, and bring to light lessons and sound practices for oversight, outreach, and accountability through:

- a) Practical academic content in this syllabus to provide fodder for debate, discussion, and innovative exchanges during the forum;
- b) Virtual plenary sessions that reinforce peer learning and experience sharing about common challenges and notable successes on various aspects of parliamentary oversight of the security sector;
- c) Small group discussions between parliamentarians and staff from different countries and regions that reinforce the learning objectives, helping participants exchange

lessons learned and share ideas about parliamentary contributions to oversight, accountability, and outreach on defense and security issues.

The forum will be conducted in English and French. The moderated discussion portion of the plenary sessions will be recorded and posted to the Africa Center website. A strict policy of non-attribution applies for the weekly discussion group sessions as well as during the question-and-answer portion of weekly plenary sessions. These rules are binding during and after the seminar. We encourage you to share the insights you gain from this seminar with your colleagues, but not to quote the specific comments of your fellow participants. We hope that this will allow you to freely address the sensitive issues under discussion. The views expressed in the readings, case studies, and presentations do not represent the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. All program documentation will be posted on the Africa Center website.

Syllabus

This syllabus is an educational document intended to expose participants to various perspectives to help them take full advantage of the program; it does not reflect the views or official position of the Department of Defense or U.S. government. It provides an overview of key ideas, debates, and policy issues related to parliamentary involvement in defense and security sector oversight and its contributions to good security sector governance.

For each weekly session listed in the syllabus, we provide learning objectives and an introduction to the theme of the plenary session. We also list questions that participants should be prepared to answer in the discussion group meeting held the day after the plenary session. Finally, we include a selection of recommended readings. They are short selections of material intended to prepare participants for the plenary sessions and discussion groups. Please consider reading them before the sessions for which they are listed.

The primary purpose of the recommended readings is to help frame the stakes and the challenges of security-justice coordination within the context of available scholarship, empirical evidence, and policy documentation. We encourage you to share questions and suggestions about the materials and the forum, as it will enhance the quality of our programs. We are eager to discuss specific topics with you.

The lion's share of expertise and knowledge about these topics comes from you, based on your current and past work in the legislative field in your countries and in your regions. We heartily encourage you to share your experiences and knowledge with each other, to challenge and debate ideas that are raised at the forum, and to use the forum as you wish to build additional networks that might be useful to you professionally.

Preparation for the Seminar

Before each week of the seminar, we ask that you:

1. Review the relevant weekly portion of the syllabus and consult the recommended readings.

2. Think about the relevant week's discussion group questions and consider what experiences from your work you might share with your colleagues.
3. Be ready to participate in discussion groups and interact with other participants.

Week 1: Roles of Parliament in Democratic and Civilian Security Sector Governance

Format: Plenary Session: Tuesday, March 1, 1200-1345 GMT
Discussion Group: Wednesday, March 2, 1200-1330 GMT

Objectives:

- Understand the core roles that parliaments play in democratic and civilian security sector governance, as well as parliamentarians' key responsibilities in the domains of oversight, accountability, and outreach
- Identify the current security threats and emerging security trends in Africa that parliamentarians are likely to encounter as they fulfill their roles and responsibilities
- Analyze how recent trends in African governance relate to the advancement of citizen security, and how parliaments fit into this picture
- Examine African Union commitments to democracy, human rights, and governance that promote parliamentary roles in accountability and oversight

Background:

Parliamentary oversight of the defense and security sector plays a fundamental role in facilitating democratic and civilian security sector governance. However, the two are not one and the same. Democratic and civilian control of the security sector depends on multiple institutions working in complementarity to ensure that the defense and security forces, who “hold and deploy the means of coercion on behalf of, and for the protection of the entire society, do not end up functioning as a threat to the same elements they were supposed to protect in the first place.”² Parliament, the judiciary, the media, civil society, and citizens are all involved. As a core institution of security governance, parliaments also have opportunities to work with and call on other oversight bodies like ombudsmen, supreme audit institutions, and independent anti-corruption and human rights commissions to help ensure democratic and civilian control.

Parliaments are also fundamental to a healthy system of checks and balances. Parliamentary oversight is an essential tool for holding defense and security officials from the executive branch of government to account on the scope and limits of their mandate. Parliament's oversight powers contribute to a broader system of checks and balances that help ensure that security policies and programs are developed and implemented in ways that address citizen concerns and meet the needs of the people. Because one of the functions of legislatures and their constituent political parties is to represent the interests of the people, parliament “has both a duty and a right to exercise judgement over all facets of public life, including the security sector.”³ Members of Parliament can use their institutional vantage points not only to approve or modify defense and security budgets, oversee troop deployments, and review procurements, but also to shape

² Adedeji Ebo, “Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Addressing Democratic Governance Deficits,” in Adedeji Ebo and Boubacar N’Diaye, eds. *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008 :7.

³ Ibid: 6.

defense and security policy into something that advances the security of citizens. As Members of Parliament “turn over” and those with the relevant technical expertise leave office, attention must be paid on an institutional level to helping new MPs acquire the relevant skills and experiences. Including youth and women parliamentarians in these processes is valuable for ensuring that the kind of defense and security policies and budgets that the country produces reflect the interests and concerns of constituents with diverse perspectives on security spending and programming.

According to the foremost African analysts of parliament, the quality of parliamentary oversight is a function of three basic elements: **ability, authority, and attitude**. Ability refers to whether legislators have the financial, technical, and human resources to conduct oversight; authority concerns whether legislators have the legal mandate and sufficiently specific standing orders to be able to conduct oversight; and attitude pertains to whether legislators have sufficient motivation, will, and incentives to conduct oversight.⁴ A mix of these factors affects oversight and security governance outcomes, which also differ according to specific countries’ histories, institutional configurations, and political and economic contexts. Nevertheless, in many countries, power is heavily concentrated in the executive branch, which has made it difficult for legislatures to oversee security force budgets, missions, and conduct. Some difficulties arise from a culture of secrecy about defense and security, as well as past tendencies of governments prioritizing state security over citizen and human security. Despite these challenges, prominent analysts also note that African parliaments are making a difference in their countries’ governance.⁵ Some even argue that African parliaments are in the midst of an impactful “awakening.”⁶ These assertions are worth examining, even in the face of challenges to legislative power that have recently arisen. (Two striking examples are the passage of Covid-19 emergency measures that temporarily but significantly curtail parliamentary oversight, as well as the occurrence of several military coups overturning systems of democratic and civilian control).

Last but not least, parliamentary oversight also transcends the national level in Africa. Regional parliamentary bodies – like the ECOWAS Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly, the SADC Parliamentary Forum, and others – may also offer opportunities to engage in oversight on the regional level, as well as to help Members of Parliament and their staff take on cross-country sharing of knowledge, experiences, tools, and practices for effective oversight. The African Union also urges its Member States to enable legislative oversight of the security sector. The Security Sector Reform Policy affirms that parliaments need the space to “make and approve laws, rules, and regulations of the respective security sector institutions” and “establish and mandate specialized Committees to exercise oversight on behalf of the legislature.”⁷ Parliaments and legislative oversight are also important for upholding various aspects of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, which mentions the need to build the requisite parliamentary capacity to institutionalize transparency and accountability (Articles 27 and 32).⁸

⁴ Ibid: 10.

⁵ Ken Opalo, *Legislative Development in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

⁶ Nayé Bathily, *L’*é*veil des Parlements africains*, Karthala, 2020.

⁷ “[African Union Security Sector Reform Policy Framework](#),” African Union, 2013.

⁸ “[African Charter on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance](#),” African Union, 2012.

Discussion Questions:

- What makes for an effective legislator, even in a system where there may be a heavy concentration of power in the executive branch of government relative to the legislature and the judiciary?
- Experts say that the quality of parliamentary oversight of the security sector is a function of three factors known as the “3As”: *ability* (whether legislators have the resources and capacity to conduct oversight), *authority* (whether legislators have the legal mandate and sufficiently detailed standing orders to conduct oversight), and *attitude* (whether legislators have the motivation and incentives to conduct oversight). Where does your national or regional parliament stand on each of these three factors and why?
- Do you agree with some of the plenary speakers who argue that African legislatures are on the rise? In particular, do you find that African legislatures are increasingly asserting their oversight roles? Why or why not?
- How do you think that national parliaments’ successes and challenges with security sector oversight have been affected by factors like the intensity of partisanship in a country, the engagement of the national parliament with regional parliamentary bodies, and the commitment of a country’s leaders to African Union principles of legislative oversight and good governance?

Recommended Resources:

1. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. “[Parliaments: Roles and Responsibilities in Good Security Sector Governance](#),” 2015.
Centre pour le contrôle démocratique des forces armées – Genève. “[Les Parlements: Rôles et Responsabilités dans la Bonne Gouvernance du Secteur de la Sécurité](#),” 2015.
2. About the new book, *The Awakening of African Parliaments* (by Nayé Anna Bathily): Olivier Marbot, “[African Parliaments: Do They Carry Any Real Political Weight?](#)” *The Africa Report*, July 6, 2021.

A propos du nouvel ouvrage, *L'éveil des Parlements africains* (par Nayé Anna Bathily): Olivier Marbot, « [Les parlements servent-ils vraiment à quelque chose ?](#) » *Jeune Afrique*, 3 juillet 2021.
3. Thomas Jaye, “[Liberia: Parliamentary Oversight and Lessons Learned from Security Sector Reform](#),” Center for International Cooperation, 2009, especially the “Legislative Oversight” section (pages 8-15).
4. Boubacar Ndiaye, « [La problématique du contrôle parlementaire en Afrique francophone](#), » dans *La réforme des systèmes de sécurité et de justice en Afrique francophone*, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, pages 36-41.
5. “[Watchdogs? The Quality of Legislative Oversight and Defense in 82 Countries](#),” Transparency International-Defense and Security,” 2013.

Week 2: Oversight - Overseeing Security and Defense Budgets

Format: Plenary Session: Tuesday, March 8, 1200-1330 GMT

Discussion Group: Wednesday, March 9, 1200-1330 GMT

Objectives:

- Analyze approaches and tools that parliamentarians have to oversee defense and security budgets, and how they apply throughout the budget cycle
- Discuss how parliaments can and should deal with secret and classified information that is relevant to budgetary oversight
- Highlight the role played by budgeting in the realization of national security objectives and delivery of security and justice to the citizens.

Background:

Parliaments have the power of the purse, and one of their core responsibilities is to appropriate, approve, and oversee defense and security budgets, drawing upon tools like posing questions to ministers, holding hearings, conducting special inquiries, and arranging side visits to get the information they need to engage in thorough and accurate oversight. The challenges to overseeing security and defense budgets, particularly in emerging democracies, are complex. Africa, like any other part of the world, needs to ensure maximum efficiency in the security and defense sector's budget management and practice. Governments have a duty to invest adequate funds to protect citizens and the national interest through maintaining professional, well-equipped, and properly resourced security and defense services. A government's security and defense budget outlines their plans to do so. And parliaments can play a role in making sure this obligation is met. They can prevent the misuse of public finances through exercising their oversight, deliberative, and legislative functions.

As representatives of citizen interests, parliamentarians have a unique constitutional role in authorizing and scrutinizing security and defense expenditures and holding the executive branch accountable for the security sector's performance. This role comprises not just the debating and passing of security and defense related bills. Instead, parliamentarians must be actively involved in all major aspects of security and defense management, including organizing debates on security and defense matters, scrutinizing budgeting processes, as well as overseeing the disbursement of sectoral expenditures⁹. The ways in which parliaments carry out oversight, the tools and procedures parliamentarians choose to deploy, and the extent of the scrutiny applied vary considerably. Rigorous, constructive, and evidence-based oversight is by no means universal.¹⁰ Thus, parliamentarians must not simply act as 'rubber-stamps' or approach key policy issues emerging from the security and defense sector as a purely technical exercise.

⁹ Naila Salihu, "Enhancing Accountability and Transparency in Ghana's Defence Sector," 2019.

¹⁰ Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme, "Parliamentary oversight: Parliament's power to hold government to account" 2017.

www.ipu.org/oversightand and www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/library/

Sound financial management of a state's security and defense sector remains the key to making security actors efficient, effective, and capable of providing legitimate security to citizens. From a public policy perspective, the security sector budget is an integral part of overall state budget and shares many of the characteristics of other sectors of government. This means that the citizens of any country will benefit from a security and defense sector that is subject to the same sound financial management set of rules and procedures that are applied to other sectors. It is therefore important for parliament to give a high priority to key budgetary principles such as comprehensiveness, contestability, transparency, accountability to ensure the integrity of all security sector activities and reduce the potential for corruption in the sector.¹¹

To be able to do this, parliament must acquire a variety of things: elected civilian officials who have adequate technical training on budgetary oversight, parliamentary staff who have the resources and expertise to provide empirical analysis of security issues, a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) or equivalent to provide independent analysis of budget documents, and committee structures that allow for in-depth analysis, debate, and collaboration. In addition, some countries have practices to manage the multi-partisan nature of oversight, like formally designating an opposition party politician as head of the budget or public accounts committees.

All of these elements can enable those in parliament to understand the technical issues of complex security and defense systems, property management and personnel policies. In addition, they must empower themselves by getting expert advice from knowledgeable civil society organizations such as academic institutions and NGOs involved in the defense and security debate. In pursuing this goal, parliaments must support a vision for a citizen centered security and defense sector by deepening national ownership; developing a national vision for security, shaping sound legal frameworks; and ensuring better public financial management.

Discussion questions:

- In your experience, what have been the conditions that facilitate parliament's effective oversight of security and defense budgets and how do they relate to the 3As (ability, authority, attitude)? Can you share any specific examples of how your parliament has been successful in this process, and explain what enabled that?
- What are currently the principal challenges that parliamentarians face in carrying out effective budgetary oversight of the security and defense sector in your country? Could you provide a specific example to illustrate?
- To what extent does work across party lines influence budgetary oversight in your country, whether formally and informally? How important is multiparty debate and discussion to legislative oversight of security sector budgets and expenditures?
- How have you and your colleagues dealt with issues related to secrecy of defense and security budget and expenditure information, or related information about security force deployments, missions, and projects?

¹¹ Jeanne Kinney Giraldo, "Defense budgets, democratic civilian control, and effective governance," *In Who Guards the Guardians and How*, University of Texas Press, 2021, 178-207.

Recommended Readings:

1. Inter-Parliamentarian Union. "[Global Parliamentary Report 2017 Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's Power to Hold Government to Account](#)," pages 99-108.

Union Interparlementaire. "[Rapport Parlementaire Mondial 2017 - Le Contrôle Parlementaire : Le Pouvoir du Parlement de Demander des Comptes au Gouvernement](#)," pages 114-123.
2. Amor Tounakti, « [Les principes du contrôle budgétaire des dépenses de défense et de sécurité dans le monde francophone](#), » dans *La réforme des systèmes de sécurité et de justice en Afrique francophone*, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, pages 203-211,
3. Institut Démocratique National (NDI), « [Le contrôle le budgétaire du secteur de la sécurité par les parlements du Burkina Faso, du Mali et du Niger: Guide à l'usage des commissions de défense et de sécurité](#), » 2017.
4. "[The Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process: The Case of Kenya](#)," Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative, 2018.
5. Bernard Harborne, W. Dorotinsky & Paul Bisca, eds, [Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector](#), World Bank, 2017, pages 7-14, 25-47.

[Sécurité et développement: Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector](#), World Bank, 2017, pages 8-16, 27-53.

Week 3: Accountability - Fostering Security Sector Professionalism and Transparency

Format: Plenary Session: Tuesday, March 15, 1200-1330 GMT

Discussion Group: Wednesday, March 16, 1200-1330 GMT

Objectives:

- Analyze approaches and tools parliamentarians have to foster security service professionalism vis-à-vis citizens, and how best they can use those tools to address security actors' abuses or breaches of ethics and conduct
- Analyze approaches and tools that parliamentarians have to ensure transparency in security and defense procurement, and how best they can use those tools to prevent corruption and improve the efficient and effective management of security resources
- Highlight the role played by transparency and accountability of the security forces in the realization of security objectives and the delivery of security and justice to citizens

Background:

Parliaments also play key roles in fostering the accountability of the defense and security sector to the people. In addition to approving and/or debating defense and security sector budgets, African legislators are mandated to oversee the management of security resources by ensuring adherence to principles of public financial management. They are involved in overseeing procurement and working with audit institutions to ensure efficient use of resources in the defense and security sector. Parliaments are also important for advancing efforts to foster military and police professionalism and accountability to citizens. They ensure that the armed forces' duties to citizens are clearly delineated in the law and that their constituents understand those duties, as well as security actors' standards of ethical and professional conduct vis-à-vis citizens. Each of the above endeavors is part of good security sector governance, which can nurture trust, enhance legitimacy, and help the state deliver security and justice to citizens.

Lack of transparency in managing security resources, particularly when it comes to defense procurement and acquisitions, is widely concerning to African security professionals and citizens.¹² This poses a serious threat to security and stability.¹³ The Ibrahim Index of African Governance notes that while there have been improvements in anti-corruption in Africa over the last decade, public procurement has become less competitive, with less law enforcement against companies violating procurement rules.¹⁴ Entrenched informal practices and norms, including clientelism and graft, can play a deleterious role in procurement. Legislative oversight, however, can help to mitigate challenges related to poor procurement or contracting practices. External oversight by the legislature can also counterbalance any weaknesses in internal inspections and

¹² Kwesi Aning & Joseph Siegle, "[Assessing Attitudes of the Next Generation of African Security Sector Professionals](#)," Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021.

¹³ Government Defense Integrity Index 2020 Global Report: Disruption, Democratic Governance, and Corruption Risk in Defense Institutions, Transparency International-Defense and Security, 2021.

¹⁴ 2020 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Index Report, Mo Ibrahim Foundation: 55.

audits. African legislatures can also help bolster whistleblower protections to incentivize the reporting of defense sector malpractice.¹⁵

Parliamentarians can improve accountability and transparency in security by influencing how the security services develop codes and follow ethics that bolster constitutionalism, rule of law, human rights, integrity, and service.¹⁶ They can contribute by consulting with constituents about security sector resource management, professionalism, and conduct, and by holding public hearings, posing official questions to ministerial authorities, and holding commissions of inquiry on these topics. They might work with ombuds institutions to follow up on citizens' complaints about security actors when those institutions are mandated to address them.¹⁷

Parliamentarians also need access to reliable information as a basis for their oversight. This can be difficult because information about defense and security procurement is frequently excluded from the scrutiny of the public and of civil authorities, sometimes in secret budgets or off-budget accounts, allegedly because of its sensitivity.¹⁸ The over-classification of information about national security "can seriously undermine the main institutional safeguards against government abuse: independence of the courts, the rule of law, legislative oversight, media freedom, and open government."¹⁹ Not all military procurements and complaints about security actor conduct need to be confidential, and their classification is governed by law. The passage and effective implementation of freedom of information laws could mitigate these challenges; so could the establishment of military ombuds units that are civilian run, independent, and properly resourced to alert legislatures to human rights and ethical issues within the armed forces.²⁰ Collaboration with supreme audit institutions and civil society is also key.

Discussion questions:

- How much is transparency within the defense and security sector a concern in your country? What have been your parliament's successes and failures in addressing these issues, and do the 3As (ability, authority, attitude) explain this?
- How much is the conduct, performance, ethics of the security services and their respect for citizens' rights and the rule of law issues of concern in your country? What have been your parliament's successes and failures in addressing these issues, and do the 3As (ability, authority, attitude) explain this?
- To what extent does a culture of secrecy in the defense and security sector play into parliamentary access to relevant information about procurement practices or professional and ethical conduct of the security forces?

¹⁵ Government Defense Integrity Index, *op.cit.*: 95.

¹⁶ Emile Ouedraogo, "[Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa](#)," Africa Research Paper no. 6, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, July 31, 2014.

¹⁷ "[Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Good Practice](#)," Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006.

¹⁸ *The Missing Element: Addressing Corruption through Security Sector Reform in West Africa*, Transparency International-Defense and Security, 2020.

¹⁹ [The Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information \(The Tshwane Principles\)](#), Open Society Justice Initiative, 2013: 6.

²⁰ Ouedraogo, *op.cit.*

- How do you get information from other government institutions about the accountability of the security sector, both for its upholding of human rights and for its fiscal transparency?
 - Are there insights you can share with colleagues about tools and techniques for obtaining information from security sector institutions on these topics?
 - Are there insights you can share with colleagues about tools and techniques for obtaining information from supreme audit institutions, as well as independent anti-corruption and human rights commissions?

Recommended Readings:

1. [“Corruption Risks and Sustainable SSR: A Critical Challenge,”](#) and [“Integrating Corruption into Security Sector Management,”](#) in *The Missing Element: Addressing Corruption through Security Sector Reform in West Africa*, Transparency International-Defense and Security, 2020, pages 13-22, 26-28.

« [Risques de et RSS durable : un défi cruciale,](#) » et « [Intégrer la lutte contre la corruption dans la gestion du secteur de la sécurité](#) » dans *L'élément manquant: lutter contre la corruption au travers des processus de réforme du secteur de la sécurité en Afrique de l'Ouest*, Transparency International-Defense and Security, 2020, pages 14-23, 30-31.

2. Emile Ouedraogo, [“Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa,”](#) Africa Research Paper no. 6, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, July 31, 2014.

« [Pour la professionnalisation des forces armées en Afrique,](#) » Papier de recherche no. 6, Centre d'Etudes Stratégiques de l'Afrique, 21 juin 2016.

3. Kemi Okenyodo, [“Governance, Accountability, and Security in Nigeria,”](#) *Africa Security Brief No. 31*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 21, 2016.

« [Gouvernance, responsabilité, et sécurité au Nigéria,](#) » *Bulletin de la Sécurité Africaine no. 31*, Centre d'Etudes Stratégiques de l'Afrique, 21 juin 2016.

4. “Preamble” and “Information that May Be Withheld on National Security Grounds and Information that Should Be Disclosed,” [The Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information \(The Tshwane Principles\)](#), Open Society Justice Initiative, 2013, pages 7, 19-28.

« Préambule » et « Informations pouvant être retenues pour des raisons de sécurité nationale, et informations devant être divulguées, » [Principes globaux sur la sécurité nationale et le droit à l'information \(Principes de Tshwane\),](#) » 2013, pages 9, 23-32.

Week 4: Outreach - Bringing Civil Society and Constituents into Security Policymaking

Format: Plenary Session: Tuesday, March 22, 1200-1330 GMT

Discussion Group: Wednesday, March 23, 1200-1330 GMT

Objectives:

- Consider the ways that parliaments and parliamentarians can help governments advance security policies that reflect the interests of constituents and incorporate civil society expertise
- Compare and contrast different ways that parliamentarians can engage civil society and bring constituents into security policymaking and oversight, whether through side visits, research consultations, constituency funds, or otherwise
- Analyze what tools parliamentarians have to enhance communications with constituents and communities about security issues and policies, so as to build trust between them and security actors

Background:

One of the most critical roles of parliamentarians is that of constituent engagement. Parliaments are at their best in facilitating a balance of powers in security sector governance when they are tapping into the representative roles that they play for citizens. Both parliamentarians and their constituents, along with civil society and the independent media, have leading roles to play in oversight of the defense and security sector. When each of these entities works synergistically, they can increase the legitimacy of defense and security policymaking by making it more transparent, accessible, evidence-driven, and people-centered.

As they oversee defense and security, parliamentarians have opportunities to raise people's awareness of relevant policies, catalyze dialogue about them, and facilitate citizen and civil society input into oversight. The tools for this vary. Parliamentarians and their staff can proactively identify civil society entities that are doing research and advocacy on defense and security; this might involve networking and side visits to local think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and academia. Parliaments can also publish legislative documentation on defense and security policy to increase institutional transparency and to facilitate civil society's access to information. Using parliamentary powers to subject relevant bills to public hearing before they are voted upon, using townhalls to consult constituents, and linking up with media to raise awareness of parliament's role in fostering policy discussions are other notable practices. Parliamentarians can also receive petitions by members of the public and invite the public and the media into certain sessions on defense and security topics.²¹

Civil society and the media are both potential partners for parliaments and complementary entities involved in oversight. They "have an important oversight function by raising awareness

²¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Global Parliamentary Report 2017 Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's Power to Hold Government to Account," pages 99-108; Adedeji Ebo and Boubacar N'Diaye, eds. *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*, DCAF, 2008.

of the role of the military among the general public and drawing attention to areas of reform.”²² They can also place pressure on government institutions – including parliament – to implement reforms and fulfill roles effectively.²³ Some civil society organizations have the resources and expertise to offer trainings that parliament might benefit from, on topics like budget analysis, human rights, codes of conduct, or gender analysis of security.²⁴ Similarly, parliamentarians may have an interest in developing relationships with independent journalists who report on security and defense. Print and audio-visual media are prime avenues for informing the populace about parliament’s oversight activities as well as the security issues under scrutiny.

Parliamentarians interested in learning more about citizen perspectives on security can also seek out reputable open data sources. Some such data indicate the need for parliaments to enhance their efforts to connect and build trust with citizens, raise awareness of their work on defense and security sector oversight, and include women and youth in it.²⁵ On both security/defense and related policy issues, parliamentarians have an interest in making their constituency engagement inclusive by bringing underrepresented groups into consultations, debates, discussions, and side visits. In furthering a security and defense policy that is truly citizen-centered, parliamentarians and their staff will benefit from inviting people with diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, etc. when soliciting input for committee inquiries, public hearings, and internal research or analysis.

Representation itself also matters: having women and youth in parliament is key, and giving them access to opportunities to serve on defense and security, public accounts, and internal affairs committees is essential for forging better policy shaped by a diversity of perspectives. Regional women’s parliamentary bodies – like the ECOWAS Female Parliamentary Association and the SADC Parliamentary Forum Regional Women’s Parliamentary Caucus – are some notable examples of networks that are useful touch points for bringing more women parliamentarians into defense and security, for instance.

Discussion questions:

- What are the security trends and challenges that you feel the most need to take into account as a parliamentarian in your country or region? What do your constituents think about these issues?
- What kinds of outreach and constituency service do you engage in on security and defense issues? What kinds of challenges do you face and how do those challenges relate to the 3As (ability, authority, attitude)?
- What have been some of the successes and challenges that parliamentarians in your country or region have had in interacting with civil society and the media on defense and security oversight issues? Are there any good practices or lessons learned that you can share?

²² Ouedraogo, *op.cit.*

²³ Global Defense Integrity Index: 227.

²⁴ Augustin Loada & Ornella Moderan, *Le rôle de la société civile dans la réforme et la gouvernance du secteur de la sécurité*, DCAF, 2009: 35; *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: ECOWAS-DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians*, eds. Hans Born, Jean-Jacques Gacond & Boubacar Ndiaye, 2011; IPU, *op.cit.*

²⁵ Gildfred Asiamah, Ousmane Djiby Sambou, & Sadhiska Bhoojedur, “Africans Say Governments aren’t Doing Enough to Help Youth,” *Afrobarometer Dispatch* 486 2021: 2.

- Have you or your colleagues held side visits with security sector officials or sought the analysis and advice of academia or civil society to inform your work on defense and security oversight? What advice do you have for others about how best to go about these activities?

Recommended Readings:

1. Kossi Agokla, Auwal Ibrahim Musa & Egghead Odewale, "[The Role of Civil Society and the Media,](#)" in *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: ECOWAS-DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians*, ed. Hans Born, Jean-Jacques Gacond & Boubacar Ndiaye, 2011, pages 313-327.

Kossi Agokla, Auwal Ibrahim Musa & Egghead Odewale, « [Rôle de la société civile et des médias,](#) » dans *Contrôle Parlementaire du Secteur de la Sécurité*, eds. Hans Born, Jean-Jacques Gacond & Boubacar Ndiaye, 2011, pages 339-354.
2. Ilja Luciak, "[How Can Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector Help Advance Gender Equality and Integrate a Gender Perspective?](#)" in *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender*, DCAF/OSCE-ODIHR/UN Women, pages 27-36.

« [Comment le contrôle parlementaire du secteur de la sécurité peut-il intégrer une perspective de genre et faire progresser l'égalité des genres ?](#) » dans Ilja Luciak, *Place du genre dans le contrôle parlementaire du secteur de la sécurité*, DCAF/OSCE-ODIHR/UN Women, pages 29-38.
3. Gildfred Asiamah, Ousmane Djiby Sambou, and Sadhiska Bhojedur, "[Africans Say Governments aren't Doing Enough to Help Youth,](#)" Afrobarometer Dispatch no. 486, 2021.

« [Selon les Africains, les gouvernements n'en font pas suffisamment en faveur de la jeunesse,](#) » Afrobaromètre publications conjointes no. 486, 2021.
4. Ken Opalo, "[In a fiscal ditch? African countries should try public participation in the budget process,](#)" *The Conversation*, January 26, 2022.
5. « [Redevabilité dans la finance publique au Sénégal : Barrières de l'accès des citoyens à l'information,](#) » Media Foundation for West Africa, 2019.