



RULE OF LAW AND SECURITY SECTOR PROFESSIONALISM IN AFRICA: LESSONS LEARNED FROM SENEGAL AND BEYOND

**Expert Roundtable
July 27, 2022, 0900-1630**

BACKGROUND

The rise of military coups in West Africa has led uniformed and civilian security practitioners to re-examine the state of security governance at home and across the continent, and to re-evaluate how they can address the most pressing national and regional security threats to further ensure that strategies, policies, and practices are people centered and citizen focused. Senegal – along with several other countries like Ghana, Botswana – have a wealth of experiences to share about rule of law and security sector professionalism, good security sector governance, and the benefits that democratic and civilian control of the security sector can bring to leaders seeking to provide citizen security, prevent conflict and violence, and address pressing security challenges like violent extremism and transnational organized crime.

The time is ripe to harvest the latest analysis from African perspectives about practical ways that security sector leaders can approach: (i) the politics and policies shaping rule of law, doctrine, and professionalism; (ii) the institutional dynamics influencing cultures of rule of law, doctrine, and professionalism; and (iii) the community-based elements of building trust between security sector actors and citizens that can legitimize democratic and civilian systems of security sector oversight rooted in rule of law.

The roundtable will provide security and justice practitioners, civil society experts, and academics with expertise on African rule of law and security governance with an opportunity to analyze the comparative lessons learned and ways forward for rule of law approaches to security force professionalism and security sector oversight, and to re-evaluate best practices and identify strategic solutions in light of the new challenges to democratic and civilian models of security sector governance.

Overall RT Objectives:

1. Analyze good practices and core challenges of fostering security force professionalism through the rule of law.
2. Identify lessons learned from the past and future areas of opportunity through analysis of African countries with strong traditions in the domain of rule of law and professionalism in the security sector.

Session 1: Past Experiences and Lessons Learned on Rule of Law and Professionalism in the Security Sector (0930-1100)

- Analyze the past experiences of various African countries' experiences with fostering professionalism within the security sector through the rule of law, using case studies from several countries to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses, sound practices, and lessons learned from a comparative African perspective
- Consider the ways that the relationships between rule of law and professionalism in the security sector influence security outcomes on the local and national levels, and how these relationships have affected everyday relationships between security officials and communities
- Collectively identify lessons learned from several different African countries' lived experiences in using rule of law and professionalism to advance democratic civil-military relations, build popular trust in the security sector, and improve security provision for citizens

Recommended Readings:

Emile Ouédraogo, "Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa," Africa Center Research Paper no. 6, July 2014. (64 pages). <https://africacenter.org/publication/advancing-military-professionalism-in-africa/>

Session 2: Applying Lessons from the Past: Addressing Current and Future Challenges to Democratic and Civilian Security Governance (1130-1300)

- Assess the implications of different countries' past experiences with rule of law and professionalism for the future of democratic and civilian security sector governance in light of the recent wave of military coups in Africa
- Discuss current and future potential challenges as they relate to (i) the politics and policies shaping rule of law, doctrine, and professionalism; (ii) the institutional dynamics influencing cultures of rule of law, doctrine, and professionalism; and (iii) the community-based elements of building trust between security sector actors.
- Identify prime areas for innovation in rule of law and professionalism in Africa, as well as key targets of opportunity (geographically, methodologically, or otherwise) for advancing sound security sector governance and security provision.

Recommended Readings:

Catherine Lena Kelly, "Justice and Rule of Law Key to African Security," Africa Center for Strategic Studies Spotlight, May 25, 2021. (3 pages). <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/justice-and-rule-of-law-key-to-african-security/>

"2020 Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Index Report," Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2020, pp 78-80. (2 pages). <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020-index-report.pdf>

Breakout Group Discussions (1400-1600)

- Goal of the group discussions is to suggest what the major lessons learned are, what the key opportunities and challenges there are for the future of rule of law and professionalism in African security provision, and suggest ways forward

Discussion Group Questions

- How do the politics and policies about the rule of law, security sector doctrine, and professionalism affect the establishment and maintenance of democratic and civilian security sector governance? What are the practical lessons learned in this domain from the past and what are the policy implications of this relationship for the future?
- How do formal state institutions influence whether and how cultures of the rule of law and security sector professionalism take root in different African countries? What are the practical lessons learned in this domain from the past and what are the policy implications of this relationship for the future?
- What are some of the community-based elements of building trust between security sector actors and citizens that can help to legitimize democratic and civilian systems of security sector oversight rooted in rule of law? What successes and challenges have there been in this domain in the past, and what tools might be used to further these efforts in the future?
- What do these insights lead us to in terms of policy recommendations on the local, national, and cross-national levels?

