



# AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

COMMUNITY CHAPTER LEADERS FORUM  
25-26 March 2025

## BIOGRAPHIES

### PANELISTS

**Dr. Mathurin (Matt) Hounnikpo** is an independent scholar whose work focuses on the governance of the security sector, civil-military relations, and democratic governance in Africa. He served as Associate Professor and Chair of Security Studies (2005-2009), before becoming Professor and Chair of Civil-Military Relations (2009-2013) at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, Washington, DC. Between 2013 and 2018, Dr. Hounnikpo served as Strategic Advisor in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. He is currently assisting several African governments in the areas of security sector/defense reform, national security strategy development, maritime strategy, and the blue economy. Dr. Hounnikpo holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Paris VIII Saint-Denis in France, and another doctorate in international studies from the University of Denver, Colorado, in the US. His publications include "Repressing or Protecting? The Security Sector and Society in Africa," in Pamela Aall and Chester A. Crocker, eds. *The Fabric of Peace in Africa: Looking beyond the State*, Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2017; "Eroding Democracy: Competitive Authoritarian Drift in Benin," in Claire Metelits and Stephani Matti, eds. *Democratic Contestation on the Margins: Regimes in Small African Countries*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015; *L'Afrique au Futur Conditionnel*, Paris, France: L'Harmattan, 2011; and *Guarding the Guardians: Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Governance in Africa*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 2010.

**Honorable Mphatso Jones Boti Phiri** is a security governance researcher and politician. He is a Member of Parliament in Malawi. Holds a PhD in peace and security from Coventry University, UK, MA in National Security from Naval Postgraduate School California -USA, and BA in Public Administration from University of Malawi. He is a retired military officer with 12 years in the Malawi Defence Force, that included deployments in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. His research interests include security governance, elections and voting behaviour, African politics and governments, Elections management and institutional reforms.

Mphatso has extensive conference facilitation expertise and has conducted several management and leadership training workshops within Malawi and the United Kingdom. He also worked as a lecturer in politics, governance, peace and security, at the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University in Malawi.

### MODERATOR

**Dr. Catherine Lena Kelly** is Director of Engagement at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Prior to assuming this position, Dr. Kelly was the Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Justice and Rule of Law. She was also the faculty lead for the security sector governance, as well as countering transnational organized crime portfolio.

Previously, Dr. Kelly was an Advisor in the Research, Evaluation, and Learning Division at the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, where her work on judicial training and grassroots legal empowerment took her to work in a wide range of countries in West and Central Africa. Her book, *Party Proliferation and Political Contestation in Africa: Senegal in Comparative Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), is based on 18 months of research in Senegal. Her work has been published in *African Security*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Comparative Politics*, *The Washington Post*, *Democracy in Africa*, numerous edited volumes, and American Bar Association white papers.

Dr. Kelly holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in government from Harvard University, a Graduate Certificate in international politics from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, and a B.A. summa cum laude from Washington University in St. Louis. She is a Council on Foreign Relations Term Member.