



AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Emerging Security Sector Leaders Seminar

SYLLABUS

Online, via Zoom for Government

June 3-5, 2025

&

In-Person

June 16-27, 2025



AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

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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 is 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 complex and turbulent security environment in Africa makes the need for leadership development in the security sector a matter of urgency and strategic importance. Beyond this rapidly changing security environment, the rise of military coups in Africa calls for a re-examination of the state of security governance and the role of political leadership in addressing security threats through strategies, policies, and practices that are people-centered. The demand for continuous coaching and training of security leaders in Africa has been echoed by Brigadier General (ret.) Daniel K. Frimpong, former Commander of the Ghana Military Academy, who once said “[g]ood leaders develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience.”¹ In the 2021 African Union (AU) Africa Governance Report, the role of political leadership that is adaptive, inclusive, accountable, and ethical has been recognized as one of the key drivers for Africa to realize the AU’s Agenda 2063.² This seminar provides a collaborative and trusted problem-solving platform for emerging African security sector leaders. It seeks to support the next generation of principled and professional public servants in the security sector in their efforts to adequately adapt and proactively respond to the unprecedented security challenges the African continent faces. The seminar accordingly provides them an opportunity to learn from their peers and other African security experts to advance their acquisition of attributes and skills for effective leadership. This will help them lead with empathy to address citizens’ basic security and safety needs and proactively prepare to confront complex and changing security threats.

Why Conduct This Program?

Cumulative evidence shows that a well-designed executive training program enhances effective leadership. There is also a consensus among African leaders, scholars, and practitioners that effective, strategic, and ethical leadership is central to the continent’s success. You have already received a considerable amount of training on professionalism, ethics, and leadership/decision-making through formal military education and non-academic experiences. Furthermore, your nomination by your government or institution to attend this program indicates that your past performance and your leadership potential in these areas are held in high regard. We will honor these accomplishments and seek to build upon them in a meaningful and useful way.

This three-week (one week virtual, two weeks in-person) seminar is designed to facilitate participants’ engagement in interdisciplinary peer learning about strategic and adaptive leadership and its implications for the effective management of African security challenges. This entails accurately analyzing the security environment to design and implement inclusive security strategies that can forge new civil-military relations and enhance professionalism in the security sector; judiciously managing security resources to ensure accountability and transparency; and leveraging partnerships with regional, continental, and international stakeholders to collectively confront transnational security threats. Participants will consider these topics in relation to their own context as well as in comparative regional perspectives. This will enable participants to reflect on lessons that can be learned at home, in neighboring countries, and in other parts of Africa and the world.

The overarching goal of the program is to provide practical and effective tools and skills that

¹ Brigadier General Daniel K. Frimpong, “Appendix Two,” *Leadership and the Challenges of Command*, AFRAM Publications, Accra, 2003, p. 156.

² African Union, *Africa’s Governance Futures for the Africa We Want*, The Africa Governance Report 2021. <https://au.int/en/documents/20220328/africa-governance-report-2021-africas-governance-futures-africa-we-want>

participants can use to contribute to their nation's security, development, and governance. To this end, there are four program objectives:

Program Objectives

1. Strengthen critical-thinking and decision-making skills among emerging security sector leaders for adaptive and effective strategic leadership geared towards achieving concrete solutions in their security contexts.
2. Assess strategic approaches at the national, regional, and international levels to address current, emerging, and future security threats in Africa.
3. Provide a trusted platform whereby emerging security leaders can think strategically about concrete solutions for their own security challenges.
4. Share experiences and lessons in anticipating and responding to the changing security landscape and leveraging partnerships to address evolving security threats.

Program Overview

Strategic leadership, critical thinking, ethical and evidence-based decision-making, and standards of behavior at the strategic level will guide and inform the program's central topics. Effective leadership training is crucial to the creation and sustainment of democratic governance and professionalism in the security sector in Africa. The program will be delivered over three weeks. The first week is virtual and will provide an overview of the course materials, simulation exercise, and assignment requirements, as well as highlight the importance of strategic leadership and critical thinking as themes that are core to the program. The second and third weeks are in-person and are divided into three modules: (1) Analyzing Africa's Security Threats; (2) National Response to Security Challenges; and (3) Regional and International Response to Security Challenges. The modules are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Across the three modules, speakers will highlight security threats and opportunities, as well as the implications for leadership to deliver better citizen security and safety.

Topics are introduced in plenary sessions by a guest speaker or panel of experts, followed by discussion group sessions. The group discussions will be moderated by facilitators who are highly qualified and experienced experts. The role of a facilitator is not to lecture or to insist on any "correct" solutions, but to create a conducive environment for candid dialogue and sharing of experiences. Take advantage of the facilitators' wealth of expertise and experiences, though do not hesitate to challenge them.

Academic Approach

Given the variation in the level of experience and understanding among participants about security threats and the level of response to these security threats, this seminar will seek to capture important lessons and sound practices through:

- Academic content in this syllabus focuses on evidence-based analysis supported by practical examples with less focus on theory.
- Plenary sessions that will be led by seasoned experts on the subject matter, focusing on collaborative, two-way learning as opposed to one-way, traditional classroom-based learning.

- Small group discussions that provide a trusted platform for participants to share their experiences and lessons learned and to prioritize peer-to-peer learning and teamwork, with participants serving as experts on the context of their countries and regions.

The seminar will be conducted in English, French, and Portuguese. A strict policy of non-attribution will apply during discussion group sessions as well as during the question-and-answer portion of plenary sessions. Plenary sessions will be recorded and posted to the Africa Center website after the close of the program.

Academic Material

The Africa Center utilizes academic tools to promote frank and open dialogue on critical issues and to lay the foundation for the development of effective peer networking. To facilitate our discussions, we have provided this academic syllabus and recommended readings. We encourage you to consider critically the analyses and content in all the materials provided. In this regard, the readings are intended to foster a healthy dialogue on the security challenges under discussion, which, in turn, will enable you to forge realistic and effective strategies to address these challenges.

As with all Africa Center academic programs, this seminar will be conducted under a strict policy of non-attribution, which is 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 address freely 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.

The Syllabus

This syllabus is an educational document intended to expose participants to various perspectives and help them take full advantage of the program. This syllabus provides an overview of academic material and key policy questions about strategic leadership in Africa's security sector. The document is organized sequentially to guide participants through the program's three modules. For each plenary session, the syllabus gives a brief introduction and frames questions for discussion to be answered by participants in the discussion group meeting. We provide selected readings that are intended to prepare participants for the plenary sessions and discussion groups and should be read prior to the sessions for which they are listed. We recognize that the syllabus 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 share questions and suggestions about the materials and the seminar, as it will enhance the quality of our programs. Much expertise and knowledge about these topics comes from you, the participants. We encourage you to read the assigned materials and actively participate in your discussion groups and to freely share your experiences and knowledge. The syllabus content does not reflect the views or official position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

The benefits of this program should continue after you have returned home. The discussions and written materials, as well as the friendships formed over the next two weeks, should help you respond to the often-unpredictable challenges you will face in your profession.

Preparation for the Seminar

Before the virtual and the first in-person week of the seminar, we ask that you:

1. Skim this syllabus.
2. Review the virtual and in-person sessions of the syllabus and read the recommended readings.
3. Spend some time thinking about the in-person discussion questions and considering what experiences from your work you might share in discussion groups.
4. Be ready to participate in discussion groups and learn from other participants.

Virtual Session 1: Course Introduction: ESSL

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Introduce the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and the Emerging Security Sector Leaders (ESSL) program.
- Discuss why ESSL is the flagship program of the Center, and its impact over the years.

Background:

Over the past 26 years, ESSL and its predecessor program, Next Generation of African Security Sector Leaders (Next Gen), have been the longest-running programs offered by the Africa Center (ACSS). Both seminars have targeted mid-level African security sector professionals to provide the next generation of African security sector leaders with practical and effective tools upon which they can draw to contribute to their nations' security and development. The seminars have addressed the roles and responsibilities of professional security sector officials in democratic societies, enhancing leadership skills to respond to current and emerging security challenges more effectively. Next Gen and ESSL have focused on strategic leadership and national security strategy, Africa's contemporary security threats, and the coordination of external security assistance.

This opening virtual session will provide participants with an introduction to ACSS, its vision, mission, and mandate. Participants will also learn more about the ESSL program as a flagship seminar for the Center, as well as the impact it has had over the years.

Recommended Readings:

Emerging Security Sector Leaders Seminar. Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

<https://africacenter.org/programs/emerging-security-sector-leaders-seminar/>

Virtual Session 2: The Importance of Strategic Leadership & Critical Thinking for ESSL

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Highlight the importance of strategic leadership and critical thinking for emerging security leaders faced with evolving challenges.

Background:

In the complex and often fraught environment African security professionals operate in, effective strategic leadership and critical thinking are key to successfully addressing security challenges. African security threats are predominantly irregular and have their roots in a diverse and complex set of social, economic, and political issues that defy straightforward solutions.³ In this context, the traditional tools and systems of the security sector can be unreliable, or even part of the problem in cases where the security sector may have become corrupted or politicized.⁴ This places a high burden on the decision-maker to identify problems, tools, and solutions when many orthodox security approaches may be ineffective or counter-productive.

Strategic leadership is generally defined as “the unique abilities of anticipating, envisioning, maintaining flexibility, thinking strategically, and empowering employees to create new inventions that lead to organizational transformations or changes.”⁵ Beyond developing these abilities, strategic leadership is also about having the adaptive capacity to appropriately respond to the dynamism and complexity of the context. Critical thinking, on the other hand, “is a learned skill.”⁶ It involves the “use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed—the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions, when the thinker is using skills that are thoughtful and effective for the particular context and type of thinking task.”⁷ Given the complex and dynamic security environment on the African continent, strategic leaders must develop critical thinking skills so as to achieve their objectives. In fact, as Gen. Martin E. Dempsey explained, “strategic leaders must be inquisitive and open-minded. They must be able to think critically and be capable of developing creative solutions to complex problems...”⁸ Accordingly, critical thinking is essential for defining how strategic security sector leaders can address complex problems.

Recommended Readings:

³ Paul Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*, 2nd ed., Polity Press, 2016, pp. 38–40.

⁴ Emile Ouedraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2016. <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ARP06EN-Advancing-Military-Professionalism-in-Africa.pdf>

⁵ Alex Jaleha, Vincent Machuki, “Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance: Critical Review of Literature,” *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 4, no. 35, 2018, p. 127. <https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/11558>

⁶ Helen Bouyges, “3 Simple Habits to Improve Your Critical Thinking,” *Harvard Business Review*, May 2019.

⁷ Diane F. Halpern, *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*, 5th ed., Psychology Press, New York, NY, 2014.

⁸ Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, referenced in “Critical Thinking and SOF Decision Making,” *Special Warfare*, June 2017.

Ben Ramalingam et al. "Five Principles to Guide Adaptive Leadership." Harvard Business Review. 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/09/5-principles-to-guide-adaptive-leadership>

Regina Eckert and Simon Rweyongoze. "Leadership Development in Africa: A Focus on Strengths." Center for Creative Leadership. 2015. <https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/leadershipDevelopmentAfrica.pdf>

Kwesi Aning and Joseph Siegle. "Deep Commitment, High Expectations: The Values of the Next Generation of African Security Sector Leaders." Africa Defense Forum. 2018:
EN: <http://adf-magazine.com/deep-commitment-high-expectations/>
FR: <http://adf-magazine.com/engagement-profond-attentes-elevees/?lang=fr>

Sam Adeyemi. "Africa does not Need Charity, it Needs Good Leadership." World Economic Forum on Africa. 2017. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/05/africa-doesn-t-need-charity-it-needs-good-leadership>

Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett, Michael Woolcock. "Escaping Capability Traps through Problem Driven Iteration Adaption (PDIA)." CID Working Paper No. 240 June 2012.
<https://www.cgdev.org/publication/escaping-capability-traps-through-problem-driven-iterative-adaptation-pdia-working-paper>

Virtual Session 3: Mega Trends: Assessment Frameworks

Format: Plenary session

Objectives:

- Provide an overview of the assessment frameworks used to assess a country's risks, vulnerabilities, and sources of resilience.
- Discuss how to incorporate national, regional, and continental megatrends and their possible implications on security into threat, vulnerability, and resilience assessments.

Background:

There are several factors that will shape Africa's peace and security and the trajectory of change in the near and long term. These factors include a web of complex, multifaceted, and ever-changing security threats, including but not limited to transnational organized crime, violent conflicts, violent extremism and terrorism, cyber threats, maritime threats, state fragility, and pandemics. These security threats will be exacerbated by megatrends⁹ such as demographic change¹⁰, urbanization¹¹ the rising middle class, and emerging technologies¹². Moreover, these security threats and megatrends are accompanied by an underlying current of a rising governance deficit in Africa, in which states themselves have become a source of insecurity.¹³ The intersections of these megatrends will undoubtedly shape the ways that African governments and institutions will address human security in the decades to come. These megatrends will create shocks that both exacerbate security challenges and create new opportunities for addressing human security in the continent.

Country risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVA) can assist policymakers in making informed decisions that address the dynamic security challenges affecting the continent. Specifically, CRVAs identify structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risks, and existing resilience factors to broader security threats occurring within a particular country or region and that are affected by megatrends. Such assessments leverage both qualitative and quantitative data to provide baseline assessments of the patterns and trends of security dynamics across human security pillars based on robust, holistic methodologies and reliable empirical evidence. Examples of the different data sources typically used to for CRVA include: geospatial data from the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD)

⁹ Raymond Gilpin, "Unpacking the implications of future trends for security in Africa," *Brookings*, 3 February 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/02/03/unpacking-the-implications-of-future-trends-for-security-in-africa/>

¹⁰ Matthias Basedau, Charlotte Heyl, and Eckart Woertz, "Population Growth and Security in Africa: Myth or Underestimated Risk?" *German Institute for Global and Area Studies*, Hamburg. 14 January 2021. https://assets.ctfassets.net/jlhjubhjuo/4NjHjVvw3biOA3lQ5SvHlz/2c19465df7f608cf3b2e2cc8ef033046/GIGA_Population_Growth_Security_in_Africa_PDF.pdf

¹¹ Ekeminiabasi Eyita-Onkon, "Urbanization and human security in post-colonial Africa". *Front. Sustain. Cities* 4:917764, 2022. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/sustainable-cities/articles/10.3389/frsc.2022.917764/full>

¹² Velomahanina Razakamharavo, "Implications of Emerging Technologies on Peace and Security in Africa". *Conflict and Resilience Monitor*, Accord, 2, 2021. <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/implications-of-emerging-technologies-on-peace-and-security-in-africa/>

¹³ Peter Mwai, "Are Military Takeovers on the Rise in Africa?" *BBC*, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-46783600>

Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN); the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); the Afrobarometer; the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG); ENACT's Organized Crime Index; in addition to field research and qualitative desktop research, among other sources.

Accordingly, information from well-researched CRVA can inform early warning and response efforts and generate actionable recommendations. Moreover, CRVAs are crucial for strategic security sector leaders tasked with addressing complex security problems. The analysis and recommendations generated from a CRVA help inform security leaders as they develop creative solutions to complex problems.

Recommended Readings:

Raymond Gilpin. "Unpacking the implications of future trends for security in Africa." Brookings, 3 February 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/02/03/unpacking-the-implications-of-future-trends-for-security-in-africa/>

Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Handbook, ECOWAS and USAID, December 2018, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WNNZ.pdf

In-Person Sessions

Plenary Session 1: Conflict Trends & Security Mega Trends

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Understand the dynamics of major megatrends in Africa, such as urbanization, demographic and social change, the rising middle class, enabling technology, and pandemics.
- Understand the security implications of these megatrends for the leadership in the security sector in Africa.
- Explore drivers of violent conflicts in Africa, how they relate to the major megatrends in Africa, and their strategic implications on diplomatic, defense, and development responses.

Background:

The term “megatrends” was widely popularized by John Naisbitt, a political scientist who published a bestseller in 1982 on the trends transforming our lives. Many variations on the definition exist but put simply, megatrends are “long-term driving forces that are observable now and will most likely have a global impact”.¹⁴ Often used in forecasting, they can inform policy decisions to realize a desired future.

Some of the major megatrends seen in Africa include:

- Population growth: While all other continents will see a decline in population by 2100, Africa’s population will triple in the same period.¹⁵ As the population was estimated at 1.4 billion people as of 2022, that is over 4 billion people.¹⁶ This is in part due to the current “youth bulge” as 77% of the population is under the age of 35.¹⁷
- Urbanization: By 2050, more than 60% of the population of Africa will be living in cities.¹⁸
- Enabling technology: Increased digitization and technological infrastructure is transforming labor and production, while also serving to connect people to each other and

¹⁴ European Commission, “The Megatrends Hub,” 28 November 2022.

https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/foresight/tool/megatrends-hub_en

¹⁵ Yomi Kazeem, “Africa’s Population Will Triple by the End of the Century Even as the Rest of the World Shrinks,” *World Economic Forum*, 23 July 2020. [https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/africa-](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/africa-population-)

[population-triple/#:~:text=Every%20global%20region%20could%20see%20their%20populations%20decline,or%20faster%20than%20birth%20rates%20in%20several%20countries.](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/africa-population-triple/#:~:text=Every%20global%20region%20could%20see%20their%20populations%20decline,or%20faster%20than%20birth%20rates%20in%20several%20countries.)

¹⁶ Statista, “Total Population of Africa from 2000 to 2030,” 2024.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1224168/total-population-of-africa/>

¹⁷ Bandar Hajjar, “The Children’s Continent: Keeping Up With Africa’s Growth,” *World Economic Forum*, 13 January 2020. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/the-children-s-continent/>

¹⁸ Aimée-Noël Mbiyozo, “Climate Change will Strain Africa’s Already Congested Cities,” *Institute for Security Studies*, 20 October 2021. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/climate-change-will-strain-africas-already-congested-cities>

the international community.¹⁹

- Emerging middle class: If economic growth continues, there will be a rise of a young, entrepreneurial, technologically savvy middle class.²⁰
- Pandemics: As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and without adequate advances in prevention, infectious diseases can spread quickly from country to country.

These trends are inevitable, but their outcomes will depend on African leaders' strategies and policy responses. African governments have no choice but to proactively plan for and respond to these megatrends so as to mitigate anticipated challenges and harness potential opportunities.²¹ Megatrends will have profound impacts on the security outcomes and the way security is planned, managed, and delivered to citizens. These trends create new opportunities for African governments to review their existing security policies, capacities, and institutions to better respond to these complex threats and to build trust with citizens based on their inclusion in security governance and strategy development.²² Effective response to these trends requires coordinating and collaborating across multiple government agencies and nation states; developing policy responses and mechanisms that are flexible, agile, iterative, and adaptive; leveraging external partnerships; and developing foresight capabilities. As these trends are mutually reinforcing and cannot be addressed in isolation, African countries (and their external partners) must think strategically about how to address them through national, regional, and continental policies and strategies that are feasible, proactive, creative, coordinated, and comprehensive.

Megatrends are also related to the violent conflict trends we observe on the continent. Since 2010, the number of armed conflicts that involve African states has increased, including those related to violent extremist organizations and insurgent groups in areas such as the Sahel, Coastal Western Africa, Northern Mozambique, Somalia, and Kenya, as well as civil wars in Libya, Central African Republic, and Sudan.²³ In part, the recent surge of violence is due to the changing nature of conflict itself. In recent years, the most prevalent forms of conflict in Africa have included riots and protests, violence against civilians and battles between state and non-state actors.²⁴ Non-state armed conflicts and incidents of one-sided violence against civilians have also increased. The number of parties to various conflicts has risen over time because rebel organizations and violent extremist organizations frequently splinter and multiply.

¹⁹ Njuguna Ndung'u and Landry Signé, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Digitization will Transform Africa into a Global Powerhouse," *Brookings*, 8 January 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-and-digitization-will-transform-africa-into-a-global-powerhouse/>

²⁰ Nafisa Akabor, "The Rise Of African Tech Hubs: How They Are Becoming The Silicon Valleys Of The Continent," *CNBCAfrica*, 2 November 2023, <https://www.cnbc africa.com/2023/the-rise-of-african-tech-hubs-how-they-are-becoming-the-silicon-valleys-of-the-continent/>

²¹ Olli Ruohomäki, "Africa Megatrends: Looking over the horizon into the future." *FIIA Briefing Paper 305*. Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2021. https://www.fia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/bp305_african-megatrends.pdf

²² Luka Kuol and Joel Amegboh, "Rethinking National Security Strategies in Africa." *Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy*, Vol. 9 (1): 1-17, 2021. <http://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/60a72058556ba.pdf>

²³ Paul Williams, "Continuity and Change in War and Conflict in Africa." *Prism* 6:4, 2017; Africa Center, "Sudan Conflict Straining Fragility of Its Neighbors," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 25 April 2024. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/sudan-conflict-straining-fragility-of-its-neighbors-displacement-refugees/>; Africa Center, "Deaths Linked to Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Continue to Spiral," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 29 January 2024. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mig2024-deaths-militant-islamist-violence-africa-rise/>

²⁴ Armed Conflict Location Event Dataset, <http://acleddata.org>

Other triggers or drivers of violence include poor governance, social exclusion, and weak rule of law. For instance, state-perpetrated human rights abuses and citizens' perceptions of unjust treatment by the state are increasingly recognized as a core cause of violent extremism.²⁵ In the Sahel region, where there is a large population of unemployed young men (At 14.8 years old, Niger has the lowest average age globally), transnational organized crime and illicit economic finance violent extremism.²⁶ Furthermore, layering climate change on this dynamic adds violent competition over resources – land, food, and water – and transition to other means of survival, as can be seen among Fulani nomadic herdsman who join armed groups or resort to banditry in the Sahel.²⁷ Similarly, the World Bank's 2018 Pathways for Peace report shows that "exclusion from access to power, opportunity, services, and security creates fertile ground for mobilizing group grievances into violence," particularly in fragile states or states that are known for human rights abuses.²⁸ Resilience to violent conflict and crime is correlated with levels of governance.²⁹ Without the right policies and infrastructure in place, attuned to the megatrends shaping the continent, there will be continued security degradation.

Discussion Questions:

- Which megatrends are most important in your country or sub-region? How do these megatrends interact to influence security outcomes in your country?
- What type of conflict affects your country/subregion the most? What are the impacts of conflict on your country/subregion/continent?
- What is the relationship between conflict and megatrends in your subregion/region?
- Do you think leadership can make a difference in responding to these megatrends, and how? How about ordinary people? Please give examples if possible.
- What role should the regional security architecture play in responding to these megatrends and conflict trends?
- How do international actors shape megatrends and their effect on the continent?

Recommended Readings:

Raymond Gilpin. "Unpacking the Implications of Future Trends for Security in Africa." Brookings 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/02/03/unpacking-the-implications-of-future-trends-for-security-in-africa/>

²⁵ Luca Raineri, "If Victims Become Perpetrators: Factors contributing to vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the central Sahel," International Alert, June 2018; "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives, and the Tipping Point for Recruitment," *United Nations Development Program*, September 2017. <http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/en/report>; "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement," *United Nations Development Program*, February 2023. <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/v2/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2023-english.pdf>

²⁶ Will Marshall, "Africa's Crime-Terror Nexus: Transnational Organized Crime, Illicit Economic Networks and Violent Extremism in the Sahel," 16 February 2022. <https://globalriskinsights.com/2022/02/africas-crime-terror-nexus-transnational-organised-crime-illicit-economic-networks-and-violent-extremism-in-the-sahel/>

²⁷ Anouar Boukhars and Carl Pilgram, "In Disorder, They Thrive: How Rural Distress Fuels Militancy and Banditry in the Central Sahel," 20 March 2023. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/disorder-they-thrive-how-rural-distress-fuels-militancy-and-banditry-central-sahel>

²⁸ "United Nations; World Bank, Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>

²⁹ *Africa Organized Crime Index 2023: Increasing Criminality, Growing Vulnerabilities*, ENACT, 2023. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/organised-crime-index-africa-2023/>

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Plenary Session 2: Violent Extremism Dynamics

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Unpack drivers/causes that account for the proliferation and endurance of violent extremist organizations (VEOs).
- Assess national and regional approaches to countering violent extremism and lessons learned (hard and soft approaches).
- Examine the role of strategic leadership in countering violent extremism (what role do national and local security actors play in national strategic plans to counter VEOs).

Background:

Violent extremism continues to be one of the most significant challenges to peace and security in Africa. What makes this state of affairs particularly frustrating is that despite the extraordinary sacrifice and enormous number of lives and resources that Africans and their international partners have devoted to countering and preventing terrorism, many violent extremist groups (VEOs) have still been able to flourish and expand their reach. Even in theaters where they were described as vanquished or in their final throes, VEOs remain a threat.

The resilience and proliferation of these organizations are puzzling because their objectives and methods are far more radical than the people they claim to represent. Surveys and available evidence show that the vast majority of Africans oppose violent extremism and terrorism. Yet, al-Qaeda-linked groups, Islamic State affiliates, and other violent extremist groups continue to attract recruits and financing, shrewdly exploiting opportunities created by state fragility, exclusionary governance, and local conflicts. In areas where they have managed to control territory, groups such as al-Shabaab have focused on delivering basic forms of governance and social services to the population in areas of central and southern Somalia. In other theaters where they have not successfully supplanted the state, VEOs exploit and stoke political instability, inter-communal tensions, and socio-economic grievances. The growth and expansion of violent extremist organizations in the Sahel, Coastal West Africa, Lake Chad Basin, the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, northern Mozambique, and East Africa illustrate that their resilience and power stem not just from their violent activity, but also from their ability to supplant local governments as service providers and arbiters of social order.

To generate new results in the struggle against violent extremism, policymakers, security officials, and practitioners must rethink existing assumptions and methods. This necessity of reexamining and replacing failed methods and paradigms is immediately evident in the emerging consensus among multiple African stakeholders that preventing and countering violent extremism requires population-centric strategies that include communities and build partnerships among a wide range of actors. To defeat extremists, security forces must therefore adapt their methods to carefully cooperate with local authorities, including service providers, traditional leaders, community defense groups, and civil society organizations. This is a testament to the growing recognition of the peril of treating community-oriented approaches to preventing, mitigating, and countering violent extremism as a distraction, instead of a necessary, strategic complement to traditional security approaches.

Discussion Questions:

- What VEOs are operating in your country and region? How have these organizations affected the security environment in which you work?
- What concrete and practical measures can African nations take, working at the national, regional, and international levels, to better counter VEOs on the continent?
- What should be the role of strategic leadership and security sector leaders in countering violent extremism?

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- FR : <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/trajec-toires-de-la-violence-contre-les-civils-par-les-groupes-islamistes-militants-dafrique/>
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- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/spotlight/os-diversos-fatores-que-desencadearam-a-violencia-extremista-na-regiao-norte-de-mocambique/>

Additional Africa Center Resources:

Developing Local Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) in Africa program 25 January – 16 February 2022:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/2022-01-cvelocal-developing-local-strategies-counter-violent-extremism-africa/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/2022-01-cvelocal-fr/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/2022-01-cvelocal-pt/>

“Why Al-Shabaab Persists in Somalia” webinar 9 December 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/202112cve-why-al-shabaab-persists-somalia-webinar/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/202112cve-pourquoi-al-shabaab-persiste-somalie/>
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Plenary Session 3: Transnational Organized Crime Dynamics

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Describe the trends and levels of various forms of transnational organized crime and the relevant criminal networks operating in Africa.
- Understand the drivers of transnational organized crime in Africa, as well as its consequences for governance, stability, and economic development.
- Assess the merits of potential elements of state response to transnational organized crime, particularly the roles of security sector leaders in fostering citizen/community community-centric approaches, interagency cooperation, and regional collaboration.

Background:

Transnational organized crime (TOC) is a growing security challenge in Africa. There are many forms of TOC in Africa perpetrated by state and non-state actors with varying degrees of linkage. Human trafficking, arms trafficking, and non-renewable resource crimes are the three most widespread criminal markets, and overall, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the ability of those state-embedded actors who facilitate TOC to do so with less restrictive measures for accountable governance in place.³⁰ Furthermore, TOC and political instability continue to be mutually reinforcing phenomena, and the commercial, criminal, and corrupt elements of TOC foster a parallel political economy that undermines economic development and state legitimacy.³¹

There is no single definition of organized crime, but the UN's Palermo Convention – which most African countries have ratified – defines “organized criminal groups” as three or more people, existing for a period of time, that act together with the aim of committing at least one crime punishable by four years’ incarceration. TOC is committed to obtaining a direct or indirect financial/material benefit.³² Organized crime is transnational when activities and their effects cross national borders. Devising responses can be challenging, as some states are ill-equipped to counter and prevent criminal network activities or have certain high-level officials who are politically unwilling to combat crimes from which they benefit. The coordination of security, justice, and other institutions on the inter-agency, cross-border, and subnational levels is warranted, but inherently complex.

Security sector actors in African states are well aware of the challenges of countering TOC, but also face the difficult task of devising responses that fit local contexts. Political economy frameworks can help emerging leaders understand where to start. Political economy is “the study of rational decisions in the context of political and economic institutions,” which shape various actors’

³⁰ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, “Africa Organized Crime Index 2021: Evolution of Crime in a Covid World,” <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ENACT-Organised-Crime-Index-2021.pdf>

³¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. 2015. *Illicit Financial Flows: Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa*. Addis Ababa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. <http://hdl.handle.net/10855/22695>

³² UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>

incentives to behave in certain ways.³³ Taking a political economy approach involves understanding who the different actors are, identifying the strategies they may adopt based on African states' criminal markets and vulnerabilities, and assessing how resilience factors can change organized criminal actors' incentives to pursue TOC in particular places. There are many factors that shape people's incentives to participate in illicit economies. Some key ones are the availability of alternative livelihoods, how legitimate the state and its laws are, and how the transparency and accountability of the security and justice sectors affect such legitimacy.

One example of a political economy framework is the ENACT Consortium's Organized Crime Index (released in 2019, again in 2021, and updated for 2023).³⁴ It examines the roles of five primary criminal actors: state-embedded actors, criminal networks, foreign actors, mafia-style actors, and private sector actors, and tracks the presence and intensity of fifteen different criminal markets in all African countries. The Index shows a considerable increase in TOC over this timeframe, with state-embedded actors playing key roles in facilitating such activities. To influence state responses to TOC, the Index analyzes twelve factors affecting resilience to TOC: political leadership and governance, government transparency and accountability, international cooperation, national policies and laws, judicial capacity, law enforcement capacity, anti-money laundering, economic regulatory capacity, victim and witness support, prevention, non-state actor involvement in response, and territorial integrity.³⁵

Ultimately, the ENACT research concludes that the most successful efforts to counter TOC are likely to involve security responses that feed into broader efforts to address the development- and governance - related drivers of organized crime. In particular, the 2023 Index provides empirical evidence over the last five years of "the crucial role of effective rule of law, accountability mechanisms and a transparent civil society in combating organised crime."³⁶

Discussion Questions:

- How much is transnational organized crime a security concern in your country/region, and what kinds of criminal actors and criminal markets are involved?
- What factors allow transnational organized crime to flourish in your country/region? To what extent are issues of development, governance, and rule of law linked to transnational organized crime?
- What kinds of efforts to counter and prevent transnational organized crime are underway in your country/region? Do they use the twelve resilience factors mentioned in the ENACT Organized Crime Index?
- What roles can security sector actors play in responding to transnational organized crime on the cross-border, national inter-agency, and subnational levels?

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³³ Allan Drazen, *Political Economy in Macroeconomics* (Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 4, citing James Alt & Kenneth Shepsle, eds. *Perspectives on Political Economy* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³⁴ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, *ENACT Global Organized Crime Index 2021*, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/GITOC-Global-Organized-Crime-Index-2021.pdf>; ENACT *Organized Crime Index Africa 2019*, <https://enact-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2019-09-24-oc-index-2019.pdf>

³⁵ *Organised Crime Index Africa 2019*, op.cit.

³⁶ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, *ENACT Global Organized Crime Index 2023*, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/GITOC-Global-Organized-Crime-Index-2023.pdf>, p.8.

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- EN: https://africa.ocindex.net/assets/downloads/english/enact_report_2023.pdf
 - To find the report on your country, visit: Data Analysis Portal for Organised Crime Index Africa 2023, <https://africa.ocindex.net/>
- FR: <https://enact-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/pages/1708078791220-2023-ocindex-africa-report-fr.pdf>
 - Pour trouver le rapport sur votre pays, visitez : Portail d'analyse des données de l'Indice du crime organisé en Afrique 2023, <https://africa.ocindex.net/>
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- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/security-justice-transnational-organized-crime/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/renforcer-coordination-securite-justice-criminalite-transnationale-organisee/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/reforco-coordenacao-seguranca-justica-criminalidade-organizada-transnacional/>

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- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/2021-ctoc-sj-2/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/2021-ctoc-sj-2/>

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- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/2020-ctoc-webinar-series/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/2020-ctoc-webinar-series/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/2020-ctoc-webinar-series/>

Plenary Session 4: Maritime Security Threats

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Explore trends in maritime safety and security in Africa.
- Evaluate existing collaborative arrangements to safeguard Africa's maritime interests.
- Examine the role of strategic leadership and security sector actors to sustain maritime safety and security.

Background:

Africa's blue economy – including fisheries, minerals, hydrocarbons, tourism, and trade from thirty-eight coastal countries and six islands -- is estimated to be worth US \$1 trillion per year.³⁷ Besides such economic potential, over 90% of African exports and imports are transported by water.³⁸ While there is much potential, there is a tendency towards “sea blindness”, or to ignore the maritime domain and its centrality to African economic growth as well as its security and defense. The maritime space has been a theater of criminal activities and is host to a web of interconnected security threats. Some of the most pressing threats include Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and other natural resource theft, as well as piracy and armed robbery at sea.³⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated the security threats in the maritime domain in Africa, particularly by disrupting supply chains and increasing the risk of ports becoming targets for attack.

The protection of Africa's maritime space and its resources is a strategic security concern of coastal and landlocked countries and requires the provision of effective maritime security. The maritime domain has become one of the main focuses of the AU Agenda 2063 and 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy).⁴⁰ Both recognize the maritime domain's pivotal role as a catalyst for Africa's economic resurgence and socio-economic change.⁴¹ The Lomé Charter was adopted in 2016 by the AU as a binding maritime security and safety charter with a focus on security provisions of the 2050 AIM Strategy.⁴² These AU commitments are aligned and linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, which promotes the sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources, including for development.

This collaborative international approach finds its concrete expression at the regional level, where

³⁷ Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood. “Review of nine African “blue economy” projects shows what works and what does’ not work”. The Conversation, August 11, 2020.

³⁸ Henrietta Nagy and Siphesihle Nene, “Blue Gold: Advancing Blue Economy Governance in Africa.” Sustainability 13, 7153: 1-11. 2021. <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/13/7153>

³⁹ Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood. “Review of nine African “blue economy” projects shows what works and what does’ not work”. The Conversation, August 11, 2020.

⁴⁰ Nagy and Nene, op cit.

⁴¹ Richard Wetaya, “Blue economy seen as a catalyst for Africa's economic resurgence.” Alliance for Science. 2022. <https://allianceforscience.cornell.edu/blog/2022/02/blue-economy-seen-as-catalyst-for-africas-economic-resurgence/>

⁴² Pieter Brits and Michelle Nel, “African maritime security and the Lomé Charter: Reality or dream?” African Security Review 27 (3-4): 226 – 244, 2018.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329326511_African_maritime_security_and_the_Lome_Charter_Reality_or_dream

nations sharing a maritime region have worked with each other, often through the Regional Economic Community structure, to build practical agreements and frameworks for cooperation at the operational level. For example, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct established cooperation between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) member states on a variety of maritime security issues and created a jointly staffed Inter-regional Coordination Center to organize cooperation. These frameworks have helped facilitate the harmonization of maritime laws on issues such as hot pursuit, evidence sharing, and extradition, as well as providing for tracking and even operational coordination between navies. Although joint capacities are still in development, there have been several notable successes. One is the recapture of the Hailufeng 11 in May 2020, after its capture by pirates off the coast of Côte d'Ivoire. Through information sharing across the region and operational cooperation between Benin and Nigeria, the vessel was successfully recaptured, and the pirates were tried in Nigeria under a new anti-piracy law.

African states' ability to collectively govern their maritime domains and to sustainably manage their resources determines their capacity to deliver an array of benefits to their citizens and improve their provision of security and development. Improving governance and security in the littoral communities most affected by IUU fishing and other forms of natural resource theft can also help diminish threats by enhancing their interest in cooperating with law enforcement and limiting community member engagement in maritime crime.⁴³ There is also more work to continue to ensure that national laws and practices are in place to facilitate the prosecution of maritime criminals, especially when cross-border and regional cooperation is required. Many littoral African nations are still developing chain of custody procedures for the handling of maritime criminals and criminal evidence; prosecution can also be challenging due to the complexities of the law of the sea, or low levels of maritime legal expertise or law enforcement authorities within navies.⁴⁴ Updating national law and procedure and harmonizing it regionally are both essential.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the economic potential of the maritime space of your country/region, and do you think this potential is being fully realized? Why or why not?
- Can you share some of the key maritime security threats in your country/region, and whether they have been adequately addressed?
- Given the transboundary nature of threats facing maritime space, what is the level of cooperative, coordinated, and collective responses of countries in your region to maritime insecurity? Can you share some examples of such collective responses and what can be done better?
- What roles can security sector leaders play in fostering maritime safety and security?

Recommended Readings:

Christian Bueger, Timothy Edmunds and Jan Stockbruegger. "Securing the Seas: A Comprehensive Assessment of Global Maritime Security." (Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR, 2024).

⁴³ Ifesenachi Okafor-Yarwood, "The cyclical nature of maritime security threats: illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing as a threat to human and national security in the Gulf of Guinea." *African Security*; Vol. 13 (2): 116-146, 2020.

⁴⁴ Ian Ralby, "Learning from success: Advancing maritime security cooperation in Atlantic Africa." CIMSEC, 2019. https://cimsec.org/learning-from-success-advancing-maritime-security-cooperation-in-atlantic-africa/?fbclid=IwAR0qlr2I3Vn_wQhTc_Gu-JsuDjiTrZl8DYr5cQT3fsr4I1DqDa0jYQr5Xzg

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- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/tendances-en-matiere-de-securite-maritime-en-afrique/>

United Nations, "Africa's Blue Economy: A Policy Handbook." 2016.

- EN: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30130/AfricasBlueEconomy.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- FR: <https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/23073>

Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood, Oliver Eastwood, Noleen Chikowore, and Lucas de Oliveira Paes, "Technology and maritime security in Africa: Opportunities and challenges in the Gulf of Guinea."

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<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X23005092>

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09644016.2024.2419800>

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<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X17303445>

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Darshana M. Baruah, Nitya Labh, and Jessica Greely, "Mapping the Indian Ocean Region," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 15, 2023,

<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/06/mapping-the-indian-oceanregion?lang=en>

Christian Bueger, "Who Secures the Western Indian Ocean? The Need for Strategic Dialogue," Center for Maritime Strategy, September 19, 2024,

<https://centerformaritimestrategy.org/publications/who-secures-the-western-indianocean-the-need-for-strategic-dialogue/>

Carina Bruewer, "Africa's ocean of organised crime," Institute for Security Studies, October 09, 2023, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africas-ocean-of-organisedcrime>

Additional Africa Center Resources:

"Enhancing Maritime Safety and Security in Africa: Whole of Africa Maritime Dialogue," round table, 27-28 July 2021:

- EN/FR/PO : <https://africacenter.org/programs/mss-dialogue-2021/>

André Standing, “Criminality in Africa’s Fishing Industry: A Threat to Human Security.” Africa Center for Strategic Studies *Africa Security Brief* No. 33, 2017:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/publication/criminality-africa-fishing-industry-threat-human-security/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/publication/criminalite-peche-commerciale-afrique-menace-securite-humaine/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ASB33PT-Criminalidade-na-industria-pesqueira-de-Africa-Uma-ameaca-a-seguranca-humana.pdf>

“Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean: A Conversation with Assis Malaquias,” 7 July 2017:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/maritime-security-western-indian-ocean-a-discussion-with-assis-malaquias/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/la-securite-maritime-dans-la-partie-occidentale-de-locean-indien-une-discussion-avec-assis-malaquias/>

Plenary Session 5: Cyber & Emerging Technology Threats

Format: Plenary session

Discussion group

Objectives:

- Explore the nature of cybersecurity in Africa: what is it and why is it relevant? Then discuss its implications.
- Explore how emerging technologies are changing Africa's security landscape.
- Assess national, regional, and international approaches to addressing the security implications of technological change.
- Discuss the challenges faced by African security actors in responding to emerging technology threats.

Background:

With the rapid spread of digital technology across the African continent, cyberspace is becoming an increasingly important security domain. A growing number of African citizens are falling victim to online fraud, theft, and extortion perpetrated by organized, and increasingly globalized, cyber-enabled criminal networks. Africa's critical infrastructure, essential to the continent's future prosperity, is becoming vulnerable to cyber sabotage. Social media, artificial intelligence, and unmanned systems are increasingly being deployed by nation states and non-state actors in Africa's armed conflicts, changing the character of warfare.

The policy response in many African countries is struggling to keep up with the rapid growth of digitally enhanced threats. Deficits in human and organizational capacity mean that many cyber incidents go unreported and unaddressed. Though the number of states with cybersecurity policies and strategies is rising, even Africa's most cyber mature countries often fail to establish key interagency coordination mechanisms or anticipate and respond to the latest threats. At least 31 African countries have acquired military drones, even as these systems struggle to effectively address guerrilla tactics and are becoming increasingly entangled in proxy wars.

The African security sector has a critical role to play in leveraging digital technology to respond to its most pressing security threats and in responding to how terrorist groups and armed criminal networks are increasingly leveraging digital technology themselves. Yet because information technology is an enabling technology with a broad array of applications, key sources of expertise lie in the private sector. This era of open technological revolution is fundamentally different from previous eras and requires the security sector not only to quickly adapt to the rapid spread and advancement of digital technology, but also to pursue partnerships with the private sector and civilian government institutions to stay ahead of the threat.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the cyber-related security challenges in your country or region?
- How are emerging technologies changing the security landscape in your country or region?
- How are digital capabilities and other emerging technologies being leveraged to address security threats in your country or region?
- What practical steps can security sector actors take to address the threats posed by the spread of emerging technology?

Recommended Readings:

Nate D.F. Allen, "Military Drone Proliferation Marks Destabilizing Shift in Africa's Armed Conflicts." *Spotlight*. Washington: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2025:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/drone-proliferation-africa-destabilizing/>

Nate D.F. Allen, "Africa's Evolving Cyber Threats." *Spotlight*. Washington: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-evolving-cyber-threats/>
- FR : <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/lafrique-a-lepreuve-des-nouvelles-formes-de-cybercriminalite/>

Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Topic in Focus: Foreign Information Manipulation." Washington: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2025.

EN: <https://africacenter.org/in-focus/fimi/>

FR : <https://africacenter.org/fr/focus-sur/fimi/>

Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Artificial Intelligence and Africa's Security Landscape." *Webinar*. Washington: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2023.

EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/2023-09-artificial-intelligence/>

FR : <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/2023-09-intelligence-artificielle/>

PO : <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/2023-09-intelligence-artificielle/>

INTERPOL, "African Cyber Threat Assessment Report 2024." INTERPOL 2024:

- EN: https://www.interpol.int/en/content/download/21048/file/24COM005030-AJFOC_Africa%20Cyberthreat%20Assessment%20Report_2024_complet_EN%20v4.pdf?inLanguage=eng-GB&version=14
- FR: https://www.interpol.int/fr/content/download/21048/file/24COM005030-AJFOC_Africa%20Cyberthreat%20Assessment%20Report_2024_complet_FR%20v3.pdf?inLanguage=fr-FR&version=14 AR: https://www.interpol.int/ar/content/download/21048/file/24COM005030-AJFOC_Africa%20Cyberthreat%20Assessment%20Report_2024_complet_AR_LR.pdf?inLanguage=ara-SA&version=14

Plenary Session 6: Strategic Leadership in Africa's Security Sector

Format: Plenary session

Discussion group

Objectives:

- Understand the critical role of leadership in confronting the changing and complex African security landscape.
- Analyze the tenets of effective strategic leadership in an African context.
- Highlight the importance of adaptability for effective leadership in the ever-changing and complex security environment.

Background:

There is optimism that Africa can claim the latter part of the 21st century if its leaders are prepared to harness emerging global opportunities and address the continent's evolving security challenges. Depending on whether African leaders respond proactively or reactively to the challenges and opportunities they face, the interconnected megatrends discussed in Session 1 may lead to virtuous, mutually reinforcing cycles of stability, growth, and development or vicious cycles of instability, conflict, and poverty. The dynamic security landscape demands that security sector leaders move away from the old approach of "business-as-usual" and provide much-needed strategic and proactive leadership to create resilient institutions over the long term, and make decisive, evidence-based decisions in the face of crisis and uncertainty.

Although there are different approaches to the understanding of leadership, the focus here is on effective strategic leadership that is generally defined as "the unique abilities of anticipating, envisioning, maintaining flexibility, thinking strategically, and empowering employees to create new inventions that lead to organizational transformations or changes."⁴⁵ Beyond developing these abilities, strategic leadership is also about having the adaptive capacity to appropriately respond to the dynamism and complexity of the context.⁴⁶ With the rapidly changing and uncertain external environment, adaptive leadership gains ground and prominence.

Adaptive leadership is defined as "the ability to anticipate future needs, articulate those needs to build collective support and understanding, adapt your responses based on continuous learning, and demonstrate accountability through transparency in your decision-making process."⁴⁷ There are five key principles that are central to the application of adaptive leadership, namely: evidence-based learning and adaptation; stress-testing underlying assumptions and beliefs; streamlining deliberative decision-making processes; appreciating the significance of accountability, transparency, and inclusion; and mobilizing collective action.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Alex Jaleha and Vincent Machuki, "Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance: Critical Review of Literature." *European Scientific Review*. Vol 4(35): 127, 2018.

<https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/11558>

⁴⁶ Paul Schoemaker, Steve Krupp and Samantha Howland, "Strategic Leadership: The Essential Skills." *Harvard Business Review*. 91(1-2): 131-134, 2018. <https://hbr.org/2013/01/strategic-leadership-the-essential-skills>

⁴⁷ Ben Ramalingam et al, "5 Principles to Guide Adaptive Leadership," *Harvard Business Review*, September 11, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/09/5-principles-to-guide-adaptive-leadership>

⁴⁸ Ramalingam et al, *op cit*.

The concept of leadership is well embedded in African values and cultures. For example, the concept of *ubuntu* is a South African leadership ethic, which means “a person is a person through others,” and it provides understanding of ourselves in relation to the world.⁴⁹ A similar ethic, found in West Africa, is the *Kurukan Fuga*.⁵⁰ or the Manden Charter, which established the Federation of Mandinka clans under one government and outlined laws by which the Malinké people should abide by social peace, co-exist in diversity, and live with dignity. Some of the indispensable characteristics that most strategic leaders have in common include being a visionary, having high moral and ethical values, being a strategic thinker, investing in the development of social and human capital as well as future leadership, being a quick learner, being a change initiator, and exhibiting both sense giving and sense making.⁵¹

Discussion Questions:

- Who are some leaders (national, regional, continental, and international) you consider to be role models for leadership and why?
- Do you see yourself as a leader, and what can you do to make yourself an effective strategic leader?
- Can you share cultural values and norms in your country or region that promote effective leadership?
- Based on the experience of COVID-19 in your country/region, can you share your assessment of the quality of leadership provided to address the pandemic and what could have been done differently?
- Do you know of any leaders in your community/country/region who have facilitated positive change? What factors have led to their success as a leader?

Recommended Readings:

Ben Ramalingam et al, “Five Principles to Guide Adaptive Leadership.” *Harvard Business Review*, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/09/5-principles-to-guide-adaptive-leadership>

Regina Eckert and Simon Rweyongoze, “Leadership Development in Africa: A Focus on Strengths.” *Center for Creative Leadership*, 2015. <https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/leadershipDevelopmentAfrica.pdf>

Kwesi Aning and Joseph Siegle, “Deep Commitment, High Expectations: The Values of the Next Generation of African Security Sector Leaders.” *Africa Defense Forum*, 2018:

- EN: <http://adf-magazine.com/deep-commitment-high-expectations/>
- FR: <http://adf-magazine.com/engagement-profond-attentes-elevees/?lang=fr>

Sam Adeyemi, “Africa does not Need Charity, it Needs Good Leadership,” *World Economic Forum on Africa*, 2017. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/05/africa-doesn-t-need-charity-it-needs-good-leadership>

⁴⁹ See <https://historyplex.com/ubuntu-african-philosophy>

⁵⁰ See <https://en.unesco.org/mediabank/23135/>

⁵¹ Page 211, Asif, *op cit*.

Plenary Session 7: Rule of Law and Security Governance: Importance to Civil-Military Relations

Format: Plenary session

Discussion group

Objectives:

- Discuss what rule of law is as a principle, its place in democratic and civilian security sector governance, and the ways it shapes drivers of security challenges affecting Africa.
- Discuss the key elements of Civil-Military Relations (CMR) and their link to the democratic governance of the security sector under the rule of law.
- Discuss how reforming the security sector and promoting sound institutions of security sector governance can contribute to forging a healthy CMR, and vice versa.

Background:

Addressing challenges related to delivering legitimate and accountable security services to the populace – especially in relation to a government’s strategy to address issues like terrorism, organized crime, armed conflict, maritime or cyber insecurity, or otherwise – demands a holistic, coordinated effort across the security sector and entities across the different branches of government authorized to oversee security. Rule of law and healthy civil-military relations are critical components of ensuring the security sector’s effectiveness in these endeavors.

Rule of law and justice are vital for peace and stability, which is the security sector’s job to provide. In its simplest form, the rule of law means that nobody is above the law, including those who are in the security services; all people are treated equally under the law, regardless of who they are. Laws are clear, well-known, and applied transparently and evenly by an independent judiciary. Maximally, rule of law includes accountability, just laws, open government, and accessible justice for all.⁵² The African Union’s Agenda 2063 further advances such a vision by calling for an Africa where people “enjoy affordable and timely access to independent courts and judiciary that deliver justice without fear or favor.” Thus, rule of law is not just about security officials enforcing the law; fostering the rule of law helps governments build a “social contract” with citizens.

Rule of law is also a core element of sound security sector governance, which facilitates the provision of security to citizens on the basis of democratic and civilian control of the security sector. Rule of law is particularly relevant to security governance in light of empirical evidence that some security threats, like violent extremist recruitment, tend to be exacerbated by state-perpetrated abuses of civilians and people’s perceptions of unfair treatment by state officials.⁵³ The professionalism of the security services, as well as citizens’ perceptions of it, hinge upon having a system of checks and balances that ensures everyone respects civil liberties and human rights. When there is accountable and people-centered security sector governance, these institutions and actors work in complementarity, within a robust system of checks and balances, to ensure that the defense and security forces who “hold and deploy the means of coercion on behalf of, and for the protection of

⁵² World Justice Project, “What is the Rule of Law?” <https://worldjusticeproject.org/about-us/overview/what-rule-law>

⁵³ John Mukum Mbaku, “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Africa By 2030,” Foresight Africa, Brookings Institution, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-rule-of-law-in-africa-by-2030/>

the entire society,...do not end up functioning as a threat to the same elements they were supposed to protect in the first place.”⁵⁴

There is, accordingly, a range of formal and informal institutions that must be engaged consistently and adaptively. Formal, national-level oversight institutions (like parliaments, inspectorates, military ombuds institutions, independent anti-corruption and human rights commissions) play key roles in monitoring security force activities and behaviors toward citizens; civilian leaders should also be subject to oversight by the same or similar institutions. The everyday practices that security officials exercise with citizens also matter, since every rights-bearing citizen is a key stakeholder in the rule of law. Local oversight in security sector governance and security governance as a whole also depends upon the work of civil society organizations, media, customary or religious authorities, women and youth groups, and non-state security providers.

The health of a country's Civil-Military Relations (CMR) also influences the state's ability to deliver human security to citizens effectively. CMR is concerned with the manner in which the military and the society it is meant to protect interact, usually through some sort of negotiated bargain between citizens, civilian government authorities, and the military.⁵⁵ Arguably, the biggest challenge is to address the dilemma of “who guards the guardians”⁵⁶ and to craft pathways to reconcile the security sector's desire to act on the wants of civilians with the ability to do only what civilians authorize.⁵⁷ A key challenge in most African countries is how to nurture healthy CMRs that will create a secure environment conducive to citizen security, job creation, justice, and rule of law. There is an alarming regression in democracy and a surge of coup d'états in Africa, combined with increased and unconstrained military spending, all without significant improvements in citizen security and safety.⁵⁸ The Ibrahim Index of African Governance shows a shrinking trust of citizens in security forces.⁵⁹ These indicators demonstrate increasingly problematic CMR, with increased military intrusion in politics and control of civilians. This regressive trend has been exacerbated by weak civilian oversight of the security sector and gaps in knowledge, experience, and attitudes.

Reversing such a grim trend in Africa is urgent and will require rethinking, re-negotiation, reform, or transformation of the CMR framework. Frameworks for not only security sector reform but also for sound security sector governance provide an opportunity for countries in developing or consolidated democracies, as well as those emerging from military dictatorship, to forge new CMRs that will consolidate democratic civilian control of the security sector and rule of law. It has been shown that democratic civilian control of the security sector is not sufficient by itself to nurture

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ Mackubin Thomas Owens, *US Civil-Military Relations After 9/11: Renegotiating the Civil Military Bargain* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 13.

⁵⁶ Thomas Bruneau and Florina Christina Matei, “Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations.” *Democratization*. Vol 15(5) pp. 909 – 929, 2008.

⁵⁷ See Feaver, Peter D. 1996. “The Civil-Military Problématique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control,” *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 149-178; Kuwali, D. “[“Oversight and Accountability to Improve Security Sector Governance in Africa”](#)”, Africa Security Brief no. 42, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, September 11, 2023.

⁵⁸ Nan Tian, “A cautionary tale of military expenditure transparency during the great lockdown.” SIPRI, 2020. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2020/cautionary-tale-military-expenditure-transparency-during-great-lockdown>

⁵⁹ See <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag/2020-key-findings#kf1>

healthy CMRs, as the effectiveness and efficiency of the military in fulfilling their assigned roles and missions are also important.⁶⁰ Overall, what is needed are clearly defined roles and missions for the security forces, legal and practical mandates and resources for effective oversight institutions and practices, and a commitment to professional norms and ethics within the security services.

Discussion Questions:

- What practical measures can African countries take to promote the rule of law in the security sector?
- Do African security sector leaders have an interest in building democratic and civilian oversight institutions that facilitate rule of law? Why or why not?
- What are some of the limitations that civilians face in exercising democratic control over the military/security forces in your country/region, and how can you help to address such limitations?
- Who are the relevant stakeholders in improving the state of civil-military relations in your country/region, and why?

Recommended Readings:

“Letting Citizens, Constitution Lead the Way: Civilian Control of the Armed Forces Remains a Durable Model Despite Coups, Setbacks,” *Africa Defense Forum*, 1 January 2024.

- EN : <https://adf-magazine.com/2023/12/letting-citizens-constitution-lead-the-way/>
- FR: <https://adf-magazine.com/fr/2023/12/laisser-les-citoyens-et-la-constitution-montrer-la-voie/>
- PO : <https://adf-magazine.com/pt-pt/2023/12/os-cidadaos-e-a-constituicao-devem-assumir-a-lidenranca/>

Christopher Day, Moses Khisa, and William Reno, “Rethinking the Civil-Military Conundrum in Africa.” *Civil Wars* Vol 22(2-3) pp. 156-173, 2020.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13698249.2020.1736808>

Catherine Lena Kelly, “Justice and Rule of Law Key to African Security.” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies Spotlight*, 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/justice-and-rule-of-law-key-to-african-security/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/la-justice-et-letat-de-droit-pierres-angulaires-de-la-securite-en-afrique/>

“Security Sector Governance: Applying Principles of Good Governance to the Security Sector.” *Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces*, 2015:

- EN: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_1_Security%20Sector%20Governance_0.pdf
- FR: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_1_La%20gouvernance%20du%20secteur%20de%20la%20securite.pdf

Additional Africa Center resources:

⁶⁰ Bruneau and Matei, *op cit*

“Why Does Rule of Law Matter for Security Sector Effectiveness in Africa?” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies webinar*, December 16, 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/jrol2021-rule-of-law-for-security-sector-effectiveness-in-africa/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/jrol2021-etat-de-droit-efficacite-secteur-securite-afrique/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/jrol2021-estado-direito-importante-eficacia-setor-seguranca-africa/>

“How Do National Oversight Institutions Influence Security Sector Governance?” webinar, April 26, 2022:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/2204rol-oversight-security-governance/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/2204rol-institutions-contrôle-gouvernance-securite/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/2204rol-instituicoes-supervisao-governacao-seguranca/>

“Roles of Parliament in Democratic and Civilian Security Sector Governance” panel, African Parliamentarians Forum 2022, March 1, 2022:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/african-parliamentarians-forum-2022/>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/forum-parlementaires-africains-2022/>

Plenary Session 8: Critical Thinking to Enhance Professionalism in Africa's Security Sector

Format: Plenary session

Discussion group

Objectives:

- Assess the status of professionalism in Africa's security sector, challenges to professionalism, and the costs of weak professionalism in African security services.
- Discuss the importance of critical thinking for enhancing military professionalism and innovation.
- Share knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned to enhance and advance professionalism in Africa's security sector among uniformed and civilian professionals.

Background:

It is well established that enhancing professionalism in Africa's security sector is critical to improving citizen security and safety, promoting political stability, improving rule of law and governance in the security sector, and cultivating citizens' trust in security officials. Though it is a frequently used term, it is necessary to establish a common understanding of "professionalism" for its application in the security sector. In the armed forces, professionalism is commonly defined in terms of the principles guiding the professional, such as the subordination of the military to democratic civilian authority, allegiance to the state, and a commitment to political neutrality and an ethical institutional culture. The inherent values of professionalism include discipline, integrity, honor, sacrifices, commitment to the greater good of society, dedication to duty, individual responsibility, and accountability for moral agency and service in spite of self-interest.⁶¹

Despite the call by the African Union for member states to invest in comprehensive capacity-building and professionalism in the security sector,⁶² military professionalism in Africa has been weakened by a recent surge of coups, waning popular trust in militaries, political instability, corruption, and failure to confront the insecurity and violence caused by non-state security actors. Although there are many reasons that explain weak military professionalism in Africa, some factors of primary concern are a lack of systematic checks and balances, politicization of militaries and militarization of politics, and ambiguity over the missions of the militaries that serve to protect governments rather than citizens.⁶³ Ultimately, the professionalism of the security services, as well as citizens' perceptions of it, hinge upon having a system of checks and balances that ensures everyone respects civil liberties, human rights, and the rule of law. Formal, national-level oversight institutions – like parliaments, inspectorates, military ombuds institutions, independent anti-corruption and human rights commissions – play a key role in monitoring security force activities and behaviors toward citizens. The everyday practices that security officials exercise with citizens also matter, along with the local oversight of security that may involve civil society organizations, media, customary authorities, and non-state security providers.

⁶¹ Emile Ouedraogo, "Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa." *Research Paper No. 6*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Page 1-3, 2014. <https://africacenter.org/publication/advancing-military-professionalism-in-africa/>

⁶² African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, 2014, https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/60132/986021/AU_SSR_policy_framework_en.pdf

⁶³ Ouedraogo, *op cit*.

The bleak status of military professionalism in Africa notwithstanding, some militaries have exhibited notable levels of professionalism during political transitions, elections, and popular uprisings against autocratic regimes by upholding the rule of law and respecting the constitution and will of the people. Most African security sector professionals are not only satisfied with their profession, but also have a strong sense of pride in embracing the values of professionalism such as duty, responsibility, respect, and honesty.⁶⁴ In some African countries, the armed forces enjoy the respect of citizens and become a source of their national pride. This shows military professionalism is a product of policies, strategies, and political leadership, as well as each individual's commitment to the principles of rule of law in the security sector.

Governments and security sector leaders have a vital interest in enhancing the professionalism and accountability of defense and security institutions. The development and implementation of national security strategies will not only provide mechanisms for democratic civilian control and oversight of the security sector to ensure respect for civil liberties, human rights, and rule of law, but will also provide guidance and clarity for the roles, mission, mandate, professional norms and values, and doctrine of security forces.

Discussion Questions:

- How would you describe the level of professionalism in the security sector, particularly of the armed forces, police, and intelligence services in your country/region and the reasons?
- Which security institutions have exhibited quality professionalism and why?
- What do you think is the main challenge to military/security professionalism in your country/region and why?
- What do you think the future of military/security professionalism in your country/region and why?
- Based on your experiences, are there any lessons on how to build and advance a professional armed forces and security services in your country/region?

Recommended Readings:

Emile Ouedraogo, "Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa." *Research Paper No. 6*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, p. 1-3, 2014:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/publication/advancing-military-professionalism-in-africa/>
- FR : <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ARP06FR-Pour-la-professionnalisation-des-forces-arm%C3%A9es-en-Afrique.pdf>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ARP06PT-Promo%C3%A7%C3%A3o-do-Profissionalismo-Militar-em-%C3%81frica.pdf>

Kwesi Aning and Joseph Siegle, "Assessing Attitudes of the Next Generation of African Security Sector Professionals." *Research Paper No. 7*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, p. 1-2, 2019:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/publication/assessing-attitudes-next-generation-african-security-sector-professionals/>

⁶⁴ Kwesi Aning and Joseph Siegle, "Assessing Attitudes of the Next Generation of African Security Sector Professionals." *Research Paper No. 7*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Page 1-2, 2019.
<https://africacenter.org/publication/assessing-attitudes-next-generation-african-security-sector-professionals/>

- FR: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ARP07FR%20-%20Evaluation%20des%20attitudes%20de%20la%20prochaine%20generation%20de%20professionnels%20du%20secteur%20de%20la%20securite%20en%20Afrique.pdf>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ARP07PT-Avaliacao-das-atitudes-da-proxima-geracao-de-profissionais-do-setor-da-seguranca-em-Africa.pdf>

David Novy, "Professionalism in the Armed Forces." *Research Report*, Air War College, p. iv, 2017.
<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1038055.pdf>

African Union, "African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform." P. 16, 2014:

- EN: https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/60132/986021/AU_SSR_policy_framework_en.pdf
- FR: https://issat.dcaf.ch/fre/download/60132/996775/SSR_policy_framework_fr.pdf
- PO: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/policy-framework-po.pdf>

Plenary Session 9: National Security Strategy Development and Implementation

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Examine the rationale, key concepts, and prerequisites for National Security Strategy Development (NSSD) and key elements of the National Security Strategy document.
- Discuss the typical phases of NSSD in Africa.
- Examine the role of strategic leadership and security sector leaders in the development and implementation of national security strategies in Africa.

Background:

Ensuring national security and the safety of citizens is a core responsibility of any government. In many African countries, however, this responsibility remains unfulfilled despite substantial investments in the security sector. Insecurity is on the rise, and in some cases, the state itself contributes to instability. Emerging and complex threats such as terrorism, organized crime, violent extremism, and cyber insecurity are reshaping the continent's security landscape. These developments underscore an urgent need for African governments to establish and implement comprehensive National Security Strategies that address both the security of the state and the well-being of its people.

At present, most African states do not operate under a unified national security framework. Instead, they often rely on fragmented, sectoral plans that are poorly coordinated, lack public input, and are frequently supported by external partners without strong national ownership. This absence of an overarching strategy weakens the ability of governments to effectively allocate resources, coordinate across institutions, and respond to both current and emerging threats. Without a clearly articulated National Security Strategy, decision-makers are left without a shared vision or roadmap to guide security-related policies and actions.

Recognizing this critical gap, the African Union has called upon its member states to develop inclusive and nationally driven security strategies. Policy instruments such as the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defense and Security Policy (2004)⁶⁵ and the Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (2014)⁶⁶ offer member states guidance on how to build these strategies through consultative and participatory processes. Similarly, the United Nations continues to provide support to countries seeking to establish effective national security policies as part of broader efforts to promote peace, stability, and good governance.

The development and implementation of a National Security Strategy is not merely a policy exercise. It is a strategic necessity that allows governments to identify and prioritize threats, improve coordination across security and governance institutions, build trust with citizens, and enhance transparency and accountability. A strong strategy fosters consensus and inclusivity while providing a foundation for national and international partnerships that support long-term stability. To assist African countries in this process, the Africa Center has developed the National Security

⁶⁵ See <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/declaration-cadsp-en.pdf>

⁶⁶ <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/au-policy-framework-on-security-sector-reform-ae-ssr.pdf>

Strategy Development in Africa Toolkit. This resource outlines key phases of strategy development including stakeholder consultations, threat assessments, drafting, validation, and implementation. While the toolkit offers useful guidance, it encourages countries to tailor the process to their unique contexts and to develop strategies that reflect homegrown solutions.

In a dynamic and increasingly complex security environment, the absence of a well-crafted National Security Strategy places states at a significant disadvantage. Developing and implementing a comprehensive, inclusive, and context-specific strategy is essential for African nations to effectively address security challenges, strengthen state resilience, and safeguard the future of their citizens.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you know whether your country has a national security strategy? If yes, do you know how it was developed? Was there any public or citizen engagement in the process, and was the strategy debated or approved by parliament? Is the document accessible to the public?
- If your country or region does not currently have a national security strategy, do you believe there is a need for one? What benefits might such a strategy bring, and what role should national or regional leadership play in initiating and guiding its development?
- Who is typically responsible for initiating the NSSD process, and what motivates this action? Who should be involved and consulted throughout the process, and why is their participation important? At what stages should different stakeholders be engaged? Should groups such as the media, women, youth, and civil society organizations be included, and in what ways can they contribute meaningfully?
- Should a national security strategy be subject to parliamentary approval? Why or why not? Do you believe such a strategy should remain classified, or should it be made public? Please explain your reasoning.

Recommended Readings:

Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “National Security Strategy Development in Africa: Toolkit for Drafting and Consultation.”

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Security-Strategy-Development-in-Africa-Toolkit-for-Drafting-and-Consultation-Africa-Center-for-Strategic-Studies-2022-01.pdf>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Developpement-dune-strategie-de-securite-nationale-en-Afrique-Centre-dEtude-Strategiques-de-lAfrique-2022-01.pdf>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Desenvolvimento-da-Estrategias-de-Seguranca-Nacional-em-Africa-Um-kit-de-ferramentas-para-consulta-e-preparacao.pdf>

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African Union, “The Solemn Declaration on Common African Defense and Security Policy.” 2004:

- EN : <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/declaration-cadsp-en.pdf>
- FR : <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/declaration-cadsp-fr.pdf>

Africa Union, “Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform.” 2014:

- EN: <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/au-policy-framework-on-security-sector-reform-ae-ssr.pdf>
- FR: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/policy-framework-fr.pdf>
- PO: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/policy-framework-po.pdf>

Additional Africa Center Resources:

National Security Strategy Development and Implementation program, April 20 – May 5, 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/nssd-2021-04-05/>
- FR : <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/fr-nssd-2021-04-05/>
- PO : <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/pt-nssd-2021-04-05/>

National Security Strategy Development Process: Lessons Learned program, March 9-24, 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/national-security-strategy-development-lessons-learned/>
- FR : <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/fr-nssd-mar-2021/>
- PO : <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/pt-nssd-mar-2021/>

Plenary Session 10: Managing Security Resources in Africa

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Analyze trends, patterns, and key drivers of security and defense spending across Africa
- Discuss the link between the budget cycle and national security strategy development and implementation.
- Examine the role of security sector leaders in the transparent, accountable, and effective management of security resources in Africa.

Background:

Security remains a top priority for African countries facing a complex mix of traditional and emerging threats. These include internal armed conflicts, terrorism, cross-border criminal networks, piracy, cyber threats, and communal violence. In response, many governments have significantly increased military and security spending. However, concerns persist about whether this spending is effective, equitable, and aligned with broader national priorities. Between the 1990s and 2020, military spending in Africa nearly tripled, from \$15 billion to over \$43 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). In several countries, defense budgets now account for a substantial portion of total government spending, often surpassing the global average. In countries affected by conflict, this share is even higher. Yet despite the increased investment, many countries continue to struggle with maintaining security and ensuring the safety of their citizens.

This disconnect raises critical questions about the efficiency and impact of security spending. More money does not necessarily equate to better security outcomes. In many contexts, citizens continue to experience insecurity and express low levels of trust in security institutions. These realities suggest that the effectiveness of security spending hinges not only on how much is spent but on how those resources are allocated and managed.⁶⁷ A key contributor to misaligned spending is the absence of clear, inclusive, and strategic national security frameworks. Without a well-defined National Security Strategy (NSS), resource allocation tends to be reactive, fragmented, and often driven by elite interests rather than public needs. Weak coordination among key ministries, such as finance, defense, interior, and justice, further undermines coherence in budgeting and planning across the security sector. Compounding these challenges are opaque budget processes and limited civilian oversight.

Transforming Africa's security sector requires a shift toward more accountable, transparent, and citizen-centered governance. This means moving beyond hardware-focused approaches centered solely on weapons and military infrastructure toward strategies that address the broader needs of society. Central to this transformation is the development of National Security Strategies that are inclusive, participatory, and grounded in local realities. Security should not be defined merely by military strength. It must be rooted in the strength of institutions that protect rights, uphold the rule of law, and foster trust between the state and its citizens. When security resources are allocated and managed effectively, they can help build resilient institutions and support the development of

⁶⁷ Kuol and Amegboh, *op cit*.

peaceful, inclusive societies.

Ultimately, responsible resource allocation in the security sector is not just a technical matter. It is a cornerstone of democratic governance. Ensuring that security institutions are accountable and serve the public interest is essential to preventing them from becoming autonomous centers of power. A reimagined approach to security spending, centered on outcomes, transparency, and citizen engagement, offers a path toward more sustainable peace and stability across the continent.

Discussion Questions:

- Based on the security threats and development challenges in your country, do you think more resources need to be allocated to the security sector and why?
- Based on the most recent approved budget of your country, which security sector institution/agency is allocated the most resources, and is that allocation justifiable?
- Which security sector institution/agency in your country should be allocated more public resources and why?
- Do you think having a National Security Strategy that is developed through an inclusive and participatory process will help in the effective allocation and alignment of security resources and why?

Recommended Readings:

Bernard Harborne, William Dorotinsky and Paul Bisca (Eds.), "Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector." The World Bank, p. 7-14, 25-47, 2017:

- EN: <http://www.sipotra.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SECURING-DEVELOPMENT.-Public-Finance-and-the-Security-Sector.pdf>
- FR: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25138/210766ovFR.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

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<http://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/60a72058556ba.pdf>

Chimere Iheonu, Kingsley Odo and Davidmac Ekeocha, "Estimating the effect of democracy, governance and militarization on peace in Africa." Research Africa Network, WP/20/046, 2020.

<http://publications.resanet.org/RePEc/abh/abh-wpaper/Estimating-the-effect-of-Democracy-Governance-and-Militarisation-on-Peace-in-Africa.pdf>

Maurice Ogonnaya, "Has counter-terrorism become a profitable business in Nigeria?" Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2020.

- EN: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/has-counter-terrorism-become-a-profitable-business-in-nigeria>
- FR: <https://issafrica.org/fr/iss-today/la-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-est-elle-devenue-une-activite-rentable-au-nigeria>

Additional Africa Center Resources:

Aligning Resources with National Security Strategies in Africa program, November 30 – December 15, 2021:

- EN: <https://africacenter.org/programs/msra-nssd-2021-aligning-resources-national->

[security-strategies-in-africa/](https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/msra-nssd-2021-alignement-ressources-strategies-nationales-securite-afrique/)

- FR: <https://africacenter.org/fr/programs/msra-nssd-2021-alignement-ressources-strategies-nationales-securite-afrique/>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/pt-pt/msra-nssd-2021-alinhamento-recursos-estrategias-seguranca-nacional-africa/>

Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021. "National Security Strategy Development in Africa: Toolkit for Drafting and Consultation". Pages 40-41 :

- EN : <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Security-Strategy-Development-in-Africa-Toolkit-for-Drafting-and-Consultation-Africa-Center-for-Strategic-Studies-2022-01.pdf>
- FR: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Developpement-dune-strategie-de-securite-nationale-en-Afrique-Centre-dEtude-Strategiques-de-lAfrique-2022-01.pdf>
- PO: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Desenvolvimento-da-Estrategias-de-Seguranca-Nacional-em-Africa-Um-kit-de-ferramentas-para-consulta-e-preparacao.pdf>

Plenary Session 11: Regional Responses to Security Challenges

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Examine strategies and good practices for mitigating conflicts, including mediation, diplomatic engagement, and defense.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of regional security and defense policies and regional mechanisms for peace support operations in addressing regional security challenges.

Background:

The predominant regional security challenges in Africa transcend national political boundaries. Issues related to transnational organized crime, violent conflict, terrorist insurgencies, migration, small arms and light weapons proliferation, and economic crisis have profound security implications. Given the transnational elements of these threats, they cannot be addressed by national responses alone, but through interstate coordination and cooperation.

For the past three decades, peace operations sponsored by the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have played large roles in addressing the regional dimensions of peace and security in Africa. In recent years, however, they have faced significant headwinds. Due to divisions in the U.N. Security Council, a perceived lack of success of recent multidimensional peacekeeping missions, and questions about the effectiveness of the U.N. in responding to Africa's cross-border and violent extremist threats, no major new U.N. mission has been sponsored in a decade. Though Africans themselves are taking on an increasing share of the responsibility for managing Africa's conflicts, concerns remain about the degree to which regional actors possess the resources, operational capabilities, and political will needed to grapple with Africa's most significant armed conflicts and crises. What is clear is that Africa's regional security architecture lies at a critical juncture.

Other means beyond peace operations include regional initiatives, for example, the East African Community (EAC)-led Nairobi Process launched in 2022, which seeks to use dialogue and negotiation with all relevant stakeholders to resolve the conflict in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Moreover, regional security and defense mechanisms, such as ECOWAS's Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), launched in 2003, and from the Horn of Africa's experience, IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism (CEWARN), established in 2002, are designed to preempt conflict.

However, regional institutions and mechanisms vary greatly based on leadership dynamics, political and cultural cleavages, and the depth of integration. Insufficient political incentives at the national level to mainstream regional commitments and agreements into state planning, or into action, limit their effectiveness. This has affected dedication to both UN and African-led operations, resulting in operational and expeditionary capabilities, poor integration with civilian-led efforts, and heavy dependence on external donors. Innovative regional approaches that adapt to the changing nature of conflict and new geopolitical realities will be critical for advancing security. For example, the passage of UNSCR 2719 on assessed contributions is a watershed moment and could be the start of a deeper series of changes between the UN and African partners when it comes to communication

and division of responsibilities.⁶⁸

Discussion Questions:

- Which strategies and good practices have been especially critical to mitigating conflict in your country or region?
- How can the AU and REC working relationship improve, both between the organizations and with international partners like the United Nations?
- How effective is your REC at mobilizing member states to collectively address regional security challenges? Please share some examples of successes and challenges.
- Do overlapping country memberships in the RECs help or hurt the RECs' ability to coordinate collective responses to security challenges?

Recommended Readings:

Nate D. F. Allen and Nicole Mazurova. "African Union and United Nations Partnership Key to the Future of Peace Operations in Africa," *Spotlight*. Washington: Africa Center for Strategic Studies. April 30, 2024. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-union-united-nations-peace-operations/>

"Eight Priorities for the African Union in 2025," International Crisis Group Briefing no. 205 (2025). <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/african-union-regional-bodies/b205-eight-priorities-african-union-2025>

"The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities," United Nations Peacekeeping, November 01, 2024. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/study-on-future-of-peacekeeping-new-models-and-related-capabilities>

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Bitania Tadesse, "The Role of African Multilateralism in the New Agenda for Peace," *International Peace Institute Global Observatory*, September 2023. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2023/09/the-role-of-african-multilateralism-in-the-new-agenda-for-peace/>

Mark Whitlock and Robert Muggah, "Reflections on the evolution of conflict early warning." *International Journal of Security and Development*, 10 (1), 2022. <https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.857/>

L'Organisation pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO), « Les mécanismes communautaires de réduction des risques de catastrophes pour des moyens d'existence résilients au Sahel. » 2017. <https://www.fao.org/emergencies/recursos/documentos/recursos-detalle/es/c/1035230/>

West African Network for Peacebuilding, "Annual Report 2021: Adapting Resilient Approaches and Synergies to Peacebuilding in the 'New Normal'." 2021:

- EN: <https://wanep.org/wanep/annual-report-2021-adapting-resilient-approaches-and->

⁶⁸ Security Council Report, The Financing of AU Peace Support Operations: Prospects for Progress in the Security Council, Research Report, April 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/research-reports/the-financing-of-au-peace-support-operations-prospects-for-progress-in-the-security-council.php>

- [synergies-to-peacebuilding-in-the-new-normal/](#)
- FR: https://wanep.org/wanep/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Wanep-2021_French.pdf

Plenary Session 12: Leveraging Donor Assistance

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Identify the variation in external security assistance models.
- Explore the role of strategic leadership in using and leveraging external assistance to deliver better security to citizens in Africa.
- Investigate links between national security strategy development and effective security assistance coordination.

Background:

Security provision in many African countries is shaped not only by domestic capabilities but also through strategic external partnerships. A key characteristic of Africa's current security landscape is the intensifying competition among global powers. Traditional partners such as the United States, the European Union, and China, along with emerging actors like India, Russia, Brazil, Vietnam, South Korea, the Gulf States, and Turkey, have significantly increased their engagement across the continent. These nations view Africa as both a critical source of natural resources and an expanding market for business. Simultaneously, they seek to strengthen their diplomatic ties and influence within multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Among these partners, China stands out due to the depth and breadth of its relationships in Africa. China's involvement spans numerous sectors and is primarily channeled through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global infrastructure and foreign policy framework. As of 2022, 52 of 54 sub-Saharan countries have signed on to the BRI Memorandum of Understanding with China.⁶⁹ This engagement directly links the continent's security with China's own prosperity - a serious departure from its famed foreign policy of non-interference in domestic affairs. China's increased focus on security stems from needing to protect investments from the disruptions and damage caused by conflict, and the desire to strengthen its global reputation. Working towards these ends, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense hosted the inaugural China-Africa Defense and Security Forum in 2018 and has ramped up its participation in UN peacekeeping operations.⁷⁰ Of China's approximately 2,500 troops in UN peacekeeping missions, almost 85% are in Africa.

Russia, in contrast, has pursued a more unconventional strategy. The upsurge of violent extremism, terrorist activity, and coup d'états in West and Central Africa has given opportunity for Russia to deepen its influence through the Wagner Group, a shadowy mercenary company, that has gradually assumed traditional and strategic military and security partnerships with countries in West Africa. The 2023 Russia-Africa summit further showcased intentions to lay the foundation for deeper

⁶⁹ Xuewu Gu et al., "China's Engagement in Africa: Activities, Effects and Trends," *Center for Global Studies*, June 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361589142_China's_Engagement_in_Africa_Activities_Effects_and_Trends/citations

⁷⁰ Niall Dungun, "The Expanding Role of Chinese Peacekeeping in Africa." *Oxford Research Group*, January 18, 2018, <https://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/Blog/the-expanding-role-of-chinese-peacekeeping-in-africa>

cooperation, coming at a sensitive time considering Russian withdrawal from the Black Sea grain initiative the week prior.

While external security assistance can bolster African countries, such support can be counterproductive if not aligned with national security priorities. To derive meaningful benefits, African leaders must clearly define their security threats, identify capability gaps, and articulate specific needs. Likewise, international partners must recognize that the success of their assistance depends on harmonizing with national strategies. A robust National Security Strategy (NSS) serves as a foundational tool for aligning external support with domestic goals. Without such a national strategy, donor-driven agendas risk overshadowing national interests, undermining long-term security outcomes.

External security assistance should therefore be based upon genuine and enduring partnership (rather than patronage), mutual interests, the African Union's principles of sovereign equality and inter-dependence, the traditional African values of equal burden-sharing and mutual assistance, and the indivisibility of African security.⁷¹ It is most effective when predicated on a national ownership and solid institutional framework and when tailored, aligned, and appropriate to national needs and interests. National Security Strategies is itself a tool for leveraging external security partnerships and domestic resource utilization for greater transparency, accountability, and sustainability in the Africa security sector.

Discussion Questions:

- How significant is external assistance, particularly external security assistance, in your country/region? Who are the new external security partners and how effective are they in comparison with the traditional partners?
- Do you think external security assistance has helped in reducing and combating the security threats facing your country/region? Please give examples.
- How can African countries/institutions best coordinate multiple offers of partnership? Please give examples.
- How can your country/region address the increasing influence of great power competition? How can your country/region make better use of and leverage external security assistance to help achieve national/regional security priorities and objectives?

Recommended Readings:

Lina Benabdallah, "China-Africa military ties have deepened. Here are 4 things to know," *The Washington Post* Monkey Cage blog, July 6, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/07/06/china-africa-military-ties-have-deepened-here-are-4-things-to-know/>

Moderan, O. (2015). Political Leadership and National Ownership of Security Sector Reform Processes. Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa, 3. <https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/SSRG-West-Africa-Toolkit-Tool-1-EN.pdf>

Paul Nantulya, "Solidarity in Peace and Security: The Nordic-African Partnership," Africa Center for Strategic Studies, November 29, 2017, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/solidarity-peace->

⁷¹ AU, 2004, Solemn Declaration on A Common African Defense and Security Policy, Addis: African Union.

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Paul Nantulya, “The Tokyo International Conference on African Development – Fostering Stability through Peace and Security,” Africa Center for Strategic Studies, August 22, 2022, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/the-tokyo-international-conference-on-african-development-fostering-stability-through-peace-and-security/>

Paul Nantulya, “Africa-India Cooperation Sets Benchmark for Partnership,” Africa Center for Strategic Studies, December 12, 2023, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-india-cooperation-benchmark-partnership/>

Watts, Steve. “Identifying and Mitigating Risks in Security Sector Assistance for Africa's Fragile States”. Rand Corporation 2015.
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR808/RAND_RR808.pdf

Additional Readings:

Ismail, Olawale, and Elisabeth Skons, eds. Security Activities of External Actors in Africa. Oxford University Press, 2014.
<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/books/SIPRI2014IsSk01.pdf>

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- EN : <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/National-Security-Strategy-Development-in-Africa-Toolkit-for-Drafting-and-Consultation-Africa-Center-for-Strategic-Studies-2022-01.pdf>
- FR : <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Developpement-dune-strategie-de-securite-nationale-en-Afrique-Centre-dEtude-Strategiques-de-lAfrique-2022-01.pdf>
- PO : <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Desenvolvimento-da-Estrategias-de-Seguranca-Nacional-em-Africa-Um-kit-de-ferramentas-para-consulta-e-preparacao.pdf>

Plenary Session 13: United States Government: Security Assistance in Africa

Format: Plenary session
Discussion group

Objectives:

- Examine the objectives and mechanisms of U.S. security assistance to Africa.
- Assess the impact and effectiveness of U.S. security assistance.
- Explore the role of strategic leadership in using and leveraging external assistance to deliver better security to citizens in Africa.

Background:

The U.S. Department of State serves as the lead agency for coordinating U.S. foreign assistance, facilitating interagency collaboration through the Office of Foreign Assistance (OFA). This coordination reflects a commitment to partnership and mutual responsibility, recognizing that lasting peace and security in Africa require cooperative efforts between the United States, African governments, and regional organizations. By integrating diplomatic, development, and defense efforts, the State Department manages a comprehensive portfolio of assistance programs designed to support African-led peace and security initiatives across the continent.

Through its regional and functional bureaus, including the Bureau of African Affairs, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the Department administers programs that build African security sector capacity. These efforts support peacekeeping missions, counterterrorism, conflict prevention, combating transnational organized crime, and promoting democratic governance, accountability, and the rule of law. By emphasizing African ownership and collaboration, these programs ensure shared responsibility and mutual accountability for sustainable outcomes. Recognizing that Africa's security challenges often cross-national borders, the Department employs both bilateral and regional strategies. Partnerships with African Union institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and multinational security frameworks highlight a collective approach that leverages regional leadership and resources alongside U.S. assistance.

While the Department of State leads foreign assistance programming, including funding for security sector reform and training of foreign military personnel through initiatives such as the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, the Department of Defense (DoD) serves as the primary liaison with foreign defense establishments. The DoD's military-to-military partnerships, joint exercises, and capacity-building programs complement the State Department's diplomatic and development efforts, reflecting a unified commitment to strengthening African security capabilities. This collaborative approach emphasizes transparency, accountability, and efficient use of resources. It acknowledges that sustainable security depends on strong African leadership and ownership, with the U.S. providing supportive assistance that respects national priorities and regional dynamics. Through this partnership, U.S. security assistance contributes to addressing violent extremism, organized crime, and emerging geopolitical challenges across the continent.

The Role of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM):

In 2007, the United States established the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) to consolidate

and enhance its military engagement on the African continent. Before AFRICOM's creation, responsibilities for Africa were divided among three separate commands: European Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM). The formation of AFRICOM reflected the increasing strategic importance of Africa to U.S. national security interests, including counterterrorism, regional stability, and protecting economic and geopolitical ties.

AFRICOM works closely with African nations and regional organizations to promote stability and security across the continent. Its efforts focus on strengthening national and regional security capabilities, fostering military professionalism, and encouraging principles of good governance within security institutions. Through various training programs, joint exercises, and partnership initiatives, AFRICOM supports African-led solutions to the complex security challenges facing the region.

Security Assistance Effectiveness:

Research on U.S. security assistance highlights that its effectiveness varies widely depending on the nature and approach of the support provided. There is increasing recognition that sustainable security in African countries depends not merely on operational and tactical training or the provision of military equipment, but on building defense and security institutions that are civilian-led, socially representative, merit-based, and capable of independent strategic decision-making.

Effective security assistance are characterized by several critical factors to include "regular, intensive contact between international advisers and the partner nation's security personnel; a relatively long-term commitment; close oversight of the performance of security forces; and the integration of train-and-equip efforts into an overall political strategy."⁷² Historically, U.S. security assistance exhibiting these features have been most successful in reducing conflict, insurgency, terrorism, and abusive government practices. Notably, such comprehensive partnerships have often coincided with the presence of United Nations peace support operations, which provide an enabling environment for integrated security efforts.

Discussion questions:

- What are the elements of the U.S. security assistance and the U.S. Department of Defense's policies toward Africa that are most meaningful to you and your work?
- Are perceptions in your home country different from what you learned today?
- How does the information you learned today change how you will do your work?
- How can strategic leadership and security sector leaders harness and leverage US security assistance to promote national security priorities and interests in Africa?

Required Readings:

General Thomas Waldhauser, "United States Africa Command 2022 Posture Statement." 2022. <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/AFRICOM%20FY23%20Posture%20Statement%20%20ISO%20SASC%2015%20MAR%20Cleared.pdf>

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⁷² See Stephen Watts et al, "Reforming Security Sector Assistance for Africa," RAND Corporation Research Brief RB-10028-OSD/AFRICOM, 2018, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10028.html

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