

## **POLITICAL OVERSIGHT OF ARMED FORCES: STRENGTHENING DEFENCE OVERSIGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA'S SEVENTH DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION**

One important facet of democratic rule is how well responsibility, accountability and transparency play out. The standard of democratic rule is also strongly influenced by the quality of oversight over government activities, decisions allocation and use of resources. In this regard multiparty oversight reflects democratic culture while the efficiency of oversight plays out in how well oversight committees cooperate to use mechanisms and hold departmental leadership accountable to report and implement oversight instructions.

Quality oversight is however much dependent upon how familiar oversight committee members are with the mix of oversight mechanisms and go through a learning curve of how to best execute oversight over the allocated state departments. Similarly, an understanding of the key focus areas of defence oversight and selecting oversight focus areas where an impact can be made are central to effective oversight. Ultimately, defence oversight also regulates the standard of civil-military relations and more particularly, cooperative democratic civil-military relations as the gold standard.

Defence oversight is a difficult sector given the standing the military holds in society and as a department holding control over the means of coercion that includes legitimate access to violence. While the defence establishment largely remains static and entrenched in its own culture, democratic politics imply regular changes in the political oversight of defence and thus the imperative to keep oversight committee members in step with their role. Experience, organisational learning and familiarity with defence is one grounding. Another pathway to knowledge is the role of academia to communicate research to policy-makers and so cooperate and support democracy-based defence oversight. Knowledge about aspects of oversight can help members of Parliament to conduct their oversight role with confidence. To this end the Round Table theme entails a selection of research findings to support serving members of parliament responsible for defence oversight in South Africa.

Date: 18 September 2024      Time: 10:00 – 13:00

Venue: SA Parliament, Cape Town

10:00 - 10:10	<b>Welcoming:</b> Chair, PCDMV
10:10 - 10:20	<b>Opening:</b> Dean, Faculty of Military Science
10:20 - 10:30	<b>Programme Director:</b> Prof Hussein Solomon, University of the Free State
10:30 - 10:50	<b>Looking back: Pitfalls in post-94 defence oversight:</b> Dr Evert Jordaan, Stellenbosch University
10:50 - 11:10	<b>On contemporary challenges of the SANDF:</b> Dr Moses Khanyile, Center for Military Studies, Stellenbosch University
11:10 - 11:30	<b>On the military legal system and the Military Ombud:</b> Prof Michelle Nel, Stellenbosch University
11:30 - 11:50	<b>On Civil-Military relations:</b> Prof Lindy Heinecken, Stellenbosch University
11:50 - 12:00	<b>Discussant:</b> Dr Wilhelm Janse van Rensburg, Parliament of South Africa
12:00 - 12:45	<b>Question session:</b> Facilitated by Prof Hussein Solomon
12:45 – 12:55	<b>Synthesis:</b> Prof Francois Vreÿ, SIGLA, Stellenbosch University
12:55 – 13:00	<b>Closing remarks:</b> Chair, PCDMV