



The Royal Danish Embassy



Post-SONA Seminar on Defence Co-hosted by SIGLA and the Danish Embassy in South Africa

Thursday 20 February 2020

Time: 15.30-17:30

Venue:

Pola Pasvolsky Conference Center
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre
88 Hatfield Street, Gardens, Cape Town

Seminar:

After the SONA: The role of the defence force in contemporary South Africa and in Africa

On 13 February 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa is scheduled to deliver his 2020 State of the Nation Address (SONA) to a Joint Sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. The much anticipated annual address to Parliament indicates the political direction of the South African government and the various government departments.

In recent years, the SONA has made limited reference to military affairs. References largely focused on the South African National Defence Force's (SANDF) role in continental peacekeeping efforts as well as domestic deployments to assist other state departments. The latter deployments gained prominence through SANDF operations such as the Vaal River cleanup, bridge constructions, security operations with the Police and relief efforts in Mozambique. The decline in focus on defence matters aligns with the significant decline in defence spending since the transition in 1994. In 2019, defence received an allocation of 0.8% of the Gross Domestic Product, significantly lower than the 2.0% envisaged in the 2015 Defence Review document.

The declining budget and decreasing focus on defence matters during recent SONAs highlight concerns regarding the prioritisation of defence matters and bring into question the exact role

envisaged for the SANDF in contemporary South Africa. The Seminar will unpack the February 2020 SONA and its references to defence and foreign policy matters. With the SONA as backdrop, key questions will be addressed that impact on the future of defence matters in South Africa. What priority does government afford the SANDF and defence matters in general? What are the contemporary roles of the SANDF in South Africa and in Africa? What structural challenges face the SANDF in fulfilling its contemporary functions? What future roles may potentially exist for the SANDF?

The seminar is co-organised by the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa (SIGLA) and the Danish Embassy in South Africa. SIGLA is a Stellenbosch University based independent civilian research centre, focusing on security governance in Africa. SIGLA has a unique position being located at the interface between the South African Security institutions and the academic world.

For questions related to the seminar and for registration please contact:

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RVSP by 18 February 2020

Programme

- 15.30-15.40: Opening and welcome.
Prof. Sam Tshehla, SIGLA and Amb. Tobias Elling
Rehfeldt, Embassy of Denmark
- 15:55-16.10: SANDF in contemporary South Africa – what did the SONA
tell us?
Prof. Anthoni van Nieuwkerk, Wits University
- 16.10-16.25: Structural challenges facing the SANDF- what did we learn
from the SONA.
Prof. Ishmael Theletsane, Faculty of Military Science, SU
- 16.25-16.40: Parliamentary oversight in South Africa – A crisis in Civil-
Military relations?
Dr. Wilhelm Janse van Rensburg, Parliament Research
Unit
- 16.40-16.55 SANDF and its domestic and international role – lessons
from the SONA?
Prof. Thomas Mandrup, SIGLA, SU
- 16.55-17.25: Q/A
- 17.25-17.30: Closing by Prof. Francois Very, SIGLA
- 17.30-18.30 Refreshments

