



The Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in Democratic Societies



The Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in Democratic Societies

Introduction

The armed forces play a paradoxical role in democracy. Their role is to foster a peaceful and stable environment from which democratic institutions can flourish. However, by its nature, the armed forces are endowed with special powers, namely the legitimate use of force, which have a great risk of misuse and abuse. When the armed forces deviate from their intended mandate, there is great potential to harm or destroy the democratic institutions to which it is responsible. Thus, there is a need to balance these concerns between public security, as assured by the armed forces, and upholding democratic standards. A way to strike this balance is to ensure the armed forces are accountable to democratic institutions by establishing oversight bodies, such as ombuds institutions.

Ombuds institutions for the armed forces come in many different iterations and possess widely different mandates; however, for the purposes of this conference, we define ombuds institutions for the armed forces as those organizations that are mandated to receive or investigate complaints from within or relating to the armed forces in their respective jurisdictions. Ombuds institutions for the armed forces typically can be classified into three models: general ombuds institutions mandated to oversee all members of society and all branches of government, such as protector of citizens, public defender and ombudsman; ombuds institutions with exclusive jurisdiction over the armed forces, such as parliamentary commissioner; and ombuds institutions integrated within the armed forces, such as inspector general.

While ombuds institutions for the armed forces have diverse and varying mandates, they all share two fundamental purposes: to prevent maladministration and protect human rights. The respect for and protection of human rights is integral for a healthy and fully functioning democracy. Human rights represent a system of values which form the basis of the democratic rule of law. Ombuds institutions for the armed forces strengthen rule of law by both increasing respect for human rights internally, amongst personnel, and externally, in its interactions with the public while deployed.

Ombuds institutions also make the security sector more transparent and accountable, which are more essential elements of a democratic society. Moreover, ombuds institutions for the armed forces build greater trust and participation in the armed forces, as they provide a voice to all members of the armed forces, particularly those most marginalized.

Methodology and Outcomes

As such, the following sessions seek to explore in greater detail this relationship between ombuds institutions and democratic societies. The sessions will vary in their approaches to foster a more dynamic and participatory environment conducive to generating insight into these topics, ranging from panels, moderated discussions and breakout groups. Participants possess vast experiences in handling and responding to complaints, and it is hoped that participants will share their experiences, both positive practices and gaps in capacity, to draw out good practices and areas of need that may prove to be informative to their peers.

Overview of Conference Program

Sunday, 25 October 2015	Hotel Diplomat, Evropská 15, 160 41 Praha 6	All day	Arrival of participants
		18:30–21:00	Aperitif and Welcome Dinner at CD Restaurant (1st Floor), Hotel Diplomat, Evropská 15, 160 41 Praha 6
Monday, 26 October 2015	Hotel DAP, Vítězné nám. 684/4, 160 00 Praha 6	09:00–09:30	Conference Opening Antonín Rada , Deputy Minister - Head of the Supervision and Inspection Division, Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic Lenka Marešková , Main inspector for Human Rights Protection, Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic Ambassador Theodor H. Winkler , Director, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Major General Jaroslav Kocián , Deputy Chief of the General Staff - Inspector of Army of the Czech Republic, Armed Forces of the Czech Republic Anna Šabatová , Public Defender of Rights
		09:30–09:45	Group photo
		09:45–10:00	Coffee break and media opportunities
		10:00–11:00	SESSION 1 The role of ombuds institutions in democratic societies
		11:00–12:00	SESSION 2 The centrality of human rights in democratic societies and the role of ombuds institutions for the armed forces
		12:00–13:00	Lunch at Restaurant Evropa, Hotel DAP
		13:00–14:30	SESSION 3 Civil and political rights of armed forces personnel: citizens in uniform?
		14:30–15:00	Coffee break
		15:00–16:30	SESSION 4 Conducting effective investigations
		16:30–18:00	Free time
		18:00	Meet at Hotel DAP reception to travel to Dinner
		18:00–20:30	Dinner and Cultural Event
		09:00–10:45	SESSION 5 The importance of ensuring and maintaining independence of ombuds institutions in democratic societies
		10:45–11:15	Coffee break
		11:15–12:30	SESSION 6 The relationship between ombuds institutions and civil society in the democratic oversight of armed forces
		12:30–13:30	Lunch at Restaurant Evropa, Hotel DAP
Tuesday, 27 October 2015	Hotel DAP, Vítězné nám. 684/4, 160 00 Praha 6	13:30–15:15	SESSION 7 Current Affairs
		15:15–15:30	Coffee break
		15:30–15:45	Announcement of the 8th ICOAF in the Netherlands, October 24-25, 2016 (TBC)
		15:45–16:00	Conclusions, adoption of the conference statement and closing remarks

Format

Plenary Session

Moderator

Lenka Marečková

Main inspector for
Human Rights Protection,
Ministry of Defence,
the Czech Republic

Panels

Saša Janković

The Protector of Citizens
of the Republic of Serbia

Armen Grigoryan

Deputy Ombudsman on
the Rights of Military
Servicemen, Office of the
Human Rights Defender of
the Republic of Armenia

Moustapha Elhadji Kollo

Conseiller Technique,
Médiateur de la
République, Niger

Bogdan Kryklyvenko

Head of the Secretariat
of the Ukrainian
Parliament Commissioner
for Human Rights

Nicola Williams

Service Complaints
Commissioner for
the Armed Forces,
United Kingdom

Session 1.

The Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in Democratic Societies

Ombuds institutions for the armed forces promote transparency and accountability of the security sector. As impartial and independent institutions, they play a crucial role in preventing and responding to both maladministration and human rights abuses, whether they affect civilians or military members of the armed forces, depending on the mandate of the ombuds-institution. The objective of the first session is to explore the role of the ombuds institution in strengthening democratic accountability and civilian control of the armed forces in both democratic societies and in societies in transition to democracy.

Question for discussion

1. What is the role of armed forces in a democracy and in states in transition to democracy?
2. What is the role of ombuds institutions with jurisdiction over the armed forces in a democracy and in states in transition to democracy, in particular through preventing maladministration and the protection of human rights in the armed forces?
3. How do ombuds institutions contribute to democratic accountability and civilian oversight of the armed forces?

Format

Plenary Session

Moderator

Joseph Perez

Chief, Assistance
& Investigations,
U.S. European Command

Panels

Lenka Marečková

Main inspector for
Human Rights Protection,
Ministry of Defence,
the Czech Republic

Jose Luis Martin Gascon

Chairperson of the
Commission on
Human Rights,
the Philippines

Ivan Dvořák

Senior Defence Adviser
of the Czech Republic
to the OSCE and FSC
Co-ordinator for the
OSCE Code of Conduct
on Politico-Military
Aspects of Security

Hans-Peter Bartels

Parliamentary
Commissioner for
the Armed Forces,
Germany

Session 2.

The Centrality of Human Rights in Democratic Societies and the Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces

Human rights are integral in the foundation of every democracy and they represent the basic system of values in every democratic country. A true respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is what separates democracies from totalitarian states and dictatorships. Human rights must not only be formalized in law but fully respected and adhered to in practice, by the government as well as by members of the armed forces and the public. The failure to respect human rights would have negative consequences for the legal, social and health condition of members of the armed forces as well as members of the public at large. In this panel, the focus is on the question, “What are the consequences if armed forces do not respect human rights and how could this be addressed?” These consequences might refer to the impact on the democratic order, for the members of the public and for members of the armed forces itself. Furthermore, this panel discusses the role and conditions of ombuds institutions to successfully protect human rights.

Question for discussion

1. How are human rights compatible with the armed forces?
What are the areas of the armed forces where human rights are not compatible with?
What is the role of ombuds-institutions in protecting human rights?
2. What are the most common complaints related to armed forces or members of the armed forces not respecting human rights?
3. If armed forces do not respect human rights, what are the consequences for the members of the armed forces, for the members of the public and for the democratic constitutional order as a whole?
4. What are the lessons learned from your experiences as ombuds person when you had to act in case armed forces of your country did not respect human rights?

Format

Breakout Groups per Type
of Civil and Political Rights

Breakout Group 1

Freedom of Expression

Breakout Group 2

Freedom of Association

Breakout Group 3

Right to Complain

Breakout Group 4

Political Rights

Session 3.

Civil and Political Rights of Armed Forces Personnel: Citizens in Uniform?

Civil and political rights include freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, the right to demonstrate, the right to vote and the right to stand for office. These are important fundamental rights for any citizen to participate in a democratic society. In principle, armed forces personnel, as citizens in uniform, enjoy the same civil and political rights as every citizen. In many countries, however, armed forces consider that political activities are detrimental to the need for discipline and are incompatible with the military profession. It follows that a fine balance needs to be achieved in affording armed forces personnel the same enjoyment of civil and political rights as any other citizen, while at the same time to comply with the requirements of military service. In this panel, the role of ombuds institutions in achieving this balance will be examined.

Questions for breakout group 1: Freedom of Expression

1. Is the freedom of expression of members of the armed forces limited (i.e. they are not permitted to protest in uniform, they are limited in what they may communicate publicly or in other fora, such as on social media)?
Why is it limited?
And if so, to what extent is it limited?
2. Has your office received any specific complaints or violations pertaining to an individual's freedom of expression?
3. What is your office's mandate to protect freedom of expression?
How does your office work to ensure that limitations of this right are not abused or over-used?
4. What are a number of good practices or recommendations on this subject?

Questions for breakout group 2: Freedom of Association

1. Is the freedom of association of members of the armed forces limited (i.e. they are not permitted to join military associations or unions)?
Why is it limited?
And if so, to what extent is it limited?
2. Has your office received any specific complaints or violations pertaining to an individual's freedom of association?
3. What is your office's mandate to protect freedom of association?
How does your office work to ensure that limitations of this right are not abused or over-used?
4. What are a number of good practices or recommendations on this subject?

Questions for breakout group 3: The Right to Complain

1. Is there a "right to complain" in your country?
Does this right extend to members of the armed forces?
2. Are there protections in place to encourage and protect whistleblowers?
3. Has your office received any specific complaints pertaining to an individual facing retaliation for filing a complaint or whistleblowing?
4. What is your office's mandate to protect whistleblowers or complainants that have suffered retaliation for their actions?
5. What are a number of good practices or recommendations on this subject?

Questions for breakout group 4: Political Rights

1. Can members of the armed forces join political parties, run for election and hold office or otherwise participate in politics in your country?
2. Has your office received any specific complaints or violations pertaining to an individual's political rights?
3. What is your office's mandate to protect members of the armed forces' political rights?
How does your office work to ensure that limitations of this right are not abused or over-used?
4. What are a number of good practices or recommendations on this subject?

Schedule	13:00–13:05	Participants move to breakout group rooms Breakout group 1: Plenary Room Breakout group 2: Room A Breakout group 3: Room B Breakout group 4: Room C		
	13:05–13:40	Group discussion The breakout groups will use the questions below as a guide for their discussions. Participants should share their professional and personal experiences in dealing with their group's topic. Each breakout group is expected to determine five points of good practice, which will be presented to the plenary by the breakout group chair.		
	13:45–13:50	Participants move back to plenary room		
	14:05–14:30	Plenary discussion Each breakout group chair will take 5 minutes to summarize their discussion and provide their five points of good practice. Participants from other groups will then be given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments.		
Breakout Group 1 Freedom of Expression		Gérard Aimé PHILIPPSON Akpelozim LOKOUN Mamadou chérif THIAM Moustapha ELHADJI KOLLO Igli TOTOZANI Mircea CRISTE Bertrand BUYSE Gulnara ZHAMGYRCHIEVA Abdukhlim NIZOMOV Blanka BESSEROVÁ Breda BUNIC Nene Eddedine SISSOKO TRAORE Alima Déborah TRAORE Ben Taous NOURI	Breakout Group 2 Freedom of Association	Caroline HENRION Emmanuel JACOB Tamar GABIANI Natia KATSITADZE Jose Luis Martin GASCON Tafil RRAHMANI Hilmi JASHARI Lenka MAREČKOVÁ Johann BEHR Maija SAKSLIN Jernej ROVŠEK Bogdan KRYKLYVENKO Temba MATANZIMA Ivan DVOŘÁK Martin WEINERT Henk POORTIER Matthijs VAN DER HOEVEN
Breakout Group 3 Right to Complain		Askar SHAKIROV Nidoev KHUSNIDDIN Boško ŠILJEGOVIĆ Bart HOITINK Velile JONAS Tomasz OKLEJAK Tony MCCOURT Raivo SULTS Geoff EARLEY Reinier VAN ZUTPHEN Kristian HOLMAN Oyunchimeg PUREV Saša JANKOVIĆ Joerg KRAEMER James GONDELLE Nicola WILLIAMS Brian SAID	Breakout Group 4 Political Rights	Željko GRUBEŠIĆ Armen GRIGORYAN Roald LINAKER Joseph PEREZ Bjorn GAHRE Algis VAIČELIŪNAS Jaroslav KOCIAN Luka GLUŠAC Tamara LEGEIN-BOZILOVIC Brian ONEILL Dominique PEETERS Karl SCHNEEMANN

Format

Breakout Groups per
Stages of Investigation

Breakout Group 1

Receiving Complaints
and Determining the
Course of Action

Breakout Group 2

Conducting Interviews
and Accessing Information

Breakout Group 3

Making Conclusions,
Recommendations,
Reporting and Follow Up

Breakout Group 4

Mediation

Session 4.

Conducting Effective Investigations

Investigations are an essential element of ombuds institutions' responsibilities, including investigating complaints related to violations of civil and political rights of armed forces personnel (see previous session) or to conduct investigations into the armed forces involved in violating the constitution or democratic order. For every complaint, a subsequent investigation must be conducted to determine the merits of the complaint and, where applicable, to produce the resulting recommendations. Because ombuds institutions' fundamental responsibilities are to prevent maladministration and protect human rights, their investigations will typically focus on matters pertaining to these two issues. These investigations and their consequent outcomes ensure that rule of law is respected and therefore build greater trust in the broader system, which in turn make the armed forces more accountable.

This breakout session will explore the elements and obstacles of effective investigations. All staff involved in investigating complaints should be adequately prepared to conduct an investigation, including having received the proper support and training.

Questions for breakout group 1: Receiving complaints

1. Are staff specially trained to receive complaints?
What elements must be present to determine a complaint is worthy of further investigation or action?
2. How does your office determine what sort of follow up action is most appropriate?
3. What tools does your office have at its disposal to handle complaints?
4. What are a number of good practices or recommendations in this area?

Questions for breakout group 2: Interviews and access to information

1. How are staff trained to conduct interviews? What sort of preparation and information is needed before conducting an interview?
2. How do investigators plan their investigation and gather information? What methods do investigators use to gather information? How do investigators prepare for and interview relevant individuals?
3. Are there special considerations that should be taken into account during interviews? How does one tailor their approach to interviews (i.e. interviewing a victims, offender or witness)?
4. How do investigators overcome obstacles during investigations, such as being given a lack of access to relevant information?
5. What are a number of good practices or recommendations in this area?

Questions for breakout group 3: Reporting and follow up

1. How does your office conclude an investigation?
2. Is your office required to follow up on the recommendations of the investigation? How does your office ensure that all parties are satisfied with the outcomes?
3. Are your recommendations often fully implemented?
4. What methods does your office have to ensure compliance with the outcomes of your investigations?
5. What are a number of good practices or recommendations in this area?

Questions for breakout group 4: Mediation

1. Is your office authorized to use mediation to resolve complaints?
2. How does your office conduct mediation and ensure an equitable outcome for all parties involved?
3. How does your office determine that mediation is preferable to other methods?
4. Why is mediation preferable to other methods of complaints handling?
5. What are a number of good practices or recommendations in this area?
What are a number of good practices or recommendations on this subject?

Schedule	15:00–15:05	Participants move to breakout group rooms Breakout group 1: Plenary Room Breakout group 2: Room A Breakout group 3: Room B Breakout group 4: Room C
	15:05–15:45	Group discussion The breakout groups will use the questions below as a guide for their discussions. Participants should share their professional and personal experiences in dealing with their group's topic. Each breakout group is expected to determine five points of good practice, which will be presented to the plenary by the breakout group chair.
	15:45–15:50	Participants move back to plenary room
	15:50–16:30	Plenary discussion Each breakout group chair will take 5 minutes to summarize their discussion and provide their five points of good practice. Participants from other groups will then be given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

Breakout Group 1
Receiving Complaints

Gérard Aimé PHILIPPSON
Akpelozi LOKOUN
Mamadou Chérif THIAM
Moustapha ELHADJI KOLLO
Igli TOTOZANI
Mircea CRISTE
Bertrand BUYSE
Gulnara ZHAMGYRCHIEVA
Armen GRIGORYAN
Algis VAIČELIŪNAS
Nene Eddedine SISSOKO TRAORE
Alima Déborah TRAORE
Ben Taous NOURI
Abdukhalim NIZOMOV
Khusniddin NIDOEV

Breakout Group 2
Conducting Interviews
and Accessing
Information

Željko GRUBEŠIĆ
Boško ŠILJEGOVIĆ
Velile JONAS
Tomasz OKLEJAK
Maija SAKSLIN
Dominique PEETERS
Raivo SULTS
Johann BEHR
Joseph PEREZ
Geoff EARLEY
Bjorn GAHRE
Saša JANKOVIĆ
Karl SCHNEEMANN
James GONDELLE
Brian SAID
Tamar GABIANI

Breakout Group 3
Making Conclusions,
Recommendations,
Reporting

Oyunchimeg PUREV
Askar SHAKIROV
Bart HOITINK
Tony MCCOURT
Reinier VAN ZUTPHEN
Kristian HOLMAN
Jernej ROVŠEK
Caroline HENRION
Luka GLUŠAC
Nicola WILLIAMS
Matthijs VAN DER HOEVEN
Joerg KRAEMER
Bogdan KRYKLYVENKO

Breakout Group 4
Mediation

Natia KATSITADZE
Blanka BESSEROVÁ
Lenka MAREČKOVÁ
Tamara LEGEIN-BOZILOVIC
Brian ONEILL
Temba MATANZIMA
Tafil RRAHMANI
Hilmi JASHARI
Jose Luis Martin GASCON
Roald LINAKER
Emmanuel JACOB
Jaroslav KOCIAN
Henk POORTIER
Breda BUNIC
Martin WEINERT
Ivan DVOŘÁK

Format

Breakout Groups Per Type
of Ombuds Institution

Breakout Group 1

Civilian Ombuds office
with a General Mandate,
Including the Armed
Forces (e.g. National
Ombuds Office)

Breakout Group 2

Civilian Ombuds Office
with a General Mandate,
Including the Armed
Forces (e.g. National
Ombuds Office)

Breakout Group 3

Civilian Ombuds Office
with a Specific Mandate
for the Armed Forces,
but Independent from
the Armed Forces (e.g.
Parliamentary Commis-
sioner for Armed Forces
or Independent Defence
Ombudsman)

Breakout Group 4

Ombuds Office Inside
the Armed Forces
(e.g. Inspector General,
Complaints Manager)

Session 5.

The Importance of Ensuring and Maintaining Independence of Ombuds Institutions in Democratic Societies

In safeguarding a proper role of the ombuds institution in a democratic society, independence is of central importance to the work of ombuds institutions and is widely considered to be the key ingredient of their effectiveness. Without a perception of independence, its constituents will lack trust in the system to rectify their complaints, which will in turn erode democratic accountability and oversight of the armed forces. This independence is manifested in three ways: institutional independence, operational independence and personal independence:

Institutional independence pertains to the legal foundation of the ombuds institution, and whether it is independent from the organizations that it is mandated to oversee. This manifests itself most evidently in being given the independence in allocating resources, both finances and staff. While financial resources are vastly important, they are almost inevitably insufficient. Thus, the first breakout group will focus on making the most of the human resources available to them. Ombuds institutions often experience high staff turnover, thus it is important that these institutions can ensure that all relevant staff are trained to ensure that they have a suitable level of capacity in carrying out their work.

Operational independence is the freedom of the institution to undertake the work it is mandated to do, which includes deciding which matters and priorities to pursue, releasing reports, making recommendations and addressing the public. For the purposes of this breakout group, discussions will focus on ombuds institutions' freedom to produce and promote its findings with the public. Publicity builds credibility and trust, and makes recommendations more difficult to ignore. This breakout session will explore how ombuds institutions can use publicity to strengthen their institutions.

Personal independence is the broader public perception that the staff working for ombuds institutions are impartial, neutral, independent, effective and accountable. If the ombuds institution's constituents do not perceive the institution to be acting impartially, they will not file complaints, and the system will not function. Thus, it is essential that ombuds institutions be careful to avoid conflicts of interest or partisan disputes.

Given that ombuds institutions for the armed forces have varying mandates and status with regards to independence, the breakout groups will be divided into groups pertaining to their style of institution.

Questions for discussion

1. What rights does your institution have in hiring/promoting/firing/retaining staff?
2. Does your office conduct staff trainings?
3. How does your institution work with the media to promote your cause?
4. What is the appointment and termination process for your head of office?
5. Has your institution experienced recriminations for pursuing cases against high ranking officials?
6. What are other good practices that you have developed to ensure independence and the perception of neutrality?

Schedule	09:00–09:05	Participants move to breakout group rooms Breakout group 1: Plenary Room Breakout group 2: Room A Breakout group 3: Room B Breakout group 4: Room C		
	09:05–09:55	Group discussion The breakout groups will use the questions below as a guide for their discussions. Participants should share their professional and personal experiences in dealing with their group's topic. Each breakout group is expected to determine five points of good practice, which will be presented to the plenary by the breakout group chair.		
	09:55–10:00	Participants move back to plenary room		
	10:00–10:45	Plenary discussion Each breakout group chair will take 5 minutes to summarize their discussion and provide their five points of good practice. Participants from other groups will then be given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments.		
Breakout Group 1 Civilian Ombuds with a General Mandate		Gérard Aimé PHILIPPSON Gulnara ZHAMGYRCHIEVA Abdulkhalim NIZOMOV Akpelozi LOKOUN Mamadou Chérif THIAM Askar SHAKIROV Nidoev KHUSNIDDIN Moustapha ELHADJI KOLLO Igli TOTOZANI Mircea CRISTE Oyunchimeg PUREV Nene Eddedine SISSOKO TRAORE Alima Déborah TRAORE	Breakout Group 2 Civilian Ombuds with a General Mandate	Luka GLUŠAC Saša JANKOVIĆ Tamar GABIANI Natia KATSITADZE Jose Luis Martin GASCON Tafil RRAHMANI Hilmi JASHARI Bogdan KRYKLYVENKO Armen GRIGORYAN Tomasz OKLEJAK Maija SAKSLIN Raivo SULTS Reinier VAN ZUTPHEN Kristian HOLMAN Jernej ROVŠEK Matthijs VAN DER HOEVEN Brian SAID
Breakout Group 3 Civilian Ombuds with Exclusive Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces		Željko GRUBEŠIĆ Boško ŠILJEGOVIĆ Velile JONAS Johann BEHR Brian ONEILL Temba MATANZIMA Tony MCCOURT Bjorn GAHRE Roald LINAKER Karl SCHNEEMANN Joerg KRAEMER James GONDELLE Nicola WILLIAMS Martin WEINERT	Breakout Group 4 Ombuds Office within the Armed Forces	Lenka MAREČKOVÁ Jaroslav KOCIAN Tamara LEGEIN-BOZILOVIC Bart HOITINK Bertrand BUYSE Dominique PEETERS Joseph PEREZ Geoff EARLEY Blanka BESSEROVÁ Algis VAIČELIŪNAS Henk POORTIER Breda BUNIC Ivan DVOŘÁK Ben Taous NOURI

Format

Plenary Session

Moderator

Maija Sakslin,
Deputy Parliamentary
Ombudsman,
Finland

Panels

Reinier Van Zutphen
The National
Ombudsman,
The Netherlands

THIAM Mamadou cherif
Charge de Mission,
Le Mediateur De La
Republique Du Senegal

Jernej Rovšek
Deputy Ombudsman,
Human Rights
Ombudsman,
Slovenia

Emmanuel Jacob
President,
EUROMIL

Session 6.

The Relationship Between Ombuds institutions and Civil Society In Democratic Oversight of Armed Forces

Public involvement in democratic oversight is crucial to ensure accountability and transparency across the security sector, in particular in the armed forces. The engagement of civil society in the security policy domain strongly contributes to accountability and good governance: civil society acts not only as a government “watchdog” but also as an index of public contentment with the performance of institutions and agencies responsible for public security and related services. Actions such as monitoring government performance, policy, compliance with laws and human rights observance all contribute to this process. Advocacy by civil society groups representing the interests of local communities and groups of like-minded individuals helps to give voice to often marginalized actors and opens up the policy-making process to a wider set of perspectives. The objective of this session is to assess the role of civil society and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the democratic oversight of the armed forces as well as to assess to which extent and how ombuds institutions engage with CSOs.

Question for discussion

1. To what extent is your office mandated to engage with civil society and civil society organizations?
2. How does your office cooperate with civil society?
3. How does your office cooperate with organizations focused on the rights and welfare of armed forces personnel, such as military associations, advocacy groups and unions?

Format

Round Table

Moderator

Hans Born,

Deputy Head of the
Research Division,
DCAF

Panels

Roald Linaker

Ombudsman,
The Parliamentary
Ombudsman for
the Norwegian
Armed Forces

Akpelozim Lokoun

Research Analyst,
Office of the Mediator,
Togo

Nicola Williams

Service Complaints
Commissioner for the
Armed Forces,
United Kingdom

Temba Matanzima

South Africa Military
Ombudsman

William McDermott

Project Officer, DCAF

Session 7.

Current Affairs

The objective of this session is to provide an opportunity to ombuds-institutions to inform each other about the latest developments, current affairs or good practices that might be relevant for other countries. Examples could be: reform of the ombuds office and its mandate, trends in complaints, challenges to the effectiveness or independence of the ombuds office, highlights of the latest annual report of the ombuds office etc. For this purpose, participants should inform the conference conveners in advance whether they would like to take the opportunity to give a short presentation (a strict maximum of 5 minutes).

The Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in Democratic Societies

**25–27 October 2015
Prague, the Czech Republic**