

OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

Parliamentary Mechanisms for Security Sector Oversight

1. General Powers of Parliament

- To enact, initiate or to amend legislation on defence issues and institutions
- To question the minister of defence
- To summon military and other civil servants to committee meetings and to testify
- Access to classified information
- Involving civil society by organising public hearings on defence issues
- Initiating a parliamentary independent inquiry in case of major scandals
- To set up specialised parliamentary committee, supported by staff

2. Budget Control of Defence Issues

- Parliament has the right to amend, approve and to allocate defence budget proposals
- Parliamentarians have access to classified budget documents
- Parliament controls the defence budget by line-items
- Control of the defence expenditures via an independent audit budget office

3. Parliamentary Powers Concerning Peace Support Operations

- Approval of sending troops abroad *a priori*
- Debate on the Mandate, rules of engagement and duration of the mission
- Approval of the budget of the mission
- The right to visit the troops on missions abroad

4. Powers Concerning Defence Procurement

- Adoption of legislation on open and transparent procurement processes
- Approval of major procurement contracts
- Access to all relevant information on procurement decisions
- Parliament involved in specifying needs for new equipment, selecting producer and in assessing offers for compensation and off-set

5. Powers Concerning Security Policy and Planning Documents

- Debate on the adoption of the national security concept and defence concept
- Debate on the adoption of the force structure and planning as well as military strategy

6. Powers Concerning Military Personnel

- Adoption of laws on the status, duties and rights of military personnel as well as on military service and conscientious objectors
- Parliament approves the defence human resources management plan
- Parliament approves the maximum number of personnel employed by the MoD and the military
- Legislating a military ombudsperson who monitors human rights situation and who is appointed by and reports to parliament
- Parliament gives consent to high-ranking military appointments