



## Webinar

### THE 2026 SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE BUDGET VOTE: IS THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF A LONG DARK TUNNEL?

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The perception that South Africa's national defence is in dire straits—teetering on a "point of no return"—has transitioned from a warning to a disturbing perception. While the military serves as the final safeguard for national sovereignty, the discourse surrounding its funding and functionality remains largely invisible within broader civil society. On 20 May 2026, the annual Defence Budget Vote will be read and debated in Parliament, providing a temporal window into the state of the nation's defence establishment.

For years, Defence Budget Votes have been characterized as "uninspiring," regardless of the political leadership at the helm. This has led to a stagnant environment where defence is viewed as a neglected and unfocused national responsibility. While a small group of academics, journalists, NGOs, and industry experts maintain islands of awareness, expertise, and publications, the national defence debate remains fragmented and neglected.

Presented by the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa (SIGLA), Stellenbosch University, this webinar seeks to help bridge these "knowledge nodes" by way of a brief debate on the future of South African defence. The session will move beyond mere critique to explore whether credible defence is still possible despite financial constraints and an absent constructive defence debate.

#### Event Detail

Date: 21 May 2026      Time: 14:00-16:00

Host: SIGLA, Stellenbosch University

Platform: MSTEAMS [Here](#)      Register [Here](#)

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## Programme

Time	Topic	Speaker
14:00	Chair	Prof Hussein Solomon Univ of the Free State
14:15	Introductory remarks: Understanding the defence budgeting process	Dr Rendani Randela National Treasury
14:35	Why defence in South Africa has turned into an underfunded and misaligned portfolio.	Prof Theo Neethling Univ of the Free State
15:00	A commentary on the 2026 Defence Budget Vote - Optimism, or more of the same?	Dr Wilhelm Janse van Rensburg Stellenbosch Univ
15:20	Future Cogency: Projects, and initiatives on the future of the SANDF	Dr Nick Sendell SA Defence Secretariat
15:40	Q&A	Chair
16:00	Closing remarks	Prof Lindy Heinecken Stellenbosch Univ