

## The Past, Present and Future of African Security Research: Setting the Agenda

*Friday 5 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)*

The roundtable addresses the emergence and development of African security research through interrogating how it emerged, has evolved and where it could be headed. It will involve theoretical, metatheoretical and methodological explorations of the overarching conceptual claims and empirical arguments that have been advanced on Africa interrogating their often unacknowledged ontological, epistemological, methodological and normative commitments. For example, the temporal classification of Africa into the 'precolonial', 'colonial' and 'post-colonial', is often taken for granted which shapes the questions that can be asked as well as claims that can be made about Africa. The roles of gatekeepers and 'intellectual tourists' who position themselves as 'experts on Africa' thus discrediting legitimate dissenting voices within Africa require further examination. In contrast to the dominant positivist approach to security on Africa, more recent advances within critical security studies have included a growing attention to lived experiences of (in)security, coloniality, race, and reflexivity, among others, where qualitative and ethnographic methods have increasingly been adopted to investigate what locals make of (in)security, thus enriching recent security research. In doing these, the roundtable addresses important questions such as: what dominant themes have emerged historically within African security research? How have these changed? How has theory 'travelled' both in and out of Africa? What future directions can security research on Africa take?

**Track Classification:** Africa and International Studies Working Group