

Alan Bryden and Funmi Olonisakin (Eds)

SECURITY SECTOR TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA



GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE
DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF
ARMED FORCES (DCAF)

LIT

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Preface

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is an international foundation whose mission is to assist the international community in enhancing good governance through reform of the security sector. Beyond a wide range of publications linked to its activities, each year DCAF dedicates one book – the ‘Yearly Book’ – to a topic that is of particular relevance to its policy research and operational priorities. The first volume in this series, *Challenges of Security Sector Governance*, was published in 2003. Subsequent Yearly Books focused on *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* (2004), *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (2005), *Private Actors and Security Governance* (2006), *Intergovernmental Actors and Security Sector Reform* (2007), *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform* (2008) and, last year, *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*.¹

The eighth edition in DCAF’s Yearly Book series examines the conceptual and operational dimensions of *Security Sector Transformation in Africa*. African knowledge and experience has contributed much to the evolution of the security sector reform (SSR) concept while Africa continues to be the main arena for SSR programmes. Consequently, over the years, DCAF has actively sought to expand its knowledge base, policy research focus and operational activities on African security sector reform and governance issues. For these reasons it is therefore particularly appropriate that DCAF focuses on this subject in 2010 – the 10th anniversary of the creation of the DCAF foundation.

This volume underlines core values and motivations behind DCAF’s policy research agenda. First, we firmly believe that ‘concepts count’. Unless the underpinnings of the SSR concept and its relationship to security sector transformation (SST) are critically examined, we cannot move beyond oft-highlighted policy-practice gaps in order to effect genuine behavior change. And second, we are convinced that DCAF can only add value in the challenging field of African security sector reform and governance if we learn from, engage with and support African-driven scholarship and practice. Indeed, the editing of this volume itself represents a successful collaborative effort between Alan Bryden, Deputy Head of DCAF’s Research Division and Funmi Olonisakin, Director of the Conflict, Security and Development

¹ Yearly Books are available online at: www.dcaf.ch/publications

Group at King's College, London as well as a highly-valued member of DCAF's International Advisory Board.

It would not have been possible to successfully complete this volume, in particular given the extremely tight timelines imposed by an annual publication, without the invaluable contributions of a number of people. Thanks go to Fairlie Chappuis, Lynda Chenaf and Nicole Schmied for research and editing assistance and Cherry Ekins for her copy editing. Herbert Wulf provided extremely valuable insights on earlier drafts of the manuscript. Yury Korobovsky and his team ably managed the publication process at the DCAF end while Veit. D. Hopf and Frank Weber of LIT Verlag were, as always, extremely patient and encouraging. Last but not least, special thanks go to the editors and contributors who all delivered under significant time pressure.

Heiner Hänggi
Assistant Director and Head of Research
DCAF

Geneva, September 2010

Abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFRICOM	US Command in Africa
ANC	African National Congress
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
AU	African Union
CDF	civil defence forces (Sierra Leone)
CIDO	AU Citizens and Diaspora Directorate
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Liberia)
CSDG	Conflict, Security and Development Group (UK)
CSO	civil society organisation
CSSDCA	Conference on Stability, Security, Development and Cooperation
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DoD	Department of Defence (South Africa)
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOSOCC	AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EU	European Union
EUSEC	EU Security Advisory Mission
FDG	focus group discussion
GC	Governance Commission (Liberia)
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHL	international humanitarian law
IMATT	International Military Advisory and Training Team (Sierra Leone)
JSCD	Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Defence (South Africa)
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MPRI	Military Professional Resources Inc.
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
OROLSI	Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions
OSD	Operational Support Division (Sierra Leone)
PCRD	post-conflict reconstruction and development
PSC	AU Peace and Security Council
PSC	private security company
REC	regional economic community
RM	regional mechanism
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAHRIT	Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SARPCCO	Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation
SG	Secretary General (United Nations)
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SSR	security sector reform
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOGBIS	UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WNC	Women's National Coalition (South Africa)



PART I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Conceptualising Security Sector Transformation in Africa

Alan Bryden and 'Funmi Olonisakin

Introduction

The last decade has witnessed major developments in the evolution of the security sector reform (SSR) concept and its adoption within the international community. Bilateral actors as well as multilateral institutions including the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN) have developed policy frameworks¹ and in some cases established operational capacities for SSR. Given its rapid ascent up the international policy agenda, a number of overlapping concepts have emerged in this area. Security sector *development, management, reconstruction* and *transformation* are some of the variations, each emphasising a particular type of context or approach. Yet the dominant discourse in policy terms is clearly that of security sector *reform*. At the core of this agenda is the need for the effective and efficient provision of state and human security within a framework of democratic governance.²

However, many (predominantly) African scholars and practitioners emphasise the need for *transformation* rather than *reform* as a point of departure for positive change in relation to the security sector and its governance in Africa. As reflected in various contributions to this volume, the concept of security sector transformation (SST) is also beginning to find its way into the discourse of international organisations working in this field. Two problems become apparent in considering the evolving body of analysis on SSR in relation to SST. The first derives from a seeming interchangeable use of terms without due consideration of differences in meaning, inference and resonance. The second is found in an apparently reflexive juxtaposition of SSR and SST in terms of the legitimacy and sustainability (and therefore

utility) of the two approaches. This volume seeks to move beyond these limitations by providing additional conceptual clarity to the SST discourse, while drawing on insights from a range of acknowledged experts in order to understand better the challenges to and opportunities for an operational security sector transformation agenda in Africa.

It is important to reconcile a body of literature on SST that dates to a significant extent from the early part of this decade³ with more recent developments within the international community (at least in terms of policy formulation) that have characterised the SSR discourse. However, the increased prominence of security sector reform on international development and security agendas has cast into sharp relief a conspicuous gap between widely embraced policy prescriptions and much slimmer results from SSR programmes on the ground.⁴ Unpacking the relationship between these two concepts is thus necessary in order to mitigate incoherence or misguided approaches that, although strongly influenced by issues of both capacity and political will, have their roots in the consequences of conceptual fuzziness.

A clear focus of this volume is on understanding approaches to SSR and SST in practice. Indeed, the SST concept is particularly promising because it has emerged from the continent that is the major arena for SSR programmes. Acknowledging the factors that underpin the growing call for SST in Africa is therefore critical. We argue that a uniquely African dimension to this agenda can be found in the need to shift radically structural conditions that underpin the governance of security and render current endeavours only marginally relevant in a number of African societies. In doing this, we trace security provision and its governance in Africa from a historical perspective and assess the extent to which recent conceptualisations are relevant in Africa's current security environment. An approach that is grounded in the political, security and socio-economic trajectories of different African polities interrogates the challenge of translating the ideal of transformation into real behavioural change on the ground. This provides the basis for clarifying potential channels of transformation within national and regional settings, including actors and institutions at these levels whose role will be crucial to the realisation of a transformative agenda.

This chapter begins by exploring the commonalities and distinctions between SSR and SST in terms of concepts and implementation. It then reflects on the nature of security governance challenges in Africa. Building on these observations, the chapter outlines an agenda for security sector transformation. It proposes a number of critical drivers of SST and relates these to the two levels of analysis applied in the main body of this volume: security sector transformation at the domestic level and beyond the level of

the state. On the basis of this analysis, the chapter concludes by returning to our initial question on the relationship between SSR and SST in Africa.

Reform or transformation of the security sector?

The SSR concept has evolved considerably since it first emerged in international development policy circles in the late 1990s. This evolution is visible in several respects. The first concerns the broad range of issues to which SSR is connected. The security sector reform discourse has progressed through several stages, from debates which connected the notion to poverty alleviation, good governance and sustainable development to those which consider it as vital to professionalisation of the security establishment and its treatment as an underpinning factor in peace and state building.⁵ The second is a noticeable movement from the initial focus on SSR by mostly development actors to a more inclusive focus by development, democracy-promotion and security communities. Third and last, SSR has also evolved from an initial analytical focus on the military and security establishment to encompass a wide range of security governance concerns as well as issues of access to and delivery of justice.

Whatever the origins and evolution of the SSR concept, there is now a broad acceptance within the development and security community that the rationale behind the SSR agenda is a legitimate one and the objectives that it is intended to achieve are eminently sensible. There is also an acknowledgement of the wide range of actors that constitute the security sector – incorporating security providers, management and oversight bodies – even if there is a continuing debate about the inclusion of specific categories of actors and issues (e.g. informal and traditional security providers and gender roles).

Tangible progress has been realised in the effort to embed principles of SSR on national agendas as well as in regional and global governance institutions. At the national level, foreign and defence ministries and development agencies in key donor countries have embraced SSR, in some cases situated as part of a whole-of-government approach that seeks to promote greater coherence across relevant agencies.⁶ As discussed above, multilateral organisations have also tapped into their own experience to adapt and integrate their visions of SSR into strategic frameworks.

However, SSR remains contested in a number of areas and in several settings. The issues of what or who should reasonably be included in the security sector, what SSR programmes across a variety of contexts ought to consist of and how they can be better implemented for greater impact remain

the subject of much debate. These issues are discussed in varying degrees in this volume, although they do not constitute its central focus. In Africa, the region which forms the core focus of this Yearly Book, SSR is contested among practitioners, analysts and, not surprisingly, political leaders, albeit for seemingly different reasons. The most common explanation is that SSR is seen largely as an externally generated and driven concept. Closely related to this is the near absence of local ownership of externally supported reform processes. These arguments have gained ground in recent times.⁷

Common to different understandings of SST is the need for comprehensive change that radically alters the status quo of power relations in terms of the provision, management and oversight of security in Africa. Thus the concept of security sector governance (SSG) provides an indivisible companion concept to support the 'rooting out of old reflexes and attitudes'⁸ necessary for transformation. Human and institutional capacity building are essential components of an operational SST agenda. The first handbook on security sector governance in Africa follows this comprehensive approach in pointing to four areas of focus for security sector transformation:⁹

- organisational character
- cultural make-up
- human resource practices
- political relationships with elected authorities and the civil power.

A central plank of the transformation discourse is the need to alter the culture and character of security actors. One senior participant involved in South African defence transformation describes this process as a matter of 'change of heart, mind and spirit' that touches all aspects of security organisations.¹⁰ N'Diaye further elaborates on this need for a systematic overhaul that affects the 'orientation, values, principles and indeed practices' of the security sector.¹¹ Political will is a key requirement so that elected authorities 'show a more profound intent' to bring security sector practices in line with democratic principles¹² (and thus expose security decision-making to the influence of parliaments, other statutory oversight bodies and citizens in general). The absence of qualities of decisive leadership, high levels of legitimacy and a clearly determined scope of action identified by Rocky Williams as necessary enablers of transformation¹³, frequently provides the greatest obstacle to change. Long-standing relationships of mutual dependence between security actors and executive authorities are particularly resilient barriers to change in the direction of greater transparency and accountability.¹⁴

Transformative processes must derive from close attention to both national and regional context and history. Thus for Cooper and Pugh transformation entails ‘a multilevel and multifunctional strategy that addresses not just the domestic environment of the state but gives equal weight to change at the regional or global level’.¹⁵ This points to an important supportive role for regional and international actors in enabling such processes. Yet, arguably, it is exactly the disequilibrium between the predominant roles of external actors and the absence of positive domestic drivers of change that impedes security sector transformation in practice.

Definitions of SST have not proved as robust as the type and level of change implied by the concept. Thus, typically, SST was situated in opposition to SSR and defined as:

a more profound intent on behalf of elected governments to ensure that the practices of the security organisations are consistent with the democracies that they serve. Countries with serious governance deficits may require a fundamental transformation of relations between the civil authorities and civil society on the one hand and the security organisations on the other hand. Such transformations should occur within a framework of democratic oversight and control.¹⁶

What difference, if any, exists between the now commonly accepted notion of SSR and that of SST advanced by analysts of African security? One argument that has been consistently made, even if sometimes relegated to the background in relation to other explanations, is that SSR is conceptually flawed and thus of limited relevance to Africa.¹⁷ SSR is portrayed as a piecemeal and narrow approach to changing the security establishment, thus making the case for a wholesale and complete *transformation* of the security sector. SST according to this narrative is taken to mean a complete change in the system that governs the security establishment rather than a more gradual reform process, which presumably still leaves the form and function of the sector largely intact.¹⁸

It is important to acknowledge that the concept of SSR is not without the language of transformation. Indeed, the major policy contribution by proponents of SST has been to inject holistic, people-oriented approaches into the SSR discourse. A brief analysis of the influential policy work of the OECD DAC – which has provided a model for a number of bilateral and multilateral actors’ engagement in SSR¹⁹ – is illustrative.

The first guidelines issued by the OECD DAC in 1997²⁰ and predating the emergence of the SSR concept include explicit SSR measures such as the need for democratic oversight and civilian control of the security sector. The 2001 supplement to these guidelines, *The DAC Guidelines – Helping*

Prevent Violent Conflict,²¹ points to a central role for SSR in delivering security and justice. A holistic definition of SSR stresses the need for an effective, well-managed and accountable security sector that requires the application of sound public sector management principles. SSR is identified as a human security issue that must combine development, human rights and security concerns. Significantly, security and justice reforms are regarded as parallel, mutually reinforcing processes. The 2004 *Guidelines on Security System Reform and Governance: Policies and Good Practice*²² and the subsequent 2007 *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform*²³ represent the state of the art in terms of the DAC approach. They respectively provide key principles and a framework for their implementation (as well as a set of political obligations) for bilateral donors and other international organisations in their support for SSR.

SSR as defined in the 2004 guidelines is explicitly understood as ‘the transformation of the “security system” – which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance’.²⁴ On the face of it, this definition ought to satisfy the demand for a more robust approach made by the proponents of SST. While arguing that gaps in practice are due to the inherent flaws in the SSR concept *when applied* in African contexts, these same analysts nonetheless acknowledge the robustness of the OECD definition to some degree:

While OECD-DAC has tried to confer some rigour and uniformity to the concept – stressing for example a governance dimension, a holistic and integrated approach addressing the needs of both security and development, and of security institutions as well as oversight bodies, etc. – ‘SSR’ in Africa unfortunately appears to have become somewhat of a catch-all phrase, with donors pursuing many different approaches, not all consistent with this approach.²⁵

Those who felt this approach was not sufficiently robust and instead argued for transformation did so on the basis that SSR prescribes a ‘piecemeal, narrowly focused and short-term’ agenda.²⁶ In fact, on the level of implementation shortfalls there may be little disagreement between proponents of reform and transformation. Indeed, the development of the *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform* was a response to the widespread acknowledgement within the SSR community that guidelines reflecting core transformative principles such as legitimacy, ownership, participation and sustainability were not being realised in practice.²⁷

Notwithstanding such acknowledgements and a clear indication that the challenge lies in application rather than conceptualisation, the call for SST in Africa (as opposed to SSR) has seen a revival in recent years. We have witnessed a radical shift in approach by African regional organisations such as ECOWAS and the continental body, the AU, where new normative frameworks underscore the need for structural change.²⁸ Advocates of transformation argue that without taking African history and the peculiarity of its context into consideration, it is impossible to undertake SSR programmes successfully.²⁹ This view has been strongly influenced by the South African experience, where the nature and depth of the insecurity and injustice caused by the apartheid system necessitated a comprehensive dismantling of the entire system that supported the apartheid policy. Thus within Africa, where other countries have been going through various transitions, especially from military dictatorship, long-term authoritarian rule or armed conflict, a strong case is being made for the transformative quality of the South African approach to security sector reform. As discussed later in this chapter, some important features of that approach are missing from the SSR discourse.

Although it is difficult to generalise about African contexts given the unique experiences and varying conditions within countries and across regions, a number of patterns are identifiable which make it possible to draw preliminary conclusions about the challenges that render SST an appropriate response in its own right. Three ‘positive’ arguments are important for the purposes of this volume. In part these derive from questions about the efforts of the international community thus far to support the implementation of effective reform programmes in conflict-affected and other parts of Africa.

The first is the relatively small returns that have attended SSR efforts on the continent so far. Taking one example of the acknowledged ‘market leader’ in bilateral SSR support, a review of the UK government’s SSR programmes in Africa in 2007 indicated that despite impressive overall expenditure, relatively limited areas of impact and effectiveness can be identified.³⁰ It is the case, for example, that important channels of transformation and influential oversight mechanisms and actors such as parliaments and civil society have received far less attention in resource allocation than the security establishment, which is largely targeted for training. The net result is that investment in professionalisation is not matched by a transformation in governance patterns. The question then arises as to whether this outcome is the result of failure in approach or gaps in application.

A second reason for taking the idea of transformation more seriously is that SSR remains narrowly attractive within African contexts where armed

conflict has led to a seemingly meaningful conflict management process and an uncontested international presence to assist with peace and/or state building. It is far less visible on national agendas in contexts not directly affected by armed conflict. What makes SSR of only limited applicability in these areas? Is it conceptually relevant in some and not in others, or is the problem simply one of the lack of political will to undertake SSR in the absence of evident conflict legacies and related fragility?

Thirdly, and related to the first point, essential channels for transformation tend to remain largely untouched in SSR implementation. Potential actors and institutions which can provide the platform for transformation are often not at the heart of SSR initiatives. Indeed, the core targets of SSR programmes are often the formal and state-based institutions and actors that operate in spaces far removed from the daily reality of masses of ordinary Africans. And in many African states, this distance between state-based security and justice institutions and ordinary people has remained a fact through history. Undeniably, this exacerbates the perception that the reform agenda in Africa is imposed from above and without.³¹

The real question, however, is whether the agenda of systematic transformation that underlines the more robust definitions of SSR as well as the aspirational declarations of proponents of SST is sufficiently captured in existing policy formulation and by extension in programmatic interventions on the ground. Whereas proponents of SST tend to underscore the need for a long view of history in examining the relevance of SSR in Africa, the aspects of history that are brought to bear and indeed the questions that are raised about that history do not yet allow us to disentangle transformation from reform. If transformation is simply taken to mean an overhaul of the entire system without raising the larger questions that underlie this, then it is possible to argue that the holistic descriptions of SSR offered in recent years ought indeed to count as transformation. Additionally, one could argue that with the exception of a few issues (e.g. gender considerations and the role of informal actors as mentioned above), the concept of SSR articulated by the OECD and others is significantly transformational in outlook. In this regard, the problem would be that of implementation and not conceptualisation. The subsequent section therefore considers key contextual factors that distinguish a substantive security sector transformation agenda in Africa.

Taking a long view of history: African contexts and the security sector transformation agenda

The extensive impact of armed conflict in a number of countries and regions is one feature that rightly captures the interests of observers and Africa's security and development partners. Another is the long history of authoritarian rule across the continent, which only began to experience varying degrees of reversal in the last decade. While the analysis of that history tends to focus on the abuse meted to citizens by security agencies and the need to remedy this, there is often no in-depth attention to the factors that brought this role to bear or that continue to sustain it.

Instead, SSR support in Africa, not surprisingly, tends to gravitate naturally towards the areas of least resistance – mostly conflict-affected and fragile areas – where state capacity is limited and thus external actors are able to penetrate the system without dealing with recalcitrant gatekeeping elites who presided over repressive and collapsed systems. Typically, the ideas and templates of SSR being implemented in settings such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia and Sierra Leone are largely externally driven. As discussed below, these approaches may be based on the same flawed assumptions that led to the conflict in the first instance, and as such point to the need to assess critically the usefulness of SSR as presently conceptualised and applied.

A critical appraisal of security governance patterns in the period since African states became independent dominions offers a basis to clarify the notion of SST and distinguish it from SSR. When closely examined, the intentions and assumptions that underlie the systems designed to provide security for African peoples and states are precisely what require a complete transformation if they are to bear relevance to the practical reality of life in many African settings. Taken from a historical perspective, despite national and regional variations, notions of security and the nature of security provision and governance in Africa reveal several important patterns.

First, the African states that emerged at the end of colonial rule were shaped by the same ideas and assumptions that lie at the core of the classical nation-state. It was taken as a given that such a state would have monopoly over the use of force and would reproduce itself through fairly regular means and mechanisms – i.e. taxes and leadership succession – not least because the states were the result of compacts between citizens and their new governments. Additionally, these states would be imbued with strong, legitimate civilian institutions, which would maintain control over a professional security establishment, in turn accepting its 'rightful' place of subordination to an elected civilian leadership.³²

In reality, however, many of the new African states were no more than a caricature of the classical state and mirrored the colonial system from which they were born. There was no real security 'system'. The security establishment was not created for the protection of the people, but rather for the protection of the elite and its interests, in much the same way that it was intended for population control and resource extraction in the colonial era. Africa's 'inheritance elites' had failed to dismantle the colonial security structures and transform the existing security arrangements. Indeed, as some of the earlier civil-military relations scholars observed, the military, police and the rest of the security establishment formed part of the transfer of power from colonial rulers to African elites.³³

The successor elite missed the opportunity to seize the transitional moment, to transform the basis for security delivery and governance through a participatory conversation about a national vision of security, including citizens' security needs and protection. Instead, the security establishment was mobilised in large part to protect the regimes in place, whether under direct military rule or civilian authoritarian systems. As, with few exceptions, one African country after another fell under autocratic rule in the 1960s and through much of the 1970s, it was hard to separate civilian and military elites. West Africa alone experienced 15 coups d'état in the 1960s and eight in the 1970s.³⁴ The initial optimism that greeted military rule, with observers hailing the military as a modernising force,³⁵ quickly encountered a revision when it became apparent that the military suffered from the same ills as the civilian elites.³⁶ Indeed, just like their civilian counterparts, the military demonstrated a lack of capacity to forge national unity, bring about socio-economic development and govern the security establishment effectively.³⁷

The net effect of this weak foundation has been a catalogue of failed or poor governance systems, albeit with national and regional variations. Despite different colonial, post-colonial and nation-building trajectories, Africa's experiences reveal several common patterns, which are discussed below. These patterns exist notwithstanding the evolution of the security discourse at the global level, with a shift in focus from the defence and security of the state to people-centred approaches to security.

First, formal state security systems in Africa remain largely state and not people focused, despite these changed and changing notions of security; this is explained in part by the fact that security provision and governance continue to be elite driven and focused and characterised by a high degree of non-responsiveness to ordinary people's needs. Invariably, in many settings non-state security and justice systems provide security for ordinary people,

far removed from the state systems that provide and govern security at the national level.³⁸

Second, and related to this, with few exceptions the African state does not typically have a monopoly of the means of violence. In any case, these states are rarely the product of popular sovereignty. We cannot therefore ignore that there are informal, embedded, unrecorded systems of security and justice, far removed from the view of the state, which in some cases provide security for ordinary people.

Third, where moments of transition such as the end of the Cold War or the dismantling of colonialism have provided opportunities genuinely to transform the security system, there has not always been a real interest in radical change. Instead, the efforts to find a lasting solution to post-Cold War conflicts, which in some cases held the promise of a radical change, have largely resulted in ‘elite compacts’ rather than a compact between the people and their new leaders. Change will occur not through reinforcing the power of those who have a vested interest in the status quo, but by empowering the constituencies that legitimately represent the voices of citizens and have the potential to mobilise for an expansion of the decision-making base beyond the narrow interests of ruling elites.

Against this historical background, it is now possible to reflect on why SSR has been deficient in its reach and impact in Africa, what the notion of SST should correctly entail and what gaps it might fill.

The transformation agenda: Why Africa needs SSR ‘plus’

Even if supported by capacities, political will and a shared set of principles and values, SSR efforts will be inherently flawed if following the same assumptions that sustained and underpinned earlier governance systems. These assumptions include the following.

- State-based institutions should be the only focus of reform. As a result, the tendency for external stakeholders to pay only lip-service to the idea of including non-state and informal entities has been widespread. Upon close examination, the non-state actors mentioned in mainstream SSR literature do not include the traditional, informal, even if obscure security actors that only emerge from a close analysis of each African context.
- National ruling elites and the state institutions they preside over have sufficient legitimacy to sustain a reformed security system without

radically transforming the governance structures and arrangements on which these systems will be based.

- The ruling elite's intentions are genuinely the protection of the people, because they say so and because they have on the surface submitted to multiparty electoral systems. In fact, there is no effective response to the view that elites have instrumentalised elections and the notions of democracy as good governance.
- The elite will behave differently even though the security mindset continues to uphold the notion of population control rather than protection, and to create powerful executives who manipulate the security system for regime protection.

Indeed, one could argue that the single most important weakness of SSR programmes as currently designed and implemented is not necessarily an inferred assumption of piecemeal reform but a focus on change in a technical sense rather than as an intricate political process of transformation in governance. While the fundamentally political nature of SSR is confirmed in principle, its articulation and application in practice fail to take into account the systemic changes and organic movements that must underpin the equally important process-driven changes to security institutions that will cement those changes. Without these, a reform process will amount to no more than cosmetic change.

Systemic changes and organic movements refer, for example, to national conversations that must precede reforms. In conflict-affected settings, these conversations must be genuinely home-grown and led, even if facilitated by skilful and sensitive external actors. They are not time-bound but can have important benchmarks. There are few examples on the African continent of such national conversations. In South Africa, a two-year consultative process led to the adoption of a new constitution and defence policy. In both Benin and Mali, national consultations between government, security forces and civil society actors led to important, enduring breakthroughs in redefining civil-military relations.³⁹ More recently, the second referendum leading to the adoption of a new constitution in Kenya following the post-election violence of December 2007 and January 2008 is another example of such a process.

What, therefore, does transformation mean and what might it entail? As indicated earlier, SST implies an overhaul of the entire system for security provision and governance that is particularly relevant to African contexts. This agenda should not essentially negate the well-known tasks of SSR. Rather it will complement and provide a solid basis for effective implementation of SSR, fostering sustainability, legitimacy and long-lasting

impact. However, the concept is not yet articulated in ways that clarify how it may be both distinct from and complementary to SSR.

Even when the foundations of transformation have been set, either because there is a consensus among citizens and keepers of the state or because circumstances demand that there is no alternative but a radical change in the system, making that change a lived reality requires credible channels of influence both within and beyond state boundaries. Such channels might consist of old (including gatekeepers) and new critical actors and institutions. Indicators of changing or changed power dynamics and structures may be witnessed in improved gender relations, more effective parliamentary oversight, greater engagement with legitimate non-state and informal security systems and the realisation of regional and global normative frameworks that promote transformation. The effective transformation of the roles of these actors in itself serves as a concrete indicator of change.

Contexts of armed conflict and post-conflict situations such as Liberia and Sierra Leone reveal the transformational roles that non-state actors, from leaders of former armed and warring factions to expert networks, can play. Leaders of warring factions tend to have potent transformational potential because of the influence they wield not only over segments of the population but also over the means of violence. When they genuinely commit to relinquishing violence and pursue their conflict through non-violence, they can play important roles such as bringing key constituencies, including renegade groups, to the peace table and facilitating the process of disarmament. In Liberia, as Jaye's chapter in this volume reveals, Kabinéh Jann'eh, former leader of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development, became a champion of change by acting as the first convenor of a key national dialogue for security sector reform. Such positive examples are rare, however. Interestingly, it was in the same Liberia where Jann'eh was able to transform into an influential change-maker that Charles Taylor, as president (from 1997 to 2003), was unable to champion positive change or successfully take his country through peaceful democratic transition.

Some actors and institutions demonstrate more transformative potential than others. This could be due to a number of reasons, two of which are worth highlighting here.

Firstly, opportunities and spaces might open up for previously suppressed roles and actors to become enabled to perform constitutionally assigned roles. This is often the case, for example, with the legislative arm of government, which is either non-existent or redundant during periods of armed conflict, military dictatorships or civilian authoritarian rule. Moving from a situation of inaction and rubber-stamping executive decisions to one

of providing a check and balance to the executive arm as well as oversight of the security establishment can be a strong indicator of transformation.

Secondly, certain actors emerge as critical players during periods of crises or where there is a power vacuum. This is the case with various non-state actors that either rise to the occasion to serve legitimate security and justice functions or take advantage of vacuums existing during situations of armed conflict or when state institutions are non-responsive to citizens' security and justice needs. In a transitional period, those actors cannot and should not be wished away. Indeed, some become trusted service providers and decision-makers that inform policy and practice.

There are several visible indicators of radical change in a state transitioning from regimes where power was previously concentrated in one branch of government and/or security decision-making resided in the hands of a few individuals. These might entail the following, among others.

- A change in the roles of institutions previously serving as agents of repression of legitimate opposition and the population.
- An opening up of political spaces to include new voices and actors, such as those within civil society, particularly women and youth.
- Recognition and pre-eminence of civil institutions such as parliament in the oversight of security institutions.
- Reform in the laws that govern the creation of security institutions.
- Innovative policies that define a new role for the security establishment.
- An acceptance that previously excluded groups, e.g. women, and poor and rural communities are legitimate targets of security provision and constructive engagement with institutions that provide security for these communities.
- A visible expansion in the pool of security decision-makers at various levels.

Analysing security sector transformation in Africa

The selection of themes, issues and actors addressed within this volume is based on our identification of potential channels of transformation. A number of overarching questions are addressed across the contributions within this volume in order to enhance our understanding of the particular characteristics of security sector transformation.

- What is the significance of transformation rather than reform as a point of departure to address challenges relating to the security sector and its governance?
- What are the merits of using ‘transformation’ rather than ‘reform’?
- Are there context-specific African dynamics that make ‘transformation’ a concept and approach that is particularly relevant?
- Where is resistance to change most significant, and how do spoilers work against security sector transformation?
- In what ways can transformation be realised given the evident challenges to a ‘reform’ agenda?
- What key indicators or issues provide evidence of the presence or absence of transformation?
- Can transformative actors be identified, and how can they be effectively engaged in these processes?

This section considers two sets of issues that have shaped the structure of this volume. First, key thematic areas and context-specific cases are considered that provide insights to SST at the domestic level. Second, actors and institutions beyond the level of the state are considered in order to understand better their actual or potential role in promoting security sector transformation in Africa.

SST at the domestic level

While actors and institutions that have the potential to transform security sector governance may be broadly similar, the champions of transformation and the issues around which they converge will vary from one context to another. Much depends on the circumstances under which spaces open up for transformation. In situations of post-conflict peacebuilding, one can expect a much wider array of transformational actors than in transitions from authoritarian rule or normal democratic transitions. The extensive nature of reconstruction required after long periods of armed conflict, and in some circumstances the relative absence or weakness of a gatekeeping elite, creates an opening for transformation.

In post-authoritarian settings, by contrast, elite hold over the system is still fairly robust. The opportunity for change, while significant, is limited to the goodwill of an old reforming elite or new leaders with energy and aspiration for change. The chance for SST might be limited to a small window, and the actors in that context might be relatively few. The categorisation outlined by Luckham and Hutchful (Chapter 2) offers a

panoramic view of the types of terrain requiring varying forms of security sector reform in Africa.

In all transitional settings, an active parliament with a core group of parliamentarians championing reform is one of the most visible symptoms of transformation. Depending on the constitutional framework, parliaments will be key to reframing the legal framework to deliver a new national vision of security. However, the degree to which they can overcome challenges such as security illiteracy or an overbearing executive will determine the extent of their transformative role. This is compounded by the fact that often in the democratic transitions taking place in Africa, many members of the legislative branch of government are first-time parliamentarians. N'Diaye (Chapter 3) highlights the crucial role of parliamentarians and some of the challenges they confront, while acknowledging that even though parliaments often contain a sizeable number of individuals who are resistant to change, a handful of champions of change can make a real difference.

Transformation in gender relations and the inclusion of women in security considerations are significant indicators of transformation. Put differently, the exclusion of, or failure to give attention to, the place of women in formal or informal structures is one of the most potent indicators of the need for SST. As discussed by Hendricks and Valasek (Chapter 4), illustrated by the South African case, a change in this situation invariably marks a radical departure from the norm and is perhaps the best marker of transformation.

The changing power dynamics in transitional environments also serve as concrete indicators of transformation. These dynamics can be most visibly demonstrated in the increased engagement and participation of civil society in security processes – previously a no-go area for the civilian community. Moreover, the human security of individuals and communities should provide the point of departure for SST. Smith-Höhn (Chapter 5) traces and compares human perceptions of security in Liberia and Sierra Leone and their implications for existing reform processes.

SST at the international level

Notwithstanding positive changes and trends at the domestic level, bastions of resistance to reform can close windows of opportunity for transformation. Resistance might come from parts of the security establishment, such as intelligence organisations that are yet to be dismantled, or pockets of elite resistant to expanding the security decision-making base. In this regard, the mutually reinforcing roles of national and international processes cannot be overstated. As discussed above, SST cannot be seen as an internal dynamic

only. African continental and regional organisations have important roles to play, and have increasingly contributed to processes of security sector reform in different ways.

The emergence and assimilation of norms and standards represent a powerful vehicle to support transformation. Gacond and Uzoechina (Chapter 6) examine two examples of regional codes of conduct in Africa and consider how far these frameworks are able to translate into concrete behavioural change.

Transnational expert networks have become increasingly important actors in post-conflict and democratic transitions. The intellectual leadership provided by African-led expert networks like the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) go beyond regular civil society engagement. Their interventions include input to policy processes, facilitation of participative conversations such as national dialogues on security sector reform and research, analysis and expert support to regional organisations like ECOWAS and the African Union. The particular experience of the ASSN is considered by Jaye (Chapter 7). That such networked bodies are both available and utilised in these roles is another indicator of the atmosphere of change on issues of security sector reform.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of regional organisations to date is norm setting. As detailed by Ikpe (Chapter 8), the ECOWAS experience in West Africa demonstrates both the potentially transformational role of regional actors and the limitations of their concrete actions. Similarly, Mlambo (Chapter 9) reveals the important role of the African Union in developing a continental security policy framework with strong transformational elements. However, challenges relating to capacity, political will and the sheer diversity of political and security settings within Africa provide major obstacles to the implementation of such an agenda.

Beyond regional actors, the legitimacy and clout of global governance institutions such as the United Nations potentially offer an invaluable multiplier effect. Ebo (Chapter 10) draws attention to the various ways in which the United Nations, through specific departments and agencies, can apply normative standards in the field despite substantial political obstacles.

One group of actors which invariably brings its influence to bear on individual states, albeit selectively, is bilateral donors. They might seek to influence national actors, and can do so for better or worse. While a group of donors can make a commitment to abide by standards of engagement established by multilateral organisations to which they belong, such as the United Nations or OECD, there are numerous examples of situations in which bilateral actors intervene not in coordination or in concert and against the interests of the recipient countries and their citizens. This among other

things contributes to oft-heard claims of ownership gaps in external SSR support. Hendrickson (Chapter 11) acknowledges these challenges while drawing attention to the potential of bilateral donors to provide much-needed leverage with local leaders and actors.

Conclusion

Insights from African scholarship and practice that successfully injected transformative principles and approaches into the SSR policy discourse can make an equally important contribution to addressing shortfalls in SSR programmes. The concluding chapter in this volume, 'Enabling Security Sector Transformation in Africa', addresses two objectives. First, it draws on the various chapter contributions to identify important dynamics, indicators and challenges to security sector transformation. Second, it applies on this analysis to identify the most propitious channels and opportunities to support SST in practice.

Fleshing out the SST concept and its practical application is the overarching objective of this volume. The challenges of moving against entrenched interests and mobilising political will pervade the various contributions. Yet even in the most difficult settings positive examples emerge that can be further built upon. Ultimately, it will be by this criterion of effecting behavioural change reflecting the key principles of transformation that the validity of the SST agenda will be judged.

Notes

¹ 'African Union policy on security sector reform – zero draft', presented at AU-UN security sector reform meeting to review the draft AU SSR policy document, Addis Ababa, 17–19 May 2010; ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08; Council of the European Union (2005) 'EU concept for ESDP support to security sector reform', 12566/4/05 REV 4, Brussels, 13 October; European Commission (2006) 'A concept for European Community support for security sector reform', COM (2006)253 Final, Brussels, 24 May; Council of the European Union (2006) 'Council conclusions on a policy framework for security sector reform', 2736th General Affairs Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 12 June; OECD DAC (2004) *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. Paris: OECD DAC; OECD DAC (2007) *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform, Supporting Security and Justice*. Paris: OECD DAC; United Nations (2008) 'Securing peace and development: The role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform', report of UN Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/62/659-S/2008/39.

² Heiner Hänggi 'Security sector reform', in Vincent Chetail (ed.) *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding – A Lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 337.

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- ³ See Nicole Ball, Kayode Fayemi, 'Funmi Olonisakin, Rocky Williams and Martin Rupiya 'Governance in the security sector', in N. Van de Well and Nicole Ball (eds) *Beyond Structural Adjustment: The Institutional Context of African Development*. New York: Palgrave, 2003; Nicole Ball, Kayode Fayemi, 'Funmi Olonisakin and Rocky Williams *Security Sector Governance in Africa: A Handbook*. Lagos: Centre for Democracy and Development, 2004; Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham 'Conclusion: The scope of transformation and its limits', in eds. Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham, *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies* (Zed Books, 2003); Neil Cooper and Michael Pugh, 'Security Sector Transformation in Post-Conflict Societies', *The Conflict Security and Development Group Working Papers No. 5*, (CSDG, 2002); Roland De Vries 'Defence Transformation in South Africa: Sharing the Experience with the Forces Armées de la République du Congo', *Africa Security Review* 15.4 (2006): pp. 80-97.; Boubacar N'Diaye 'Francophone Africa and Security Sector Transformation: Plus ca Change...', *African Security* Volume 2, Issue 1 January 2009 pp. 1-28.; Chris Smith 'Security Sector Reform: Development Breakthrough or institutional engineering?', *Conflict Security and Development* 1.1 (2001): pp. 5-20.; Rocky Williams, 'African Armed Forces and the Challenges of Security Sector Transformation', *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Vol. 3 Issue 2, pp. 1-35.
- ⁴ See Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (eds) *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*. Munster: Lit Verlag, 2009; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications.
- ⁵ Clare Short (1998) 'Security, development and conflict prevention', speech at Royal College of Defence Studies, 13 May; Clare Short (1999) 'Security sector reform and the elimination of poverty', speech at Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, London, 9 March; available at www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/Security_Sector_Reform_and_the_Elimination_of_Poverty_DFID.pdf; Hänggi, note 2 above; Nicole Ball and Dylan Hendrickson 'Trends in security sector reform (SSR) policy, practice and research', CSDG Paper No. 20, Conflict, Security and Development Group, London, March 2009.
- ⁶ See Alan Bryden and Rory Keane *Security System Reform: What Have We Learned?* Paris: OECD DAC, 2009, pp. 6-7.
- ⁷ See Timothy Donais (ed.) *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*. Munster: Lit Verlag, 2008; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications; Laurie Nathan *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*, 2nd edn. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2007.
- ⁸ N'Diaye, note 3 above, p.16.
- ⁹ Ball et al. (2004), note 3 above, pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁰ De Vries, note 3 above, p. 81.
- ¹¹ N'Diaye, note 3 above, p. 5.
- ¹² Ball et al. (2003), note 3 above, p. 267.
- ¹³ Williams, note 3 above, p. 8.
- ¹⁴ Although focusing on completely different contexts, a similar emphasis on the culture and values of security sector actors can be found in work on 'second generation' SSR. See: Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds and Anthony Forster, 'The Second Generation Problematic: Rethinking Civil-Military Relations and Democracy', *Armed Forces and Society* 29:1 (Fall 2002).
- ¹⁵ Cooper and Pugh, note 3 above, p. 23.
- ¹⁶ Ball et al. (2004), note 3 above.

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- ¹⁷ Eboe Hutchful and 'Kayode Fayemi (2003) 'A survey of security system reform in Africa', CSDG Papers No. 3, CSDG, London, p. 3. See also www.securityanddevelopment.org.
- ¹⁸ Ball et al. (2004), note 3 above; Rocky Williams (2000) 'Africa and the challenges of security sector reform', in J. Cilliers and A. Hilding-Norberg (eds) *Building Stability in Africa: Challenges for the New Millennium*, Monograph 46. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies; available at www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No46/Contents.html.
- ¹⁹ According to the European Commission, note 1 above, the DAC SSR guidelines and good practices 'provide an important basis for EC engagement in terms of norms, principles and operational guidance'. The UN Secretary-General's report on SSR notes that the OECD DAC 'has formulated comprehensive guidelines on security system reform and governance and has produced a handbook to guide their implementation' – United Nations, note 1 above.
- ²⁰ OECD DAC *Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation on the Threshold of the 21st Century*. Paris: OECD DAC, 1997.
- ²¹ OECD DAC 'Conflict, peace and development cooperation', in *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*. Paris: OECD DAC, 2001.
- ²² OECD DAC (2004), note 1 above.
- ²³ OECD DAC (2007), note 1 above.
- ²⁴ OECD (2004), note 1 above, p. 16.
- ²⁵ Hutchful and Fayemi, note 17 above, p. 22.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ²⁷ Alan Bryden (2007) 'From policy to practice: The OECD's evolving role in security system reform', *DCAF Policy Paper No. 22*, DCAF, Geneva, pp. 6–15.
- ²⁸ One example is the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), which stresses the need to transform security in the region by addressing structural violence. The ECPF's security governance component speaks to these structural factors. Similarly, the AU's peace and security architecture advances the agenda of structural change. The language of transformation in its draft SSR policy is consistent with this. See Mlambo's chapter in this volume.
- ²⁹ Ball et al. (2004), note 3 above.
- ³⁰ Nicole Ball, Piet Biesheuvel, Tom Hamilton-Bailey and 'Funmi Olonisakin (2007) 'Security and justice sector reform programming in Africa', *Evaluation Working Paper 23*, UK Department for International Development, London.
- ³¹ Ball et al. (2003), note 3 above, p. 266; Williams, note 3 above, p. 7.
- ³² S. E. Finer *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, 2nd edn. London: Pinter, 1988; Eboe Hutchful and Abdoulaye Bathily (eds), *The Military and Militarism in Africa*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 1998 (see chapter 1).
- ³³ Ruth First *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat*. London: Penguin, 1966.
- ³⁴ Ade Boahen with Jacob F. Ade Ajeyi and Michael Tidy *Topics in West African History*, London: Longman, 1986.
- ³⁵ M. Janowitz *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1977.
- ³⁶ S. Decalo *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Style*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976.
- ³⁷ R. Luckham *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971; Boahen, Ade Ajayi and Tidy, 1986.

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- ³⁸ See 'Funmi Olonisakin, Eka Ikpe and Paschal Badong (2009) 'The future of security and justice for the poor', CSDG Policy Studies No. 21, Conflict, Security and Development Group, London.
- ³⁹ See Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye and 'Funmi Olonisakin *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*. Munster: Lit Verlag, 2008. Available at www.dcaf.ch/publications.

PART II

TRANSFORMATION AT THE DOMESTIC LEVEL

Chapter 2

Democratic and War-to-Peace Transitions and Security Sector Transformation in Africa

Robin Luckham and Eboe Hutchful

Introduction

Africa has made impressive strides towards its own peace and security architecture under the African Union's (AU's) Peace and Security Council and through regional organisations like ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and the SADC (Southern African Development Community). But effective security cooperation still falls far short of the formal provisions, and the capacity of African states to assure the security of their own citizens, let alone prevent conflicts and build peace in the continent as a whole, varies greatly. All too many are fragile, lack fully legitimate public authority and have little ability to shield their citizens from poverty and violence. Some states constitute major sources of insecurity in their own right: trampling on the rights of their citizens, unleashing state violence and failing to prevent non-state violence, spreading conflicts across borders into neighbouring states and frustrating regional efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. Of course, by no means all African states are as problematic. Some are relative beacons of stability, good governance and democracy. But it has proved difficult to hold AU member states accountable to the AU's own high standards due to the inbuilt conservatism of the African state system and the continuing weakness of its peer-group mechanisms.

The security *status quo* in Africa is not just dysfunctional; it penalises poor and vulnerable people, who suffer most from underdevelopment and violence. Nor is there an effective framework for managing new forms of risk, such as climate change, dwindling water supplies, health pandemics, financial shocks, terrorism and transnational crime.

Moreover, African states find their capacity to act heavily constrained by massive global inequalities in wealth, military capability and political power. Donors, international financial institutions and international organisations can demand adjustments in their economies, set standards of good governance, support security sector reform (SSR) and intervene in conflicts with very little influence or accountability in the reverse direction.

Both globally and within the African continent, security largely continues to be the discourse of the powerful, privileging major powers and global corporations over less well resourced states, the rich over the poor, the secure over the insecure and states over civil societies.

Nothing less than transformation of the continent's security framework will suffice to meet these challenges. Such a transformation must start by asking whose security it is that African states and their security architectures protect, and from what.¹ It would require deep analysis of their governance structures, development paths and relationships with their citizens, especially those who are most insecure, poor and excluded. It would also have to offer credible responses to the dysfunctional security status quo, and to provide distinct African alternatives to the reform paradigms of international donors, including SSR.

Such a strategy for security sector transformation would prioritise four interrelated goals:

- *Inclusive citizen and human security.*² These are major aims in their own right, and should be the yardsticks used to evaluate state and international security. In the final analysis what counts is whether states and their security institutions are willing and able to assure the safety and welfare of their own citizens – and are responsive to their rights, views and demands. Human as well as citizen security is a requirement in order not to neglect the needs of the many vulnerable people, like refugees, who do not enjoy the full benefits of state protection. Indeed, the responsibility to protect³ those who are insecure, oppressed or impoverished extends to the African state system as a whole as well as to individual African states.
- *Democratic governance and accountability of military, security, police and justice institutions.* This includes but extends beyond the current SSR agenda, being a necessary corollary of citizen security. It presupposes, however, that governments are already legitimate and accountable – which is not the case in all African states. Thus democratic governance of security tends to be part of a wider struggle to create and consolidate democratic governance in the African continent.

- *Secure foundations for sustainable development*, especially where development has been blocked by political instability, insecurity and violent conflict. Security can be seen as both a public good in its own right and an essential prerequisite for economic growth. It is also a crucial aspect of state building in fragile and post-conflict states, although security, law and order by themselves are not enough to generate sustainable development or meet the needs of poor and vulnerable people.
- *Common or collective security*, including the capacity of the African state system and regional bodies to prevent and resolve conflicts and respond creatively to the multiple new security challenges facing the continent.⁴ The AU and other regional institutions cannot act solely as trade unions for the protection of the prerogatives and status of member states. They need to cooperate more fully to address the main sources of injustice and insecurity in the continent. At the same time they should be able to craft African policy responses to African problems – cooperating with donors and international agencies, but also standing up to them when they undermine the security of African states and their peoples.

However, proposals for security sector transformation are much easier to make than to turn into credible proposals that can gain the assent of African states and make their citizens more rather than less secure. If they do not reflect Africa's unique historical and developmental experience, they are empirically flawed and of little use as guides to action. To consider properly how to transform security, one must first understand the sources of insecurity and malgovernance – including the state failure, societal militarism and political violence which have prevailed in many parts of the continent.

The central issue is how to transform security in a political marketplace in which many of the most important actors are self-interested and in thrall to patrimonial politics, face international constraints and have little real appetite for change.⁵ It is also how to mobilise political coalitions of citizens to insist on change even where it is blocked or opposed by their own states and political elites, as well as sometimes by international actors. While the overall objective may be security sector transformation, one must recognise that it can often only be achieved in small steps⁶ – requiring long struggles and constant negotiations and renegotiations, with the constant threat of regression or reversal.

In Africa there have always been considerable historical and contextual differences among states, as well as wide variations in the level of

political commitment and capacity to bring about desired changes. More disaggregated and realistic understandings of security, the state and development in particular African states are essential. This chapter will analyse a series of contradictions in the current theory and practice of security in the continent, including its discordant relationships to development. But at the same time it will try to identify potential synergies – ways in which security and development are or could become mutually reinforcing. To catalyse these synergies and create a convincing case for change, good analysis is needed of how current security structures function or malfunction, and whom they benefit and whom they fail. Even their weaknesses and contradictions, it will be argued, can be seen as potential starting points for transformation.

Democratisation and its discontents: Transformation and continuity in African security governance

Ever since independence Africa's multifaceted historical dynamics have created shared problems, but also ensured enormous regional and national diversity in the forms of militarisation and securitisation. Military and security structures, civil-military relations, security governance and indeed the entire post-colonial state have constantly been thrown into crisis, modified and reinvented. The present round of wars, crises and insecurity is only the most recent manifestation of protracted crisis in security governance. Despite these historical continuities there have been immense, but contradictory, transformations in African security governance since the late 1980s. Democratisation, or more precisely the decomposition of military/authoritarian regimes, opened both windows of opportunity and windows of danger for the African state system. The so-called third wave of democratisation caught up with Africa during the 1990s. Simultaneously, the continent reaped the whirlwind of state failure and spreading armed conflict. The evidence suggests that democratisation and armed conflict were not merely alternative paths, followed in some countries but not others, but that they were also complementary and interconnected.

The end of the Cold War created a new ideological climate in which Western governments and international agencies began to promote good governance and liberal democracy more openly and aggressively. It also terminated many of the aid flows, notably military and security assistance which had previously sustained many authoritarian regimes as well as a number of armed movements.

Many regimes had already experienced deep crises in their legitimacy, capacity to govern and ability to manage dissent, even before the end of the Cold War. These gathered pace and many African regimes faced a rising swell of anti-government protest, rooted in real domestic grievances and encouraged by international changes. Democratisation in Africa thus emerged from complex interactions between domestic demands and international support for political and economic liberalisation.⁷

A notable feature of these upheavals was that opposition to authoritarian governance came not just from civil and political society, but sometimes also from within the ranks of the state's own military and security establishments, as in Mali or Malawi. The deep institutional crises which developed in many African military and security establishments made it difficult to deploy them during internal crises. In the more extreme cases, factions within the decomposing armies took up arms against the regime or against the state itself, as in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the then Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC).

The continent's military institutional crises were in part by-products of the fiscal and economic crises of African states. Often they were aggravated by economic stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes, including deep cuts in military and security budgets, insisted on by donors and international financial institutions. One study concludes that 'the ramshackle state of many military establishments in Africa is as much evidence of under-funding as a reflection of mismanagement of resources'.⁸ In the worst cases such cuts were militarily and politically destabilising due to the inability of governments to train, equip or pay their soldiers.

Hence armed conflict has loomed as an increasingly negative influence, with varying and complex relationships to democratic transition.⁹ In a few countries, to be sure, armed conflicts catalysed democratisation (e.g. Uganda in 1986 and Ethiopia in 1991). In others, the negotiated termination of conflicts paved the way to democratic transition (e.g. South Africa and Mozambique). But in many African states (Angola, Algeria, Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, DRC, etc. – the list is long), political violence or the unfinished business of war blocked democratic transition for long periods of time or made it far more traumatic than it might otherwise have been.

Democratisation has been widely promoted by the international community as not only beneficial in itself but also a 'solution' to violent conflict and insecurity. Democratic elections and new constitutions have featured in almost all the peace agreements concluding African conflicts. Yet donor support for democracy, good governance and SSR remains in many ways problematic. Whether democratisation contributes to the resolution of conflict or sometimes encourages it is open to argument.¹⁰ The jury remains

out on whether international support (and still more sanctions against regimes resisting changes) is helpful in sustaining political reform. Both entrenched African autocrats (like Presidents Mugabe and Bashir) and self-proclaimed modernising ‘democrats’ (like Museveni and Meles) have demonstrated unexpected staying power and ability to resist reforms and perpetuate themselves or their chosen successors in office by fraud, corruption and intimidation behind façades of democratic governance.

There have been different subregional dynamics, some facilitating and others obstructing democratisation and better security governance. Examples are the synergies between South Africa’s transition from apartheid and political changes elsewhere in Southern Africa; the mutual demonstration effect of the ‘national conferences’ ushering in democratic transitions in some francophone states; or, conversely, the regressive interactions among conflicts in the Great Lakes and the Mano River Union regions, which have blighted the prospects for democratisation in both regions.

Democratic transitions in most African states have been of greatly varying depth, substance and sustainability. They have followed a number of distinct historical trajectories, some of which are outlined in Table 2.1. A distinction is made between countries which have made transitions from military governance, those which have democratised civilian autocracies or one-party states and those which have embarked upon democratisation in order to break out of cycles of armed conflict. The columns differentiate between managed transitions ‘pacted’ by the country’s elites; those stemming to a significant extent from popular pressures for reform, some involving largely peaceful protests, others linked to armed struggles; and those where political change remains blocked or disputed.

Many transitions can be categorised in more than one place in Table 2.1. While South Africa’s transition, for example, was ‘pacted’ through negotiated agreements between the ANC (African National Congress) and the outgoing apartheid regime, the latter’s National Party government was only brought to the negotiating table after a popularly based resistance struggle. In Mali a coup by military reformers opened the political space for democratisation; but at the same time a crisis of legitimacy in the previous military dictatorship had led to broad-based popular protests. Transition was facilitated though careful negotiation between these military reformers and a wide range of civil society groups, which were incorporated in the transitional government.

Some transitions have been no more than formal – reinventing former autocrats as unconvinced and unconvincing ‘democrats’, like President Bashir in Sudan. Some have plunged countries into permanent crises in

Table 2.1 Varying trajectories of democratic transition in Africa

	Managed or 'pacted' by elites	Achieved through protest or struggle	Blocked or disputed
Transitions from military rule	Negotiated military withdrawal (e.g. Ghana, Nigeria)	Democratisation from below (e.g. Benin) Democratisation after popular coup (e.g., Mali)	Reinvention of military rulers as dubious 'democrats' (e.g. Burkina Faso, Guinea)
Liberalisation within civilian autocracies or one-party states	Democratisation via changed rules of the political game (e.g. Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia)	Democratisation following protest from below (e.g. Malawi)	Blocked or coopted liberalisation (e.g. Gabon, Togo, Cameroon)
Transitions accelerated by violent conflict	Democratisation via peace negotiations (e.g. South Africa, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone) Peacebuilding and democratisation from below (e.g. Somaliland)	Democratisation following military victory by rebel groups (e.g. Ethiopia, Uganda)	Transitions to conflict rather than democracy (e.g. DRC, Somalia) Transitions to warlord politics, not democracy (e.g. Liberia under Taylor, Congo Brazzaville)

which demands for democracy have been swallowed up by conflict and insecurity. Others have simply replaced authoritarian governance by new forms of clientelism, repression and warlord politics.

Military regimes *per se* have mostly vanished, despite an apparent resurgence in countries like Guinea and Niger. Nigeria's was one of the last recognisably 'military' regimes to hand over power to an elected government (in 1999). However, ex-military rulers have often reinvented themselves as elected or self-appointed civilian heads of state. This is especially the case in West Africa, where several civilian presidents during the past two decades have been former soldiers. Some of these, like President Rawlings in Ghana or Obasanjo in Nigeria, genuinely reinvented themselves as elected civilian statesmen; while others like Presidents

Compaoré in Burkina Faso and Conteh in Guinée have had rather more dubious credentials as supposed democrats. But the broader point is that in many countries present and former military and security personnel continue to exercise considerable political influence behind the façades of constitutional democracy.

Moreover, coups and army mutinies, though fewer than in the heyday of military interventionism, have been enjoying a minor resurgence. They have toppled or threatened previously stable civilian regimes, as in Côte d'Ivoire; they have stepped in to replace quasi-civilian with fully military regimes, as in Guinea; they have rung the changes between a series of unstable autocracies, as in the Central African Republic or Niger; and they have opened and closed democratic spaces, as in Mauritania.

But the main security threats to African regimes have tended more often to originate from armed insurgents and warlord entrepreneurs rather than from formal military and security establishments. Political violence sweeping in from the periphery has engulfed the state in countries like the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire – contrasting with the coups erupting from within the military core of the state itself that prevailed in the Cold War era.

Nevertheless, political spaces have opened to transform security governance in a small but important group of African states, notably South Africa, Mali, Ghana, Tanzania, Senegal, Mozambique and arguably Nigeria. Transformations in these countries' security governance have potentially important demonstration effects elsewhere, as we shall see. They hold out hope that democratic transitions can make a real difference by fostering democratic accountability, reinforcing professionalism and addressing the human rights abuses, corruption and malgovernance of security prevalent under authoritarian rule.

Even in such countries, however, both security governance and democratisation itself remain intensively challenged by the manifold legacies of colonial, military and authoritarian rule. These legacies include absent or weakened democratic values, processes and institutions. Many new African democracies remain 'limited', 'semi', 'virtual' or 'illiberal', varying from the relatively benign to the frankly repressive. Democratic governance of security cannot be assured if there is little democracy in the first place.

Behind democratic façades, considerable continuity in regimes and ruling elites has often been maintained. Most African military and security establishments still remain in one sense or another 'political armies'.¹¹ Not only ex-military men but also ex-armed insurgents have reinvented themselves as democratically elected rulers, as in Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda. A number of civilian autocrats (like Mugabe in Zimbabwe or Biya

in Cameroon) have maintained themselves in office by manipulating elections and suppressing dissent. Elsewhere, as in Tanzania, Mozambique or Angola, the leaders of former single parties have proved remarkably resilient, managing to reconsolidate their dominant positions even after transition to multi-party politics.

The path to democracy has also been strewn with reversals and relapses, in the form of new coups or military rebellions. Some, like Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, have since been restored to a fragile constitutional track. In others, like Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic, coups and rebellions have opened broader conflicts and insecurities.

Hence the 'politics of force' still continues in various different guises. Governments, which still depend heavily upon state coercion and surveillance, have continued to entrench military and security forces in the political process. Violations of democratic rights and freedoms, electoral manipulation and fraud, patronage politics, corruption, etc., remain widespread, all of them undermining security governance. Added to this there tends to be deep societal militarisation, manifested in increasing criminality, political violence and citizen insecurity: what may be termed 'civil militarism'.

Another enduring legacy of authoritarian rule has been the decomposition of military and security bureaucracies themselves, compounding their inability to carry out their basic security functions. Weak and disunited militaries arguably made it easier to rid the continent of its military and authoritarian regimes from the late 1980s. The dangers they currently pose for democracy, security and state viability took some time to become fully apparent. The prevailing political and fiscal crises of African states, together with conditions set by donors that required military/security cuts, even where security was demonstrably underfunded, tended to reinforce such institutional weaknesses.¹²

Violent conflicts and their legacies have posed manifold challenges to security governance over and above those typifying non-democratic regimes. Indeed, they may have been even more disruptive than the legacies of colonial and military governance. While conflicts are far from new in the African continent, they arguably became more dangerous and disruptive during the post-Cold War era. They both fed on and aggravated state crisis and failure. In terms of strategy and tactics, they increasingly took a reactionary and predatory turn. They were increasingly used to pursue commercial interests and appropriate and control natural resources (diamonds, oil, land, etc.).¹³ Ethnic identities were instrumentalised to mobilise support for war. Violence was deployed as a deliberate tool, both

by targeting civilians and through the systematic devastation of land, productive assets, social capital and political institutions.¹⁴

Africa's conflicts have also developed distinctive regional and subregional dynamics. This regionalisation of conflicts – as in the Great Lakes, West Africa and the Horn – and the transmission of the sources of insecurity (small arms, combatants, refugees, etc.) across national boundaries have made it increasingly difficult for many individual African states to assure security on their own.

Nevertheless, there have been significant steps towards terminating conflicts in a number of African states. In some, like Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Liberia, there has been tangible progress towards not only sustainable peace but also democratic governance. In others like Angola, previously authoritarian governments have restored their authority and ended rebellions, as well as taking limited steps towards democracy. Elsewhere peace deals such as Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement have established a durable truce while negotiations have continued concerning the underlying divisions. In other countries, like the DRC or Burundi, violence has been contained, if not completely ended, through less than satisfactory political settlements, which have bought time for international and local peacebuilding efforts to continue.

But in many cases the conflicts have been formally 'ended' without being fully resolved or shifted into the forum of democratic politics. Often various forms of political and societal violence have continued, with the potential to reignite hostilities. Typically there are deep physical, economic, psychological and political scars, which will take many decades to uproot.

Another frequent legacy of violent conflicts has been the decomposition and collapse of official military and security establishments – often accompanied by the introduction of many other armed bodies into the equation of security governance: paramilitaries, militias, guerrillas, warlords, criminal gangs, etc. Democratic control of military and security agencies is far harder where they have been torn apart by conflicts among rival armed factions, being too ill-disciplined to be controlled by their own commanders, let alone by civilian political authorities. Such problems are compounded in countries like Sudan or Congo Brazzaville, where official force structures, intelligence agencies in particular, have established covert links with paramilitaries and militias, for instance by subcontracting 'dirty work' which they cannot carry out themselves.

The concepts of democratic accountability and good governance scarcely apply at all to some non-state armed formations. These can pose even more intractable threats to democracy and citizen security than official military establishments, as in Somalia, the DRC or Northern Uganda. There

is the added risk that waging war against them may reinforce, in the context of the ‘international war against terror’, the trend towards ‘hard’ democracies or neo-authoritarian ‘national security states’ – with potentially problematic implications for democratic governance and human rights.

Not all the legacies of conflict, however, have been equally negative. Indeed, one school of thought contends that new opportunities for political innovation are arising from the ashes of disorder, violence and state collapse in countries like Liberia, Somalia and the DRC.¹⁵ Such arguments must be treated with some caution, so as not to lend legitimacy to regressive political forces, including criminal mafias, warlords and ethnic entrepreneurs.

Indeed a variety of alternative forms of security provision have emerged to replace collapsed or malfunctioning security provision at grass roots – and not just in conflict situations. These include community self-help and vigilante groups, revived chieftaincy institutions and ‘traditional’ (in inverted commas, as tradition is almost always a relative concept) justice and policing institutions, etc., which emerge alongside but can never entirely replace state security and justice institutions.¹⁶

African conflicts have had certain other potentially transformative aspects, which deserve serious scrutiny. New and arguably more democratic governments have emerged from armed struggles against autocratic regimes, notably in Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda, although in each of these countries the nature, extent and sustainability of democracy can be questioned. Democratic governments have also been brought into being through negotiated settlements of armed conflicts, as in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Liberia – again with significant variations in the quality of security governance.

There have also been wider international and regional responses to armed conflict in the continent, which potentially facilitate security transformation. The international donor community has supported conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and SSR, including democratic governance of military and security establishments, in a growing number of African states – although the blessings of donor interest in security issues have not been unmixed.

More promising has been the forging in the matrix of the continent’s conflicts of new forms of collective security, including regional and subregional security architectures within the AU, ECOWAS, SADC, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), etc. Even if these organisations have enjoyed a less than inspiring record of supporting governance reform, conflict management and peacekeeping, at least there now exists an emergent cooperative framework which can be built upon and improved. Nevertheless, the challenges of stirring African governments,

many not themselves exemplars of good security governance, into collective action to transform the continent's security remain formidable.

Can African security governance be democratised and transformed? Emerging patterns

To summarise the above, since the end of the Cold War new forms of security governance have been emerging from the African continent's development crises; from the decomposition of authoritarian regimes; from institutional crises in formal military and security establishments; from their partial displacement by non-state armed bodies and security provision; from a flawed and contradictory process of democratisation; and from armed conflicts along with the new regional security architectures created to manage them.

In response, the international community has been promoting its own paradigms of security governance, though linking them more to rebuilding and post-conflict states than to democratisation *per se*.¹⁷ In principle at least it has pursued a holistic human security approach, although it has not always succeeded in linking the latter to its own narrower programmatic concerns. It has been showing an increasing awareness of shifting African realities, has moved emphasis to 'local ownership' of security governance programmes and has engaged with a broad array of reform constituencies within the continent, including civil society groups and regional and subregional organisations.

In the final analysis, however, African regional bodies, governments, legislatures and civil societies need their own *democratic strategies* to transform security.¹⁸ This will be no easy task. The room for manoeuvre in each African state varies according to history, political context, governance structure and regime. In some national contexts there is real scope for security sector reform or even transformation; in others there is very little that can be achieved without major political and economic upheavals.

One may identify a number of historical paradigms of security governance in the continent, shaped by different historical conjunctures – each of which may either open political spaces for transformation or alternatively close these spaces down.

1. *Democracies with democratically governed military and security institutions.* Despite the reservations expressed above, a number of African states are willing and able both to assure democratic governance of security and to build on the latter to engage on a more transformative agenda. Post-

apartheid South Africa is the shining, if not completely untarnished, example.¹⁹ Arguably, indeed, democratic oversight of military and security institutions in South Africa has been more comprehensive than in many Western democracies. While no other African states have transformed security governance to anything like the same extent, significant reforms have been initiated in Ghana, Tanzania, Mali, Mozambique, Kenya and Mauritius (in relation to its police force),²⁰ among others. Such countries have adopted at least some elements of the standard SSR paradigm, such as reprofessionalising their military, police and security establishments; subordinating them to civilian authority under strengthened defence ministries and parliamentary committees; improved and more transparent financial management in the defence and security sector; demilitarising public order policing; and improving mechanisms for judicial oversight and rule of law. Human and citizen security have also crept in – with increased interest in non-state security provision, community policing and factoring of security into poverty-reduction programmes – though as yet with relatively little tangible impact.

Of course there remain conspicuous gaps between reform policies and the realities of unequal security, violence and injustice, especially in poor communities and among marginalised groups. But policy commitment is an important first step. Moreover, an open political process is crucial, not least in order to expose where security governance falls short of its own goals or bears harshly upon vulnerable people, which it frequently does, even in the paradigm cases.

2. *Weak or contested democracies, with little real capacity to assure democratic governance of security institutions, still less to transform them.* Several African countries, such as Benin, Zambia, Malawi and Nigeria, have made transitions to democracy without yet implementing effective reforms in their military, security and justice institutions – either because their democratic institutions have yet to be consolidated and their governments are still weak, divided and corrupt, or because their military and security establishments remain sufficiently powerful to veto significant reforms touching on their interests and prerogatives. This is the case in Nigeria, where the military was able to fend off reform proposals by portraying them, with some credibility, as externally driven.²¹ This does not mean that security sector reforms are entirely ruled out, but they are less likely to be initiated, more likely to be donor-driven and less likely to make any real impact on the performance and accountability of security institutions. There is some overlap between this group of African democracies and those in the first category. Even relatively consolidated democracies, like Ghana, have

implemented reforms selectively and with little real enthusiasm for democratic accountability on the part of their governments and security institutions.

3. *Developmental democracies with relatively professional but democratically non-accountable military and security institutions.* Most such democracies have been governed for long periods under dominant-party systems, like Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and, until recently, Senegal.²² Although they may have free and fair elections, civil liberties and a free press, they remain qualified by the overarching requirements of political stability and/or strong developmental management. Their governments have retained tight control over security and have not much prioritised democratic oversight of military and security institutions. These institutions have remained relatively professional, playing no overt role in politics – but in practice have supported the political status quo. Civil control has tended to amount to not much more than obedience to the elected civilian government, often behind high barriers of official secrecy, with little or no public, parliamentary or even executive oversight.²³ Hence the best that one can expect is limited security sector reforms, including improved accountability and financial management in this sector. While there has been some interest in human security, this has been largely in terms of prioritising the Millennium Development Goals rather than use of human security as a yardstick to evaluate state security priorities.

4. *Post-liberation democracies with ‘new model armies’ and ex-guerrilla security establishments,*²⁴ where armed movements with reformist or revolutionary goals, rather than the narrower predatory or ethnic armed groups of some recent African wars, have prevailed on the battlefield and taken control of the state. Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and Namibia (though coming to power through a negotiated settlement) have been the most clear-cut examples. Eritrea and Zimbabwe both followed a similar path before regressing to more despotic forms of governance.

The resultant regimes – and their security governance – have differed significantly from the earlier radical governments established by anti-colonial national liberation struggles. Unlike the latter, they borrowed the ideological clothing of democratisation rather than Marxism-Leninism for largely pragmatic reasons, reflecting a transformed international context, although they have never been fully comfortable with liberal democracy. They have also cautiously embraced donor agendas of economic liberalisation and market-oriented development – sometimes turning themselves into prominent donor ‘success stories’.

In such countries a distinct type of illiberal democracy has emerged to pursue broad goals of post-war reconstruction, national reconciliation and relaunching of national development. A central feature of their regimes has been the predominance of ex-commanders of the former guerrilla or liberation forces in the political leadership, entrenching close regime-military links.²⁵ Whether and how such regimes are democratic remain open to debate. In Ethiopia, the space for democratic contestation in a nominally multi-party democracy has been increasingly restricted, culminating in the ruling party's staged victory in the 2010 elections, as well as a ban on NGOs with a governance, human rights or security reform remit.²⁶ Until recently Uganda operated a 'no-party' and now a dominant-party democracy, with opposition parties facing numerous de facto constraints and operating in a very confined political space.²⁷ In Rwanda, even though nominally contested elections have been held, democratisation has taken second place to security, national reconstruction and post-genocide reconciliation,²⁸ while opposition parties and independent media face constant harassment. Once the euphoria of liberation had passed, in all three countries some of the familiar features of patrimonial governance, including clientelism and corruption, began to creep in, affecting even the governance of their 'reformed' defence, police and security institutions.

The whole area of SSR has been fraught with tension. Donors have tried to insist that reforms tackle underlying problems of corruption and lack of accountability as well as management issues. Governments have tended to take a largely instrumental position. Security reviews have been undertaken and reforms have been adopted largely in order to gain access to donor funding for security modernisation and re-equipment – paying lip-service to democratic accountability and human rights at best and actively resisting them at worst.

5. *Contested or poorly functioning democracies with weak and/or unreconstructed security sector governance.* As already argued, democracy is a long way from being consolidated in many of Africa's new democracies. Poorly functioning or non-functioning democracy – marred by systematic corruption, patronage politics, human rights abuses and political violence – is scarcely conducive to improved governance in the security sector, let alone its transformation. This has been the unfortunate reality in such countries as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya during the Moi era and Zimbabwe, despite their quite different national experiences of democracy. The main obstacles to reform of any kind have tended to be government disinterest or indeed active opposition, along with intimidated parliamentary

institutions, weak civil societies and sometimes foot-dragging by military and security institutions themselves.

In such conditions, the scope for improvement in security sector governance remains severely limited and must await the creation of properly functioning democracies. Yet security elites themselves have sometimes been more open to reform than civilian politicians; notably when they believe their professional roles have been compromised by underfunding, government interference or deployment in public order roles in order to prop up unpopular governments. Military and police establishments have retained relatively high standards of professionalism in countries like Kenya, partially insulating them from the politicisation, corruption and intimidation threatening to engulf them. This has provided some protection from the chaos and disorder which might have prevailed had they disintegrated, thereby assuring a modicum of basic stability and security upon which more democratic governments could eventually build.

Nevertheless, especially in times of crisis, such regimes have tended to fall back upon the normal mechanisms of 'subjective control', including patronage networks, political and ethnic manipulation of appointments and allocations of land and other economic benefits as sweeteners to army and police officers, which both undermines professionalism and subverts any prospect of democratic control. A tragic case in point is the corruption and politicisation of Zimbabwe's previously highly professional military and police establishments.

6. *Shadow or façade democracies with coopted or praetorian military and security apparatuses*, which practise the same malgovernance of security that prevailed during the pre-democratic era. The difference from the other contested democracies considered above is mostly a matter of degree rather than kind. Civilian control – to the extent that it exists – has merely meant subjugation to the whims of a repressive and corrupt civilian executive. Its main mechanisms have been the familiar ones of patronage, corruption, intimidation, intelligence surveillance and the proliferation of paramilitary bodies and presidential guards, etc., to insure against disloyalty by the official armed forces. Some countries, like Togo, Gabon and Congo Brazzaville, have simply remained frozen in the regressive security sector governance arrangements of an earlier time. In other larger and more complex façade democracies, like Algeria and Sudan, military and security establishments are more professional but just as politicised and even more politically powerful, and have been able to deepen state repression through extensive intelligence surveillance and (in Sudan's case at least) the subcontracting of state violence to paramilitary units.²⁹

7. *Failing, predatory or warlord 'states' coping with ungoverned security and privatised violence*, where legitimate public authority has largely vanished and the 'state' has little reality except as a juridical notion in international law. The regimes of such states have enjoyed varying capacities to control parts of national territory and extract resources by force or fraud. The formal agents of state and public security have largely become agents of insecurity. The very idea of security sector governance has retained little meaning, given the erosion of the state's monopoly of legitimate force, the privatisation of violence and the proliferation of armed groups which have only contingent and fluid relationships to the state.

This has been the depressing reality in a number of African countries, including Somalia, the DRC, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and previously Sierra Leone and Liberia. Somalia remains the most extreme case, with a largely non-functional government of national reconstruction whose armed forces and police are more or less indistinguishable from the religious militias and warlord bands they are fighting. In these failing states, wars and other forms of political and criminal violence continue to be the basic facts of political life and of security (non-)governance. Even in states where conflicts have formally been resolved through peace settlements, like the DRC, state security institutions remain weak, internally divided and lack the capacity to reinforce legitimate public authority, with whole regions of the country remaining marginalised and insecure.

Yet one must not slip into the assumption that these are or ever were complete states of anarchy, entirely lacking in any security provision. Most of them, apart from Somalia, have been minimally ruled by partly functioning, albeit fractured and ineffective, governments whose writ has run in some areas of the country but not in others. Added to these have been varied forms of security self-provision by community defence groups, 'traditional' authorities, youth groups, vigilantes and the like. Even warlords, ethnic militias, criminal mafias, etc., though predatory and oppressive, have supplied different forms of protection, at least in the pockets of territory they control. Added to these have been the private security forces of resource-producing transnational corporations and indeed international NGOs operating in fractured states or 'ungoverned' spaces within functioning states (like the Niger Delta in Nigeria).

Nor can it be assumed that there is no exit from conditions of insecurity, ungovernability and violence. Some supposedly failed African states have succeeded in restoring a modicum of political stability and are slowly rebuilding security institutions, law and order – either with the

assistance of the international community, like in Sierra Leone and Liberia, or almost entirely through their own efforts, as in Somaliland.

8. *'Post-conflict' democracies engaged in the reconstruction of legitimate public authority and security sector governance.* By destroying non-functional states, conflicts arguably create new political spaces for reconstruction. They clear the ground to rebuild democratic states with improved and more accountable security institutions. In reality, however, the situation is never that simple.

Although free elections and democratic constitutions have been written into virtually all post-conflict settlements, these elections have sometimes proved counterproductive, either reigniting violence, as in Angola in 1992, or bringing warlords to power, as in Liberia in 1997. More recent political settlements have paid more attention to conflict management and institution building. Yet they have still had to reckon with the power structures and vested interests brought into being by the conflicts, which have usually remained powerful during the 'post-conflict' era, continuing to shape governance arrangements.

Indeed, an alternative way of seeing post-conflict reconstruction is as a political struggle to capture the peace and control the new security institutions, whereby a range of different local, national and international actors compete to control the new governance framework and reshape its security arrangements. In such a context, well-crafted democratic strategies for the armed forces, police and other security agencies are vital – even more so than in countries making transitions from despotic rule.

9. *Democratic governance of security reconstructed 'from below' in the aftermath of conflict.* The clearest example is Somaliland, where an end to conflict was negotiated through agreement among clan elders and other stakeholders, including women's groups, militia leaders etc. In the process a new democratic compact between the state and citizens was brought into being, paving the way for a democratic constitution, robust enough to assure a durable peace and eventually permit a successful change of government through contested multiparty elections³⁰. Two special conditions made such a renegotiation of the state and its security framework possible. Political space was opened through the delegitimisation and indeed disappearance of the previous Somali state. Also Somaliland was largely left alone by the international community, never becoming the focus of counterproductive international efforts to impose peace and reconstruct the state as in the rest of Somalia.

Building a democratic peace in Somaliland has not been without problems including a lengthy and costly cantonment of fighters, and the somewhat patriarchal character of the compact, reliant as it was upon the mediating role of clan elders. Moreover the very conditions which opened the political space for this unique experiment might now become obstacles to its consolidation. Somaliland's ability to prosper as functioning democratic state remains hostage to insecurity elsewhere in Somalia, as well as the difficulties arising from the absence of AU and international recognition.

On the one hand Somaliland appears to offer an exciting example of how African states and their security architectures might be rebuilt on more democratic foundations. On the other hand the AU and its member states remain extremely reluctant to recognize it, not least because of the potentially revolutionary implications for the entire African state-system. Their suspicions could be put to rest if the Somaliland model were not regarded as a recipe for the break-up of existing African states – but instead as a paradigm for their renewal by creating zones of relative peace and security, which could act as local catalysts for more broadly based transformations at a national level.

Historical trajectories and democratic strategies

Drawing on the historical paradigms outlined in the previous section, democratic strategies can be identified that include some or all of the following elements.³¹

- Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants has been the immediate priority in many post-conflict countries, which have only later turned to SSR and wider issues of security governance. Donors and international agencies initially tended to approach DDR as a mostly technical task, albeit with economic and social dimensions, including alternative livelihoods for demobilised ex-combatants. More recent settlements, however, have tended to follow more integrated approaches, sequencing DDR and SSR within one package, as in the DRC, Burundi and southern Sudan – although with varying consistency and success.
- DDR is necessarily a political process, because in order for it to succeed, those who have waged war on the state (and sometimes those who have fought for it as well) need to be politically marginalised, bought off or offered a stake in the new political and security dispensation. This is especially important where they are undefeated

or still command real political and military support. A pertinent illustration of the complex politics involved is the manner in which negotiators encouraged the reinvention of Renamo as a political party in Mozambique, alongside the integration of its combatants into the armed forces and police, despite its involvement in appalling war atrocities.

- SSR has been the other main prong of security sector reconstruction. It promotes the re-establishment of professional, disciplined, effective and well-resourced military, police and security structures – not in isolation, but as part of a broader process of rebuilding state capacity and legitimate, inclusive and effective public institutions. This is no easy task where existing security structures have been repressive and corrupt. It is even harder when they have ceased altogether to exist as disciplined forces, or where disparate armed groups of varying structure and origins have had to be retrained and melded into a coherent force, as in the DRC. Devoting proper attention to regional and ethnic diversity of the armed and police forces has often been necessary where previous recruitment favoured particular groups. In Ethiopia, for instance, the constitution requires that the composition of the armed forces reflects the national diversity of the country; at the same time the recruitment and control of the police, except the small federal force, is devolved to regional and local levels.
- Democratic and not just civil control of the armed forces, police and security services has tended to be particularly essential where ‘civilian’ and even ‘democratic’ executives have abused their powers, deployed security institutions for partisan purposes, targeted violence against minorities or trampled on the rights of citizens in conflict zones. This in principle includes a broad basis of accountability to parliamentary bodies, courts and citizens, while recognising the need for professional and operational autonomy. But democratic control has tended to be particularly difficult to assure where major elements of the former state apparatus still control the post-conflict security sector, as is the case in Angola, or where former armed factions become the basis of the new armed forces, as in the DRC.
- Post-conflict settlements have also provided a rare opportunity to rebuild state security upon the broader foundations of development and human security. As we have seen, the latter is open to varying interpretations. In post-conflict settings it is particularly essential to ensure the physical safety and welfare of vulnerable groups and endangered minorities – and for this impartial and effective security and justice institutions are crucial.

- The sustainability of security sector transformation is also dependent on the progress made in containing and reversing the privatisation of violence³² and the activities of military and criminal entrepreneurs. This requires the dismantling of mafia networks, expulsion of mercenaries, the cutting off of cross-border flows of weapons, combatants and resources (for example conflict diamonds) and effective regulation of private security companies and corporate security guards.
- Security transformation also necessitates the filling of the massive public security gaps opened by the previous failure of law and order institutions. It is seldom possible to do this immediately. Efforts to plug these gaps by sending in central government or international peacekeeping forces have often proved counterproductive, as in Somalia or the eastern DRC. Hence it is all the more important to find ways of encouraging, but at the same time regulating, the non-state security and justice institutions which have tended to emerge under conditions of state failure and conflict: community policing organisations; militias and vigilantes; traditional and religious courts and justice institutions; and even the security provided in local areas by erstwhile rebel groups and criminal gangs.
- Non-state security provisions often have a more tangible impact on the lives and security of citizens than the security and justice institutions of a distant and coercive state,³³ which is why dismantling them can be counterproductive and sometimes dangerous. It is, however, important that such non-state providers are not romanticised, as they too may be abusive, violate rights, reinforce inequality and spread local insecurity. Creative but also critical approaches are needed, with a clear focus on bringing local security provision within the wider framework of the rule of law and an accountable and responsive state.
- In situations where conflicts have spread across boundaries and neighbouring states have intervened, it is crucial to reinforce regional and subregional collective security and confidence-building mechanisms, as already argued. Security sector transformation is unthinkable without them, all the more so in countries still emerging from violent conflicts.
- The management, timing and sequencing of reform processes are equally crucial. Invariably resources are extremely limited and priorities are adjusted around measures promising quick and tangible improvements in security. Yet at the same time the multiple goals of reconstruction frequently clash. It is often argued that institution building should precede democratisation and that the latter can

generate fresh insecurities if it is premature.³⁴ On the other hand, rebuilding security institutions without adequate democratic oversight and in the absence of the rule of law is potentially a recipe for re-authoritarianisation and a return to the conditions of insecurity which fuelled conflict in the first place.³⁵

To summarise, our survey of the different historical trajectories taken by African states reinforces the case for the transformation and not simply the rebuilding of state security structures. But it also suggests the need for a critical approach which is sufficiently sensitive to different national contexts, varying historical paths and complex subregional situations. There is not and never can be a 'one-size-fits-all' policy paradigm for security sector transformation, despite the generic issues raised above.

Some national political and economic contexts have been more conducive to transformation than others. The least problematic have been the countries embarking upon relatively consensual transitions to democracy (category 1 in the previous section), especially where democratic governance in the security sector has been reinforced by broad-based democratisation, as in South Africa. But even in such countries, reforms can be derailed if they do not respond to the realities of national politics and the constraints of development. Political will for security governance reform has also existed, at least initially, in post-conflict countries (category 8) and tends to be prioritised and supported by international donors.

Yet the difficulties and dangers of rebuilding military and security establishments, together with democracy and indeed the entire state, cannot be underestimated. Even democracies, notably those with long-standing dominant-party systems (category 3) have proved resistant to reform, their governments fearing that their hard-won executive grip over military and other establishments could be compromised by increased parliamentary oversight and public debate. In post-liberation democracies (category 4), oversight has also been resisted or merely paid lip-service in order to satisfy donors – especially where regimes fear democratic control may dilute regime-military political links or compromise security in conditions of ongoing conflict and insecurity, as in Uganda or Ethiopia.

In our other three categories – façade democracies, non-democracies and failing states – better governance of security and still more democratic oversight would seem to be ruled out from the start by the predatory nature of regimes, their reliance upon repression and the weakness of state institutions. One may even argue that to strengthen security sector governance in such countries is to risk putting improved tools of repression in the hands of rotten regimes. Yet even worse dangers can arise from

fractured and ill-disciplined forces, the privatisation of violence and the spread of uncontrolled armed conflict. The preservation of a modicum of professional integrity and discipline in non-democratic or unstable political conditions is at least a potential starting point for reform when political conditions change, as in post-Moi Kenya, where the relative discipline of the police and armed forces largely prevented the further escalation of potentially catastrophic post-election violence in 2007.

Conclusion

Until recently the prospects for consolidation of democratic governance, not to speak of security transformation, appeared dimmer in Africa than in most other parts of the developing world. Fragile state institutions, uncertain democratic consensus, unaccountable leaders, weak, under-professionalised military and security establishments, the growth of non-state armed formations, weak civil societies, continued poor economic performance and other problems (AIDS, environmental degradation, ethno-regional conflicts, etc.) have been formidable problems in their own right. When they are all present and have interacted, as in many African states, they have spoken to an enormously challenging future.

However, it is important not to succumb to the previous climate of pessimism about Africa. Political spaces still exist for the transformation of security sector governance if policy-makers make good use of them, as our survey has shown. There are examples of best (or near-best) practices in the continent that can be drawn upon – although they should not be treated as templates which can be imposed regardless of particular national histories and circumstances.

We have already begun to see the emergence of ‘archipelagos’ of states leading and sustaining the democratisation and improvement of security sector governance. These include countries like South Africa and more tentatively Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique. Others still remain in the wings, like Nigeria, whose efforts to construct a democratic polity and transform civil-military relations are still in the balance, but have potentially massive demonstration effects in the continent as a whole and in West Africa in particular.

Changes have been possible even in countries apparently trapped in cycles of authoritarian rule, non-functioning democracy or armed conflict. Obviously it is unrealistic – and may even be counterproductive – to forge ahead with SSR processes that are not likely to be sustainable, or will be subverted by predatory elites and warlords. Yet as we have argued, this does

not mean there is no space for reform or transformation at all. Rather it implies that reform must be even more carefully targeted in the light of existing political and other constraints.

Moreover, stable and democratic governance of security, and even less transformation, cannot be achieved solely by reforming military and security institutions themselves. It requires effective democratic institutions and active civil societies as well. Comparative studies suggest that even where civil institutions are strong, as in some Latin American countries, they may still lack the interest or skills required for national defence and security management, tending to abdicate important responsibilities to the military and security services.³⁶

For these and other reasons, the construction of democracy, along with the transformation of security, will be necessarily uneven, with effective civil control of security institutions requiring much time and patience to accomplish. There is no universal formula for curbing the power of military and security institutions, although clearly partnership and consensus between civilians and security professionals on core issues, e.g. the role of the military and police and their claims on national budgetary and other resources, tend to be essential.

There is a broader sense, too, in which the performance of the civil sphere is vital to transforming security sector governance in a more democratic direction. The latter cannot occur in isolation without democratisation of other political spheres. The process depends critically on how other national (civilian) institutions and leaders perform. A sobering thought is the fact that, in some African countries, both the performance and the accountability of other public institutions have actually fallen short of that of security institutions and the armed forces in particular, at least in the public perception.³⁷ Undemocratic behaviour by elected leaders, continued disputes over the rules of the game and failure to prevent economic collapse can potentially pull in the military and security agencies and even precipitate armed conflict, as seen in Côte d'Ivoire and potentially in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe.

Nevertheless, Africa has surprised the world more than once by dismantling previously seemingly unassailable non-democratic regimes – such as the apartheid system in South Africa or Nigeria and Ethiopia's formidable military regimes – and by ending, if not always resolving, seemingly intractable conflicts. Hence it is crucial that the continent's decision-makers should be positioned to make best use of critical historical opportunities when they occur. Democratic strategies for security governance and transformation are essential, both nationally in individual African states and as part of the security architecture now being elaborated

by the African Union and other regional and subregional bodies for the continent as a whole.

Notes

- ¹ We have always taken the view these questions are the first that should be asked in any analysis of security provision: see Robin Luckham (1983) 'Security and disarmament in Africa', *Alternatives*, IX, pp. 203–228; Robin Luckham (2007) 'The discordant voices of "security"', *Development in Practice*, 17(4/5), pp. 682–690; Robin Luckham (2009a) 'Democracy and security: A Shotgun marriage?', Global Consortium on Security Transformation Working Paper No. 8, GCST/FLACSO, Santiago; available at www.securitytransformation.org/images/publicaciones/34_WP8_-_Robin_Luckham.pdf; Robin Luckham (2009b) 'Introduction: Transforming security and development in an unequal world', *IDS Bulletin*, 40(2), pp. 1–10.
- ² We use both terms, since citizen security suggests the political agency of citizens far more clearly than human security on its own: see Luckham (2007, 2009b), *ibid.*; Jenny Pearce and Alexandra Abello Colak (2009) "'Security from below" in contexts of chronic violence', *IDS Bulletin*, 40(2), pp. 11–19. For a comprehensive overview of debates on human security, see Richard Jolly and Deepayan Basu Ray (2007) 'Human security – National perspectives and global agendas: Insights from national Human Development Reports', *Journal of International Development*, 19, pp. 457–472. A more critical view is put forward by Roland Paris (2001) 'Human security: Paradigm shift or hot air?', *International Security*, 26(2), pp. 87–102.
- ³ The origin of the term 'responsibility to protect' is attributed to the distinguished Sudanese academic, lawyer and former representative of the UN Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Francis Mading Deng. See Francis Mading Deng (2010) 'JISS interview: The responsibility to protect', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4(1), pp. 83–89. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty turned it into a set of principles to guide international humanitarian interventions: ICISS (2001) *The Responsibility to Protect*. Ottawa: IDRC. It has become controversial among some African and developing country governments, which see it as a threat to their sovereignty. However, the underlying idea that states have a responsibility to ensure the security of their citizens remains valid.
- ⁴ Commission for Africa (2005) 'The need for peace and security', in *Our Common Interest – Report of the Commission for Africa*, pp. 150–171.
- ⁵ For the idea of an African political marketplace as a necessary corrective to over-prescriptive donor-driven reform programmes, see Alex De Waal (2010) 'Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace', *International Affairs*, 85(1), pp. 99–113.
- ⁶ Richard Sklar coined the phrase 'democracy in parts' to describe the situation in the 1980s, when there were limited but important democratic spaces under the authoritarian and military regimes of the time. It can also be used to describe formally democratic regimes with major democratic deficits. See Richard L. Sklar (1983) 'Democracy in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 26(3/4), pp. 11–24.
- ⁷ These interactions are examined in Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle (1997) *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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- ⁸ Wuyi Omitoogun and Eboe Hutchful (2006) *Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa. The Processes and Mechanisms of Control*. Stockholm: SIPRI.
- ⁹ Considered in Richard Sandbrook (2000) *Closing the Circle: Democratisation and Development in Africa*. London: Zed Books.
- ¹⁰ See Robin Luckham (2010) on the sometimes contradictory relationships between democracy and security.
- ¹¹ Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (eds) (2002) *Political Armies. The Military and Nation-Building in an Age of Democracy*. London: Zed Books; Robin Luckham (2002) 'Radical soldiers, new model armies and the nation state in Ethiopia and Eritrea', in Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (eds) *Political Armies. The Military and Nation-Building in an Age of Democracy*. London: Zed Books.
- ¹² Donors once tended to insist uncritically on military and security spending cuts. SSR policies instead focus upon improving the budgetary process rather than military cuts *per se*. See DFID (2000) 'Security sector reform and the management of military expenditure: High risks for donors, high returns for development', report on international symposium sponsored by the UK Department for International Development, London.
- ¹³ Philippe Le Billon (2000) 'The political economy of resource wars', in J. Cilliers and C. Dietrich (eds) *Angola's War Economy. The Role of Oil and Diamonds*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- ¹⁴ Robin Luckham (2001) 'Conflict and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Assessment of the Issues and Evidence', *IDS Working Paper 128*, United Kingdom: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex; Chris Allen (1999) 'Warfare, endemic violence and state collapse in Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, 26(81), pp. 367–384.
- ¹⁵ Such arguments are put forward in different forms by William Reno (1998) *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*. Oxford: James Currey; Mark Duffield (2001) *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* London: Zed Books.
- ¹⁶ Bruce Baker (2002) *Taking the Law into Their Own Hands: Lawless Law Enforcers in Africa*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- ¹⁷ For state-of-the-art summaries of the international policy wisdom see especially OECD/DAC (2005) *Security System Governance and Reform*. Paris: OECD; OECD/DAC (2007) *Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*. Paris: OECD. On local ownership of SSR and some of its ambiguities see Laurie Nathan (ed.) (2007) *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*. Birmingham: GFN-SSR. On the origins of SSR and its impacts on donor practices see Nicole Ball (2001) 'Transforming security sectors: The IMF and World Bank approaches', *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development*, 1(1), pp. 45–66; Chris Smith (2001) 'Security sector reform: Developmental breakthrough or institutional engineering?', *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development*, 1(1), pp. 5–20; Nicholas Waddell (2006) 'The ties that bind: DFID and the emerging security development agenda', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 6(4), pp. 531–555.
- ¹⁸ Alfred Stepan (1988) *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. The preface and Chapter 1 elaborated the idea that democratic strategies towards the military were essential for Latin American redemocratisation movements. The arguments are equally valid in Africa and apply to war-to-peace just as much as to democratic transitions. See Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham (eds) (2003) *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of the Military in*

Democratic Transitions. London: Zed Books; Eboe Hutchful (2009) *Security Sector Reform Provisions in Peace Agreements*. Birmingham: GFN-SSR. The latter spells out a democratic strategy for SSR in post-conflict contexts. On the emergence of civil society strategies on security issues within ECOWAS see 'Funmi Olanisakin (2009) 'ECOWAS and civil society movements in West Africa', *IDS Bulletin*, 40(2), pp. 105–112.

¹⁹ Described by Gavin Cawthra (2003) 'Security sector transformation in post-apartheid South Africa', in Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham (eds) *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of the Military in Democratic Transitions*. London: Zed Books. For a recent much less optimistic view see Annette Seegers (2010) 'The new security in South Africa: A cautionary tale', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 10(2), pp. 263–285.

²⁰ Mauritius has no military establishment as such, although its police force has acquired military and paramilitary functions.

²¹ As when soon after the 1999 transition to a democratic administration the Nigerian armed forces refused to cooperate with MPRI, an American security firm brought in to introduce organisational reforms.

²² Moussa Paye and Momar Diop (1998) 'The army and political power in Senegal', in E. Hutchful and A. Bathily (eds) *Military and Militarism in Africa*, Dakar: Codesria Books.

²³ In this, indeed, they have followed an established European and colonial tradition: until fairly recently there was not much in the way of democratic oversight in countries like the UK and France either.

²⁴ See Marina Ottaway (1999) *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction?* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. This offers a prescient critique of the claims of these regimes to be democratic, rather than purely state-building enterprises.

²⁵ See Luckham, note 11 above, on the links between army and regime in Ethiopia.

²⁶ New regulations introduced in 2010 closed down all such NGOs if more than 10 per cent of their funding came from external sources – effectively banning all NGO work on SSR, among other things.

²⁷ On how the politics of illiberal democracy have shaped SSR and defence decision-making in Uganda see Sabiiti Mutengesha and Dylan Hendrickson (2008) 'State responsiveness to public security needs: The politics of security decision-making. Uganda case study', CDSG Papers 16, King's College, London.

²⁸ The dilemmas created for donors are described in Peter Uvin (2001) 'Difficult choices in the new post-conflict agenda: the international community and Rwanda after the genocide', *Third World Quarterly*, 22(2), pp. 177–189.

²⁹ In both Algeria and Sudan, political Islam is also (in contrasting ways) a major determinant of civil-military relations. Both have retained or introduced some elements of electoral democracy, qualifying them for classification as façade democracies.

³⁰ See David Leonard, *Recreating Political Order: the Somali Political System Today* Working Paper 316 Brighton UK: Institute of Development Studies 2009.

³¹ See Cawthra and Luckham, note 18 above; Hutchful, note 18 above.

³² See Jeff Isima (2009) 'The global marketplace and the privatisation of security', *IDS Bulletin*, 40(2), pp. 113–120; Deborah D. Avant (2005) *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatising Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Baker, note 16 above.

³³ Baker, *ibid*.

³⁴ Roland Paris (2004) *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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- ³⁵ On the need for such trade-offs, see Robin Luckham (1995) 'Dilemmas of Military Disengagement and Democratisation in Africa', *IDS Bulletin* 26(2), 49-61; Robin Luckham (2004) 'The international community and state reconstruction in war-torn societies', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 4(3), pp. 481-507; Robert Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (eds) (2009) *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding. Confronting the Dilemmas of Postwar Peace Operations*. London: Routledge.
- ³⁶ Stepan, note 18 above; Lucia Dammert et al (2007) 'Report on the security sector in Latin America and the Caribbean', FLACSO, Santiago.
- ³⁷ Opinion surveys in some African countries suggest that the military is compared favourably with major civilian institutions. See for instance Ghana Centre for Democracy and Development (2000) 'Civil-military relations in Ghana: Survey report', CDD-Ghana Research Paper 9, Accra.

Chapter 3

Parliaments and Security Sector Transformation in West Africa

Boubacar N'Diaye

Introduction

After a decade of debates and struggles, it is now becoming common wisdom that the *status quo* in the structures and functioning of the security sectors in nearly all African countries cannot be maintained without deleterious consequences for their political systems, societies and regional peace and security. The slaughter of hundreds of Guineans on 22 September 2009 by defence and security forces is only one recent example. Recurring civil wars, the insidious abuses they cause, their spill-over effects and recent military coups in several countries have left no doubt that there is 'something wrong' with West Africa's security sectors and that 'something' needs to be done. Precisely because of that widespread sentiment, it seems that, however reluctantly, the necessity for security sector reform (SSR) has now acquired some legitimacy in the official policy and security discourse in Africa.

The recent flurry of attempts at national, regional and continental levels to jump on the bandwagon of SSR testifies to that.¹ It is certainly true that, for many, even 'reform' still conjures up more or less diffuse fears of lost control, both political and personal.² But *reform's* purportedly gradual and more controlled nature and the possibility for some key actors to control its character, pace and reach seem to make it appeal much more than *transformation* as the operative concept when considering how to alter the status quo in the security sector of African states to match the democratising movements that started in the 1990s.

An important dimension of the functioning of Africa's security sectors is the relationship between the security apparatuses and the democratic institutions that are being painfully established or revived since African countries embarked on the democratisation of their political systems. As one of the most important symbols of democracy and expression of popular will,

the parliament is, without a doubt, the key institution not only to participate in the initiation of the changes required, but also to exercise the control and supervision that will be the cornerstone of the new (transformed) security sector that is congruent with a democratic dispensation. It is therefore clear that no serious discussion of the concepts or policies relative to the future of the architecture, functioning and orientation of the security sector of West African countries can be complete without focusing on the role and place of this institution in these two capacities. While only a few countries are used to illustrate the propositions and arguments, this analysis and its conclusions concern the entire West African subregion. The scepticism some practitioners of SSR, otherwise committed to the concept, express once in a while³ on such a role is clearly misguided, and in a sense only reflects the challenge of overcoming a legacy of systematic exclusion of the parliament as a partner in the governance of security. The current academic and policy-oriented discourse on shaping efforts to ensure success in overcoming a long legacy of dysfunctional security apparatuses across the continent must necessarily include the central role of parliament as the premier institution for the control of the executive, and particularly its uses of the armed and security forces. The answer to the question why *transformation* of the role of parliament in the security sector of African countries is necessary can be found in large part in the legacy of parliaments very much left out in the cold throughout most of the post-colonial era. A review of this legacy reveals that current SSR efforts may not have gone far enough and thus an upgrade of sorts is needed.

In discussing the role of parliament in security sector transformation (SST) in Africa, the questions posited here will also be answered. How can this now widely acknowledged need to alter the status quo be translated in most areas of the security sector? What arguments can be leveraged to back the need for *transformation* of the security sector of most African countries? When applied to the specific West African context, what dynamics must be kept in mind when the merits of transformation compared to reform or restructuring, are highlighted? How can that transformation be carried out in such a critical component of the security sector as the parliamentary oversight organs themselves? These and similar questions are tackled in this chapter with a focus on the parliament, a key actor in promoting democratic security sector governance.

The SSR concept and its application

It is useful to bring some conceptual clarity to the confusion that often exists between the concepts used in bringing change within the security sector. In many post-authoritarian (or post-conflict) African states, typically for expediency and certainly without systematic clearheaded purposefulness, decisions affecting the military are made at the initiative or under the watchful eyes of the security establishments' movers and shakers, who have always been entrusted to make such decisions with hardly any input from other institutions or even individuals outside a certain coterie. Of course, these measures are *not* taken to connect the governance of the security sector and democratic praxis, but are meant to attain some ill-defined notion of effectiveness or efficiency. They typically focus on more or less superficial aspects of the functioning of the military, such as moving commanders or units around, reducing troops, enacting some new (usually overdue) personnel or uses of material policies, acquiring new materials, correcting some obvious structural or organisational defect, etc. The measures are sometimes more than mere cosmetic changes and can reach their aim of improving, sometimes substantially, the operational capabilities of the armed and security forces, particularly the military. They can affect to some extent the general organisation and functioning of the armed forces for a while and for the better.

However, such measures are neither the transformation of the security sector nor reforms within a holistic understanding of SSR; instead, they amount to a mere restructuring and may often be tantamount to rearranging chairs on the deck of a more or less rapidly sinking ship. Doubtless there is a limit to this metaphor, and the suggested limits and even futility of restructuring. Of course, restructuring can provide an impression of safety and even breathe new life for a while into the security sector of a state. However, the point is that it can only slow down or delay the inevitable reckoning that is sure to occur if restructuring is used to avoid necessary overhaul of a severely dysfunctional security system. Fundamentally, restructuring does not recognise the intimate relationship between the political system and the management of the security sector. Nor does it seek to involve important stakeholders in security. In failing in these two areas, restructuring ends up not really affecting the progress towards a democratically governed security sector in a democratic society.

The two concepts of SSR and SST are related and have in common the genuine recognition of a more or less pressing need for change and the existence of an opportunity for, and benefits of, change. They signal an acknowledgement of the unsatisfactory nature of the status quo and

determination to alter it significantly. However, reforms may not go sufficiently far, fast or deep in altering the status quo. Purposeful and gradual measures to bring about better practices, performance and effectiveness are not as far-reaching as the qualitatively better alternative, the transformation – the complete overhaul *in a relatively short period of time* – of the security sector. In the words of Nicole Ball and 'Kayode Fayemi, this alternative is 'a more profound intent on behalf of elected governments to ensure that the practices of the security organisations are in conformity with the democracy that they serve'.⁴

In other words, the transformation of the security sector entails a clear consciousness of the absolute necessity, even urgency, of carrying out, in association with all stakeholders, a systematic overhaul of the orientation, values, principles and indeed practices in the security sector to conform to a democratic (or democratising) political system and the expectations inherent in it. Transformation, like reform, recognises the eminently political character of the need to alter profoundly the overall structure, philosophy, means and methods of the security sector. What is long overdue and is yet to be achieved in much of (West) Africa is a genuine, all-encompassing *transformation* of security sectors. Where attempts were made to transform them, the changes enacted did not reach the level of reforms as defined above, much less transformation. In effect, transformation entails a series of sustained revolutions: radical changes in attitudes, mentalities, approaches, relationships and attributes on the part of all the components of the security sector. These transformations concern the security bodies, of course, but also the executive branch as a whole. They most certainly concern the legislative branch in particular because of its vital role in both the initiation of change, through its legislative responsibilities, and its implementation through its oversight and control function. West Africa's sclerosed security systems are more averse to change than average institutions. In this context, it is useful to conceptualise transformation as a series of revolutions to be carried out synchronically in as many areas as possible of the entire security system. Only such swift moves, if resolute enough, can overwhelm, or at least blunt, the predictable resistance. For the parliament, a revolution means immediately, under the leadership of members of parliament keenly aware of the importance of the institution's role, adopting new attitudes towards security, security policies of the executive branch and the security apparatus. This means, first and foremost, pushing hard for a national debate on security and the subsequent adoption of a national security strategy in which the parliament will play a major role. Another 'revolutionary' stance will be the setting up of a defence and security commission with extensive powers to carry out wide-ranging investigations and oversight over security bodies.

While these institutional initiatives are critical to transformation, the leadership of individual parliamentarians willing to take risks and become trailblazers is also key to the process and its outcome. As the following section will demonstrate, this new attitude and such measures will be nothing short of revolutionary. While SSR also entails essentially similar attitudes, a will to transform the security sector radically in West Africa will need a much more assertive and aggressive stance that is willing to confront resistance and use all the constitutional and legal avenues open to parliament.

Parliamentary oversight and reform contexts in West Africa

Before examining the limits of attempts at security sector reform, illustrated with examples across West Africa, a brief historical background is useful to contextualise these limits. The institutions and political arrangements bequeathed by the former colonial powers, which entailed pluralism, separation of powers and checks and balance between them, held firm for only a few years after independence. Soon, and for nearly 30 years, most African countries lived under either single-party or military regimes (albeit sometimes with civilian accoutrements). Most of these regimes had a parliament with, in theory, the usual powers of purse-string holding, law making and control of the executive branch. In reality, as recent studies established in a number of African countries,⁵ in many cases parliaments were mere rubber-stamp institutions. They existed only to carry out the will of the president and his inner circle in all areas, with the security area deemed a preserved domain. Parliaments rarely had defence and security commissions and when they did, the commissions prudently avoided any activities or moves that could question the dominion and supremacy of the executive branch. Indeed, they eagerly rubber-stamped every proposal of the executive that had any security implication and were very receptive to the notion of state secrecy. In other words, opacity and unlimited discretion for the executive branch and high-ranking officers in the security sector were pre-eminent features of these regimes.

One of the consequences of this situation has been the institutionalisation of a culture of self-denial on the part of parliament in any question that has a security connotation. Furthermore, both parliament as an institution and individual parliamentarians consciously remained ignorant of security issues and their consequences for the country and its population. Without this role of parliament or any other mechanism of democratic control, defence and security forces became unprofessional, unaccountable,

corrupt, politicised, 'ethnicised' and prompt to violate the human rights of their people.

In the late 1980s the democratisation movement reached the shores of the continent and it became necessary for many West African countries to change the configuration and *modus operandi* of their security sector. However, more than a decade after this movement started, a stark conclusion is inescapable. It is clear that the effort at 'reforming' these security sectors has not yet produced any tangible results and has not altered in any meaningful way how they operate. In 2005 a survey conducted for an OECD project to map progress accomplished in SSR on the continent concluded that programmes 'deliberately designed to accomplish long-term transformation are the exception rather than the rule'.⁶

Reforms have thus not ushered in a genuine democratic governance of the security sector, the ultimate objective of SSR. For francophone Africa, a study by this author recently argued that the feeble efforts to rid this part of the continent of practices that were common in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s did not, in reality, bear fruit. In this case, it was argued, it was the heavy legacy of questionable relations with the former colonial power that should be blamed in part. As the author put it:

...what was, once again, missing *in practice* was the creation of the right conditions (by France as well as by African leaders themselves) for Francophone Africa's security sectors to truly transform. This *full* transformation could only be realised by getting, on the one hand, new Franco-African security relations to root out old reflexes and attitudes and on the other hand, by adopting new conceptualisations of security fitting the democratic systems that were being ushered in during the 1990s.⁷

In fact, as one specialist admitted, none of the major actors on the French side envisaged a 'total' transformation at all.⁸

However, it would not be fair to consider the relations between France and its former colonies as the only reason why there has been no transformation. This is particularly true in the 1990s and 2000s, when real opportunities to overhaul the security sector existed. In countries like Senegal or Mali in francophone West Africa, and Sierra Leone, Liberia and even Nigeria (where a parliamentary tradition can be argued to have existed), besides the strong resistance of the executive branch to letting go of its complete control over security issues, parliamentarians were not eager to step up to the opportunity to carry out fully their constitutional mandate.⁹

It is true that in reaction to an overbearing executive branch's abuses of power for most of the independence years, constitutionalists during the *Conférences Nationales* and other democratisation moves strengthened the

powers of parliament in a number of mostly francophone countries, (Benin, Togo and Mali, for example). In Togo, President Gnassingbe Eyadema's decades of despotic rule backed by brutal forces left no room for any other branch of constitutional power. Yet the powers of the parliament were strengthened beyond the wildest expectations of the opposition thanks to concessions made by the Eyadema regime in order to live to fight another day. Indeed, the parliament came to be dominated by the opposition after the first truly pluralist elections and a prime minister from the opposition succeeded in eroding Eyadema's power significantly. Soon enough, however, Eyadema had troops mount a brutal attack on the parliament building and ended the daring assertion of parliamentary (and government-backed) power in one of the regimes that stifled it the most noticeably. That military attack on the Togolese parliament symbolised the determination of the executive in most West African states, certainly francophone countries, to reverse one of the clearest intents of the national conferences: to limit generally the power of the executive, particularly in the use of the armed and security forces, and devolve some authority to a reinvigorated parliament. Hence, only a few short years after the early 1990s, these additional powers of parliaments were reversed and the executive branches in these countries reasserted their supremacy in general and singularly over the security sector. Though not all were as brutal as Eyadema, this was certainly true for Benin and Togo where the executive, while less blatantly than in the past, reasserted its domination. In countries such as Mauritania, Mali and to a lesser extent Nigeria, this was done by default (i.e. the failure of the parliament to maintain and expand its role in such a critical sector). In Senegal, for example, after campaigning on a programme to strengthen the national assembly, President Abdoulaye Wade emphatically reversed this policy in practice. The Senegalese parliament never had the role it was destined to play in transforming the security sector, which needs it as much as any other, albeit not burdened by repeated military coups or other serious internal conflicts. In Mali a retired general returned to power through the ballot box and, though definitely democratically minded, did not involve the parliament in the management of a major crisis the country faced in the northern Touareg rebellion. In general, despite much-touted reform measures, including a pioneering code of conduct for the armed forces, the security sector transformation Mali needs never occurred. Some members of parliament complained to this author of being slighted by senior military officers, and the executive more generally, when they attempted to find out more about the policies and activities regarding the low-intensity rebellion in the north of the country. In many areas, the near supremacy over all aspects of the security sector by the executive branch through an insidious

militarisation of important segments of the administration, particularly the territorial administration, remains visible. Characteristically, in countries where the executive branch reasserted its supremacy and denied the parliament any significant role in effective supervision of the security sector, another insidious practice of the past has persisted: widespread petty corruption by security forces, not only at border crossings but at entry points of major cities and various checkpoints within urban areas.

This is not to deny various instances where the individual courage of some parliamentarians was evident in systematic capacity building and awareness raising. Progress has been made in altering long-standing attitudes and related practices. As Thomas Jaye and Adedeji Ebo¹⁰ document, the defence and security commissions of the house and senate of the Liberian parliament, led by people who had benefited from training offered by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), rejected a National Security Act that was elaborated without consultation by the executive. The commissions and their leadership also tried to exercise effective oversight over the role of a private military company that was hired in non-transparent conditions to train the Liberian military at a particularly sensitive period.¹¹ Although their bid to carry out their mission was not entirely successful, they raised awareness of the need for the executive to involve the parliament in decision-making on these critical aspects of the security of the country. They were able, ultimately, to obtain clarification on the presence, mission and obligations of Dyncorp, the US-based private military company in question.

Similarly, as Kwesi Aning observes, Ghana experienced handicaps in terms of a legacy of unorthodox and oversight-averse practices developed by decades of military rule, and weak capacity and low self-efficacy on the part of parliamentarians themselves, including ignorance of critical stipulations of empowering legislation. Nevertheless, some individual parliamentarians mustered the courage to check corrupt practices and carry out other oversight missions at some risk to their own careers and political interests.¹² Ghana is a country that has made some progress in developing awareness of SSR thanks to a particularly effective civil society. The progress is limited, as Aning acknowledges, but his hopeful conclusion is that 'it is becoming clear that there is an emerging boldness among select committee members to question decisions made by the executive branch; notwithstanding [these] structural difficulties and problems, committee members play their oversight roles'.¹³ This is indeed an encouraging note, though the process has been quite slow. In a 2005 survey of the progress of SSR on the continent, two experts suggested that an incremental strategy was more likely to succeed because of various obstacles, arguing that a 'set of more modest core goals, such as

gradual and monitorable improvements in transparency, in sensitivity to human rights issues and in the quality of defense and security management, would be more realistic'.¹⁴ It is clear, however, that this approach to changing the heavy legacy of the way the security sector functions and is managed has not changed that much, and a different approach must be attempted.

Transforming African security sectors: The role of parliaments

For nearly a generation now, the overriding objective of public life in Africa and relations between the continent and its external partners has been to make democracy take root and build democratic and secure societies. If the *raison d'être* of the transformation of the security sector in West Africa, and in Africa in general, is to strengthen and expand the democratic experiment in which African states and their development partners have been engaged, the apt conclusion of Steven Fish's study must be permanently kept in mind: 'the evidence shows that the presence of a *powerful* legislature is an unmixed blessing for democratisation'.¹⁵ In West Africa there will be no democratisation worth the efforts and sacrifices of the countless millions who have been hoping for it without a fundamental *transformation* of the way the security sector is governed. To achieve this transformation, the role of parliament is critical. It should be pursued in two stages.

First, through key leaders keenly aware of security as a critical issue in democratisation and state building, the parliament has to marshal the strength and courage to *take the initiative* to enact bold and far-reaching legislation. Such legislation, in accordance with the current constitutions of most West African countries, must provide the general framework for the organisation and management of the security sector in its entirety. This framework will have to be based on an unavoidable conclusion, itself a premise to any further action: that a go-slow approach has not allowed the progress hoped for towards genuinely democratic governance of the security sector in the few countries that tried it. Indeed, in some cases SSR has been used as a pretext for immobility and inaction, and thus for the perpetuation of a status quo ante. In some cases the SSR catchphrase became merely another clever gambit to misuse scarce internal or donor-provided resources, undermining the concept even further and making it harder still to bring into reality.

The premise of the initiative of parliamentarians must be to promote the radical overhaul of the security sector architecture and functioning along the lines of an entirely new conceptualisation of security. Only a new

security infrastructure and new role for various stakeholders, including the parliament and civil society, will enable a break with the crass practices that existed prior to the 1990s and managed to linger in new guises despite various attempts to change them. An overhauled legal framework would be based on a thoroughgoing review and updating of the main pillars of the entire legal security infrastructure of the country. This review would be concomitant with a national security and defence strategic review involving all stakeholders and providing an opportunity for input by regular citizens.

For many West African states, with the mobilisation of national, subregional, regional and international expertise and the financial and material backing of various donors, this can be done in a fairly short amount of time – weeks, not even months. It is evident that this bold initiative would need the financial, technical and political support of institutions and states that traditionally back the building of democratically controlled security sectors. The self-motivation that would underlie such an initiative would denote local ownership and political will on the part of a major actor – the parliament. It is certainly true that the collaboration of the executive branch, or at least its willingness not to obstruct such an initiative, must be secured by the parliament. This means that the leaders of the parliament must display extraordinary skills and acumen. The small successes achieved by both the Ghanaian and Liberian defence commission leadership after intense capacity building by the ASSN, DCAF and development partners suggest that such leaders can be helped to emerge and be nurtured. This mobilised leadership, single-mindedly determined to put its imprint on such a crucial sector of national life, can achieve its objective given a minimum condition of lack of serious antagonism between the executive and the legislative on political grounds, for example after divisive elections.

The second stage of a parliament-initiated transformation of the security sector, once this comprehensive legal framework is carefully constructed and enacted, is to deploy the necessary means to ensure that effective oversight is carried out, to implement the framework and prevent deviations from it for any reason. These must start with duly constituted, functional and capable defence and security committees and subcommittees to carry out the required oversight.

The premise of this reinvigorated parliamentary role is another lesson to be drawn from the current failure of nearly all efforts by executive-led SSR. Whether post-conflict, post-authoritarian or simply as a conflict prevention mechanism, such efforts, even when genuine, have typically focused almost exclusively on aspects that did not involve democratic control and a true reorientation of security. They have instead concentrated on operational effectiveness, with an eye towards the ability to repress

challenges to power even when expressed democratically, such as political rallies or keeping political opposition in check. However, arguably the most critical challenge that transformative parliamentary efforts will face will be changing their own attitudes and perceptions of their abilities and power to shoulder the mission of truly transforming the security sector. As a recent study concluded, in the case of Senegal, a country with a long and culturally inspired pluralist tradition and a parliament that ceased to be monolithic and single party dominated long ago, the first challenge is for deputies of the national assembly to overcome the prevailing belief that the parliament is at best the junior partner of an omnipotent executive branch. This attitude must change at both institutional and personal levels. Only then will the authority given by the constitution to the national assembly and its members in the oversight of the security sector translate into concrete and sustained oversight activities.

Of course, a transformation agenda will entail more than these two phases on the part of the parliament, and radical transformation must penetrate critical aspects of the security sector and, in particular, learn from past failures. It must also start with recognising the theoretical insights provided by early pioneers. Ball and Fayemi have argued that in the pursuit of democratic security sector governance, a key precondition is to transform the relationships between civilian democratic forces and the security apparatus. This suggests that elected civilian leaders, specifically parliamentarians, must seek to harmonise an approach to SST with other democratic forces in civil societies, their natural allies when it comes to reversing long-standing practices of exclusion from security matters of these stakeholders. The transformation of these relations can be facilitated by combined efforts on the part of civil society and reform-minded parliamentarians. This alliance will be necessary in both phases discussed above.

It is not necessary to discuss in detail what parliament-led SST would entail for each of the security sector bodies in these four areas. In practice, Ball and Fayemi prescribe that the structure, practices, orientations and critical relationships with civilians in both the legislative and the executive branches selected by the people to run their government must be carefully addressed to ensure that they are radically transformed to fit a true democracy.¹⁶ These four dimensions will be addressed in each of the phases described above. It is the care given to transforming them in the initial phase and the vigorous safeguarding of these transformations, particularly in the *modus operandi* of the security sector bodies in the second phase that will ensure the success of the transformative agenda. To illustrate, when well-thought-out recruiting and career management policies are enacted in the

statute of the armed forces as part of a sound human resources management policy, and an equitable gender balance and a transparent arms procurement policy are enacted in the first phase, only a vigorous oversight phase will ensure that the legal and policy framework does not remain a futile exercise.

A mobilised, assertive and capacitated parliament, and more specifically its defence and security and other relevant commissions, does not mean that an SST agenda is guaranteed to succeed. Indeed, in most countries it is unlikely that top-ranking officers and executive branch operatives accustomed to having their way in security matters will easily follow the lead of parliament and renounce old ways. It is most likely that some will oppose such an agenda. However, a determined parliamentary leadership, particularly when allied with civil society, can succeed in reducing this opposition and develop a partnership with many transformation-minded stakeholders in the security apparatus and executive to increase the chances of success. The strongest ally of this approach is that many stakeholders, when convinced of the genuineness of the agenda and the strength of the leadership in parliament, will welcome an alternative to the current stalemate that the executive-led piecemeal, go-slow approach seems to have reached in West Africa's attempts to enhance its security sector governance.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the need for an SST agenda for West Africa. It argues that the record of SSR in changing the manner in which the security sector has been organised and managed has resulted in little progress. These efforts failed to a large extent because of the heavy legacy left by many years of unprofessional, unresponsive and quite dysfunctional security sectors. They failed more directly due to the fact that they did not seek to transform fundamentally how security itself is thought about. Efforts failed also because they were mainly designed and led by the executive branch. In many West African states, the executive branch beat back more or less brutally attempts by parliaments, inspired by early 1990s' national conferences, to reassert their powers and roles in security sector governance. They were concerned, in all West African countries, mainly with maintaining a monopoly over the management of anything that concerned security. The alternative must therefore be SST initiated and conducted by a self-confident parliament, in accordance with constitutional and legal powers laid down in most West African countries' constitutions, that will get the legal framework right and pursue vigorous oversight of a thoroughly

overhauled security sector in collaboration with an executive willing to accept a leadership role for parliament in a democratically governed security sector. There is no guarantee that this alternative will succeed, but it is definitely worth trying given the limits shown to date by efforts to change the outlook and governance of security institutions in West Africa.

Notes

- ¹ ECOWAS and the African Union are currently engaged in reviews and SSR strategy development, and many countries such as Guinea and Mauritania, once totally impervious to the notion, seem to have come around to embrace it. France and shortly thereafter the OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie) have also committed to furthering SSR goals.
- ² That was recently demonstrated by statements made by high-ranking officers of the Guinea-Bissau military, a conversation reported to the author.
- ³ Such a doubt was expressed to this author in the case of various efforts to associate the national and provincial parliaments to SSR efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, no doubt a particularly challenging environment.
- ⁴ Nicole Ball and 'Kayode Fayemi (2004) *Security Sector Governance in Africa*. Lagos: Centre for Democracy and Development, p. 5.
- ⁵ See Adedeji Ebo and Boubacar N'Diaye (eds) (2008) *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*. Geneva: DCAF.
- ⁶ Eboe Hutchful and 'Kayode Fayemi (2005) 'Security system reform in Africa', in OECD *Security System Reform and Governance*, Annex 4.A1, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. Paris: OECD, p. 87.
- ⁷ Boubacar N'Diaye (2009) 'Francophone Africa and security sector transformation: Plus ça change...', *African Security*, 2(1), p. 16.
- ⁸ See Pascal Chaigneau (1999) 'Vers une neutralité des interventions', *Problèmes Politiques et Sociaux*, 825 (August), p. 51.
- ⁹ Ebo and N'Diaye, note 5 above.
- ¹⁰ Thomas Jaye and Adedeji Ebo (2008) 'Liberia', in Adedeji Ebo and Boubacar N'Diaye (eds) *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa, Opportunities and Challenges*. Geneva: DCAF, p. 154.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.
- ¹² Kwesi Aning (2008) 'Ghana', in Adedeji Ebo and Boubacar N'Diaye (eds) *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa, Opportunities and Challenges*. Geneva: DCAF, p. 130.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Hutchful and Fayemi, note 6 above, p. 87.
- ¹⁵ Steven Fish (2006) 'Stronger legislature, stronger democracies', *Journal of Democracy*, 7(1), pp. 5–20 (emphasis added).
- ¹⁶ Ball and Fayemi, note 4 above, pp. 5–6.

Chapter 4

Gender and Security Sector Transformation – From Theory to South African Practice

Cheryl Hendricks and Kristin Valasek

Introduction

Hand in hand with the rising acceptance of human-centred approaches to security has come a begrudging acknowledgement that gender issues are relevant to security. In diverse African contexts this has taken a variety of forms, from routine lip-service to quotas for female police officer recruitment to gender-sensitive defence policy reform. While innovative gender initiatives are being implemented in certain security and justice institutions across the region, gender issues remain a crucial gap in African security policy formulation and security sector reforms. The contextually specific security and justice needs of African men, women, girls and boys remain largely unmet and women continue to be systematically underrepresented in security decision-making and provision at the continental, regional, national and community levels. Moving beyond the topics of security needs and representation, issues of gender continue to lie unacknowledged at the heart of the discourses and institutions that make up the African security sector.

Gender is not a 'new' issue in the field of security. African women and men have voiced their right to security and justice for decades if not centuries: the right to live without violence and oppression and the right to participate in decision-making. Women's organisations, as parts of liberation movements or political parties or as grassroots civil society organisations, have often led the way in advocating for the security and justice needs of marginalised groups. They have struggled to place vital gender issues such as violence against women, human rights abuses by security sector personnel and the impact of small-arms violence upon young African men on the national security agenda. This articulation has manifested in a critique of

realist concepts of security and a call for a fundamental transformation of security sector institutions.

This chapter will illustrate the necessity of comprehensive transformation of the security sector through focusing on the issue of gender. Not only is gender equality one of the key objectives of a process of transformation, it is also an entry point and an indicator of sustainable security sector transformation. After delving into the conceptual linkages between gender, security and transformation, the chapter employs the example of the South African defence reform process to illustrate opportunities and challenges for the integration of gender into security sector transformation processes.

Paying due respect: The concepts of gender and security sector transformation

The nexus between gender, security and transformation can be approached from many different angles. This section maps a conceptual path from gender to security and on to security sector transformation. There are a multitude of different understandings of gender issues, from liberal feminist theorists to self-identified womanists. This chapter draws upon the schools of post-colonial and post-structural feminist theory and the work of various African gender theorists. As such, 'gender' is understood as the socially constructed roles and relationships between men, women, boys and girls. We are often taught to act, feel and think differently depending upon whether we are born female or male. These social roles are fluid and vary depending upon the specific ethnic, religious, class and geographic community that we are born into. Context is everything. In contrast, biological differences between males and females, such as hormones, reproductive organs and genetic differences are largely fixed. When referring to biological rather than socio-cultural differences between women and men the term 'sex' is used.

These socially constructed gender roles have determined African women and men's differential access to education, employment, political power, etc., all of which influence the security threats that they face and their ability to access security and justice. For instance, African women are much more likely to become victims of domestic and sexual violence, while men are more likely to suffer from gun and gang-related violence. Another example is that women are less likely to have access to formal justice systems due to the feminisation of poverty; women often do not have the resources to cover the necessary transportation costs, bribes or lawyers' fees.

Gender roles are one of the key factors that construct the different security experiences, needs, priorities and actions of men, women, girls and boys.

In addition to changing with time and place, gender roles are relational. In many socio-cultural contexts, gender roles are constructed as oppositional and hierarchical. The hierarchy within this binary system privileges and imbues with power those characteristics associated with masculinity. For instance, boys might be taught that they need to be strong, rational and aggressive, while girls may be taught that they are vulnerable, emotional and peaceful. In Liberia, as in many countries around the world, women both during and after the armed conflict have often been portrayed as victims of insecurity – as part of a ‘vulnerable’ group. This label has been imposed by both internationals and has emerged from local culture. This is not to deny that Liberian men, women, girls and boys have suffered extreme violence, hardship and degradation. However, gender roles that strictly associate women with victimhood (security consumption) and men with threats to security and/or security provision posit power in the hands of men and hinder women from participating in the security sector. Rather than recognising that both Liberian women and men are fully capable of providing security in the home, in the local community and at the national level and that both men and women can be victims of violence, gender roles constrain and silence. In most African countries, women remain a scant minority in state and non-state security and justice provision and men are culturally dissuaded from acknowledging their own victimisation, particularly in the case of sexual violence.

Gender roles are not always perceived as restricting. Many African women draw upon traditional gender roles in order to gain access to power and decision-making. Especially in post-conflict contexts such as Rwanda, African women often cite their maternal nature as having gifted them with the skills of peacebuilding and reconciliation. Though this line of argument can occasionally open doors to influence political decision-making processes, it can also be used to close the door on women seeking to pursue a career within the armed forces or other security sector institutions. Essentialist links between women and peacemaking abound, but the lack of conclusive biological research combined with the innumerable examples of female perpetrators of violence demonstrates that violence – like many other forms of behaviour – is learned.¹ Thus gender roles lie at the core of social discourse on peace and security.

Gender and the concept of security

In an effort to create an inclusive, equitable and emancipatory understanding of security, gender theorists and women's rights advocates have critiqued realist and neo-realist theories of security and presented an alternative in the shape of a gender-sensitive human security approach. This reconceptualisation places the specific security needs of men, women, girls and boys at the core of national security provision and thereby acknowledges a wide range of interconnected security and justice providers, including women's organisations and traditional justice providers.

Feminist international relations scholars² as well as women's rights and peace activists contend that realist approaches that equate national security with the protection of state sovereignty and territory masks other forms of violence and insecurity. For instance, the threat of territorial invasion or terrorism might be prioritised despite the reality that the largest threats to people's physical security include domestic violence, lack of access to healthcare and traffic accidents. The realist assertion that the state is the only legitimate provider of security denies the fact that the state itself often poses a threat to the security of people, from police brutality to structural violence through perpetuating economic inequality. In addition, the assumption that peace equals the absence of war (negative definition of peace) posits the armed forces as solely responsible for upholding security. This denies the importance of a range of security providers, including other state institutions such as the police service, justice and penal systems as well as civil society and non-state/traditional justice and security providers. It also overlooks the critical functions of security oversight actors such as parliament, government ministries, ombudsperson institutions and the media.

An alternative to realist conceptualisations of security can be found in gender-sensitive human security. As Rita Manchanda notes, 'the human security discourse has come up from below, from peoples and groups excluded from the national security debate, defined and articulated by civil society groups, social movements and marginal groups, especially women'.³ In general, human security approaches emphasise the security of people rather than state sovereignty, the obligation of states to ensure people's security, the cross-border nature of many security issues, the importance of non-state actors, accountability for violators of human rights and humanitarian law, the complexity of security threats and the need for multifaceted responses.⁴ By focusing on humans rather than the state as the primary referent or subject of security, human security approaches take into account the state itself as a potential threat to security, regard civil society

organisations as key security actors⁵ and create the space to acknowledge and address gender-based insecurities.

Regrettably, mainstream discourse on human security is starting to forget its roots in peace and women's movements. This can be seen in the trend towards homogenisation of security threats and the silence on the topic of gender-based violence. A gender-sensitive approach to human security goes beyond viewing 'humans' or 'people' as a homogeneous group and takes into account differentiating factors that expose an individual or group to specific security threats, including gender, ethnicity, age, class, nationality, religion, ability and sexual orientation. Human security can transcend the gendered binaries of public/private, citizen/alien, war/peace, relief/development and catastrophic insecurities/daily insecurities, opening up the geography of security to take into account non-traditional issues such as domestic violence and transnational human trafficking. No wonder feminist theorists and women's organisations around the world have taken up the banner of human security, reclaimed its transformative potential and are using it as a point of leverage in the struggle to draw attention to insecurities faced by women and other marginalised groups.

Gender and the realities of security sector transformation

Moving beyond the conceptual level, gender roles fundamentally influence African men and women's lived experiences of (in) security, whether as victims, perpetrators or security providers. Rather than acknowledging and addressing these differences in security and justice needs, security sector institutions are themselves steeped in a sexist institutional culture that deeply influences the institutions' doctrine and procedures, structures, personnel and operations. In this context, ad hoc or isolated gender reforms often result in a counterproductive or unsustainable impact. Only through a comprehensive transformative approach to the security sector can these institutions be changed into equitable employers and effective service providers to men, women, girls and boys. Examining the requisite interconnected gender reforms demonstrates the need for a profoundly transformative approach to reforming the security sector.

Broadly speaking, security sector institutions such as the armed forces and police service are highly gendered institutions that are influenced by and in turn influence social gender norms.⁶ For example, social stereotypes of men as 'protectors' and 'security providers' and of vulnerable 'women and children' are often relied upon by the armed forces to boost recruitment and build morale and cohesion. Thus becoming a soldier has been purposely linked to being a 'real man'.⁷ The armed forces often go beyond utilising and

enforcing existing gender stereotypes to actively conditioning recruits to adopt specific gender roles. For instance, during the 1980s ‘The SADF [South African Defence Force] was a crucial source of ideas about what behaviour was appropriate for white South African men. A number of SADF conscripts have emphasised that the core of military training was to inculcate aggressiveness and equate it with masculinity.’⁸ Studies of military training or ‘boot camp’ have demonstrated that it is often a tightly choreographed process aimed at breaking down individuality and building official military conduct – a common tool being sexist indoctrination in a certain form of violent masculinity.⁹ Sexist and violent institutional culture is a formidable obstacle to the creation of security sector institutions that provide a healthy work environment for male and female personnel, respect human rights and effectively provide security to women, men, boys and girls.

African armed forces and police services are often suffused with discriminatory policies and practices. There are innumerable examples of discrimination at the levels of national and institutional policy, staffing, training, institutional structures, operations/programming, logistics, infrastructure and budgeting. It is not surprising that the rates of sexual harassment and assault are shockingly high in these institutions. Though information is scarce, a 2006 report by Amnesty International stated that ‘Rape of women and girls by both the police and the security forces and within their homes and community is acknowledged to be endemic in Nigeria.’¹⁰ Another example is the ongoing epidemic of rape perpetrated by armed forces and the militia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹¹ This does not minimise the positive steps that have been taken in many African countries – such as described in the next section on South Africa – but provides us with a glimpse of the wide range of challenges and areas for reform within the armed forces and police service.

When faced with the call to reform in the name of gender equality, the most common response from African armed forces and police services has been to step-up the recruitment of female personnel. However, a narrow approach of recruitment reform will only have a minor impact upon the institution as a whole. For instance, in the case of the initial Sierra Leone post-conflict police reform process, efforts were made to increase the number of women in the police service as well as to provide gender training and establish institutional gender policies. However, when visited, it was found that newly recruited female police officers were sometimes expected to do little more than cook lunch for their male colleagues.¹² Increasing female recruitment is a vital step in the process of reforming a security sector institution, yet as an isolated reform it will have very little impact. Efforts to recruit more women lead to a handful of junior women in a predominately

male institution. As a survival mechanism, these women will often conform to traditional gender roles rather than challenge them.¹³ It is also unfair to place the burden of change upon the shoulders of a relatively powerless institutional minority. Facing discrimination, harassment and abuse, female recruits often have a higher drop-out rate than males. Without a broad range of reforms, such as a mentorship programme, sexual harassment policy, female staff association, career education opportunities, gender training for all personnel, separate housing for women and men, correctly fitting uniforms and equipment and a thorough reform of promotion policies and practices, women will continue to drop out or remain marginalised and trapped in stereotypically female low-level positions such as administration.

It is possible that female personnel can act as agents of change within their own institutions in order to advocate for gender reforms. This is especially the case, if recruitment efforts are combined with reforms to increase retention and advancement of female personnel and if the number of female personnel reaches the noted turning point of 30 per cent. For instance, many of the gender initiatives within security sector institutions in West Africa have been instigated by the first female personnel to reach senior-level positions.¹⁴ Female security sector staff associations, such as Women in Security Sector – Sierra Leone, have also played a strong role in supporting the elaboration of institutional gender policies as well as initiating recruitment drives targeting women and mentorship programmes for female recruits. However, increased recruitment, retention and advancement of female personnel contribute to a transformation process only if they are part of a substantial and coherent reform of policy, structure, training, operations/programming, logistics, infrastructure and budgeting.

The elimination of sexual harassment within the armed forces is another example of the need for interconnected reforms, as well as of how gender issues can be an entry point for security sector transformation. The problem of sexual harassment is starting to be acknowledged in a few African armed forces as highly detrimental to force preparedness, operational effectiveness and troop coherence. In order to reduce rates of sexual harassment, a range of initiatives should be implemented, cutting across all domains of institutional reform; they include: developing a sexual harassment policy and training all personnel on the policy; infrastructure reform including separate bathroom facilities, better lighting and a phone hotline; structural reform through the establishment of an equal opportunities office; specific budget lines for sexual harassment prevention, etc. Alone, each of these initiatives will not be very successful in reducing sexual harassment. Yet together these measures, if properly coordinated, may begin

to lower rates of sexual harassment or at the very least increase reporting and reduce impunity.

However, addressing the issue of sexual harassment comprehensively requires not only a range of coordinated institutional-level reforms but a fundamental transformation of national security doctrine and institutional and social culture. At the policy level, it starts with a participatory and transparent reconceptualisation of national security priorities towards a gender-sensitive human security focus. Based on this policy reform process, the purpose and mandate of security sector institutions can be transformed to address the security and justice priorities of men, women, girls and boys. An example is the fundamental shift that is implied with the transformation from a police force to a police service.¹⁵ In addition, clear policies and mechanisms can be established, for instance strengthening the oversight role of the ministry/department of defence, parliamentary committee on defence and security issues, independent human rights commissions, ombudsperson institutions, equal opportunity commissions, civil society organisations and the media. In the case of sexual harassment, parliamentary committees on gender issues, the ministry responsible for gender affairs, as well as women's organisations are additional key oversight actors. To eliminate sexual harassment from the armed forces, a comprehensive transformative process is necessary – from the level of national security policy to phone hotlines.

As seen in these examples, gender issues can be an objective, an entry point and an indicator of security sector transformation. They are an objective because, as previously mentioned, a transformed security sector needs to be able to meet the different security and justice needs of men, women, boys and girls as well as being an equitable employer to male and female staff. And as security sector institutions around the world, including in Africa, face many challenges to realising this objective, gender issues need to be centrally positioned on the security sector transformation agenda. As described in the last few paragraphs, a gender issue such as sexual harassment elimination can be an entry point for security sector transformation, since it demonstrates the necessity not only for cosmetic reforms, but also for a foundational transformation of institutional doctrine and culture. Finally, a gender lens clearly reveals the interdependent nature of security sector institution reforms. Without a comprehensive approach, isolated gender initiatives will have little or no impact. Therefore, the integration of gender issues can be a useful indicator to determine whether reforms have been cross-cutting and coherent.

The practice of transformation: Integrating gender into defence policy and institutions in South Africa

The transformation of the SADF into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) provides good lessons on the opportunities and challenges inherent in creating a security sector that is gender sensitive and strives for gender equality. This section unpacks the context behind this transformation, the legal frameworks and policies underpinning institutional change and the strengths and weaknesses of the restructuring process implemented to effect gender equality. Due to space constraints and the need for depth rather than scope, this case study is focused on the defence sector rather than the broader security sector transformation process in South Africa, which involved many more security and justice institutions.

The imperative for transformation of the SADF was born out of the struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist democratic society. Prior to 1994 the SADF was 'largely a white male conscript force'¹⁶ and was often viewed as the embodiment of white oppression. From 1970 white women could volunteer to serve in the military but, although not legally restricted, were limited to support functions. The transformation of the armed forces became part of the negotiation process in 1993 as it was a key priority to create a new defence force through the integration of the liberation armed forces. The African National Congress' (ANC) armed wing (MK), which had a number of women soldiers, negotiated the inclusion of women and gender equality at all levels within the newly formed South African National Defence Force.¹⁷ This gender transformation of the SANDF, however, has to be contextualised in relation to the broader transformation of national legislative frameworks, the establishment of a national gender machinery, as well as the adoption of a human security approach to defence and security matters.

Transforming national legislative frameworks and gender mechanisms

South African women drove the process of creating a new state structure and legislative framework that supported the goals of gender equality. Backed by a well-established tradition of social activism, in 1992, women established the Women's National Coalition (WNC), aimed at developing a common agenda for women's rights and serving as an umbrella for over 100 national organisations. As a result of WNC advocacy, women had 50 per cent representation at the 1993 Multi-Party Negotiating Process. Each of the 26 parties present was allowed to bring two delegates to the peace negotiation table and one had to be a woman.¹⁸ Women within political parties,

including the ANC, also spearheaded the drive for a 30 per cent quota for female parliamentarians. As a consequence, in the first multiracial, democratic elections in South Africa, women won 28 per cent of parliamentary seats. This important victory enabled South African women to participate in the Constitutional Assembly, the mechanism established to draft the new constitution, as well as playing a key role in the development and review of national defence and security policy.¹⁹

As a result, South Africa's constitution includes equality clauses that compel all government institutions to transform. Chapter 2, section 9 of the constitution states: 'The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.' It supports affirmative action, proclaiming that 'legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken'.²⁰ In line with the constitution, South Africa developed a plethora of legislation and institutions designed to promote and protect equality, including the Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality and the Office on the Status of Women, which is located in the offices of the presidency. South Africa also became a signatory to most of the international, continental and regional gender protocols and declarations, including the 1997 Southern African Development Community Gender and Development Declaration (now a Protocol) that calls for 30 per cent representation of women in decision-making structures.

A national gender machinery and gender management system were also introduced in order to establish gender structures and develop gender mainstreaming strategies within government line departments at the national, provincial and local levels. Interestingly, this framework addresses all government sectors except the security sector, despite its clear relevance to this sector. This could be because the security sector remains somewhat of an enigma to gender activists, whose focus on gender and security has been largely limited to sexual violence; also, the Employment Equity Act, strictly speaking, does not apply to the armed forces.

Transforming defence policy

In 1989 the African National Congress proposed three key principles regarding the role and function of any future armed forces in South Africa: civilian control of the military; non-racism; and loyalty to the constitution.²¹ While peace negotiations were under way, the ANC started an inclusive and

participatory process to define the new face of South African national security. Key actors in this process included the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD), the Department of Defence (DoD) and civil society organisations. A first draft of a white paper on defence was drawn up in June 1995 and distributed for public comment. It received over 90 written submissions, which were revised by the JSCD and DoD. The final white paper was approved by Parliament in May 1996. Its main objective was to bring defence policy into line with the new democratic constitution and the post-apartheid security environment and to forge a political consensus on defence policy, thereby conferring legitimacy to the police and the SANDF. In particular, it adopted a human security perspective, established clear democratic control of the armed forces and included a strong focus on equal representation and non-sexism.²²

The theme of the white paper is 'Defence in a Democracy' and accordingly it noted that national security would be sought 'primarily through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights and needs of South Africa's people'. Making a sharp break with the past defence policy, which had focused on maintaining oppressive government control, the white paper embraced a human security focus and recognised the importance of a wide range of internal security threats, such as poverty, lack of development and high levels of crime. It also established clear mechanisms for democratic oversight of the armed forces, holding that the Department of Defence should be accountable to Parliament, which is responsible for approving the annual defence budget and providing oversight through the Joint Standing Committee on Defence.

In line with the new national frameworks and mechanisms on gender equality, the white paper placed a strong emphasis on gender transformation of the armed forces. Article 11.14 notes that 'The SANDF shall develop a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory institutional culture as required by the constitution', while Article 11.15 states that 'the composition of the SANDF shall broadly reflect the composition of South Africa. To this end affirmative action and equal opportunity programmes will be introduced.'²³ In addition, the white paper acknowledged the right of women to serve in all ranks and positions, including combat roles and mandated the minister of defence to oversee the design and implementation of the affirmative action and equal opportunity programme.

The programme included the establishment of a working group on affirmative action and equal opportunity in the Department of Defence. The emphasis of the programme 'will be on the education, training and development of black officers, service women and other previously disadvantaged personnel. Appropriate strategies in this regard will include

special education and training courses, career development plans and the reorientation of recruitment and promotion systems.’ Additional initiatives specified in the white paper are training on respect for multicultural diversity and gender equality, the identification and elimination of discriminatory practices and attitudes and a review of professional standards. In justifying this programme, the white paper stated: ‘This is both a constitutional imperative and a matter of ‘combat readiness’. The SANDF will not perform its functions effectively if capable people are excluded from senior posts because of prejudice, or if these tendencies undermine cohesion and morale.’ It also included a provision for oversight of this process of gender transformation: the minister of defence was to present Parliament with a detailed plan of the programme and then report on a yearly basis regarding the progress made in implementation. Provisions for gender equality were thus a significant part of the white paper, which also clearly acknowledged the link between gender equality, constitutionality and mission readiness.

Following the establishment of the White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa, from 1996 to 1998 an extensive defence review process was undertaken. The initial objective of the review was to determine operational aspects such as doctrine, force design, logistics, armaments, human resources and equipment. At the insistence of female parliamentarians, the JSCD called for a national consultation as part of the defence review process. A variety of measures were taken to ensure public participation, including using military planes and buses to transport religious and community leaders, NGO activists and representatives of women’s organisations to regional meetings and workshops. Grassroots women’s organisations were vital in drawing attention to previously ignored issues such as the plight of dispossessed communities whose land had been seized for military use, the environmental impact of military activities and the sexual harassment of women by military personnel. To respond to these issues, two new subcommittees were formed within the Defence Secretariat. In this two-year process, the participatory defence review helped build national consensus around defence issues and generated public legitimacy for the new security structures.²⁴

Once again non-discrimination in respect to gender was identified as a priority area. At that point there were 10,014 women and 75,310 men in the SANDF – 12 per cent women.²⁵ The review noted the need to eliminate backlogs in the training of women for command positions and in combat-related mustering, the lack of retention of women because of problems associated with childcare and family disruptions and the general need to recruit more women. Furthermore, in addressing the military culture, the review stated that the ‘SANDF will have to gradually evolve an acceptable

military culture in which all members, irrespective of their own culture, can exist and in which operational readiness could be assured'. The review indicated that the DoD 'will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment, irrespective of the rank or position of the perpetrators' and that the 'Equal Opportunity Policy shall contain specific prescripts concerning sexual harassment which will have to be strictly complied with by all employees'. In line with the defence white paper, the review also addressed the issue of sexual orientation, specifying that 'Appointment and promotion will depend on ability, competence and potential of individuals and will not take unrelated sexual orientation factors into account.'²⁶

The South African defence white paper of 1996 and defence review process from 1996 to 1998 set a global standard for the comprehensive integration of gender issues into defence policy. As a result of a strong women's movement and past activism on gender issues, participatory policy formulation processes and higher numbers of gender-sensitive women in decision-making positions, these policies went beyond superficial mentions of women and gender issues and created a platform for comprehensive transformation of the armed forces. Regrettably, implementation has had mixed results and subsequent policies, such as the Defence Act of 2002, contained no reference to gender.

Transforming defence institutions and oversight

In line with national defence policy, numerous initiatives have been put into place to increase gender equality within the SANDF and the Department of Defence, as well as to strengthen internal and external oversight on gender issues. Despite the positive impact of many of these initiatives, challenges remain in the form of discriminatory institutional culture, sexual harassment, difficulties in attaining adequate representation of women and a gap in resources and capacity for gender mainstreaming.

Institutional human resource policies have been rewritten and a policy on sexual harassment and a gender mainstreaming strategy for the SANDF were adopted in 2008. In step with national-level defence policies, human resource policies have been changed to reflect the principle of non-discrimination. For instance, pregnancy has been eliminated as grounds for dismissal, women who are on maternity leave for up to one year retain the right to promotion and female and male SANDF personnel have the right to equal benefits including pensions (in the past men and women of the same rank did not receive equal benefits). At the level of equipment, women and men now bear standardised shoulder insignia on their uniforms – in the past women wore smaller insignia.²⁷

The 2008 gender mainstreaming strategy includes a wide range of targets and objectives:

- A target of 40 per cent recruitment of women at entry level in order to create a significant pool of female personnel to increase female promotion
- A Target of 30 per cent representation of women at all decision-making levels by 2009 and 30 per cent representation of women in peace support operations by 2014
- Integrating gender criteria in all defence and military policy, plans and processes including mission assessments, business plans and human resources
- Ensuring resource allocation to sustain the work of gender mainstreaming
- Establishing mechanisms to advise, execute, monitor and report on gender issues
- Ensuring that facilities are gender sensitive
- Mainstreaming gender in all communication activities
- Implementing positive measures to increase women's participation in decision-making structures, including training and coaching programmes
- Reviewing the Defence Act and the human resource policy in order to promote equal treatment of all DoD employees.²⁸

Military policy guidelines provide for women to be trained and employed on the same basis as men in the SANDF. Women are hence offered the same benefits and career choices as men, as well as the same academic and physical training. In accordance with the defence white paper, additional training opportunities have recently been provided to female recruits to strengthen advancement efforts. In addition, gender education and training have been introduced for all personnel along with civic education that incorporates discussions on sexual discrimination and harassment.

Additional measures include the production of a magazine entitled *Soldier*, which regularly features the different roles of female armed forces personnel in an effort to combat social stereotypes. There has also been a concerted effort to create high-level role models for women in defence and security; for instance, in 1999 the Defence Secretariat appointed a female Quaker, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, to the post of deputy defence minister and other women were appointed to a number of high-level positions. This represented a clear statement of commitment and intent on the part of the South African government towards making the defence forces a truly

gender-equitable body. In addition, the SANDF hosts an annual gender conference attended by the minister of defence, members of parliament, service and division chiefs and female personnel from all rank levels.

Finally, various internal and external structures and initiatives have been established to ensure oversight and monitoring on gender issues within the SANDF. Within the Department of Defence, a gender focal point was established within the Equal Opportunities Directorate with the mandate of monitoring gender issues, conducting gender training, promoting gender awareness and liaising with civil society and international organisations. A gender forum was established to implement gender policies at the lower level of the DoD, a telephone hotline was set up for reporting sexual harassment and gender-based violence within the armed forces and a gender sensitisation programme was initiated to provide gender training for all DoD personnel.²⁹ More recently, the Chief Directorate on Transformation Management and the Gender Mainstreaming Council have been established. The Council consists of both women and men representing the different services and divisions, with the lowest rank being that of a colonel. It meets once a month to discuss implementation of gender policies. Issues raised here are referred to the Defence Staff Council. These bodies, along with the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Defence and the Commission for Gender Equality, are important oversight mechanisms for gender equality.³⁰ Ultimately, the minister of defence is responsible for ensuring equity within the SANDF.

Few can argue that the South African defence sector has not paid due attention to promoting gender equality: it has confirmed commitment from the highest political and decision-making levels and both policy and institutional frameworks have been developed to achieve this objective. As a result there has been a substantial improvement in the number and ranking of women in the SANDF: from 12 per cent in 1994 to 24 per cent in 2010. In addition, the current minister of defence and the secretary for defence are both women. Of all the African countries that contribute peacekeeping troops, the SANDF has the highest number of female armed forces personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations: 10 per cent. Although the majority of women are still in support and health mustering, 'an estimated 14 per cent serve in the armour corps, 18 per cent in artillery, 8 per cent infantry, 21 per cent combat navy and 6 per cent as aircrew (including pilots)'.³¹

The statistics are impressive, but they mask the continued challenges faced by women in the security sector at large and the SANDF in particular. The sexist culture of the military remains largely unchanged despite the transformative objectives adopted at policy level. Female personnel in the combat branches still feel inferior and, as Heinecken and Van der Waag-

Cowling note, 'experience the pressure to adopt masculine attributes to be recognised as true soldiers'.³² Women in leadership positions still have trouble asserting their authority over men. One often still hears reference to the deterioration in the readiness of the armed forces because of the inclusion of women – stereotypes loom large. Although there is a DoD policy on the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment, this bane remains a significant challenge, particularly during deployment. Yet few cases are brought before disciplinary hearings, possibly indicating a lack of awareness of the policy and/or distrust that perpetrators will be disciplined. Women deployed in peacekeeping operations note that the accommodation facilities and equipment are not gender friendly; also, the long periods away contribute to increased family tensions back home and do not take into account their continued primary family responsibilities.

Women have not reached the critical mass required to truly transform the institutionalised culture of violent masculinity within the armed forces. Despite a significant increase in the number of women in the SANDF, they still lag behind the targets of 30–40 per cent female representation. Furthermore, women remain markedly rare at the senior levels of the armed forces. In addition to discriminatory institutional culture, sexual harassment and inadequate representation there is also a capacity gap. As the 2006 SANDF Gender Audit report noted, 'there is generally inadequate capacity to support effective gender mainstreaming in the DoD. This relates to capacity in terms of skills, knowledge (legal/policy compliance requirements and theoretical frameworks) and the amount of human, financial and logistical resources devoted [to] the coordination of gender programming and compliance monitoring in the DoD.'³³ Clearly, additional measures are needed, including sufficient resources, in order to address the existing challenges to gender equality in the South African defence sector. It also needs to be acknowledged that institutional transformation is a long-term process. The gains made thus far must not be eroded but serve as a foundation for sustainable change.

Lessons identified from South African practice

The case study of South African defence reform illustrates that gender issues are an essential aspect of a comprehensive transformation process. It shows the variety of interdependent reforms that are necessary to create a gender-equitable institution, as well as the ongoing challenge of transforming institutional culture. Through concerted political will, participatory legislative and policy reform, the establishment of strong internal and

external oversight mechanisms and a range of institutional-level reforms it is possible to effect sustainable change.

The political will to create an equitable and democratic system of governance had its roots in the political and armed struggle against apartheid. The advocacy of resilient women's organisations and other civil society organisations as well as vocal women and supportive men within the ANC built the political will and provided the technical expertise necessary to enshrine gender equality in the constitution and create the space for women to participate in national decision-making processes on peace and security. Support for civil society organisations and women's political or parliamentary caucuses advocating for gender equality, in particular support to the formation of networks and other coordination mechanisms to increase their political leverage, is crucial in order to build political will for a transformative gender-sensitive SSR process. Sustained political will may be one of the key factors behind the encompassing gender transformation of the defence sector in South Africa – a process which has yet to be duplicated in other African countries.

Participatory policy reform and review processes are a foundation for security sector transformation. In effect, a truly participatory process led by oversight actors such as parliament and government ministries can provide the impetus and legitimacy for a metamorphosis of the security sector. Through building in sufficient time, funds and mechanisms to collect input from civil society at the national and community levels, participatory processes can foster a democratic security vision that reflects the different security needs and priorities of men, women, girls and boys. It also serves to build national consensus on security and defence issues and opens up the space to reorient towards a gender-sensitive human security agenda. Specific measures to include women's civil society organisations and female parliamentarians may be necessary depending upon the country context. This process of collective reflection on national security and defence issues can result in national policy that provides a platform and justification for comprehensive transformation of specific security sector institutions.

Functional and democratic security sector oversight was also prioritised in the South African transformation process. Establishing clear policy directives for accountability to parliament and government ministries, strengthening the capacity of the department of defence and the relevant parliamentary committees to exercise control and creating mechanisms for liaising with civil society were essential elements of the South African reform process. For many African countries, these remain formidable challenges. The establishment of internal and external gender structures responsible for overseeing the implementation of gender and equal

opportunity policies such as gender focal points and the Commission for Gender Equality is one of the main reasons behind the gender mainstreaming successes. Without these mechanisms, gender policies often remain words on paper without the necessary institutional support and resources for implementation.

Finally, the case of South African defence reform demonstrates the necessity for multilevel and coordinated institutional reforms as well as the challenges of transforming institutional culture. From the revision of human resource policies to gender training and recruitment targets – to have a substantial impact, reforms need to be coordinated across all parts of the security sector institution. However, when it comes to transforming the sexist institutional culture of the SANDF, even with a defence policy in place that specifically addresses the need for cultural change, even with a sexual harassment policy, procedures and training in place, even with one of the highest rates of female participation in the world, this remains a crucial challenge. Though substantial improvements have been made, additional capacity and resources, sustained political will and broader social change are imperative to maintain and escalate the current rate of gender reform.

Conclusion

Gender issues lie at the core of the security sector transformation process. By employing a gender optic, we can see that it is not only the security sector institution itself but the very concept of national security that warrants interrogation. The emphasis that a gender approach places on the different security and justice needs of women, men, boys and girls refocuses policy and institutions on the aim of security and justice provision to people as well as the state. Responding to the lived security experiences of people justifies a participatory approach to policy-making, which in turn results in placing issues of gender-based violence, such as domestic violence, high on the national security agenda. A new approach to security and defence at the national level necessitates a transformation at the institutional level. A focus on gender issues highlights the need for coordinated, multilevel reforms in order to effect institutional transformation. Strong internal and external oversight mechanisms are also essential to provide the capacity and impetus for policy implementation.

With the case of defence sector transformation in South Africa, we are able to learn from the challenges and successes of addressing gender issues. Participatory policy formulation combined with strong political will, a supportive legislative framework, institutionalised gender mechanisms and

gender-sensitive women in decision-making positions resulted in exemplary defence policies. These policies provided legitimacy and coherence for the institutional gender reforms within the South African National Defence Force and the Department of Defence. With a current rate of 24 per cent women in the armed forces and a wide range of structures and programmes in place to support equal opportunity and affirmative action, South Africa is a role model for Africa if not the world. However, challenges such as unreported sexual harassment, a capacity and resource gap for gender mainstreaming and a pervasive sexist institutional culture remain. Transformation is a long-term process and it is important not to lose sight of the final objective: an equitable, participatory and accountable security sector that meets the security and justice needs of all.

Notes

- ¹ Anne E. Hunter (ed.) (1991), *On Peace, War and Gender: A Challenge to Genetic Explanations*. New York: Feminist Press.
- ² See the works of Charlotte Bunch, Carol Cohn, Cynthia Enloe, Betty Reardon and J. Ann Tickner.
- ³ Rita Manchanda quoted in Charlotte Bunch (2002/2003), 'Feminism, peace, human rights and human security' *Canadian Women's Studies*, 22(2), pp. 6–11.
- ⁴ Beth Woroniuk (1999), 'Women's empowerment in the context of human security: A discussion paper', December, pp. 3-4.
- ⁵ Ellen Lammers (1999), *Refugees, Gender and Human Security: A Theoretical Introduction and Annotated Bibliography*. Utrecht: International Books, p. 53.
- ⁶ Other security sector institutions, such as the justice sector, penal system and border management institutions are also detrimentally affected by institutionalised discrimination, harassment and sexual violence. The same can be said for security sector oversight bodies, including parliament and civil society and non-state security providers, though the dynamics are quite different. See Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) (2008), *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW.
- ⁷ Yaliwe Clarke (2008), 'Security sector reform in Africa: A lost opportunity to deconstruct militarised masculinities?' *Feminist Africa*, 10 (August), p. 52.
- ⁸ Jacqueline Cock (2001), 'Gun Violence and Masculinity in Contemporary South Africa', in Robert Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in South Africa*, London: Zed Books, pp. 50-51.
- ⁹ Sandra Whitworth (2005), 'Militarised Masculinities and the Politics of Peacekeeping' in Ken Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 96.
- ¹⁰ Amnesty International (2006), *Nigeria: Rape – The Silent Weapon*. Amnesty International, November, p. 28.
- ¹¹ Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (2010), *'Now the World is Without Me': An Investigation of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*. Cambridge: Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International.

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- ¹² Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Camille Pampell Conaway (2004), 'Security sector reform', in *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, Hunt Alternatives Fund and International Alert, p. 35.
- ¹³ Clarke, note 7 above, p. 53.
- ¹⁴ DCAF (2010), *Gender Survey of Security Sector Institutions in ECOWAS Countries*, Geneva: DCAF, forthcoming.
- ¹⁵ Kadi K. Fakondo (2008), 'Involving women in community policing', *Peace, Security and Development Update – Women in Security*, 3 (March), Centre for Development and Security Analysis and Conciliation Resources, p. 3.
- ¹⁶ Lindy Heinecken and Noelle Van der Waag-Cowling (2009), 'The politics of race and gender in South African armed forces: Issues, challenges, lessons', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 47(4), p. 517.
- ¹⁷ Hugo Van Der Merwe and Guy Lamb (2008), 'DDR and transitional justice in South Africa: Lessons learned', Research Brief, International Centre for Transitional Justice; www.ictj.org/en/research/projects/ddr/country-cases/23.
- ¹⁸ If the parties did not have female members, the seat was left empty. See Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Camille Pampell Conaway (2004), *Negotiating the Transition to Democracy and Reforming the Security Sector: The Vital Contributions of South African Women*. Washington, DC: Initiative for Inclusive Security, pp. 6–8.
- ¹⁹ Anderlini and Conaway (2004), op. cit., p. 5.
- ²⁰ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) Act 108.
- ²¹ James Ngculu (2004), 'The role of Umhonto we Sizwe in the creation of a democratic civil-military relations tradition', in Rocky Williams, Gavin Cawthra and Diane Abrahams (eds) *Ourselves to Know: Civil-Military Relations and Defence Transformation in Southern Africa*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- ²² Text based upon an unpublished draft: Beatrice Mosello (2009), 'Defence reform and gender: The case of South Africa', DCAF, Geneva.
- ²³ South African Government (1996), *White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa*, May.
- ²⁴ Anderlini and Conaway (2004), p. 23–25, quoted in Kristin Valasek (2008) 'Security sector reform and gender', in Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, p. 6.
- ²⁵ South African Defence Review, 1998.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ N. Motumi (1999), 'Gender equality: A challenge for the Department of Defence', *African Security Review*, 8(3).
- ²⁸ South African Department of Defence (2008), *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy*, No.1.
- ²⁹ Anderlini and Conaway (2004), op. cit., p. 27.
- ³⁰ Major-General Memela-Motumi (2009), Presentation to Committee on Women in NATO Forces, Meeting held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, from Tuesday 02 to Friday 05 June 2009.
- ³¹ Heinecken and Van der Waag-Cowling, note 13 above.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ South African Department of Defence Gender Audit Report 2006, cited in Cheryl Hendricks and Lauren Hutton (2008), 'Defence reform and gender', in Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, p. 19.

Chapter 5

Transformation through Participation: Public Perceptions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Judy Smith-Höhn

Introduction

Sierra Leone and Liberia both recently emerged from over a decade of civil war, which left their security infrastructure and policing mechanisms in shambles. Generally, efforts undertaken to rebuild the security sector have centred on re-establishing the state's monopoly on the use of force, ignoring the potential of non-state policing structures to play a key role in this regard. This corresponds with the academic focus on strategies undertaken by external or state actors in ensuring the survival of the local population, while giving little attention to the efforts made by locals themselves to survive in such hostile situations. Moreover, one key criterion for determining the efficacy – and hence incorporation into reform efforts – of policing structures tends to be ignored, namely whether those for whom the security provision is intended actually feel protected.

This is the starting point for this chapter, which attempts to fill the gap by presenting empirical evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone of local perceptions of the policing structures citizens rely upon for security, including not only external and state but also local, non-state actors. As the title suggests, the chapter will explore the relevance of local perceptions of a given security situation for successful security sector transformation in these two post-conflict societies. The main focus is on the consequences of a lack of state monopoly on the use of force following state failure, particularly in view of the emergence of alternative non-state security actors, and the impact of international involvement on the control of violence.

Following a brief conceptual discussion on the relevance of transformation as opposed to reform of the security sectors in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the utility of local perceptions as a strategic tool for developing such

activities, the chapter draws evidence from the empirical findings demonstrating the need for a more holistic transformation agenda in post-conflict settings such as these. By outlining the current status of the transformation processes in each country, it will also focus on the challenges faced in ongoing transformation processes, particularly with regard to spoilers that have the potential to resist such change.

The chapter draws its findings from qualitative and quantitative data collected over a period of six months in both countries.¹ The two case studies permit a comparison on various levels, particularly since Sierra Leone's post-conflict period is 'older' than that of Liberia. The influence of external peacekeepers, for example, can be examined, for these have withdrawn from Sierra Leone but are still a key player in Liberia. The results obtained from the case studies highlight issues – and actors – that should and could be included in such strategies to improve their likelihood of success. The chapter will reveal that non-state policing mechanisms play a significant role in security provision, particularly on the local, community level. Considering the state of the national security apparatus in both countries, alternative policing structures will remain crucial for some time to come, as will external support for reconstruction efforts, hence calling into question the suitability of state-centred approaches to transforming the security sector.

Transformation versus reform – Sustainability through participation

In the aftermath of violent conflict leading to state failure in countries around the world, international organisations or coalitions of countries have increasingly engaged in what is commonly termed 'post-conflict reconstruction'.² In recognition of the importance of the provision of security, i.e. (re)installing an 'order' of violence, reconstruction efforts have focused heavily on rebuilding the security sector in post-conflict societies.³

In the tradition of Max Weber, where the state is defined – among other things – as 'a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical forces within a given territory',⁴ such strategies focus on (re)installing the state monopoly and 'deprivatising' the security sector. However, this approach ignores the fact that the post-colonial state has itself often played a central role in causing and promoting the escalation of violence. Rather, strategies to reform the security sector should include a consideration of whether the state should or can be reconstructed into its 'pre-conflict' shape, since the goal is the establishment of a viable society capable of managing its conflicts without resorting to violence. A notion such as this would include, for example, alternative or

traditional security models that exist parallel to the state structures. As noted above, the focus has been on strategies undertaken by external actors in such situations, while the efforts made by locals themselves to prevent and manage security threats have been given little attention.⁵ Hence the absence of criteria to assess such alternative security models, indeed the lack of empirical evidence of their existence, much less their efficiency, is the starting point for further deliberations on the challenges to security sectors in post-conflict societies.⁶

By the early 2000s, more than ten years of civil war in both Liberia and Sierra Leone had devastated their security infrastructures. Given the context for rebuilding efforts, there was a need to go beyond a concept of reform, which suggests reconstituting previously existing state structures without redefining the relationships between all the stakeholders in such a process (including the government, the formal and informal security sector and citizens), to embrace the notion of security sector transformation, which strives to do just that.

Following the cessation of open violent conflict, the state security structures were either non-existent, non-operational or had even become security threats themselves. In Liberia, for instance, the end of the civil war saw the complete dismantling of the country's armed forces; thus there was less a need for reforming existing structures and more a need for a total reconstruction of this branch of the security sector. Given the destructive role of Liberia's armed forces during the civil war, the former special representative of the UN Secretary-General for Liberia, Jacques Paul Klein, even went so far as to argue that the country should abolish its army and make do with a 'decent police force and a well-trained border security force of between 600–700 men'.⁷ However, one cannot expect any country in this extremely volatile region, where violent conflicts are known to have spilled over borders, to give up what is considered a key national security provider.

In Sierra Leone, some of the poorly trained and underpaid government troops had deserted the force and defected to the rebel faction as a response to state neglect during the war. These *sobel*s committed numerous atrocities against the civilian population and were involved in extortion of property as well as illicit trade activities. Any attempt to reconstitute a national force would thus require a fundamental shift in the way such actors are perceived by the general population they had so recently terrorised.

Such challenges are further compounded by the fact that, in the past, the security apparatus of both countries had generally been personalised, to the extent that neither had a truly national army dedicated to serving the common good. In both countries, many different security actors vied for control and influence over several decades. Also, the national army and

police were never able to establish or maintain a state monopoly on the use of force for any significant period of time. The scope of state security actors' influence and activities was generally also restricted to urban areas, while in the hinterland local civil defence forces, rebel groups and secret societies continued to dominate the security sector. For citizens, these various actors could act as protectors but could also pose a threat to individual security.

In both cases, the lack of a state monopoly on the use of force has resulted in the increased importance of external and non-state actors in the provision of security, particularly on the community level. Citizens have resorted to privately produced security, mostly by way of communal self-help organisations and, to a lesser extent, from commercial actors. Given the fairly divergent perceptions of the different groups, there can be no simple blueprint for the treatment of these sets of security actors. Hence the need for a further assessment of these actors to determine whether they should be incorporated in or excluded from security sector reform (SSR) efforts. Notwithstanding their varying importance and given the state of the national security apparatus in both countries, alternative policing structures will remain crucial for some time to come, as will external support of reconstruction efforts.

The importance of non-state actors in both post-conflict environments points to the need for not merely a reform of existing (or dismantled) state security institutions, but for a shift in the way security provision is perceived away from the focus on state security actors to incorporate non-state actors and consider a view from below.

The findings in this chapter are based on empirical data collected in both countries, with a focus on local perceptions of security as a benchmark for the success of strategies implemented to rebuild the respective security sectors. Of course, one might then ask why and how perceptions can be considered as indicators for the efficacy of a particular institution, given that perceptions are not always a reflection of the reality on the ground. For example, in this case the police force may be perceived to be ineffective when in fact its performance has improved.

Victor Azarya's work on reordering state-society relations in Africa provides some valuable insights as to why local perceptions not only enable an assessment of the performance of security actors but are also relevant for the future success of transformation and reconstruction strategies.⁸ In his work on states in society, Azarya suggests an alternative to the state-centred approach to studying state-society relations in contemporary Africa by placing greater emphasis on societal responses to state actions. In his attempt to explain the weakening of the state, Azarya developed the notion of incorporation into and disengagement from the state as 'societal responses to

state actions (or anticipated state actions) which lead to a perceived change in the field of opportunities of given groups or individuals'.⁹

Adapting Azarya's concept of incorporation and disengagement to the provision of security in society, with the state ideally dominating and regulating the behaviour of all relevant actors within this realm, acts of association with or distancing from the state by individuals or groups are indicative of that sector's efficiency. If the weakening of government agencies can lead individuals and groups to devise alternative methods of sustaining themselves economically, then surely the same can be said for the pursuit of interests related to the provision of security. If individuals or groups perceive the state to be incapable of providing or managing security in the country, they will disengage from this arena.¹⁰ As other structures gain increased authority, state security structures weaken. Thus to determine whether security bodies exist that are capable of providing security, or whether effective oversight mechanisms are in place, one can consider society's response to the state in this arena. In other words, one must question whether individuals or groups within society perceive the state as providing effective security, or whether citizens tend to opt for alternative means of provision. To use Azarya's terminology, do citizens incorporate into or disengage from the state when it comes to funding for their security needs? An analysis of the efficacy of the security sector that is based on empirical evidence gathered on the ground must therefore take into account the perceptions of the local population as regards security-related matters.

Comparing Liberia and Sierra Leone – Ownership matters

Liberia and Sierra Leone display divergence in the different reform approaches that were undertaken by the (mostly international) implementing agencies in each case, with Sierra Leone at a slightly more advanced stage of the process; on the other hand, they display a number of contextual similarities in that they share certain background conditions. For example, both West African countries witnessed protracted periods of violence during the 1990s. In fact, the civil wars in both countries are closely linked: mercenaries surreptitiously crossed the common border to fight in the other's civil wars, and the ruling class has continuously meddled in the affairs of its neighbour. Charles Taylor's role in instigating violence and supporting rebel groups in Sierra Leone is the most prominent case in point. Another contextual similarity is the extensive involvement of international and regional actors such as the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the post-conflict

phases. Also, the socio-economic conditions are similar and there appears to be a number of different (types of) security actors in both cases.

Given the fact that the processes of reconstituting the security sectors have been under way for a few years in both countries, the comparison will facilitate the gauging of previous efforts as well as the identification of best practices and lessons learnt and unlearnt from the different experiences. By outlining the current status of the transformation processes in each country, it will also focus on the challenges faced in such processes, particularly with regard to spoilers that have the potential to resist change.

The first point of comparison involves the identification, first and foremost, of the actors (e.g. traditional authorities, remnants of state security, private entrepreneurs and international peacekeeping missions) that have provided security in these situations of fragmented authority. Drawing from empirical data gathered on the ground,¹¹ the focus then turns to the modes of interaction between the various security actors, which will enable a synopsis on the extent to which such ‘transformative actors’ can be engaged and incorporated into transformation processes.

Turning to the first objective, namely identifying the actors perceived to have provided security in these post-conflict societies, a number of findings indicate the importance of transformation of the security sector as opposed to simple ‘reforming’ of existing or dismantled state structures.

Liberia’s security actors: International peacekeepers come up trumps

At the time of the survey in Liberia, the United Nations had force strength of 15,000 troops, most of whom were posted in and around the urban centres of Monrovia, Buchanan and Tubmanburg. It therefore came as no surprise that the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was considered to be the most important security provider. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected from survey poll respondents, focus group participants and expert interviewees attest to the fact that UNMIL was considered to be the only actor that could ensure internal security.

Table 5.1 depicts the results received for an ‘open’ question: respondents were asked who they considered to be the most important security provider for their personal security.¹² Results were tested with a second ‘closed’ question.¹³ Again, UNMIL received the most positive rating.

While the tables reveal the remarkably favourable perception of the state security actors (Liberian National Police and the Armed Forces of Liberia), given their current reorganisation and history of violence

Table 5.1 Which group is the most important for your personal safety?

Actors	%
UNMIL	75.9
Liberia National Police	17.9
Armed Forces of Liberia (including army)	2.0
Ex-combatants	0.1
ECOWAS	0.1
Poro/Sandee	0.1
Vigilante teams	0.1
Family	0.1
No answer/don't know	3.4

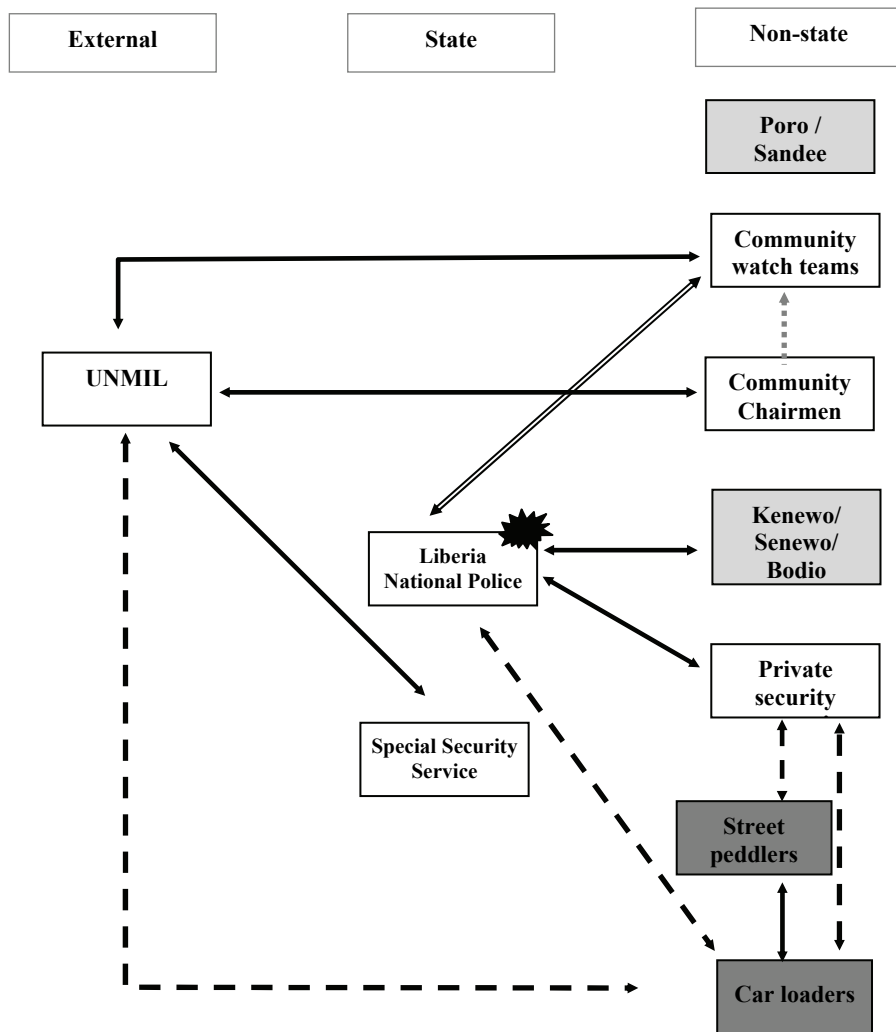
Note: N = 698

Table 5.2 Perceptions of security actors in urban Liberia (%)

Types of actors		Very/ somewhat important to personal security	Does not affect my personal security	Somewhat/ a big threat to personal security
International	UNMIL	94.9	2	1.4
State	Liberian National Police	91.9	4.6	2.9
	Armed Forces of Liberia	64.8	23.8	9.3
International/ commercial non- state	Private security companies	38.3	52.2	3.8
Domestic non-state	Community watch teams	56.6	17.9	15.5
	Poro/secret societies	15.7	46.4	26.1
	Political party militias	7.2	36.3	42.8
	Street boys	0.4	6.3	78.6
	Ex-combatants	3.3	6.9	86.8

Note: N = 698 (out of total sample of 700); percentages of 'Don't know' and 'No answer' responses not shown in table.

Figure 5.1 Liberia today – Security actors and their interactions (health workers)

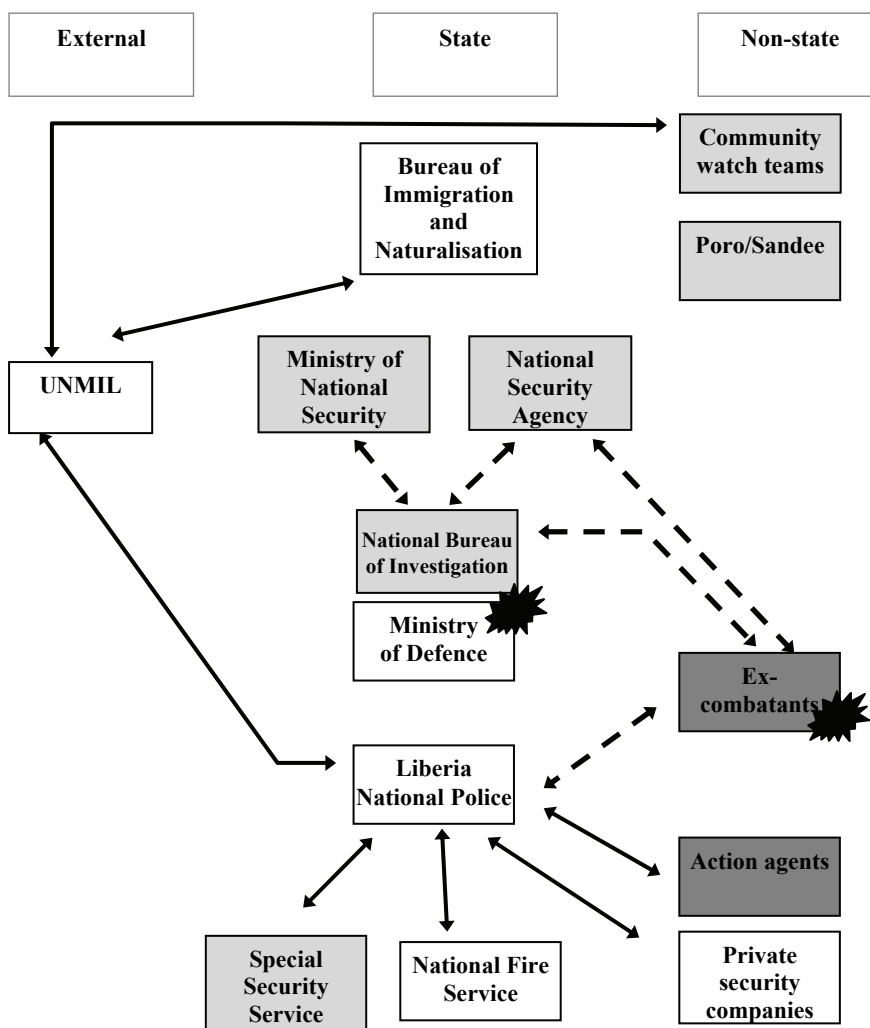


Legend

- positive
- ◻ neutral/disputed
- ◼ negative
- ★ rivalry within
- ↔ cooperation
- ⋯ rivalry
- ↔ rivalry/cooperation
- ⋯ influences

*Source: FGD2 Liberia, Health Workers; © Judy Smith-Höhn

Figure 5.2 Liberia today – Security actors and their interactions (teachers and students)



Legend

- positive
- neutral/disputed
- negative
- cooperation
- rivalry
- ★
 rivalry within

*Source: FGD1 Liberia, Teachers and Students; © Judy Smith-Höhn

against citizens in the past,¹⁴ the relative importance of a number of informal non-state actors, particularly private security companies and community watch teams, confirms the prominence of these actors in the security arena. Further research could determine which of these groups could be viable alternatives to state security.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2, depicting selected results from an exercise conducted in all four focus group discussions (FGDs), again highlight the importance of community-based informal actors in the security arena. Discussants were asked to identify all relevant security actors, determine their relative importance and illustrate the interactions among these various actors.

The maps reveal that, to ordinary Liberians, a variety of actors – beyond the state and external ones – play a role in providing or threatening security in Liberia today. Two informal actors are of particular significance: the community watch teams and the Poro/Sandee. These ‘secret societies’ tend to have a negative image in the urban areas; indeed, to some extent they are viewed as a threat. But above all they are decoupled from all the other actors. This absence of points of contact with other security actors indicates that their involvement in the development of strategies for security sector transformation would very likely be problematical. This does not apply, however, to the community watch teams. With the rise in crime and a lack of adequate state-led responses to the problem, community-based neighbourhood watch teams have become more prevalent in the country. The fact that such groups are (re-) emerging points to similarities with Sierra Leone’s experiences after the civil war, which also witnessed the emergence of such groups. However, unlike the Sierra Leonean case, where there was an attempt by the government to formalise police-community cooperation through police partnership boards, those in charge in Liberia had, at the time, limited their strategies to publicly calling for increased community action. Table 5.3 summarises the results from the four focus groups.¹⁵

Notwithstanding the inclusion of a number of state security agencies in the arena, the number of non-state actors identified by focus group participants is noteworthy. What could this mean for the potential to transform the security sector? Are all these actors important players? Can and should they be included into the processes of redefining the relationships between the state, the security sector and the population? The fact that most actors identified interact with each other – whether these interactions are hostile or cooperative – points to their interconnectedness. If one actor were to take on a different role, be that more positive or negative, surely that would alter its relationships and abilities to function with other actors in the same arena.

Table 5.3 Liberia – Mapping security actors today (FGD 1–4)

Types of actors	Positive	Neutral/disputed	Negative
State	National Fire Service; Liberian National Police; Ministry of Defence	National Security Agency; Special Security Service; National Bureau of Investigation; Ministry of National Security; Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation; Special Security Service; Monrovia City Police	Politicians
International/ commercial non-state	UNMIL		
Domestic non-state	Market superintendent; Community watch teams; Private security companies; Agents Against Rape; Community chairmen	Town chief; Poro/Sandee Kenewo/Senewo/ Bodio; Press Union; Drivers Union/car loaders/ wheelbarrow boys; Liberia Marketing Association/ pedicure-manicure boys/Yanna boys/shoeshine boys money changers	Ex-combatants; Street boys (ex-combatants); Political party militia; Warlords; Action agents

Sierra Leone: A multitude of security actors on the playing field

Findings from Sierra Leone provide some insights into the ways in which the security sector has adjusted to the departure of a large international peacekeeping force. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) – which at the height of deployment numbered as many as 17,000 soldiers – initiated

the gradual withdrawal of its troops in 2002 and by the end of December 2005 had withdrawn all but a 250-man battalion deployed to provide protection to the Special Court of Sierra Leone. Research conducted after the troop withdrawal revealed that a security vacuum had been left, and that it had been filled not by state actors but by a number of non-state actors, thus further highlighting the importance of this group of informal actors in these young post-conflict societies. Given that the fieldwork was conducted shortly after UNAMSIL's withdrawal, the sustainability of the current post-conflict phase cannot be determined. However, the results do reveal the significant vacuum left by the multinational force and expose the inability of the national security forces to fill it.

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 demonstrate that the external actors – UNAMSIL, ECOMOG, IMATT¹⁶ – are not perceived to be the most significant players

Table 5.4 Which group is the most important for your personal safety?

Actors	%
Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces	37.2
Police	35.8
UNAMSIL	11.7
ECOMOG	3.2
Government	2.2
Former warring faction 1: CDF	1.7
Husband/family/individual	1.1
God	1.1
Rebels/ex-combatants	1.0
President	0.9
Youth groups	0.6
Foreign troops (general)	0.5
Traditional authorities (paramount chief/village authorities)	0.4
Private security companies	0.3
SLP Operational Support Division	0.3
IMATT	0.2
Mende	0.2
Former warring faction 2: RUF	0.2
Other	1.4
None	0.8

Note: Valid N = 651 (24 = no answer, 27 = don't know, total N = 702).

Table 5.5 Perceptions of security actors in urban Sierra Leone (%)

Types of actors		Somewhat/ very important to personal security	Does not affect personal security	Somewhat/ a big threat to personal security
State	Sierra Leone Police	87.8	3.4	8.0
	RSLAF	81.4	5.0	10.0
International/ commercial non-state	Private security companies	54.6	38.6	1.6
Domestic non-state	Secret societies	26.6	50.9	19.7
	Youth wings of political parties	30.6	33.5	30.3
	Ghetto Boys	4.4	16.2	76.8
	Bike riders	39.1	30.1	26.6
	West Side Boys	2.9	17.0	74.6
	Civil defence forces	20.5	20.5	54.1
	Revolutionary United Front	2.3	16.1	78.0

Note: N = 702 (out of total sample of 700); percentages of 'Don't know' and 'No answer' responses not shown in table.

in the security arena. Although some respondents still consider them to be important security providers, they are considerably less prominent than their Liberian counterparts.

Notwithstanding the increased significance of non-state actors in the security arena following the withdrawal of external forces, Tables 5.4 and 5.5 also reveal that most respondents consider the state actors – namely the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) – to be the most important security providers. As in Liberia, the Sierra Leone government and its security forces scored high in the respondents' expectations for the provision of national security. Surprisingly, focus group discussions revealed that the fact that the RSLAF stayed out of sight and was confined to barracks was what accounted for the discussants' favourable assessment of this actor.

Focus group discussants had a relatively negative opinion of the SLP. This deviates from the positive ratings given to the SLP in the survey, where 87.8 per cent of respondents considered them to be very or somewhat important for their personal security. Interviews with local and international

Table 5.6 Sierra Leone – Mapping security actors today (FGD 1–4)

Types of actors	Positive	Neutral/disputed	Negative
State	Chiefdom police; RSLAF	SLP Operational Support Division (OSD); Customs and Excise; Immigration; Parliament; Government; City council	Prisons; Port security; Judiciary
International/ commercial non-state	UNIMATT		
Domestic non-state	Headmen/ Headwomen; Soweis Media Dogs	Secret societies (Poro, Ojeh; hunter militias); Chiefs; Community watch teams; Private security companies	Ex-combatants; Doctors; Criminals; Ghetto youths; Student politics; Political party militia; Potential threats Charles Taylor; NPFL; Yenga border issue; Businessmen; Al-Qaeda connections

*Source: Focus Group Discussions 1–4, Freetown, April–May 2006.

experts provided some clarity and revealed that, despite citizens' high expectations of the national security forces, Sierra Leoneans were well aware of the shortcomings of the SLP. Despite external support and training received from the Commonwealth Police and the civilian police section of UNAMSIL, the SLP's ability to perform its duties is hampered by, among other things, a lack of equipment and insufficient remuneration for officers, which partly explains their poor performance. The same mapping exercises were conducted in Sierra Leone, and Table 5.6 illustrates the combined results obtained from the four focus groups.

By and large, the ranking of the various actors confirms the results from the quantitative survey, such as the positive ratings of the RSLAF, the UN and IMATT. However, a positive rating does not necessarily imply that these actors play a proactive role in security provision – as in the case of the

RSLAF, where the positive ranking was attributable to its invisibility rather than its capacity to provide for national security. Similarly, a neutral or disputed ranking requires elaboration. The community watch teams, for instance, were ranked as *neutral/disputed* not because discussants disagreed on whether they had a positive or negative effect on security; rather, there was unanimous consent that this group of actors had the potential to be a guarantor of security, but the composition of these self-organised squads was key to ensuring that they do not pose a threat to security, as was known to have happened with the civil defence forces (CDF) in the past.

The maps also revealed a number of interesting linkages between the actors identified as playing a role in the security arena. Unlike their Liberian counterparts, secret societies appeared to be integrated into the security arena. Not only did all focus groups attest to clear paths of interaction between this group and other security actors, but research revealed that membership often overlapped; in other words, a policeman or army chief could be a member of a secret society and use this membership to gather security-related information, for example.

Comparing Tables 5.2 and 5.5, one group in particular is perceived in a more positive light in Sierra Leone than in Liberia, namely the private security companies (PSCs). While only 38 per cent of Liberian respondents considered them to play an important role in their security and more than half deemed them irrelevant (52.2 per cent), some 54 per cent of the Sierra Leonean respondents regarded the PSCs as important/very important for their personal security. This difference is partly explained by the fact that PSCs operated throughout the civil war in Sierra Leone, providing security in certain, particularly urban, areas. In contrast, Liberian PSCs were only established after the civil war ended in 2003, hence at the time of the survey most respondents had little, if any, personal experience of this group of actors.

Finally, one particular finding from the research conducted in Sierra Leone provides a practical example of the benefit of taking a bottom-up, inclusive approach to security planning. Survey results revealed that bike riders, many of whom are ex-combatants, received relatively *balanced* results; that is, an almost equal number of respondents considered them either as important, insignificant or a threat to their security. In contrast to the Ghetto Boys, also comprising ex-combatants, this group appears to have a more positive impact on security (see Table 5.5). A majority of 39.1 per cent viewed them positively; a third found that they had no impact on their security, while only 26.6 per cent considered them to be a security threat. These results can be explained if one considers the responses in each of the cities where the survey was conducted. Following conflicts between bike

riders and other transport stakeholders in Makeni and Koidu, civil society groups together with the local police intervened successfully to curb this threat. This led to a rapid decrease in bike-related unrest and explains the favourable results this group obtained in these cities, particularly in Makeni, where 79 per cent of respondents considered them as being important or somewhat important for their security. In comparison, 73.3 per cent of Koidu respondents considered them as positive, whereas only 24 per cent of the respondents in Freetown answered accordingly. In the latter case, most respondents found the bike riders to have no impact on their security (37.1 per cent).

Towards effective security sector transformation: Acknowledging the fallacy of a state monopoly on the use of force

Following the cessation of violent conflict, both countries were faced with a key challenge: the protracted years of civil war as well as the inability of the state to provide the public good of security to all its citizens had over the years led to the emergence of alternative security actors, yet as the findings reveal, it had not diminished the expectations of citizens towards the state to provide for security.

The ‘security dilemma’ caused by this gap between expectations and the reality that the state does not hold the monopoly on the use of force, and remains unlikely to do so for some time to come, was further compounded by the overwhelming importance of external actors in the post-conflict security sector.

Consider Liberia, for example. As the provision of internal security is typically a key state function, the recently reconstituted Armed Forces of Liberia would be expected to take over this role upon UNMIL’s withdrawal. However, it is doubtful that a nominal force of around 2,000 troops will be able to replace the international peacekeepers in all the areas in which they have engaged. Likewise, the involvement of international actors in policing activities, such as training the Liberia National Police, coupled with the fact that the police service currently remains ill-equipped and short-staffed, effectively means that local police forces lack the capacity to provide security without external support. In Liberia this gap is filled, to a certain extent and only in some districts, by civil defence forces known as community watch teams, which take on the responsibility of protecting their local community. In addition, citizens with the necessary financial resources can engage private security firms to protect their property and business premises. The picture is further complicated by the fact that the UN mission

hires PSCs to protect its premises, and these companies sometimes employ ex-combatants on low wages. On the one hand, this creates employment opportunities for potential troublemakers, which would not be available if the mission withdrew altogether; on the other hand, it again reflects the lack of confidence in the state's own security forces. Although the activities of such companies should not be regarded as entirely unproblematic or necessarily positive, they are nonetheless a key actor in providing security in Liberia.

The fact that an external actor was considered the primary security provider poses a number of crucial challenges. How long should the mission be deployed? When and how should the responsibility for national security be handed over to the national security forces? Can the population be confident that the newly trained police officers and soldiers have the capacity and willingness to perform their duties? For there is an inherent, and perhaps irresolvable, dilemma faced when such transformation processes are driven largely by external support: the longer and more intense the involvement of external agencies with the relevant expertise to fulfil such tasks, the more likely their long-term success, yet at the same time disengaging from any such process given the level of engagement inevitably becomes more difficult.

By and large, the research has shown that Liberians and Sierra Leoneans expect state actors to play a leading role in security provision despite their evident shortcomings with regard to capacity, skills and resources. This poses a challenge: state security institutions such as the Sierra Leone Police and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces will not be able to fulfil this function exclusively for some time to come. This jeopardises the potential for successful transformation, in that there is then a risk of what Azarya would have called *disengagement* from the state in this particular arena. If citizens rely increasingly on alternative means of security provision, and these become entrenched in the security architecture not as subordinate and complementary to the state institutions but as a substitute for services the latter are expected to provide, the context for effectively transforming the security sector becomes progressively more difficult.

While the findings attest to the overwhelming perceived importance attributed to state security actors in both countries, they also point to the importance of non-state actors in providing security in areas where state actors are absent. The incorporation of traditional non-state actors such as the secret societies in the security arena appears to be a unique feature of Sierra Leone's post-conflict environment. In terms of security sector transformation, this indicates that it should be easier to acknowledge and integrate such actors into the reform process.

Before identifying the shortcomings in reform initiatives and their actual impact on the security sectors in both countries, one must consider the fact that in any given post-conflict setting, such as that which prevailed in Sierra Leone in 2001–2002 and Liberia in 2003, the immediate objective is the maintenance of an acceptable level of peace and stability. Hence there is little time to prepare well-planned reform or transformation strategies based on accurate, thorough and timely groundwork. That said, the blueprint strategies policy-makers have resorted to in the past were designed with little prior knowledge of the context within which such assistance was to take place. The SSR strategies implemented in Liberia, for example, were generally technical exercises outlining a number of checklist activities, and there was a lack of focus on democratic governance principles to act as a guideline for activities of security organs, and little consideration of local context and dynamics, hence only cosmetic overhaul of security structures.

From the findings outlined here, one could argue that both Liberians and Sierra Leoneans ideally prefer state actors to non-state actors. State security actors – both the police and the military forces – received remarkably positive ratings despite obvious shortcomings in terms of equipment and training as well as their general history of violence and oppression. However, this positive assessment is less a reflection of their actual performance, and should be interpreted more as an indication of the high expectations that citizens have towards these actors. Based on these perceptions and expectations from the local population as regards security provision, one can certainly maintain that, ideally, the state is expected to reassert its monopoly on the use of force.

However, if we are to learn from history, we must acknowledge the fact that, in both countries, the post-colonial state did not hold the monopoly on the use of force before or after the end of the civil war. Instead, (transitional) governments were installed under the direction and supervision of international peacekeeping forces. So the national security forces clearly lacked the capacity to guarantee law, order and the safety and security of citizens, and the empirical results from the fieldwork are a reflection of this state of affairs.

Conclusion

Security sector reform and the demands and challenges faced in such processes are context-specific and ever-changing, and academics and practitioners continue to search for generalisable lessons to be learnt for future security sector transformation operations. This chapter has

demonstrated that the policies and strategies implemented in both countries have not had sufficient focus on the non-state actors involved in the security sector, particularly with regard to their role as security providers.

By and large, reform policies of the lead agencies involved in what is generally termed SSR attached little overall significance to local conditions and actors. Social and political mechanisms, capacities and conflicts at the local level were largely ignored. Since it cannot be expected of a temporarily deployed UN mission or recently trained national police and armed forces to provide security in the medium term, security sector transformation can only work effectively if local conditions are taken into account.

Despite the obvious preference for the state to hold the monopoly on the use of force, there is a marked discrepancy between the expectations of citizens for state security actors to reassert their monopoly on the use of force and the realities on the ground. This reaffirms the analysis of several observers that, in both contexts, the state will not be able to fulfil this role for some time to come. Both the Liberian and Sierra Leonean governments remain heavily dependent on external support, and the (re-)emergence of non-state security actors such as neighbourhood watch teams and traditional security institutions following the withdrawal of international peacekeeping troops in Sierra Leone, as highlighted above, underscores this fact.

A context-sensitive approach calls for a movement away from a sole focus on idealised, far-reaching and long-term SSR programmes towards more realistic mid-term strategies. In light of the improbability of a restoration of a state monopoly on the use of force in the near future, a second-best alternative option is required. Phrased differently, there is a need for mid-term strategies within security sector transformation frameworks.

The findings suggest that in Liberia and Sierra Leone a strong state security sector embedded in sound socio-economic development that takes into consideration the role of non-state actors will work best. Given the fairly divergent perceptions of the different groups, there can be no simple blueprint for the treatment of these sets of security actors. It may be worthwhile to consider some form of cooperation with the more positively rated actors – at least from a mid-term perspective – while other groups (e.g. ex-combatants) may warrant a tougher approach in case their fortunes do not improve sufficiently to reduce the threat they pose.

Moreover, the incorporation of local mechanisms to deal with security threats into transformation measures would enable the implementing actors to address another problematic context-specific characteristic, namely the prevalence of mob justice, which is widely practised in both countries. Research showed that the issue of mob justice is widely accepted at all levels

of society. As the worrying statement of one Liberia expert reveals: ‘You may call it mob justice, but in real life it’s just getting rid of pests.’¹⁷

Research and policy often approach post-conflict societies as passive victims of external forces beyond their control. By treating post-conflict countries as mere objects of Western policy and a staging ground for international interventions, agency is being denied to local political actors and ordinary citizens alike. Local actors are not merely relevant in the degree to which they interact with external forces, and the discourse must go beyond casting them as either ‘spoilers’ or ‘change agents’ to considering them as fundamental if one hopes to achieve sustainable transformation.

Notes

- ¹ The findings presented were drawn from a larger research project conducted between August 2005 and September 2007 entitled ‘Legitimate Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies with a Particular Focus on Liberia and Sierra Leone’, implemented by the GIGA Institute of African Affairs in Hamburg, Germany and funded by the German Foundation for Peace Research. As part of the research team, the author conducted the fieldwork in Liberia and Sierra Leone and used the project as a framework for the development of her doctoral thesis.
- ² Michael Brzoska and Andreas Heinemann-Gruder (2004) ‘Security sector reform and post-conflict reconstruction under international auspices’, in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*. Munster: LIT, p. 121; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/bm_ssr_yearbook2004.cfm.
- ³ Ibid.; Heiner Hänggi (2004) ‘Conceptualising security sector reform and reconstruction’, in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*. Munster: LIT, pp. 1–11; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/bm_ssr_yearbook2004.cfm; David M. Law (2006) ‘The post-conflict security sector’, DCAF Policy Paper 14, pp. 12–15; available at www.dcaf.ch/docs/PP14_post_conflictss.pdf; Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Erhart (2005) ‘Post-conflict societies and the military: Challenges and problems of security sector reform’, in Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Erhart (eds) *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, p. 1.
- ⁴ Max Weber (1958) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 78.
- ⁵ See e.g. Andreas Mehler (2009) ‘The production of insecurity by African security forces: Insights from Liberia and the Central African Republic’, GIGA Working Paper No 114, Hamburg, November, p. 26; available at http://vg02.met.vgwort.de/d3a4f6f9ee7842f0af37838da425331b?l=http://www.giga-hamburg.de/dl/download.php?d=/content/publikationen/pdf/wp114_mehler.pdf.
- ⁶ Andreas Mehler has coined the term ‘oligopoly of violence’ as one such alternative security model. He defines it as ‘a fluctuating number of partly competing, partly cooperating actors of violence of different quality’. The term ‘oligopoly’ is derived from economy theory, where it denotes a market or industry that is dominated by a small number of suppliers. Subsequently, an oligopoly with two suppliers is a duopoly, and one with many is termed a polypoly. Applied to the security context, an oligopoly of violence

signifies a security arena that is occupied by a few security actors – providing either the same kind of security (homogeneous oligopoly) or different kinds of security (heterogeneous oligopoly). Andreas Mehler (2004) ‘Oligopolies of violence in Africa south of the Sahara’, *Nord-Sud Aktuell*, 18(3), pp. 539–548; available at www.gigahamburg.de/content/staff/mehler/publications/mehler_nsa_04-3.pdf.

⁷ Festus B. Aboagye and Martin R. Rupiya (2005) ‘Enhancing post-conflict democratic governance through effective security sector reform in Liberia’, in Festus B. Aboagye and Alhaji M. S. Bah (eds) *A Tortuous Road to Peace. The Dynamics of Regional, UN and International Humanitarian Interventions in Liberia*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, p. 264; available at www.iss.co.za/pubs/Books/TortuousRoad/Contents.htm.

⁸ Victor Azarya (1988) ‘Reordering state-society relations: Incorporation and disengagement’, in Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan (eds) *The Precarious Balance. State and Society in Africa*. Boulder, CO and London: Westview Press, pp. 3–21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰ Incorporation, on the other hand, would entail the integration of traditional, commercial and other alternative security agencies into the state security sector.

¹¹ Field research was conducted in both countries extending over a period of three months each. The findings are based on a multi-method approach combining unique empirical data from a survey poll of 700 respondents in three urban areas in both countries; four in-depth focus group discussions each comprising six to eight participants; and around 60 semi-standardised interviews with elites as well as local and international experts. Due to practical considerations, research was limited to urban areas; thus the figures represented here reflect the perceptions of the countries’ urban populations. However, people who had migrated from the hinterland participated in the focus groups, thus providing some insights of conditions in the rural areas as well. The general consensus on the importance of the UN troops among participants in the discussions suggests that, in this respect at least, a clear rural-urban divide does not exist.

¹² The open-ended question from the survey was designed to encourage the respondents to name the most important group in each case without being influenced or guided towards any particular answer. If one had asked respondents to choose from a list of actors, one may have unwittingly excluded certain actors who in fact play a key role in security from respondents’ perspectives. In a second step, multiple-choice options were offered in order to test the data obtained from the open-ended questions. There was very little difference between the two sets of answers.

¹³ A set of multiple-choice options was provided and respondents were asked to rate each listed actor according to the level of importance it had for their security.

¹⁴ This is reflected in the finding that while some 20 per cent believed the armed forces to have no impact on their security, almost two-thirds regarded them as important for their personal security. This seems to reflect a wish among the respondents for the Armed Forces of Liberia to play a prominent role rather than a rating of its actual performance.

¹⁵ The results from the focus groups have been compiled in such a manner as to reflect the overall ratings given to each set of actors in all four focus groups. Given that this was a qualitative exercise, ratings are based on the outcomes of the entire exercise. In other words, UNMIL, for example, was rated positively in all four discussions, hence it was grouped in the positive category. Similarly, ex-combatants were rated negatively by all four focus groups. Ideally, there should have been four categories to separate adequately the neutral/disputed actors, for there was a need in retrospect to differentiate between actors considered to be both positive and negative security actors depending on the

circumstances, and those actors where discussants could not agree on how they should be rated.

¹⁶ The UN Mission in Sierra Leone, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group and the (British-led) International Military Advisory and Training Team, respectively.

¹⁷ Interview with Rufus Kaine, 16 December 2005.

PART III

**TRANSFORMATION BEYOND
THE STATE**

Chapter 6

Operationalising Norms for Security Sector Transformation: The Role of Codes of Conduct

Jean-Jacques Gacond and Okey Uzoechina

Introduction

At the very heart of security sector transformation (SST) are norms and standards of behaviour targeted at positively changing the attitudes of security actors. Such norms and standards may be encapsulated in codes of conduct as a non-binding affirmation of commitment to implement measures contained therein. No code of conduct by itself, no matter how well intentioned and implemented, will guarantee compliance with norms for good governance of the security sector by all security actors. However, codes increase the probability that people will behave in accordance with envisioned standards of conduct. Codes of conduct are therefore an invaluable operational tool in transforming the security sector in states without a long tradition of democratic norms and practice. Given the myriad of security challenges and the important democratic deficit faced in many national contexts in West Africa, this chapter zooms in on efforts at operationalising norms for SST in the region under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),¹ while drawing comparative analysis from the Southern African region.²

The objective of this chapter is to examine strategies and critical success factors in operationalising norms encapsulated in the ECOWAS Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa,³ drawing lessons and insights from the approach taken with the Code of Conduct for Police Officials⁴ adopted by the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO), which is more advanced in terms of implementation. Although regional security treaties, frameworks and other instruments are a common feature in the regional economic communities (RECs), regional codes of conduct are very few in

Africa. The ECOWAS and SARPCCO codes are therefore novel initiatives that have the potential to become models for other regions. The preamble to the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa makes it clear that it is intended as an agreement on ‘common principles and standards defining politico-security relations’. With South Africa’s advancement in articulating security policy, the Southern African region presents a slightly different picture of states at broadly different phases of security development. Recognising the need to promote professionalisation of police forces and disseminate best practices across its 12 members,⁵ SARPCCO adopted the Code of Conduct for Police Officials in August 2001.

A focus on security sector *transformation* helps to emphasise that there is a wide gap between making strategic-level commitments on norms and standards of behaviour at the regional level on the one hand, and facilitating the infusion of such norms and standards into the operations of armed and security forces at the country level and changing the attitudes and conduct of security operatives at the individual level on the other. Beyond the sense of political accomplishment that follows the adoption of codes of conduct, this chapter argues for an increased focus on strategies for operationalising norms encapsulated in the codes mentioned above. The first section highlights the importance of codes of conduct in the context of SST, and underlines the importance of a regional dimension to SST in both West and Southern Africa. The second section examines the role of codes of conduct in SST particularly as it relates to consolidating constitutional democracy, strengthening civil-military relations and promoting respect for human rights and the rule of law. It also links the ECOWAS Code of Conduct to the broader regional security governance architecture and other related codes at the national level. The third section compares the ECOWAS and SARPCCO codes in terms of their purpose, scope, approach, form and implementation mechanisms. The fourth section draws lessons from the opportunities and pitfalls of the SARPCCO Code of Conduct for the implementation stage of the ECOWAS code. It argues for the need to develop a clear strategy for promotion and dissemination of the code, advocates its timely domestication and further explores how to develop action plans and specific indicators based on the code’s objectives and main elements in order to monitor progress and evaluate its impact. The concluding section identifies political and security factors that may constitute obstacles to achieving the ambitious aspirations of the codes of conduct, and argues for expanded stakeholder participation to include civil society, the media and civilian oversight bodies in the monitoring and review process.

The role of codes of conduct in security sector transformation

Codes of conduct usually contain general obligations and admonitions, but they also serve a greater role. They are practical expressions of fundamental objectives and directive principles of desired policy.⁶ In other words, they often capture a vision of excellence, of what individuals, institutions and societies should be striving for and what needs to be done to achieve set objectives.⁷ In the sphere of security, codes of conduct are the ultimate terms of reference for security personnel and the most important statements of civic expectation. They can be an effective tool for transforming the security sector in societies with no prior established culture of democratic security governance, or where the foundations of such a culture have been so shaken over time that they can hardly support any piecemeal reform agenda.⁸ *Transformation* rather than reform is called for in challenging environments where the security sector is situated in 'barely enabling, less-than-ideal political, security, economic and social contexts'.⁹ Such contexts include societies that undergo serious political transitions from war to peace, from war economies to market economies or from authoritarianism to democracy. Codes of conduct attempt to reduce the gap between real and ideal situations into a workable compact.

The intractability of insecurity and conflict in many African states is best seen as an outcome of interlinked and complex phenomena with multiple layers of causality. The wave of democratisation since the end of the Cold War brought to the fore the yawning security gap and huge democratic deficit facing most African states. In the states where they held sway, the armed forces and security personnel had been indoctrinated to ensure regime security even at the risk of violation of fundamental human rights of citizens, thereby engendering a perception of security as anti-people. The armed forces of some states were undisciplined, poorly trained, poorly remunerated and, ironically, contributed in no small measure to the security problems within states. Today there is still a lack of trust between the civilian population and the state security services whose primary role it is to safeguard lives and property. Lack of understanding of the distinct but complementary roles of the military component, the civilian authorities and citizens has made states in Africa still prone to civil unrest and political instability, civil wars, *coups d'état* and military or even civilian authoritarian rule.

Untangling the insecurity knot therefore requires multiple layers of engagement feeding off a wide range of policy options and operations targeted at effecting far-reaching political change. A challenge to addressing insecurity is the negative perception of security and the place of the security

Table 6.1 Snapshot of the ECOWAS Code of Conduct

Chapters	Subject matter	Main elements
Chapter I (Articles 1-4)	Definitions and general principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of ‘armed forces’ and ‘security services’ • Inviolability of national integrity (Article 1) • Civilian supremacy (Article 2) • National cohesion (Article 3) • Affirmation of human rights and IHL (Article 4)
Chapter II (Articles 5-10)	Armed forces and security services, human rights and international humanitarian law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in constitutional law, human rights, IHL and peacekeeping (Article 5) • Individual responsibility (Article 6) • Humanitarian assistance (Article 7) • Human rights in periods of emergency (Article 8) • Prohibition of unlawful acts against the individual (Article 9) • Commensurate use of force (Article 10)
Chapter III (Articles 11-27)	Regulatory framework governing civil-military relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty to constitutional authority (Article 13) • Operational confidentiality (Article 14) • Non-execution of illegal orders (Article 16) • Transparency and accountability in security management (Article 19) • Protection of lives and property (Article 20) • Contribution to national development (Article 23) • Security, civil society and media (Article 24) • Free movement and harmonisation of border control measures (Article 25) • Support to humanitarian assistance (Article 26)
Chapter IV (Articles 28-33)	Relations between the armed forces and the security services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between uniformed personnel (Article 28) • Policing in peacetime (Article 29) • Policing in times of crisis (Article 30) • Rules of engagement in times of crisis (Article 31) • Joint operations (Article 32) • Enhanced linkages and communication (Article 33)
Chapter V (Articles 34-37)	Implementation and propagation of the code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination and propagation (Article 34) • Monitoring and oversight (Article 35) • Biannual review (Article 36) • Codification/domestication (Article 37)

sector in society. Security is still perceived overwhelmingly by citizens, governments and security actors alike as a closed unit, often disarticulated from the wider society, within which decisions have to be taken of necessity in a confidential rather than transparent manner, and actions have to be justified in the interests of the state which more often than not is wrongly understood to exclude the interests of the individual.¹⁰ Such warped perception invariably affects the way security is managed, deployed, controlled and evaluated. The ramifications of the negative perception of security are felt in all states, whether in conflict, post-conflict, authoritarian or democratising polities. In turn, the negative perception of the security sector as a 'state within a state' partly stems from the institutional culture, actions and conduct of security actors – both past and present – in relation to governments, the political class and citizens.

Security sector transformation should therefore entail a fundamental shift in the way security is perceived, managed, controlled and overseen, coupled with positive change in the attitude and conduct of security actors. However, contemplating a shift from negative to positive institutional and individual behavioural patterns is always a great challenge. In the toolbox of policy instruments for enabling and effecting such a shift, codes of conduct come closest to operationalising norms for SST. Codes of conduct represent a first step in facilitating the infusion of norms and standards of behaviour into the operations of armed and security forces at the country level.

The ECOWAS Code of Conduct summarised in Table 6.1 is not *per se* a legally binding instrument. It is an effort to provide specific confidence-building measures and facilitate the infusion of democratic norms into the behaviour of the armed forces and security services in West Africa. As such, it does not create any independent sanctions regime. However, the code reaffirms standards of conduct and already existing democratic constitutional principles, tenets of human rights and international humanitarian law, international and regional treaties and customary international law. Logically, the enforcement procedures inherent in those systems of laws would apply in specific cases. Although a common feature of the politico-security matrix in the West African region has been the high incidence of *coups d'état*, the scope of the code is not limited to addressing this symptom alone. On the contrary, it aims to engender the conditions that would deter unconstitutional change of government, enhance civil-military relations and promote democratic civilian control of the security sector. The code was endorsed at the seventeenth meeting of the chiefs of defence staff in October 2006 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. More stakeholder engagement and buy-in continued with the adoption of the code by the Committee of Chiefs

Table 6.2 Snapshot of the SARPCCO Code of Conduct

Principles	Subject matter	Main elements
Articles 1-6	Respect for all human life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for human rights (Article 1) • Non-discrimination (Article 2) • Use of force (Article 3) • Torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 4) • Protection of persons in custody (Article 5) • Victims of crime (Article 6)
Article 7	Reverence for the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the rule of law and code of conduct (Article 7)
Articles 8-9	Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness (Article 8) • Corruption and abuse of power (Article 9)
Articles 10-12	Service excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of duties (Article 10) • Professional conduct (Article 11) • Confidentiality (Article 12)
Article 13	Respect for property rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property rights (Article 13)

of Security Services at its constitutive meeting in May 2009 in Dakar, Senegal, and by the ministers responsible for security in November 2009 in Abuja, Nigeria. It is hoped that the code will be adopted by the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council and the final stamp of political legitimacy given to the process by the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of West Africa at its summit in December 2010 before the code is implemented.¹¹ Though a regional document, it is addressed to the armed forces and security services of ECOWAS member states and will be implemented at the national level.

In contrast, as illustrated by Table 6.2, the SARPCCO Code of Conduct is a set of minimum standards for police forces and services in the region. It is addressed only to the police forces and services of SARPCCO members; it does not apply to the armed forces and other security services. Its scope is therefore limited to matters of internal security, law and order

and does not extend to defence, territorial integrity or civil-military relations. Post-colonial regimes often placed much emphasis on the development of military powers at the expense of developing civilian policing authority. The SARPCCO code therefore represents a commitment to encouraging ethical and professional policing in the region. It also seeks to address the high incidence of violence and crime frequently associated with countries emerging from civil conflict. The code refers to fundamental human rights principles, accountability and management of police, use of force and police power, and acknowledges police responsibilities in protecting and serving members of the public and victims of crime. The code was adopted at the sixth General Assembly of SARPCCO in Mauritius in August 2001, and each SARPCCO member country undertook to implement the code nationally.

National, regional and continental codes of conduct: Complementarities or redundancy?

The international security architecture can be pictured as a model of five concentric circles. In real life this is a geopolitical complex: the local space is a subset of the national; the national is a subset of the regional; the regional is a subset of the continental; this is in turn a subset of the global.¹² It follows naturally that if there is a toxic leak in one circle, it will diffuse into and contaminate its surrounding environment. But human groupings are not inanimate circles and so take self-preservative measures. States bear primary responsibility for providing and ensuring security within their juridical borders. However, in much of Africa the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of force within the local spaces which are closest to the people has been so eroded that states cannot guarantee internal peace and the establishment of law, order and good governance. When states are faced with compelling security challenges or gaps but are either unwilling or unable to address them, it naturally falls to the regions, which will bear the most direct consequence if nothing is done, to take necessary remedial measures. Since sovereignty lies with the state, the region cannot supplant state authority; it can only support and supplement it in building capacity and establishing norms for security governance that would contribute to enhanced security at the local and national levels. The unique place of the regions as middlemen in the international security architecture – as both alternative and streamlined entry points for security governance to the constituting states and building blocks in the continental security structure –

makes the region a desirable and realistic hub for the elaboration and transmission of common security standards and the promotion of SST.

National codes of conduct: The challenge of transforming from the inside

States and societies define and pursue security according to their peculiar contexts and needs. Thus codes of conduct are relevant instruments for states whether in conflict, post-conflict or democratising phases. Even where universally or regionally defined norms and standards of conduct for security actors exist, states in exercise of their sovereignty have to adopt and adapt such norms and standards before they can become applicable to the states.

Codes of conduct of varying scope and purposes have been adopted by states in West Africa at different points in their political history. At the inception of the Nigerian civil war in 1967, the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria gave an operational code of conduct for the Nigerian army which in effect was a directive on the conduct of military operations. The code emphasised loyalty and discipline of the armed forces, territorial integrity, and the protection of civilian populations.¹³ During the conduct of the war, officers were declared by the code to be duty bound to observe Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions in all their actions. The Code of Conduct for Malian Armed and Security Forces was adopted in 1997. One of the objectives of this code was to engender a smooth transition from a tradition of authoritarian government to a culture of democratic governance and national construction. The code concludes that ideals such as peace, democracy and national unity will never be achieved without the effective participation of armed and security forces. It specifies the role of the military in the evolving Malian democratic society. In particular, it states that the principal mission of the Malian armed forces is to prepare for and guarantee, if necessary by armed force, the defence of the homeland, the republican form of the state, its democratic heritage and the highest interests of the nation.

However, when we talk of security sector transformation it is noteworthy that the objects of transformation are state security institutions. While it is true that the inspiration for transformation should preferably come from within the state or the state security institutions, there is also a danger that the security establishment in itself may be resistant to positive change and thus form an obstacle to transformation. In such cases, the real potential for transformation will only be fully realised when the strongest instruments or channels of resistance are removed or circumvented. It is not improbable that political commitment to propagating the norms of civilian control and democratic governance of the security sector expressed in a code

of conduct will be undermined by the agenda of some undemocratic regimes or political interest groups – some even within the armed forces and security services – that see it as a challenge to the politico-security status quo from which they benefit. In West Africa today, one can still point to a few civilian authoritarian regimes, military junta and a plethora of non-state security actors that, though falling outside the ambit of a national code of conduct, constitute an essential component of the regional security environment.

Where elements within the state or its security sector are resistant to transformation, the regional level presents an alternative entry point to define norms collectively, establish common security standards and form a platform for security cooperation among states while still taking into account the peculiar socio-political context and needs of individual states. Beyond this normative function, regional intergovernmental organizations such as ECOWAS are known to mount pressure on offending states to abide by agreed principles of democracy and good governance, democratic control of armed forces and zero tolerance of power acquired by unconstitutional means. The ECOWAS code seeks to transmit these norms and standards down to the security institutions of its member states, including those that are unwilling or unable to effect a transformation of their security sector. Appeal to a higher level of legitimacy where there are legitimacy gaps at the state level (to use recent examples, the *coup d'état* of February 2010 in Niger and the challenge to constituted authority in Guinea-Bissau by the military in April 2010) will most likely be seen as a salvaging or complementary measure rather than redundant. In the light of this, operationalising the ECOWAS code will inspire and support efforts at the national level to infuse democratic principles into the operations and conduct of state security actors.

Regional codes of conduct: The operational challenge in West Africa

West Africa has witnessed 44 successful *coups d'état* since January 1955, more than any other region in Africa.¹⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone have also seen civil wars in which the activities of ungovernable state security forces and other non-state armed groups that opposed the politico-security order had disastrous consequences for the peoples and states of West Africa. Despite commendable inroads in promoting lasting peace, stability and security in West Africa, spearheaded by ECOWAS, recent military incursions into the sphere of governance in Niger, the Republic of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau have put a question mark on the weight of political commitment to the regional security objectives and underlined the challenge of operationalising the norms encapsulated in regional security instruments.

Against this background, the ECOWAS Code of Conduct is the latest instalment in a long line of efforts at the regional level to plug the security gap and lock in democratic gains in some West African states. The ECOWAS code in essence draws from and builds upon earlier policy instruments relating to regional security and good governance. Primary among these is the ECOWAS Revised Treaty of 1993, Article 58 which prescribes the need to safeguard and consolidate regional peace, security and stability. Also pivotal to the regional peace and security architecture is the 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The mechanism establishes an inextricable link between economic and social development and the security of peoples and states. Furthermore, the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001, supplementary to the mechanism, elaborates constitutional convergence principles shared by all ECOWAS member states. Among these principles are separation of governmental powers into executive, legislative and judicial arms; depoliticisation of the armed forces and their subjection to the command of a legally constituted political authority; and zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means.

The latest addition to the regional security policy architecture, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), was adopted in January 2008. The ECPF is intended as ‘a comprehensive operational conflict prevention and peace-building strategy’,¹⁵ yet there is no dispute that this strategy needs to be further developed into readily usable operational tools. Although the draft code of conduct predates the ECPF, paragraphs 72–76 of the ECPF¹⁶ on security governance demonstrate that the code will be an important step in transforming regional security policy instruments and strategies into practical tools for security sector operations.

A fundamental operational challenge in implementing and transmitting the ECOWAS code at the national level is the limitation constituted by sovereign national borders. Codes of conduct that have application in more than one state form an international regulatory regime that is significantly different from binding legal regimes that contain detailed proscriptions and sanctions.¹⁷ Although this raises a challenge in implementing and ensuring compliance with codes of conduct, codes generally serve as roadmaps for security policy. The target should therefore be further development of national laws in line with the international regime. The principle of complementarity in ECOWAS relations with its member states seeks to strengthen state capacity rather than supplant state authority.¹⁸ It therefore appears that ownership (by adoption and domestication), active participation, concurrence or at least acquiescence of state authorities is

needed before the code can be implemented. Intrusive measures beyond dissemination, coordination and facilitation of activities in member states by ECOWAS will likely be questioned. The ECPF recognises this challenge by restating that ECOWAS member states bear primary responsibility for peace and security, but proffers a futuristic solution: ‘the tensions between sovereignty and supranationality, and between regime security and human security, shall be progressively resolved in favour of supranationality and human security respectively’.¹⁹

Building blocks for the continental structure

Moving further outwards in the concentric circles, Article 16 of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council Protocol and the Common Africa Defence and Security Policy stress that regional mechanisms will form the ‘building blocks’ of the AU’s peace and security architecture, including the African Standby Force. This more or less shifts some responsibility to prevent, resolve and respond to threats to international peace and security emanating from states to the regions. In terms of operationalising norms for SST, there are practical reasons that justify a national approach complemented by a nuanced regional approach guided by common objectives.²⁰

First, Africa is a large continent, with the AU presently composed of 54 member states. These states are widely diverse in terms of their territorial size, colonial history, external linkages, political structure, economic strength, ethnic composition, internal cohesion and internal security needs. Needless to say, it is much more probable that 15 contiguous states in West Africa can agree and follow through on ‘common principles and standards defining politico-security relations’ and security cooperation than that the 54 member states of the AU can do so.

Secondly, since the codes target the transformation of not only institutional behaviour but also individual conduct and attitude, the continental structure may be considered too far removed from these targets to follow through with activities that would bring about infusion of the norms encapsulated in the codes. Ownership of international initiatives targeted at operationalising norms for SST and therefore commitment to those initiatives is better assured at the regional level, which is closer to the national and local security spaces than the continental level. This is not to say that the AU cannot play a key role in reaffirming universally applicable normative standards of conduct in line with international humanitarian law and human rights. In fact, in agreeing to and transmitting norms of universal application, it is much easier – though not necessarily more successful – to

adopt a top-down rather than a bottom-up track. A top-down approach aims to translate a broad framework and common standards from the global or continental level down to the national and local levels while adapting it to peculiarities of context. For instance, the UN General Assembly on 17 December 1979 adopted the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, which is non-binding and generic in nature rather than context-specific.²¹ For the UN code to have application in any state it needs to be adopted into the body of laws or practice of the state, and for it to have any operational relevance it needs to be further adapted to the circumstances and institutional nuances of the state. A bottom-up approach proceeds from a more flexible, nuanced consideration of what works in particular local and national contexts while remaining faithful to universal standards. While the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, the regional level presents a convenient meeting point between top-down and bottom-up norm setting.

The security needs of the West African region are very different to those of Southern Africa or East Africa and the Great Lakes, therefore any hope of success in operationalising norms for SST on the continent should not be based on a monolithic continental model. While every region in Africa has had its fair share of conflict and political instability, the practical expressions of the conflict dynamics and post-conflict symptoms reveal nuanced needs and points of emphasis. Southern Africa has become a reference point for high levels of crime and violence in the post-apartheid era; West Africa is witnessing an unprecedented rising trend in transborder organised crime and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the aftermath of long periods of armed conflict; and in addition to longstanding feuds between itinerant nomads and farming communities, East Africa and the extended Great Lakes region now battle with piracy and the growth of terrorist networks stemming from large swathes of ungoverned spaces. The AU, however, remains an appropriate body for advancing the African voice on SST in the global security dialogue and, significantly, for resource mobilisation to enable the operationalisation of the codes at the national and regional levels. Conversely, the centrifugal force of regionalism which now sees the African continent carved up into sizeable but better manageable RECs operates to bring the message and the process of transformation closer to state institutions and to peoples.

Comparing the ECOWAS and SARPCCO codes

While both the ECOWAS and the SARPCCO codes of conduct are regional, there are wide-ranging differences between the two in terms of their scope, structure, approach and content.

In terms of scope, while some of the subject matters addressed by both codes are similar, each works in a different political and security context. Whereas the ECOWAS code is addressed to the armed forces and security services in West Africa, the SARPCCO code addresses only the police forces and services of SARPCCO members. The ECOWAS code thus has a more comprehensive application to all security providers acting in the name of the state; provisions on joint operations and collaboration between armed forces and security services which feature in the ECOWAS code are not covered in the SARPCCO code.²² As such, the scope of the SARPCCO code is limited to matters of internal security, human rights, the rule of law, and law and order; unlike the ECOWAS code, it does not extend to matters of defence, territorial integrity and civil-military relations.²³ The scope is reflected in the length of the respective documents: while the ECOWAS code contains 37 articles, the SARPCCO code is a concise document consisting of only 13 articles.

In terms of structure, there are striking differences between the two codes. First, while the SARPCCO code proceeds from and is annexed to a resolution²⁴ of the police chiefs which also contains the agreed approach to implementation of the code,²⁵ the approach to implementation of the ECOWAS code is contained in the body of the document.²⁶ While the position of the implementation mechanism in relation to the body of the code does not in any way affect the importance attached to actual implementation, it clearly reflects the process of development of the code. The 2001 resolution of the SARPCCO police chiefs was the final stamp of authority required for the coming into effect and implementation of the code. On the other hand, the ECOWAS code is still at a less advanced stage, being the outcome of a much more complex and broad-based process. The sheer scope of the ECOWAS code necessitates that it be adopted by the ECOWAS chiefs of defence staff, the Committee of Chiefs of Security Services, the ministers responsible for security, and finally by a resolution of the Authority of Heads of State and Government in West Africa before it can be implemented at the national level. It is hoped that the bottom-up process of adoption will promote buy-in by political and military authorities, good faith in the process and political commitment to its implementation.

However, a consequence of the simplified and unilateral approach taken by SARPCCO in adopting its code is that the processes of

implementation and monitoring are also thereby simplified. Monitoring and oversight of implementation of the code and annual reporting on activities based on it are the concerns of internal organs of SARPCCO: the legal and training subcommittees.²⁷ In contrast, under the ECOWAS code the monitoring and oversight of implementation rests with ECOWAS rather than internal structures of the armed forces and security services.²⁸ It is envisaged that each ECOWAS member state will appoint a national independent ombudsperson to monitor implementation of the code and take appropriate measures following any violations. A related consequence of the scope and process of adoption of the ECOWAS code is seen in its review process. The code recommends the convening of biannual meetings to assess implementation at the local, national and regional levels.²⁹ Participants at these reviews should include security experts and representatives of governments, armed forces and security services and civil society, including non-governmental organisations, the media and other relevant stakeholders. The biannual meetings will consider reports to be submitted by each ECOWAS member state on the implementation of the code. In contrast, the SARPCCO code only establishes an annual reporting process by the legal and training subcommittees, without making provision for multistakeholder review.

Each code envisages the development of comprehensive training plans and curricula based on the code.³⁰ The articulation of norms for SST into portable manuals and other easy-to-understand derivatives is a way of getting the message across to the end users in a simple, standardised form. In 2003 SARPCCO, in cooperation with the Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa (SAHRIT), published a resource book and training manual for police officers based on the code and several training sessions have already been conducted.³¹ SAHRIT also published a proposal for monitoring indicators for human rights and policing in Southern Africa in 2005. To advance this, a set of indicators for monitoring implementation of the SARPCCO code has also been developed by the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum. The indicators and monitoring tool are for the use of oversight practitioners, civil society and managers within the police to assess achievements in implementation of the code, as well as to assist police officials and policing units in meeting their obligations in respect of the code. While implementation of the ECOWAS code will commence only when it is adopted by the Authority of Heads of State and Government in West Africa, the trend of harmonisation of policy and standardisation of police training set by the Southern African region is a worthy example to emulate.³²

The ECOWAS code provides that it will be translated into the working languages of ECOWAS,³³ and widely disseminated through

national sensitisation campaigns using the appropriate media. With respect to domestication at the national level, this code remains non-committal. Whereas the ECOWAS code merely states that the code ‘shall be implemented with an eye toward its domestication’,³⁴ the SARPCCO code places a positive obligation on each member country to take necessary measures to implement the code nationally and to ‘adopt [*sic*] it to its own national requirements, if necessary’.³⁵ To bridge the implementation gap for the ECOWAS code, preliminary negotiations have already commenced to develop a regional framework and plan of action in readiness for its adoption, to be complemented by national plans of action. This step will ensure that a clear path for implementation of the code and transmission of the norms contained therein at the national level is charted.

In terms of content, there are areas addressed in the ECOWAS code which are not reflected in the SARPCCO code. Notably, these differences stem from the wider scope and peculiar socio-political context of West Africa. To advance the supplementary protocol, Article 2 of the ECOWAS code directly addresses the skewed civil-military relations in some West African states by endorsing the subordination of the armed forces to constitutionally and democratically elected political authorities. Furthermore, to curb the high incidence of military incursion into the sphere of governance, the same provision places matching prohibitive injunctions on the two groups competing for power: political authorities and groups shall refrain from undue interference in or extending partisan politics to the operations of the armed forces and security services; conversely, armed forces and security services personnel shall observe strict neutrality in partisan political matters. In excess of caution, Article 13 of the code reiterates loyalty and obedience by the personnel of armed forces and security services to democratically elected constitutional authority.

To promote a relationship of trust and an understanding of the complementary roles of the civilian population, civil society and the media on the one hand and armed forces and security services on the other, the ECOWAS code inaugurates confidence-building measures focusing specifically on public relations, respect for the dignity of the human person, corporate integrity and social responsibility.³⁶ Primacy of the security of the person – as opposed to regime security – spans the gamut of the code. Significantly, to ensure smooth and efficient provision of security by various state security actors, the code spells out the constitutional responsibilities of uniformed personnel, the rules of engagement and collaboration in both peacetime and times of crisis, involvement in joint operations and measures to enhance linkages and communication.³⁷

Critical success factors for the ECOWAS Code of Conduct

The ECOWAS code holds out a potential to streamline security policy, thereby promoting common standards across the 15 member states. It would crystallise the expectations and obligations of civilian and military components of the society to one another, and also of the armed forces on the one hand and the security services on the other, in order to evolve a functional synergy. However, an agreement on common principles and standards in any sphere does not in itself guarantee compliance, much less in the sphere of civil-military relations. Beyond domestication, achieving the transformative purpose of the code will depend on the will of the political leadership in West African states to support a project of high visibility, such as by mass producing and disseminating glossy manuals; on the readiness of the military command and security services to propagate norms of conduct to hundreds of thousands of officers who were not privy to the drafting and adoption of the code; and on the ability and the attitude of civil society actors in following through and ensuring compliance of both civilian and military authorities with the agreed principles and standards.

Given these dynamics and other numerous interacting factors in the politico-security matrix of the region, it would only be realistic to gauge the impact of the ECOWAS Code of Conduct with specific, observable and measurable indicators rather than on desirable but remotely connected outcomes such as zero incidence of *coups d'état* in the future or (ab) use of the military by political authorities to entrench regime security.³⁸ Even legally binding regional instruments with a sanctions regime, such as the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001, have not guaranteed this outcome. To be sure, the code forbids the involvement of the armed forces and security services in partisan politics and frowns upon any form of unconstitutional change of government, but its purpose and scope extend far beyond this narrow issue and is targeted more at creating the conditions that deter unconstitutional change in government and promote democratic civilian control of the security sector. Critical success factors in the next steps of the ECOWAS code should therefore include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Timely adoption of the code by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of West Africa. This will engender political commitment to the code and create the necessary momentum to drive its implementation.
- Strategic partnership with the various ministries of defence and internal security and with the military and security commands in

disseminating the code, developing training manuals and curricula, and propagating the 'agreed' norms of civil-military relations to the rank and file. The pilot stage offers a good opportunity to test the workability of this arrangement. Active participation and concurrence of state security authorities are a prerequisite for successful implementation of the code.

- High levels of awareness of the code and its normative provisions among armed forces and security personnel (measured over time), including a clear understanding of the role of security actors in a constitutional democracy and the implications of the international humanitarian law and human rights provisions of the code.
- A robust communication strategy that enhances civil society appreciation of its role in the politico-security balance of West African states, especially as it relates to monitoring activities of the security sector in order to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Expanded stakeholder participation in the stipulated biannual reviews of the code to assess its implementation at the local, national and subregional levels. It is, however, too limiting that Article 36 of the code envisages a one-off high-level biannual meeting that will consider official reports to be submitted by each ECOWAS member state on implementation. Such reports can hardly be representative of the real situation on the ground.
- Ultimately, domestication of the code by the parliaments of member states will be an opportunity to enhance the legitimacy of the code and balance expectations of the security sector by the parliamentarians who represent the citizens. It will also allow consideration of the peculiarities of each state while still maintaining common principles and standards across the region.

Conclusion

Codes of conduct play a direct and significant role in operationalising norms of security sector transformation. The Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa, though a less than perfect document, is a well-conceived and timely instrument for promoting the subordination of the armed forces and security services to democratically elected civilian authorities and clarifying other thorny aspects of civil-military relations. The bottom-up process of drafting and adoption of the code has ensured a certain degree of buy-in, if not ownership of the process, at the strategic (experts, ministerial and security management) level. It is hoped that this process,

capped by timely adoption by the Authority of Heads of State and Government in West Africa, will engender the requisite political commitment to implement and propagate the code across ECOWAS member states. The real test for the ECOWAS code therefore lies in the next stages of its evolution: implementation and propagation.

To ensure success in the next stages, important lessons should be drawn from the more operationally advanced – albeit limited in scope – SARPCCO Code of Conduct for Police Officials, for which a training manual and set of indicators have already been developed. It is recommended that stakeholder participation in the ECOWAS process be widened with a robust communication strategy and the biannual reviews prescribed in the code. To manage expectations as to what the code can or cannot achieve, it is also necessary to spell out clearly the purpose, scope, objectives, challenges, next steps and prospects of the code at the outset. With the adoption, testing and implementation of the ECOWAS Code of Conduct at the national level, the West African region might be just a few steps away from transforming engagement with non-state security actors that operate at the substate level: ethnic militias, vigilante groups, private military and security companies, armed religious sects and mercenaries. Success in implementing and propagating the code would create the necessary political will and momentum to address these more thorny aspects of security governance.

Notes

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- ¹ Member states of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.
 - ² The regional level is particularly important as an entry point for translating norms into practical standards of behaviour across states.
 - ³ Draft Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa; available at www.dcaf.ch/code_conduct-armed-forces-west-africa/WestAfrica_CoC.pdf.
 - ⁴ SARPCCO Code of Conduct for Police Officials; available at www.kubatana.net/docs/demgg/sarpcco_code_of_conduct.pdf.
 - ⁵ The members of SARPCCO are Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
 - ⁶ In the field of peace and security, desired policy would for instance relate to improved civil-military relations, professionalisation of security forces and promoting respect for fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law.
 - ⁷ Stuart Gilman (2005) 'Ethics codes and codes of conduct as tools for promoting and ethical and professional public service: Comparative successes and lessons', prepared for PREM, World Bank, p. 3; available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/33/35521418.pdf.
 - ⁸ For more on the significance of SST rather than SSR (security sector reform) as a point of departure to address challenges relating to the security sector and its governance, see

generally Nicole Ball and Kayode Fayemi (eds) (2005) *Security Sector Governance in Africa: A Handbook*, particularly Chapter 7; available at www.ssronline.org/ssg_a/index.cfm?id=20&p=20.

- ⁹ Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (eds) (2009) *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*. Geneva: DCAF, p. 3; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?ord279=title&lng=en&id=109872&nav1=5.
- ¹⁰ Adedeji Ebo (2004) 'Security sector reform as an instrument of sub-regional transformation in West Africa', in Alan Bryden and Hänggi Heiner (eds) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*. Geneva: DCAF, pp. 66–67; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?lng=en&id=18849&nav1=4.
- ¹¹ The first statement in the preamble of the ECOWAS code reads: 'We, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)...' A meeting of the MSC usually precedes an ordinary summit of the Authority which inter alia would consider and adopt the major recommendations of the MSC.
- ¹² Herbert Wulf argues for a system of segmented public monopoly of legitimate force with a clear division of labour at all levels of security governance, i.e. local, national, regional and global. Herbert Wulf (2006) 'Good governance beyond borders: Creating a multi-level public monopoly of legitimate force', DCAF Occasional Paper No. 10, pp. 35ff; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?lng=en&id=18340&nav1=5.
- ¹³ Cf. the Fourth Geneva Convention which affords protection to civilians, including in occupied territories; available at www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/7c4d08d9b287a42141256739003e636b/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5.
- ¹⁴ Patrick McGowan (2006) 'Coups and conflicts in West Africa, 1955–2004: Part II, empirical findings', *Armed Forces and Society*, 32(2), p. 236; available at <http://afs.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/32/2/234>. Over 45 per cent of all coup attempts in sub-Saharan Africa have occurred in West Africa, though the states in the region represent only 33 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 states. Only Cape Verde and Senegal stand out in the region for their lack of coup activity.
- ¹⁵ Paragraph 7(a), The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08, available at http://www.ecowas.int/publications/en/framework/ECPF_final.pdf
- ¹⁶ These paragraphs seek to promote accountability, transparency and professionalism of security forces and human security.
- ¹⁷ See generally Abram Chayes and Antonia H. Chayes (1995) *The New Sovereignty: Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ¹⁸ Paragraph 115, ECPF.
- ¹⁹ Paragraph 4, ECPF
- ²⁰ See, however, Adedeji Ebo (2005) 'Towards a code of conduct for armed and security forces in Africa: Opportunities and challenges', DCAF Policy Paper 5; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?lng=en&id=18399&nav1=5. This paper argues for a continental code of conduct within the context of general trends in civil-military relations in Africa.
- ²¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 34/169, annex, 34 UN GAOR Supp. (No. 46) at 186, UN Doc. A/34/46 (1979); available at www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/i1ccleo.htm.
- ²² Chapter IV, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ²³ The primacy given to these issues is reflected in their inclusion in Articles 1–3, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ²⁴ The annexed code is thereby made an integral part of the resolution.

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- ²⁵ Paragraphs 1–6 of the SARPCCO Resolution.
- ²⁶ Chapter V, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ²⁷ Paragraphs 3 and 6 of the SARPCCO Resolution.
- ²⁸ Article 35, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ²⁹ Article 36, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ³⁰ Paragraph 4, SARPCCO Resolution; Article 34, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ³¹ SARPCCO and Child and Law Foundation (2003) *Human Rights and Policing: Towards Ethical Policing, Training Manual on the SARPCCO Code of Conduct* (Harare: Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa, SAHRIT).
- ³² Elrena Van der Spuy (2009) 'Police cooperation in the Southern African region: Politics and practicalities', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 51(2), pp. 243-259.
- ³³ English, French and Portuguese.
- ³⁴ Article 37, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ³⁵ Paragraph 4, SARPCCO Resolution.
- ³⁶ Articles 3, 7 and 21–24, ECOWAS Code of Conduct. See: Table 5.1 above.
- ³⁷ Articles 28–33, ECOWAS Code of Conduct.
- ³⁸ SARPCCO is now at an advanced stage of developing indicators for implementing its code of conduct.

Chapter 7

Expert Networks and Security Sector Transformation

Thomas Jaye

Introduction

This chapter argues that some of the non-state actors that continue to play a significant role in security sector transformation (SST) processes globally, and in Africa in particular, are expert networks. These are groups that comprise professionals and academics with expertise in a broad spectrum of issues and processes. One such group is the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), which includes diverse individual and institutional members and partners.¹ The ASSN has worked to facilitate locally and regionally driven agendas for security reform and provide support for training, policy development and operational activities on SST in different parts of the world, with a particular focus on West Africa.

Conceptually, SST is a process that places particular emphasis on promoting a democratic relationship between civilians and the security establishment and calls for altering power dynamics that can help to improve this relationship. In this light, SST can lead to confidence building and the creation of an enabling environment for adherence to the rule of law, as opposed to the abuse of human rights, which has been a characteristic behaviour of security personnel in the past. As indicated in the first two chapters in this volume, this cannot realistically be an overnight affair but will in all probability be a gradual process that is pursued within specific historical contexts. Through SST, new legislation is crafted that defines or redefines the national security architecture and the roles and functions of specific agencies, while ensuring that they work effectively in the pursuit of their duties.

Through this process civil oversight is strengthened, while ensuring that the emerging architecture conforms to the principle of democratic accountability. This process involves diverse actors and issues and has its own inherent challenges, as discussed in this chapter. For example, for

countries emerging out of conflict situations like Sierra Leone and Liberia, the entire process often depends on support from external stakeholders. Unfortunately, some external stakeholders are mainly interested in quick fixes and do not allow enough time to address these challenges. They set unrealistic targets and are mostly concerned with meeting deadlines. The end result of such an approach is anything but transformation. In certain cases, such short-term interventions might end up doing more harm than good.

There are a number of reasons why SSR has become attractive in recent years, many of which are reiterated in other chapters in this volume. While some may frame activities as an effort towards post-war reconstruction and others as a conflict prevention mechanism or an exercise for post-conflict peacebuilding, what is clear is that this discourse originates from the past activities of security agencies and personnel. In numerous cases they have been among the most abusive institutions within the state structures. Rather than serving as ‘watchkeepers’ or ‘guardian angels’ of the security of the people, these institutions have frequently been the sources of insecurity for the people. In contexts where this has been the case, what is required is transformation, not reform.

For the purpose of this chapter, two reasons will be highlighted that demonstrate the need for security sector *transformation*. First, over the years, the institutions dealing with security have not been put under democratic civil oversight. This was due largely to the long years of authoritarianism, military dictatorship and single-party rule in many states. One of the victims of these circumstances was democratic governance of the security sector. Second, the changing nature of new and emerging non-conventional threats and the complex challenges they pose demand that security institutions are transformed in order to become efficient, transparent, accountable, coherent and coordinated in undertaking their duties. They also require that the institutions providing democratic civilian oversight are strengthened in order to carry out their functions properly. Parliamentary oversight constitutes one of the essential ingredients of this process. In addition, civil society has a vital role to play.

This chapter examines the role of expert group networks – as distinct from regular non-governmental or civil society organisations (CSOs) – in supporting SST with specific reference to the ASSN and its affiliate bodies. A case study on the role of the ASSN in post-conflict Liberia is used to highlight the wider roles that such expert networks can play in supporting SST. The chapter concludes with a number of policy-relevant recommendations in relation to the optimal engagement of expert networks in these processes. In particular, it argues that networks such as the ASSN do have critical roles to play in SST processes because they bring considerable

multidisciplinary knowledge, expertise and skills to it. By virtue of their nature, they consist of pools of experts who share experiences and thereby foster knowledge sharing. Further, such networks include people from diverse professional, academic and other backgrounds who have worked in the fields of SSR and post-conflict reconstruction and are thus able to provide intellectual leadership on various aspects of SST.

African Security Sector Network

The ASSN is a pan-African expert network working on security sector transformation issues in Africa and other parts of the world, where it shares the experiences of the African context through a South-South dialogue. Originally formed to synthesise the work of CSOs operating in the area of security sector reform and governance, and facilitating regional and continental networking, the ASSN also seeks to build African capacity and ownership, and even the playing field *vis-à-vis* donors and externals in this sensitive sovereign domain. The network was initially managed by the Accra-based African Security Dialogue and Research, but it is now in the process of establishing its own independent secretariat. The network has established links with a number of institutions in Africa and other parts of the world that are working on SSR issues. The network has diverse individual and institutional members, and fosters partnerships across the world. It has carried out policy development support for individual countries as well as regional organisations.

A set of factors to do with its vision, core values and membership stands the ASSN apart from a conventional civil society organisation. According to the ASSN, its 'driving vision is that of an African security sector that is democratically governed, people-centred, well managed, effective and accountable; and continental, regional and national security communities that are self-reliant, and able to draw primarily upon indigenous resources and knowledge to support sustainable collective peace and security arrangements'.² Related to this are the ASSN's core values of African-led and owned processes of security reform. In this regard, the ASSN holds the conviction that CSOs and think-tanks have crucial roles to play in reform processes as 'repositories of knowledge, advocacy, and popular participation and accountability'.³ The composition of its membership means that the ASSN is uniquely placed to work beyond the scope and reach of conventional civil society actors. As a multidisciplinary network consisting of academics, think-tanks, CSOs, security practitioners (active and retired) and members of parliament, among others, the ASSN is

able to produce policy-relevant knowledge while gaining access to channels of influence in policy arenas where its work can affect change in real time. This multidisciplinary character, as well as the diverse regional origins and experiences of key actors (especially West and South Africa), was the source of a rich and transformative internal debate within the ASSN itself. Furthermore, the group's approach and core values of respect for African experience-based knowledge and African-led and home-grown ideas of problem solving have shaped its engagement with Africa's security community and its proffering of solutions to Africa's security challenges. This has not only given the ASSN valuable access and convening power but also enabled it to build strong links with critical actors, thus providing vital entry points for the network to provide expert support to security decision-making and peacebuilding processes, not least in post-conflict contexts. This attribute is perhaps the single most important factor that enables it to work in direct partnership with national and regional security institutions while retaining a valuable knowledge base on security issues.

The ASSN considers as its principle objective the need to bridge the often substantial gap between a cross-section of stakeholders, not least academics and practitioners, and between civil society organisations and state-based actors, 'while harnessing their collective expertise, and enabling experiences from different traditions of security organisation and practice (anglophone, francophone and lusophone) to be shared'.⁴ The network sees its core strength as deriving from its 'diverse competencies, and the corresponding ability to engage a broad range of security actors (including policy-and decision-makers) within a framework that facilitates dialogue and shared learning'.⁵ The following sections consider the context for and engagement of ASSN as an agent of SST in Liberia.

Context for SST in Liberia

On 18 August 2003 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed by the key stakeholders in the Liberian conflict: both the armed factions and civil society, including political parties. The signing of the CPA took place against a background of 14 years of armed conflict characterised by the killing of thousands, the displacement of a million people from their homes as refugees or internally displaced persons and the destruction of both state and societal structures. The CPA was preceded by 13 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2003. Although the issue of the restructuring of the army was included in these agreements, it was only in the CPA that a

relatively elaborate SSR process was envisaged by the crafters of the agreement.⁶

The factors that shaped the origins of the war are rooted in the 163-year history of Liberia as an independent state. One of the key elements is poor governance characterised by politics of exclusion, repression and oppression. Liberia was declared independent on 26 July 1847 and, like most post-independence countries that subsequently emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, over the years the country continued to be faced with security sector governance challenges. Just as other African countries would later adopt governance models from their former colonial masters, so did Liberia, a century before, adopt the US governance model within an African setting. This has had serious implications, in the sense that for a long time the so-called modern state system had to coexist with the traditional one. Consequently, in the country there are two justice systems – formal and informal (traditional). Importantly, the security sector, which emerged after Liberia was established, was mainly intended to maintain the ruling class in power rather than to protect the ordinary people.

The issue of the governance of the security sector, including the judiciary, was left to the whims of the ‘imperial’ president, and parliamentary oversight was very weak and defective. Although the Acts establishing the various security agencies read that all appointments by the president are subject to the approval and consent of the Liberian Senate, this provision was never adhered to in any serious manner. Until recently, it was very difficult for presidential nominees to be rejected by the legislative body. Finally, until the signing of the CPA, the issue of security sector reform was never considered. This assumption is verified by the poor and defective legislative oversight of the sector, and the obsolete legislation that provides for its governance.

After 14 years of war, the entire security sector became highly dysfunctional and factionalised. It is common knowledge among Liberians that during the war years the national army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), was virtually an armed faction among many others. By the time the conflict ended, the entire system had collapsed and suffered from a severe lack of public confidence. Restoring this confidence and ensuring discipline and professionalism required root-and-branch transformation of the security sector.

Initially, the SSR process in the country was narrowly focused on restructuring the army and the police, leaving out the rest of the security institutions. For example, intelligence, the fire service and border security and management received little attention. The emphasis was placed on technical aspects of SSR with no reference to its governance aspects.

Therefore, the major gap in the process was security sector governance (SSG) to provide an enabling environment for SST in Liberia.

It is within this context that expert networks intervened in Liberia in July and August 2004 in order to assess the possibility of injecting critical debates on policy issues, including security sector governance, in the country.

Expert networks and SST in Liberia

From 28 July to 1 August 2004 the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) of King's College London and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) undertook an assessment visit to Liberia with three specific objectives: 'witness firsthand the situation on the ground and assess efforts to implement the CPA', 'explore possible ways of facilitating and assisting civil and parliamentary oversight of the security sector' and 'follow-up on previous discussions with the Liberia Minister of Justice on ways in which the Liberia Action Research team could facilitate a broader dialogue on security sector governance among key stakeholders'.⁷ Building on this initial assessment, the Liberia Action Research Project was organised to support the rebuilding of Liberia by injecting critical thinking and providing intellectual leadership to the process by Liberians and non-Liberians alike. It was also aimed at building local capacity and strengthening domestic governance and oversight mechanisms through the transfer of knowledge and skills.

The visit was facilitated by the then minister of justice, Kabineh Ja'aneh. Under his guidance and support, during the assessment the team met with a cross-section of people including members of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, several security agencies and civil society. This provided an opportunity for the team to understand and appreciate the challenges facing Liberia after the war. During the visit the team recognised the need for a comprehensive strategy for SSR and the lack of a holistic approach to the process. The point of departure is that:

Transformation – as opposed to 'reform' – of the entire state security apparatus should be at the heart of the peace and reconstruction process. Unless the limitations of past security models are addressed, there is the danger of recreating the conditions that gave rise to Liberia's war in the first place. The challenge is not simply to demilitarise, but to create a new framework for state security action that can help to avoid the conflicts of the past between the security interests of Liberia's political regimes and the

security interests of its population. Achieving this will be a long and complicated process, but it will involve fundamentally reviewing the very objectives and means of state security provision, including institutional cultures, systems and processes.⁸

This observation not only reflected the existing challenges in relation to SSR in Liberia, but summed up the basis for further action towards SST. Subsequently, the report emerging from this visit provided the basis for greater engagement with the SSR process in the country. On 3–4 August 2005 the report was validated in Monrovia with the ASSN and one of its affiliate members, the Centre for Democracy and Development, playing the roles of co-facilitators. The validation process brought together a broad spectrum of people and provided the basis for key stakeholders to talk openly on the future of SSR in Liberia. The validation forum underlined the importance of broad consultations, consensus building and the fostering a critical community of people with a shared view of the way forward in order for a transformation process to advance. It also highlighted the need for validation as part of this processes.

The dialogue aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- To place the notion of democratic control of the armed and security forces on the pre- and post-election agenda in Liberia;
- To explore mechanisms for and approaches to a collective broad-based vision of security in Liberia;
- To contribute to the promotion of local ownership of the post-conflict reconstruction process in Liberia.⁹

The validation meeting played a critical role in shaping thinking about the future of SSR in the country. A number of important observations flowed from the meeting: that the security sector was bloated in size and suffered from overlapping mandates; the calibre of personnel in terms of education level was often minimal, largely because people were recruited on a patronage basis; there was a history of human rights abuses by security personnel, and a lack of effective oversight as a result of 'excessive presidential powers'. The root of the lack of professionalism in the armed forces was identified as poor and inadequate remuneration, which in turn led to corrupt practices.¹⁰

A major point of consensus that emerged out of this dialogue was that SSR should be viewed as a *process*, and therefore the emerging security framework should enhance opportunities and provide an enabling environment for durable development. The consultation underscored the

enthusiasm of the security sector itself for reform (a clear recognition that the existing situation was untenable), and to be included as one of the owners/drivers of reform, though lacking clarity as to how this might be done. It also called for a framework that reflects a shared vision of what constitutes security; hence it should emerge from a broad national consultative process. In terms of further steps, it was proposed that the SSR programme should 'derive from a comprehensive national defensive and security review',¹¹ which had not occurred before the start of the process.

It was agreed that to enhance parliamentary oversight it was vital to ensure that parliamentarians were knowledgeable about oversight issues, including the preparation and analysis of defence budgets and the technical aspects of defence procurement.¹² The dialogue also agreed that Liberians should take the process of SSR into their own hands instead of waiting for an invitation from external stakeholders or adopting other security models wholesale without a critical analysis of their relevance to the Liberian context. The SSR process should be situated within West Africa and hence sensitive to its environment. In addition it was agreed that the dialogue process should be sustained.¹³

Subsequently, the ASSN and its partners organised a series of policy seminars aimed at addressing the issue of transforming the country's security sector. The issues raised at the SSR dialogue meeting shaped the future activities of the ASSN in Liberia and contributed largely to the process of evolving a shared vision of national security and subsequently formulating a national security strategy; the ASSN played an important role in the drafting of the strategy through resource support.

An important entry point for the ASSN in Liberia was a seminar on SSG in March 2006 under the auspices of the Governance Commission (GC), headed by Professor Amos Sawyer, former interim president of Liberia. To reiterate a point made earlier, at this seminar it was agreed that there is a need to ensure inclusion of the governance element in the SSR debates because, at the time, the technical element was dominating the discourse. Further, like the dialogue of 2005, this meeting called for local ownership of the process. Subsequently, the GC was mandated by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to provide intellectual leadership and inject critical thinking into the SSR debates in the country. This provided a window of opportunity for the ASSN to contribute to the process, in collaboration with a credible organisation that was mandated by President Johnson-Sirleaf to provide intellectual leadership on SSR debates. In collaboration with the GC, several policy seminars were held in Monrovia, bringing together senior government officials, legislators, security personnel, civil society groups,

UNMIL, the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS. Representatives of the US embassy also actively participated in these meetings.

An SSR task force was established, which comprised representatives from UNMIL, UNDP, AU, ECOWAS, the US embassy and civil society, and Liberian parliamentarians and government officials. The task force provided support to the GC in undertaking its SSR debate and a subcommittee was set up to work on an outline of the national security strategy for Liberia. The Civil Society SSR Working Group, organised and funded by the International Centre for Transitional Justice, played a role in the debates.

Accordingly, between 2006 and 2008 the GC led the process of writing the national security strategy with ASSN support. During this period and subsequently, the ASSN organised several seminars on oversight issues for legislators,¹⁴ held in Liberia, Ghana (three times) and the UK. The meetings proved very useful because they armed legislators with the knowledge and expertise needed to provide effective oversight over the security sector in Liberia. Unlike in the past, legislators became robust in exercising their oversight responsibilities. For example, they reviewed the Defence Act, and summoned security personnel as well as the ministers of defence and justice and the national security adviser for hearings on security and defence matters. A crucial factor that made this possible was that this was the first time in the history of Liberia that the ruling party did not have a majority in the legislature. Whereas party loyalty had superseded national interest during single-party rule in the past, the interests of a single party were now less likely to undermine the independence of parliament.

Through its work with legislators, civil society and security personnel in collaboration with the GC, the ASSN sought to identify areas of support to the SST process in Liberia. To aid the process, the ASSN recommended the establishment of a security transformation and facilitation team.¹⁵ Subsequently, it conducted an interactive needs assessment in 2007 on capacity support for legislators.¹⁶

The assessment process involved providing an environment for Liberian legislators to interface with other African counterparts by way of South-South experience sharing. This enabled them to understand the challenges facing their colleagues and realise that their situation was not unique. Thus it was resolved that 'efforts must be made by both the Legislature and Executive to articulate a national position; within the Legislature, members must endeavour to cross party lines in the best interest of Liberians; and external actors must aim to harmonise their activities'.¹⁷

During the assessment process, the team identified priority needs, strengths and challenges of the legislature. It used the principles of the triple

‘As’ (authority, ability and attitude) as the basis for the assessment. Under authority, it was observed that Liberian legislators were endowed with sufficient constitutional backing to ensure checks and balances, and democratic oversight of the security sector. However, they suffered from poor logistical capacity, human resources and information dissemination.¹⁸ Thus the priority areas included improving logistics; building the capacity of staff and legislators; and providing civic education. In terms of ability, it was observed that while the members of the legislature had very good professional backgrounds and capable staff, they faced challenges including a lack of public hearings and resources. Accordingly, the priority areas included ensuring that provisions were made in the national budget for logistical and financial support to facilitate public hearings, establish a resource centre and train staff, and emphasising the need for short-term external support.¹⁹ Finally, in relation to attitude, it was observed that there was respect for parliamentary rules and regulations, they were sensitive to and tolerant of each other’s views and they had a level of commitment to issues of national interest. But they were faced with some challenges: ‘negative mindsets, selfishness, and arbitrary use of legislative powers’. In this light, the identified priority areas were ‘peer motivation through dialogue between the Senate and House of Representatives, civic education and public dialogue, and adherence to the rule of law’.²⁰

Subsequently, other policy seminars were held to promote dialogue on and understanding of the challenges and processes of conducting SST in Liberia. For example, under the auspices of the GC, a policy seminar was held on budgeting and border management and security in Monrovia. Given the complexity of the issues surrounding the dissolution of the AFL, the ASSN also supported an experience-sharing seminar on veteran issues that brought in representatives from South Africa and Sierra Leone to talk with their Liberian counterparts. For the first time, Liberian veterans were able to learn from the experiences of their colleagues in these countries. Through this meeting, the veterans were able to reconcile their differences with the Veterans Bureau. Previously they were at loggerheads, but through this exercise both are now working together.

The sustained interest and support of the ASSN have helped develop the capacity of the legislative committees on defence and security to become assertive in carrying out their oversight responsibilities. Thus, unlike before when the legislature was a lame duck under a strong executive, the former has begun to play a critical democratic oversight role.

To sum up, in Liberia there has been an emphasis on legislative oversight for two fundamental reasons. First, SSG has been extremely weak throughout the country’s history, due to long years of single-party rule,

autocracy and strong military influence over political life. Under such circumstances, where an ‘imperial presidency’ dominated every sphere of Liberian political life to the extent that it undermined checks and balances, the security agencies reported directly to the president. This was possible because regime security was upheld at the expense of human security. Second, the constitution provides the legislature with sufficient authority on defence and security issues.²¹ Thus, by strengthening legislative oversight, the appropriate governance mechanism can be put into place for supporting SST. Parliamentarians are drivers of change in this sense.

Challenges of security sector transformation

The reform process in Liberia has not been a smooth one; instead it has presented some challenges. In this light, this section focuses on the potential challenges for expert networks in SST processes based on the Liberian experience. These include, but are not limited to, overcoming traditional notions of security, opposition to a consultation process, lack of funding, expertise gaps and others.

First, the need to overcome the traditional notion of security presented a real challenge for the ASSN and its affiliate bodies and partners. Most security personnel could not accept the fact that academics and civilians, especially non-Liberians, could play a role in security policy-making because this was a taboo area. To some, this could easily compromise the national security interests of Liberia. On a critical note, this position was questionable because, at the time, security in Liberia was almost totally provided by foreigners under UNMIL; these people were sitting in senior security meetings under the Security Pillar²² and had access to security briefings. Yet it was these very people who complained about ‘foreign interference’ and portrayed the ASSN as outsiders to the process. Thus it was difficult to understand what all the fuss was really about. Nonetheless, the ASSN found support from the GC and legislators, and therefore remained steadfast and resilient in the pursuit of its activities in Liberia. The point was made abundantly clear to security personnel that the intervention of the ASSN through the GC was not an effort aimed at intruding into operational matters; the ASSN was only interested in broader security governance issues involving policy-making and oversight. For the ‘securocrats’, security was about the state, the regime and state secrets. Hence, asking security personnel to discuss issues with non-security people was unacceptable. However, thanks to the GC, over the years opposition was overcome. Legislators, security personnel and civil society regularly

discussed and debated security policy issues initially through ASSN-facilitated processes and thereafter through bilateral and other arrangements in-country. In the past this was a taboo, but the contexts for reform and transformation have provided the basis for such a change.

Second, there was opposition to viewing SST as a process, and development partners and members of the regime were opposed to any national consultation. Under the auspices of the GC and with support from UNDP, the process of formulating a national security strategy was preceded by a nationwide consultation process on SST. To some this was a waste of time and resources, but fortunately the GC carried out the process with a shoestring budget. A small GC-ASSN team travelled through Liberia to conduct consultations on SSR issues. Because of their commitment to the process based on their experiences of security forces in pre-war Liberia, they were prepared to operate on a relatively low budget, and ensured that all the political subdivisions were covered by bringing together representatives of civil society, elders, traditional leaders, security personnel, local authorities, UN staff, religious leaders and others in a region that they could easily reach without too much expense.

Third, the lack of funding almost crippled the SST process in the country. This delayed the process but, once again, the ASSN, DCAF, GC and UNDP at different times played a critical role in financing the debates. Thus, in as much as the process was carried out on a very limited budget, the point should be made that adequate financial resources for such processes is crucial. It is a long process and hence, while the Liberian experience is laudable, this may not be the case everywhere. In fact, with more resources perhaps the team could have covered more ground than it did.

Fourth, the issue of transformation of the security sector was a totally new subject for most Liberians. The lack of local expertise clearly illustrated the need to rely heavily on external expertise. Unfortunately, while external experts are usually endowed with knowledge and experience from other contexts, they do not always have local knowledge. Under such conditions, the tendency to transplant one experience mechanically into another can be dangerous. Fortunately, most ASSN experts had either written on Liberia or had some knowledge of the country. In addition, they relied on local knowledge provided by the GC to bridge this gap. Further, the various meetings and the challenges faced during this period enabled them to appreciate the difficulties of working in such an environment. They interacted and worked with locals with considerable knowledge of the security sector and its history, and used their experiences gained elsewhere to contribute to the process.

Finally, like other aspects of national politics, the issue of security is politically sensitive and has always evoked debates and generated turf battles. SSR is about changing power dynamics in any given country. Therefore, beside the drivers of change who are interested in making the sector more effective, efficient, coordinated and governed by democratic oversight, there will be spoilers who will do everything to resist change in their own interests; this situation played itself out in the Liberian experience. However, the post-war environment was characterised by an insistence to ensure the implementation of the CPA, and there was national buy-in by critical actors including parliamentarians, elements within government, civil society and the international community. All this provided an opportunity for a reform process in the country.

Opportunities for expert networks in security sector transformation

From the Liberian experience a number of lessons can be learned that point to opportunities for expert networks working on SST. These include the following.

The importance of critical individuals

The role of the ASSN was facilitated by the interventions of critical individuals at two key moments. The CPA had enshrined a clause on SSR and therefore, during the transitional period, the former minister of justice, Kabineh Ja'aneh, whose office presided over internal security, created an opportunity for expert group engagement in the process. Similarly, after the elections of 2005, the GC, chaired by Professor Amos Sawyer, was mandated by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to provide intellectual leadership and inject critical thinking into the SST process in Liberia. The GC welcomed the role of the ASSN and facilitated its engagement after the elections. Without these two vital elements, the ASSN would have found it difficult to play a positive role in the SST process in Liberia. Local engagement and political will by critical actors are therefore absolutely necessary for such interventions by external actors.

The importance of capitalising on key moments

The post-conflict environment also contributed to the intervention of the ASSN. In Liberia there was a lack of adequate domestic expertise on SST, and this provided the ASSN with an avenue for intervention in order to fill in

the gap. An assessment of the security environment and post-conflict situation in 2004 enabled the group to identify gaps and lead a dialogue process on the subject. This dialogue not only introduced the governance element in the debates, but also brought together diverse actors that were working on this issue.

The need to identify meaningful, context-specific entry points

It is important to understand the context in which one is intervening. The ASSN assessment prior to the intervention which studied the different actors and the history of the country was therefore essential. Further, dependence on credible local knowledge is vital. It enables the identification of potential challenges, spoilers and drivers of change in the process. Understanding the context is important because it highlights risk factors that could easily exacerbate local situations and let them degenerate into conflict. A conflict-sensitive approach is therefore crucial in such situations. Depending on their knowledge of the local conditions, the ASSN and its partner bodies decided to work with Liberian legislators as well as the international community. In addition, they received early backing from the Ministry of Justice and later the Governance Commission. For the first time, legislators were brought together to interface with civil society, security personnel and external actors to discuss the SST process in the country. Within such an environment, it was possible for the ASSN and its partners to make a difference in Liberia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to stress that expert networks such as the ASSN, with the types of qualities described in this chapter, can have a critical role to play in SST processes in West Africa and other parts of the world. They can add value, and their role does not necessarily undermine local ownership, but supports its development. At least, this has been the experience of the ASSN and its partners in Liberia. Hence, while it is vital for such processes to be driven by local people, in contexts where there is low domestic capacity for SST, expert networks have the capacity and experience to fill the vacuum. The role of local people is to ensure sustainability because, after external actors leave, they are the ones who shoulder the responsibility of continuous civilian democratic oversight of the security sector.

It is also important to stress that SSR in any given context is a highly politically sensitive exercise. It is about changing the power dynamics in a

country, and therefore there will always be those who oppose it and those who will support the process. Thus understanding the local context is necessary for the success of external support by both state and non-state actors, such as expert networks like the ASSN. In distinguishing the particularities of security sector *transformation*, the contribution of the ASSN in Liberia highlights the importance of broad participation and validation of the process by Liberian citizens, as well as the need to prioritise security sector governance concerns (notably the role of the parliament) and provide a basis for transformative change.

Against this background, the conclusion can be made that while the SST process in Liberia occurred within the unique circumstances in which the country found itself, as illustrated in this chapter, the lessons drawn can be applicable elsewhere. There are transferrable conclusions that can be useful for a regional approach to security sector governance and for the role of expert networks. Notably, the intersection of policy and practitioner expertise, South-South experience sharing and a flexible, low-cost approach represents a powerful combination.

Finally, the point should be made that expert networks have a significant role to play in these processes because they bring much-needed expertise and experience with identified core values and a certain level of commitment, which transcends the normal professional approach of commercial consultants, for example. They possess the values, approach and willingness to work with meagre resources and yet have significant impact on SST processes.

Notes

¹ These include, but are not limited to, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the Conflict, Security, and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College, University of London, Centre for Democracy and Development, African Security Dialogue and Research and others. The ASSN has a formalised relationship with DCAF through a MoU in three critical areas of work: training, policy research and operational activities.

² ASSN Vision document, 2010. Available at : www.africansecuritynetwork.org

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 18 August 2003, Accra, Ghana; for other details see Thomas Jaye and Adedeji Ebo (2008) 'Liberia', in Adedeji Ebo and Boubacar N'Diaye (eds) *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa. Opportunities and Challenges*. Geneva: DCAF, pp. 139–158.

⁷ See CSDG-DCAF Liberia Consultations, 28 July–1 August 2004, pp. 1–2.

⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

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- ⁹ CSDG, DCAF and CDD (2005) 'Summary report, Liberia national dialogue on security sector reform', Corina Hotel, Monrovia, Liberia, 3–4 August, p. 2.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ¹⁴ See www.securityanddevelopment.org and www.africansecuritynetwork.org.
- ¹⁵ The team comprised the ASSN, GC, DCAF, CSDG and a senior research fellow from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre who was also a member of the ASSN.
- ¹⁶ The assessment was finalised at an interactive assessment meeting held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre on 28–30 March 2007.
- ¹⁷ ASSN, DCAF and CSDG (2007) 'Interactive needs assessment on security sector oversight for the Liberian legislature', 28–30 March 2007, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, p. 15.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21
- ²¹ See Article 34C of the Constitution of Liberia, 1983.
- ²² The Security Pillar is a body comprising all the major stakeholders (internal and external) that are involved in security matters in the country. It holds regular monthly meetings chaired by the minister of defence.

Chapter 8

Security Sector Transformation beyond the State: The Economic Community of West African States

Eka Ikpe

Introduction

This chapter interrogates the engagement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with the notion of security sector transformation (SST) and the related concept of security sector reform (SSR). It principally examines the ECOWAS approach to engaging the security sector with reference to the instruments and structures that have been developed to address the way the security sector functions in the West Africa sub-region. In doing this, the chapter reflects on the extent to which concerns around the security sector are inclusive of all relevant West African constituencies. This debate is of particular significance given the current ECOWAS vision of an organisation of peoples beyond its member-state governments. The chapter argues that while ECOWAS pursues security transformation as a strategic objective, in reality it is constrained by structural factors not dissimilar from those faced by most inter-governmental organisations, which compel it, invariably, to retreat to the pursuit of a less ambitious reform agenda.

The chapter is divided into four parts. Firstly, we present a brief history of ECOWAS engagement with issues of security in West Africa. As part of this, we critically analyse the ECOWAS norms and standards on peace and security and how they address the way in which the security sector functions. In particular, we focus on the pivotal Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security along with its Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

Secondly, we briefly consider the key concepts of SSR and SST against the background of the West Africa context. Thirdly, we review the instruments and key policy documents that have been set up by ECOWAS to

engage directly the manner in which the security sector operates. These are the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services and the security governance (SG) component of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). In particular, we examine how the latter interacts with the notions of SSR and SST. The fourth section reflects on the opportunities that the ECPF presents for ECOWAS engagement with the security sector. In so doing, we also examine the extent to which it is inclusive of the broad spectrum of security sector constituencies in the sub-region.

The final part presents what is instructive about the ECOWAS experience with reference to its ability to set norms efficiently on SST within the sub-region. On this note we address the lessons to be learnt, as well as the shortcomings to be addressed.

ECOWAS's evolving engagement with peace and security in West Africa

ECOWAS is often lauded as exemplary in its institutional engagement with issues of security in West Africa, due to the violent conflicts that beset the sub-region from the 1980s, through the 1990s and to a lesser extent through the first decade of the twenty-first century in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. This accolade especially draws on a needs-based process that emerged as a result of the succession of armed conflicts in the sub-region.

Established in 1975, ECOWAS was proposed to be the sole economic community in the West African sub-region with 'the purpose of integration and the realisation of the objectives of the African Economic Community'.¹ Concerns about security were limited to the principle of participation in the economic community, and food security.² Structures to address the occurrence of violent conflict between member states were proposed for the purpose of ensuring the necessary security for a functioning economic community. On violent conflicts there were provisions for peaceful dispute resolution alongside regional peace and security observation systems and peacekeeping forces.³

Developments in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of ECOWAS saw the beginning of a series of efforts to strengthen the provisions for addressing security threats in West Africa. Over the initial phase of these efforts, at least until 1991, the broader West African citizenry hardly featured within these provisions. This pattern underscored ECOWAS's preoccupation with state sovereignty. With its focus on the security of independent and sovereign states, it did not necessarily address

the challenge posed by intra-state conflicts and the realities faced by the broader West African citizenry.

This emphasis on national security and the resolve to preserve the sovereignty of nation-states at all costs were justifiable in the post-colonial era, after a series of hard-won independence struggles. Beyond this, though, the prioritisation of the security of the nation-state reflected the dominance of authoritarian and military regimes in the sub-region at that time. This has been aptly described as ‘a long period of exclusion of civilians from security discourse under authoritarian rule’.⁴

Instruments developed in this period include the 1978 ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression. The protocol was found to be ineffective in the absence of an enforcing mechanism, notably the lack of an institutionalised response in the case of a breach.⁵ This was followed by the 1981 Mutual Assistance in Defence Protocol, which seminally comprised institutions to deliver its mandate. However, the institutions, namely the Authority, the Defence Council and the Defence Commission,⁶ reinforced the dominance of state security and a continued limited focus on military activity.

In the aftermath of the eruption of a series of violent conflicts in West Africa, the exclusive spotlight on state security was challenged. This occurrence of armed conflicts in the sub-region called the efficacy of the ECOWAS security arrangements into question. It clarified that the hitherto focus on inter-state conflict at the expense of intra-state conflict, on the basis of the principle of state sovereignty, was ineffective and inadequate for the maintenance of peace and security in the sub-region. The widespread insecurity due to massive violations of the rights of ordinary people by all warring parties to these conflicts put the security needs of the broader citizenry at the forefront of all other security considerations. Given that the central objective of economic integration in the sub-region was not possible amid widespread intra-state armed conflict, ECOWAS was forced to act from 1990 in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire. In this conceptual transition space was opened up for engaging with the structure of security institutions and their ability to provide security to the entire populace.

The Liberian crisis in particular compelled a reassessment of the ECOWAS peace and security mechanism in the wake of broader conceptual developments relating to the notion of security. The result was the revision of the institutional approach, which drew a linkage between intra-state conflict and regional peace and security, reinforced by the establishment of the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles in 1991.⁷ The declaration recognised the interaction between governance and peace and security. This was evidenced by the continued dedication to maintaining peace and security

in the sub-region, alongside the commitment to promote democratic governance systems.⁸

The realities of the impact of conflict on the security of peoples were taken into account in the ECOWAS peace and security architecture in one of its most influential instruments to date: the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, also known as the ECOWAS Mechanism. The mechanism effectively replaced the preceding Protocols on Non-Aggression and Mutual Assistance in Defence with its endorsement by the heads of state and government in August 1999.⁹ In its introduction it acknowledged that it was ‘convinced of the need to develop effective policies that will alleviate the suffering of the civil population, especially women and children and restore life to normalcy after conflicts or natural disasters and desirous of making further efforts in the humanitarian sphere’.¹⁰ The document was cognisant of the breakdown of security in the sub-region and some of the factors contributing to this, including cross-border crime.¹¹ This indeed marked a transformative moment in the ECOWAS region and set the scene for the development of new norms and institutions that are responsive to the security needs of West African peoples and states.

The ECOWAS Mechanism is significant for its establishment of a series of institutions to pursue improved security in the sub-region against the background of the notion of the security of the state and that of the individual.¹² It emphasised the principle that the security of the state and the individual were inextricably linked, and the need to protect fundamental human rights and adhere to international humanitarian laws.¹³ These were backed by a provision for intervention in internal conflicts and violations of human rights.¹⁴ The mechanism also demonstrated the significance of governance systems as a basis for security in the development of peace and security instruments. In its introduction, the document referenced the vital importance of ‘good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development for peace and conflict prevention’ in the sub-region.¹⁵ This is a marked departure from the past, where what happened within a nation-state, including the conduct of governments, was not seen as the primary concern of ECOWAS, or indeed other international organisations.

Broad strokes were used to describe the responsibilities of the Authority; it was established that ‘it shall have powers to act on all matters concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution, peace-keeping, security, humanitarian support, peace-building, control of cross-border crime, proliferation of small arms, as well as all other matters covered by the provisions of this Mechanism’.¹⁶ In theory, this left open to debate the performance of institutions on security provision. In addition, meetings of

the ministers of foreign affairs, defence, internal affairs and security presented opportunities to raise institutional performance matters in relation to security within the ECOWAS structure.¹⁷ However, beyond measures to strengthen security institutions and the capacity to address cross-border crime and arms proliferation, there is limited discussion within the mechanism on the capacity of the security sector to provide security, let alone its reform, transformation or governance.

The follow-up supplementary protocol to the Mechanism on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001 served as a tool for strengthening the democratic character of governance systems of member-state governments, including the separation of powers, strengthened parliaments and independent judiciaries.¹⁸ Although not directly referencing security provision, it did emphasise the citizenry within governance structures by prioritising popular decision-making and the protection of rights set out in continental international human rights instruments. In advocating a stricter separation of powers, it addressed the oversight responsibilities of national parliaments, thereby speaking to their supervision of the security sector.

The ultimate breakdown of security structures during the incidents of violent conflict in the sub-region presented an opportunity to interrogate the functioning of state security institutions and their (in)ability to provide security to their citizens. This consideration was intensified in the context of post-conflict environments in delicate security arrangements and attempts to consolidate peacebuilding processes. In fact, the mechanism makes provision for ECOWAS activity in the post-conflict peacebuilding period to ensure the agreed peace.¹⁹

Considering the linked notions of SSR and SST in a West Africa context

The concept of SSR emerged in a context of major developments in the global security landscape. As mentioned, the end of the Cold War was accompanied by increased emphasis on democratic governance systems, including within the security sector.²⁰ As such, ensuring the democratic governance of this sector is at the core of the notion of SSR. The SSR concept was also driven by a human security discourse that drew on the idea of the protection of individuals as being critical to national and international security, and that of development and security as being intrinsically interlinked.²¹

Within the SSR concept, the understanding of what constitutes the security sector has been hotly contested. Traditionally, the sector is seen to comprise the statutory organisations with responsibility for providing

internal and external security; some include justice institutions, with others suggesting a broader definition to include non-state security and justice institutions.²² The broadly accepted understanding of the security sector among most international actors is a compromise. In the *OECD DAC Handbook*, which was created to ensure that donor institutions effectively pursue SSR policy, security and justice institutions are included in the definition of the sector, as it is noted that this is what ‘has become established internationally’.²³

Against this background, SSR policy responses have been described as having the most relevance in externally supported post-conflict reconstruction processes.²⁴ This point is taken further: SSR is noted as having been developed as a call for the promotion of ‘democratic control of security forces and services’ in response to situations of armed violence in a largely donor-driven agenda.²⁵ As such, SSR is seen to be part and parcel of a process that has been led by the international community in its support to conflict-affected nations to ensure that hard-won peace is consolidated. Indeed, in West Africa, the states of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire have been recipients of such SSR support.²⁶

In a period noted as preceding the formal beginnings of SSR, an earlier domestically driven process called ‘practice driving concept’ is described as contributing to the notion of SSR. Some have argued that pro-reformers within civil society in developing and transition countries advanced an understanding of SSR from practical work undertaken to ‘educate security service personnel, civil authorities and members of civil society on their various roles’ in supporting security provision.²⁷ This trajectory from practice to concept is significant, as it highlights the importance of empirical reality informing an earlier leaning to the broadest definition of the security sector (including non-state actors) in the core engagement of civil society actors in practice. Although this work is described as contributing to the formal idea of SSR, the apparent understanding of a broader security sector and domestically driven processes appears to have been subsumed by the emergent concept. The point has been made that in these earlier stages of SSR concept building there were ‘serious divergences between the objectives of pro-reformers, especially those in the developing countries and development donors...; while the differences have decreased over time on the conceptual level, tensions continue to exist at the operational level’.²⁸

Within West Africa, SSR initiatives have not been limited to (formal) post-conflict contexts exclusively. Nigeria, a dominant member state of ECOWAS, was subject to controversial SSR support from the United States due to its status as returning to democratic governance systems

following extended periods of military dictatorship. The controversy lay in the Bush-led US administration's approach to SSR programme support in using the US private security enterprise Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI), and claims of non-transparency in its trajectory from needs assessment to implementation.²⁹

The major challenge of external leadership has tended to haunt SSR in the lack of national ownership of the processes. In Nigeria MPRI recommendations were rejected by senior military officials.³⁰ The Liberia SSR experience, supported by the United States and run by the private security enterprise DynCorp, exemplifies this challenge, as vocalised by senior Liberian government officials. The criticism of the process was on account of both its leadership by a private military company and a formulation of the SSR programme that was seen as devoid of broad consultation with significant constituencies, including the legislature and civil society.³¹

In fact, these issues draw on the piecemeal approach often associated with SSR in practice. It has been noted that in the absence of a comprehensive governance reform framework, SSR policies tend to be dominated by programmes dealing with aspects of security institution building.³² In addition, SSR conceptual understandings that exclude non-state security actors undermine the very understanding of what comprises the sector. Hence in terms of both policy and practice, failure to treat the security sector holistically has in turn undermined the way SSR processes have functioned in West Africa, as described in Liberia for example.

The notion of SST emerged, calling for an overhaul of the security system in its entirety due to its failure to achieve its principal mandate and, indeed, sometimes itself constituting the principal cause of insecurity. It has been argued that the far-reaching and more innovative process of SST is required to transform systemically the relationship between civil authority, civil society and the security sector.³³ Part of this argument draws on the challenging origins of much of the security sector in the West Africa sub-region. The point has been well made elsewhere about the security challenges inherited from the colonial era, during which the colonial governments used the security establishment to suppress local populations; in many cases these systems were later adopted by national political elites for economic and political gain.³⁴ The notion of SST arguably has the idea of human security at its core, as it rejects the exclusive focus on the security of these elites that are the main preoccupation of state security institutions, at the expense of the broader citizenry.

Overhauling the security sector through SST implies a systemic process that moves beyond territorial borders to address transnational

structures that may undermine security delivery.³⁵ This implies a large-scale endeavour, and raises questions as to its possible achievement. Indeed, SST has been posited as the ‘desirable’ and SSR as the ‘practical’.³⁶ One may then argue that addressing the governance of the security sector and its provision of security within the sub-regional context is a step in the direction of the desired SST.

Focusing in on the security sector: The ECOWAS journey

Beyond the international donor community, with changing approaches to governance the space arguably opened for a debate on the governance of security systems within ECOWAS itself. The new approach of addressing the security needs of individuals has served to strengthen ECOWAS engagement with security governance agendas. The adoption of the ECOWAS Code of Conduct of the Armed Forces and Security Services facilitated the organisation’s engagement with the SSR debate. Although it was based on a pattern of donor and externally led and generated ideas and processes,³⁷ more critically it focused on the capacity of state security actors, armed forces and security services to deliver security to the citizenry in times of violent conflict and peace, as well as the sector’s democratic governance.

Principally, the code of conduct lays emphasis on the need for the conduct of armed forces and security services to conform to international human rights provisions and law at all levels, including national and international law.³⁸ In addition, the link between governance and peace and security is reinforced by the insistence on the necessity of civilian control of the armed forces and security services.³⁹ It represented some consonance with the changing tide on the interrogation of the security sector in delivering its responsibilities (see the chapter on codes of conduct in this volume). In its most consolidated effort on this issue, ECOWAS has taken up the mandate of directly addressing the security sector within its Conflict Prevention Framework.

The ECPF is meant to be ‘a reference for the ECOWAS system and member states in their efforts to strengthen human security in the sub-region’.⁴⁰ For its purposes, human security is defined as the creation of conditions to eliminate pervasive threats to people’s human rights, livelihood, safety and life, the protection of human and democratic rights and the promotion of human development to ensure freedom from fear and want.⁴¹ To this end, conflict prevention is defined broadly to include addressing imminent conflict threats, including early warning and preventive

disarmament and deployment as well as structural issues, thus including longer-term strategies such as peacebuilding and political, institutional and developmental reforms.⁴²

The ECPF addresses 14 issues understood as being essential for conflict prevention in the West African sub-region: early warning; preventive diplomacy; democracy and political governance; human rights and the rule of law; media; natural resource governance; cross-border initiatives; security governance; practical disarmament; women, peace and security; youth empowerment; an ECOWAS standby force; humanitarian assistance; and peace education. The principal tool for addressing the security sector within the ECOWAS peace and security architecture is the security governance (SG) component within the ECPF. The SG component underscores ECOWAS's trend of maintaining a linkage between security processes and broader governance structures.⁴³

The SG component maintains the spirit of the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services, although it is not explicitly mentioned within the ECPF. There is clear mention of the value of democratic control of the armed forces and security services, adherence to basic human rights and rule of law and consolidation of 'accountable, transparent and participatory security systems'.⁴⁴ The absence of a mention of the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services may speak to some discontinuity in the ECOWAS approach on security-sector-related issues, but on the other hand it may represent a struggle of sorts with the idea of a home-grown reinvention to address the issues at hand. On the latter point, there is a notable divergence in the SG component's focus on basic human rights and rule of law provisions within the domestic sphere compared to the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services, which emphasises international human rights provisions.⁴⁵

In a brief foray into discourse analysis it becomes apparent that an explicit reference to the idea of 'transformation' is missing from the SG component of the ECPF. However, within the larger ECPF document, 'transformation' is used to describe the change in mindset necessary for peace education,⁴⁶ the intended change in ECOWAS from an organisation of states to one of people,⁴⁷ in relation to the desired or negative change following conflict⁴⁸ and to underscore the desired benefits from natural resources.⁴⁹ This does indicate that the notion of transformation is not lost on ECOWAS. But in contrast, within the SG component there is a substantial commitment to a reformist agenda.

Several factors confirm the leaning towards SSR rather than SST in the SG component. Firstly, there is an activity proposal for member states to 'restructure and right size' national security agencies in post-conflict

settings.⁵⁰ Secondly, member states are to develop and implement reform policies on the conditions of work for armed forces and security services.⁵¹ Thirdly, member states are to develop and implement reform policies to address prisons and detention infrastructure and processes, and discourage armed forces' engagement in policing duties.⁵² Perhaps this has more to do with issues of political expediency than a reluctance to transform the security space. Arguably, a gradual movement through piecemeal reform towards the changes that will benefit the people of the region is invariably better than the imposition of an agenda which will achieve no more than resistance from member states.

Interestingly, it is in spaces where there are vacuums in terms of structures of security sector engagement that ECOWAS appears to drive a strong process, perhaps highlighting the enhanced role that it could realistically play. This includes the development, adoption and implementation of a regulatory security governance framework with sanctions, provisions on non-state armed groups and prohibitive legislation on mercenary, terrorist and cross-border criminality.⁵³ Notably, most of these issues principally concern non-state security actors, which might also explain the forthright approach adopted by ECOWAS.

To a large extent this SSR leaning reflects the broader context of the existing discourse on the security sector, with which ECOWAS must necessarily engage. As a sub-regional organisation it invariably conforms to the dominant national and international-level agendas while pursuing its mandate. As such, the ensuing SG framework is expected to 'feed into continental and global processes on security sector reform'.⁵⁴ In resonance with this, the organisation has committed itself to undertake a study into the security and military needs of member states as part of an SSR needs assessment across West Africa.⁵⁵

Yet despite the largely SSR-driven programme, the intended outcomes from the SG component reflect expectations of transformation. Firstly, the SG component is designed to ensure the existence of transparent and competent oversight institutions, policies and procedures on security.⁵⁶ Secondly, it is to eliminate the incidence of military incursions into politics and drastically reduce armed brutality and the use of arms to resolve disputes.⁵⁷ Thirdly, it is to improve public confidence levels in and perceptions of security agencies.⁵⁸ These are ambitious endeavours that arguably necessitate the overhaul of many security systems within the sub-region.

Deploying the ECPF: Opportunities and challenges for ECOWAS in its engagement with the security sector

The focus on SSR in the activities to be undertaken and the SST language used to describe the benchmarks and expected outcomes of the SG component suggest that ECOWAS has settled on SSR as a realistic and achievable objective, even though its overarching goal is SST. Indeed, this apparent inconsistency reflects the contradictions and complexities of the ECOWAS sub-region. The ECOWAS Commission, which drives policy processes on behalf of member states, is caught between the demands to implement a people-driven security agenda and those of member states whose leaders are slow to embrace change. Thus the challenges that ECOWAS faces in pursuing a transformative agenda lie in the reality of an arrangement which relies on structures of intergovernmental organisations and their member states. Beyond this structural challenge, the bottom-up process of change takes time to impact on the actions of these organisations. That ECOWAS has made some progress in terms of articulating a message of transformation is in itself an achievement and a reflection of the commission's genuine engagement with regional civil society, which translates the reality from the ground.

At a formal level, ECOWAS makes provision to engage a wide constituency of actors in the security sector. Beyond state agencies, it mentions its target groups as including non-state security and justice actors, such as civil society and militia groups and traditional justice institutions, as well as local, foreign and international institutions working on SSR.⁵⁹ The inclusion of militia groups and traditional justice institutions is especially significant, as a large number of West Africans, especially the poorest, rely on these structures for any access to security or justice.⁶⁰ This is indicative of the ECOWAS commitment to being people-centred as opposed to being state-centric.

In reality, ECOWAS has a good track record on the inclusion of non-state actors on security matters. Notably, its engagement with civil society mirrors the changing understanding of security from state-centric to people-centred. Although civil society actors were active on peace and security in a local and national context, until 2000 there was limited engagement with ECOWAS in this.⁶¹ In 2003 the West African Civil Society Forum was created as a forum for West African civil society engagement with ECOWAS.⁶² This progress has been driven from within the establishment, as the former ECOWAS president⁶³ Ibn Chambas and the former deputy executive secretary, the late General Chiekh Oumar Diarra, were involved in

identifying analysts, policy practitioners and activists on security and development issues in the sub-region.⁶⁴

However, in spite of its broadened security agenda, ECOWAS remains an organisation beholden to the governments of its member states and is ostensibly forced to act within this remit. The prevalent strength of the executive in relation to other arms of government in member states has found its way into the ECOWAS structures; within the organisation there is a seeming focus on the executive at the expense of the legislature. Although the SG component is replete with the pursuit of democratic control of security services, there is limited mention of parliament and possible roles it might play in this area.⁶⁵ A further challenge linked to the limitations of governmental preferences is the possible involvement of key non-state actors in the security sector, including informal security actors such as militias and, to a lesser extent, civil society groups that may not necessarily be favourites of member-state governments.

Notably, the mention of informal security providers is more often than not punitive and linked to prevalent negative connotations, with reference to sanctions and prohibitive legislation. This does not appear to draw on the security activities many of these actors provide to large groups of citizens beyond the elites in West Africa. In reality many Africans, especially the poorest, rely on the provision of security from informal sources as they exist beyond the reach of state security providers, who tend to prioritise the security needs of elite groups.⁶⁶

In moving beyond rhetoric, ECOWAS presents the process of implementing the SG component of the ECPF in its plan of action.⁶⁷ In this, it addresses the issues of a reform agenda as compared to a transformation agenda, and the reality of the engagement on non-state actors. On a transformative agenda, firstly the plan of action deepens the task of developing a security governance framework, and calls on member states to drive a similar national process and develop accompanying national security policies.⁶⁸ Secondly, it broadens the legal and policy framework structure to hold all security actors accountable and ensure their relevance to the needs of West African citizens, instead of simply targeting non-state actors.⁶⁹

On the reality of the engagement of a broad spectrum of actors on security governance, the plan of action lays out the processes to ensure civil society engagement in developing and implementing SG programmes in member states.⁷⁰ In addition, it surpasses the SG component and argues for a more overt and explicit role for national parliaments in security governance pursuits.⁷¹ For non-state security providers, the plan of action⁷² details the SG component's call for a study on military and security agencies, to include a study on formal and informal security providers. All these provisions

signal opportunities to transform West Africa's security environment, even if by stealth.

Conclusion

When ECOWAS was forced to address the notion of internal conflicts in member states, its present goal of becoming an ECOWAS of peoples effectively crystallised. On this path of understanding the dynamics of internal conflicts and the problems faced by citizens of member states, the security challenges that face West Africa have become all the more apparent. Violent conflicts have been dominated by the actions of security actors, both formal and informal, in bringing insecurity to large numbers of people in the subregion. In responding to this, ECOWAS shed its prior preoccupation with state security to embrace a broader notion of security for people, beyond states.

The ECOWAS approach of redefining security and incorporating a broader constituency in its peace and security agenda is commendable, and is a key indicator of its transformational quality. In addition, its methodology of constant learning and adapting has challenged the idea of international organisations being rigid and unable to change. In these transitions it has shown strength in prioritising and wholeheartedly utilising local knowledge bases and expertise in policy-making and implementation on peace and security. This has been most apparent in its engagement with civil society. The SG component of the ECPF continues the close engagement with specialised civil society actors and is resolute in its involvement at different levels, including knowledge gathering, training and capacity building.⁷³

However, ECOWAS remains an organisation of member states, which effectively drive the security governance agenda of the institution. The negative connotation that underscores the tone of reference to informal non-state security actors in the SG component of the ECPF creates some resistance to accepting the pivotal role that these groups play in the provision of security to the most vulnerable in the sub-region. Clearly, tensions will arise in taking on this reality, in the shape of resistance of member-state governments and parts of the international community, which have negative attitudes to security arrangements outside the formal realm under the pretext of threats such as terrorism. Nonetheless, for ECOWAS to achieve its goal of becoming an organisation of its peoples, the positive role played by informal security providers must be acknowledged and fully engaged while its negative impacts are confronted.

Taking the proverbial bull by the horns on informal security actors would represent a departure from SSR to SST. The challenge ECOWAS faces in doing this will show whether it is driving an agenda of reform or of transformation. Again, ECOWAS is obliged to its member states and the predominance of security structures that continue to protect the state and elites at the expense of the broader population. Challenging the status quo is to challenge the powers in place, which in many cases constitute substantial authorities within the ECOWAS structures.

All of this notwithstanding, there is clear scope currently for ECOWAS to tackle this immense challenge with the use of its normative framework, most especially in its budding ECPF plan of action. The situation is not without hope, but ECOWAS will need to take sound action to drive its existing SSR agenda to achieve its end goal of transformation of the security sector and its governance process. Many will argue that this cannot be done. It will be left to ECOWAS to prove them wrong and consolidate its gains in its peace and security record in the sub-region.

Notes

- ¹ ECOWAS Treaty of Lagos; available at www.afrimap.org/english/images/treaty/ECOWAS%20Treaty.pdf.
- ² *Ibid.*, Articles 4 and 25.
- ³ *Ibid.*, Article 58.
- ⁴ F. Olonisakin (2009) 'ECOWAS and civil society movements in West Africa', *IDS Bulletin*, 40(2), p.13.
- ⁵ J. Kabia (2009) *Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Resolution in West Africa: From ECOMOG to ECOMIL*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 67.
- ⁶ ECOWAS Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance in Defence; available at <http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/iss/pdfs/ecowas/13ProtMutualDefAss.pdf>, Article 3.
- ⁷ ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles; available at www.afrimap.org/english/images/treaty/file423b0220808e6.pdf.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 6.
- ⁹ African Union Profile of ECOWAS; available at www.africa-union.org/root/AU/RECs/ECOWASProfile.pdf.
- ¹⁰ ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; available at www.sec.ecowas.int/sitecedea0/english/ap101299.htm.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Preamble.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, Article 4.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, Article 2.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Article 25.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Article 6.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Article 13.

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- ¹⁸ ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; available at www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/12ProtDemocGood.pdf, Article 1.
- ¹⁹ ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, note 6 above, Article 44.
- ²⁰ Heiner Hänggi, 'Security Sector Reform', in *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding – A Lexicon*, ed. Vincent Chetail (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- ²¹ N. Ball and D. Hendrickson (2009) 'Trends in security sector reform (SSR): Policy, practice and research', CSDG Papers No. 20; available at www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/CSDG%20Paper%2020.pdf.
- ²² Hänggi (2009): p.339.
- ²³ OECD (2007) *The OECD DAC Handbook on SSR: Supporting Security and Justice*. Paris: OECD; available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/25/38406485.pdf.
- ²⁴ Hänggi (2009): p.338.
- ²⁵ A. Ebo (2007) 'Towards a common ECOWAS agenda on SSR', DCAF Policy Paper No. 23, DCAF, Geneva.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Ball and Hendrickson, note 21 above, also give examples of the work of the members of the Military Research Group at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 1993 with grants from the Danish government, which eventually became the Centre for Defence and Security Management; the Security Transformation Project at the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, established in the late 1990s to contribute to the development of an indigenous African intellectual and practical capability in the spheres of defence and civil-military management; the African Security Dialogue and Research in Accra, established in 1998, that undertakes work on issues of security and their relationship with democratic consolidation; and the Centre for Democracy and Development, established in 1997 to work on governance, security and development, including the publication of a handbook on democratic governance in the security sector as part of its educational efforts in this area.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ P. Singer (2003) *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatised Military Enterprise*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, p. 132.
- ³⁰ S. Adejumobi (2001) 'Guarding the guardian: The Obasanjo regime and military reform in Nigeria', *Development Policy Management Network Bulletin*, 8(3), pp. 17–19.
- ³¹ E. Ikpe (2007) 'Enhancing the security oversight role of Liberia's parliamentarians: Findings of an interactive needs assessment', CSDG Papers No. 8, King's College, London.
- ³² A. Ebo, note 25 above.
- ³³ N. Cooper and M. Pugh (2002) 'Security-sector transformation in post-conflict societies', International Studies Centre, University of Plymouth, draft paper for Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, London; available at www.gsdr.org/docs/open/SSAJ150.pdf.
- ³⁴ J. Lar (2009) 'The ECOWAS SSR agenda in West Africa: Looking beyond normative frameworks', KAIPTC Occasional Paper No. 24, ECOWAS, Abuja.
- ³⁵ N. Cooper and M. Pugh (2002) 'Security sector transformation in post-conflict societies', CSDG Working Paper No. 5, King's College, London.
- ³⁶ A. Ebo (2004) 'Security sector reform as an instrument of sub-regional transformation in West Africa', in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hanggi (eds), *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*. Munster: Lit Verlag/DCAF.
- ³⁷ The Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services is closely linked with the DCAF programme on the Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces in West

-
- Africa; available at www.dcaf.ch/code_conduct-armed-forces-west-africa/_index.cfm. DCAF is also named as a joint partner to ECOWAS for the deployment of the instrument in a pilot phase.
- ³⁸ ECOWAS Draft Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa; available at www.dcaf.ch/code_conduct-armed-forces-west-africa/WestAfrica_CoC.pdf, Article 4.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, Article 2.
- ⁴⁰ ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework; available at www.ecowas.int/publications/en/framework/ECPF_final.pdf, Section 2, no. 5.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Section 2, no. 6.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, para. 72.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ ECOWAS Draft Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa, note 38 above, Introduction and Articles 4, 5, 8, 16 and 17.
- ⁴⁶ ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, note 40 above, para. 97.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 4.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, paras 4, 7–9, 13, 44 and 50e.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 64e.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 74g.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, paras 74k and 74j.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, paras 74i and 74k.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, paras 74a, 74c and 74d.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 74a.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 74b.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 75b.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 75e.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 75f.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 73.
- ⁶⁰ F. Olonisakin, E. Ikpe and P. Badong (2009) ‘The future of security and justice for the poor: A “blue sky” think-piece’, CSDG Policy Studies No. 21, King’s College, London; available at www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/CSDG%20Policy%20Studies%2021.pdf.
- ⁶¹ Olonisakin, note 4 above.
- ⁶² A. Ebo (forthcoming) ‘The gender dimensions of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture: A regional perspective on UN Resolution 1325’, in F. Olonisakin, K. Barnes and E. Ikpe (eds) *Women, Peace and Security: Translating Policy into Practice*. London: Routledge.
- ⁶³ President Ibn Chamas began his tenure as executive secretary of the ECOWAS Secretariat; upon its transformation to the ECOWAS Commission he became its president.
- ⁶⁴ Olonisakin, note 4 above.
- ⁶⁵ There is only one mention of the role of parliaments in the SG component: ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, note 41 above, para. 74n. This point is also made in the introduction to the plan of action: F. Olonisakin and E. Hutchful (2010) ‘ECOWAS draft ECPF action plan – Security governance’, ECOWAS, p. 2.
- ⁶⁶ Olonisakin et al., note 61 above; O. Ismail and D. Hendrickson (2009) ‘What is the case for a security and justice focus in development assistance programming? An assessment of existing literature and evidence’, Conflict, Security and Development Group, King’s

College, London; A. Ebo (2007) 'Non-state actors, peacebuilding and security governance in West Africa: Beyond commercialisation', *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 3(2), pp. 53–69; J. Isima (2004) 'Demilitarisation, non-state actors and public security in Africa: A preliminary survey of the literature', *Journal of Security Sector Management*, 2(4); available at www.jofssm.org/issues/jofssm_0204_isima.doc.

⁶⁷ Olonisakin and Hutchful, note 65 above.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 12.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 7; ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, note 40 above, para. 74b.

⁷³ ECOWAS, note 40 above, para. 74m, 74n, 74p and 74q. This point is also made in the introduction to the plan of action: Olonisakin and Hutchful, note 65 above, p. 2.

Chapter 9

Conceptualising and Implementing a Transformative African Union Policy on Security Sector Reform

Norman Mlambo¹

Introduction

This chapter describes the rationale behind the African Union (AU) decision to have a continental security sector reform (SSR) policy, the transformational objectives of such a policy, its guiding principles and the expected challenges in both the policy formulation process and its implementation. The policy statements discussed in this chapter are based on the AU SSR policy draft document presented at a meeting in Addis Ababa in May 2010² and the subsequent discussions that the paper has generated. The draft AU SSR document will be subjected to a number of consultative processes with civil society organisations, AU partners, regional economic communities and member states at the expert level before its adoption by the African Union. Although the document is likely to have undergone significant changes by the time it is adopted as the AU's SSR policy, the principles and process that underpin it will form the key focus of this chapter.

In many AU member states the security sector faces numerous internal challenges, such as a lack of proper institutional structures, poor leadership, inadequate equipment and training and a lack of funding and other resources. These and other challenges, many of which are discussed in the first two chapters of this volume, make it difficult for elements of the security sector in Africa to perform its legitimate functions in a democratic manner. It is thus difficult to challenge the case for security sector transformation in many AU member states. However, the current transformation discourse focuses more on the democratic governance³ aspects of the security sector, sometimes even when there are no adequate forces to sustain the emerging

African democracy. An ideal security sector transformation agenda for Africa should tackle both 'technical' reform challenges and the wider challenges of the democratic governance of the sector.

In addition to these challenges, it is important to realise, as indicated in Chapter 1 of this volume, that many elements of the security sector in AU member states were created during the colonial period, not to serve the general public, but rather to safeguard the interests of the colonial masters. In other words, the colonial security sector was never meant to be democratic, a fact which is not often acknowledged by many pro-democracy activists. During the anti-colonial struggles, liberation movements used guerrilla forces and other armed groups with methods that were just as undemocratic as those of the colonial security forces. The various transitions towards democracy in many AU member states were supposed to include the democratic transformation of both the colonial forces and the forces of the liberation movements. Some countries did actually achieve some level of security sector transformation, but these are few and, as discussed in Chapter 2, the focus was on the transformation of the military rather than other parts of the security establishment.

The immediate post-colonial period was difficult for most AU member states where the security sector was concerned. To start with, it was difficult to convince any African government to 'democratise' its security sector against a fear of the return of the colonial masters and, more importantly, in the context of the many military confrontations on the African continent associated with the Cold War. In some countries the security sector became so intertwined with national political activity that the sector took over the running of the state in various military coups d'état. Even where the military did not take over the state, some leaders were able to use elements of the security sector to suppress any political dissent and keep themselves in power for very long periods. In many African countries, therefore, rather than being the guarantor of peace and security for citizens, the security sector itself became the biggest threat to the general population.⁴

The end of the Cold War saw a wave of political reforms that led to multi-party elections in several African countries. In a number of these, the most visible signs of the reforms were disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes and the accompanying withdrawal of the military from direct political activity. There was popular talk of turning 'swords into ploughshares' complemented by the reduction of defence budgets and downsizing of the numbers of defence forces in many countries.⁵ This was the context in which African countries participated in early forms of security sector reform.

These early initiatives were met with mixed reactions in different countries. Although there were notable reductions in the security sector, in some cases the sector actually increased in numbers and expenditure. The successes were also often punctuated by negative and unintended consequences, which in extreme cases led to elements of the security sector being eroded to the extent of being unable to defend the state, maintain law and order and take part in regional and continental peace and security initiatives.⁶ Some African states became dependent on international partners and/or private security companies for ordinary defence and security activities. Others actually collapsed, while in a further category the demobilised forces who could not be absorbed into civilian society became a source of insecurity. These negative consequences of early SSR initiatives led some African leaders to regard this area with suspicion.

For the African Union, the turning point came with the adoption of the post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) policy document, which will be discussed in detail later. Among other things, the PCRD document gives priority to the re-establishment and strengthening of the capacity of African security institutions to 'pursue the transformation of the organs of state, especially those relating to security and justice'. However, if *transformation* underpins its provisions, the language the PCRD document adopted is that of security sector *reform*. This document provides for the development of an AU policy on security sector reform. Among other objectives, such as democratising security sector governance, the AU SSR policy aims to transform and tackle the internal development challenges of the African security sector in order to assist African states in addressing the national security imbalances created by earlier but not-so-well-planned SSR initiatives.⁷

SSR has been recognised by the African Union as an essential item on the agenda of peace, security and sustainable development in Africa. Accordingly, in January 2008 the Assembly of the African Union adopted a decision which 'encourages the Commission to develop a comprehensive AU Policy Framework on SSR, within the context of the Policy Framework on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development adopted by the Executive Council in Banjul in June 2006'.⁸ As a result, the AU Commission has started the process of formulating a continental SSR policy in fulfilment of the decision of the Assembly of the African Union. It has also developed an SSR project and a budget for phase one of the project, which will run until December 2012.⁹ The main activities listed in the project include policy formulation, consultation with stakeholders, creation of an AU SSR unit and SSR training. In analysing the African Union's engagement in this area, this chapter is consistent with the language of 'reform' used by the African

Union while seeking to identify the transformative elements of the organisation's approach.

SSR in the AU post-conflict reconstruction and development policy

The AU policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development was adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union in Banjul, the Gambia, in July 2006. The aim and objectives of the policy are to coordinate activities in post-conflict situations on the African continent and lay down foundations for social justice and sustainable peace. Specifically, the policy was conceived as a tool to:

- Consolidate peace and prevent a relapse into violence
- Help address the root causes of conflict
- Encourage and fast-track planning and implementation of reconstruction activities
- Encourage complementarities and coordination between and among diverse actors engaged in PCRDR processes

The PCRDR document draws on the discourse of transformation by explaining that the post-conflict reconstruction process must be viewed as an opportunity for social, political, economic and physical transformation of the affected states and societies. In this regard, the document elaborates six indicative elements that may be followed in post-conflict situations to address the root causes of conflict. Security is one of these six elements. The document also explains that all activities of the security sector shall be based on the concept of human security as stipulated in the common African defence and security policy.¹⁰

The PCRDR document states that activities relating to security should promote the consolidation of efficient, accountable and professional defence and security forces, operating under responsible civilian control and oversight. It therefore seeks to strengthen legal frameworks, improve operational capacity and encourage broad consultation and participation of civil society in the security sector. The security element of the PCRDR document focuses on three major objectives. The first is to address issues of DDR and specific security concerns of women and girls. The document specifically aims to 'ensure that the process of transformation of the security sector recognises and acknowledges the role of and addresses the specific needs and challenges that confront women and child soldiers'. The second objective relates to the formulation of security policy, while the third is to

build the human resource capacity of the security sector in post-conflict African countries.

This third objective of the security element of the PCRDR policy gives priority to the re-establishment and strengthening of the capacity of security institutions, including defence, police, correctional services, border control and customs.¹¹ Specifically, the PCRDR policy document calls on countries emerging from conflict to attend to the following:

- Pursue the transformation of the organs of state, specifically those relating to security and justice.
- Restore and strengthen institutions of public law and order, including the establishment of an efficient police force.
- Establish mechanisms for the democratic governance and accountability of the security sector, as a means of restoring public confidence.
- Facilitate security sector reform, including civil-military relations and right-sizing and professionalisation of the security sector, as soon as demobilisation efforts are commenced.
- Create appropriate and effective oversight bodies for the security sector, including parliamentary committees, national ombudspersons, etc.¹²

It is clear from the wording of the security elements of the PCRDR document that transformation of the security sector is central to AU thinking. But, interestingly, the African Union deals with issues of security sector transformation in this manner only in post-conflict settings and not in other types of transition. This in itself says much about the politically sensitive nature of this subject within the organisation. However, although the PCRDR paper became one of the celebrated documents of the AU Commission, for some time there was no real activity on the ground to implement its provisions. The main criticism is that the document did not establish a clear mechanism to follow up on the implementation of PCRDR activities in post-conflict countries. Even at the AU Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, it was only at the end of 2009 that one officer was appointed to coordinate PCRDR activities for the commission.¹³ The other constraint is of course the lack of funding for the African Union to follow up on PCRDR activities, let alone to assist any member state in implementation.

On the issue of SSR, however, there has been some activity since the adoption of the PCRDR policy. The African Security Sector Network (ASSN), in collaboration with the Centre for Policy Research and Dialogue, organised an African continental meeting for civil society in Addis Ababa in October

2007.¹⁴ The meeting was held at the AU headquarters, and its main objective was to identify concrete steps towards the development of an African SSR strategy. That meeting was followed by an international workshop on SSR held in Cape Town, South Africa, in November 2007. The Cape Town meeting was sponsored by the government of South Africa in collaboration with the government of Slovakia, and produced a number of useful recommendations for both the African Union and SSR practitioners on the African continent. The report of the meeting was presented to the chairperson of the African Union in January 2008. In that same month, the Assembly of the African Union adopted a decision which encourages the AU Commission to develop the AU SSR policy mentioned earlier. It is this decision that gave the AU Commission the mandate to develop an AU security sector reform policy and strategy.

General objectives of the AU SSR policy

It is intended that the AU SSR policy will have continental coverage, including the regional economic communities (RECs) and AU member states. According to the draft AU policy document, the SSR policy will be a framework document for the African Union, the RECs, AU member states and other stakeholders.¹⁵ The policy will describe how the African Union and stakeholders that embark on SSR initiatives on the African continent should approach SSR issues. It is also important to note that the AU SSR policy document will not aspire to make the African Union the main SSR implementation agent on the continent, but that it may be a partner which assists member states in national SSR activities.

The general objective of the AU SSR policy is to assist national governments so they will be best able to fulfil the following specific functions:

- Defend and protect all citizens from all forms of violence and insecurity (human security).
- Defend the state, borders and national sovereignty (state security).
- Deal with criminal elements in society.
- Punish and rehabilitate offenders within the limits of international law.
- Better promote regional and continental peace and security, including peacekeeping.
- Deal with the threats of internal and international terrorism.
- React to natural disasters, serious accidents and other national emergencies.¹⁶

Core African principles for security sector reform

The basic principle guiding the AU SSR policy is to empower member states and enable them to respond in a democratic way to the security challenges they face, while promoting good governance and the rule of law.¹⁷ The emerging AU policy on SSR should therefore establish principles that would guide SSR on the continent. The meeting held in Addis Ababa to discuss the draft AU SSR policy document identified 12 basic ideas that should form the AU SSR core principles. These are consistent with the ten UN basic SSR principles.¹⁸ The meeting was at pains to extract specific African principles, such as the recognition of traditional security providers as important elements of the African security sector. This African focus was informed by ideas expressed at the Forum on African Perspectives on SSR held in New York on 13–14 May 2010.¹⁹ How many of these 12 principles will survive the rigorous consultation with stakeholders is another matter. This chapter will discuss only three of these principles, because they seem particularly relevant to a transformative agenda: local/national ownership, democratic control of the security sector and gender mainstreaming and transformation.

Member states and national ownership

In the emerging AU SSR policy, member states are the primary providers of peace and security for their citizens and all entities within their borders. One of the main principles of the AU policy is national ownership of SSR activities in any country. Within the African Union, national ownership is not confined to state ownership, but includes all national stakeholders and actors.²⁰ National ownership means that SSR should be conceived, designed, led, managed, implemented, monitored and evaluated by national actors. National authorities should also make substantial financial, human and other resource contributions to the SSR process. Resource contributions are often interpreted to mean financial resources, which many African governments cannot raise without external assistance. However, besides financial contributions, governments can also take leading roles by providing political leadership and other non-monetary resources required for SSR processes.

To be truly national, a member state implementing SSR will be required to include as many national stakeholders as possible into the SSR process. These may include but are not limited to the following:

- Representatives of various government departments
- The local security sector, including core security, justice, prison and immigration institutions, air traffic control and emergency response units;
- Women's organisations
- Political parties and local human rights organisations
- Local elites, universities, research institutions and other think-tanks
- Civil society and representatives of youth organisations
- The local business community and financial institutions
- The local media²¹

The African Union sees its role in SSR on the continent as that of assisting the national authorities in fulfilling their locally conceived SSR initiatives and providing the necessary support. The draft AU SSR document indicates that the African Union will work in partnership with national authorities in the implementation of SSR activities in member states. SSR activities are expected to take into consideration the activities of non-state actors and identify and address those that may turn out to be spoilers of the process. The draft AU SSR document goes on to list a number of activities that a member state is expected to undertake in order to conform to the AU SSR policy.²²

Regional economic communities and regional ownership

Article 16 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC)²³ of the African Union states that the regional mechanisms (RMs) for conflict prevention, management and resolution are part of the overall security architecture of the African Union. The same article further requires the AU Commission, the regional economic communities and RMs for conflict prevention, management and resolution to conclude a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that would institutionalise and strengthen cooperation between them in the area of peace and security and thereby contribute to the full operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Following the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union²⁴ and in line with the provisions of the protocol on the establishment of the PSC, a protocol on relations between the African Union and the RECs was signed on 27 January 2008, followed a day later by the signing of an MoU²⁵ on cooperation in the area of peace and security.

The African Union therefore considers the RECs and RMs as the building blocks of the APSA and thus leading stakeholders in SSR activities

of member states. The principle of local ownership is extended to mean that a REC has a bigger stake in the SSR activities of its member states *vis-à-vis* other external actors. The regional approach is strengthened by the fact that member states in a REC often face common security needs due to the cross-border nature of some security challenges, which require collective regional responses. The PCRD policy document also encourages the adoption of a regional approach to security, ‘to avoid the danger of PCRD in one country displacing conflict/insecurity to neighbouring countries and to align the post-conflict country to existing regional and continental commitments and protocols’.²⁶ In this regard the African Union can work with the relevant RECs whenever SSR activities are envisaged in a member state of the REC. Where both the African Union and an REC have to engage in an SSR activity together, the organisation that has a comparative advantage in that particular situation may take the lead.

The potential for overlap between the African Union and RECs in implementing this policy is not lost on the managers of the SSR policy-making process, particularly when some REC activities predate the AU-led process. The draft AU SSR policy document therefore lists a number of activities where the RECs could take a lead. These include, among others, the development of regional security sector reform and governance frameworks to assist member states to comply with the AU SSR policy, and designation of SSR focal points to coordinate activities in member states and engage with other international partners such as the United Nations and the European Union.

It should, however, be noted that some RECs, notably the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have moved much faster than the African Union in implementing their part of the MoU, especially in the area of SSR.²⁷ This observation prompted one REC liaison officer to the African Union to remark that at least in the area of peace and security ‘the AU is leading from behind’. This remark underscores the inherent challenges in implementing an AU SSR policy which focuses narrowly on post-conflict contexts in regional settings such as West Africa, while ECOWAS has a robust policy framework on security governance which goes beyond post-conflict contexts to include all member states (see Chapter 8 in this volume). As discussed later, the emerging AU SSR policy framework attempts to go beyond post-conflict contexts in as much as it articulates broad principles which can be applied in other contexts.

Democratic control of the security sector

Several principles which underpin the AU approach to SSR are articulated in the draft policy document. A member state implementing SSR is required to establish clear civil control of the security sector. In this regard, the document proposes a number of principles²⁸ that should be articulated in the relevant sections of national constitutions and Acts of parliament. One of the principles highlighted is the need for a civilian head of state who should be commander-in-chief of the armed forces and have the sole authority, with advice from the cabinet or its equivalent, to declare war and deploy troops outside the country. This is strengthened by the proposal that a member of the armed and uniformed security forces should not take part in party political activity during his/her term of service. Where such a member desires to participate in party politics, he or she should first resign from service in the armed or uniformed forces, and would be eligible to join party political activities after a period of 12 months from the date of termination of service.²⁹

Another area of focus for democratic control of the security sector is budget control. The draft AU SSR policy document proposes that all elements of the security sector should have a civilian secretariat in charge of their administrative and financial affairs. The document proposes that the budgets of these elements should be controlled by the civilian secretariat and their financial activities should be audited by the public auditor on an annual basis.

Democratic control also means that parliaments of AU member states should exercise oversight authority over the security sector through parliamentary subcommittees. All elements of the sector should adhere to international law and international humanitarian law, and should not act in contravention of any domestic and national law. Only members of the security forces should be charged under military courts for any offences, and decisions handed down by military courts should be subject to appeal to civilian courts.³⁰

Gender mainstreaming and transformation

The emerging AU SSR policy reflects the AU commitment to gender equality. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this volume, the inclusion of women in security is one of the strongest indicators of transformation. The African Union is committed to gender equality, and that commitment is expressed in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa³¹ and the Solemn Declaration on Gender

Equality in Africa.³² In order to implement gender mainstreaming, the AU Commission established the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, which has now developed an AU gender policy and action plan. The African Union's approach to gender mainstreaming is informed by UN gender instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979.

In the area of peace and security, the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy calls on member states to provide a framework for the effective participation of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution activities.³³ On SSR, the PCRD paper devotes considerable attention to women and gender issues. This is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which politically legitimises the role of women in all peace and security activities.³⁴ It is in this context that the AU draft SSR policy document proposes to mainstream issues of women and gender in all elements of the policy, and also addresses the issue of gender mainstreaming in a stand-alone section. In particular, the AU SSR process should aim to achieve the following:

- Improve the mechanisms for the prevention of gender-based violence, with the aim of ending all violence against women.
- Involve women at all levels of SSR, with the aim of creating more representative security sector institutions.
- Address specific needs of female ex-combatants as well as wives and widows of former combatants.
- Provide sexual trauma counselling and support to victims and female ex-combatants.
- Provide gender training and human rights training to all security personnel.
- Increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in all security sector institutions.³⁵

Other key elements of the AU SSR policy

Although the AU Assembly decision to implement SSR refers to post-conflict situations, the proposed policies recommend SSR in other contexts, such as to support the prevention of unconstitutional changes of government, in the process of readmission of suspended member states or upon request by a member state or a REC. However, the draft document lays out some necessary conditions for the implementation of SSR, the main ones being that there must be a stable political and security environment and a legitimate government to implement any SSR activity.

Included in the main elements of the SSR implementation guidelines is the necessity for an assessment before any SSR activity begins. Equally important is the provision that an SSR process must start from constitutional and other legal frameworks for the relevant elements of the security sector. Conditions of service, training, the rehabilitation of ex-combatants and security sector resource mobilisation are some of the important elements proposed in the draft AU SSR policy.

Partnerships

It is envisaged that the African Union will develop and build on its existing partnerships and collaborations with various actors as part of its strategy for developing and implementing its SSR policy. Some of these partnerships were developed prior to and outside of the SSR policy process, while others are being created as a result of the strategy. Some of these are discussed below.

Partnership with the United Nations

The African Union recognises that the UN Security Council has primary responsibility for global peace and security,³⁶ in line with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. It also recognises that the United Nations has been actively involved in SSR with national authorities in a number of African countries. For example, various UN agencies have been involved in SSR in Burundi, the Central African Republic, the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau.

As the leading regional organisation for the African continent, the African Union recognises its own critical role as the main custodian of peace and security on the continent in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In 1998 the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out that UN support for regional and subregional peace and security initiatives was both necessary and desirable:³⁷ such support is necessary because the United Nations lacks the capacity, resources and expertise to address all problems that may arise in Africa; and it is desirable because wherever possible the international community should strive to complement rather than supplant African efforts to resolve Africa's problems.³⁸

It is important to note that African countries are not always the recipients of UN support, but also provide it. African countries have provided tens of thousands of troops participating in 17 UN peacekeeping operations, including hybrid AU-UN operations such as UNAMID in the

Darfur region of Sudan. African countries have also contributed thousands of officers to the global policing missions deployed by the United Nations. In the area of SSR, some African countries have become providers, such as South Africa and Angola in the DRC, Egypt in Burundi and Nigeria and Ghana in Liberia.³⁹

In the context of the above facts the AU Commission developed an SSR partnership with the UN SSR Unit based in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The two organisations have worked together right from the start of the AU SSR process in March 2009. The African Union and the United Nations co-hosted the Africa regional workshop on SSR held in Addis Ababa in March 2009. The two organisations have started a joint SSR orientation programme for senior officials on the African continent. In May 2010 they co-hosted the first meeting to review the draft AU SSR policy document. The document lists a number of areas where the United Nations may support the African Union in its SSR process.

African civil society and partnership with the African Security Sector Network

The participation of civil society in AU activities is rooted in Article 4(c) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which encourages the ‘participation of the African Peoples in the activities of the Union’.⁴⁰ Although there are various entry points for civil society engagement with the African Union, the AU organ created specifically to handle civil society issues is the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).⁴¹ Within the AU Commission various departments⁴² provide space for civic inclusion and have mechanisms to reach out to civil society. More specifically, the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO)⁴³ operates as both the secretariat to ECOSOCC and the focal point for civil society and citizens from both the continent and the diaspora. Further, CIDO organises civil society organisations to meet at the margins of all the AU summits of heads of state and government to discuss the summit theme and any other issues under the spotlight.

In the area of peace and security, it is important to note CIDO evolved from the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA)⁴⁴ established in 1999 by the Organisation of African Unity as its focal point for civil society organisations. The role of civil society in AU peace and security activities was strengthened by the 2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which has a section on relations with civil society organisations that reads as follows:

The Peace and Security Council shall encourage non-governmental organisations, community-based and other civil society organisations, particularly women's organisations, to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. When required, such organisations may be invited to address the Peace and Security Council.⁴⁵

In the area of security policy formulation, the PCRD policy requires the African Union, RECs and AU member states to 'foster the inclusion of civil society organisations as partners in safety and security cluster activities'.⁴⁶ In this context the AU Commission developed a partnership with the ASSN, one of the leading expert networks on the subject of SSR. The AU Commission collaborated with the ASSN to write background research papers to generate ideas for inclusion in the draft AU SSR policy. Nine such papers were considered at an AU SSR validation workshop held in Addis Ababa in December 2009. The ASSN has been providing support to the AU SSR project through seconding a senior SSR adviser and interns to the project. It is envisaged that this collaboration will be complemented by a comprehensive memorandum of understanding between the AU Commission and the ASSN.

In addition to working with civil society organisations in the development of the AU SSR policy, the draft SSR document highlights the role of civil society in security sector governance. It is important for civil society to interact with the security sector as part of the democratic oversight of security institutions. Civil society organisations may act not only as watchdogs over the actions of national authorities, but also as a measure of public approval of their actions in security sector reform and transformation. Civil society may contribute positively to SSR by facilitating dialogue and debate on security issues, assisting in security-related research, training in legal and human rights issues, advocacy and awareness raising, security budget analysis and monitoring and evaluation of security policy. The draft AU SSR policy document lists a number of areas in which civil society may influence security sector governance.

Other international partners and donors

The United Nations, AU member states, regional economic communities and the African Union have the primary responsibility to provide security and implement security sector reform under their different mandates. However, SSR processes always require the involvement of other international partners. The African Union recognises that the majority of SSR processes

carried out in AU member states have been initiated, coordinated and funded by international partners. The draft AU SSR policy document appreciates the lead taken by some international partners in assisting member states with their SSR requirements, and encourages these and other partners to continue to engage with member states, RECs and the African Union on SSR-related activities and provide financial and technical support to member states and RECs wherever possible.⁴⁷

The discussion on the role of partners in AU SSR activities centres around the issue of ownership of and coordination of international support to SSR processes on the African continent. While it is generally agreed by all stakeholders that national authorities have the primary responsibility to lead SSR processes in their countries and coordinate the contributions from all partners, it is also clear that donors cannot simply provide funding for national SSR processes and not get involved in their planning, execution and evaluation. The question is therefore one of the degree of involvement of international partners rather than a discussion of whether or not they should be involved. Also, if there are several partners involved in a national SSR process, who determines which activity is funded or led by which partner? In many cases, international partners choose for themselves the SSR activities that they want to support, which often leads to some activities receiving too much attention and others not getting any support at all.

The draft AU SSR policy document therefore lists a number of areas where international partners and donors may get involved, and suggests that where multiple partners are involved in one SSR activity in an AU member state, the African Union should have the responsibility to coordinate all such international support.⁴⁸ Some of the areas that the AU document proposes for international partner engagement are:

- Provide support for and be part of joint SSR assessment, monitoring and evaluation missions to AU member states, together with national authorities, the United Nations, the African Union and RECs as required, and develop tools for such missions.
- Support SSR training activities for the African Union, RECs and member states.
- Support capacity building for SSR for the African Union, RECs and member states.⁴⁹

Conclusion

There are a number of serious challenges in the formulation and eventual implementation of an AU SSR policy and strategy. The first challenge is one of capacity at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. The decision to develop an AU SSR policy was taken in January 2008, but it was only in January 2009 that the AU Commission appointed an officer to start the process. Even that one SSR officer was not given a regular post, but only a short-term project position with a 12-month contract. Yet that one officer has to deal with SSR policy formulation, SSR training for AU staff and RECs, coordination of assessment missions to potential SSR candidates, fundraising and liaison with all stakeholders and partners interested in security sector reform on the continent. This dire shortage of human capacity accounts for the African Union's failure sometimes to play its role in important strategic processes. It was difficult for the African Union, for example, to send a representative to participate as part of an AU-ECOWAS-EU SSR assessment team in Guinea Conakry in March 2010. This lack of capacity invariably impacts on the ability of the AU Commission to implement effectively decisions taken by the AU Assembly. The assistance offered by the ASSN through the senior SSR adviser on secondment to the African Union and the support of two interns attached to the AU SSR project has been crucial.

The second challenge, related to the first, is the lack of funding for AU SSR activities. As there is no established SSR post at the AU Commission, the SSR officer receives his pay from the EU Capacity Building Fund. In 2009 only US\$100,000 was allocated for all SSR activities; this hardly covered the cost of meetings with stakeholders. The AU SSR project had to rely on the UN SSR Unit, UNDP and the European Union to fund each and every other activity undertaken in 2009. The financial situation is worse for 2010 because, apart from funds promised by Denmark and Spain (which were not available for the first half of the year) and potential support from Norway for two SSR training workshops later in the year, there is no allocation for SSR from the AU member states' regular budget.

One major question that has come up at almost every consultation meeting is whether member states of the African Union will accept the proposed AU SSR policy, knowing very well that it might erode their security sector power bases. But there is some optimism within the AU Commission that the draft policy will be adopted. This optimism is informed by several reasons. First, the mandate to develop an AU SSR policy was given by a decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of all AU member states. Second, the proposed AU SSR policy empowers

member states to shape their security sectors in the way that they feel is in their national interest and in their own time but with the backing of the African Union, the United Nations and the rest of the international community.

For member states wishing to implement SSR, the major challenge will be the significant funding required to reform even one small element of the national security sector. The African Union proposes to alleviate this problem by creating a continental security sector reform fund from which member states may draw funds for SSR. There is no illusion that creating such a fund will be easy. However, the AU Commission banks on the knowledge that a reformed, professional and democratic security sector is in the interest of all African citizens and leaders and also of the rest of the international community.

Another major challenge for the African Union is the establishment of mechanisms to implement the proposed AU SSR policy. The proposal is to create an African Committee on Security Sector Reform that would advise the AU Peace and Security Council on all matters relating to SSR. The committee would be composed of SSR experts from the African continent and would be responsible for direct interactions with member states that are implementing SSR. It would also be responsible for fundraising for all AU SSR activities. The idea of such a committee was not well received at the first AU-UN meeting to review the draft AU SSR policy document. Participants were more inclined to the creation of an AU interdepartmental mechanism following the UN model of an inter-agency SSR taskforce.

It is also proposed to create an AU Security Sector Reform Unit at the AU Commission that would act as the secretariat for the African Committee on Security Sector Reform. The unit would have capacity to perform secretarial, administrative, financial, research, training and information management functions in the area of security sector reform. For these proposals to become a reality, much will depend on the availability human and material resources to put those structures in place.

In the final analysis much depends on the extent to which the AU SSR policy process will produce an agenda of transformation and the capacity of the AU Commission to implement such an agenda. Already, the tell tale signs point in the direction of a limited focus on post-conflict environments and a much reduced capacity in the AU Commission to implement a more robust SSR policy even if Member States were inclined to move in this direction. It remains to be whether and how such transformation can be realized.

Notes

- ¹ Dr Norman Mlambo is the AU focal point on SSR. However, the views expressed in this chapter are his own and do not represent the official position of the AU Commission.
- ² 'African Union policy on security sector reform – Zero draft', paper presented at AU-UN Security Sector Reform Meeting to Review the Draft AU SSR Policy Document, Addis Ababa, 17–19 May 2010.
- ³ Nicole Ball and J. Kayode Fayemi (eds) (2004) *Security Sector Governance in Africa: A Handbook*. Lagos: Centre for Democracy and Development. Chapter 7 discusses six challenges of security sector transformation; all six are in the realm of democratic governance.
- ⁴ Ramtane Lamamra (2009) 'The future of security sector reform (SSR) on the African continent – Towards an African Union policy on SSR', keynote address by AU commissioner for peace and security presented at African Regional Workshop on Security Sector Reform, Addis Ababa, 23 March.
- ⁵ See, for example, Gwinyai A. Dzinesa (2006) 'Swords into ploughshares – Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa', ISS Paper 120, January, Pretoria.
- ⁶ Lamamra, note 3 above.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ African Union, Assembly/AU/Dec.177(X), January 2008.
- ⁹ 'African Union Security Sector Reform (SSR) Project – Phase One: Funding proposal and budget, Rev 6B', Addis Ababa, January 2010.
- ¹⁰ Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, Adopted by the African Union Assembly of Heads of States and Government at the Second Extraordinary Session, Sirte, Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 28 February 2004.
- ¹¹ African Union Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), Adopted by Executive Council of Ministers of the African Union, Banjul, the Gambia, July 2006, Article 25(c).
- ¹² Ibid., Article 25(c) [i–v].
- ¹³ The PCRD coordinator was appointed on a short-term contract of six months with a possibility of renewal. This is because the African Union has not created an established post for PCRD.
- ¹⁴ Report on ASSN Workshop on an African SSR Strategy Agenda and ASSN General Meeting, Addis Ababa, 9–11 October 2007.
- ¹⁵ 'African Union policy on security sector reform – Zero draft', note 1 above.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ 'Securing peace and development: The role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform', report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/62/659-S/2008/39, 23 January 2008, section VI.
- ¹⁹ See Co-Chairs Statement presented by Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations and Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations at High-Level Forum on African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform, New York, 14 May 2010.
- ²⁰ 'African Union policy on security sector reform – Zero draft', note 1 above.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.

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- ²³ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Adopted by First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Durban, 9 July 2002.
- ²⁴ Constitutive Act of the African Union, Adopted by 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Lome, Togo, 11 July 2000.
- ²⁵ Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern and Northern Africa, signed in Addis Ababa on 28 January 2008.
- ²⁶ African Union Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, note 10 above, Article 24.
- ²⁷ The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, signed in Abuja, Nigeria, in January 2008, has a section on security governance which forms the basis of the subregion's quick response to security sector reform and governance issues.
- ²⁸ 'African Union policy on security sector reform – Zero draft', note 1 above.
- ²⁹ This provision compliments the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted by the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa, 30 January 2007.
- ³⁰ Some provisions in the draft SSR policy document were heavily criticised by SSR experts at the first review meeting in May 2010 as being too prescriptive. It is thus most likely that the final AU SSR policy may have watered-down versions of these original ideas.
- ³¹ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Adopted by Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Maputo, 11 July 2003.
- ³² Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, Adopted by Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 6–8 July 2004.
- ³³ Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, note 9 above, para. 13(w).
- ³⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, 31 October 2000, UN Doc. S/RES/1325(2000).
- ³⁵ 'African Union policy on security sector reform – Zero draft', note 1 above.
- ³⁶ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, note 22 above, Article 17(1).
- ³⁷ Kofi Annan (1998) 'Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa', report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/52/871-S/1998/318, 16 April.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Dmitry Titov (2009) 'Security sector reform in Africa: The role and contribution of the United Nations', keynote address by assistant secretary-general for rule of law and security institutions, DPKO, Geneva, 14 December.
- ⁴⁰ Constitutive Act of the African Union, note 23 above, Article 4(c).
- ⁴¹ ECOSOCC was established as an organ of the African Union under the provisions of Articles 5 and 22 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, *ibid*.
- ⁴² These are: Peace and Security; Women, Gender and Development; Political Affairs; Infrastructure and Energy; Social Affairs; Human Resources, Science and Technology; Trade and Industry; Rural Economy and Agriculture; Economic Affairs; and CIDO.
- ⁴³ The Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) evolved from the Conference on Stability, Security, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA), which was established by the Organisation of African Unity in 1999 as the focal point for civil society organisations.

⁴⁴ The CSSDCA was first proposed by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda in Kampala in May 1991. However, it was only in 1999 that President Obasanjo of Nigeria urged heads of state and government to focus on the CSSDCA. This led to the CSSDCA Solemn Declaration, Adopted by 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Lome, Togo, 11 July 2000.

⁴⁵ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, note 22 above, Article 20.

⁴⁶ African Union Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, note 10 above, Article 25(b) iii.

⁴⁷ 'African Union policy on security sector reform – Zero draft', note 1 above.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Chapter 10

The United Nations and Security Sector Transformation in Africa

Adedeji Ebo

Introduction

There are several interlocutors directly and indirectly engaged in supporting the reform of security sectors in Africa, including various multilateral, bilateral, regional, national and commercial actors. Among these, there is a persistently increasing realisation that reform of the security sector, while often necessary, is hardly ever sufficient in making African states and societies feel safer and creating the requisite conditions for sustainable development. This realisation has exposed the need for a broader security agenda which aims at *transformation*, as opposed to *reform*, of the security sector.

This chapter is based on the premise that the United Nations has an important and unique role to play in security sector transformation (SST) in Africa. It attempts to outline this role, and considers the extent to which the UN's approach to security sector reform (SSR) corresponds with and contributes to the transformation of the security sector in Africa. Specifically, the chapter considers the extent to which the UN's SSR framework reflects two elements which Chapter 1 to this volume proposes as being at core of SST: 'a fundamental shift in the way security is conceived', and 'the pursuit of a governance agenda that puts citizens at the centre of security planning and provision'. The chapter approaches SST as a holistic change to the security sector (aimed at shifting the relations of power within the sector in the direction of civil/constitutional control) to alter institutional culture fundamentally, promote professionalism and improve resource utilisation and operational effectiveness in tandem with accountability and respect for human rights and international law, involving inputs from a wide range of stakeholders and role players. It is important to emphasise from the start that the United Nations, though important, is just one of several actors and is by no means a pioneer in the field of comprehensive SSR. While the

organisation has for many years been involved in supporting national actors in the maintenance and enhancement of security, its record in the development of a coordinated and comprehensive approach to security sector reform is relatively new and still evolving. The United Nations is coming into this field after major bilateral actors (e.g. the United Kingdom) and other international organisations – such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Union (EU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – developed practical interventions and operational principles in this area as early as the turn of the new millennium.¹ By comparison, the UN's first specific reference to SSR was with regard to Sierra Leone in 2002. The UN's arguably delayed arrival on the SSR scene was considerably boosted by the realisation from its cumulative experiences that a comprehensive approach to addressing justice and security institutions was an essential element in peacekeeping if reversal to conflict was to be avoided.²

This chapter is structured in four main parts. Following this brief introduction, we discuss the UN's SSR framework on the basis of defined norms and principles. In this regard, we posit that, given its universality, neutrality and legitimacy, the United Nations occupies a unique position in defining the normative standards for SSR processes globally. Beyond this normative role, the third part of the chapter examines the practical and operational aspects of the UN's support to SSR and the extent to which these reflect and enhance the prospects for security sector transformation. Following and drawing from the second and third sections, the fourth part summarises the challenges and lessons learned from the UN SSR framework and approach from the perspective of an SST agenda.

The UN's normative framework: From the security of states to the security of peoples

In spite of its extensive experience in supporting the re-establishment of security, particularly after conflict, UN support for SSR remained essentially *ad hoc*. But with the release of the first-ever report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform, the United Nations attempted to elaborate principles and standards to guide its work in this important area. These principles and normative standards are contained in the Secretary-General's report and related instruments which have evolved since then. Given the universal coverage, neutrality and legitimacy of the United Nations, this body of norms is rapidly developing into common global principles for developing and supporting SSR processes. As the SG's report itself

acknowledges, ‘the legitimacy and global character of the United Nations give it particular responsibility to continue to facilitate the elaboration of international principles and standards for support to security sector reform’.³ It is, however, important to note that these values and principles are shared with frameworks that predate the SG’s SSR report, such as those of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the EU. They are also linked to and to an extent influenced by SSR frameworks within regional economic communities such as the African Union and ECOWAS. The relevant task at this juncture and within the context of this chapter is to examine the extent to which such a normative framework is transformative in character.

The UN SSR framework can indeed be said to be transformative firstly in terms of the important shift in the definition and conception of security. Such transformation relates the change in focus from the security of states *per se* to a conception which includes and emphasises the security of *individuals*. This deepening of the conception of security from national to human calls for a ‘human-centred approach’, including issues of social justice, environmental protection, democratisation, human rights and rule of law.⁴

The broadening of security from military to include non-military issues and its deepening from national to human security captures and corresponds with the trajectory of insecurity in Africa. The traditional security agenda – with its Weberian underpinnings and assumptions predicated on the monopoly of use of legitimate force by the state – has always enjoyed questionable relevance and validity on a continent in which such monopoly has either never existed or not been legitimate. Typically, African states have had a limited security reach. The state has been a crucial, but by no means the only, actor in security provision. Indeed, the state, including state security actors (the police and armed forces), has often been the cause of insecurity. In Africa, as elsewhere, informal and non-state security and justice mechanisms have in many contexts been important – if not primary – providers of these critical public services. In this regard, it is significant to note that the UN’s definition of ‘security sector’ recognises other security actors beyond the state.⁵

As the title of the Secretary-General’s report (‘Securing peace and development: The role of the UN in supporting SSR’) suggests, the UN’s approach to SSR extends beyond narrow conceptions to a broader, more comprehensive security agenda, which has as its ultimate goal the achievement of peace and development. It is based on the assumption that SSR is more than narrow exercises such as right-sizing the security services or training and equipping uniformed personnel, and involves a set of

strategies, policies and activities that are at their core aimed at transforming states and societies in accordance with nationally defined goals.

Beyond a wider conception of security, another major transformative element of the UN's SSR framework can be found in the principles and norms which it propounds. While no attempt will be made here to analyse each of the UN's SSR principles,⁶ some transformative elements are noteworthy:

- The goal of the United Nations in SSR is to support States and societies in developing effective, inclusive and accountable security institutions so as to contribute to international peace and security, sustainable development and the enjoyment of human rights by all;
- Security sector reform should be undertaken on the basis of a national decision, a Security Council mandate and/or a General Assembly resolution, the Charter of the United Nations and human rights laws and standards;
- In order to be successful and sustainable, support in the area of security sector reform must be anchored on national ownership and the commitment of involved States and societies;
- A United Nations approach to security sector reform must be flexible and tailored to the country, region and/or specific environment in which reform is taking place, as well as to the different needs of all stakeholders;
- A United Nations approach to security sector reform must be gender sensitive throughout its planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. It must also include the reform of recruitment processes and improvement in the delivery of security services to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence;
- A security sector reform framework is essential in the planning and implementation of post-conflict activities. Ideally, security sector reform should begin at the outset of a peace process and should be incorporated into early recovery and development strategies;
- A clearly defined strategy, including the identification of priorities, indicative timelines and partnerships, is required for the implementation of a security sector reform process;
- The effectiveness of international support for security sector reform will be shaped by the integrity of motive, the level of accountability and the amount of resources provided;
- Coordination of national and international partners' efforts is essential. Lead national entities and a designated international counterpart should be identified wherever possible;

- Monitoring and regular evaluation against established principles and specific benchmarks are essential to track and maintain progress in security sector reform.

While noting that UN SSR support is predicated on national ownership, it is important to stress that such ownership is seen as including other national stakeholders *beyond* the government. As the SG's report on SSR stresses:

...the transformation of the security sector is inherently linked to national goals and relationships between different institutions and groups within a country. ... Ultimately, however, SSR can only succeed if it is a nationally led and inclusive process in which national and local authorities, parliaments and civil society, including traditional leaders, women's groups and others, are actively engaged.⁷

The flexibility of the UN's SSR approach enables it to be transformative, recognising that no 'one-size-fits-all' allows each society to reform its security sector in accordance with its own historical, cultural and political specificities.

A third notable transformative element in the UN's SSR norms is the deliberate focus on women and other vulnerable groups. There is explicit mention that SSR support must be 'gender-sensitive', and it is further recognised that 'addressing the specific needs of women, minorities, indigenous peoples and other socially excluded groups in society requires the inclusion of their perspectives in the design and delivery of security'.⁸

The operational role of the United Nations: A governance agenda within a multilateral framework

Beyond its normative framework, we argue that the focus of the UN SSR agenda on security governance and the dynamic (albeit challenging) multilateralism of its operational role in supporting SSR reflect and enhance prospects for a transformative impact in states and societies undergoing reform. Therefore, though titled SSR, the UN agenda is actually one of transformation and recognises the pivotal role of security governance and its multilayered nature beyond the state. In the same vein, SSR is seen as part of a broader agenda, not to be isolated from other aspects of reform: 'As a matter of principle, Member States are encouraged to formulate security sector reform in a comprehensive way that is linked to their broad national reform agendas.'⁹

From a governance perspective, which constitutes an essential element of transformative SSR, the UN approach is explicit in stating that ‘security sector reform underscores that effectiveness, accountability and democratic governance are mutually reinforcing elements of security’.¹⁰ It is further stressed that ‘effective governance and civilian oversight of the security sector are essential’.¹¹ This emphasis on governance emanates from UN experience in this area, notably in post-conflict contexts. Particularly for African states, some of which are at different stages of fragility and legitimacy, the limited reach of the state and the very legitimacy of state institutions have emerged as a major element in the security problematique. It has been generally recognised that:

...the record of security sector institutions in post conflict societies justifies the conclusion that they often function more to threaten, rather than protect the basic human security needs of the population, which they ostensibly serve. Thus, the relationship between the security sector and the population in these contexts tends to be exploitative and predatory, in which individuals and groups are more victims rather than beneficiaries of underpaid and ill-governed security services.¹²

For the United Nations, experience has confirmed that the role of inefficient, unruly and often desperate security forces has to be addressed as an integral part of multidimensional peacekeeping; otherwise, there is an omnipresent risk that conflict will return.

The history of African conflicts where the United Nations has supported SSR demonstrates poor governance, ethnic tensions and structural inequities, characterised by the use of security institutions to protect incumbent regimes, often against their own citizens who protest about social and economic exclusion (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone). In many of these contexts, the security sector is itself a major source of conflict and contestation and an instrument for authoritarian rule, characterised by the personalisation of power, ethnic domination, structural inequalities and corruption. Hence, the UN’s emphasis on security governance concerns is an integral part of SSR.

For example, the failure to address the security sector in a structured way in Liberia in the 1990s led to a return to conflict. The Charles Taylor government’s insistence on ignoring the provisions of the peace agreement and retrenching some 2,000 soldiers without compensation, while protractedly failing to pay the salaries of those remaining in service, created the conditions for the implosion and mutiny in the ranks that later ensued.¹³ In contrast, addressing SSR early in the peace process in Burundi resulted in building essential foundations for sustainable peace. The South African

experience demonstrates the importance of political commitment, ownership, broad consultation and sufficient resources in building sustainable security sectors. The corollary, of course, is that SSR can be a profoundly transformative process. In post-conflict contexts, where state institutions are often weak, populations fatigued by the status quo and international attention and availability of resources are high, as was the case in Sierra Leone, SSR presents a unique opportunity for a positive and enduring transformation of the relationship between the citizen and the state.

Another transformative element in the UN's operational approach is the emphasis on multilayered governance, which, in spite of the UN's state-based membership, recognises the importance of other actors below and above the level of the state. The importance of addressing root causes of insecurity has become critical in a world confronted with new and emerging threats. Meeting those challenges requires integrated strategies that incorporate local, national, sub-regional, regional and international approaches, as well as attention to the social, economic and governance dimensions of each specific context.¹⁴

Even though the first formal reference to the security sector appeared in Security Council Resolution 1436 on Sierra Leone in 2002, the United Nations has been actively involved for decades in Africa in areas that would be considered as comprising components of the security sector.¹⁵ Currently, most UN field missions are mandated to undertake SSR or related activities. While not exclusively limited to Africa, many of these operations are on the continent, including in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan. In Africa, the UN's engagement in SSR varies from context to context; the organisation provides support to national authorities in a number of SSR-related areas, including training and infrastructure development, capacity building for management and oversight of security institutions, strategic advice for the development of national security policies, strategies and plans, and assistance in coordinating international partners in support of national SSR priorities, among a range of other activities.

In addition to the wide security sector expertise found in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which covers the military, political, police, justice, corrections, mine action, DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration), SSR and other key aspects, SSR and SSR-related support and expertise are provided by other UN entities. For example, the Department of Political Affairs has been focusing on the security sector in peacemaking processes and in the context of the offices or missions it leads. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights addresses the reform of human rights institutions and capacity building for

security actors, while the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has expertise in supporting institutional development in the areas of justice and security, as well as legislative and civil society oversight. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime has proven strengths in supporting the enhancement of crime prevention capacities, while the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) brings knowledge and expertise on the gender dimensions of SSR and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has expertise on protecting the rights of children by conducting training and other activities directed at security institutions like the police and military.

The acknowledgement that SSR requires a multidimensional approach predicated on a pooling of interdepartmental resources has led to the creation of the UN inter-agency SSR Task Force, which currently comprises 11 agencies, departments, offices, funds and programmes and is chaired by the DPKO as the lead department for SSR. The task force is a mechanism for information sharing, coordination and coherence. It is engaged in the development of guidance and training, and the management of an online community of practice and a roster of SSR experts. It also serves as repository of best practices and lessons learned.

The recognition of SSR as an essential component of a viable peacekeeping exit strategy has informed the establishment of the SSR Unit within the DPKO, located in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), which functions as the designated UN lead entity on SSR. The unit focuses on three broad areas: support to field missions; policy and guidance development; and advocacy and partnerships. In the area of field support, which is considered a core and priority objective, the SSR Unit currently supports ten peacekeeping missions and special political missions with SSR-related mandates.¹⁶ Such support includes technical advice from headquarters, staffing and recruitment, provision of surge capacity to the field and administrative support such as budgeting and resource mobilisation.

Placing the SSR Unit within OROLSI, along with police, criminal law and judicial advisory, DDR and mine action capacities, was meant to enhance synergies between these related areas, as well as between those provided by member states, regional organisations and other UN entities. The goal is to provide support to national authorities at the political-strategic level of SSR, where requested or mandated, by:

- Helping to establish an enabling environment;
- Supporting needs assessments and strategic planning, as well as coordination and specialised resource mobilisation;

- Providing technical advice to and building the capacity of security institutions and their oversight mechanisms;
- Supporting national and international partners in monitoring and reviewing progress.

The SSR Unit has been working with several field and headquarters offices and departments to address the gap between its own limited capacity and the growing demand for SSR expertise. A UN SSR roster of experts supported the government of Guinea-Bissau in establishing an electronic platform for coordinating SSR activities through the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, participated in several technical assessment missions, contributed to a security sector assessment for Guinea Conakry and Somalia and created a UN community of practice. On policy and guidance development, and as part of its role as the secretariat of inter-agency SSR, the unit is coordinating the production of technical guidance notes in seven priority areas.¹⁷ SSR and defence policies are also in preparation.

The multilayered and multilateral approach to SSR support is also evidenced by the importance placed on partnerships with regional organisations, which is a main focus of the SSR Unit. The United Nations acknowledges that the viability of a global approach to SSR is largely dependent on the extent to which it is responsive to and informed by regional approaches. It is thus significant to note that an important place is reserved for collaboration with regional organisations. Regional and subregional organisations play critical roles in the elaboration of SSR policies and guidelines, as well as in the planning and implementation of related activities. Moreover, African countries have greatly contributed to SSR activities: Africa has provided tens of thousands of troops participating in 17 UN peacekeeping operations. It also contributes considerable personnel to the maintenance of regional security via the African Union (AU) or hybrid operations. Moreover, African countries provide thousands of officers to the overall 11,500 police personnel deployed by the United Nations. Thus partnership with African organisations in particular reflects the UN commitment to support the development of African peace, security and development capacities, as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.¹⁸

Towards this objective, the United Nations held a regional consultation on SSR in Africa in March 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is important to note that the most active and advanced collaboration with any regional organisation on SSR is found in the current AU-UN strategic partnership for the articulation of an African regional SSR policy framework

Table 10.1 AU-UN partnership on security sector reform

Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the process for the production, adoption and promulgation of the AU's SSR policy framework and related instruments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and facilitate capacity building within the AU for SSR.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the AU Commission and field-based consultation and collaboration between the AU, the United Nations and other partners in SSR.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalise the AU's input into the elaboration of a global approach to SSR, and develop and deploy tools to implement this approach.
Related activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policy development.</i> Support the drafting process of the AU SSR policy framework and development of policy tools, e.g. a code of conduct for African security institutions, a manual on SSR best practices in Africa and guidance on the harmonisation of national security legislation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Human resource development and support.</i> Capacity building in Addis Ababa and short-term deployment of experts from the UN's senior SSR experts' roster.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joint SSR assessment missions.</i> AU-UN joint needs assessments in up to five mutual priority countries.

and capacity-building support to the AU for the implementation of such a framework. This partnership fulfils the January/February 2008 decision of the AU summit which expressly encourages 'the AU Commission to develop a comprehensive AU policy framework on security sector reform.'¹⁹

In addition, the SSR Unit has developed a 'sensitisation briefing on SSR and the UN approach'. This advocacy tool covers UN actors, capacities, experiences and lessons learned in SSR. It is targeted at UN field and headquarters staff, regional partners and national counterparts. It is intended, through a common understanding of the UN's emerging approach to SSR, to facilitate cooperation among these actors. Some 13 briefing sessions have been delivered to date to over 300 UN staff from among all inter-agency SSR Task Force member entities, as well as representatives from member states and partner institutions.

Challenges and prospects

While an overall assessment of the UN's engagement in SSR may fall outside the immediate purview of this chapter, it is worth noting some factors which condition the role of the United Nations in SSR processes,

including the tension between the long-term imperative of SSR and the short-term timeframe of peacekeeping mandates, as well as the fact that the United Nations is not in direct control of such processes, but functions only in support of national and regional processes and initiatives.²⁰

The United Nations has in the past decade championed and exemplified a vibrant, multilateral approach to security sector reform. For an organisation composed of states, this has been a challenging task, particularly in view of the need to address SSR at levels both below and above the state. Therefore, one of the first challenges that has surfaced is respecting the national ownership of member states while at the same time working to support the expansion of the SSR constituency within states to ensure that other national actors beyond the government take part in the reform process.

Related to the above challenges is the reality of uneven political support for the UN's SSR agenda among the membership of the organisation. Thus, an active advocacy programme is ongoing to sensitise member states on the national ownership of SSR processes. SSR initiatives need to be adaptable according to the needs of each country and should be supported by the United Nations only at the request of member states or on the basis of a Security Council mandate and/or a General Assembly decision.

- 1) *What is in a name?* Even though the UN's support in this important area is commonly referred to as security sector reform instead of transformation, it was earlier noted that the organisation's framework is more transformative than the term SSR might suggest. SSR has become the 'brand name' for the United Nations in this area mainly out of a need to be consistent with the first entry of the term into the UN lexicon in 2002. Concepts such as security sector transformation, security sector development, security sector management, security sector governance and security sector support, among others, have been used to describe work in this area. Emerging lessons being learned by the United Nations include that there is much to a name. It does matter significantly to national counterparts whether UN support in this area is described as reform, transformation or development, even when the substance of support does not differ. The issue of appropriate terminology is therefore one that may need to be revisited in the future.
- 2) *Engaging non-state actors.* While the UN role in SSR is, given its membership, primarily focused on state actors, experiences around the world indicate that the state is not always the exclusive provider of security. A state-centric model of SSR is inadequate in many African

contexts where non-state actors often enjoy more legitimacy among the population. Thus, although the state remains the primary actor, there are several non-state and informal traditional providers of security, which need to be engaged if SSR is to be viable and sustainable. In addition, any transformative UN SSR framework in Africa would need to respond to the proliferation of private commercial security actors that are playing increasingly significant roles in SSR support, as in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some sub-regional entities, for example the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention mechanism, are proposing a regulatory framework to govern the activities of such commercial security actors in supporting SSR.

- 3) *The United Nations as a forum for SSR policy dialogues.* One of the major normative roles of the United Nations that was envisaged in the SG's SSR report and in which the organisation is increasingly becoming visible is that of actively contributing 'to the collective knowledge on SSR by providing a forum for international dialogue and by assisting in the further development of best practices'. With respect to Africa, it is important to note that African UN member states are starting to play leading roles in defining the SSR agenda of the organisation. As a prominent example, a high-level forum on African perspectives on security sector reform was held on 14 May 2010 at the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations, New York, co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa. Over 80 people participated in the forum, including permanent representatives of 55 African and other member states, as well as senior officials of the United Nations and regional organisations. Facilitated by the UN SSR Unit, the event was organised within the context of the evolution of the UN approach to SSR and the strategic partnership between the AU Commission and the United Nations on SSR. It aimed to give African states, as the major beneficiaries and emerging providers of SSR support in their own right, the requisite space to contribute collectively and effectively to the UN's SSR agenda and make input into the AU's emerging SSR continental policy framework. It is noteworthy that the United Nations is providing opportunities for African states to contribute to the UN's SSR policy agenda: this is a positive development which is worthy of further exploration.

Conclusion

The evolution of the UN's engagement in SSR itself demonstrates a transformative agenda. From its previous *ad hoc* engagement in this area, the United Nations has taken deliberate steps to articulate a normative framework which is central to the emergence of global standards in SSR. It has also introduced mechanisms to improve coherence and coordination in SSR support by the organisation, principally the UN inter-agency SSR Task Force, which is increasingly recording some success.

The UN's contribution to a transformative SSR agenda can be found in the emphasis it places on its partnership with the AU Commission, its insistence on support based on national ownership, which extends beyond governments to include other national stakeholders, and the provision of political space for African states to contribute directly to the UN's global framework.

While significant challenges remain, the United Nations has successfully exposed the opportunities that are inherent in multilateral approaches to security sector reform. Much of the theatre for such an agenda is on the African continent. As argued in this chapter, this approach has been based on human security and a governance agenda that focuses on the individual, rather than the state in isolation.

Notes

- ¹ See, for example OECD (2000) 'Conceptual framework for enhancing policy coherence', OECD, Paris; Heiner Hänggi (2004) 'Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction', in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, Munster: Lit Verlag; Nicole Ball (2001) 'Transforming security sector: the IMF and World Bank approaches', *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development*, 1(1); Michael Brzoska (2003) 'Development donors and the concept of security sector reform', DCAF Occasional Paper No. 4; available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?lng=en&id=18353&nav1=5.
- ² See United Nations (2000) 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations' (Brahimi Report), UN Doc A/5/305-S/2000/809.
- ³ United Nations (2008) 'Securing peace and development: The role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform', report of the UN Secretary-General, UN Doc A/62/659-S/2008/39, para 47, p. 14.
- ⁴ See United Nations (2000) 'We the peoples – The role of the United Nations in the 21st century' (commonly known as UN Millennium Report); Kofi Annan (2001) 'Towards a Culture of Peace'; the first UN document to introduce the concept of human security was the UNDP (1994) 'Human Development Report', New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ⁵ United Nations, note 3 above, pp. 4–5, defines 'security sector' as a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. It is generally accepted that the sector

includes defence, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services and institutions responsible for border management, customs and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, in many instances, also included. Furthermore, the security sector includes actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as ministries, legislative bodies and civil society groups. Other non-state actors that could be considered part of the sector include customary or informal authorities and private security services.

⁶ Ibid, para. 45, pp. 13

⁷ Ibid., para. 36, p. 11.

⁸ Ibid., para. 7, p. 4.

⁹ Ibid., para. 38, p. 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., para. 18, p. 6.

¹¹ Ibid., para. 41, p.12.

¹² Adedeji Ebo (2007) 'The role of security sector reform in sustainable development: donor policy trends and challenges', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 7(1), pp. 27-60; see also 'Funmi Olonisakin (2003) 'Security and sustainable development: An African perspective', in *Security Sector Reform: Its Relevance for Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Development*, compilation of presentations made at the first joint seminar of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 21 January 2003, Geneva, Switzerland.

¹³ Festus Aboagye and Martin Rupiya (2005) 'Enhancing post-conflict democratic governance through effective security sector reform in Liberia'; available at www.iss.co.za/pubs/Books/TortuousRoad/Chap11.pdf; Adedeji Ebo (2005) 'The challenges and opportunities of security sector reform in post-conflict Liberia', DCAF Occasional Paper No. 9, Geneva.

¹⁴ United Nations, note 3 above, para. 6, p. 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., para. 64, p. 18.

¹⁶ These missions include United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and to lesser extent United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN).

¹⁷ These priority areas include national ownership, international coordination, monitoring and evaluation, national security policy strategy and plans, gender, peace processes and democratic governance of security institutions.

¹⁸ United Nations, note 3 above, para. 64, p.18.

¹⁹ See African Union Assembly/AU/Dec.117 (X).

²⁰ For an initial independent assessment of UN engagement in justice and security sector reform, see Center on International Cooperation (2010) *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*, New York: New York University; available at www.cic.nyu.edu/peace_ssr/globalpeace.html.

Chapter 11

Security Sector Transformation in Africa: Challenges Confronting Bilateral Donors

Dylan Hendrickson

Introduction

The concept of security sector transformation (SST) takes to a new level the debate on how the international community can constructively assist in addressing Africa's deep-rooted patterns of insecurity. In so doing, the limitations of current international approaches to security sector reform (SSR) – which tend in practice to be state-centric, externally driven and technical in nature – are more clearly revealed. Drawing on recent research on the politics of security decision-making, this chapter examines the opportunities and challenges which SST thinking presents for bilateral donors working in Africa.

Underpinning the notion of SST is the widely acknowledged need for far-reaching political changes to address Africa's persisting security problems. The point of departure for this volume is that only a fundamental shift in the way security is conceived and the pursuit of a governance agenda that puts citizens at the centre of security planning and provision can provide stable and secure national environments in Africa where development can thrive.

These ideas, as noted in the introductory chapter to this volume, are not new; indeed, they are the point of departure for the guidance provided in the OECD DAC's 2007 *Handbook on Security System Reform*, which underscores that 'security system reform and international assistance to support it are inherently political processes'.¹ The thinking in this handbook was itself heavily influenced by debates within the African SSR community including an article written by the late Rocky Williams which makes a case for a distinctly African approach to SST and emphasises the importance of getting the language right:

The term 'reform' has many pejorative connotations within the African environment. Politically it is often associated with the implementation of

policy decisions from 'above' without an attempt to secure the broader participation and consultation of non-state or legislative actors. Many of the 'reform' strategies adopted by diverse African countries have had, as their objective, the legitimisation of unpopular regimes and have failed to meaningfully alter the existing balance of power within both the state and society.²

As made clear in Chapter 1, the differences between SSR and SST are not purely semantic in nature. While the OECD DAC's approach to SSR (which all bilateral donors have officially endorsed) on the face of it satisfies the need for the 'systemic changes' and 'organic movements' required to align Africa's security sectors with principles of democratic governance, in practice few external assistance programmes measure up to what is required. This is partly a problem of SSR conceptualisation, due to the failure to come to terms with the fact that the formal state- and elite-based security institutions (which largely hail from the colonial era and are the traditional focus of external assistance) were established to protect elite interests rather than normal people. The non-state, customary actors which play a more direct role in meeting people's security needs in many countries have not until very recently begun to receive attention in SSR programmes.

There is also a problem of application: the donor SSR assistance machinery is not adequately supported by the requisite policy frameworks or programming tools actually to carry through the profound changes in power relations in Africa's security sectors that are required. As a consequence, overall the record of external SSR interventions has been poor, and this in spite of the fact that the focus has generally been on conflict-affected and fragile areas where external actors have had greater freedom to shape and push reform processes. In Africa's more stable countries, where problems of security sector governance are in many cases deeply entrenched, donors have less leverage and hence fewer opportunities to engage with state- and elite-based security institutions.

SST breaks new ground with its emphasis on alternative channels through a range of non-traditional change agents and security institutions largely overlooked by the SSR community until recently. These alternative channels of transformation do not necessarily fall outside the state domain: three key institutional processes central to effective security sector governance which are generally not taken seriously despite the heavy emphasis on them in the SSR literature are civil oversight, inclusive decision-making and judicial independence. Although aid is sometimes targeted at relevant actors such as parliamentary committees, civil society groups and women's associations, it usually falls short of influencing power relations in ways that broaden security decision-making beyond the preserve

of a narrow group of security and political elites³ or, say, provide women with a meaningful voice in the management of security matters.

More notable, however, has been the failure of SSR programmes to engage with non-state security and justice processes which, in African contexts, may have a far more direct impact on the livelihoods of citizens, particularly the poor, than state-based processes.⁴ In the context of crisis-ridden and fragile states, there are a range of informal actors, including militias and other irregular forces, which enjoy legitimacy and are significant players in local-level processes. Traditional SSR programmes, which emphasise formal security actors and processes, have tended to see informal and non-state actors as ‘spoilers’ which obstruct and threaten reforms rather than (by virtue of their participation in these processes) as critical to their success by imbuing them with legitimacy in the eyes of marginalised social and political groups.

This chapter examines the significance of SST thinking for bilateral actors, focusing in particular on the challenge of developing more inclusive decision-making processes. It first examines the roles and comparative advantage of bilateral actors working on SSR in Africa, and briefly maps out the African SSR engagements of four particular countries: the UK, France, the Netherlands and the United States. It then discusses some key findings of recent research on the politics of security decision-making and considers the implications of this analysis for how donors can support SST.

The comparative advantage of bilaterals

The landscape of international engagement in African security sectors is rich and varied. This reflects a long history of external intervention in Africa’s security domain by European powers which started during the colonial era and continues today, notably Belgium, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Newer actors such as the United States and the Soviet Union assumed a prominent role during the Cold War as the superpowers competed for the support of client states, while more recently China has become a significant actor.

The historical backdrop for most of these interventions in Africa’s security sectors was the pursuit of national interests and commercial profit. This has resulted in intense competition between external actors and a diverse mix of assistance programmes essentially designed to strengthen and win the favour of client regimes rather than promote the security interests of African populations. Only with the ending of the Cold War and the emergence of the SSR agenda did political space emerge – made possible by

the efforts of Africans themselves – for a new framework for security sector reforms and external security assistance that was more people-centred. This also resulted in a proliferation of new SSR actors, including multilateral development agencies, NGOs, private security companies (PSCs), for-profit development firms, academic institutions and independent advisers.

The emergence of SSR has led, in the space of a decade, to a rebranding as ‘SSR’ of many more traditional security- and justice-related assistance activities, even if, in practice, many of these do not conform in terms of aims, focus or approach with SSR in the OECD DAC sense of the word. There is thus a wide range of niche activities addressing a specific aspect of SSR – for instance, ‘train and equip’ activities targeted at the military or training on human rights for security actors – which either do not have any governance content or are not linked to wider reform processes. Though often welcomed by recipient countries, the impact of this assistance on the governance and effectiveness of the wider security or justice system is often limited. This is because the reforms undertaken rarely result in significant changes to power relations between security players and civilian actors, while the institutional capacity enhancements achieved are often difficult to direct to productive uses or to sustain.

While many of the bilateral donor countries have dabbled in one form or another of SSR assistance, few actually have the requisite capacity, resources or motivation to support a major programme of SSR assistance that could bring about significant changes in security sector governance or service delivery in a given country. This is not to downplay the potential value of some of these contributions, for they can have a strategic impact on, say, policy development processes or the functioning of oversight mechanisms that creates space for other reforms to take place. Moreover, because most of the bilaterals now explicitly seek to collaborate on assistance programmes, the value of their interventions should not be assessed in isolation. But the point is that there are very few bilateral SSR players that can actually have a significant impact on their own.

Despite the proliferation of actors on the SSR assistance scene, bilaterals are the central players for the simple reason that the bulk of funding for international assistance activities comes from donor countries. In the case of support for multilateral actors such as the European Union or the United Nations, donor-country funding is channelled through various means, including the annual dues which member states pay to these institutions, peacekeeping contributions and more specific project financing provided to individual agencies or units. Where this funding is directly earmarked for SSR activities, donor countries will have more control over how this money is spent. In the case of NGOs, consultants, PSCs, etc., these actors are

usually contracted to implement bilateral SSR programmes and work according to policies and programming modalities established by the donor. A growing number of bilateral assistance activities are being outsourced to this second category of actors, which has a number of important implications for SSR examined in more detail below.

Bilaterals have several comparative advantages *vis-à-vis* both multilateral agencies and non-governmental actors when it comes to working on politically sensitive security issues. The most important of these is the ability to provide direct, government-to-government assistance of a military nature, which can be a critical component of support for SSR. Because military assistance (particularly of a lethal nature) does not constitute part of official development assistance (ODA), it cannot be provided by the official multilateral development agencies, or for that matter NGOs. While donor governments do outsource the *delivery* of military assistance programmes to private firms, in some cases this assistance remains essentially bilateral in nature – from one government to another.

The major bilateral donors working in Africa have another distinct area of comparative advantage which stems either from their historical ties to certain African countries or close economic relationships, largely due to the foreign assistance they provide to these countries. This gives these countries a certain level of political leverage and influence which may (though not always) enable them to encourage a country down a particular reform path. These special ties can be seen with regard to France's relationship with some countries in francophone Africa (e.g. the Central African Republic), Belgium in the DRC, the UK with some of its erstwhile colonies (Sierra Leone, for instance) and the United States with countries such as Uganda, which has benefited from extensive political and military support in recent years in exchange for its support for the US government's 'war on terror'.

Bilateral engagement in Africa's security sectors

Among the bilaterals engaged in supporting SSR in Africa are several key countries which – by virtue of their approach, the size of their assistance programmes, the aid delivery instruments at their disposal or their relationship with the continent – offer interesting insights on working bilaterally. The four countries examined here are the UK, France, the Netherlands and the USA, each of which have embraced the SSR agenda to varying degrees and in varying manners. Differences in approach reflect a combination of factors, including political interests, legal and administrative frameworks and the nature of their relationship with the continent.

The United Kingdom

The UK's role in supporting the development of the SSR concept and policy agenda has perhaps been the most critical in terms of getting SSR on the agenda of other donors and African countries. The initial spur was the need for a policy framework that would enable the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to engage in conflict-affected regions in support of reconstruction efforts targeting, in particular, the restoration of state security capacity. From the outset, DFID has adopted a strategic approach focusing not just on the development of its policy and SSR programming, but also influencing other donors to embrace its policy agenda and supporting the development of pro-SSR constituencies within its partner countries, particularly Africa, to take up and drive the agenda forward.⁵

At the same time, the UK developed a range of instruments which facilitated this engagement, including the Defence Advisory Team,⁶ the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool⁷ and the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform⁸ (GFN-SSR). It also developed close relationships with a range of academic and policy institutions in both the UK and Africa, as well as a network of international SSR experts to which it turned on a regular basis for advice and support in developing, implementing and evaluating its SSR policy and programmes. The most notable of these is the African Security Sector Network, established with UK support, which brings together civil society institutions, research centres, policy-makers, practitioners and parliamentarians working in the field of SSR with the objective of enhancing security sector governance in African states.⁹

Sierra Leone was the test case for the UK's new SSR policy starting in 1999, where it provided support for a comprehensive restructuring and development of the war-torn security sector. During this period, the UK also supported a defence review in Uganda and a range of other SSR initiatives in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and South Africa, some of which are either ongoing or are currently being renewed. In Sierra Leone, for instance, a new Improved Access to Security and Justice Programme is currently being designed, which will cost roughly £18 million and is scheduled to begin implementation in 2011. This programme specifically sets out to address the imbalance in investments in recent years between Sierra Leone's security and justice sectors. In south Sudan the UK is supporting the Sudan People's Liberation Army Defence Transformation Programme, which aims, among other things, to provide an institutional framework for the effective and accountable management of defence. A five-year Security Sector Accountability and Police Reform Programme was

launched in the DRC in 2009. Smaller initiatives are also under way in Somalia, Kenya and Ghana.

France

France has a comparable historical attachment to Africa to the UK in terms of its colonial footprint and security relations. In the past France maintained a range of military facilities in key francophone countries. This military presence was principally about supporting friendly governments and French national interests, including the protection of citizens and commercial concerns, rather than providing training or support for SSR initiatives. Troop numbers have been greatly reduced in recent years, and today France only retains military facilities in Djibouti, Gabon and Senegal. The emphasis of its security engagement has shifted accordingly to supporting the development of African peacekeeping capacity, particularly in ECOWAS and support for the Africa Standby Forces initiative. This work builds upon the multinational peacekeeping training conducted under the auspices of the Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities Programme since 1996, and is being done in conjunction with the USA and the UK.

France's Africa engagement is motivated by a long-term political commitment to the continent and the belief that it makes sense to invest in African militaries rather than to send European troops to Africa, though this has been translated into a markedly different approach to and level of direct bilateral engagement with SSR.¹⁰ France, like all the other bilaterals, has endorsed the OECD DAC SSR concept and approach. While there is growing acceptance across government of the need for an inter-agency approach, there is no clear political vision to commit France to SSR in Africa. Recent cross-ministerial engagements in Africa – such as the crisis-driven interventions in Guinea and the Central African Republic – have been coordinated informally. The Secretariat-General for National Defence and Security, the inter-ministerial organism under the prime minister responsible for coordinating security policy, has never been tasked with anything relating to SSR in Africa.

French engagement with SSR in Africa, therefore, like that of most other European countries, is primarily focused on working through the multilaterals, the European Union in particular. This is in recognition of the fact that France believes that there are few cases where one country working alone can make a difference, and the EU provides a more effective framework for the long-term, integrated and resource-intensive engagements which SSR implies. French personnel are currently deployed in the DRC as part of the European Union Security (EUSEC) and European Union Police

(EUPOL) advisory missions supporting military and police reforms respectively. In the Central African Republic, France is the main supporter of the UN mission that is engaged in, among other tasks, restructuring the army.

The Netherlands

Like France, the Netherlands generally prefers to work through multilaterals or on a partnership basis when supporting SSR. Like other small European countries, it believes that it has limited capacity to work on its own effectively and sees the benefits of sharing the risk of SSR engagements. In Africa the Dutch have been engaged in SSR-related work in a number of countries, including south Sudan, Uganda (rule of law) and the DRC where, through EUSEC, they have supported a 'chain of payments' project which aims at improving financial management within the army. The Netherlands regularly sends experts to EU and UN missions in Africa, and sought to support the development of UN capacity for SSR by financing both the new UN SSR unit and the UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention Rule of Law unit.

In 2009 the Dutch government made a significant foray into providing bilateral support for SSR in Burundi when it signed an eight-year MoU with the government covering support for a security sector development programme. The programme involves working with a number of ministries responsible for national defence, public security and foreign affairs, aiming to strengthen governance of the security sector. This engagement marks in some ways a departure from the normal Dutch preference for partnership-based approaches, and came about because of the relatively small number of donors engaged in Burundi. The Dutch seized this opportunity in response to an expression of interest from the government, though the Netherlands is hoping that other bilaterals as well as the United Nations will eventually come on board in support of the initiative.

The United States

While there has been a general trend among European countries to downgrade the scale and nature of their security engagement in Africa over the past decade, the reverse is true for the United States. The events of 11 September 2001, as well as the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, have led the USA to reconsider its strategic interest in Africa for both economic and security reasons. This has led it to scale up its military presence and engagement on the continent, most notably with plans to establish a new US Command in Africa (AFRICOM), which became operational in 2008. At the same time

the USA has intensified plans for military exercises with African countries, as well as other forms of military-to-military engagement and training.

This enhanced military engagement (and the role of AFRICOM in particular) is being publicly pitched in terms of building professional and capable militaries and addressing transnational security threats of mutual concern to the United States and African countries.¹¹ AFRICOM works in concert with other US government agencies, such as the Department of State and the Agency for International Development (USAID), to ensure its activities support US policy objectives. Funding for AFRICOM comes from the US Department of Defense and is largely geared towards operations such as the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa and the Trans-Sahel Counter-Terrorism Partnership, both of which are aimed at countering terrorism and violent extremism. Furthermore, AFRICOM – unlike the US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan – does not have congressional authority to carry out military development work.¹² The common assumption that AFRICOM does SSR is therefore wrong, although clearly some of its activities have the potential to contribute to SSR.

In practice, the immediate requirement of US military engagement in Africa is counter-terrorism. Emphasis is placed on building security cooperation relationships with African states and armies and providing US forces with opportunities for training. While some of the aims pursued under this work could potentially contribute to SSR – such as enhancing regional cooperation on security issues or reinforcing policing or intelligence capabilities – the approaches taken tend to be short term, focused on US versus African security objectives and weak on governance content given the pressure to show quick results. This diminishes the appeal of systemic investments aimed at improving the governance of African security institutions. The main focus rather is on training initiatives, which fall under the International Military Education Training programme. This has an important normative content, though this is largely delinked from practical reform initiatives.

There have nonetheless been significant recent developments in SSR policy within the US government which are being translated into assistance programmes in a number of countries. The discourse within the OECD DAC has been key to getting SSR on the agenda of USAID – which has taken the lead in promoting the concept across government – as well as in the Department of Defense and the State Department. There is now an inter-agency SSR assessment framework, an SSR working group and a policy committee on security sector assistance (SSA) – which is how the US terms its support to SSR. In 2010 a new policy directive on SSR will be issued by the president, with directives, principles and metrics to guide US SSA

programmes. There are a number of cross-departmental SSA initiatives currently ongoing in the DRC, Liberia and Sudan, among others, though these are largely overshadowed by US military engagements in Africa in support of US national security objectives.

This brief mapping of bilateral engagement suggests that there is a broad range of security cooperation and assistance initiatives in Africa, not all of which are consistent with the SSR policy agenda in terms of either aims or approaches. Furthermore, as most of these initiatives narrowly target the formal state security apparatus, they are likely to have little impact, as the next section argues, in terms of improving the responsiveness of state security institutions to public security needs.

Transforming security decision-making

Recent research underscores that state responsiveness to public security needs is about power and relationships, and is the outcome of bargaining that results from the interests of individuals, social groups, political elites and external actors.¹³ This research backs the argument made in this volume that there are real limitations to state-centric approaches to SSR. In many, if not most, African countries there are likely to be different sources of security decision-making authority with varying degrees of autonomy from the central state. Unlike in mature Western democracies, there is rarely national consensus around the idea of security and safety as a public good, citizens are not able to articulate and exercise a collective ‘demand’ for security and state administrative capacities and resources to deliver public security resources – where policy-makers are so inclined – are grossly inadequate.

As a consequence, though SSR assistance can strengthen a government’s capacity for service delivery, it often does little to make it more likely that decision-makers will defer to the preferences of the wider community and, perversely, may in some cases make governments even less inclined to consult their citizens. Furthermore, the existence of a strong formal institutional framework for security decision-making is not sufficient to ensure that state policy is responsive to the needs of citizens. There are ample cases in Africa, after all, where a constitutional form of government exists, security decision-making architectures are well developed and civilian authorities enjoy primacy in decision-making.

In the absence of consensus within these societies on the basic notion of security as a public good, the foundation for SSR remains very weak. There is frequently contestation over not only whose interests should take precedence (regimes versus communities), but also what kind of security is

required (physical safety versus human security) and how priorities should be determined (by political elites or through participatory processes). This contestation is bound up with the conflicts that divide many African countries, and may also reflect the differing economic and political interests of African countries and donors. Thus the US-led 'war on terror' that has been supported by a number of African governments has generally had a deleterious impact on how SSR is conceived on the continent, by shifting the emphasis away from the governance and 'soft' security dimensions to 'hard' security approaches.¹⁴

Accepting the centrality of politics in determining security policy outcomes has a number of important implications for the way that donors work. First, while it is important that donor assistance is informed by a 'holistic' understanding of security (which has become the frequent mantra of the policy literature), perhaps more importantly African countries need to be given the space so that a genuinely national vision of how the security of the state and its citizens can best be achieved can emerge organically.

Second, in situations of weak responsiveness, the answer to security problems will not lie in interventions that target the security sector alone. It will need a broader strategy that addresses the political causes of insecurity and conflict and incorporates security interventions into wider economic and social development programming. This is in recognition of the fact that the ability of citizens and interest groups to articulate and exercise a demand for improved security is influenced by a range of factors, including levels of socio-economic development, social cohesion and the maturity of a political system. Where these levels are low, the public articulation of security preferences tends to revolve around narrow, parochial security interests, further increasing the autonomy of government security decision-makers.

These trends are unlikely to be reversed simply through basic organisational reforms or additional training for personnel in state security decision-making structures. Donor SSR interventions often uncritically accept the basic institutional set-ups that are in place (e.g. national security councils) and attempt to use them to operationalise broader notions of security. Yet these institutions are themselves the product of the orthodox state-centric and military-oriented approaches to security that prevail. There is thus a danger of SSR getting 'trapped' in formal state structures and processes that give the impression of being democratically legitimised, but may actually do little to respond to the real security needs of the community.

The policy conclusions of this research suggest that there are few short-cuts to developing security decision-making cultures and institutions that are truly responsive to the needs of citizens. Indeed, as the case study countries underscore, broader structural changes need to take place in the

way that these societies are organised and function in order for sustained citizen pressure to be mobilised to ensure that security institutions are accountable. The ability of civil society, political parties and the citizenry to aggregate and articulate policy positions on security that can successfully challenge orthodox state approaches thus depends not simply on capacity building, effective parliaments or democratic elections (all of which are part of the SSR agenda), but will require addressing more fundamental problems related to socio-economic underdevelopment, low literacy levels and limited access to information in African societies.

Challenges facing bilaterals

Working in a way that is more supportive of security sector transformation in Africa will require external actors to adapt their approaches in two ways that may, at first glance, seem at odds with one another.

On the one hand, they need to confront more directly the profound structural problems plaguing governance of the continent's security sectors. This means acknowledging that current security deficits stem not simply from *capacity* problems in Africa's security establishments but, in many cases, a lack of public legitimacy that has deep roots in the colonial era. Supporting the establishment of security sectors that prioritise the protection of people and uphold the rule of law will therefore require donors to engage more effectively with actors outside the formal state security apparatus that can advocate for and negotiate the new security norms and arrangements that will guarantee people's safety and protection. Current donor SSR policy frameworks and accompanying programming approaches overwhelmingly prioritise formal security actors and political elites without in effect addressing the question of who will pressure these groups to change or offer constructive support in developing new policy where state capacity is weak.

On the other, it will require donors to cede greater responsibility for initiating and driving these SST processes to relevant actors. This will mean accepting that both the pace and the direction of the transformation processes pursued will be determined by the priorities of African countries and the political space that is available in a given context, rather than external agendas and models for change. This is not a call for disengagement, but rather acknowledges the immense limitations of current aid instruments and the need to re-engage in a manner that more effectively (and realistically) *supports* rather than seeking to *drive* or *direct* nationally led transformation efforts.

Bilaterals will face different constraints as they seek to develop the broader approaches required. The first challenge relates to the coherence of bilateral government action in light of the diverse array of interests and objectives which bilateral countries are pursuing in the African context. This challenge has traditionally been posed in terms of how to reconcile bilaterals' strategic national interests on the continent with African countries' own development objectives. The implication here is that the two are necessarily or always at odds with each other – hence the need to finding convincing humanitarian or altruistic reasons why bilateral governments should invest in support of genuine SST in the first place. This situation, which has clearly prevailed in the past, no longer holds in such a clear-cut fashion due to ongoing changes in the strategic environment which are resulting in increasing areas of overlap between the security interests of African countries and the major bilateral donor countries.

This area of overlap covers a range of threats to the stability (and ultimately development) of African countries which have international dimensions and also pose threats to the security and development prospects of the richer nations. The focus has inevitably been narrowly on problems relating to terrorism and violent extremism, though there are other issues such as migration, trafficking in drugs and humans and political stability more generally which are now of concern to Western policy-makers because of the direct impact they can have on (particularly Europe's) security. As recognition grows that the solutions lie in broader initiatives to support development in Africa, of which SST is a central component, the debate is also shifting to one of effectiveness and sustainability – how to ensure that international support will achieve a lasting and positive impact.

The shadow of (narrowly defined) national interests will nonetheless continue to hang (in some cases heavily) over bilaterals' SST engagement in Africa because of a combination of factors: arguments that supporting international development in Africa is in OECD countries' security interest not being accepted across all donor government departments; financial pressures and budget restrictions; and a lack of sufficient internal analytical and technical expertise to design, manage and implement donor SST programmes effectively.

One way in which donors such as the UK have addressed institutional constraints to working on SSR has been to 'projectise' assistance and outsource as much of it as possible to large consultancy firms with the capacity both to manage programmes and source the technical SSR expertise required to implement them. This trend has been accentuated in recent years (particularly in DFID's case) by the desire to spend more with fewer staff inputs, in response to staffing restrictions imposed by central government. In

the case of the US, similar pressures have seen PSCs in countries such as Liberia tasked with designing and implementing SSR-related programmes.

As a business model that is likely to become more common, it is important to confront some of its key limitations. Outsourcing may depoliticise a donor's SSR engagement at the very stage in a reform programme when effective political engagement is required to ensure that donor assistance helps to open up (rather than close) political space for non-state actors to influence a reform process. Depoliticising an engagement may also have the unintended consequence of increasing the reliance of contractors on prescriptive and technical approaches to assistance that stunt rather than encourage local initiative. Recent experiences also suggest that donors have had mixed success through their recruitment processes in identifying consultancy firms that have the requisite institutional capacity *and* expertise to deliver SSR assistance effectively.

Conclusion

Without coherence among different parts of donor governments, African countries engaged in very difficult SST processes may receive mixed signals about donors' own commitment to the aims and principles that the latter are advocating. Within bilateral governments there are typically a range of departmental frameworks (though not necessarily a unified policy) that influence how security assistance is approached. As a consequence, there are a significant number of bilateral security assistance initiatives on the continent which, at best, have a negligible impact on SST concerns and, at worst, may actually close down the space for SST.

For these reasons, developing a clear strategic policy framework that spells out aims, roles of different departments and the instruments and resources that donor governments can draw upon will be a critical step in engaging with the broader SST agenda outlined in this volume. Donors also need to be politically engaged. This means being prepared to use the various instruments they have at their disposal, including financial aid, technical assistance and political dialogue (and pressure where appropriate), to encourage partner states – and, in particular, security and political elites – in the direction of security policy-making processes that are genuinely people-centred.

Notes

- ¹ OECD DAC (2007) *Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*. Paris: OECD, p. 28.
- ² Rocky Williams (2005) 'African armed forces and the challenges of security sector reform', *Journal of Security Sector Management*; available at www.jofssm.org/issues/jofssm_sp_04_rocky_african_armed.pdf, p. 7.
- ³ D. Hendrickson (2008) 'State responsiveness to public security needs: the politics of security decision-making: Synthesis of findings and implications for UK SSR policy', CSDG Papers No. 12; available at www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/Findings.pdf.
- ⁴ F. Olonisakin (2009) 'The future of security and justice for the poor: A "blue-sky" think piece', CSDG Policy Studies No. 21, Conflict, Security and Development Group, London.
- ⁵ D. Hendrickson (2009) 'Key challenges facing security sector reform: The case for reframing the donor policy debate', GFN-SSR Working Paper, University of Birmingham; available at www.ssrnetwork.net/publications/reframing.php.
- ⁶ The name of this team was later changed to the Security Sector Development Advisory Team as its remit was broadened. In 2009 it was formally merged with the UK's Stabilisation Unit, a cross-departmental unit based in DFID. The unit's security and justice team is responsible for supporting SSR activities.
- ⁷ Now a sub-programme within the Conflict Prevention Pool.
- ⁸ The GFN-SSR has largely ceased to function and most of its SSR knowledge materials will be integrated into the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (www.gsdrc.org).
- ⁹ See www.africansecuritynetwork.org.
- ¹⁰ Interview with Eric Fournier, Africa Desk, Joint Staff, French Ministry of Defence, July 2010.
- ¹¹ See www.africom.mil/pdfFiles/USAFRICOM2010PostureStatement.pdf.
- ¹² This authority is granted on a mission basis by the US Congress following a joint request by the Offices of the President and the Secretary of Defense.
- ¹³ This comparative research project, funded by the UK government, was conducted by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College, London, during 2006–2008. The research was based on 18 micro case studies of security decision-making conducted in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. For a detailed discussion on the findings see Hendrickson, note 3 above.
- ¹⁴ E. Hutchful and K. Fayemi (2004) 'Security system reform in Africa'; available at www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/CSDG%20Papers%20Number%203.pdf.

PART IV
CONCLUSION

Chapter 12

Enabling Security Sector Transformation in Africa

Alan Bryden and 'Funmi Olonisakin

Introduction

This volume seeks to interrogate the meaning and utility of security sector transformation (SST) as both a conceptual framework and a practical agenda for effecting positive change in how people experience security in Africa. Our point of departure is to provide clarity to a term which, depending on one's perspective, may seem idealistic, visionary or threatening. This analysis provides a basis to address a more policy-focused objective of delineating potential channels of transformation that can contribute to supporting necessary behaviour change across African security providers, management and oversight bodies.

While calls for security sector transformation have been made in contexts as far apart as Afghanistan¹ and Bosnia-Herzegovina,² we focus squarely on SST in relation to Africa. Although some insights may be more broadly applicable, this reflects the origins of the concept in African scholarship and also a firm belief that *transformation* provides the only meaningful basis for addressing historically rooted pathologies that have resulted in deep cleavages between state, security sector and citizens in many contemporary African settings. Thus while contributions to this volume address actors and issues at local, national and international levels, in each case perspectives are grounded in African cultural, political and socio-economic realities.

The introductory chapter provides a critique of the SSR (security sector reform) and SST concepts, and links this to an analysis of the context-specific factors that bind the notion of transformation to African political and security trajectories. A central caveat lies in the peril of automatically building reform efforts around national elites and state-based security institutions. Instead, a number of principles are proposed that seek to orient

notions of security around the well-being of individuals and communities. Potential channels of transformation are proposed that point to the legitimacy (and therefore sustainability) of change. These observations provide a conceptual framework to approach the different actors and issues addressed by contributors to this volume.

This concluding chapter begins by drawing on the various contributions in order to flesh out our understanding of SST. Key dynamics and challenges are considered. The subsequent two sections focus on identifying the conditions necessary to elaborate an operational SST agenda. Findings are set out in relation to transformation at the domestic and international levels. Finally, the chapter considers potential next steps and further actions necessary to enable a transformative approach to addressing challenges associated with security and its governance in Africa.

Understanding security sector transformation

Our review of a number of the key texts that argue the need for security sector transformation in Africa demonstrates that the concept has frequently been situated as a response to perceived shortcomings in the SSR approach. This is problematic on two levels. First, downplaying the transformative nature of the holistic understanding of SSR that has gained currency in recent years risks perpetuating confusion rather than greater coherence in the way that these concepts are used. It distracts attention from the very real need to understand better why policy frameworks that have drawn on this approach have not translated into effective SSR programming in Africa. Second, and related, by opposing inherently related concepts we lose the ability to demonstrate the unique attributes of SST and its particular relevance to African contexts. SST is therefore positioned in this volume as a necessary complement to SSR in Africa. First and foremost, it addresses the structural change(s) required to make SSR efforts effective and result in greater impact on the ground.

Conceptual clarity is essential in order to make the case for and identify concrete opportunities to support a transformative approach to SSR in Africa. This section builds on responses to questions elaborated in Chapter 1 on the significance, dynamics, indicators and challenges of transformation that were applied across all contributions to this volume. It therefore seeks to expand our understanding of this concept *sui generis*.

The significance of transformation

The relationship between SST and African contexts is crucial. Applying the concept in shaping security sector reform programmes without due attention to African historical and developmental trajectories can only perpetuate familiar gaps between policy and practice. This point is particularly relevant in relation to externally assisted post-conflict peacebuilding. Flaws that reach back to the inception of post-colonial security institutions (and their relations to political authority) mean that efforts to recreate the *status quo ante* in terms of state security structures may be misguided or even counterproductive in terms of human security.

As indicated in Chapter 1, a central plank of the transformation discourse is the need to influence the culture and character of security actors. In practice, this alteration is dependent on a radical shift in the agenda of political leaders – this is the starting point and a prerequisite for a sustainable change in the culture and attitude of the security sector. Undemocratic regimes showing the different characteristics proposed by Luckham and Hutchful (Chapter 2) offer multiple barriers to transformation. Influencing entrenched attitudes and perspectives in order to change these power dynamics is thus a central element of SST. Particularly conspicuous challenges are posed by the shadow hierarchies that exist alongside the trappings of constitutional democracy. The rationale for the security sector governance (SSG) focus of African Security Sector Network (ASSN) intervention in Liberia analysed by Jaye (Chapter 7) lies in the reality that constitutionally mandated parliamentary oversight powers have never been used in practice, while the extant security sector legislation is obsolete. The dilemma of declaratory policy obstructed by frozen mindsets is also well illustrated by attitudes to gender mainstreaming in African armed and security forces. A common response to pressure for gender mainstreaming is to step up female recruitment, even though greater influence will only stem from a combination of leadership, policy and structural change.

Language and meaning are clearly important to strategies for behaviour change in the security sector. It is significant that all the international organisations with a state-based membership addressed in this volume employ the term ‘SSR’ for their policy frameworks and operational capacities. Within the African Union’s (AU) post-conflict reconstruction and development policy document³ the concept of transformation only appears in relation to post-conflict contexts. Although used elsewhere in the document, the security governance component of the Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)⁴ developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) does not refer to transformation. For this reason, contributors to

this volume seek to identify transformative elements within the approaches of these organisations. This should not be understood as linguistic legerdemain but as a pragmatic response to the difficulty of engaging in a very sensitive area of public policy with member states that, even when not particularly resistant to change, certainly see little incentive to increase transparency and accountability on national security issues. To illustrate, as Ikpe (Chapter 8) points out, the security governance component of the ECPF sets out a number of piecemeal reforms that appear more technical than political in orientation. Yet the underlying expectations are clearly transformational – democratic oversight, elimination of military influence in politics and confronting public mistrust of security bodies. Similarly, while national political authorities are not bypassed by the ECOWAS Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces⁵ – indeed, the code can only be implemented at national level once approved by heads of state – its provisions are clearly addressed to influencing the behaviour of the armed and security forces of ECOWAS member states. Thus processes of defining, validating and implementing norms provide opportunities to support transformation ‘by stealth’.

The promotion of democratic security sector governance figures prominently in contributors’ understanding of SST. In part, this reflects a critique of SSR programmes that de-emphasise governance issues. But it also recalls the need to shift power dynamics as a central element of this agenda. To take Jaye’s example, the roots of the Liberian state itself as ‘a US governance model within an African setting’ have resulted in two (formal and informal) justice systems and a security sector conceived to maintain the ruling elite in power. Knowledge and empowerment are therefore crucial enablers of SST. Even where civil institutions are strong, knowledge of or interest in security issues may be lacking. In such cases, rightful powers of oversight and accountability are abdicated to the security institutions themselves.

Some debate lies in the temporal aspect of transforming entrenched patterns of behaviour. N’Diaye (Chapter 3) argues that urgency is integral to the notion of transformation, which can only be achieved through ‘a series of revolutions to be carried out synchronically in as many areas as possible of the entire security system’. Only such an ‘across the board’ approach can blunt resistance to the desired behaviour change. However, for most contributors, security sector transformation, despite its radical overtones, is likely to be incremental and process-driven. Hendrickson (Chapter 11) demonstrates how the need for long-term processes runs against the project-based approaches of a number of bilateral actors. Moreover, as emphasised by Ebo (Chapter 10), constraints imposed by mandates and demands for an

‘exit strategy’ also place particular stresses on measures developed in the framework of UN peacekeeping missions.

Transformation dynamics

In many African contexts, security remains a preserved domain of executive authorities. This has been apparent even when parliaments, the media and civil society more broadly provide robust oversight in other areas of public policy.⁶ A key dynamic of transformation is positive change in the level of responsiveness by the state to the rights, views and demands to security of its citizens. This transition from purely state (or regime) to human security is explicit in the strategic objective of ECOWAS to create an ‘ECOWAS of the peoples’.⁷ However, as Smith-Höhn (Chapter 5) points out in relation to Liberia and Sierra Leone, this goal can only be achieved if we gauge how people experience security. Given the male-dominated nature of many security institutions, Hendricks and Valasek (Chapter 4) underline that a gender-sensitive human security approach is particularly useful in moving beyond state-centric perspectives focused narrowly on issues of sovereignty and territoriality. Differentiating the security needs of men, women, girls and boys helps to identify the multiple causes of insecurity in a given context as well as the wide range of security actors (including women’s organisations and traditional security providers) that should be understood as being part of a security community.

Finding ways to harmonise approaches across democratic forces is essential to achieving a critical mass for transformation. Mobilisation and networking thus represent key dynamics of SST. Relevant signposts may include evidence of political will among elites within a change-resistant environment, and also the building of coalitions of like-minded citizens to engage on security-related issues. Political will to support transformation is more likely to be generated when support is networked across change agents such as parliaments and civil society bodies. The benefits of stakeholder clustering at the national level are shown within the gender dimensions of the South African defence transformation process. Gender mainstreaming was embedded through the engagement of staff associations, while gender-sensitive women in decision-making positions across the executive, parliament, armed forces and civil society collectively proved very influential as change agents. This phenomenon also points to the important role of regional and international organisations – notably the United Nations – in creating positive synergies between different actors at national, regional and international levels.

It is increasingly recognised that a reorientation of national security or sector-specific policies can provide a basis for SST. Process is everything. Participative discussions on the role, shape and values of the security sector represent an essential precursor to building confidence and consensus around security institutions. An open political process and evidence of policy commitment are positive indications of an enabling environment for change. Integrating the resulting insights from national conversations into a national security or sector-specific strategy provides both legitimacy and concrete insights. National dialogue processes demonstrate the central role that parliament can play in binding disparate efforts and actors within a broader process of change. For example, the interlinked and coordinated engagement of the South African Parliamentary Defence and Security Committee (PDSC), the Department of Defence and civil society forged political consensus that generated legitimacy for the reformed police and armed forces.

Positive emulation effects can help nurture support for transformation. The South African experience has been widely (if sometimes too uncritically) touted for its transformative qualities. Useful lessons can also be drawn from the experience in Mali during the early 1990s, in which the armed forces played an important role both during and after the transition to democratic rule.⁸ Prefaced by a deeply symbolic request for forgiveness to the Malian people during the national conference, collaborative efforts grew between the military, newly elected parliamentarians and civil society groups. This resulted in a consensus that constituted a transformation in civil-military relations and the conception of the security sector in Mali's political system and society. While both Mali and South Africa continue to face numerous security-related challenges, common to both experiences is the imperative that the security sector reflects wider democratic changes at the national level.

The real added value of security sector transformation lies in the nurturing of a discourse which tackles the assumptions, rationale and intentions underpinning systems of security provision and governance. The notion of security, the functions for which security institutions are designed and the governance of those institutions would essentially be revised in favour of ordinary citizens and not against them. Elements of such an approach might entail the following, among other things.

- An overhaul of the legal framework that underpins and maintains the system of security provision and governance. For example, this might entail constitutional change or reform of relevant legislative frameworks in ways that expand security decision-making beyond the

ambit of the ruling elite or the executive branch of government in particular, thus creating important channels for checks and balances within government and also across society.

- Flowing from this comes a systemic change in the patterns of governance of the security sector in terms of who performs oversight and how it is performed. This might include a more prominent role for parliaments, gender mainstreaming or the enabling of legitimate and credible channels of oversight across segments of society.
- Evidence of a collective national understanding that the meaning and basis of security provision and governance has shifted in favour of peoples and not state actors. This might entail a process of participative conversations, through national dialogue and conferences, etc.
- A common, home-grown national vision of security, and clarity in the role and functions of security institutions and governance processes.
- A culture change resulting in a visible shift in power base from a small group of elite to various people-based centres.
- Engagement by bilateral donors, regional and international actors that is sensitive to these dynamics.

Key challenges

Altering power relations lies at the heart of SST. This accounts for a great deal of resistance to injecting the agenda of transformation in SSR programmes. Beyond the national level, this is apparent in the uneven political support for SSR in organisations such as the United Nations, the AU and ECOWAS. While resistance to externally driven interference in (national) security matters forms one part of this challenge, the governance-driven approach that seeks engagement with a range of non-state actors is equally problematic.

While SSR programmes may place significant emphasis on improving the effectiveness or management of security institutions, less attention has been paid to how to transform *values* warped by politicisation, ethnicisation or other pernicious practices. However, given that certain values are fundamental to a functioning security institution, this can also be a powerful argument in favour of change. In some cases security elites have actually been more open to reform than civil authorities, especially when professionalism has been compromised by underfunding or political interference. One of the most significant findings from the ASSN-facilitated national consultations in Liberia was the appetite for reform within the security sector itself. Dismay at promotions based on patronage and poor

remuneration as well as frustration from marginalised veterans led to a strong desire for a voice in a national security review process. The consultations channelled these concerns by helping overcome confusion as to how to provide input within existing structures.

Luckham and Hutchful argue that transformation needs to include the containing or reversing of the privatisation of violence. A first step is to understand the nature of this phenomenon in different contexts. It is also necessary to take into account the reluctance or inability in certain contexts of many state authorities to engage with the private or informal security sector. This dilemma is evident in the approach of ECOWAS, which acknowledges the particular relevance of non-state security providers in West Africa – from militias and civil defence forces to private security companies (PSCs) – yet focuses mostly on subjecting them to sanctions or punitive legislation. This seems to run counter to claims of a people-centred approach, given the widespread reliance on these actors within the region. Certainly, in both Liberia and Sierra Leone weaknesses in the state security sector mean that a combination of external assistance and alternative non-state structures will be necessary for the foreseeable future. From a human security perspective, complementarity therefore offers a more promising approach that reflects the hybrid nature of many African societies rather than containing or rolling back legitimate non-state security functions. As Ikpe argues, if ECOWAS does overcome resistance from its members to focus on the security governance implications of non-state security provision, this would certainly represent a shift to promoting transformation in practice.

Once identified and acknowledged, filling public security gaps represents a critical challenge for an operational SST agenda. Smith-Höhn argues that analysing how citizens deal with insecurity during and after conflict can provide important lessons on the opportunities and constraints offered by different means of non-state security provision. In terms of post-conflict peacebuilding, this can help identify a more nuanced interplay of state and non-state actors that offers a greater level of security for citizens. In particular, such an approach can help to demonstrate important differences between how security is experienced in urban areas (where the reach of the state is likely to be more evident) when compared to rural settings.

The most significant challenge to SST may be the same critique that proponents address to SSR: the concept provides for a compelling advocacy and policy agenda but faces major implementation challenges, albeit for qualitatively different reasons, across all African contexts. The evident sensitivities mean that the best strategies for transformation may involve de-emphasising the transformative objectives being sought. For external partners, implementing a transformative approach to SSR requires the

seemingly paradoxical combination of *dirigisme* and *laissez-faire* highlighted by Hendrickson. SSR needs to be much more deliberately applied to context-specific African security sector governance challenges. At the same time, far higher levels of responsibility need to be ceded to a range of national stakeholders in determining the speed and direction of these processes.

Security sector transformation at the domestic level

An examination of security dynamics in Liberia and Sierra Leone brings to life important tensions between human- and state-security-driven approaches in two societies emerging from conflict. Common to both cases is that ordinary citizens have suffered depredations at the hands of government and ‘rebel’ forces during periods of civil war as well as continued high levels of violence and criminality in the aftermath of armed conflict. Liberia and Sierra Leone both receive significant international support for SSR, while the former benefits from external security provision through the continued presence of a UN peacekeeping force. At the same time, a lack of state policing capacity in both contexts and the security vacuum ensuing from the withdrawal of UN troops in Sierra Leone led to a burgeoning of community-based watch teams as well as PSCs employed by wealthier citizens.

Transformation was prominently identified in the work of the ASSN and its partners in Liberia. Specifically, this reflected the fact that SSG institutions and actors were not visible in US- and UN-supported SSR efforts. The critical areas of ASSN engagement – supporting national consultations and empowering Liberian parliamentarians – faced significant resistance from security elites (foreign ‘academics’ should not be involved in national security issues) and internationals involved in SSR (consultation processes distract from building up the capabilities of the police and armed forces). According to Jaye, high-level political support was critical to safeguarding the process and facing down influential opposition. First, activities were framed as providing support to the Liberian Governance Commission led by former President Amos Sawyer. And second, activities met a requirement within the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and were subsequently based on a presidential mandate.

Looking at these cases more closely, Smith-Höhn’s empirical analysis of public perceptions is counterintuitive in that despite the past conduct and weak capacities of state security providers, in both cases they benefit from positive perceptions and high expectations of the role they will play in safeguarding public security. However, the *de facto* reliance on informal

security providers in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, particularly in rural areas, points to an expectation-delivery gap that will be exacerbated in the case of Liberia over the medium term as UN forces draw down. Current SSR efforts that focus squarely on reinforcing state structures do not address this reality. She therefore argues that transformation can only be realised through adopting a new approach to SSG in programmes that embed support for non-state security providers within reinforced state structures. To address the challenge of complementarity a key yardstick is the likelihood of engagement with other parts of the security sector. Secret societies in Sierra Leone already demonstrate a level of integration with the formal sector due to overlapping memberships, whereas in Liberia this is not the case. Similarly, community watch teams in Sierra Leone are already engaged through the mechanism of police partnership boards. Fundamentally, national-level programmes supported by the international community that build synergies between state and non-state security providers will increase security exactly because they acknowledge the realities of how security is and will continue to be provided in the longer term in these societies. Such an approach thus gives agency to national SSR stakeholders and can aspire to reducing the culture of dependency on international support in the longer term.

N'Diaye argues that transforming the oversight role of parliament for West African security sectors can only be realised by acknowledging as a point of departure how this institution has been disempowered across the region during the post-colonial period. For N'Diaye, parliaments represent a powerful symbol of democracy and an expression of political will to oversee and initiate security sector transformation. In order to overcome what he characterises as a widespread 'culture of denial' in West African parliaments towards their oversight role in the security field, he advocates a combination of structural change hand in hand with fostering greater individual leadership by parliamentarians. The establishment of parliamentary defence and security committees with 'teeth' in terms of investigative mandate and authority represents an essential step forward. This was evident in the South African defence transformation process, which derived much credibility from the active role of the PDSC in exercising oversight of the process, including the power of the purse to approve or withhold defence budget allocations.

From his analysis of West African parliamentary practice, N'Diaye identifies a bold stance to addressing SSG deficits within parliaments in Ghana and Liberia. In the former, individual parliamentarians have sought to check corrupt practices within the security sector at some risk to careers and at the expense of narrow political interests. In the latter, members of

parliament rejected a National Security Act imposed by the executive without consultation and gained clarification on the opaque mandate and obligations of a PSC hired by the US government to train the Liberian armed forces. Comparing these examples is instructive. Both demonstrate self-belief to swim against the tide by objecting to perceived abuses that undermine the authority of parliament. The Ghanaian case shows how exemplary roles can be played by individual parliamentarians within a permissive national environment. In Liberia, as considered in detail by Jaye, the position of the parliament was reinforced by well-targeted capacity-building efforts. On the other hand, its role had been undermined by external SSR assistance that bypassed domestic oversight and accountability mechanisms.⁹

Hendricks and Valasek argue that changing attitudes to gender within the security sector represents a significant 'objective, entry point and indicator' for SST at the domestic level. In part, efforts at gender mainstreaming within the South African National Defence Force reflect the very particular environment of post-apartheid South Africa. Change within the security sector was part of and tapped into the wider process of transforming the state, constitution and public institutions to uphold 'the political, economic, social and cultural rights and needs of South Africa's people'.¹⁰ This dynamic was reflected in overwhelming political will in favour of change, including a reconceptualisation of national security in line with the precepts of human security.

In relation to gender mainstreaming, an important shift was made from acknowledging the issue as a policy imperative to understanding the relevance for combat readiness of benefiting from the optimum human resources available. Recognising the importance of preserving morale and cohesion across the security forces was also significant. Moreover, improving recruitment, retention and advancement of women demonstrated pay-offs when situated as part of a programme that included policy, structure, training, operations and resource dimensions. However, Hendricks and Valasek paint a stark picture of the challenges to implementation of the gender mainstreaming dimension of South Africa's defence transformation process. Discrimination and harassment remain too common despite political commitment, the development of innovative policy and institutional frameworks and increases in the number of women in general and within the officer class in particular. One explanatory argument is the lack of available resources to support a sustained gender mainstreaming campaign. Yet the key challenge of changing attitudes remains prominent and resistant to financial solutions.

Security sector transformation beyond the state

The significance of regional dynamics as an element of SST emerges from a number of contributions. In part, this reflects the need for common security frameworks to address 'borderless' causes of insecurity and injustice. Regional organisations may be particularly appropriate vehicles for SST given their proximity to the security challenges that affect a given region. Regional approaches also represent an alternative entry point for SST that can bypass resistance at the national level.

The onus on safeguarding regime security provides a formidable barrier to implementing a transformative SSR agenda at the national level. A multilayered approach is therefore called for. Prominent in Ebo's analysis of the role of the United Nations is the breadth of the organisation's engagement. At the country level, a multidimensional approach can be seen in efforts that seek to link SSR to related activities such as peacemaking, human rights, civil society support, crime prevention, gender and children's issues. On a political level, the UN's role in fostering dialogue among member states can help change minds and attitudes. Indeed, strong input by African experts to the development of the UN approach to SSR is evident in the influential findings of the 2007 Cape Town conference on 'Enhancing United Nations Support for Security Sector Reform in Africa: Towards an African Perspective',¹¹ which helped to shape the drafting of the first UN Secretary-General's report on SSR.¹²

Building bridges from norms and standards to the practice of security institutions in individual states seems to represent an important enabling activity for SST. In particular, processes to develop and apply regional norms that engage the principles of transformation represent a useful, low-key way to exert influence at the national level. The AU SSR strategy currently under development therefore offers the possibility for a continental framework that highlights and promotes African-focused principles. This is important for both external partners and member states. Ratification will result in pressure to reflect these principles in national constitutions and legal frameworks, thus reinforcing efforts in this direction by domestic change agents. Although there are evident political and practical (notably resource) challenges to realising this process, the decision by AU heads of state to develop such a strategy provides a powerful response to the arguments of more resistant member states. In a similar vein, Gacond and Uzoechina (Chapter 6) emphasise the importance of regional codes of conduct in encapsulating both (non-binding) political commitments and operational tools that provide guidance to shape behaviour change. A key aspect of the ECOWAS code of conduct is its integrationist dynamic. The

code deals with relations *between* armed and security forces. It also places particular emphasis on confidence building between civilians, the media and security actors.

African experts, notably drawn from the ASSN, have played a prominent role in shaping both the AU and ECOWAS approaches to SSR. Perhaps reflecting sensitivities within some member states, the security governance component of the ECPF is conspicuously light on references to the role of national parliaments. However, work to develop an action plan for its implementation has provided an opportunity to rectify this, thus broadening a politically sensitive agenda at the working level. Of particular importance is the South-South approach that underpins the ASSN network and methodology. Leveraging expertise from within and across different African regions provides an accessible resource base for organisations that need to tap into expertise from different African settings. A cross-regional approach also lends credibility to specific reform efforts. The thorny issues involving the rights of veterans in Liberia were thus defused through meetings that involved sharing experiences with veterans from Sierra Leone and South Africa.

As Luckham and Hutchful point out, consolidated policy engagement with bilateral donors and international organisations is important if African regional organisations are to punch their weight. When cooperation takes place across organisations, perhaps the most promising aspect of the nascent AU-UN strategic partnership, the potential pay-offs are multiplied. Building on the roles already played in policy development and programming, expert networks are well placed to support a transformative agenda within and across these organisations. The ASSN and other networks that tap into African expertise¹³ constitute an emerging community of practice. There is now little excuse for donors and regional and international organisations failing to meet acknowledged good practice such as the recommendations stemming from the Accra Forum on Aid Effectiveness,¹⁴ which emphasise the need for the international community to draw much more readily on relevant national and regional expertise.

Conclusion

Taking a historical perspective, this volume has identified several factors which make SST of particular relevance to Africa. The history of the continent from colonial times to the present reveals a need for a radical shift in the preconceptions and intentions that underpin the creation and functioning of the security establishment in many African countries. As long

as SSR is undertaken on the assumptions that the framework that supports the average state is underpinned by popular sovereignty, that the security sector is designed for the protection of individuals and communities and that non-statutory and non-regulated security actors are automatically not legitimate, SSR cannot bring about the desired change in the culture and character of security actors.

A number of channels for SST exist in the form of actors and institutions. The analyses in this volume identify some on the basis of new roles and changes in power dynamics. We know that progress has been realised in certain areas and that the continent has not been stagnant in the area of SSR in the last decade. Examples include the emergence of expert networks; elected parliamentarians who can champion positive change (although this has not shown great signs of sustainability); increased movement in some settings toward gender equality; and a continued search for more effective interventions among key development actors. However, powerful sources of resistance continue to obstruct the potential opportunities and processes of transformation. Thus it has been difficult to upscale the progress realised in some national and regional settings in ways that can translate into more meaningful, widespread change of the nature to which the proponents of SST have aspired.

The potential for structural change remains limited across many African settings. National processes of reform continue to face resistance and are being challenged by internal and external factors. Faulty assumptions which guide security sector reform interventions, and the sometimes conflicting strategies and interests of external stakeholders, limit the extent to which radical change is possible even in such settings. Regional actors, though well meaning, continue to face constraints posed by strong demands for state sovereignty notwithstanding new normative frameworks that give less emphasis to *national* security, at least in certain contexts and situations. Thus windows of opportunity can close and progress is lost.

Situations of armed conflict followed by externally assisted post-conflict peacebuilding have shown more receptivity and openness to SSR, as the cases discussed in this volume demonstrate. Yet we also show that tangible evidence of transformation has not, by and large, been found in these settings. Rather, transformation in cases such as Mali and South Africa has formed part of, albeit qualitatively different, 'pacted' transitions from authoritarian rule. The litmus test in the future for an operational security sector transformation agenda should therefore lie in its impact within mixed, notably post-conflict, settings.

What kind of general concluding remarks can we make about the state of SST and SSR in Africa? And what should form the focus of attention for

analysts as well as policy-makers and practitioners in the future? The SST discourse has proved highly potent in influencing the way that the SSR policy agenda has evolved. As a result, nearly all major international, regional and bilateral actors have embraced transformative principles within a holistic definition of SSR. Yet we cannot confidently speak about a sustainable trend of transformation in practice. The influence of the SST discourse on key normative and policy frameworks provides an important springboard for change. But successes are still too few and the result of one-off changes rather than widespread structural change. Related to this, not surprisingly power dynamics remain skewed in favour of official political and social power holders without gender equality or balance. As such, security decision-making has not yet transformed into a situation where the majority of people are the recipients of security provision and are beneficiaries of democratic security sector governance.

In sum, Africa is yet to realise transformation that supports a shift in the culture, behaviour, form and function of the security establishment but is gradually reforming aspects of its governance, supported through security sector reform. Realising the agenda of SST within these processes requires a concerted effort and decisive attempt at structural change on the part of African leaders as well as regional and international actors, and not least the bilateral actors which provide assistance in the area of SSR. The challenge is to turn the already progressive conceptualisation of SSR into transformative action on the ground.

Notes

- ¹ Mark Sedra (2004) 'Security sector transformation in Afghanistan', DCAF Working Paper No. 143, DCAF, Geneva.
- ² Slobadan Perdan (2006) 'Security sector reform: The building of security in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Conflict Security and Development*, 6(2).
- ³ African Union Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. Adopted by Executive Council of Ministers of the African Union, Banjul, Gambia, July 2006.
- ⁴ ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. Enacted by Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08 of ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, 16 January 2008.
- ⁵ ECOWAS Draft Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces in West Africa; available at www.dcaf.ch/code_conduct-armed-forces-west-africa/WestAfrica_CoC.pdf.
- ⁶ Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye and 'Funmi Olonisakin (eds) 'Addressing the Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa', *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*. Munster: Lit Verlag, p. 338.
- ⁷ ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, note 4 above, para. 4.
- ⁸ See Nouhoum Sangaré (2008) 'Mali', in Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye and 'Funmi Olonisakin (eds) *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*. Munster: Lit Verlag, pp. 185–204.

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- ⁹ Adedeji Ebo (2005) 'The challenges and opportunities of security sector reform in post-conflict Liberia', DCAF Occasional Paper No. 9, DCAF, Geneva.
- ¹⁰ South African Government (1996) *White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa*.
- ¹¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council (2007) 'Statement of the co-chairs of the International Workshop on Enhancing United Nations Support for Security Sector Reform in Africa: Towards an African perspective', annex to letter dated 20 November 2007 from the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/62/554-S/2007/687, 29 November.
- ¹² UN Security Council (2008) 'Securing peace and development: The role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform', report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/62/659-S/2008/39, 23 January.
- ¹³ Important examples include the Association for SSR Education and Training, the Global Consortium on Security Transformation and the alumni network of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.
- ¹⁴ The Accra Agenda for Action was drawn up in 2008 and builds on the commitments contained in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. See www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html.

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The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is an international foundation whose mission is to assist the international community in pursuing good governance and reform of the security sector. To this end, the Centre develops and promotes appropriate norms at the international and national levels, determines good practices and relevant policy recommendations for effective governance of the security sector, and provides in-country advisory support and practical assistance programmes to all interested actors.

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