9 UN field operations' contribution to defence sector reform[1]

VINCENZA SCHERRER AND ALBA BESCOS POU

Introduction

Given their often dominant power and potential for coercion, defence institutions lie at the heart of security sector governance. Ensuring their effectiveness and accountability is thus viewed as a key element for sustaining peace.[2] United Nations (UN) bodies such as the Security Council and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations have repeatedly called for efforts to ensure that UN support to national defence sector reform (DSR) is anchored in a broader framework of security sector reform (SSR).[3] To address the challenges that weak and dysfunctional security institutions may pose, DSR should be aimed at implementing the principles of good governance.

To enable a strategic shift in the approach of the UN to DSR, the then-Department of Peacekeeping Operations (or DPKO; now the Department of Peace Operations, or DPO) prepared and adopted its first DSR Policy in 2011, within the framework of the Inter-agency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF). Multilateral organizations often fail to reflect on *how* to disseminate, monitor or implement policy and guidance, the effectiveness of which can only be measured by their use.[4] With this concern in mind, and building on a study undertaken at the request of UN DPO, this chapter introduces the UN DSR Policy (Section 2), provides an overview of the mandates for and implementation of DSR support by UN peace operations (Section 3) and, on this basis, identifies a set of lessons regarding the extent to which UN support has aligned with the Policy (Section 4).

This chapter offers a comparative analysis of the support to national DSR efforts provided by UN field operations, with a particular focus on peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and special political missions (SPMs) with DSR-specific or SSR-related mandates.[5] The methodology used for this analysis involved a systematic examination of 155 UN Security Council resolutions and 369 reports of the UN Secretary-General (SG) on selected peace operations adopted in the period between

January 2006 and January 2016.[6] Given that Security Council resolutions are negotiated by Member States, these resolutions highlight the specific areas for which a political commitment to UN engagement exists.[7] Additionally, while it is recognized that not all the activities conducted in a mission are reflected in SG reports, they nonetheless provide an important overview of support delivered and progress made in the field, in all areas, including DSR.

There are several limitations to the methodology employed, from which the findings in this chapter are derived. First, any comparison of the support mandated or provided in the different countries where DPO or the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA; formerly the Department of Political Affairs, or DPA) have a field presence must be carefully contextualized in relation to the specific conditions and demands of each mission. These findings are not presented, for example, with consideration for whether the UN focused on specific areas of support because other multilateral or bilateral actors were already engaged in other areas. Second, because this study is based only on desk research, the analysis was mainly focused on the frequency of various approaches to DSR support, and not on understanding the quality or depth of this support. Therefore, conclusions cannot be drawn about either the quality or depth of the reform processes that were supported. Finally, a lack of field research made it impossible to determine whether other activities have taken place in the framework of reform but have not been included in SG reports.[8] Still, despite these limitations and with an acknowledgment of the complexity of realities facing peacekeeping and political missions, this chapter provides an important empirically-based snapshot of the state and evolution of UN support to DSR.

The 2011 UN DSR Policy: context and overview

While DSR is mainly a national process, states have often requested support from international actors, including multilateral organizations, to effectively implement these reforms. In this context, within the broad mandate to support peace and security, and in line with the objectives of development, human rights, and the rule of law, the UN has been actively engaged in providing support to broader SSR – including DSR – processes. After decades of engagement in SSR-related activities, a substantial normative framework has been created within the organization (including, among others, the 2008 and 2013 SG reports,[9] Security Council resolution 2151, and the UN SSR Integrated Technical Guidance Notes) to enable the provision of assistance to national reform processes undertaken in what we know as "the security sector," which includes, among other institutions, those tasked with policing, corrections, and defence.

Within this broader framework of support, the development of effective, efficient, accountable, and affordable defence sector institutions plays a key role in ensuring the security of a state and its citizens, as this is essential to achieving sustainable peace and development. In fact, DSR (as a key component of SSR) is recognized as central to good governance and the rule of law.[10] DSR has thus become a crucial element among the mandates and activities of UN field operations. In 2018, the UN was engaged in such efforts through 14 of its 20 peace missions mandated to provide broader SSR support.[11] While PKOs and SPMs are not the only tools used by the UN to support national DSR processes, these operations are deployed at moments in time that represent windows of opportunity to negotiate and initiate these reform processes. Therefore, examining how these operations are providing support to DSR is fundamental to understanding broader UN efforts in this area.

The work of the UN to support DSR processes has been challenging, particularly but not only in countries recovering from conflict. Power politics and the resistance of defence institutions to change have limited, or even prevented, the success of reform efforts in the past. This led to the recognition that further guidance was needed to steer UN efforts in this field. In line with Policy Committee Decisions 2007/11 and 2011/1, and in close consultation with the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) and the IASSRTF, the DPO Security Sector Reform Unit (SSRU) led the development of the DSR Policy in 2011. This was the first attempt to articulate standards and principles that the UN should apply when providing support in this area and was aimed at overcoming the traditional ad hoc approach. The Policy applies to all staff of all UN PKOs and SPMs with specific mandates on SSR and/or DSR and is a "reference for all Offices, Departments, Funds and Programmes of the IASSRTF and Member States, as well as regional authorities and other multi-lateral actors engaged in DSR."[12]

The Policy recognizes that "an effective, efficient, accountable and affordable defence sector – an important component of the broader security sector – is essential for sustainable peace and development."[13] It thereby acknowledges that DSR, especially in the context of support mandated by the Security Council, is a key component of SSR. Within this framework, the Policy highlights the need to anchor SSR processes, and thus DSR-related efforts as well, in the principles of national ownership and inclusivity, in order to be successful and sustainable.[14] The Policy also clarifies that the goal of the UN in the context of DSR is "to support national efforts to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and affordability of the defence sector and its components, in order to contribute to sustainable peace, security, good governance and development for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law, and in accordance with national and international norms, laws and nation-specific agreements."[15]

Drawing on the rich experience of the UN in this area,[16] the adoption of the DSR Policy represented a significant step forward in strengthening the coherence of UN support. Yet there is still room for improvement, and the need to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of peace operations more broadly has been identified by the Secretary-General as a main priority of the UN reform agenda with regard to the peace and security pillar.[17] As the UN has increasingly provided support to national DSR efforts, a closer look at the progress achieved and challenges ahead in the implementation of these efforts will provide a valuable contribution to advancing discussions related to the coherence and effectiveness of peace operations. However, as defence institutions are often a symbol of state sovereignty, any external support remains a very sensitive issue.

Overview of the mandates and implementation of UN DSR support

In order to appreciate the extent to which the Security Council has entrusted PKOs and SPMs to support DSR processes, and the extent to which support has been implemented, this section presents an overview of the DSR support mandated and reported to have been implemented by the following peacekeeping operations:

- United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI),
- United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT),
- United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH),
- United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL),
- United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS),
- United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID),
- United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS),
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA),
- United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK),
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA),
- United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and
- United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO);

and by the following special political missions:

- United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM),
- United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL),
- United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA),
- United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI),

- United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA),
- United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA),
- United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB),
- United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS),
- United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL),
- United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), and
- United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL).

DSR support mandated

Given that Security Council resolutions are negotiated by Member States, the mandates set by these documents identify the specific areas for which a political commitment to UN engagement exists. During the period analysed, the number of resolutions with DSR-specific mandates increased for some missions and decreased for others, presumably according to contextual needs. In total, for PKOs, 69 mandates with explicit calls for DSR support were identified over the ten-year period under review,[18] while there were substantially fewer explicit DSR mandates for SPMs (15).[19] In practice, however, some SPMs (e.g. BINUCA, UNSOM, etc.) that do not have an explicit DSR mandate have broad SSR mandates that are often used as an umbrella for providing DSR support in the field. Moreover, it should be noted that most mandates for both types of mission are simply renewed or extended, and very few have actually been re-negotiated or re-adapted to the needs on the ground.

While mandates target different areas of support from mission to mission, some general trends can be identified across PKOs and SPMs. One of the most frequent areas of DSR support called for in the mandates of PKOs is the development of force structure and force planning, often requiring efforts to reform and restructure militaries (e.g. UNOCI, S/RES/2162 (2014), para. 19). Addressing cross-cutting issues within defence sectors (e.g. human rights, child protection, international humanitarian law, and the prevention of gender-based violence) has also been prominent in some mandates, as well as strengthening the coordination of DSR support. This area has been particularly relevant in Sudan, where several resolutions have included a mandate to liaise with bilateral donors in the area of DSR. In a smaller number of cases, mandates have encompassed other areas, such as support to building consensus among national stakeholders (e.g. UNOCI, S/RES/2162 (2014) para. 19) or, as in the DRC, to strengthening the administration, budget development, and management of the defence sector, with a particular focus on supporting vetting processes and mechanisms. Sometimes, mandates also call for support in the area of governance and oversight (accountability). However, these mandates are often limited to strengthening military justice institutions. While

civilian oversight was mentioned in some of the Security Council resolutions that were analysed (e.g. UNMIT, S/RES/1969 (2011), para. 4), it was never referenced in the operative paragraphs that establish actual mission mandates. Finally, the mandates of PKOs never explicitly call for support to strengthen the education of military personnel, and only rarely address the need to provide logistical support or develop infrastructure.

The smaller sample of resolutions with DSR mandates for SPMs limits the ability to identify trends among them; nonetheless, some general commonalities can be observed. For instance, most SPM mandates call for the coordination of international assistance to DSR processes in line with the principle of national ownership. This is the case for the missions in Afghanistan and Libya, for instance.[20] The second most frequently targeted area of support for SPMs in this sample is related to governance and oversight (accountability) mechanisms in the area of defence, although such support was mostly provided in the context of the mission in Guinea-Bissau and was limited to military justice.[21] Contrary to PKOs, none of the SPMs examined in this research were ever mandated to address issues of force structure and force planning, defence budget development, or management during the period under study. With the exception of UNSMIL in Libya, these mandates are often focused on a single issue in a specific context. Additionally, while DSR mandates for SPMs remain primarily political, there has been an increasing trend over the ten-year period analysed to mandate both political and technical support. For instance, since 2013, mandates for UNIOGBIS have started including a technical dimension in addition to a political focus.

DSR support provided

Of the 369 reports of the SG that were analysed, 345 DSR-related activities were reported as having been provided in practice.[22] While not all the activities conducted by UN actors are reflected in SG reports, these documents nonetheless provide an important overview of the support delivered and the progress made in the field, in all areas, including DSR. This analysis has shown that the number of activities dedicated to supporting DSR processes has increased over the past ten years, playing a significant role in some countries, such as Timor-Leste, CAR, the DRC, and Côte d'Ivoire. Support in this area has been particularly intensified in the context of SPMs, with the number of DSR-related activities by these missions rising exponentially from just 18 in the first term of the period analysed (2006–2010) to 111 in the second term (2011–2016). Moreover, according to the data gathered, while some missions have been active in nearly all areas of defence reform (e.g., UNMIT, UNSMIL, and MONUSCO), others have been providing targeted support aimed at specific areas (e.g., UNAMA, UNAMI, UNMIL, and UNAMID).

Overall, according to the SG reports, the majority of activities delivered by both PKOs and SPMs have addressed so-called cross-cutting issues.[23] These activities have included the provision of human rights training, for example, or the implementation of sensitization strategies on HIV/AIDS prevention for the armed forces.[24] The area of child protection and gender issues has been particularly emphasized.[25] Most field missions have implemented numerous projects to support cross-cutting issues within the defence sector, which represent the most important share of support in Darfur, Iraq, and Mali. It should be noted, though, that support in this area is often technical in nature as most peace operations have mainly engaged at the tactical (individual) level, for instance by providing training or mentoring to armed forces personnel (e.g. UNMIT, S/2010/522, para. 27).

When it comes to other targeted areas of support, PKOs and SPMs differ considerably. For PKOs, the second most-supported area relates to governance and oversight mechanisms, representing a significant share of the overall support provided in the DRC and South Sudan. A few of these activities have involved the provision of technical support on democratic oversight to legislative bodies (e.g. UNOCI, S/2015/320, para. 35), but the majority of efforts in this area have been aimed at establishing or improving the military justice system while engaged at the tactical level (e.g., training armed forces prosecutors and judges in military law; see UNMISS, S/2012/820, para. 51) or the operational level (e.g., establishment of prosecution support cells to strengthen the capacity of military prosecutors; see MONUC, S/2009/472, para. 37). In some instances, this type of support has also acquired a political dimension (e.g., advocating for military justice reforms).[26] In practice, according to SG reports, legislative institutions (e.g. parliaments), civil society, and the media have only rarely been engaged in DSR support (the only examples found in this analysis were in Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, and Burundi).

Other relevant targeted support provided by PKOs includes assistance in the development of force structure and force planning (particularly relevant in Côte d'Ivoire and Timor-Leste) and in the area of logistics and procurement of infrastructure (e.g., the rehabilitation and equipment of military barracks and hospitals).[27] Beyond this, coordination (particularly in Sudan)[28] and support to strengthen education systems (such as in Liberia) have also been addressed.[29] To a lesser extent, support to the administration, budget development, and management of armed forces has also been provided; still, this support has played a key role in certain countries, such as CAR – where MINUSCA has assisted the national authorities in establishing an electronic database for human resources management of the defence forces.[30]

For SPMs, the area most often supported after cross-cutting issues has been the development of defence legislation, norms, doctrines, and overall reform plans. For instance, BNUB has provided technical advice to support the development of a

strategic plan to set baselines for reform of the armed forces in Burundi (BNUB, S/2014/36, para. 22). Similarly, BINUCA proposed a road map to the national authorities in CAR with timelines and a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among national stakeholders for a security sector reform process that included reform of the armed forces (S/2011/739, para. 35).

The coordination of international assistance and other related activities in the area of DSR (e.g., co-chairing meetings and advocacy efforts vis-à-vis the donor community) also represents a considerable share of support delivered in the field. For instance, according to the Secretary-General, UNIOGBIS has coordinated with ECOWAS and the national authorities in Guinea-Bissau with respect to overall reform of the defence and security sectors.[31] Finally, administration, budget development, and management have also been areas targeted by SPM activities in the field. UNSMIL, for instance, has been working with the Libyan army on a proposal for pension reform and incentives for early retirement, and UNIOGBIS provided support to the vetting and certification process for Bissau-Guinean armed forces personnel.[32] Additionally, SPMs have sometimes delivered support aimed at improving governance and oversight mechanisms, including through the organization of workshops attended by military officers to raise awareness on anti-corruption laws.[33] Support to governance and oversight has mainly been provided through advocacy activities such as sensitization workshops addressing ministries of defence, military justice institutions, and on a few occasions, legislative bodies.

Though to a lesser degree, SPMs have also sought to build consensus among national stakeholders, as in Libya, where UNSMIL has encouraged political dialogue on the DSR process among national security forces and armed groups.[34] On the other hand, SPMs have rarely been involved in supporting improvements to education systems, and most support that has been provided in this area has manifested in a "training-of-trainers" approach.[35] SPMs have also rarely supported logistics or the procurement of infrastructure in the area of defence. And, while neither PKOs nor SPMs appear to be involved in most defence sector reviews, in practice, support in this area may be provided under the umbrella of broader SSR reviews.[36]

In sum, support reported to have been delivered in the field does not always align with Security Council mandates. Still, this finding must be understood in the particular context of each mission, as the support delivered by field operations not only depends on these mandates but also on needs on the ground. Moreover, much political support provided by the UN may be considered too sensitive to be reflected in the SG reports. Additionally, while the mandates of PKOs and SPMs may differ, the activities implemented in each type of mission are often similar. Indeed, in both cases, support is often technical in nature, and there is a general lack of support to and engagement with legislative bodies and civil society. It is possible that the similar

challenges faced by both types of field presences contribute to similar limitations for missions on the ground, and hence the provision of similar kinds of support. There is, nonetheless, a need to further explore the implications of supporting national reform processes through PKOs or through SPMs, as well as how this affects broader transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Lessons identified

This analysis has highlighted the increasing involvement of the UN in assisting national actors to reform defence institutions; and this section sets out key findings regarding the extent to which UN support to DSR aligns with fundamental provisions of the DSR Policy. These findings apply to both PKOs and SPMs, but where relevant, further explanation is provided to highlight differences between these two types of field operations.

Lesson 1: The delivery of DSR support is not always in line with mandates

> "The support of the United Nations Mission or field presence to the DSR process shall be aligned with the mandate provided by the Security Council or General Assembly and/or requests received from the host nation" (UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 24).

Mandates define not only the support that should be delivered, but also the areas Security Council members are prepared to support. Thus, as in any area of the UN's work, the DSR Policy sets out the necessity to implement mandates. However, this review of DSR support highlights that, in practice, mandates do not provide the full picture in terms of support subsequently delivered on the ground by SPMs or by PKOs.

Based on the SG reports periodically submitted to the UN Security Council, in PKOs, logistics and the procurement of infrastructure, including equipment, played a more important role in practice than what was called for in mandates. Also, while peacekeeping mandates called mainly for strategic engagement, most support is reported to be delivered at the tactical level through training. In SPMs, despite a predominance of mandates to support the governance and oversight (accountability) of defence institutions, in the reports, this type of support was overshadowed by efforts to address cross-cutting issues. Furthermore, although SPM mandates often called for political support, this political dimension was only targeted by a third of the support delivered.[37] Additionally, there are some mandated areas that are not being implemented (or vice versa).

The fact that UN SSR support delivered on the ground is not always in line with mandates contributes to a lack of predictability. It appears that one reason for this gap has to do with mandates themselves; meaning, it is not always clear that

mandates have been appropriately tailored to the changing needs in a given context. While the support mandated for each mission differs, suggesting that mandates have been developed at the outset with a consideration for the particular context and needs of a specific country, this research has shown that many mission mandates were drafted using "formulaic mandate tasks" that regularly reappeared in subsequent resolutions, duplicating the mandate of a mission year after year.[38] In some cases, these mandates remain relevant, but the question should be raised as to what extent recurrent mandates address the evolving needs of national counterparts. Moreover, a lack of tailor-made mandates is likely to have hampered the deployment of the capacities needed to guarantee the success of missions. Such a paucity of resources is more likely to be felt in missions and operations with mandates that do not explicitly address DSR, as the vagueness of some mandates challenges the decision-making process in mission planning and resource allocation. Although broad mandates on DSR or SSR have proven to be more flexible, it is difficult to assess whether that has helped make the provision of support in the field more efficient. It is often acknowledged, too, that mandates are sometimes inconsistent with the capacity of the organization to deliver, which risks turning their directives into a mere "wish list."

Another explanation for a deviation in the field from Security Council mandates relates to the fact that DSR support is often provided under a broad mandate for SSR (e.g., UNSOM or UNIOGBIS). For instance, although SPMs have not been explicitly mandated to support vetting mechanisms, in practice, this type of support has sometimes been provided by UNIOGBIS.[39] Similarly, while MINUSCA was only mandated to support vetting within broader SSR efforts, the mission has actively engaged in supporting the verification (simplified vetting) of armed forces and the creation of a database for armed forces personnel to be used for auditing and vetting.[40] Also, while none of the missions analysed in this chapter were mandated to provide support to military education systems, some (very limited) efforts have been made on the ground in this area by UNMIT, UNMIL, UNMIS, and UNMISS. This would suggest that broad SSR mandates provide the UN with the flexibility to address needs on the ground, to the extent that adequate resources are in place.

Finally, another challenge affecting implementation, *inter alia*, is a lack of will among national governments and other stakeholders to undertake or support reforms. A 2014 SG report on the DRC explained, for instance, that the UN had deployed military trainers but delays on the part of the national armed forces in designating units to be trained had impeded progress, including the screening of rapid reaction units.[41] On top of this, limits set by the conditionality policies developed by some missions (e.g., MONUC),[42] and to a certain extent, the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces,[43] can also challenge the delivery of support. More efforts should

be made to further explore the reasons for and consequences of a disconnect in the field from mandates adopted in the Security Council, and whether these mandates are being used to their full potential.

Lesson 2: Most of the support provided to DSR addresses cross-cutting issues

> "[T]he United Nations shall focus on the development of sufficient national governance, management, institutional, resource (human, material and financial) and technical capacities and capabilities" (UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 15).

The UN DSR Policy sets out a number of key areas in which support should be provided, including governance and oversight, defence legislation, administration, budget development and management, force formation and education, consensus building among national stakeholders, defence sector reviews, and coordination. In practice, though, the majority of support provided by PKOs and SPMs fell into a category not explicitly laid out in the Policy, which was that of addressing cross-cutting issues within the defence sector (e.g. human rights, gender equality, etc.). This may be because this kind of support is generally less contested, or because experts who can provide assistance in these areas are easier to identify.

These activities are not only conducted by field operations with dedicated DSR mandates, but also by those with only implicit mandates in this area. Specifically, SPMs have mainly focused on mainstreaming human rights, whereas PKOs have been strongly focused on supporting efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence and measures to improve child protection. Common examples of this type of support include, for example, promoting human rights and international humanitarian law within armed forces, conducting gender awareness and training programmes for soldiers, and supporting ministries of defence in developing action plans to address sexual violence or to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers.[44] While addressing these cross-cutting issues of gender and human rights is important and may be part of broader confidence-building initiatives targeting national stakeholders, it is vital that the UN plays a role in ensuring that support to other important areas of DSR is not overlooked.

It is also worth noting that, while support to cross-cutting issues was common, it does not appear to have been mainstreamed at all levels (e.g., from technical to operational to strategic). Indeed, in the period analysed, this type of support was mainly technical, provided through the training of individual soldiers or through awareness raising activities.[45] And according to reports of the SG, these efforts in the field do not always occur in a logical sequence that leads towards the prime goal of mainstreaming these cross-cutting issues across the entire sector; meaning, the UN is missing an opportunity for long-term impact. Further research is necessary to shed

light on whether engagement at the tactical level is contributing to a commitment at the operational and strategic levels to address gender or human rights.

Lesson 3: Support to strengthening the governance and oversight of defence sectors is limited

> "The United Nations shall avoid supporting initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the defence sector in the absence of, or in isolation of, initiatives aimed at developing civilian oversight, accountability and management of the defence sector" (UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 33).

While the DSR Policy calls for efforts to develop civilian oversight, accountability, and management of defence sectors, the breadth of support provided in the area of defence sector governance and oversight was limited during the period analysed for this study. In mandates, this area has not been prominently featured, particularly in the case of PKOs. In fact, it has only been mandated in South Sudan, DRC, Libya, and Guinea-Bissau, where missions have, for example, been tasked with advising the national government in strengthening the capacity of the military justice system[46] or enhancing the civilian oversight and accountability mechanisms of the military.[47]

In terms of the governance and oversight-related support reported to be implemented on the ground, it has also remained limited according to the SG reports reviewed. Most activities in this area were directed at military justice systems. For instance, UNIOGBIS assisted the Bissau-Guinean Ministry of Defence (MoD) in publishing and disseminating draft principles governing the administration of justice through military tribunals, to national stakeholders.[48] In SPMs, there has been some focus on addressing other governance-related issues, including anti-corruption efforts (e.g., BNUB) or those meant to strengthen the role of civil society in the oversight of armed forces (e.g., BINUCA); but in PKOs, this has been very rare. In addition, despite the explicit stipulation of the DSR Policy that the UN engage with legislative bodies (including parliamentary committees for defence), civil society, and the media, these entities are never specifically cited in mandates as the beneficiaries of DSR support, and have been addressed in practice on only very few occasions.

The DSR Policy provides a clear directive in this area, noting that "the United Nations Mission Concept shall encourage national authorities to reach an appropriate balance between effectiveness and efficiency of the defence sector on the one hand and appropriate civilian oversight and management on the other."[49] Yet, the great difficulties that can arise in relation to engagement with national stakeholders may explain the gap that exists when it comes to governance and oversight activities. The already limited staff in field missions is frequently replaced and the staff at ministries or even in legislative bodies (including in parliamentary committees) are often absent, making it a challenge to build the trust needed to facilitate cooperation in this area.

Further reflection is needed to determine how efforts to address the governance dimension through UN DSR support can be improved. This may include raising awareness of the Policy among senior management, or more systematically promoting the inclusion of this area in mandates put forth by the Security Council.

Lesson 4: Most of the DSR support mandated and delivered by the UN is technical in nature

> "In post conflict settings, DSR is often both a complex political process and a long-term technical endeavour" (UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 15).

According to the DSR Policy, UN support should constitute a balance of both technical (e.g., training, logistical support, etc.) and political approaches (e.g., coordination, mobilization of resources, consensus-building measures, etc.). Most mandates call for both types of support, but there are some exceptions; for instance, every mandate for the missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, Liberia, South Sudan, and Mali called only for technical support. Overall, PKOs are called on to provide mainly technical support and SPMs mainly political support.[50] Nevertheless, in practice, the majority of support delivered by both types of UN missions was technical in nature.

Technical support has largely been provided through training. For instance, UNOCI trained the *Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* to clear explosive remnants of war, and in stockpile management;[51] and UNSOM trained 965 members of the Somali National Army on human rights and humanitarian law.[52] Training programmes have generally been aimed at armed forces personnel and, for the most part, have addressed cross-cutting issues such as human rights or gender equality. Technical support has also been delivered through the provision of technical advice and assistance, and through logistical/rehabilitation support. For example, UNOCI provided logistical support to the command centre of the military, consisting of transport assistance, communications support, and the acquisition of office equipment. And in CAR, MINUSCA initiated a project to assist the MoD in rehabilitating military barracks in Bangui.[53] Other technical support has included assistance to efforts by ministries of defence to verify armed forces personnel (e.g. MINUSCA, S/2015/918, para. 54).

When political support has been provided, it has often been delivered in relation to coordination activities (e.g., UNSMIL convened regular international coordination meetings on the Libyan DSR process),[54] or though advocacy in support of the development of action plans and the mobilization of resources (e.g., UNMIS explored options to accelerate logistical support and specialist assistance for units from the international community).[55] The UN has engaged less frequently in fostering dialogue, although there have been some exceptions such as in Sudan,

where UNMIS military personnel played a significant role in facilitating dialogue between military commanders and supervising confidence-building measures; and in CAR, where MINUSCA has provided good offices to support efforts by national and international members of the Strategic Committee for DDR and SSR, including DSR, and to implement recommendations of the Bangui Forum.[56] While it is likely that additional political support takes place behind the scenes and is not captured in the reports of the SG, this analysis suggests that more efforts are needed to balance the technical with the political – both in terms of the delivery of support on the ground and in the reporting on this support.

Lesson 5: Reports of the SG do not systematically frame DSR within a broader SSR approach

> "DSR support by United Nations shall be approached comprehensibly, and consider other related reform processes such as those within the security, justice and/or public sectors, including DDR, with the aim of developing a single political strategic vision and programme for reform, on the basis of a thorough understanding and assessment of threats, dominant pressures, and national interests, objectives, values and needs" (UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 15).

In line with the first report of the SG on SSR in 2008, a defence sector is an important component of a broader security sector.[57] For a more strategic, sustainable, and long-term approach, DSR efforts must thus be accompanied by effective, long-term institutional capacity-building strategies. Moreover, in line with the broader tenets of the UN reform agenda for the peace and security pillar, all UN support, including DSR, should place political solutions at the centre of efforts.[58] But the primacy of politics requires a clear political strategy first and foremost, which should relate both to a broader mission strategy and to each of its sub-components, and this means that DSR mandates must not only be anchored in broader efforts to support SSR but should also feed into the political strategy of a mission.

In order to ensure coherence between DSR and the more comprehensive SSR process, a strategy must be defined from the outset, including the identification of priorities, indicative timelines, and partnerships. This strategy should account for national priorities as well as the capacities available in the UN. Indeed, the DSR Policy notes that a "National DSR Implementation Plan should, ideally, be derived from a recent national security policy/strategy, if it exists, and/or a national strategic defence review," or in "consultation with other security sector specific assessments that might be ongoing or in existence." On the basis of SG reports examined for this study, it is difficult to assess if DSR efforts have been systematically linked to other related processes in practice; the reports did not provide information on this aspect

of support, which is a missed opportunity to highlight how DSR contributes to the broader strategic priorities of a mission.

To ensure coherence among the DSR and the SSR processes, DSR should also be understood as an institution-building exercise and aligned to broader efforts to support the governance of the security sector. However, according to the SG reports, the support provided has been more technical than political, and efforts to enhance the governance and democratic oversight of the sector have been rather limited. In fact, field missions have rarely engaged with legislative bodies and civil society when supporting national DSR processes. Moreover, in some areas, there has been a lack of engagement with long-term approaches that aim to build institutions and support sustainable reform. And despite considerable support provided through training, field operations have only seldom sought to improve the education system itself, which would include, for instance, activities intended to support a training-of-trainers approach or rehabilitate military schools.

It would require additional research to corroborate these findings, as SG reports provide little information on the linkages between DSR activities and broader SSR initiatives. However, there appears to be a clear need to strengthen the efforts of field operations to deliver DSR support that is not only focused on technical assistance and advice but is also linked more generally to democratic governance, with a strong political dimension and in coordination with other reform processes.

Lesson 6: Reports of the SG miss opportunities to facilitate enhanced coordination at the strategic level

> "A major role of United Nations DSR personnel is to encourage, and in some cases coordinate or synchronize, the engagement and financial support of donors in line with nationally defined priorities for DSR, in support of and in close coordination with the national government or transitional authority" (UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 48).

If the international community is to provide comprehensive support to nationally-led DSR processes, coordination among partners is essential to ensuring that no gaps exist in this support and that efforts are complementary. Like any other actor involved in this area, the UN often has a limited capacity to implement mandates and, for this reason (and others), sometimes advises governments to "seek assistance from bilateral partners who have the capacity to provide support for the training and restructuring of the new armed forces."[59] In other cases, bilateral support for DSR has been favoured at the initiative of a government, as in the DRC.[60]

The UN often cooperates with other actors in the delivery of DSR support, including the AU, the EU, and others. For instance, UNOWA (now UNOWAS) has worked closely with ECOWAS and the AU to develop a joint strategic concept that calls for action on military and security sector reform.[61] The UN has frequently

played a role in attempting to harmonize the contributions of international partners to army and defence reform as well. In Somalia, for example, UNSOM facilitated the coordination of all training activities through a Somali-led steering group, comprising "head trainers" from the Somali forces, the EU Training Mission, Turkey, Ethiopia, and Bancroft Global Development.[62] According to SG reports, the UN mainly supports this coordination by chairing meetings. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that this is mostly done jointly with other actors, either by co-chairing with national actors such as from the MoD or with international actors such as from the EU.[63] In Libya, UNSMIL has regularly convened international coordination meetings on the Libyan DSR process, for instance.[64] Still, while coordination is taking place, further research is needed to determine the extent to which this coordination is strategic (i.e., seeks to identify national priorities and support an effective division of labour) or procedural in nature (i.e., consisting principally of information sharing among national and international partners).

Beyond coordination initiatives of the UN that are more ad hoc, the Security Council has also recognized the need for the UN to play a more strategic role in coordination. Resolution 2151 (2014) requested that the Secretary-General "highlight in his regular reports to the Security Council on specific United Nations operations mandated by the Security Council, updates on progress of security sector reform, where mandated."[65] The availability of comprehensive information about a mission is a precondition for enhanced coordination at the strategic level, and though SG reports are regularly adopted, they fall short in providing all the information that is necessary to understand how the support provided by SPMs and PKOs relates to or fits into the bigger picture, including support provided by other UN agencies and third parties. Reports of the SG sometimes acknowledge that other actors play a key role in the process of reforming defence institutions, but reporting practices are not systematic. Thus, there is a need to further improve reporting practices to foster a better understanding of how support is feeding into broader nationally-driven objectives at the strategic level.

Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter highlights some of the significant strides made by the UN since 2006 towards strengthening the effectiveness of its support to DSR. The adoption of the 2011 DSR Policy signalled the need for the UN to ensure its support is guided by the basic principles of SSR, including through a comprehensive, inclusive, and governance-driven approach.[66] This was also embraced by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in 2015.

Still, while progress has been made, efforts to implement some of the principles and provisions outlined in the DSR Policy have lagged. Addressing awareness-building initiatives in areas such as gender and human rights is important, but the UN must also play a role in guaranteeing that necessary support to other areas of the DSR process is not overlooked. For instance, despite being crucial to the sustainability of reform processes, the area of administration, management, and budgetary development is not systematically addressed in practice. Similarly, support to strengthening the governance and oversight aspects of reform has been limited.

This chapter identified a number of shortcomings related to the implementation of specific elements of the DSR Policy, which can be grouped into four overarching categories, related to: i) mandates; ii) the provision of DSR support under a broader SSR framework; iii) the provision of DSR support in the context of increasing recognition of the primacy of politics; and iv) reporting practices. The four broad recommendations that follow, directed at the UN and its Member States, are thus meant to promote efforts to strengthen UN DSR support:

- *Adopt more context-specific and up-to-date mandates.* Whether the traditional approach, of using formulaic mandates that are re-approved year after year, can adequately capture evolving needs in a sector so crucial to peacebuilding as defence, should be considered. Moreover, given the specialized expertise needed to support various DSR-related activities, up-to-date mandates are vital to ensuring that staffing decisions are informed by the specific expertise required to fulfil mandated tasks.
- *Ensure that DSR support is aligned to a broader SSR framework.* Efforts should be made to strengthen the governance and oversight (accountability) of defence sectors in a manner that is coherent with broader national SSR frameworks and reforms. This may include increasing, as relevant, references to governance issues in mandates and promoting engagement with a wider set of oversight actors. Support should also be positioned within a broader institution-building perspective, rather than through ad hoc support (e.g., trainings) that is delivered outside the framework of a long-term strategy.
- *Promote the primacy of politics by better balancing technical support with much needed political support.* More efforts should be made to balance these two dimensions of support in accordance with the concept of DSR outlined in the Policy. Among other things, this may require investing further in the good offices role of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs).
- *Enhance efforts to report on progress in the area of DSR, in line with resolution 2151.* The reports of the SG should be better utilized to provide a comprehensive picture of the support provided by the UN and other actors to contribute towards nationally-driven objectives.

While these recommendations relate to DSR specifically, they can be applied to broader UN reform efforts. In general, important issues related to mandates, political responses, and reporting must be tackled. These issues are at the heart of the UN's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, for instance, which seeks to reinvigorate the organization's approach to peacekeeping. The same issues should be at the core of any future review of SPMs as well. There is also a fundamental need to ensure that support to the reform of any component of the security sector, including defence, is undertaken through a governance-oriented lens. Increasing UN engagement in this area, and the recognition that support to DSR – as a component of SSR – plays an important role in contributing to sustaining peace, suggests that the time is ripe to reflect on how to address the important challenges and opportunities raised in this chapter.

Notes

1   The analysis presented in this chapter draws on the empirical results of a project carried out by DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance at the request of the DPO Security Sector Reform Unit (SSRU) as part of their ongoing efforts to review DSR Policy. See DCAF, *Mapping of UN support to Defence Sector Reform by UN Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions, 2006–2016* (forthcoming 2020).

2   See *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, A/72/19, 15 March 2018, para. 223; UN General Assembly resolution 70/262, A/RES/70/262, 12 May 2016, para. 12; and UN Security Council resolution 2282, S/RES/2282 (2016), 27 April 2016, para. 12.

3   UN Security Council Resolution 2151 *on Security Sector Reform*, S/RES/2151 (2014); UN, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnerships and People, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (June 2015), para. 154.

4   DCAF, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform: A Mapping Study Covering the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe* (2018).

5   The following peacekeeping operations were identified as a relevant sample: the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the UN-AU hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The following SPMs were also included in this chapter: the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB), the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), the Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), the UN Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), and the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic

(BINUCA). Despite examining resolutions between the period of January 2006–January 2016, UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) is also considered, as it established the mandate of UNMIK and is the only mandate ever adopted for that particular mission.

6 This time period corresponds to the first ten years the topic of SSR was considered by the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations. This chapter presents an overview on how DSR support has been mandated and implemented on the ground during that period, drawing on categories identified in the DSR Policy and complemented by concepts examined as part of a 2015 UN/EU/NATO DSR mapping project. See "Staff to staff non-paper, UN/EU/NATO Defense Sector Reform Mapping" (unpublished, April 2015). Note: this is an internal document.

7 Mandates for DSR support can be divided into two categories: those which are implicit and are covered by a broader SSR mandate (e.g., the request to "contribute to the efforts of the international community to assist the Government in the initial planning process of the reform of the security sector," as in the case of MONUC, S/RES/1756 (2007)); and those that call explicitly for DSR support. While implicit mandates provide an umbrella for delivering DSR support in the field, the limited data they provide on the approach of the UN to DSR support specifically means they have not been included in this comparative analysis.

8 Future research should consider using the results of this desk review as a baseline, to be triangulated with findings attained through other research methods, such as interviews with field staff, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the activities outlined in SG reports.

9 Reports of the SG on *Securing States and societies: strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform* (A/67/970–S/2013/480) and on *Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform* (A/62/659–S/2008/39).

10 UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 7.

11 *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, A/72/19, 15 March 2018, para. 223.

12 UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 4.

13 Ibid., para. 7.

14 Ibid., para. 14, and Annex Two.

15 Ibid., para. 11.

16 Ibid., para. 8.

17 UN Report of the Secretary-General, A/72/525, October 2017.

18 UNMIK only has an explicit mandate to support SSR in the area of law enforcement, and MINUSTAH only has an implicit mandate to support broad SSR activities.

19 Out of 56 Security Council mandates for SPMs, the 15 that specifically call for DSR support relate to UNSMIL, UNAMA, UNOWA, and UNIOGBIS.

20 For example, see UNSMIL, S/RES/2095 (2013), para.7.

21 For example, see UNIOGBIS, S/RES/2203 (2015), para. 2.

22 For the purposes of this analysis, every reference to DSR-related support mentioned in the reports of the Secretary-General was counted as a separate action. Thus, while two reports may refer to the same action, these are counted as two separate actions of support in this study. Yet, from a methodological standpoint, by defining two separate actions as constituting a "long action" and one action as a "short action," the risk of providing the same value to, for instance, a training course lasting one day or a training course lasting three months, is mitigated.

23 This category includes assistance to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights, gender-related concerns, child protection, international humanitarian law, respect for the rule of law, and all related matters with a transversal dimension. According to the OECD, "mainstreaming a cross-cutting issue is generally understood as a strategy to make that theme an integral dimension of the organisation's design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes. It also implies that relevant analyses and studies are conducted as the basis

for integrating the cross-cutting issue into the design of policies and programmes." See OECD, "Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues: 7 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews," October 2014, p. 7.

24   For example, see UNAMI, S/2009/102, para. 48; UNOCI, S/2011/807, para. 46; and UNMIS, S/2007/500, para. 67.

25   See MONUSCO, S/2014/956, para. 13; and UNSOM, S/2015/331, para. 32.

26   For example, see UNOCI, S/2013/761, para. 45.

27   MINUSCA, S/2015/576, para. 61 and S/2014/857, para. 54.

28   UNMIS, S/2006/728, para. 9.

29   UNMIL, S/2011/497, para. 50.

30   For example, see MINUSCA, S/2014/857, para. 54 and S/2015/576, para. 60.

31   ECOWAS, S/2015/37, para. 22.

32   See UNSMIL, S/2013/516, para. 67; and UNIOGBIS, S/2013/262, para. 38.

33   For example, see BNUB, S/2013/36, para. 29.

34   UNSMIL, S/2015/144, para. 64.

35   For example, see BNUB, S/2014/36, para. 21.

36   In this section, defence sector reviews are considered "DSR support" only when missions undertook such a review jointly with, or in support of, a government.

37   However, in the case of UNAMA (in Afghanistan), the mission with the most extensive political mandates, the UN has been implementing *mainly* political support.

38   United Nations, HIPPO Report, 2015, para. 174.

39   For example, see UNIOGBIS, S/2013/26, para. 23.

40   See MINUSCA, S/2014/857, para. 54.

41   See MONUSCO, S/2014/157, para. 48

42   For instance, after massacres and gross human rights violations were confirmed to have been committed by elements of the Congolese army, the UN called for the immediate withdrawal of MONUC support to the armed forces (MONUC, S/2009/623, para. 9). Still, since national actors are often in need of support, its suspension due to their involvement in human rights violations might in itself be a mechanism for political pressure aimed at activating certain reforms.

43   The policy recognizes that while withholding or withdrawing support from a mission "may significantly diminish the mission's ability to fulfil the overall mandate and objectives set out by the Security Council," suspension is sometimes necessary. Nevertheless, the HRDDP establishes mitigating measures, stating that "[n]otwithstanding the present policy, existing obligations of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law continue to apply to all United Nations activities." Thus, in many instances, such as in CAR and the DRC, SSR units have used HRDDP mitigating measures to pursue SSR goals. See UN, *Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces*, A/67/775-S/2013/110, 5 March 2013, paras. 21 and 28.

44   For example, see BNUB, S/2014/550, para. 19; UNOCI, S/2009/21, para. 22; and UNSOM, S/2015/331, para. 32.

45   For example, see UNMIS, S/2010/681, para. 57; and MONUSCO, S/2011/298, para. 39.

46   For example, see MONUC, S/RES/1856 (2008), para. 4.

47   For example, see UNSMIL, S/RES/2095 (2013), para. 7.

48   See S/2015/626, para. 49.

49   UN DSR Policy, 2011, para. 23.

50   It should be noted that political support has been primarily reflected in mandates for the mission in Afghanistan, and mainly relates to support to the coordination of international support in the area of defence through the co-chairing of joint coordination and monitoring boards (e.g., UNAMA, S/RES/1917 (2010), para. 5).

51   UNOCI, S/2012/964, para. 15.

52   UNSOM, S/2015/51, para. 53.

53 UNOCI, S/2008/645, para. 18; and MINUSCA, S/2014/857, para. 54.
54 UNSMIL, S/2015/144, para. 65.
55 UNMIS, S/2008/662, para. 18.
56 UNMIS, S/2007/213, para. 30.; and MINUSCA, S/2015/918, para. 52.
57 Report of the Secretary-General, *Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform*, A/62/659-S/2008/39, 23 January 2008, para. 14.
58 As recognized in the 2017 Report of the SG on restructuring the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/72/525), peace operations should place political solutions at the centre of efforts.
59 In this case, it was also noted that "[t]he United Nations could assist the Government in identifying such bilateral partners" (UNOCI, S/2007/275, para. 49).
60 MONUSCO S/2012/355, para. 58.
61 UNOWA, S/2012/977, para. 34.
62 UNSOM, S/2013/521, para. 29.
63 For example, see UNMIT, S/2007/513, para. 28; and MONUSCO, S/2014/450, para. 58.
64 UNSMIL, S/2015/144, para. 65.
65 UN Security Council Resolution 2151 *on Security Sector Reform*, S/RES/2151 (20140, para 15.
66 For instance, the 2008 Report of the SG on SSR outlined ten key principles, which include among others, inclusivity, national ownership, context-specificity, and gender-sensitive approaches.