

The United Nations and Security Sector Reform

Policy and Practice



Edited by Adedeji Ebo and Heiner Hänggi

LIT

DCAF Geneva Centre
for Security Sector
Governance

Adedeji Ebo, Heiner Hänggi (Eds.)

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edited by

Adedeji Ebo and Heiner Hänggi

with the assistance of

Christopher Sedgwick and Dawn Lui

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Cover photo: UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz (28 April 2014); UN Security Council concluding its open debate on security sector reform by unanimously adopting resolution 2151 (2014).

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“Another very important aspect of [good governance] is the reform of public services – including the security sector, which should be subject to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as any other public service.”*

KOFI ANNAN, United Nations Secretary-General 1997-2006

* Kofi Annan, “Peace and Development – One Struggle, Two Fronts,” address of the United Nations Secretary-General to World Bank Staff, 19 October 1999.

“This publication is a timely contribution to the building of bridges between security and political analysis. It is a worthy asset for those seeking to understand the ambivalent and dynamic relationship between legality and legitimacy in the governance of the security sector, particularly from the perspective of multilateralism.”

MOHAMED IBN CHAMBAS, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

“The United Nations’ recognition that to build security is to build peace is well captured in this publication. It is a must-read for those who seek to understand the role of the United Nations in linking security sector reform (which is as much about professionalizing the security sector as it is about the political will to do so) and peacebuilding.”

JUDY CHENG-HOPKINS, former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and current Adjunct Professor at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

“This publication has succeeded in bringing together renowned experts to reflect in a practical manner on the challenges the UN is facing in the field of SSR support. The recommendations which emerge are not only vital for improving the UN’s SSR support but are also of relevance to other issues the UN is grappling with.”

IZUMI NAKAMITSU, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

“This book is a much-welcome recognition of the United Nations’ attempts to grapple with the vital challenge of facilitating and supporting the democratic control of the armed forces. It is particularly relevant in the context of today’s declining appetite for such normative appeals of accountability and transparency in the global security domain.”

LT.-GEN. (RTD.) CHIKADIBIA I. OBIAKOR, former Assistant Secretary-General for Military Affairs/Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations and former Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

“SSR is a little-known, yet indispensable element of national and international governance. The editors of this book are world-class political scientists and practitioners, who have pioneered SSR globally; it gives unparalleled insight into this complex subject.”

DMITRY TITOV, former (founding) United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions

“In an era where the effects of (in)security on socio-economic development and human rights are increasingly palpable, this publication represents a unique combination of practitioner and policy perspectives on the role of the United Nations in supporting the reform of security institutions.”

ALEXANDRE ZOUEV, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions

Foreword

Ever since its formal addition to the agenda of the United Nations in 2007-2008, security sector reform (SSR) has received growing support from UN Member States, affirming that the governance and reform of security institutions are seen as essential to international security, conflict prevention, and sustaining peace. Today, SSR is part of the UN's "core business," guided by the principles laid out in Security Council resolution 2151, which was adopted unanimously in April 2014.

The UN Group of Friends of SSR, co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, is an embodiment of this broad Member State support for UN SSR efforts. The Group, which began as a small association, is now comprised of over 40 Member States as well as two regional organizations, the African Union and the European Union, and is dedicated to strengthening political support and national ownership of SSR processes. Working closely with national partners, the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force, and the UN SSR Unit, the Group of Friends has held high-level events, seminars, and other fora to increase awareness of, support for, and the effectiveness of nationally-led SSR and to promote opportunities to enhance the participation of all key stakeholders in all relevant processes and frameworks.

These commitments were reaffirmed at the High-Level Roundtable on SSR and Sustaining Peace at UN Headquarters in April 2018, opened by President of the UN General Assembly Mr. Miroslav Lajčák and UN Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina J. Mohammed. Given the vital role SSR plays in conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, and sustaining peace, it is essential that the involvement and efforts of the UN in this field are understood more broadly. The contributions in this volume are worthy testimony to the challenges of multilateralism in security sector governance and reform, as well as the many results achieved thus far. We are delighted that the UN's work in this very important area has been so expertly captured in this book, which encapsulates several key inputs for future discussions on multilateral policy and practice.

MICHAL MLYNÁR
Permanent Representative of the Slovak
Republic to the United Nations

JERRY MATTHEWS MATJILA
Permanent Representative of the Republic
of South Africa to the United Nations

Preface

Security sector reform (SSR) has become an increasingly important feature in international peace, security, and development initiatives. Multilateral organizations, and the United Nations (UN) in particular, have played and continue to play a vital role in supporting national efforts to make security provision, management, and oversight more effective and more accountable.

This volume illustrates that the UN SSR agenda has come a long way in the relatively short time since the Secretary-General's first report on SSR in 2008. It presents a range of perspectives on UN support to SSR, past and present, with a focus on policy and operational practice. Drawing from the experiences of UN practitioners as well as external experts on SSR, this volume offers an in-depth exploration of the UN approach to SSR from a global perspective.

The process of completing this publication has been necessarily protracted, as it has involved a wide range of collaborators and supporters who are singularly and collectively occupied with multiple tasks. It was important and gratifying to involve relevant practitioners and analysts with expertise in various aspects of the topic at hand, and we are grateful that these contributors volunteered their time to be a part of this publication. It is their hard work and patience that made this volume possible.

Nevertheless, publications of this nature which require a multiplicity of efforts could never be completed without the generous and dedicated support of a number of institutions and individuals beyond the authors.

The editors owe a debt of gratitude to Christopher Sedgwick and Dawn Lui for their unflinching commitment and invaluable role as editorial assistants of this volume.

Also vital have been peer reviews and editing assistance by current and former colleagues, including, among others, Simen Austratt, Ann Blomberg, Aline Brülisauer, Ntagahoraho Burihabwa, Gideon Chew, Assiati Chikuhwa, Rémi Clavet, Zoe Mentel Darmé, Tathagata Dutta, Leopold Gritschneider, Chirag Gura, Miriam Imesch, Kristina Koch, Thomas Kontogeorgos, Mikko Lievonon, Carole Magnaschi, Murray McCullough, Jérôme Mellon, Boubacar N'Diaye, Kelvin Ong, Suha Ostergren, Sofia Pasha, Pratheek Premkumar, Richard Priem, Orisi Rabukawaqa, Cecily Rawlinson, Kathrin Reed, Andrew Reese, Nikolai Rogosaroff, Annamaria Scuderi, Esben Skivild, Calin Trenkov-Wermuth, Maria Gabriela Urchoegua, Christian Wägli, and Simon Yazgi.

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While this publication does not represent the views and positions of the UN, we are grateful to Under-Secretaries-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Hervé Ladsous, as well as Assistant Secretaries-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Dmitry Titov and Alexandre Zouev, for the permission to publish.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge institutional and financial support from DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE EDITORS
September 2019

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INTRODUCTION

1

Conceptualizing UN support to security sector reform

HEINER HÄNGGI

Introduction

Security sector reform (SSR) is a fundamentally national process. Nevertheless, many countries that are engaged in SSR processes draw on support from external actors offering financial resources, technical expertise, and lessons learned in various contexts. As a result, multilateral organizations have been influential in shaping SSR agendas, by developing normative frameworks and providing a wide range of SSR support on the ground.¹ This applies in particular to the United Nations (UN), which has undertaken a concerted institutional effort over the last decade to achieve a consolidated, organization-wide approach to SSR, starting from an initial narrow focus on post-conflict settings but later evolving to include broader peacebuilding and development perspectives.

Though the UN was involved in SSR support for many years, it took the initiative of Slovakia in 2006-2007, within the context of its non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council, to formally put SSR on the organization's agenda.² While the Security Council and the General Assembly emphasized the importance of developing a UN system-wide approach to SSR, the Secretariat concurrently initiated an inter-agency working group on SSR (which later became an inter-agency task force)³ and commissioned empirical studies on the involvement of the UN in SSR support activities.⁴ This formed the basis for the first Report of the Secretary-General on SSR in 2008, which set out a strategic framework for UN support to SSR.⁵ In 2013, the approach of the UN was further articulated in the Secretary-General's second report on SSR,⁶ and later in 2014, in Security Council resolution 2151 – the first dedicated, standalone resolution on SSR.⁷ In parallel to this policy development process, the Secretariat led the creation of a number of guidance tools for UN staff engaged in SSR support, most notably the SSR Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (ITGNs), the first set of which was issued in 2012.⁸

Increasingly guided by the ITGNs within this policy framework, operational support to SSR gained considerable traction across the UN. The number of explicit

and implicit SSR mandates and tasks that became a part of UN peacekeeping operations, special political missions (SPMs), and field presences in non-mission settings grew rapidly. Institutional capacities, such as SSR support structures (both at Headquarters and in the field) and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, were subsequently put in place; and partnerships with regional and other multilateral actors were, or are in the process of being, developed. Key political support to the role of the UN in SSR is provided by the informal UN Group of Friends of SSR, comprised of over 40 Member States.⁹

Table 1.1: Milestones in the development of a UN-wide approach to SSR

Year	Milestones
2007	Secretary-General's Policy Committee decision on SSR Security Council's first open debate on SSR (chaired by Slovakia) Creation of the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force Creation of a Group of Friends of SSR among UN Member States
2008	First Report of the Secretary-General on SSR Security Council's second open debate on SSR (chaired by the United Kingdom)
2009	Creation of the SSR Unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations ¹⁰
2010	Creation of the UN roster of security sector reform experts
2011	Security Council's third open debate on SSR (chaired by Nigeria)
2012	Publication of the first set of Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on SSR Establishment of the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law ¹¹
2013	Second Report of the Secretary-General on SSR
2014	Security Council's fourth open debate on SSR (chaired by Nigeria); resolution 2151 on SSR adopted

More than ten years after the launch of the process that led to the development of a UN approach to SSR, and more than five years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2151, now is an opportune time to review the role of the UN in supporting SSR. With this objective in mind, this volume shows that while there has been much progress, including in building commitment among Member States for UN SSR support and developing technical guidance, the organization has faced challenges in operationalizing many of the concepts outlined in its policy framework. Moreover, at a time when the UN is expected to reflect the main tenets of global policy agendas in its work, such as those of the sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas, questions remain as to how to best deliver SSR support in a much wider range of contexts than post-conflict settings. Hence, there is a need to look back at more than a decade of UN experience in supporting SSR across contexts, to examine what can be learned and to better understand the progress that

has already been made in concrete areas of support; such as in the development of national security policies, defence sector reform, and gender-responsive SSR. The reflections in this volume can be viewed as contributing towards an empirical basis for the organization going forward, to further bridge the gap between policy and practice.

The objective of this introductory chapter is to provide the conceptual framework and some benchmarks against which UN support to SSR, as discussed in this volume, can be better assessed. First, the concept of SSR will be discussed, with a particular focus on the UN context. This is followed by an examination of the UN approach to supporting SSR, particularly the organization's principles of engagement, normative and operational roles, and institutional capacities. The chapter concludes by briefly outlining the structure and contents of the book.

Understanding security sector reform¹²

SSR is still a relatively new concept, only first emerging in the late 1990s before spreading quickly across international policy agendas. Three main developments have contributed to the rise of SSR as an important policy concept: growing recognition among the donor community that security is a development issue; increasing appreciation of the crucial role played by security sectors in post-Cold War democratization processes; and the involvement of international peacekeeping and stabilization operations in post-conflict security sector reconstruction. It is this last development that triggered the emergence of a UN approach to SSR.

Notions of security

It is evident that the provision of security is central to SSR – but what kind of security? This is important, because security can be interpreted in several ways. For most of modern history, security was understood almost exclusively in military terms, and as referring to the security of a state. When the national survival in what some scholars call an “anarchical” international system was seen to be at risk, the security discourse attributed the central, if not exclusive, role of ensuring security to the state; the primacy of military power was largely uncontested. In more recent decades, however, the concept of security has broadened considerably in two ways, resulting in a shift from the traditional to the so-called “new” security agenda. First, the concept *widened* in terms of the policy dimensions it incorporates, and second, it *deepened* regarding the main beneficiaries of security.

This *widening* of the concept of security was well captured by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who noted in 1999 that:

“[...] security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratisation, disarmament and respect for human rights and the rule of law.”¹³

The *deepening* of the concept of security was also aptly expressed by Annan in the UN Millennium Report, in which he noted in 2000 that:

“Once synonymous with the defence of the territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence.”¹⁴

This new, broader understanding of security upon which the UN approach to SSR is based comprises both military *and* non-military dimensions (political, economic, societal, and environmental). In addition, it encompasses both state security *and* human security. In other words, as emphasized in the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, it concerns “security for the State and its peoples.”¹⁵

The scope of the security sector

Our understanding of security defines our vision of the security sector and how it should be shaped, and broadening our definition of security necessarily broadens our view of the security sector. While usage of the term “security sector” is widespread, there is no universal understanding of what the sector entails. This is particularly true regarding its scope, as different stakeholders variously embrace broader or narrower conceptions. Within the framework of the UN, the Secretary-General has acknowledged that “security sector” is “a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country.”¹⁶ In his 2008 report on SSR, the Secretary-General divided the sector into four areas:

1. Defence, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services, and institutions responsible for border management, customs, and civil emergencies.
2. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force.
3. Actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as ministries, legislative bodies, and civil society groups.
4. Other non-State actors, namely customary or informal authorities and private security services.¹⁷

While this definition of the security sector appears to be rather expansive, some other international actors have developed even broader definitions, such as a widely-used definition introduced by the OECD DAC.¹⁸ By comparison, the Secretary-General’s

definition of the sector stands apart for neither fully encapsulating the role of the justice sector, nor the spectrum of non-state actors. Indeed, it refers only to those parts of the justice sector “responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force”; names only civil society groups, customary and informal authorities, and private security services as non-state actors; and does not identify non-state armed groups, other than private security services, as a component part of the security sector.

The features of a well-governed security sector

While the security sector has unique characteristics given its central role in guaranteeing a state’s monopoly on the use of force, it also shares many common characteristics with other areas of public service delivery, and should “be subject to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as any other public service.”¹⁹ Good governance of the security sector therefore means ensuring that the sector is subject to the same standards of good governance as all public services including, *inter alia*, accountability, transparency, the rule of law, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Because every security sector is different, no single or ideal model exists. Still, some institutional features of good governance are common to well-governed security sectors. According to the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, effective and accountable security sectors typically have:

- (a) “A legal and/or constitutional framework providing for the legitimate and accountable use of force in accordance with universally accepted human rights norms and standards, including sanctioning mechanisms for the use of force and setting out the roles and responsibilities of different actors;
- (b) An institutionalised system of governance and management: mechanisms for the direction and oversight of security provided by authorities and institutions, including systems for financial management and review, as well as protection of human rights;
- (c) Capacities: structures, personnel, equipment and resources to provide effective security;
- (d) Mechanisms for interaction among security actors: establishing transparent modalities for coordination and cooperation among different actors based on their respective constitutional/legal roles and responsibilities; [and]
- (e) [A] culture of service: promoting unity, integrity, discipline, impartiality and respect for human rights among security actors and shaping the manner in which they carry out their duties.”²⁰

Good governance of the sector includes a corpus of widely-recognized aspirational principles and good practices. While no country in the world matches these principles and practices entirely, they serve as the benchmark against which the actual practice of security governance can be measured. These principles and practices also define the overarching goal of SSR, namely a well-governed security sector.

Reforming the security sector

Poor governance of a security sector is the point of departure for SSR. With the aim to enhance security sector governance, SSR is designed to transform dysfunctional security institutions into functional institutions that can efficiently and effectively fulfil their statutory functions so as to deliver security to the state and its people. However, SSR is concerned with more than just the efficient and effective provision of security, which is necessary but not sufficient to enhance security sector governance. Security must also be provided in a manner that is accountable, inclusive, and transparent. In short, accountability and effectiveness are two sides of the same coin, and together, they constitute the normative core of SSR. This is why the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR refers to the reform process as one involving:

“... assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.”²¹

Furthermore, the UN concept of SSR acknowledges that “effectiveness, accountability and democratic governance are mutually reinforcing elements of security.”²²

SSR can thus be viewed as a political and technical process of improving state and human security by increasing the effectiveness and accountability of security provision, management, and oversight within a framework of democratic governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights²³ – in other words, by enhancing security sector governance. SSR can include a wide range of different reform activities, including different actors and thematic areas, and delivered at different levels (strategic, organizational, and operational).

The UN differentiates between sector-wide and component-specific approaches to SSR. *Sector-wide SSR* seeks to enhance the governance and overall performance of an entire security sector and thereby address the foundations upon which security sector institutions in each component area are built. Sector-wide initiatives include, *inter alia*, national security dialogues; the development of national security policies, strategies, and plans; security sector reviews and mappings; the design of national SSR

strategies; management and oversight capacity building; the development of security sector legislation; and security sector public expenditure reviews.²⁴

Component-specific SSR focuses instead on one sub-sector such as defence, law enforcement, justice, corrections, intelligence, or border management. Component-specific reforms are essential for SSR so long as they are not conducted in isolation and are aligned with broader SSR efforts. These reforms must be designed and implemented with a full awareness of the complex interdependencies that characterize security sector governance. For example, it is important to recognize that the success of police reform is often dependent on progress in the area of criminal justice and corrections. In a similar vein, investments in training and equipping uniformed personnel may turn out to be counterproductive if important aspects of management and oversight have not been properly addressed. In an ideal situation, SSR processes begin with overarching, sector-wide reform activities that contribute towards developing a strong governance framework with the capacity to support component-specific activities.

In sum, the concept of SSR assumes both a broad notion of security itself (military *and* non-military dimensions; state *and* human security) and a broad understanding of what constitutes a security sector (security providing institutions *and* management and oversight bodies; state *and* non-state actors). Ultimately, as SSR is meant to enhance security sector governance, it encompasses any and all activities aimed at making the provision of state or human security more effective and accountable.

Supporting security sector reform

Many countries engaged in SSR processes draw on external support provided by international actors, such as donor states and multilateral organizations. The assistance of external actors – who bring financial resources, technical expertise, and SSR experiences from their own national contexts and/or other reform contexts – can be invaluable in making reforms more cost-efficient and effective, and their implementation more expeditious. However, the possibility always exists that tension may develop between the requirement of national ownership and the imposition of solutions by these external actors. There is often a fine balance between the need for broad-based national leadership of SSR and the best use of external assistance; and this poses a challenge to both domestic and external actors, including multilateral organizations such as the UN.

To address the challenges associated with externally assisted SSR, the UN, like many other multilateral organizations, has developed an extensive policy framework to guide its own support to national SSR processes. As noted above, this framework

is broadly based upon one Security Council resolution, two reports of the UN Secretary-General, and a body of guidance tools, with the ITGNs at its core. Together, these texts and tools outline a set of shared principles and standards, normative and operational roles in the context of SSR support, and the institutional capacities that enable the UN to support SSR processes.

Basic principles of engagement

The policy frameworks of both bilateral and multilateral actors include a number of similar principles and standards guiding their approaches to SSR support.²⁵ The UN approach is based on ten core guiding principles that establish the purpose and objectives of providing support to SSR processes.²⁶

The *first* of these principles embodies the key concepts behind UN engagement in SSR:

- (a) “The goal of the United Nations in security sector reform 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;”

This principle adheres to a broad notion of security (national and human), a normative understanding of the security sector based on the principle of good governance (effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions), and views SSR as a process that may be externally assisted but which always requires national (state) and local (community) ownership. Significantly, SSR is no longer narrowly understood as a component part of the UN’s peace and security pillar – which was its point of entry for the organization – but rather as a cross-cutting activity that encompasses all three UN pillars and thus contributes to sustainable development and the protection of human rights.

The *second* and *third* principles set clear limits to external, in this case UN, support to SSR:

- (b) “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;”
- (c) “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;”

In other words, SSR should be nationally led and nationally owned. Further, any UN engagement in support of national SSR processes must take place within the framework of the UN Charter and must be based on a clear mandate and/or request.

The *fourth* principle reflects the implicit recognition that SSR is a highly political process that must be placed in its specific national and regional context:

- (d) “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;”

This principle acknowledges that the political nature of SSR means that interventions must be context-specific, since each country engaged in SSR constitutes a special case and thus a different reform context. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. At the same time, the UN must be wary of attempts by the regime in power or other stakeholders to instrumentalize SSR support for partisan interests. To prevent this from occurring, UN SSR support must account for the different needs of *all* stakeholders in a given context.

The *fifth* principle emphasizes the necessity of a gender-sensitive approach to SSR:

- (e) “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;”

This is one of the key cross-cutting issues in SSR. A gender-sensitive approach is necessary in order to promote the different security needs of women, girls, men, and boys. This principle is also an important recognition by the UN that security sector institutions play a critical role in addressing and preventing sexual and gender-based violence.

The *sixth* and *seventh* principles outline entry points for external SSR engagement:

- (f) “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;”
- (g) “A clearly defined strategy, including the identification of priorities, indicative timelines and partnerships, is required for the implementation of a security sector reform process;”

These principles implicitly define the ideal prerequisites and conditions for SSR engagement by external actors. In an ideal context, SSR should begin early in peace, recovery, and development processes, and should extend from a clearly defined strategy. In reality, however, these conditions are often met only partially. This contributes to some of the typical dilemmas faced on the ground by external actors, including the UN, especially in post-conflict contexts.

The *eighth*, *ninth*, and *tenth* principles refer to issues that may arise in the context of external assistance to national SSR processes:

- (h) “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;”
- (i) “Coordination of national and international partners’ efforts is essential. Lead national entities and a designated international counterpart should be identified whenever possible;”
- (j) “Monitoring and regular evaluation against established principles and specific benchmarks are essential to track and maintain progress in security sector reform;”

These conditions impact the effectiveness of international support, the need for coordination between national and international partners (and *among* international partners), and the importance of systematically measuring progress. It must be emphasized that these three principles should be viewed in conjunction with the cardinal principle of national ownership, which is vital to the legitimacy and sustainability of any national SSR effort assisted by external actors.²⁷ Inclusion of the phrase “integrity of motive” in the eighth principle is particularly relevant, because external support to SSR should be provided for the benefit of a partner country and not driven by the interests of an external actor.

These ten principles define benchmarks for SSR support, and in theory, these standards and goals are largely uncontested. In practice, though, they are often subverted by a lack of appropriate operationalization, the tendency to apply technical solutions to essentially political problems, or conflicting interests among the actors involved in SSR.

Normative and operational roles

Given that the UN will never be the exclusive external actor in supporting SSR processes and will inevitably have to work alongside and in partnership with other bilateral and multilateral actors, the question is what role the UN can and should play in supporting SSR. Consequently, a range of normative and operational roles have been identified in which the UN may have comparative advantages over other external actors due to its legitimacy, political neutrality, and global character.

The *normative* role of the UN is aimed at building the foundations for effective delivery of SSR assistance. In this context, the UN sees its primary role in two main areas:

- Facilitating the establishment of common international principles and standards for support to SSR, as well as elaborating policies and guidelines for the implementation of SSR plans and programmes.
- Contributing to the generation of collective knowledge on SSR by providing a forum for international dialogue and assisting in the further development of best practices.²⁸

Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) contributed significantly to establishing common international principles and standards for external assistance to national SSR processes. Applicable to the UN and its Member States, these principles and standards are intended to provide the basis for a transparent and accountable partnership between the UN system, national authorities, and bilateral and multilateral actors. Prior to adoption of resolution 2151, this normative framework was outlined in the 2008 and 2013 reports of the Secretary-General on SSR. The principles and standards contained in these foundational UN documents have strongly influenced the policy frameworks of other actors, both bilateral and multilateral, engaged in SSR support.²⁹

Common among international actors involved in supporting SSR is the habit of developing policies and guidance that provide a link between broad principles and standards and operational implementation. Over the past decade, the ITGNs have been at the core of guidance developed by the UN for UN SSR practitioners. Launched in 2012, the first set of ITGNs covered issues of immediate and practical relevance to UN staff: an introduction to the UN approach to SSR, national ownership of SSR, gender-responsive SSR, peace processes and SSR, democratic governance of the security sector, and UN support to national security policy-making and strategy-making processes.³⁰ These early ITGNs have since been complemented by a 2016 note on SSR and transnational organized crime.³¹ While the ITGNs focus on sector-wide SSR, the UN also has some component-specific guidance tools, most notably the UN policy on defence sector reform (2011),³² which was conceptualized in the broader context of SSR. Additional guidance tools address links between SSR and related areas, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and small arms and light weapons (SALW) control, as well as cross-cutting topics such as gender and human rights (e.g., the 2011 Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the 2018 Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Policy).³³

The UN views its other normative role as contributing to the generation and sharing of collective knowledge on SSR. The Security Council, the General Assembly, and other UN bodies, at both statutory and informal meetings, have repeatedly provided a forum for international dialogue on best practices of, and support to, SSR. The Inter-Agency SSR Task Force has played an important role in facilitating the development of system-wide policy and guidance, as well as developing a

number of sensitization and training products. Annual inter-agency workshops for practitioners bring together expertise from within and outside the UN system, and have developed into the core of a dedicated community of practice that exchanges experience and knowledge, policy analysis, and training. In pursuit of generating knowledge in this area, the UN has actively developed close working partnerships with other multilateral organizations, civil society networks, and a range of think tanks, particularly with the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.³⁴

The *operational* role of the UN in SSR is aimed at supporting national and regional reform processes. In this context, the UN is particularly well positioned to assist in certain areas. The following examples highlight some of these areas and serve as a starting point for exploring the different UN field experiences detailed in various chapters of this book.³⁵

- *Helping establish an enabling environment for SSR.* Any SSR process is heavily contingent on the national security, political, and development context. By influencing these overarching contextual factors, the UN can play an important role in helping to establish an enabling environment for SSR.³⁶ This could become manifest in the provision of security (where such a mandate exists), support to DDR, human rights monitoring, and support to national authorities in promoting good governance and reconciliation processes, among others.
- *Supporting needs assessments and strategic planning for SSR.* Comprehensive needs assessments and reviews are crucial to building an empirical evidence base to inform SSR processes. Assisting national authorities in conducting assessments and reviews related to the security sector and in developing national security strategies and SSR implementation plans has become a main feature of UN support on the ground.³⁷
- *Facilitating national dialogues on security.* By supporting dialogue that involves national and local authorities, representatives from security sector institutions and civil society, and the broader population, the UN can help Member States develop a more cohesive and inclusive security vision and thereby lay the foundation for national SSR processes that meet the needs of all stakeholders.³⁸
- *Providing technical advice and support to components of the security sector.* Component-specific support is in high demand from countries that are in the process of reforming security institutions. Although the UN is only one among many relevant external actors, it regularly provides specialized expertise to national authorities on the reform of specific components of the security sector, including of defence and law enforcement agencies, elements of the judicial sector and corrections system, and institutions responsible for border management, customs, and civil emergencies, among others. This support may include public

expenditure reviews (Liberia and Somalia³⁹), the vetting of personnel (Central African Republic, or CAR⁴⁰), efforts to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (CAR and Democratic Republic of the Congo⁴¹), and initiatives to address organized crime (as in West Africa, through the West Africa Coast Initiative, or WACI⁴²). Component-specific support in the areas of police, justice and corrections is increasingly delivered through the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law (see below).

- *Supporting capacity development for oversight mechanisms.* Assisting national authorities with the development of executive, parliamentary, and independent oversight mechanisms, such as human rights and ombuds institutions, is a core component of the UN approach to SSR and thus a priority task. This includes strengthening the capacity of civil society, in particular human rights groups and community-based women's organizations, to support effective civilian oversight.⁴³
- *Supporting capacity development for coordination and resource mobilization.* National and regional authorities often face difficulties in mobilizing resources and coordinating external assistance to SSR, and supporting these authorities constitutes an important operational role for the UN. At the same time, UN-led coordination efforts may be hampered by a reluctance on the part of some international (and national) partners to engage in coordination efforts, often driven by a divergence of mandates and interests.⁴⁴
- *Supporting capacity development for monitoring and evaluation.* Monitoring and evaluation, and the review of progress made, are becoming increasingly important in the SSR context. Supporting national and international partners in this area is another operational role for the UN, which has so far focused on monitoring the implementation of national SSR strategies (where they exist), and in some contexts, on human rights monitoring as a key indicator of the impact of SSR (e.g., in Mali).⁴⁵

It is difficult to assess whether the normative and operational roles played by the UN in supporting SSR processes are truly representative of its comparative advantages vis-à-vis other external actors. A recent study on multilateral support for SSR – which examined the UN, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – noted a lack of sufficiently strong empirical evidence to prove such claims. Nevertheless, the study confirmed that the UN is generally most engaged in sector-wide support, and that “it has an important role to play in supporting the identification of strategic priorities for SSR and in taking the lead in coordination efforts to ensure that a comprehensive approach to reform is supported by the international community.”⁴⁶ Indeed, as the contributions to this volume clearly demonstrate, the UN can and should focus on supporting national actors in defining areas of reform, as well as their specific needs

in terms of external support, and in taking the lead in coordinating international support to national SSR processes.

Institutional capacities

Like many other international actors, the UN has had to adapt the way it organizes the human, material, and financial resources at its disposal in order to effectively support national SSR processes, as well as the internal procedures that allocate and deploy these resources. For that purpose, the UN has been creating additional institutional capacities for SSR support since 2007, both at headquarters and in the field. These primarily include two types of capacities:

- Cross-institutional mechanisms, such as the UN Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force (IASSRTF) and the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law (GFP).
- Dedicated SSR teams, such as the SSR Unit (SSRU) within the Department of Peace Operations (DPO)⁴⁷ at Headquarters, as well as a number of SSR structures in the field.

The IASSRTF was formed in 2007 and is composed of 14 UN entities that address different dimensions of SSR support.⁴⁸ Co-chaired by DPO and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and reflecting the UN's broad understanding of SSR ("peace and development"), this inter-agency mechanism promotes a common and coordinated UN approach to SSR. Its core functions include developing sector-wide guidance for SSR practitioners, facilitating regional partnerships for SSR, engaging in SSR policy dialogue and consultations with UN Member States, and maintaining a UN roster of SSR experts. The sector-wide perspective of the IASSRTF is complemented by the component-specific focus of the GFP.⁴⁹ Created in 2012, the GFP concentrates on providing joint component-specific support in the areas of police, justice, and corrections.

The SSRU, established in 2009 within the DPO's Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, serves as the focal point and technical resource capacity on SSR for the entire UN system as well as for national and international partners. Led by a Principal SSR Officer and composed of half a dozen professional staff, the SSRU also acts as the Secretariat of the IASSRTF. Over the years, demand for support services of the SSRU has risen dramatically. While the SSRU has a system-wide mandate and takes a sector-wide perspective on SSR, there are also a number of structures within the UN system dedicated to component-specific elements of SSR support. For instance, the DPO's Justice and Corrections Service and the UNDP's Rule of Law Unit may both be engaged in supporting judicial reform under the auspices of the GFP.⁵⁰

The number of dedicated SSR structures providing sector-wide SSR support at the field level has witnessed a marked increase over the years, alongside structures focusing on component-specific SSR support particularly in the areas of police, justice, and corrections reform.⁵¹ Compared to other multilateral institutions, the institutional capacities of the UN to support SSR are quite impressive. In most of its field missions and increasingly in non-mission contexts, the UN maintains SSR structures that are supported by system-wide structures at headquarters. At the same time, dedicated SSR capacities at headquarters and in the field remain quite small, and a number of thematic SSR areas lack corresponding institutional structures, including defence sector reform, intelligence reform, and border management. A recent study on multilateral support for SSR (mentioned above) noted the need “to ensure that capacities match needs in terms of dedicated structures and number of staff, including by ensuring that SSR is adequately reflected in planning teams that feed into programme/mission budget development.”⁵²

In sum, the UN has developed a strong normative framework that outlines the basic principles of engagement and the normative and operational roles it should play in SSR support. While many capacity constraints remain, there are now structures in place to enable implementation of the main tenets of UN policy in this area. However, a number of challenges remain when it comes to linking institutional policy and operational practice, many of which will be elaborated in this volume.

Linking the policy and practice of UN SSR support

The UN SSR agenda has both progressed and expanded since the Security Council’s first open debate on SSR in 2007. Drawing from the experience of UN practitioners, combined with that of external experts on SSR, this volume presents a range of perspectives on UN support to SSR, past and present, with a focus on institutional policy and operational practice and linkages between the two.

This volume brings together 18 contributions and is divided into five parts. Part I discusses the importance of understanding the complexity of individual political contexts for SSR (Chapter 2) as well as how the UN approaches SSR support in broad contexts such as development (Chapter 3) and peacebuilding (Chapter 4). Part II presents case studies on UN support to SSR in practice, reflecting on field experiences in West Africa (Chapter 5), Côte d’Ivoire (Chapter 6), and CAR (Chapter 7). Part III is dedicated to the elaboration of various key themes in UN SSR support, including the importance of national security policies, strategies, and plans (Chapter 8), defence sector reform (Chapter 9), the nexus between SSR and DDR (Chapter 10), the protection of civilians (Chapter 11), the role of public financial management (Chapter 12), human rights-based approaches to SSR

(Chapter 13), and gender-responsive SSR (Chapter 14). Part IV emphasizes the importance of partnerships in UN SSR support, covering topics such as national ownership (Chapter 15), inter-agency coordination within the UN (Chapter 16), and partnering with regional organizations (Chapter 17).

In Part V, this volume concludes with a review of how SSR has moved from the periphery to the centre of the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding agenda, as well as how the organization has moved from developing policy frameworks and guidance to providing field support and building partnerships. In this context, the suggestion is put forth that the UN approach to SSR should be further emancipated from its initial, narrow focus on post-conflict settings and fully integrated into the sustaining peace and prevention agenda – a proposal substantiated by an analysis of remaining gaps and challenges alongside recommendations for future action.

Together, the chapters of this volume provide a multi-faceted review of the normative and operational roles of the UN in supporting SSR over the past decade. These contributions make a strong case, explicitly or implicitly, that the UN approach to SSR should be echoed across all three pillars of the organization (peace and security, development, and human rights); that the focus of SSR support should be further broadened from its peacekeeping origins in line with the sustaining peace and prevention agenda; and, most importantly, that UN involvement in SSR support should be concentrated on bridging the remaining gaps between policy and practice.

Notes

- ¹ See 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* (Geneva: DCAF 2018).
- ² UN Security Council, “Statement by the President of the Security Council” (S/PRST/2007/3*), 21 February 2007. See also Matúš Korba, “The Performance of the SR in the UN Security Council” in *Yearbook of Foreign Policy of the Slovak Republic 2006*, edited by Peter Brezáni (Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association 2007); and Peter Burian, “Slovak Republic’s Performance in the UN Security Council (2006-2007)” in *Yearbook of Slovakia’s Foreign Policy 2007*, edited by Peter Brezáni (Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association 2008).
- ³ United Nations, Decision of the Secretary-General, 16 February 2007 Policy Committee Meeting, No. 2007/11, 16 February 2007.
- ⁴ For example, see Heiner Hänggi and Vincenza Scherrer, *Security Sector Reform and UN Integrated Missions: Experience from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and Kosovo* (Münster: LIT Verlag 2008).
- ⁵ 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 (henceforth, the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR).

- ⁶ Report of the Secretary-General, “Securing States and Societies: Strengthening the United Nations Comprehensive Support to Security Sector Reform” (A/67/970–S/2013/480), 13 August 2013 (henceforth, the 2013 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR).
- ⁷ UN Security Council, Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ⁸ United Nations SSR Task Force, *Security Sector Reform: Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (United Nations 2012). Also, see *Security Sector Reform: Integrated Technical Guidance Notes – Transnational Organized Crime and Security Sector Reform* (United Nations 2016). Collectively, these are referred to as the ITGNs.
- ⁹ The informal UN Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, established in 2007 at the initiative of Slovakia and currently co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, “has proved vital in helping to develop a consensus on the United Nations security sector reform agenda.” 2013 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, para. 42.
- ¹⁰ Now called the Department of Peace Operations, or DPO.
- ¹¹ Previously called the Global Focal Point (GFP) for Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict and Other Situations.
- ¹² This section draws upon previous publications by the author, most notably Heiner Hänggi, “Security Sector Reform – Concepts and Contexts” in *Transformation: A Security Sector Reform Reader* (Pasig City: INCITEGov, 2011).
- ¹³ Kofi Annan, “Towards a culture of peace,” in *Letters to future generations* (UNESCO, 1999), 15.
- ¹⁴ Kofi Annan, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (“The Millennium Report of the Secretary-General”) (New York: United Nations, 2000), 43.
- ¹⁵ 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, para. 17.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 14.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ OECD, *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (Paris: OECD Publishing 2005), 20–21.
- ¹⁹ Kofi Annan, “Peace and Development – One Struggle, Two Fronts,” address of the United Nations Secretary-General to World Bank Staff, 19 October 1999.
- ²⁰ 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, para. 15.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, para. 17.
- ²² *Ibid.*, para. 18.
- ²³ DCAF, *Security Sector Reform*, SSR Backgrounder Series (Geneva: DCAF 2015), 2.
- ²⁴ UNSC Resolution 2151 (2014), para. 9. Also, see 2013 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, paras. 17 and 61(e).
- ²⁵ For example, see DCAF, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform*, 29–31.
- ²⁶ See the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, para. 45.
- ²⁷ UN SSR Task Force, ITGNs, 13–34. Also, see Chapter 15 of this volume, “National ownership and SSR: Towards a common framework for action.”
- ²⁸ See the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, paras. 47–49; the 2013 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, paras. 21–25; and UN SSR Task Force, ITGNs, p. 4.
- ²⁹ For example, the UN and the European Union (EU) have supported the development of a policy framework for SSR in the African Union (AU); and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has repeatedly drawn on UN experience in developing its own approach to security sector governance and reform (SSG/R).
- ³⁰ UN SSR Task Force, ITGNs.
- ³¹ UN SSR Task Force, *ITGN – Transnational Organized Crime and Security Sector Reform*.
- ³² United Nations, “Defence Sector Reform,” Policy no. 2011.17, 27 June 2011.
- ³³ United Nations Secretary-General, “Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces” (A/67/775–S/2013/110), 5 March 2013; United

- Nations, “Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations,” Policy no. 2018.01, 1 February 2018, para. 39.
- ³⁴ 2013 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, para. 45. In the case of DCAF, since 2017, its partnership with the UN has been additionally strengthened by a strategic framework agreement with the SSRU and consecutive annual work plans.
- ³⁵ This categorization of operational roles follows the approach adopted in the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR. See para. 50. Also, see the 2013 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, paras. 26–41; and UN SSR Task Force, ITGNs, 5–6.
- ³⁶ While helping to establish an enabling environment for SSR is not the same thing as supporting SSR, it is listed as an operational role in the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR.
- ³⁷ For example, see details of the UN engagement in Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic (CAR), discussed in Chapter 5 of this volume, “Sustaining peace in West Africa: UN SSR support in non-mission settings.”
- ³⁸ For example, see details of the UN engagement in CAR, discussed in Chapter 7 of this volume, “UN support to SSR in peacekeeping contexts: A case study of the Central African Republic.”
- ³⁹ See Chapter 12 of this volume, “Following the money: The role of public financial management in SSR.”
- ⁴⁰ See Chapter 7 of this volume, “UN support to SSR in peacekeeping contexts: A case study of the Central African Republic.”
- ⁴¹ See Chapter 13 of this volume, “Human rights and UN engagement with SSR.”
- ⁴² Developed by UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), UNOWAS (United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel), DPA (Department of Political Affairs, now Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs), DPO (Department of Peace Operations), and INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization), WACI supports the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan, which addresses the growing problem of drug trafficking, organized crime, and drug abuse in West Africa.
- ⁴³ See Chapter 14 of this volume, “The UN approach to gender-responsive SSR.”
- ⁴⁴ This was the case, for example, in Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, and Sierra Leone. See Chapter 17 of this volume, “Better together: Partnering with regional organisations in SSR.”
- ⁴⁵ For example, see Chapter 15 of this volume, “National ownership and SSR: Towards a common framework for action.”
- ⁴⁶ DCAF, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform*, 10.
- ⁴⁷ Formerly, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, or DPKO.
- ⁴⁸ The Task Force includes representatives from DPPA (Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs), DPO, OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), PBSO (Peacebuilding Support Office), UNDP, UN Women, UNODC, UNODA (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs), UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services), OSAA (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa), OSRSG-SVC (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict), UNICEF (*United Nations Children’s Fund*), UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research), and UNPF (United Nations Population Fund).
- ⁴⁹ The GFP comprises DPO, UNDP, UN Women, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNODC, UNOPS, and the EOSG.
- ⁵⁰ DCAF, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform*, 44.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 12.

PART I:
CONTEXTS

2

The UN and SSR: Between the primacy of politics and the echoes of context

EBOE HUTCHFUL

Introduction

SSR is a fundamentally political process. Thus, individual political contexts significantly impact the SSR interventions pursued in various countries, as well as their potential “success” or “failure.” This chapter aims to explore the primacy of politics in SSR, particularly with regard to the UN, and to identify and account for the resounding lessons (“echoes”) learned from the contextual realities of various UN attempts to support SSR processes. While the UN has played a leading and unique role in defining the principles and normative frameworks that should guide SSR processes, this chapter posits that a combination of political factors and contextual specificities continue to define and constrain the impact of reform.

The focus here is primarily on peacekeeping, for four reasons. First, the original proto-SSR (or SSR-related) initiatives of the UN took place in a context of peacekeeping and as part of peacekeeping exit strategies. Second, in such environments, the UN has played a critical role in providing the broader political and structural context for SSR initiatives. Third, the UN’s SSR efforts are still mostly implemented in conflict-affected or post-conflict contexts, often shaped greatly by the peacekeeping environment that preceded it. And fourth, these are the contexts within which the most important contemporary challenges to SSR are emerging.

This chapter is structured into five parts. Following this introduction, the second part offers an analytical framework that conceptually positions SSR within the broader spectrum of political processes and identifies the challenges that confront the UN in operationalizing such a political dimension of SSR. The third part explores the realities of specific country contexts, emanating from the primacy of politics. The fourth section encapsulates the implications of these “echoes” for the future of the UN’s role in supporting SSR processes, from the perspective of a subject-matter insider and an institutional outsider. Finally, the last part takes a brief look ahead, given current contexts and challenges.

Evaluating the UN approach to SSR

In assessing the role of the UN in supporting SSR processes, several challenging factors must be acknowledged. First, barring exceptional cases such as Timor-Leste, the UN itself is rarely a significant SSR player and lacks the independent resources to be one. This fact is appreciated by the UN, which emphasizes a focus on “comparative advantage” and “partnerships” as the basis for its SSR strategy. The operational reform capacity of the UN has traditionally been largely directed at police reform, and the organization only grappled for the first time with defence reform in the DRC, and then more recently, in contexts such as Mali. There are also areas, such as intelligence reform, in which the UN is not involved at all. And even in its self-assigned priority roles (coordination, guidance, good offices, etc.), the effectiveness of the UN is often open to question.

The UN’s role in SSR is shared with other actors that are often beyond its control. Some leading bilateral actors have their own agendas, are endowed with more SSR expertise and resources than the UN, and are not always open to external coordination. Moreover, when Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) are parachuted in from the outside, they may lack the necessary awareness of local dynamics and of the complex political calculations surrounding local security establishments, which are required to move the game forward against well-grounded (and hard-bitten) regime operatives and rebel forces.¹ While the UN is frequently saddled with the most disagreeable assignments in the most difficult environments (often those in which the P5 and powerful bilateral actors show little interest), mandates have become even more ambitious in recent years even as cuts in the UN’s budget become deeper. This has led to a widening gap between UN mandates and resources.

As we have seen in the case of Mali in particular, the climate for UN missions has also deteriorated markedly in recent years, with the implementation of more and more SSR initiatives within stabilization contexts as the security situation has worsened worldwide, often with no peace to keep. This is having a discernible impact in practice on SSR, and on security agendas in general. Equally importantly, the UN has stepped into this expanded and increasingly militarized mandate with substantial and growing credibility deficits. The scope of action taken by the UN is necessarily shaped, and constrained by, its very design and founding principle as a multilateral organization of *states*. In SSR, the principal counterpart to the UN is quite often the very state that represents the root of the security problem; this is the “sovereignty trap” that has all too often locked the UN into partnerships with states that have questionable human rights records.

The notion that the UN exists to support Member States and “restore state authority” creates moral dilemmas and real confusion as to where the organization’s

priorities lie. Is the primary goal civilian protection (often from state actors of the government the UN is supporting), or the restoration of state authority (which may at the least be contested due to abuses associated with the state)? Among the “collateral damage” that may result from UN peacekeeping is that host governments postpone or deprioritize reconciliation efforts and dismiss opposition voices, both of which would be necessities if not for the ability to rely on UN troops to maintain order, as seen in Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire.

Over the years, the UN has attempted to expand opportunities for non-state involvement, particularly by civil society organizations, in its activities. But in many cases, this remains limited and largely rhetorical at the national level, in part because of the sovereignty trap. Current challenges to states – and the perception that the very foundation of the international community of states, in which the UN itself is embedded, is at risk – has swung the pendulum in favour of efforts to preserve states and promote state-building as a principal objective of peace support and peacebuilding operations.² Arguably, this collides with, rather than supports, other priorities such as the protection of vulnerable communities or the promotion of genuine democracy. Perhaps it is not surprising then that the protection of civilians (POC) has been the most spectacular and persistent failure of the UN, particularly in the context of very large missions such as in the DRC and South Sudan, with crimes occurring sometimes in plain view of peacekeepers. This is hardly an encouraging precursor to SSR, which is designed to position national governments and security establishments to more effectively protect their own populations. Given these failures of peacekeeping, it follows that some missions have either fostered “militia-ization” or have deterred militias and other “self-defence” groups from disarming.³

The lack of political strategy informing UN missions was thus rightly identified by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) in 2015 as the Achilles’ heel of peacekeeping operations.⁴ Even while investing considerable resources in apparently interminable missions, the UN has repeatedly proved inept at dealing with ruthless but wily leaders who find the UN useful in buttressing their power, but have no qualms in undermining the mission when they no longer believe it serves their interests. There can surely be no more eloquent testament to this than the fact that some of the largest and most expensive UN missions in Africa have frequently been relegated to the sidelines as a host-government clings defiantly to power and shows no hesitation in killing protesters under the very gaze of the UN. The result, as one critic has argued, is that “the UN, having aspired to instil democracy and good governance in countries like the DRC and South Sudan, has ended up propping up unreliable and even autocratic leaders in the absence of better alternatives. Peacekeepers have to try to defend civilians from precisely the governments and security forces they are meant to partner with.”⁵

The most important note to draw from these experiences is that the great variety of contexts in which the UN operates precludes (pre)scripted responses to SSR. Each mission presents new challenges and demands some level of innovation and lesson-learning; navigating the shifting and contextual politics of any particular peace agreement becomes a major challenge in itself. Similarly, regardless of the UN's own ideal to-do list, the actual space for UN involvement in SSR and the specific nature of that involvement is largely shaped by context, as well as by available partners. In fact, in a number of cases, the role of the UN in SSR has had no relationship to its broader role in supporting peace processes and state-building. For instance, in South Sudan, UNMISS was tasked with a very broad and ambitious state-building mandate in 2011 as compared with its predecessor mission, but the UN role in SSR has ultimately been relatively minor, especially following the conflict that began in December 2013.⁶ The UN approach to SSR should thus be judged not simply on its objectives, but on the specific contexts in which it chooses to pursue SSR efforts. What “politics” means in these contexts is examined below.

Defining politics: Process vs. transformation

In a “normal” polity (operating according to rational-legal rules), politics constitute the public space within which more or less organized interests compete in a prescribed fashion to acquire state power or influence its application, including the allocation of public resources, with policy being the outcome. In the kind of contexts under discussion here, however, both the polity and politics may be privatized in whole or in part, and policy is best seen as what the state *does* and not what the state *says* it is doing or planning to do.⁷

The mantra punctuating all UN pronouncements is that SSR is “highly political,” and yet there is rarely any effort to unpack which of many senses SSR can be described as political.⁸ In particular, there is an insufficient distinction between politics as *process*, and politics as the achievement of a *transformation of power relations* and the way power or authority structures actually function – in other words, the “how” and the “what” of SSR. It is well-established that SSR should be process-driven, consultative, participatory, and inclusive, and there is a whole corpus of prescriptions in this area.⁹ Less explicit attention is paid to what it is about the aim of SSR that makes it political, and what the indicators of change should be.

SSR is political in several overlapping senses: first, it targets the nerve centre of state power and national sovereignty, the security sector, and the foundation of its ability to exercise coercion; second, it seeks to reshape how this instrument functions and in whose interest (i.e., who is protected and who is excluded) and relatedly, the nature and locus of control over the security establishment; and third, it implies, at a deeper level, the transformation of historical and existing power relations. At the

root of SSR is thus a larger question of who controls the state and who benefits from its protection. In this way, SSR is inherently revolutionary and is most effective in contexts where it is associated with broader political and social transformations (as in 1990s South Africa), as an essential component of a rupture with the existing power arrangements and underlying culture of politics. While this requires process-driven politics, SSR cannot be a stand-alone project. A transformative outcome is unlikely without broader conditions that facilitate deep change in the underlying structures of power, as reflected in governance, economic relations, and social equity. Indeed, by itself, *politics as process* (at least as it appears to be understood by the international community, in the form of elections and other procedures of formal democracy) has often frozen in place the very practices and power structures that precipitated crises to begin with.

The first of three crucial lessons that emerge is that meaningful SSR programmes (let alone successful implementation) are ultimately pointless and ineffective as long as regimes remain untransformed, as the DRC and other less notorious cases have demonstrated. Bluntly put, regimes set the tone for security sectors. Hence, SSR that does not entail a broader, transformative political strategy will ultimately be futile. Misreading the nature or intentions of a regime – as the UN did in the cases of Burundi, the DRC, and South Sudan either due to an excess of optimism or a failure to undertake serious political or contextual analysis¹⁰ – can prove costly, primarily in terms of financial and other resources and the organization's reputation with external actors, but also in the very lives and safety of civilians. Robust states and democratic cultures have not emerged from these “state-building” exercises, any more than effective and accountable security sectors have emerged from SSR in these contexts.

The second key lesson, emerging again from South Sudan and Burundi, is that SSR is not sustainable without an underlying and viable political settlement, particularly in the form of peace agreements and political transitions. This requires power arrangements undergirded by consensus, and commitment by all parties to the formal rules of the political game, *especially* regarding who has “legitimate” control of the instruments of coercion and what constitutes their legitimate use. In the absence of such a settlement, SSR poses the grave danger of further enabling the use of force by one or more parties against others,¹¹ and a similar reputational risk to external supporters of SSR.

Third, while external actors may be able to reshape national institutions (at least at a superficial level), cultures of politics and power are precisely the areas least subject to influence or control by external actors. This is where the UN is traditionally at its weakest, and at the same time, is perhaps most sorely needed. Indeed, as former UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Marie Guehenno has observed, the “United Nations and its secretary-general, in a world of nation states, can do little to shape national

perceptions,¹² or, one may add, political processes and outcomes. Even a large and protracted UN presence in conflict-torn countries such as the DRC or South Sudan has barely influenced their prevailing political cultures.¹³ Yet, reforms of political behaviour represent the *defining context for successful SSR*.

The blind spot of SSR with regard to politics emanates from the fact that reform is rarely rooted in an essential starting point: a conceptualization of the security establishment as pre-eminently a *political actor*. Instead, the tendency is to emphasize (prosaically) its role as a *service provider*. To describe the security sector as political is not to suggest that it is politicized, and thus a partisan competitor for political power, although this has often been the case, but rather that it is a core and indispensable instrument of the modern state, and hence the ultimate guarantor of power arrangements. It is, and should be, the product of a political process.

The current approach results in a notable lack of investment in political analysis and research as a foundation for SSR,¹⁴ and even less in understanding the micro-politics of the security sector it is meant to transform. This may be partly because SSR evolved as a paradigmatic shift from the more probing and sceptical civil-military relations (CMR) literature that preceded and inspired it, departing from the former insofar as it is a “policy and operational science” focused on formal institution-building (often in the mould of what was referred to in the 1960s as “institutional transfer”), long on prescription but short on research. This institutionalist focus is another departure from the analysis of CMR, which examined underlying power relations, often constituted in the *informal* domain and not necessarily residing in *institutions* per se. It is precisely these and similar insights – related to informalization and the variety of informal tools, devices, and inducements that shaped civil-security relations – that have disappeared from SSR policy discourse.¹⁵ SSR has thus been poorly positioned to grasp, let alone address, the murky political calculations and relationships bearing upon security actors, much less the complex micropolitics of the security sector itself. This “cluelessness by design” may be ascribed to the fact that SSR is primarily a sovereign transaction, which makes it imprudent to question the *realpolitik* of recipient governments and regimes, particularly as it is linked to national ownership. And so, despite all the rhetoric about “democratic oversight,” the development of capable organs of security governance (in other words, precisely where politics hits the tarmac) has typically been a low priority of external sponsors of SSR.

The State, stabilization, and national ownership: Post-Westphalia illustrated

This section expands on the preceding observations, with a particular focus on the political challenges associated with stabilization and state authority, as well as on interventions where political contexts and political leaders are not what they seem.

Mali and the DRC: The UN and SSR in the era of “stabilization”

A growing number UN mission mandates carry the term “stabilization,” and more and more SSR initiatives are taking place within this context. But what exactly does stabilization mean? As Robert Muggah and others have noted, while “stabilization has become a buzzword in peacekeeping,” there is insufficient clarity on its definition, intent, and limits.¹⁶ The meaning of stabilization, while shifting somewhat from mandate to mandate, can nevertheless be distilled from the content of these mandates – which result in missions and environments that have a distinct and often regressive impact on the implementation of SSR, and indeed on how security is defined and operationalized, reflecting the securitization of state-building.

Apart from where one stands in critical debates on this turn towards so-called “robust peacekeeping” and its implications for the core mission of the UN,¹⁷ the reality is that the UN was ill-prepared to conduct stabilization missions, which coincided with a period of steady decline in UN peacekeeping capacity as the militaries of advanced Western states gradually withdrew from these activities. This left the UN to depend increasingly on developing country troop contributors, often with rudimentary military and police capacity, while developed states “facilitated” from the sidelines by providing funding, equipment, or limited specialized assets, often preferring to join “coalitions of the willing” or act within their own alliance structures, such as NATO. This has had consequences for the ability of the UN to conduct effective peacekeeping, let alone peace enforcement, as it lacks critical financial, management, logistical, and intelligence assets.¹⁸ In 2015, the HIPPO was candid that the UN was not equipped to wage asymmetric warfare and should only seek to do so in partnership with bilateral partners or coalition forces.¹⁹

However, such partnerships sometimes come with their own baggage and potential for reputational risk. For instance, Sophia Sabrow’s analysis of local perceptions of regional and international intervention forces (from France, ECOWAS, and the UN) in Mali in 2013–14 revealed much scepticism among Malians: “While French forces are pragmatically valued for their military achievements, they receive little ideological legitimacy. The [ECOWAS] regional force has high ideological legitimacy but disappoints in its performance on the ground. The UN force scores low in ideological legitimacy and is ambiguous in

terms of pragmatic legitimacy.”²⁰ The UN’s partner of choice in a series of muscular interventions across Africa has been France, which carries some particular baggage on the continent as a (not always welcome) former colonial power with its own history of imperial interventions. The French have subsequently become a target of jihadis, who have tracked and attacked French interests across West Africa, with considerable local collateral damage. This blurring of the line between bilateralism and multilateralism in contexts like Mali has the potential to threaten the legitimacy of the UN, bring its neutrality into question, and make UN actors targets of terrorist groups. However, the problem obviously goes much beyond the French, and includes growing tendencies towards unilateralism on the part of the P5. That said, it is the stunning lack of preparation on the part of the UN itself for such stabilization missions that has been most damaging, including by sending 10,000 personnel to Mali that were “unprepared for counterterrorism and explicitly told not to engage in it. More than 80 percent of the force’s resources are spent on logistics and self-protection.”²¹

These partnerships have also brought wider geopolitical interests and designs into play in stabilization missions. Though MINUSMA, in Mali, marked a welcome reengagement of Western member states in UN peacekeeping, the objectives behind this extend well beyond the security of the Malian state and population. Indeed, “combating terrorist groups and stemming migration to Europe have motivated their contribution of troops . . . One of the more possible scenarios for Mali is that the aggressive stance of the mission will be self-fulfilling, turning it from a peacekeeping to a counterterrorism mission, leading to an escalating circle of violence with a high likelihood of civilians being targeted and killed.”²² Violent extremism has thus come to be touted as the major security threat in Mali, despite the fact that many Malians see “unresolved traditional conflicts, rising criminality and banditry – frequently driven by poverty and a chronic lack of jobs and opportunities – as the biggest risks to their personal and local security. The breakdown in trust between communities and in the government has increased levels of armed aggression, resulting in the normalisation of violence across much of central and northern Mali.”²³

Additionally, the ambiguity of the concept of stabilization as used in UN mandates leaves ample room for both external actors and local politicians and elites to manipulate it. As Muggah warns, “in the absence of a clear definition, stabilization is being (re)conceived and (re)interpreted on the basis of parochial bilateral and national or host government interests.”²⁴ Hugo de Vries has underscored this in the case of the DRC, where support for military operations, infrastructure, training, and economic alternatives to armed groups only “led to new types of predatory behaviour by state agents and training had little impact on behavioural change,” such that “the preconditions for stabilization to work, such as political dialogue with local communities, working against impunity, and reforming the security sector, were

barely addressed.”²⁵ In the contested politics that define stabilization environments, there is also a real possibility that the UN may be viewed as effectively aligning itself with the incumbent politicians of the existing state. John Karlsrud warns that in Mali, the UN is “torn between its mandate to be an impartial mediator and the charge to help ‘extend and re-establish State administration throughout the country’.”²⁶

This notion of restoring and extending state authority is at the core of stabilization initiatives. Still, the ideological influence of the state-building thesis is hard to miss, and the UN’s decision to commit to state-building occurred under circumstances that severely compromised both its image as neutral and its reputation. Guehenno has explained the origins of this “securitization of state weakness” and the UN’s role in it:

“State weakness had not been seen as a threat to peace and security and therefore not an area requiring the Security Council to act. But the possibility that weak states might become havens for terroristic organizations and the destabilizing consequences of civil wars on neighboring countries – massive flows of refugees and proliferation of small arms – have made fragile states a genuine security threat. In an international system based on the sovereignty of states, states are the first line of defense of a stable order. If some of them lose the capacity to exercise their sovereignty, the whole system is at risk. There again, the implications were wide-ranging, and they were reflected in the ever-expanding responsibilities of peacekeeping operations, which were increasingly engaged in helping shore up the fragile sovereignty of states in distress.”²⁷

Correspondingly, stabilization has come to be regarded in some quarters less as a means of *supporting* than of *controlling* transitions in fragile contexts, in ways that place a premium on consolidating central authority, often at the expense of democracy and progressive political change.²⁸ And typically – though not surprisingly – this activity of restoring or extending state authority involves or implies the refurbishment of discredited state structures and institutions rather than their transformation or the reimagining of state-society relations.²⁹

State-building also embraces several questionable assumptions, depending on the context. First, it assumes that there is indeed a past tradition of state authority to be *restored*, even if this may never have existed in the first place, as in Mali, where this thinking precluded any serious analysis of the historical or contemporary character of that state and why it had failed. Second, and perhaps most importantly, the fragile state thesis does not consider the possibility that “fragility” is not accidental, unanticipated, or inexorable. As repeatedly demonstrated in the DRC, fragility may be engineered by ruling political elites. In fact, de Vries suggests that the policy of the government of the DRC has been “to maintain and extend a state that is kept purposefully weak so as to better manipulate it on behalf of private interests.”³⁰

In any case, as Robert Lamb reminds us, fragile states are not states in the Western sense, having developed their own distinctive histories, trajectories, political

underpinnings, and elite practices and interests; and thus cannot be fixed through Western-style state-building.³¹ The concept of hybridity further challenges orthodox conceptualizations of African states. And, ultimately, the evidence suggests that stabilization simply does not work: “the results of international intervention have been patchy at best, despite the expenditure of blood, money and prestige.”³²

Finally, as we argue below, the focus on state-building comes at the cost of a balanced emphasis on social cohesion and solidarity—in other words, repairing the shredded social fabric that underlies many conflicts, and restoring trust that has been eroded by violence, among communities and between communities and the state.³³ Of course, state-building and nation building approaches (the latter recalling the prevailing paradigm of the 1960s) are not mutually exclusive. In practice the UN has attempted to pursue both, though without equal attention or enthusiasm.

Three conclusions emerge from experiences in Mali and the DRC: (i) in both contexts, stabilization has been interpreted primarily in military terms, contributing directly to the militarization of the UN mission;³⁴ (ii) stabilization in which state-building and the “restoration of the state authority” are core aims undermines possibilities for people- and community-centred approaches to SSR and favours top-down, “muscular” approaches inclined to capacity-building over governance; and (iii) at least in the case of Mali, stabilization efforts have further undercut already weak national ownership.

Burundi: Prioritizing politics, high-level political engagement, and informal arrangements

Even well-designed bilateral interventions focusing on long-term, transformative change may offer cautionary lessons for UN support to SSR. The sustained and governance-focused SSR engagement of the Netherlands in Burundi under the Security Sector Development programme included high-level national and bilateral political engagement and featured flexible programme structures to adapt to changing needs.³⁵ The programme, which started in 2009, was touted as a model of high-level political engagement, but it has nonetheless raised the question in Burundi of who constitutes the “political elite.” This is particularly relevant given how progress on SSR has been disrupted by fraught relations with the UN and other international actors in the country since a rise in political tensions and human rights abuses starting in 2015.

One potential lesson from events in Burundi is that the elite who influence and shape security policy and use of force – including, in particular, the role the security establishment plays in the political calculations of the regime – is largely faceless. It includes not only, or even primarily, visible political office-holders, but also presidential confidantes, ethnic and party bosses, and leaders of informal networks

and other interests located both within and outside formal state structures. Similarly, the Burundi crisis exposed the limits of engaging nerve centres of power. While ongoing engagement took place among a range of national stakeholders, particularly in terms of dialogue, training, and M&E, the country's core political elite was insulated from the programme, though no one seemed to have noticed at the time. This speaks to the importance of better understanding the incentives and motivations that compel the political elite in any context, and thus more realistically appraising the ability of external actors to thereby influence attitudes. For a ruling elite, SSR is a potentially high-risk, high-stakes gamble that brings uncertain rewards and little immediate material inducement or compensation.³⁶ In unstable or contested political environments, control over the security sector is the one sure avenue to gaining or retaining power, and requiring a ruling regime to voluntarily loosen its grip on the tools of coercion constitutes, at the very least, a leap of faith.

South Africa and Sierra Leone: Building national ownership – “No Commitment, No Ownership”

Giving appropriate space to politics, particularly in the form of national reconciliation and political accommodation, in turn entails national ownership of the SSR process – which is now considered a staple for successful SSR. What is often lost, however, is the fact that achieving national ownership is a difficult and expensive slog, and one that is unlikely to be realized without robust and sustained commitment; not least because SSR often embeds lopsided and asymmetrical relationships between powerful and well-resourced external actors on the one hand, and national populations and elites devastated by the aftermath of violent conflict on the other. If the oft-cited case of South Africa is any indication, one might as well stand the current SSR mantra of “No Ownership, No Commitment” on its head: “No Commitment, No Ownership.” Even so, the South African experience was far from the norm, given the favourable conditions that prevailed, in some ways more akin to a first-world than third-world country: availability of independent national resources and funding; exceptional levels of popular participation, fostering broad national consensus; local technical talent and capacity, both within the security sector and civil society more broadly; strong political direction and commitment to broad-based, democratic oversight; and elite coherence forged through a political settlement. In other words, South Africa had both the political commitment and the technical and financial capacity to exercise national ownership, under which it was able to traverse a path that departed in important respects from the conventional SSR model, in terms of vision, scope, sequencing, and timeframe.

The more applicable model of national ownership under post-conflict conditions may instead be the quite different instance of Sierra Leone. Already deeply

impoverished prior to war, Sierra Leone emerged from conflict with its economy and national institutions devastated, political authority contested, national and community trust eroded, and a deep crisis of national self-confidence. The security sector was widely regarded as a pariah, and popular sentiment initially favoured the dismantling of the armed forces over reform. Sierra Leone's path to SSR at first entailed a high level of external dependency (facilitated, ironically, by the fact that the population was looking outward for national salvation) and very limited national resources and technical capacity. Still, a bilateral security partnership with the UK incorporated a number of best practices: a long-term strategic partnership; a holistic and consultative approach to SSR; an intelligence-led security reform process managed and coordinated through a central agency located in the office of the president; a new national security architecture designed around pragmatic approaches incorporating hybrid, decentralized, and locally-rooted security structures, with chieftaincy committees as the local hub; and an M&E and research programme that allowed for periodic assessment. Over time, this led a once imbalanced security partnership to be increasingly remoulded towards greater national and strategic ownership, as local partners gained greater confidence and as imported UK models proved cumbersome and unsustainable.³⁷ While the Sierra Leone experience featured many downsides – such as persistent resource scarcity and chronically underfunded institutions, including very weak parliamentary oversight capacity, as well as endemic poverty and low social development indicators – it nevertheless telegraphs what is feasible in terms of reforming the security sector even under dire post-conflict conditions with committed external support. It is arguably an example, too, of how SSR can underpin and sustain a democratic political settlement.

Rethinking SSR?

While SSR is now accepted as an indispensable component of the peacebuilding and development agenda, as underscored by Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), it faces at least two contemporary challenges. First are the questions that continue to emerge about the effectiveness of SSR as it is presently configured and implemented. There is a growing consensus that SSR has failed to deliver on its promises (or has been over-hyped), due as much to flawed conception and design as to implementation, even as its accomplishments deserve to be upheld.³⁸ What is clear is that the ability of the UN to leave functioning and accountable security sectors as the core of exit strategies has proved consistently elusive. The jury is still out as to how much of this is to be blamed on the UN itself and how much is a function of SSR as a conceptual and policy framework, or indeed how much can be attributed to national actors and other international actors beyond the UN. Second, SSR is

challenged by the shifting priorities of major external partners as they grapple with their own changing political and national security challenges, such as mass migration, escalating humanitarian interventions, and violent extremism.

There are both opportunities and risks in this climate. Risks include the possibility and even the likelihood that SSR will become still more focused on stabilization imperatives and counter-terrorism initiatives to the detriment of longer-term governance and institution-building, that more and more SSR funding will be diverted to humanitarian and migration issues, and that violent extremism will lead to an increase in security assistance. At the same time, there appears to be a greater focus by donors on their own security agendas rather than on those of recipient states, as well as a concentration on capacity-building in security institutions (via train-and-equip efforts and “robust SSR”) and even less on security governance, as well as a willingness to tolerate serious human rights violations (even with its Human Rights Due Diligence Policy) and growing restrictions on political freedoms by governments. Then again, the current context presents opportunities to return to a human security and governance focus in SSR and to more comprehensively address the root causes of conflict and violent extremism, such as poverty and marginalization, including by examining some of the tenets of SSR orthodoxy – including the nexus between security and development and the role of politics, governance, and non-state actors and institutions. How SSR may be reconfigured to respond to myriad challenges remains an urgent but open question. What is undeniable is that there is a growing consensus that SSR must be reimagined. Indeed, there is now much talk of “second generation SSR” but what direction it will take is far from clear.³⁹ Below, we seek to contribute to this emerging debate by expanding on some earlier observations.

Taking governance, and the “political” in SSR, seriously

While a great deal of emphasis has been placed on governance as a defining element of SSR and a key to accountable security institutions, this is contradicted in practice by the meagre resources usually directed towards reforming or strengthening governance institutions. There is also a need to go beyond thinking of governance only in terms of oversight and accountability, critical as these are, and to focus on proactivity in terms of *political will* or *commitment to protect and protect equally* – this being the crucible for translating capacity into service delivery (on the basis of the observation that the problem in African states is less the *ability* than the *will* to protect). If governance is to be taken seriously, politics must also be taken seriously.

We have argued that describing SSR as “political” – let alone “highly political” – implies that the end-game is a transformation of power relations and of the way public institutions actually function. This should in turn inform the political strategy

of the UN and other purveyors of SSR. The UN has gone the route of “politics as process,” but there is no indication that this is in any way influencing underlying power structures or making them, or the security sector, any more accountable.

Rethinking the security-development nexus

While it is now considered virtually axiomatic that security and development go hand-in-hand, and that both may be facilitated by SSR, experiences in the countries described in this chapter suggest a somewhat different reality: that the achievement of minimum conditions of security following the cessation of armed conflict may not necessarily improve livelihood prospects or alleviate poverty in any meaningful way. Quite the contrary; the end of war has continued to be accompanied by massive dislocation and unemployment (among youth and ex-fighters in particular) and deepening economic distress. Hence, it is all too typical for countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia to emerge from SSR still trapped in a pattern of low or negligible growth and abysmal social and development indicators. This, rather than SSR programming per se, may well be the main challenge to the sustainability of both SSR and broader peacebuilding.

This lesson was not lost in Liberia, where the saying “the best form of SSR is jobs!” was popularized in the early stages of reform. The provision of employment and social services has since become the cornerstone of strategies to counter violent extremism there.⁴⁰ Still, this is often impeded by poverty and chronic social marginalization, in turn fuelling illegal migration and people-trafficking. The ways in which insufficient growth impedes state-building are clearly manifested in Mali, where the restoration of state authority has not been realized primarily because the state itself lacks the resources to extend its remit in the first place, which has obstructed the implementation of critical provisions of the peace agreement such as the establishment of interim administrations. The material base simply does not exist for robust statehood there, however it is defined.

The example of Côte d'Ivoire is potentially significant here, not least because it departs from this familiar paradigm. Unusually, SSR is taking place in an economic context of considerable growth and successful recovery in Côte d'Ivoire, which has one of the highest economic growth rates in Africa and is already attracting significant levels of foreign investment, thereby restoring a pre-conflict pattern. This growth has been characterized by high levels of inequality and marginalization, though, which is encouraging social and political alienation and low levels of political mobilization and participation. In the country's cocoa-growing areas, where land conflicts between indigenous people and migrant cocoa farmers and labourers were key factors in the war, the success of the export economy is placing an additional premium on access

to land. Combined with shifts in local power relations precipitated by wider national politics, this is exacerbating community-based conflicts.

There are broader lessons to be drawn about the distributive impacts of such free-market based economic growth in the era of globalization. The deadly surge of illegal migration across the Mediterranean has coincided with the highest economic growth rates (in most cases resource-based) across the African continent, suggesting increasing marginalization and inequality at a time of growing national prosperity. And amidst the high-blown rhetoric of “Africa Rising,” the military mutinies in 2017 that tarnished the “Ivory Coast miracle,” though expressed in corporatist terms, exposed wider dynamics of social marginalization and political alienation.⁴¹ But these mutinies also underlined a dangerous weakness of SSR in Africa, and one which reproduces a flaw of the public sector reform strategies of the 1980s and 1990s that preceded and inspired it.⁴² The resources invested in institutional reform have not been matched by similar investment in sustainable livelihoods and human security, including in government and the security sector. For this reason, SSR has been unable to address the corruption endemic to security institutions. Except for privileged units, conditions of service in the security sector across Africa have often been abominable, particularly for those in the ranks (Ali Mazrui’s allusion to a “lumpen-militariat” in the 1970s continues to resonate). SSR has typically done little to address this in any sustainable way. Essentially, this is because whether as institutions, professions, or simply as human beings, the military and police get little respect from their political masters, except insofar as they help to shore up regime power. Tolerance of (often organized) corruption gives a green light to security actors to prey on the population for their livelihood, while implicating the security services in public corruption becomes an informal strategy of control.

Engaging security and justice actors and institutions beyond the State

Recent thinking has begun to move away from the Westphalian notions of the legal-rational state on which SSR has been modelled, instead stressing the “hybrid” constitution of African states, in which informal norms and systems operate alongside or within nominally formal political institutions. States and informal networks are not mutually exclusive, but rather are embedded in each other; formal and informal systems overlap, interrelate, and interpenetrate at various levels. The concept of hybridity thus underscores the fact that in many African states, the security sector and its governance mechanisms reflect a complex amalgam of statutory and non-statutory actors and institutions.⁴³ At a conceptual level, hybridity has been used to critique notions of fragility, and at a programmatic level, as an approach to reconstructing security and justice systems in countries emerging from conflict. In such cases, customary, clan, and informal institutions are often the only ones left standing,

and are therefore widely implicated in the delivery of security and in support of community resiliency.

One example of this innovative approach of tapping into customary institutions to provide security and justice in the aftermath of conflict is the pioneering of women's Peace Huts in Liberia by UNMIL and UN Women, based on the traditional Palava Hut. Sierra Leone offers another example, with the use of "chieftaincy committees" as a rural building bloc of the national security architecture, a system which is in the process of being replicated in Liberia. At the same time, hybridity has moved dangerously close to becoming a new orthodoxy among certain donor circles, particularly in its uncritical, "neo-traditionalist" forms, which suggest that Africans possess their own organic and culturally rooted institutions and are best governed under those institutions. This was a line of thinking that suffused Lugardian notions of "indirect rule," which often bordered on neo-romantic because of a (paternalistic) idealization of tradition and a failure to recognize the power dynamics embedded within these institutions, or their corruption by colonial and post-colonial co-optation.

It is debatable whether the rhetoric on hybridity is an indication of genuine appreciation of customary institutions, sometimes approaching neo-romanticism, or of instrumentalism. Both featured in previous colonial indirect rule narratives that sought to co-opt and convert traditional authority structures into tools of the colonial administration, less due to notions of the intrinsic value or appropriateness of traditional institutions, and more due to pragmatic concerns about keeping down the cost of colonial administration. This could also reflect what Scheye terms "pragmatic realism," which asserts that "because the fragile state is unable to provide an adequate level or equitable distribution of public goods and services, the delivery of security has been, in many instances, privatized."⁴⁴

What is clear is that the constant recalibration of customary structures since colonial times to align with the purposes of states and regimes speaks to fluid motives and an essential instrumentalism (as opposed to principle) behind hybrid constructions. While hybridity may prove useful in addressing immediate dilemmas of security and justice delivery, in the final analysis, it is not necessarily a solution. In many instances of hybridity, such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the formal sector has continued to be weak, inaccessible, and in habitual crisis while the customary sector, which continues to provide most services, has been hollowed out or corrupted by government policies – in tandem with broader environmental and demographic factors and forces of historical change – and starved of resources.

Importantly, vulnerable groups (and women in particular) tend to fall between the cracks in these contexts, trapped between an inaccessible and often unresponsive formal sector on one hand and a decaying customary sector informed by patriarchal and gerontocratic values that particularly undervalue poor and younger women,

on the other. While the international community has been quick to deplore the human rights deficits of these customary organs, such as in confronting incidents of rape, it has not been as willing to acknowledge the patriarchal nature of customary institutions, much less the hierarchy and power relations within women's groups (usually based on age seniority as much as class) and their collusion with patriarchal structures and principles. There is some irony in the fact that celebrated "customary" devices such as the women's Peace Huts in Liberia have been donor-funded, raising questions about their sustainability once funding dries up.⁴⁵

Dealing with armed non-state actors

Traditional and customary organs are by no means the only "non-state actors" taken on board in the context of hybridity. The much-demonized non-state armed group has been a particular target of peace agreements, and such groups present particular challenges for post-conflict peacebuilding. While rebel formations may be quickly demobilized, with some fighters likely integrated into new armies, militias aligned with the state rarely disappear so easily, tending instead to persist as parallel units of the state and/or its various factions. The anti-Balaka in the Central African Republic (CAR) serve as a case in point.

While it is safe to say that the rise of powerful non-state armed groups has come to be considered the most significant single challenge to international security and to the international system of states, the reality is that these groups would rarely exist but for their instrumentalization by nation states and state actors. Indeed, the ultimate paradox of state-building in the state-obsessed international system is that states have quite often called up armed non-state entities to salvage, if not their authority, at least their control over territory and populations,⁴⁶ and to execute a variety of geopolitical tasks. Not only do states then appear unable to suppress these armed actors unless bailed out by other more powerful states, they seem unable to dispense with their services.

In Mali, the Government in Bamako has long relied on a "militia-tary strategy,"⁴⁷ employing local militias, including those operating under the Platform movement, and manipulating local rivalries and ethnic and political divisions to contain irredentist movements in the north. In Côte d'Ivoire, both the Ouattara government and the security establishment have had difficulty divesting themselves of the Dozos, not to mention the continued existence of the regional *Comzone* commanders as a parallel structure within and alongside the armed forces. In Sierra Leone, the *kamajors* continue to enjoy varying degrees of legitimacy as providers of community security, even as the state has sought to distance itself from them in theory. Wider afield, in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the effort to salvage or restore the territory and authority of the state has relied on the indispensable support of non-state armed

groups – including the Shia Popular Mobilization Forces, the Sunni Tribal fighters, and the Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq, along with the Hizbullah and Iranian-backed militias in Syria.

In all of these instances, non-state armed groups seem to enjoy a level of legitimacy and effectiveness that eludes state security formations. Why is this? In a powerful critique of the Westphalian orthodoxy, which envisions state-building and SSR as avenues to order and security in post-conflict contexts, Alice Hills has argued that it is not states but rather hybrid formations that have emerged as instruments of order and security after conflict, involving “a mixed economy in which state police (indigenous and international) are supplemented by local voluntary groups such as militias, mosques or neighbourhood watchmen, and by commercial security or guarding companies.”⁴⁸

Strengthening social inclusion: Less state-building, more nation-building and social cohesion

While the current focus is on state-building, contemporary conflicts, with their cultural and identity issues, seem to underscore the deeper issue of social cohesion. Thus, a more pertinent approach might be the nation-building paradigm of the 1960s. This is particularly true in post-conflict contexts, where trust and social capital are at a low, but also because local conflicts interact dynamically with state-based conflicts and, if unresolved, provide a basis for wider and more incendiary conflicts. And indeed, the UN has often flagged the need for national reconciliation and programmes that promote social cohesion, but following through in practice has been a different matter. UN missions have adopted various approaches to social cohesion in the different contexts cited in this chapter: while UNOCI prioritized such programmes, neither UNMIL nor the Government of Liberia did so; UNMISS preferred to defer to the (ultimately disastrous) big-tent policy of the SPLM government; meanwhile, conditions in Mali have been too dangerous for MINUSMA to attempt such programmes on any significant scale, urgent and much-needed as they are; and finally, in the DRC, while addressing community-based conflicts is at the core of the revised International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (I4S), the perception is that MONUSCO itself is not fully invested in this approach.

A social cohesion lens is much more likely to identify and prioritize embedded causes of conflict and real threats to community security, which may not necessarily be a priority to national leadership or the international community, such as in the widespread conflicts between herders and farming communities in parts of West, Central, and East Africa,⁴⁹ or between settlers and indigenous people in the cocoa growing areas of Côte d’Ivoire. In fact, this focus on social cohesion is more necessary

than ever, and not least because these hidden conflicts – largely invisible to the international community – are now being exploited by the very forces of terrorism privileged by the international security agenda.⁵⁰

Looking ahead

The contexts and interventions examined here make the case that UN missions and SSR efforts have not been designed with “politics as transformation” in mind. The (re)negotiation of the social contract between states and their populations is seen as best left to the societies in question, with the objective to restore political stability and bring states into formal compliance with internationally accepted norms and standards of political behaviour, and in particular human rights. But even with such a project, inadequate as it has repeatedly proved in practice, the UN is swimming against the tide in an international order characterized by revived big-power rivalries and unilateral interventionism, increasingly punctuated by gross abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law by both non-state and state actors.

The UN must simultaneously confront a resurgence of authoritarian politics, in particular the election of a new breed of populist leaders who revel in unpredictability and outlandish and jingoistic rhetoric, and a corresponding upsurge of xenophobia and social authoritarianism across the “civilized world.” This development speaks to the larger reality that while forms (or elements) of democratic governance have spread, and in some respects been entrenched, across the globe, “democracy” has also often been appropriated and progressively hollowed out by political elites. As a result, “democratization” no longer evokes the insurgent movement and tool of accountability that it did a scant two decades ago. The risk in this context is that SSR will increasingly be refocused away from objectives of democratic governance and peacebuilding towards initiatives to build military and police capacity to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Or, reform will simply stall because client states and their international partners are unable or unwilling to establish the political conditions that make SSR possible or meaningful.

As challenges to the international order have multiplied, the UN has concentrated on salvaging states and propping up the international state system against multifaceted and emergent threats, rather than on deepening democratic spaces and strengthening citizen security and human rights. The UN is already grossly over-extended⁵¹ in seeking to contain or resolve stubborn conflicts, and yet is still left to clean up the mess from others’ ill-considered power-plays, including the thankless job of orchestrating peace negotiations in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Initiatives to “restore and extend state authority” in this complicated and contested international environment risk enabling (or alternatively being blunted by) errant

political leadership and undermining (or being stymied by) the very notions of sovereignty that the UN was set up to serve and protect. In any case, the primacy of politics, so often embodied in high-level international rhetoric, has predictably run aground on the echoes of context, resulting at best in a patchwork of adaptive practices – or what might be referred to less charitably as expediency. A more concerted approach is urgently needed going forward.

Notes

- ¹ This may be true even of seasoned SRSs intimately familiar with the local terrain and key actors, such as Hilde Johnson in South Sudan. On the other hand, such SRSs (as in this case) may become embroiled in regime factional politics and may (rightly or wrongly) lose their image of impartiality. See Hilde F. Johnson, *South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016).
- ² See Jean-Marie Guehenno, *The Fog of Peace: A Memoir of International Peacekeeping in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 7.
- ³ On the failure to protect civilians in the DRC, see Human Rights Watch, *“You Will be Punished”: Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009); Jeffrey Gettleman, “Report Cites Vast Civilian Killings in Eastern Congo,” *New York Times*, 14 December 2009; and Muhindo Sengenya Claude, “The Danger of Fighting Fire with Fire: Civilians in Congo Turn to Self-Defence Groups to Stop Massacres,” *IRIN*, 26 August 2016, www.irinnews.org/feature/2016/08/26/danger-fighting-fire-fire. On civilian massacres in South Sudan, see United Nations, “Executive Summary of the Independent Special Investigation into the Violence which Occurred in Juba in 2016 and UNMISS Response” (S/2016/924), 1 November 2016; and Obi Anyadike, “Can UN Peacekeeping be Fixed?,” *IRIN*, 4 November 2016, <http://www.irinnews.org/opinion/2016/11/04/editor’s-take-can-un-peacekeeping-be-fixed>.
- ⁴ United Nations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People (A/70/95–S/2015/446), 16 June 2015.
- ⁵ Richard Gowan, “Happy Birthday, UN: The Peacekeeping Quagmire,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 12 August 2015.
- ⁶ See Johnson, *South Sudan: The Untold Story*, 47. UNMISS was still in the process of defining a coherent role for itself in SSR up to the outbreak of the conflict in 2013, and this role remained modest both within the overall activities of the mission and in relation to bilateral partners. After UNMISS and the UN began to criticize human rights abuses by the armed forces, certain elements within the regime and national security apparatus moved to block UNMISS from any meaningful role in SSR.
- ⁷ See Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: New Left Books, 1973).
- ⁸ For references to SSR as political, see United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 23 January 2008, 11; *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (Paris: OECD/DAC, 2005), 28; *Improving Security and Justice Programming in Fragile Situations: Better Political Engagement, More Change Management*, OECD Development Policy Papers series No. 3 (OECD, 2016), 3; and “SSR Trends and Challenges in Africa: a Partners’ Summary of the first Africa Forum on SSR,” 2014, 7.
- ⁹ See *OECD-DAC Guidelines on Security System Reform and Governance* (Paris: OECD, 2005); and *OECD-DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (Paris: OECD, 2008).

- ¹⁰ This argument emerges strongly, for instance, in Hugo de Vries, “The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo,” Rift Valley Institute PRSP Briefing Paper No. 8, February 2016; and Valerie Arnould and Koen Vlassenroot, “EU Policies in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Try and Fail?” paper commissioned by the Human Security Study Group, No. SiT/WP/06/16, Security in Transition, February 2016.
- ¹¹ Samuel Huntington’s resonant (but oft ignored) dictum is that civil-military relations are often shaped less by relations between military and civilians than by political competition between civilian factions and the temptation to use the military to secure political advantage. See Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).
- ¹² Guehenno, *The Fog of Peace*, 6.
- ¹³ The case of the SRSG in South Sudan, Hilde Johnson, is a dramatic illustration of the limits of influence of an SRSG once relations with the ruling regime begin to sour, and indeed it is not unusual for relations between the SRSG (and the UN as such) and regimes to deteriorate sharply, usually over human rights issues, once policy and political disagreements emerge. See Johnson, *South Sudan: The Untold Story*.
- ¹⁴ A notable exception is Sierra Leone, where DFID and the UK government commissioned a series of evidence-based studies on the UK-funded SSR.
- ¹⁵ On the other hand, these key insights continue to be captured and (in some cases) further elaborated in the current literature on “hybridity,” but this remains outlier science as far as official SSR is concerned. See Niagale Bagayoko, Eboe Hutchful, and Robin Luckham, “Hybrid Security Governance in Africa: Rethinking the Foundations of Security, Justice and Legitimate Public Authority,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1–32.
- ¹⁶ Robert Muggah, “The United Nations Turns to Stabilization,” *Global Observatory*, 5 December 2014, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/12/united-nations-peacekeeping-peacebuilding-stabilization/>; Cedric de Coning, “What does ‘stabilisation’ mean in a UN Peacekeeping context?” *Complexity 4 Peace Operations* (blog), 19 January 2015, <https://cedricdeconing.net/2015/01/19/what-does-stabilisation-mean-in-a-un-peacekeeping-context/>; and Cedric de Coning, “Implications of Offensive and Stabilisation Mandates for the Future of UN Peacekeeping,” *Complexity 4 Peace Operations* (blog), 15 February 2015, <https://cedricdeconing.net/2015/02/15/implications-of-offensive-and-stabilisation-mandates-for-the-future-of-un-peacekeeping/>.
- ¹⁷ See John Karlsrud, “The UN at war: examining the consequences of peace enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali,” *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2015): 40–54; and Charles T. Hunt, “All necessary means to what ends? The unintended consequences of the ‘robust turn’ in UN peace operations,” *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 1 (2017). It should also be noted that there has been some resistance to expansion of UN mandates and use of force within both the Security Council and the General Assembly.
- ¹⁸ “UN Peace Operations in Violent and Asymmetric Threat Environments,” IPI meeting note, International Peace Institute, 2016.
- ¹⁹ Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace (A/70/95-S/2015/446).
- ²⁰ Sophia Sabrow, “Local Perceptions of the Legitimacy of Peace Operations by the UN, Regional Organizations and Individual States – a Case Study of the Mali Conflict,” *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 1 (2017): 159–186.
- ²¹ Anthony Banbury, “I Love the U.N., But It Is Failing,” *New York Times*, 18 March 2016.
- ²² Karlsrud, “The UN at war,” 50.
- ²³ ““They treat us all like jihadis’: Looking beyond violent extremism to building peace in Mali,” Policy Brief, International Alert, December 2016, 2.
- ²⁴ Muggah, “The United Nations turns to Stabilization.”
- ²⁵ de Vries, “The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo.”

- ²⁶ Karlsrud, "The UN at war," 46.
- ²⁷ Guehenno, *The Fog of Peace*, 299.
- ²⁸ Roger Mac Ginty, "Against Stabilization," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 1, no. 1 (2012): 20–30.
- ²⁹ *Mali: An Imposed Peace?* (New York/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2015); and Mac Ginty, "Against Stabilization," 21.
- ³⁰ de Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo."
- ³¹ Robert D. Lamb, "Fragile States Cannot Be Fixed with State-Building," *Commentary*, 31 July 2015, Center for Strategic and International Studies, www.csis.org/analysis/fragile-states-cannot-be-fixed-state-building.
- ³² Mac Ginty, "Against Stabilization," 21. Amitai Etzioni and others have argued that, historically, the only unambiguously successful instances of post-conflict state-building have been Germany and Japan; in other contexts (the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere), given prevailing sociological conditions, the outcomes have fallen well short. See Amitai Etzioni, "Reconstruction: An Agenda," *The Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10, no. 1 (2007): 3–24.
- ³³ Indeed, as we are witnessing in the case of Somalia, this policy of "restoring" a broken state or fabricating a new one, usually without serious analysis of why that state failed in the first place, has the potential to stoke competition or intensify rivalries between communities and clans as they or their leaders struggle to control the perceived resources that will come with this state, courtesy of the international community. See Jason Mosley, *Somalia's Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities* (London: Chatham House, 2015).
- ³⁴ de Vries, "The Ebb and Flow of Stabilization in the Congo;" and Delphine Mechoulan, "Redefining State Authority in Mali," *Global Observatory*, 28 June 2016, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2016/06/mali-minusma-united-nations-peacekeeping>.
- ³⁵ Nicole Ball, *Putting Governance at the Heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Programme* (The Hague: Clingendael, 2014), 9.
- ³⁶ This is residue of earlier public-sector reform thinking, when governing and bureaucratic elites were required to undertake often risky liberalization schemes, on the basis of an appeal not to self-interest but too often to abstract tenets of neo-liberal orthodoxy. While the risks were often fairly evident (food and subsidy riots, for instance), the economic rewards did not pan out. One of the notable aspects of civil service reform, and now SSR, for instance, is how little institution building funding went into actually improving human security through, for example, salaries and other conditions of service, with the result that even senior officers managing millions of dollars in donor funding subsisted on absurdly low salaries.
- ³⁷ Eboe Hutchful, *SSR Provisions in Peace Agreements: Main Report* (University of Birmingham Press, 2009), 40; and Eboe Hutchful, "Role of Security Sector Governance in Peacebuilding," in *Peacebuilding in Africa*, eds. Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi Dzinesa (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012).
- ³⁸ Erwin van Veen and Megan Price, *Securing Its Success, Justifying Its Relevance: Mapping a Way Forward for Security Sector Reform*, Clingendael Research Unit Policy Brief (The Hague: Clingendael, 2014).
- ³⁹ Arguably, this reimagining is further advanced, or at least more explicitly acknowledged, among donor countries than among recipients of SSR support. See Erwin Van Veen, *Improving Security and Justice Programming in Fragile Situations: Better Political Engagement, More Change Management*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016; and "The 'Technocracy Trap' of State-Building: How to Improve the Effectiveness and Legitimacy of Security and Justice Sector Reforms," report from a workshop by the German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin, 14 September 2016. For an assessment and evaluation from an African standpoint, see the AU Handbook on SSR Good Practices and Lessons Learned.

- ⁴⁰ “Joining up security in the Sahel,” *Africa Confidential* 55, no. 9 (24 April 2014). Available from www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/5593/Joining_up_security_in_the_Sahel.
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- ⁴³ Bagayoko, Hutchful, and Luckham, “Hybrid Security Governance in Africa.”
- ⁴⁴ See Eric Scheye, *Pragmatic Realism in Justice and Security Development: Supporting Improvement in the Performance of Non-State/Local Justice and Security Networks* (The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 2009); and *State-Provided Service, Contracting Out, and Non-State Networks: Justice and Security as Public and Private Goods and Services* (OECD, 2009).
- ⁴⁵ Frieda M’Cormack, “Gender, transitional justice and justice sector reform in Liberia,” unpublished paper prepared for the research network Hybrid Security Governance in Africa, African Security Sector Network (ASSN), June 2017.
- ⁴⁶ Hassan Abbas and Nadia Gerspacher, *The Irregulars: Vigilante Police-Security, Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2015). Also see: Eboe Hutchful, “Disposable or Indispensable? The monopoly on the use of force in the 21st century,” Think Piece No. 7, Reflection Group “Monopoly of the Use of Force 2.0?,” Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. The work and reports of the Global Reflection Group, established by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in 2014, are available from <http://www.fes.de/de/reflection-group-monopoly-on-the-use-of-force-20>.
- ⁴⁷ Martin Van Vliet, “The Challenges of Retaking Northern Mali,” *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 11–12 (2012); and Rodrigue Kone, “La Confrérie des Chasseurs Traditionnels Dozo en Côte d’Ivoire: Enjeux socio-culturels et dynamiques sécuritaires,” unpublished paper prepared for the research network “Hybrid Security Governance in Africa,” African Security Sector Network (ASSN), June 2017.
- ⁴⁸ Alice Hills, *Policing Post-Conflict Cities* (London: Zed Books, 2009), 202.
- ⁴⁹ Jonah Leff, “Pastoralists at War: Violence and Security in the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda Border Region,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 3, no. 2 (2009): 191. An example of the way in which endemic rural pastoralist-farmer conflicts may feed into wider and more violent conflicts is that of the Seleka and anti-Balaka in CAR (pastoralists are Muslim and farmer communities largely identify with Christianity or various forms of animism). See: International Crisis Group, “The Central African Republic’s Hidden Conflict,” Briefing No. 105, 12 December 2014.
- ⁵⁰ Kaley Fulton and Benjamin P. Nickels, “Africa’s Pastoralists: A New Battleground for Terrorism,” African Center for Strategic Studies, 11 January 2017. Available from <http://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-pastoralists-battleground-terrorism>. One example of this is the Macina Liberation Front of Hamadou Kouffa, which has carried out several attacks in central Mali since January 2015.
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3

The UN approach to SSR from a development perspective

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Introduction

Security sector reform (SSR) as a “discipline” has its roots in the development agenda,¹ and was spearheaded largely by development entities. For instance, the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID) was a frontrunner in this area and the first to develop its conceptual framework for SSR, in 2000. The first multilateral organization to develop guidelines and a handbook on SSR was the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in 2005 and 2008 respectively.

SSR has been promoted by development entities based on a number of core assumptions:

- There can be no development without peace and security, and no peace and security without development;
- SSR may provide an organizing principle and conceptual framework around which development and security practitioners can collaborate and work together to bridge the security-development nexus; and
- SSR would thus contribute positively to both security and development goals.²

Similar assumptions underpin the UN approach to SSR and were subjects of discussion during foundational workshops and debates on SSR among UN Member States in 2006 and 2007.³ It was acknowledged at the time that, while different UN entities had long provided a large and diverse array of support to national actors to re-establish or re-enforce security, the Organization had not applied a coherent approach to these efforts. Participants stressed that the UN must develop a conceptual framework for SSR in order to deliver SSR support more effectively. UN Member States emphasized in particular that UN development and security practitioners needed to collaborate better, to: support reform processes that are sustainable; underpin poverty reduction through enhanced security service delivery; and help develop accountable security sectors.⁴

This chapter sets out how the UN approach to SSR has evolved from a UN development perspective, by first examining the evolution of the UN approach to SSR at the policy, institutional, and operational levels, and subsequently, challenges to SSR from a development perspective and how they can be addressed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the UN system is jointly addressing major obstacles at the policy, institutional, and operational levels to enhance the nexus between security and development in SSR, and is bringing about sustainable changes in security sectors in countries where UN peace operations have a UN Security Council mandate as well as in non-mission contexts.

How has the UN SSR agenda evolved at different levels?

The political level

In recognition of the fact that the nature and root causes of violence had changed since 1945, the first in-depth political debates within the UN on the complexities of the security-development nexus emerged in the 1990s.⁵ Engaged in these debates were members of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC),⁶ responsible for providing direction to the UN Development System, and of the Security Council,⁷ responsible for peace and security – all of whom shared the view that root causes of violence should largely be understood to lie in the interconnected and multi-layered nature of people's insecurity and lack of development opportunities. Since then, the political discourse of UN governing bodies has continuously underscored that security and development are intrinsically linked and should be pursued in an integrated manner.

Still, it was not until 2006 that SSR featured in these debates as a dedicated concept or area of attention. It was then that Slovakia held a series of thematic debates on SSR, in view of its February 2007 Presidency of the Security Council. This resulted in the first-ever Security Council debate on SSR and the adoption of a Presidential Statement on the role of the UN in SSR support.⁸ As such, while the SSR agenda was spearheaded globally by development donors and organizations, its entry into the UN was not through ECOSOC or other UN development bodies, but through the Security Council.

Following SSR debates, the Security Council progressively mandated peacekeeping operations to advise and support national governments on SSR, with Sierra Leone and Burundi among the earliest examples. As such, SSR increasingly became a priority for UN peace operations. In 2014, another breakthrough was achieved in further formalizing the UN SSR agenda, when the Security Council adopted resolution 2151 (2014). This first UN resolution on SSR stresses that in *post-conflict contexts*, SSR is critical for peace and stability as well as poverty reduction.

The resolution was pushed forward by the co-chairs of the Group of Friends for SSR – Slovakia and South Africa – and recalls that SSR should be pursued within the overall framework of the rule of law and should emphasize national ownership along with accountable, transparent, and inclusive security sectors. It advocates for a sector-wide approach to SSR and highlights the important role of development actors in achieving the sustainability of SSR.⁹

Since its establishment in 2005, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)¹⁰ has also regularly discussed SSR as a crucial priority in peacebuilding contexts.¹¹ The PBC is one of the few UN organs that brings the governing bodies on development and security together: it is comprised of UN Member States from the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the Security Council, as well as the five top providers of peacekeepers to UN missions.¹² The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was also established, as a non-operational entity that draws on and brings together operational resources across the UN system on peacebuilding priorities such as SSR. The PBC and PBSO are supported by a Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) that provides financing across the security-development nexus, including to UN support to national SSR efforts.

Despite this, the intergovernmental body for development, ECOSOC, has never explicitly endorsed national SSR efforts as a core area of work in purely *development contexts*, nor has it explicitly acknowledged the importance of SSR for poverty reduction or adopted any reports of the Secretary-General emerging from the UN SSR agenda. Most aligned to the SSR agenda have been discussions within ECOSOC of concepts relating to human security and the rule of law.¹³ Rule of law is broadly defined within the UN as “a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards.”¹⁴ While neither the security sector nor SSR is unambiguously referred to in deliberations within ECOSOC or the General Assembly on rule of law, General Assembly resolution 67/1 does call attention to the importance of “strengthening security institutions that are accessible and responsive to the needs and rights of all individuals and which build trust and promote social cohesion and economic prosperity.”¹⁵ As such, the General Assembly has acknowledged SSR as a development priority within the overall umbrella of rule of law.

In addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by ECOSOC and the General Assembly in September 2015 includes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. In this way, ECOSOC and the General Assembly have both endorsed the promotion of peace as an essential development goal. While SDG 16 does not include references to security, security institutions, or SSR, it does affirm that UN Member States should promote peace and the rule of law as part of their development agendas and calls

for accountable and transparent institutions. Together, Agenda 2030 and General Assembly resolution 67/1 represent an indirect endorsement by the Assembly and ECOSOC that SSR is indeed part of the development agenda.

As for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it has placed its support to SSR in its rule of law programme, which sits within its democratic governance portfolio. From 2011 onwards, UNDP's Executive Board has approved strategic plans that explicitly acknowledge UNDP support to SSR along these lines.¹⁶

The institutional and policy level

Driven by the Security Council as a political issue, support to SSR was institutionalized in 2007 in the Office for Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). OROLSI was established on the recommendation of the Secretary-General to facilitate a holistic, integrated approach to UN support for rule of law and security institutions in peace operations.¹⁷ The Office consists of various units dedicated to SSR, police, justice and prison services, mine action, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). The SSR Unit is mandated to serve as the Secretariat for the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF),¹⁸ to promote UN system-wide coherence. The IASSRTF was also established in 2007 and is co-chaired by DPKO and UNDP. These co-chairs and the IASSRTF Secretariat have been instrumental in providing technical and political support to discussions taking place at the Member State level, including on Security Council resolution 2151 and SDG 16, as well as in promoting and enhancing regional cooperation on SSR, most notably with the African Union.

Of the fourteen IASSRTF members, eight report to and derive their mandate from the General Assembly and ECOSOC and are considered "UN development entities."¹⁹ Development entities require approval by their Executive Boards on three- to four-year strategic plans, which set out priority areas and the development interventions that will be supported at the field level. Country operations then align their strategic plans to these, before submitting them to the Executive Boards for approval and reporting them to ECOSOC.

The lack of recognition and prioritization of SSR by ECOSOC has inevitably created certain obstacles for UN development entities to engage in SSR, except through the IASSRTF. The IASSRTF has become a vehicle to institutionalize and further develop a coherent UN SSR approach through the development of Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (ITGNs) on SSR. In this process, various IASSRTF members have taken the lead in developing ITGNs in their specific area of expertise related to the SSR agenda, respecting their individual mandates but soliciting and integrating cross-cutting expertise from all members.²⁰

The operational level

Since Security Council debates on SSR and the establishment of the SSR Unit in DPKO in 2007, the number of mandates for SSR in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and special political missions (SPMs) has grown significantly. Dedicated components already existed for police and, in some cases, rule of law (focusing on the justice sector), so SSR components initially became focused on reforms in the defence sector.

UN development entities increased support to the security sector significantly starting in 2002, when the OECD agreed to include a large number of security sector support interventions within the definition of official development assistance (ODA).²¹ Apart from extensive comprehensive support to national security policies in both Iraq and Somalia, though, development entities have been mostly involved with police and justice reform elements of SSR, to date. UNDP, UNODC, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are implementing capacity development programming for police that addresses public sector reform and policing techniques like community-oriented policing, as well as providing equip-and-train activities. Support to police from UNDP, UN Women, and UNFPA is also aimed at reducing sexual and gender-based violence; and from UNICEF, at promoting children's rights and child protection.

In compliance with ITGNs, the UN approach to supporting national SSR efforts has become more integrated and comprehensive. The IASSRTEF has advocated for joint SSR assessments involving the development entities, as well as joint SSR programming that brings together a mission and a UN country team or two or more UN agencies in non-mission settings. Joint assessments in non-mission settings, or in non-peacebuilding contexts, remain limited; but these are likely to become more common in light of the sustaining peace agenda.

Joint assessments conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Iraq, and Guinea have all produced recommendations, some of which resulted in joint programming. The IASSRTEF, in collaboration with UNDP, issued a call for proposals to promote and encourage joint SSR programming at the country level. Projects were supported in Kosovo, Honduras, Myanmar, Iraq, Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Somalia. Currently, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Somalia (UNSOM) has a mandate to support state building, including in areas of SSR, and has developed a comprehensive approach to security with an integrated SSR Unit that involves DPKO and UNDP to ensure a coordinated political and developmental approach, focusing on good governance and public sector reform. Each of these contexts features UN security and development actors collaborating at the strategic and advisory levels. For example, the Gambia also has a dedicated team to support SSR, while in Burkina Faso, SSR advisory capacity

supported by DPKO is actually housed under UNDP in-country, an interesting arrangement providing joint support in a non-mission setting.

Since the establishment of the UN peacebuilding agenda in 2005, any number of thematic areas covering or strongly related to SSR have received more attention than SSR per se, often coupled with the establishment of dedicated inter-agency arrangements at the Headquarters level. Hence, coherence in the operational support provided by the UN to SSR has not developed solely through the evolving UN SSR policy and the IASSRTF. Inter-agency bodies related to SSR include: the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), established by the UN Executive Committee on Peace and Security in 2005 (co-chaired by UNDP and DPKO); the Task Force on Counter-Terrorism Implementation, established by the General Assembly in 2006 (co-chaired by DPA and UNODC); the UN Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, established by the UN SG Policy Committee 2011 (co-chaired by DPA and UNODC); the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law, established by the UN SG Policy Committee in 2012 (co-chaired by UNDP and DPKO); and the inter-agency Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, created by Security Council in 2009²² and endorsed by the General Assembly in 2013.²³

Among the most relevant of these to SSR is the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law (GFP). The GFP was initially cost-neutral and Headquarters-based, with the aim was to bring coherence to the work of the UN in mission settings. In DPKO, the OROLSI Police Division and Justice and Corrections Service were a part of this arrangement, but other OROLSI components, including the SSR Unit, were not initially included. Whereas the SSR work of the IASSRTF has remained primarily focused at the policy level, the GFP has become highly field-driven; for instance, supporting the establishment of joint programmes to strengthen and reform police, justice, and corrections institutions in the Central African Republic, Mali, Haiti, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, and Darfur, involving both peace operations as well as UN development agencies, usually with the UNDP acting as a coordinator and fund administrator as well as technical support provider.

Support to SSR also continues to be provided by individual UN entities in the field without any engagement by a dedicated inter-agency arrangement. Increasingly, this type of support employs integrated approaches that include both UN security and development entities. Typically, as with the GFP, the main vehicle for this collaboration is a joint rule of law programme for which the UNDP plays a coordination and administration role.

Whether joint SSR support is encouraged through an inter-agency arrangement or through individual UN entities, funding incentives have generally been a major

determinant of coherence. Financing through the Peacebuilding Fund, assessed contributions for inter-agency programmatic funding, voluntary contributions for joint programmes, and financing from the UNDP Global Rule of Law programme have all been significant boosts to UN coherence in SSR. In recent years, the UN and the World Bank have also increased their cooperation on SSR, through joint public expenditure reviews (PERs) at the country level. DPKO and UNDP also collaborated on a first-ever technical sourcebook designed to highlight the role played by public finance in the delivery of security and criminal justice services. The sourcebook offers a framework for SSR practitioners, to help them better understand how a security or justice sector can be rebuilt or reformed sustainably based on available resources and revenue predictions.²⁴

Additionally, in 2015, a number of high-level reviews were undertaken of the UN peace and security architecture.²⁵ The recommendations materializing from this process are focused on prevention and will bring the UN security and development pillars closer together at the operational level.²⁶

Challenges in SSR from a development perspective, and how can they be addressed

As the SSR agenda has evolved, several challenges have emerged. For one, SSR has frequently been misconstrued as exclusively a national security project, rather than a development priority. Generalized blueprints have also tended to dominate over context-specific plans, with an impact on policy and institutional structures. Moreover, financing remains unpredictable, and monitoring and evaluation of SSR support is limited. These challenges are explored in detail below, with corresponding recommendations.

SSR is often misunderstood and misapplied as an agenda for national security by military means

As a discipline, SSR was founded in principles of good governance – such as adherence to rule of law and human rights – and the objective of UN support to national SSR efforts is “to ensure that people feel safer through the enhanced effectiveness and accountability of security institutions operating under civilian control and within a framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights.”²⁷ The OECD, along with most other international organizations and bilateral donors, views the aims of SSR similarly and places accountability and civilian oversight at the centre of SSR in their respective policy frameworks. Nevertheless, among national and international UN counterparts and sometimes among UN practitioners themselves, a common misinterpretation persists that the SSR agenda is one of

national security by military means. This can be dangerously misapplied in policy and practice at the country level as a rationale for security sector capacity building that does not account for an inclusive and accountable sector based on democratic oversight and good governance.

Extending from the policy guidance of UN organs and the ODA criteria set out above, UN development entities can support the military from a rule of law and governance perspective. Development support is vital, for instance, to strengthening core ministry of defence functions, including as far as accountable budgeting, planning, procurement, and salary payments, as well as to the military in emergencies such as natural disasters or a sudden refugee influx. However, a military-centric focus often undermines rather than enhances human development and can make engagement by UN development entities virtually impossible. The following recommendations can help prevent this dilemma:

- UN leadership at the country level should put more emphasis on strategic advocacy and the education of national and international counterparts regarding the developmental approaches and principles of good governance that should underpin SSR.
- UN operational support to SSR should focus more strongly on human rights, accountability, and democratic oversight, and should be reduced anywhere it could result in a state military force becoming oppressive. UN development entities bring important expertise in good governance capacity development, which prevents corruption or misconduct in the security forces by establishing or supporting oversight institutions. ECOSOC members are particularly encouraged to provide stronger political support and direction to promote their involvement; for instance, by more explicitly underscoring that SSR, including development support to ministries of defence, is essential for development and for the achievement of SDG 16 in particular.

Priorities and entry points for SSR are often derived from general blueprints not specific context

Concepts of security vary widely depending on country context. Today's SSR challenges are also incredibly complex, involving corruption and human rights abuses instigated by the state, unprecedented levels of forced displacement, questions of legal identity, and concerns about violent extremism and organized crime. Further, the UN often works in contexts where traditional justice and customary security institutions are prevalent and even preferred over formal justice and security systems, or where formal systems are weak or absent. It is thus problematic that the international community, including UN entities and major bilateral donors, tends to apply SSR support models that can be deemed as fairly "Western" in nature, with SSR

programmes that in some cases look like blueprints that do not fit neatly into the confines of other (complicated) contexts.

These blueprints can lead, for instance, to a siloed focus on the ministries of defence and interior as the first entry points for SSR. Yet, in some contexts, support is better delivered through parliaments, ministries of justice, informal justice and security arrangements, local governments, anti-corruption bodies, human rights commissions, or civil society. Similarly, the provision of criminal justice services to a population is often seen as the best way to instil trust in security forces. However, trust is sometimes more effectively achieved through effective traffic control, eliminating illegal housing evictions, ensuring the non-corrupt provision of identity cards, and developing community-oriented engagement during emergencies. Non-contextualized SSR support is also frequently characterized by expensive support to highly bureaucratic state-centric military, police, or justice models with large overheads and complex command and control structures. In some cases, this calls for costly infrastructure in areas where local populations have already constructed resilient local bodies.

The UN is well-positioned to work closely with communities to understand local security and justice needs, conduct multi-disciplinary analyses, and design appropriate and comprehensive interventions. However, the full potential of UN SSR support is often unmet due to a reliance on generalized blueprints, combined with unhelpful conceptual, institutional, and financial incentives (as explained in the next section). The following recommendations can help the UN provide better context-specific support:

- The UN should place a stronger emphasis on multi-disciplinary analysis and on understanding local contexts as a necessary basis for any SSR support. This is vital to designing appropriate and effective interventions that improve security and justice, and to preventing harmful interventions that undermine local structures.
- The UN should strengthen its current collaboration with the World Bank and increase engagement on economic projections, to ascertain the realistic financial capacities of national authorities and local governments over time. This should complement UN analysis and should inform SSR advice on, for instance, the composition of military and police. It should also prevent or limit overinvestment in capacities and structures that cannot be maintained by national authorities.
- The UN, and UNDP in particular, should much better utilize extensive expertise, partnerships, and programme support in areas such as institutional capacity development in order to strengthen core government functions and the capacities of security ministries to deliver services (whether these services are related to criminal justice, traffic control, passports, or disaster response), as well as to strengthen local governance, parliaments, disaster risk reduction, and poverty

reduction. This would also play a role in addressing SSR-relevant issues such as demobilization or the prevention of youth engagement in conflict.

Blueprints for SSR support are reinforced by policy and related institutional structures

Because the UN's system-wide approach to SSR evolved alongside a number of other strongly interlinked and interrelated system-wide UN areas – such as DDR, rule of law, transnational organized crime, and sexual violence in conflict – for which the relationship with SSR is unclear at the policy and operational levels, these unresolved policy issues impact UN institutional arrangements at the Headquarters level and are often mirrored at the country level. This affects operational support. From the standpoint of development, it is particularly pressing that the relationship between rule of law and SSR is further clarified. For instance, SSR is placed within the framework of rule of law at the policy level, but peace operations often have a separate rule of law unit exclusively covering the justice sector, along with a police unit and an SSR unit, all with separate reporting lines. As a result, SSR units in peace operations, which increasingly apply comprehensive approaches to security, including supporting national security policies, are doing so independent from rule of law and police components. To overcome some of these issues, the SSR Unit in DPKO has recently joined the GFP arrangement at the Headquarters level to build coherence between rule of law and SSR, but the collaboration will take time to be fully implemented at the field level.

On the UNDP side, support to defence, police, justice, and corrections are all placed within the rule of law programme, which encourages a coherent SSR approach. However, silos continue to exist where police and justice programmes remain separate at the country level, or where it has been challenging to bring justice and police support together to address the criminal justice chain. This is generally due to donor earmarking and programme or project design (e.g. separate outputs for justice and police), or to staffing profiles – justice sector experts are hired for their experience within the justice sector and police experts for their work within the police, but these experts often lack experience with overall reform in the area of rule of law.

The following recommendations can help the UN resolve policy and structural obstacles to SSR:

- UN leadership should build on the UN prevention agenda, policy committee decisions, and the GFP review to clarify the relationship between rule of law and SSR at the policy, institutional, and operational levels. The GFP should be used to achieve coherence in country-level support to national SSR efforts.
- In peace operations, rule of law, police, and SSR units should be integrated, and should include development actors, to work on the basis of joint outcomes

and programmes or joint frameworks under a comprehensive justice and SSR approach. The UN should also make more concerted efforts to recruit staff with experience in comprehensive reforms that extend beyond one single component area.

Financing is often insufficient for long-term and coherent SSR support

The Security Council continues to be the main body mandating UN support to SSR in countries with peace operations, with the DPKO SSR Unit serving as primary Headquarters support to those operations. Security Council mandates are often extensive and open-ended, but the resources allotted to SSR are usually limited and directed at quick impact projects; and when no funding is awarded to SSR, UN missions engage strictly in an advisory capacity. Further, SSR efforts are often uncoordinated and disconnected from work taking place in the justice sector or in service of the wider public sector reform agenda, because funding remains ad hoc and sporadic. Meanwhile, development actors may struggle to secure funds for SSR, because the work is seen as the remit of the peace operation.

In non-mission settings, particularly in development contexts, financing SSR and integrated UN approaches is a growing challenge. Without strong support from ECOSOC in making SSR a priority for developing countries, it remains difficult to maintain financing and political support for support to SSR by development entities. And while the DPKO SSR Unit is mandated to provide system-wide support in mission *and* non-mission settings, DPKO is financed by the peacekeeping support account and does not have access to financing for non-peacekeeping settings. So far, UN reforms on sustaining peace do not appear likely to alter this fundamental structural obstacle, even as the sustaining peace agenda further prioritizes cross-pillar approaches that cut across all phases of a conflict cycle as central to the work of the Organization. In countries classified as peacebuilding, the PBC offers an opportunity for additional resources, especially in transition contexts, by encouraging joint and sustainable approaches to SSR.

The following recommendations can help the UN fill financial gaps that impact SSR support:

- To overcome financial limitations and expand joint work on SSR, the UN should establish integrated units in mission settings that operate system-wide and mobilize resources either by advocating for assessed contributions from the mission mandate or bring in voluntary contributions from donors to support implementation of the mission mandate on SSR.
- In non-mission settings, the UN Secretariat and UN development entities should consider establishing an umbrella for SSR expertise from the UN Secretariat

at the UNDP, in existing rule of law teams, and should engage with PBC and development donors to bring financial resources for longer-term reform.

- ECOSOC Member States and PBC Member States should leverage the reform agenda of the current Secretary-General to increase attention on SSR as a priority for development, the sustaining peace agenda, and the prevention of conflict by engaging the PBC and ECOSOC to endorse more resources for SSR in both mission and non-mission contexts.

Shortcomings in monitoring and evaluating UN SSR support and in demonstrating results

Compared to peace operations, development projects are generally required to provide much more detailed evidence of results to donors. One of the biggest shortcomings of UN SSR support from a development perspective is how difficult it has been to demonstrate the effects of SSR support on the accountability and effectiveness of security institutions, and further that this accountability and effectiveness has led to increased safety, security, poverty reduction, and human development. While the World Bank's 2011 World Development Report and other sources emphasize that SSR is vital for development, there is little direct data to show how UN SSR support has directly impacted poverty reduction in specific countries.

Among the challenges to demonstrating the effects of SSR support are the short-term, one-year mandates of peace operations. This essentially discourages the UN from designing longer-term engagements or the monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure results beyond short-term outputs (such as people trained, equipment delivered, etc.). The UN is seeking to overcome this through joint programming with UN development entities, but it remains challenging to measure impact at the outcome level. Other challenges are related to some of the political and conceptual issues set out above. For instance, in some countries where SSR has negative political connotations, the UN has provided SSR support without necessarily labelling it as such, which makes it rather difficult to measure its impact. Finally, though ITGNs provide a good guide, some remaining conceptual issues make it a challenge to develop good SSR indicators against which to measure results.

The following recommendation can help the UN better assess SSR outcomes:

- The IASSRTF and the GFP should support the development of a multi-year joint monitoring and evaluation framework that is flexible enough to be contextualized at the country level. This would support UN field offices to measure all interventions and projects on SSR and rule of law in concert. While various tools exist to obtain relevant information, political commitment and investment are necessary to ensure that impact over time is measured. This task could be housed

under the Resident Coordinator system and should be linked to SDG 16 in close collaboration with national authorities.

Conclusion

The UN has made great strides in developing an approach to SSR that adheres to founding principles and assumptions, yet obstacles remain at the political, policy, and operational levels. The development-security nexus has long been acknowledged by UN Member States and it is clear that both UN development entities and security entities have a vital role to play in the provision of support to national SSR efforts.²⁸ A more explicit endorsement by ECOSOC of SSR as a development priority, including in non-peacekeeping contexts, would help in advancing and improving the sustainability and effectiveness of UN SSR support.

In many cases, the UN approach to SSR has provided an organizing principle and conceptual framework that has allowed development and security practitioners to collaborate in order to bridge the security-development nexus. However, depending on the political context, other conceptual frameworks sometimes prove more useful to advancing SSR. On top of this, conceptual confusion and institutional silos, coupled with funding challenges, continue to hinder optimal collaboration. UN SSR support should pursue more sustainable and locally-driven approaches, avoiding blueprinted support packages.

Lastly, SSR clearly contributes to both security and development goals, but there is a lack of data and monitoring and evaluation to measure the impact of UN SSR support. Moving forward, it is vital that the UN demonstrate *how* its support to national SSR efforts has ultimately enhanced the safety and development of societies.

Notes

- ¹ See Michael Brzoska, *Development Donors and the Concept of Security Sector Reform*, Occasional Paper no. 4, (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2003).
- ² See Albrecht Schnabel and Vanessa Farr, "Returning to the Development Roots of Security Sector Reform," in *Back to the Roots: Security Sector Reform and Development*, eds. Albrecht Schnabel and Vanessa Farr (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2012), 3–4.
- ³ United Nations, 5632nd Meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.5632), 20 February 2007; Security Council Report, *Update Report: Security Sector Reform*, 14 February 2007.
- ⁴ United Nations, *Multilateral and Regional Approaches to Security Sector Reform: Lessons for the Development of a UN SSR Concept*, report from the Roundtable co-organised by Slovakia and Canada, New York, 8 November 2006; United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2007/3), 21 February 2007.
- ⁵ United Nations, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping (A/47/277-S/24111)*, 17 June 1992; United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security (1994)*; United Nations, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809), 21 August 2000;

- United Nations, Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/564), 2 December 2004; United Nations, In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All (A/59/2005), 21 March 2005.
- ⁶ ECOSOC is the UN governing body for sustainable development. It has 54 members elected by the General Assembly. Seats are allotted based on geographical representation.
- ⁷ The Security Council has the sole authority to take measures that impinge upon national sovereignty in the interest of the maintenance of peace and security. The Council has 15 members, including five permanent members (US, China, Russia, France, and UK) with veto power and ten non-permanent members that are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.
- ⁸ Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2007/3).
- ⁹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ¹⁰ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1645 (S/RES/1645), 20 December 2005; United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 60/180 (A/RES/60/180), 20 December 2005.
- ¹¹ See for example United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (A/RES/70/262), 12 May 2016.
- ¹² This was proposed in 2005 by Secretary-General Kofi Annan. See United Nations, In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All (A/59/2005), 21 March 2005. It was also endorsed by Security Council Resolution 1645 (S/RES/1645) and General Assembly Resolution 60/180 (A/RES/60/180).
- ¹³ On human security, see United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 66/290 (A/RES/66/290), 25 October 2012; and United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/701), 8 March 2010. On rule of law see United Nations, Economic and Social Council Resolution 2004/25 (21 July 2004) and 2006/25 (27 July 2006).
- ¹⁴ See reports of the Secretary-General on the rule of law beginning with United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/616), 23 August 2004; and United Nations, Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (A/RES/67/1), 30 November 2012.
- ¹⁵ United Nations, Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law (A/RES/67/1), para. 11.
- ¹⁶ For example see UNDP Strategic Plans 2011–2013 and 2014–2017.
- ¹⁷ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/858/Add.1), 17 April 2007.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 205, 206, and 210.
- ¹⁹ These are: UNDP, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Office of Under Secretary General on Africa (OSAA), and UN Women.
- ²⁰ The current set of ITGNs, published in 2012, consists of guidance notes on: (i) national ownership of SSR (led jointly by UNDP and DPKO); (ii) gender-responsive SSR (led by UN Women); (iii) peace processes and SSR (led by DPA); (iv) democratic governance of the security sector (led by UNDP); (v) UN support to national security policy- and strategy-making processes (led by DPKO). An additional guidance note, on transnational organized crime and SSR (led by UNODC), was issued in 2016.
- ²¹ “Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation,” in *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (Paris: OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2001), 119.
- ²² United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1888 (S/RES/1888), 30 September 2009.
- ²³ United Nations, A Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict (A/68/633), 3 December 2013.
- ²⁴ Bernard Harborne et al, eds., *Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, United Nations, 2017).

- ²⁵ See United Nations, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (2015); United Nations; Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490), 29 June 2015; United Nations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95–S/2015/446), 17 June 2015; Security Council Resolution 1645 (S/RES/1645); and General Assembly Resolution 60/180 (A/RES/60/180).
- ²⁶ Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490).
- ²⁷ United Nations, Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (2012), 1.
- ²⁸ As reflected in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/1 on the rule of law, Security Council resolution 2151 on SSR, and SDG 16 in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

4

From peacebuilding to sustaining peace and preventing conflict: What role for SSR?

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Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a range of intra-state conflicts across the developing world that have led to the breakdown of states and to humanitarian crises of various proportions in places such as the Balkans, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. This security landscape, which confounded initial expectations of a “peace dividend” at the end of the Cold War, is also transforming the international regime of political and security governance.¹ Even though the end of the Cold War permitted a shift in focus from national security to human security, it did not, per se, result in enduring peace. Rather, intra-state conflicts proliferated while inter-state conflicts declined. Simultaneously, new or worsening sources of insecurity, including cybercrime, trafficking, organized crime, and Ebola, do not respect borders.

Much has changed since the UN first developed its traditional peacekeeping approach, in which military personnel were typically interposed between recognized fighting forces to keep a peace that had, in principle, been arranged. The UN has since adapted its approach to an ever-changing terrain in which conflicting parties innovate forms of violence to inflict maximum damage on their opponents. During this process, the lines between the domestic and international, military and civilian, and state and society have become blurred.²

So far, the UN’s record in terms of building lasting peace and instituting a functioning political order has been mixed, even when assessed against the minimal criterion of achieving short-term stability. While the UN endured an utter failure in Somalia in the 1990s for example, it was able to restore a semblance of political order elsewhere, and in some instances, took over the entire administration of conflict-ravaged states until a functioning political order was instituted. This was the

case in Cambodia, East Timor, and Kosovo. As the international community gained more experience in interventions to restore stability and build peace, the approach was adapted, and the perspective, sequencing, and priorities evolved. Accordingly, there has been a shift in attention, from restoring order and ensuring an early exit via elections and the transfer of power to elected authority, to building the institutions of the state – including security institutions – and engaging the wider society beyond the state.

In the course of addressing these challenges, there emerged the need for a contemporary framework by which to operationalize the foundational provisions of the Charter in the search for peace. The Secretary-General's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*, defined peacebuilding as activities undertaken to build structures and processes that sustain peace.³ By 2005, a peacebuilding architecture was in place, consisting of the Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office, and Peacebuilding Fund. However, until recently, the urgency of conflict management has focused the efforts of the UN and the broader international system only on the aftermath of conflict. The current conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda, which grew out of the report of the 2015 Advisory Group of Experts, is the culmination of a normative evolution that now encompasses the entire peace continuum beyond post-conflict contexts.

This move from post-conflict peacebuilding to a more comprehensive sustaining peace approach is central to the UN SSR agenda, given that SSR has been described as both a “tool” and a “thematic area” of peacebuilding.⁴ This chapter identifies and discusses the key elements manifested in the evolution of the UN's peacebuilding agenda since its inception in the early 1990s. The chapter is divided into four major parts. This introduction is followed by an analytical framework, which focuses on the evolution of UN policy on peacebuilding and the linkages between peacebuilding and SSR and serves as the basis for observations on SSR and peacebuilding presented in part three. The fourth part of the chapter offers policy advice for the future UN conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda.

SSR and peacebuilding: An analytical framework

The following section traces the connection between SSR and peacebuilding, and outlines the evolution of the UN's peacebuilding doctrine towards a sustaining peace approach, as a means to draw observations and recommendations. The core conceptualizations of SSR and peacebuilding, as distinguished from how they have frequently been applied in practice, are closely aligned. However, political and practical realities have often prevented the realization of intuitive and necessary

connections between the two on the ground. This chapter is based on two pillars of analysis: inherent linkages between peacebuilding and SSR, and the relevance of peacebuilding doctrine for SSR.

Linkages between peacebuilding and SSR

SSR and peacebuilding are fundamentally concerned with the creation and maintenance of accountable institutions upon which peace and socio-economic development can be based, hence their common relevance to Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. As has been observed elsewhere, in conflict-affected states, lasting stability and development require a shift away from hard security towards a citizen- and governance-centred security agenda.⁵ SSR is a critical element of peacebuilding because the security sector is often the “face of the state” to its citizens, and its value is closely linked to legitimacy and accountability. SSR is therefore a tool for peacebuilding in that “a democratic and accountable security sector is critical for conflict management and the preservation of peace and security,” as a report of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office has noted.⁶ Heiner Hänggi has made a similar observation on the importance of security in peacebuilding efforts: “If peace is to be lasting, the security needs of both the state and its population must be addressed equally and in parallel with political and socio-economic aspects of reconstruction.”⁷ Peacebuilding is thus deeply reliant upon SSR both as a tool and a factor of success, without which development gains can be quickly overturned by the next crisis, which may be caused by poorly governed security institutions or opposition to them.

The long-term perspective required for peacebuilding also has the potential to help mitigate the tendency in some cases to implement narrow, short-term “SSR” efforts that focus on train-and-equip exercises rather than on the transformative and long-term engagement needed for sustainable reform of security institutions. A peacebuilding lens can not only bring SSR back to its holistic, preventative, and development-centred origins, it can also help expand the scope of the security sector being reformed to include non-statutory security actors beyond the central government. The Peacebuilding Fund’s support for the development of local security committees in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia represents a good example.⁸ The UN’s growing emphasis on sustaining peace and addressing the full continuum of peace, from prevention to post-conflict, only further underlines the linkages between SSR and peacebuilding.

The evolution of UN peacebuilding doctrine, and its relevance for SSR

The UN's peacebuilding doctrine has evolved significantly from 1992 to the present, with key implications and lessons for the UN approach to SSR. In 1992, *An Agenda for Peace* reflected a post-Cold War movement towards human security, envisioned to include an economic and social focus in international interventions. However, peacebuilding was still viewed as a post-conflict phenomenon involving the arrival of UN peacebuilders after peace agreements had been signed to mark the end of a conflict.⁹ By 1995, the Secretary-General acknowledged in his *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* that post-conflict peacebuilding measures "can also support preventive diplomacy."¹⁰ This coincided with a growing understanding that peacebuilding encompasses conflict prevention and management.¹¹ As with SSR, however, peacebuilding remained mostly associated with post-conflict activities, frequently as part of multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations in support of a peace agreement, in which, by the Secretary-General's own admission, "the United Nations already has an entrée."¹² This limitation was not merely practical but also political: "mostly due to intervention/sovereignty dilemmas among Member States, peacebuilding was restricted to the post-conflict terrain and prevention of the recurrence of conflict."¹³

Peacebuilding's characterization as a post-conflict activity closely tied to SSR was underlined in a presidential statement on post-conflict peacebuilding by the Security Council in 2005, which noted even before the formal enunciation of the UN approach to SSR that "priorities in the post-conflict environment should include [. . .] security sector and economic and social reform."¹⁴ Later that year, UN Security Council resolution 1645 formally established what would become known as the peacebuilding architecture: the Peacebuilding Commission, an intergovernmental advisory body, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office within the Secretariat and the project-based Peacebuilding Fund, all firmly oriented towards post-conflict peacebuilding.¹⁵

A common approach to international peacebuilding developed from the field practice of the UN and other international peacebuilders, whereby peace agreements are signed by warring factions, followed by a transitional period – often featuring a transitional government or transitional administration – and then by elections, after which the major peacebuilding agenda is declared achieved.¹⁶ Peacebuilding and most other international state-building efforts are confined to this period, after which, a Country Coordinator and UN Country Team pursue the "normal" development agenda. Peacebuilding is thus "under-recognized and under-prioritized,"¹⁷ and the prevention of armed conflict has not been given sufficient attention and resources in the actual practice of peacebuilding interventions.

Still, an emerging consensus at the UN indicates that the conception of peacebuilding as a post-conflict activity may be changing, or may indeed have already changed. Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) assumed the definition of sustaining peace put forth by the Advisory Group of Experts, which moves beyond post-conflict peacebuilding to an approach that “encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.”¹⁸ This will be particularly relevant for SSR efforts going forward and reflects some observations that were already revealed through the evolution of peacebuilding, some of which are detailed below.

Key elements for SSR and peacebuilding

Based on the linkages between peacebuilding and SSR noted above, the following observations drawn from the UN’s experience thus far in peacebuilding support since the 1990s are particularly salient as both peacebuilding and SSR activities at the UN move towards a more preventative, sustaining peace approach.

Security is political

UN experiences in peacebuilding and in supporting SSR processes demonstrate and affirm a key observation of the 2015 report of the High-level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), that “lasting peace is achieved not through military and technical engagements, but through political solutions.”¹⁹ The report emphasizes that the ramifications of “the primacy of politics” revolve around inclusive approaches to peace.

From the external perspective, supporting national SSR processes is a function of the national security interests of those states/actors providing support, and of broader geo-strategic politics. What is supported, how it is supported, when and where such support is provided, and the measurement of “success” are all defined and confined by this reality. Therefore, neither peacebuilding nor SSR is altruistic; both are instead the products of the domestic politics of supporting states and the external relations between them. In this regard, UN SSR support includes efforts to promote dialogue and build consensus among and between international “partners.” Although the focus has primarily been on post-conflict states, such efforts are not divorced from, but rather, reflect the interests of external actors concerning counter-terrorism and migration. The sensitivities and suspicions of some UN Member States in the global South (embodied in the G77) that such agendas could become a pretext for unwanted interventions in their internal affairs, particularly where the security sector

is concerned, has often led UN agencies to pursue a “strict” development agenda,²⁰ as though development failure and success are immune from the influence of politics. The tendency to relabel development projects as peacebuilding undertakings looms large.²¹

Within states undergoing peacebuilding, the political nature of SSR is manifested in domestic political will to address the legitimacy and inclusiveness of the process of building security institutions, as well as in the institutions themselves. Fundamentally, this is a question of whether a security sector will be not merely strengthened but *reformed*, in part through the development of a common national vision of security with the participation of excluded and vulnerable groups as well as broad agreement among constituencies on the threats facing the country and the institutions needed to confront them. Thus, the impact and success of SSR in these countries do not rely solely on the efficacy of specific security institutions but also on their political and public legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness – all of which are only possible through inclusive reform processes and structures. Continuing challenges with constructing political consensus out of the multiple, and arguably conflicting, political representations in Somalia, for example, have had a debilitating impact on the reform of the security sector by a central government struggling to pull along its constituent regional parts.

Given that the quality and functioning of institutions depend on the settlement that emerges from the power balance between actors negotiating the basic rules of the game,²² the politically transformative impact of SSR interventions is essential. To the extent that the powers of different actors, classes, groups, or influential individuals whose interests are best served by a more peaceful, just, and inclusive social order are strengthened, expanded, and linked with other likeminded actors, they contribute to altering the nature of this settlement and its security and development outcomes. Whenever there are “critical masses” of reformist and transformational leadership at various levels whose interest is best served by a more peaceful and just political order, preventative measures are likely to have a higher chance of success.

Instances of catalytic funding and intervention during periods of imminent instability, and their effect on conflict outcomes, indicate the relevance of supporting, nurturing, and strengthening constituencies with transformative potential. Interventions by the UN Development Programme (UNDP)-UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA)²³ peace and development advisors (PDAs) in a number of countries are evidence of this. In Malawi’s contentious 2014 election, PDAs worked alongside DPA mediation experts and the UNDP to support Public Affairs Committees that served as “insider mediators,” the role of which was instrumental in mobilizing a series of “peace voices” from a cross section of Malawian society that, in the end, limited the extent of violence.²⁴ Other conflict prevention intervention efforts also demonstrate that such interventions are more

likely to be successful when they are backed by local constituencies supportive of peace. In Nigeria, the UNDP supported National Peace Committees composed of key personalities, which were instrumental in preventing election-related violence in 2015.²⁵

Transformation does not occur overnight

Closely related to these political dynamics is the need to harness *sustained* support from potentially transformative constituencies beyond the state. Within societies undergoing reform, the central and disproportionate role of the state relative to other political constituencies often leads to a palpable gap between policy and practice in the UN's peacebuilding efforts in general, and SSR in particular. The transformation of state-society relations in fragile states is therefore essential to peacebuilding.

In post-conflict settings, healing societal wounds caused by war while sufficiently reconciling warring factions in order to shape some sort of political community requires far longer than is accounted for in contemporary UN peacebuilding interventions. According to the World Bank, transforming fragile institutions into fairly effective ones took between 15–30 years in countries considered to have undergone fast transformations.²⁶ As the Advisory Group of Experts noted, “sustaining peace after conflict is a particularly lengthy and costly challenge. Evidence strongly suggests that undue haste and a narrow focus on cessation of hostilities rather than addressing root causes are significant factors in relapse.”²⁷ Success in peacebuilding, and SSR in particular, is a process, not an event.

This highlights the value of transformative processes not only in preventing relapse in post-conflict settings, but also in avoiding the outbreak of conflict initially. An ongoing challenge to the peacebuilding agenda has been the significant dependence of the UN, as an intergovernmental entity, on powerful states that aim to manage crisis rather than prevent it.²⁸ An under-emphasis on peacebuilding as prevention is in part connected to a global constellation of forces unwilling to commit politically and financially to prevent conflict. In the meantime, actors in developing countries are often wary about peacebuilding interventions that begin prior to the eruption of a crisis, which they frequently perceive as “external interference” and “threats to national security.”

The long-dominant post-conflict peacebuilding paradigm is only now beginning to take on a sustaining peace approach, and SSR faces a similar transition from a “crisis response” impulse towards a longer-term view. The framing of peacebuilding and SSR as crisis response has tended to focus primarily on hard security concerns related to war and violence. As such, efforts to address conflict situations early on so that they do not reach crisis level, and to sustain peace where it already exists, attract much less attention and far fewer resources. This is reflected in the field,

where UN peacebuilding and SSR are often confined to post-crisis phenomena in multidimensional peace operations. Once the Security Council approves an operation, the exit strategy tends to hinge on the transfer of the task of maintaining peace and public order to national authorities and, in select cases such as in Sierra Leone, to special peacebuilding offices. Thus, the marriage between peacebuilding and post-crisis situations is forged out of practical expediency, not long-term strategy. As an organ primarily concerned with international peace and security, the Security Council is likely to privilege policy options and strategies that bring short-term stability, with unintended side-effects for the deeper roots of conflict. In light of this, a greater commitment from all Member States to long-term SSR and peacebuilding may be required through enhanced General Assembly engagement.

The UN's comparative advantage: helping states help themselves

While the UN has a developed normative framework for guiding SSR processes, actual practice – usually involving a broad range of actors beyond the UN, and particularly, bilateral and regional actors – often falls short of these normative principles. The UN's relatively recent entry into SSR, combined with the prevalence of (often bilateral) interventions that emphasize short-term train-and-equip interventions, has resulted in coordination that is both internal, among UN actors, as well as external, with other actors on the ground. In practice, this means: reform that is supposed to be holistic is frequently piecemeal; compliance with human rights standards is not a given if a government disregards these rights when its interests are threatened; national ownership is envisioned to include citizen ownership but the actual “owners” are frequently governing elites; and the enhancement of the functional effectiveness of the state overrides aims to achieve security for all. Moreover, while the UN does engage in reform of specific security institutions, bilateral and regional actors have been known to be more prominent and enjoy greater credibility in these programmatic interventions. Thus, the UN is one of many actors in peacebuilding and SSR and its comparative advantage relative to other actors lies in its role as the custodian of SSR norms, principles, and ideals on which states should base the governance and reform of their security institutions.

In this conceptualization, the UN “helps states help themselves” through guidance on sector-wide SSR processes, in line with articulated norms. This emphasis on support for security architectures and policies, as opposed to programming, is in line with Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) on SSR, which notes that the UN is “particularly well positioned to support and coordinate sector-wide reforms as necessary in specific situations and has broad experience as well as comparative advantages in this area working in close collaboration with relevant international and regional actors.”²⁹

Regionalism and multiple levels of security governance have impact

As noted by the Advisory Group of Experts, “numerous and varied stakeholders – public and private, national, regional and international – share the responsibility for peacebuilding.”³⁰ The same holds true for SSR, which concerns national-level institutions, regional interactions and cross-border security issues, local security providers (including informal institutions), and global dynamics such as international arms flows, terrorism, and the broader geo-strategic agenda.

UN activities must take these multiple levels of security governance into account, with an understanding that different levels can impact each other both positively and negatively. And here, the regional aspect is particularly important. On one hand, “contemporary conflicts show a strong tendency to spill across borders,” and “regionalization of conflicts sees States intervening militarily across boundaries, directly or through proxies, and exacerbating local drivers of conflict.”³¹ This is notably the case in the Sahel region,³² where chronic security sector deficits are aggravated by regional trafficking and terrorism, and in a number of countries that have recently hosted peacekeeping operations and have faced challenging cross-border conflict dynamics – the most salient being Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire, and Liberia. Not all multi-level impacts are negative, however. As a regional instrument, the African Union (AU) has developed continental peacebuilding and SSR policies, including the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy and the AU SSR Policy Framework, to guide regional efforts. Similar work has been undertaken at the sub-regional level by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has developed a Security Sector Reform and Governance Framework and has supported SSR in various African contexts, such as in Mali, Liberia, and most recently, Guinea-Bissau (as part of ECOMIB).³³

Fragmentation necessitates “working better together”

Coordination and coherence, which have routinely been acknowledged as important to improving outcomes of the UN approach to peacebuilding, have proven difficult to achieve in practice. The Advisory Group of Experts attributes this to the fragmentation of the UN into separate “silos,” each of which has a different understanding of its mission, its mandate, and of peacebuilding.³⁴ Further, with each of the UN’s principal organs “hold[ing] pieces of the peacebuilding puzzle [. . .] the fragmentation between them is reproduced throughout the United Nations: within the Secretariat, between the Secretariat and the rest of the Organization, and in operations on the ground where peacebuilding actually takes place.”³⁵ This invariably impacts SSR support as well.

Thus, crafting organizational structures, operating principles, and modalities as well as generating the political interest to coherently respond to this conflation has proved challenging. The Secretary-General's efforts to reform the UN's peace and security architecture offer the potential to address these coordination issues, particularly as they relate to peacebuilding and SSR. 1 January 2019 saw a restructuring into a Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and a Department of Peace Operations (DPO), as well as the establishment of a single political-operational structure with regional responsibilities, reporting to both departments. The reform also established a Standing Principals' Group of the Secretary-General and the heads of both DPPA and DPO.³⁶ The relocation of the Peacebuilding Support Office into DPPA may offer an opportunity to better integrate a long-term peacebuilding perspective into daily political work, while closer inter-departmental coordination could further enhance the role of the UN SSR Unit at headquarters in supporting SSR efforts in both mission and non-mission settings, including through the DPPA-DPO single regional structure.

Funding matters

The predictability and sustainability of funding is important for successful peacebuilding and SSR, which are, in their truest sense, long-term and transformative activities, as described above. Yet, over the years, programmatic efforts have frequently been undertaken without any guarantee of predictable future resources. The Advisory Group of Experts noted that, in supporting SSR and rule of law activities, "even if mission budgets appear, from the outside, to be considerable, a closer examination reveals that, somewhat astonishingly, they come without any of the resources necessary for programming in those core mandate areas. Instead, program resources depend on the unpredictable generosity of donors;" it also observed that "a solution must be found to ensure predictable funding for critical program efforts towards sustaining peace."³⁷ Peacebuilding activities that lack a long-term perspective differ little from quick-impact projects and cannot bring lasting peace. Similarly, short-term funding for training exercises that do not address the political and institutional challenges of the security sector cannot be expected to have major impact. While financing alone does not guarantee well-designed interventions, predictable financing does open up possibilities for more comprehensive SSR support frameworks that span multiple years.³⁸ Such funding must also be a national responsibility, and not primarily externally derived.

Conclusion and recommendations

The principles outlined above point to the need for a long-term and comprehensive approach to SSR, not only in post-conflict contexts but also for sustaining peace. The UN must continue to shift from “what it knows,” meaning old habits of reacting to and managing conflict, to “what it must (re-)learn,” which involves fully committing to a sustaining peace paradigm. Among other things, this will entail a more preventative approach to security governance. Specific recommendations include the following:

Continue to employ the UN’s comparative advantage in sector-wide reform:

Despite the challenges of coordinating SSR actors both inside and outside the UN, sector-wide support represents the UN’s competitive advantage and should remain central to its SSR engagement. Bilateral actors may provide substantial implementation support to SSR measures, including through training and by enhancing individual elements of the security sector. However, in the final analysis, the UN is uniquely situated to advise and support national efforts aimed at sustaining peace through inclusive and accountable security institutions. These efforts will also support other wider peacebuilding aims. For example, changing the composition of the security sector to better reflect a country’s demographic composition and integrating previously opposed armed groups into a cohesive national army can play important roles in advancing reconciliation and addressing previous sources of grievance.

Keep host states accountable: This chapter has noted the close link between peacebuilding and SSR, and it is important that host states do not take support in either of these areas for granted. In other words, peacebuilding support should remain coupled with improved governance of the security sector. Development assistance in the name of peacebuilding cannot become an excuse for inaction on urgently needed reforms to security institutions, nor should an ongoing UN mission presence allow a host country to delay the difficult task of advancing reconciliation and adequately funding security institutions. Support must be extended within a framework of mutual accountability, as outlined in the 2011 Busan Principles,³⁹ such that states define their development priorities and commit to outcomes with international support. For SSR, this involves outlining strategic priorities and commitments through instruments such as statements of mutual commitment with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, peacebuilding plans, or other similar compacts.

Further incorporate the work of the Peacebuilding Commission into the work of the Security Council: Given the Security Council’s tendency to focus attention on the “crisis of the moment,” the Council should be encouraged to follow the

guidance of the Advisory Group of Experts to “regularly request and draw upon the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission on the peacebuilding dimensions of mandates.”⁴⁰ The Commission’s advisory role was envisioned from the start, in Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), and simply needs to be consistently implemented. Movement has been made towards better institutionalizing this relationship by certain members of the Council in the most recent revision of presidential note 507 on working methods: “The members of the Security Council also acknowledge the importance of maintaining communication with the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body and express their intention to regularly request, deliberate and draw upon its specific, strategic and targeted advice, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1645 (2005) and 2282 (2016). The Chair of the Commission and the Chairs of country-specific configurations of the Commission will be invited, as appropriate, to participate in public Council meetings.”⁴¹ The question is to what extent the Council, particularly its permanent members, will make use of this suggested approach in setting future mission mandates.

For a truly preventative approach, enhance UN General Assembly engagement:

Where the attention of the Security Council to preventative approaches reaches its limits, the role of the other main UN organs becomes increasingly critical. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 70/262 (2016) on the same day as the adoption of Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) to welcome the report of the Advisory Group of Experts symbolized the General Assembly’s interest and commitment in a more comprehensive and preventative approach to peacebuilding. This commitment was reaffirmed in April 2018 in General Assembly resolution 72/276, which coincided as it had two years earlier with a parallel Security Council resolution (2413) and, in this instance, with a High-level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace – where conflict prevention and improved system-wide coherence were main themes.⁴² The Assembly should increase its engagement in SSR to both complement the work of the Council and fill any “attention gaps” in long-term and preventative approaches. A General Assembly decision to adopt an identical or similar version of Security Council resolution 2151 on SSR, or even an entirely new resolution, could further support this role. Such a resolution could not only reaffirm existing UN principles on SSR, but also account for recent preventative/peacebuilding developments in which SSR support is provided in non-mission settings based on national requests. General Assembly action to devote more dedicated or pooled funding to SSR in both preventative and post-conflict settings could assist the UN in moving beyond short-term peacebuilding perspectives to a longer-term view focused on preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

Notes

- ¹ Shahar Hameiri, *Regulating Statehood: State Building and the transformation of Global Order* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- ² United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, better known as the “Brahimi Report” (A/55/305–S/2000/809), 21 August 2000.
- ³ United Nations Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping* (A/47/277–S/24111), 17 June 1992.
- ⁴ See Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, *SSR and Peacebuilding: Thematic Review of Security Sector Reform to Peacebuilding to Peacebuilding and the Role of the Peacebuilding Fund* (United Nations, 2012).
- ⁵ Funmi Olonisakin, “Security and Sustainable Development: an African Perspective,” in *Security Sector Reform: Its Relevance for Conflict Prevention, Peace Building, and Development*, compilation of presentations made at the first joint seminar of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and DCAF, 21 January 2003, 27. Available from www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/Olonisakin.pdf.
- ⁶ Fitz-Gerald, *SSR and Peacebuilding*, 6 and 15.
- ⁷ Heiner Hänggi, “Approaching Peacebuilding from a Security Governance Perspective,” in *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Geneva DCAF, 2005), 4.
- ⁸ Fitz-Gerald, *SSR and Peacebuilding*, 20–21.
- ⁹ Hänggi, “Approaching Peacebuilding from a Security Governance Perspective,” 6 and 10.
- ¹⁰ United Nations Secretary-General, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* (A/50/60–S/1995/1), 25 January 1995.
- ¹¹ Hänggi, “Approaching Peacebuilding from a Security Governance Perspective,” 10–11.
- ¹² United Nations Secretary-General, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*.
- ¹³ Sarah Cliffe and Alexandra Novosseloff, *Restructuring the UN Secretariat to Strengthen Preventative Diplomacy and Peace Operations*, New York University Center on International Cooperation (New York University Center on International Cooperation, 2017), 7.
- ¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2005/20), 26 May 2005.
- ¹⁵ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1645 (S/RES/1645), 20 December 2005.
- ¹⁶ United Nations, *Challenges of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture* (A/69/986–S/2015/490), 30 June 2015.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2282 (S/RES/2282), 27 April 2016.
- ¹⁹ United Nations, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People* (A/70/95–S/2015/446), 16 June 2015.
- ²⁰ After Burundians undertook their first post-conflict election in 2005, one senior UN bureaucrat opined that the UN wanted to iron out its relations with the government and return to its strictly developmental role. See Kristiana Powell, *Security Sector Reform and the Protection of Civilians in Burundi: Accomplishments, Dilemmas and Ideas for International Engagement*, Centre d’Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits /North-South Institute working paper, 2007. Available from www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2007-Security-Sector-Reform-and-the-Protection-of-Civilians-in-Burundi-Accomplishments-Dilemmas-and-Ideas-for-International-Engagement.pdf.
- ²¹ See Charles T. Call, “Addressing Two Problems with Peacebuilding,” United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, 17 June 2015. Available from <https://cpr.unu.edu/addressing-two-problems-with-peacebuilding.html>.
- ²² Mushtaq Khan, *Political Settlements and the Governance of Growth-Enhancing Institutions*, draft paper in research series on “Growth-Enhancing Governance,” University of London School of African and Oriental Studies, 2011.
- ²³ The Department of Political Affairs was renamed the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) in January 2019.

- ²⁴ United Nations, *Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention: Annual Report 2014*, 6–7.
- ²⁵ United Nations, *UNDP Nigeria: Annual Report (2015)*, 27.
- ²⁶ World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*. Available from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389>.
- ²⁷ United Nations, *Challenges of Sustaining Peace*.
- ²⁸ See Karen A. Mingst and Karen P. Margaret, “United Nations and Conflict Management: Relevant or Irrelevant?” in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007): 497–520.
- ²⁹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ³⁰ United Nations, *Challenges of Sustaining Peace*.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² See International Crisis Group, “Open Letter to the UN Security Council on Peacekeeping in Mali,” 24 April 2017. Available from www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/open-letter-un-security-council-peacekeeping-mali.
- ³³ See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2343 (S/RES/2343), 23 February 2017.
- ³⁴ United Nations, *Challenges of Sustaining Peace*.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ United Nations Secretary-General, *Restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/72/525)*, 13 October 2017.
- ³⁷ United Nations, *Challenges of Sustaining Peace*.
- ³⁸ For examples of the governance-centered and transformative programme design that multi-year funding can allow, see Nicole Ball, *Putting Governance at the Heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Programme* (The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 2014).
- ³⁹ See Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, “Principles,” <http://effectivecooperation.org/about/principles>.
- ⁴⁰ United Nations, *Challenges of Sustaining Peace*.
- ⁴¹ United Nations, Note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507), 30 August 2017.
- ⁴² See United Nations, High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, Chair’s Summary, 24–26 April 2018. Available from <https://www.un.org/pgal/72/event-latest/sustaining-peace>.

PART II:
CASE STUDIES

5

Sustaining peace in West Africa: UN SSR support in non-mission settings

BADREDDINE EL HARTI

Introduction

United Nations support to nationally-driven Security Sector Reform is grounded in the conviction, expressed by the Security Council, that “an effective, professional and accountable security sector without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law is the cornerstone of peace and sustainable development and is important for conflict prevention.”¹

In the preceding decade, the security sector reform (SSR) approach of the UN has been consolidated through the lens of peacebuilding and has mainly been geared towards reconstructing post-conflict environments. With the Department of Peace Operations (DPO, formerly the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, or DPKO) leading on the development of SSR policies and capacities, a focus on post-conflict contexts has naturally had a strong influence on the UN SSR approach. At the same time, SSR has been progressively introduced in conflict settings as well, through Security Council mandates, to support political and peace processes, particularly where mediation attempts rely on the adherence of armed groups to peace agreements.

While disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) efforts are often programmatically targeted at shorter-term imperatives, lessons learned from past peace agreements mediated by the UN have formed some of the basis for longer-term SSR approaches over the past decade. This approach is reflected in the presence of a significant SSR capacity in UN peace operations in conflict settings such as Libya and Yemen.² While overarching engagement is conducted by political affairs teams, SSR units rely on engaging with armed groups through the ability to analyse, convene, and sensitize them while also presenting peace mediators with options to involve armed groups in the political process.

However, experiences from the recurring UN engagements in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR), the re-emergence of threats to peace (mutinies,

caches of weapons, etc.) during the withdrawal of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), and the perception of “mission creep” in places like Libya, Yemen, and Syria, raise concerns. Persistent uncertainties surrounding peacemaking and peacekeeping have led to a renewed focus on conflict prevention, but shifting to a prevention model will demand new thinking that differs considerably from the reactive mindset frequently observed in peace operations. It will require moving beyond traditional peace operation blueprints, driven by Security Council mandates and the political support they provide to SSR practitioners.

The new sustaining peace agenda,³ geared towards preventing conflict or its relapse, appears to have gained the attention of Member States, at least rhetorically, but it must still record concrete successes to gain real traction. To this end, Burkina Faso has been identified as a potential pilot country in which the efficacy of the preventive approach can be demonstrated. Should the country succeed in its democratic transition, other countries in similar situations may be inspired to request UN SSR support and thereby strengthen the resolve of the international community to pursue this approach. In the case of Burkina Faso, progress on democratic consolidation will not only sustainably stabilize the country itself, but it will also positively impact neighbouring countries by helping contain cross-border instability in this fragile region.

While Security Council mandates have provided integration and coherence in implementing SSR tasks in conflict and post-conflict settings, non-mission settings featuring UN SSR capacities (invited by host governments) are still working to develop a more cohesive and responsive approach. Experience suggests that SSR plays a key role in conflict prevention and is a critical factor, operationally, in moving the UN system and the sustaining peace agenda in the direction of prevention, but the conceptual approach, operational follow-through, and enabling resources must be developed to match this vision.

This chapter will first examine the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas through an SSR lens in order to identify the added value of SSR. Second, it will use cases from West Africa to delineate the contours and challenges of UN SSR support in conflict prevention settings. Third, it will shed light on how those experiences have benefited from South-South lessons learned, including from neighbouring post-conflict experiences, to explore untapped opportunities. The chapter will end with concluding remarks and will outline recommendations for the way ahead.

Sustaining peace and prevention: What role for SSR?

While a detailed analysis of the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas is beyond the scope of this chapter, it remains useful to highlight relevant aspects that relate to SSR, especially in non-mission settings, where these agendas may be most likely to succeed.

Linking SSR to the sustaining peace agenda

As defined by Security Council resolution 2282, sustaining peace is “a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the [UN] engagement at all stages of conflict.”⁴ SSR is relevant to the development, human rights, and peace and security pillars that constitute the scope of the sustaining peace agenda. The human rights approach is inherent to the SSR process.⁵ This is recognized in Security Council resolution 2151, which links sustainable and effective SSR to a people-centred security sectors that are rooted in the rule of law and respectful of human rights.⁶ Further, UN SSR capacities deployed in mission and non-mission settings stress respect for and the implementation and mainstreaming of international human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law in policies and strategic documents, as well as in advocacy, capacity building, and training. When citizens benefit from the combined effect of secure environments and socioeconomic inclusion,⁷ they are less likely to resort to violence.

There are a number of areas where SSR can be of great utility to the sustaining peace agenda. First, in both SSR and sustaining peace, the process is as important as the end state. The SSR process is catalytic to and cross-fertilizes other sustaining peace activities. Second, while it may be challenging to measure evidence that peace is being achieved, especially in non-mission contexts, SSR processes offer indicators and milestones that relate to the sustaining peace agenda. There are measurable dynamics within the process of SSR, such as participation, inclusiveness, and operational effectiveness, and UN SSR interventions abide by the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), which includes its own indicators of compliance (in support of monitoring and evaluation). This strengthens the human rights objectives of SSR in line with the aim of sustaining peace. Third, SSR processes strengthen institutional reform and the establishment of security architectures, transparent decision-making processes, and national security policies and strategies. These mechanisms, tools, and processes – which embody the spirit and objectives of the sustaining peace agenda – have a long-term stabilizing effect in the course of democratic consolidation, when skilfully combined.

SSR and prevention

Though the concept of conflict prevention was discussed within the UN⁸ and among regional organizations long before the sustaining peace agenda was introduced, there has clearly been a reinvigorated interest in conflict prevention since the arrival of the current Secretary-General. This may stem, too, from earlier discussions and reports, such as that of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO Report), which argued:

Conflict prevention and mediation must be brought back to the fore. The prevention of armed conflict is perhaps the greatest responsibility of the international community and yet it has not been sufficiently invested in. [...] A prevention culture has not been embraced by the Organization and its Member States.⁹

While conflict prevention, like SSR, applies across the spectrum of peace activities, a few notes of caution should be emphasized regarding the contours of SSR in conflict prevention settings.

First, a note on terminology. The term “conflict” has been used loosely within the UN system to refer to both “conflict” and “post-conflict” environments in very different contexts (for instance, the situations in Libya, Syria, Yemen, Mali, and CAR, which fall along the continuum of conflict at diverse points, and had varying levels of intensity). While *violent* conflict is to be prevented as much as possible, well-managed non-violent conflict can be directed towards useful results. Tensions may serve as an opportunity for dialogue, a source of innovation, or an enabler for resilience. When implementing SSR to prevent conflict in transitioning democracies emerging from long authoritarian or military rule, however, it remains useful to view any conflict in light of the capacity of the security sector to disrupt democratic processes. This “higher” classification on the continuum of conflict should be factored into conflict analysis and should guide UN-system engagement: SSR support should be sequenced and prioritized within an integrated approach, including by advocating or advising for and mainstreaming SSR prioritization among host stakeholders.

Second, while conflict prevention is embedded into peace agreements in times of conflict, it is possible to argue that in the case of protracted conflicts, these agreements are designed to achieve damage control as much as to sow the seeds for long-term and sustainable peace. In post-conflict settings, peacekeeping operations are deployed in response to a failure to prevent conflict, though working towards exit strategies can pave the way to the analysis of deeper root-causes that may support the nexus with peacebuilding and mitigate relapse into conflict. In terms of SSR, peacekeepers could engage in “pioneering peacebuilding” by initiating in-depth participatory and inclusive mapping, followed by informed institutional sensitization and capacity building. Specifically, police and military components could be used

to progressively train, coach, and operationalize the law enforcement and military capacities of a host country. The presence of a large and impartial number of international troops, combined with tools such as the HRDDP and mechanisms such as partnership-based coordination platforms, could act collectively as “peacebuilding multipliers.”¹⁰ This is achievable within existing capacities and areas of deployment, and most importantly – in an era of doing more with less – at a low extra cost for an exponential cost/benefit ratio.

Third, beyond conflict and post-conflict settings, there are a number of contexts where insurgency and failed coups have left populations and states highly vulnerable and at risk of degenerating into violent conflict or reverting back to non-democratic regimes. Conflict prevention depends on providing further support that is context-specific, to enable swift recovery, the consolidation of democratic gains, strengthening of the rule of law, enhanced respect for human rights, and ensured continued peace and stability. To this end, the UN system, especially at the country level, must assist host stakeholders to analyse risks and vulnerabilities and to sequence preventive courses of action accordingly while also prioritizing the mitigation of disruptive risks such as military upheavals, inter-communal conflicts, etc. The UN system has in-house expertise in a number of fields (mediation, reconciliation, transitional justice, SSR, etc.) that can be tailored to specific non-mission contexts, including good offices, to support advocacy and capacity building for transformative processes, such as constitutional reviews, national reconciliation, and institutional reforms.

Lastly, SSR is not appropriate in all conflict prevention settings, but primarily in democratic transitions. The SSR process is often one of state-building, for which a “do no harm” approach in its conceptualization and implementation remains crucial. Without a political framework that is conducive to democracy and thus enables good governance, accountability, and the rule of law, efforts to strengthen discipline, authority, and command and control can be used to control a population. In other words, SSR may be ineffective or counterproductive if implemented where the political will and societal maturity for democracy have not reached a critical mass.

This chapter narrows the notion of conflict prevention, limiting it to the prevention of violent conflict in post-crisis contexts and addressing its root causes. Therefore, it does not address conflict prevention in conflict or post-conflict settings where the UN would usually deploy peace operations, instead focusing specifically on conflict prevention in non-mission settings, as described above. It is important to keep in mind that not all such contexts have received UN support.

SSR in non-mission settings

Features of non-mission settings

Non-mission settings refer to UN field presences that are not peacekeeping operations or special political missions. These have thus far taken the form of Senior SSR Advisors deployed in response to requests from host countries, in deployments that are joint ventures involving the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA, formerly the Department of Political Affairs, or DPA), DPO, and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). These UN entities have been building capacity, coordinating partners, and providing strategic and technical advice to executive, legislative, and judicial branches, as well as civil society. Activities include: support for the mapping of security sectors; facilitation of national security dialogues; support for the establishment of institutional mechanisms (national security councils, multi-sectoral SSR committees, etc.); and the elaboration of national security policies, strategies, and reform processes.

In contrast to UN mission settings, non-mission settings have a number of features that can impact actions in host countries. In the cases of Guinea, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia, for example, the UN is deployed at the request of national authorities but SSR capacities remain “invited” and thus must display a particularly high level of political sensitivity. Without the backing of a Security Council mandate, invited SSR capacities may be terminated. Still, one positive aspect of non-mission settings is that, because UN SSR capacity is deployed at the request of the highest authorities in a host country, important entry points within both the executive and the parliament tend to be very accessible. Enjoying significant political support and having access to top decision-makers enables UN experts to boost nationally-led SSR processes, which can also rely on the support of relevant UN stakeholders at the country level as well as at the regional and headquarters levels. Moreover, the UN can reach out to technical and financial partners, particularly when implementing reform roadmaps.

Conversely, other actors in a host country, such as civil society, trade unions, political opposition, and the media, may presume that a UN SSR advisor to a head of state supports the incumbent government (as was the case in Guinea, and is still the case in Burkina Faso and The Gambia). In the absence of effective communication on the scope of UN SSR capacities, UN efforts may be viewed with considerable scepticism, thereby limiting the engagement of important stakeholders and their buy-in to the UN-supported SSR process. On top of this, placing any emphasis on the traditional UN peace operation principles, of impartiality and neutrality, may be less convincing when the UN is not working with parties to a conflict but rather stakeholders to a reform process. In all cases, a non-mission UN SSR capacity can

have its invitation to support national SSR processes withdrawn or disregarded, and must therefore tread carefully.

Because UN SSR support in non-mission settings relies on political opportunity, it is difficult to assess through programmatic support in the initial phases. Usually, once strategic documents have been elaborated, subsequent plans are then translated into programming. However, prior to the development of these documents, support for mapping of the security sector and the establishment of institutional mechanisms to carry the SSR process forward are heavily dependent on context-specific political constraints, which require the recognition of opportune entry points.

In each country, political opportunity has been multifaceted and has yielded nuanced lessons learned in the area of non-mission SSR support. In Guinea, for instance, the leadership and personal interest of President Alpha Conde, and the need to address the legacy of the 2009 stadium massacre by military units, provided momentum for the SSR process. In Burkina Faso, on the other hand, the post-insurrection military coup of 17 September 2015 was mainly led by a single but powerful unit, the Regiment of Presidential Security (*Régiment de Sécurité Présidentielle*, or RSP), against which the majority of the army displayed firm opposition and to which the regional army units sent a stand-down ultimatum as they moved towards the capital. In contrast to the experience of Guinea, this behaviour positively influenced the public's post-coup perception of the military. This in turn influenced the approach of political leaders. With the dismantling of the RSP and the prosecution of its one-time commander, as well as the decision of President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré to demilitarize politics, the narrative of reform is such that UN SSR support has relied primarily on political opportunities to advance the process. It is worth delving deeper into West Africa as a regional case study for a better grasp of contextual parameters that interface with the challenges and opportunities of implementing preventive SSR alongside the sustaining peace agenda.

The importance of engaging with (sub-)regional organizations

West Africa has displayed an SSR-friendly environment in recent years, which appears to be the combined result of various actors and factors. There is a historical and sociological commonality across the region¹¹ and a cross-fertilizing of political progress, as well as numerous geopolitical and economic ties, but it is the will of political leaders and the dynamism of civil society that have supported a high level of regional socio-economic interaction and cohesive political behaviour. West Africa has thus displayed steady progress in implementing democratic rule while simultaneously creating vibrant civil societies.

The region presents an interesting context for an empirical approach to analysis of the dynamics of SSR in sustaining peace. West African security developments have

necessitated SSR not only in order to stabilize post-conflict environments (e.g. Mali, Côte d'Ivoire), but also in the reconstruction of security sectors (e.g. Sierra Leone, Liberia) and in the consolidation of emerging democracies (e.g. Guinea, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia). In this last category, SSR has recently trended towards innovations that move practices beyond traditional post-conflict efforts and into a new generation of conflict-preventive SSR. Ongoing efforts in The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, and Lesotho, as well as the successful experience in Guinea,¹² have been daring in their ambition, catalytic to other democratic consolidation processes, promising as far as the goals of sustaining peace, and less costly for donor partners and the international community. From the perspective of the UN, though, this support requires a more integrated approach that is often challenging due to limited resources and the minimal integration of system-wide UN resources in non-mission settings.

A number of UN entities are contributing to SSR processes in West Africa. At the political level,¹³ the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) plays a central role in providing political support to UN SSR capacities deployed to Member States, including through preventive engagement, good offices, mediation, and cross-border strategies like the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS)¹⁴ and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC).¹⁵ The SSR approach and capacity of UNOWAS not only harmonize the UN approach across West Africa and the Sahel, but also serves to mainstream SSR lessons learned and best practices across the region. Comparative examples in this chapter aim to highlight the positive impact to SSR of cross-fertilizing South-South best practices in West Africa.

Conflict-preventive SSR processes, such as in Guinea, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia, reflect a rise in voluntary requests for support made to the UN by elected authorities in post-crisis settings, who are seeking to consolidate democratic transitions and ensure sustained peace and stability. In these cases, the UN has deployed SSR teams led by Senior SSR Advisors. Guinea recently completed a seven-year UN-supported SSR process, initiated in 2011, which generated stabilizing reform and was the cornerstone of the country's democratic transition. Likewise, there are positive indicators (national dialogues, the establishment of security sector architectures, progress on national security policies, priority reform plans, etc.) that Burkina Faso and The Gambia are strengthening democratic gains and the rule of law.

At the regional level, ECOWAS has also been instrumental in bringing together synergies among its members. For SSR in particular, ECOWAS has developed a corpus of "security sector reform and governance (SSRG)" policies, agreed to by heads of state from the bloc, which includes binding clauses. The outcome is a conceptually well-defined, hands-on approach to SSR that takes advantage of the fact that, "being essentially proactive, ECOWAS does not have to 'wait for crisis to erupt and for the capacity of our security sector to fall short before we take steps to improve

it' with an SSRG in place."¹⁶ SSRG is also rooted in a broader continental reality and is reflective of UN SSR principles and approaches, including local ownership, inclusiveness, respect for human rights and rule of law, and gender mainstreaming.¹⁷ In this regard, ECOWAS has helped promote an environment conducive to SSR processes, including through binding political provisions.

It is important for the UN and its partners to engage with sub-regional organizations in order to establish strong strategic, policy, and operational partnership frameworks, as well as to strengthen their capacity in SSR where and whenever possible. These sub-regional organizations offer effective and essential entry points to achieving SSR objectives. They have requisite knowledge of endogenous and regional social and political dynamics, and can engage longstanding networks to conduct SSR interventions.

Challenges for SSR in non-mission settings

At the country level, challenges to SSR processes in West Africa are multi-faceted. These include: the hurdles of democratic transitioning after decades of non-democratic rule (e.g., institutional fragility, security sector resistance to change, etc.); balancing multiple reform processes simultaneously (e.g., reconciliation, transitional justice, constitutional reviews, development plans, etc.); scarce national resources to implement reforms that are strapped with significant expectations from the public; and contending with spill over from regional conflicts (in Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali, exacerbated by extremist groups in the Sahel). Typically, these countries are also confronting fossilized military decision-making cultures and have been met by destabilizing internal and asymmetrical threats (in contexts such as Burkina Faso) at vulnerable stages of their democratic growth.

Since its inception, the UN approach to SSR has developed with more of an eye for post-conflict reconstruction than for prevention. The conceptualization underpinning this approach should therefore be redefined and the use of available resources adjusted, to generate innovations that meet the challenges of non-mission settings. The recommendations presented later in this chapter, which stem from lessons learned and best practices, tentatively provide a pathway towards shaping a new approach.

Throughout the last decade, SSR processes have clearly been adapting to non-traditional contexts in West Africa, as tools developed specifically for post-conflict interventions could not be effectively transplanted in non-mission settings. For instance, national SSR committees are commonly established in post-conflict contexts, but in Guinea, it appears this may not be the most appropriate mechanism as it has hindered the ability of regular institutions to build capacity to administer the state. Though SSR committees are ultimately ad hoc structures

bound to be dismantled, they can trigger unnecessary resistance and limit the ability of an executive branch to implement SSR. In non-mission settings, it makes more sense to have ad hoc multi-sector or inter-ministerial (policy or reform) committees composed of key personnel who maintain their positions while regularly meeting for reform purposes. Committee members would in turn lead sectoral committees to develop sectoral strategies and roadmaps coherent with national security policies and strategies, without adding an extra burden or redundant structures into the security architecture.

A prominent feature in non-mission settings in West Africa has been the deployment of Senior SSR Advisors in support of governments, or as special advisors to heads of state, such as in Guinea and Burkina Faso. However, there is no specific conceptual framework, induction, or country-specific training for these uniquely positioned UN entry points, nor any mentoring modalities or official repositories of lessons learned and best practices. Furthermore, these Advisors operate with limited freedom of movement: as “invitees,” they must be very cautious in how they support a sensitive area of government.

These SSR capacities also lack the traditional backing provided by Security Council mandates or the enabling tools of missions – such as political affairs officers, joint operations centres (JOCs),¹⁸ and joint mission analysis centres (JMACs)¹⁹ – which enable an in-depth grasp of relevant dynamics, potential entry points for the UN, and integrated preventive and responsive courses of action. SSR processes in non-mission settings in West Africa lack crucial enablers as well, such as human rights and gender capacities. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was able to deploy a human rights capacity in Guinea, but this has not been reproduced elsewhere. Yet, human rights awareness, as well as gender strategies, gender mainstreaming, and gender analysis all support the unfolding of SSR processes.

Lastly, despite the strategic positioning of the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force at UN Headquarters and the “loose” mandate of the UN Resident Coordinator in coordinating resident and non-resident UN entities, non-mission settings are often fragmented and only somewhat coordinated. In 2017–2018 in Burkina Faso alone, UNOWAS, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) conducted more than 50 SSR activities, including related to good offices, advocacy, training of trainers, anti-corruption capacity building, information sharing, weapons management, and women and youth. However, it has been hard to quantify and evaluate the collective impact of these efforts and whether they have strengthened the governance and effectiveness of the security sector.

Lessons learned from West Africa for SSR in the context of prevention

Elected authorities in West Africa have demonstrated an increasing tendency to voluntarily request SSR assistance from the UN, in order to consolidate democratic transitions and ensure sustained peace and stability. Preventive SSR brings inclusive and participatory nationally-led processes to these contexts, harnessing South-South cooperation and recalibrating certain classical concepts of SSR – such as the centrality of ownership. While the mainstreaming of national ownership is vital in post-conflict settings, it requires less focus in non-mission contexts, where national actors are already actively leading the SSR process. In Burkina Faso, for example, there was a sense of discomfort among host actors when the UN SSR capacity alluded to ownership, because it carried with it a connotation of the support provided to failing states. More useful, by contrast, was support to institutional ownership through collective capacity building with key actors and by encouraging institutions to brainstorm, convey, and mainstream their role in and expectations from reform.

Because of its multi-sector and nation-wide reach, the SSR process – which is inclusive, participatory, and comprehensive – induces similar characteristics in other processes, such as in national reconciliation. In both Guinea and Burkina Faso, for instance, the executive has reached out extensively to civil society, including to women's and youth organizations. In Guinea, civil society actors have actively participated throughout the entire SSR process (2011–2018). And in Burkina Faso, a representative of the national council of civil society organizations was a permanent member of the multisector committee that organized the national security forum (2017). Prior to this, civil society convened a workshop concerning oversight of the security sector, alongside other legislative, judicial, and internal governance actors, to compile recommendations that were later presented during the proceedings of the forum.

By facilitating strong and well-governed security architectures, UN SSR helps shape the future of emerging democracies. To that end, institutions such as national security councils are at the heart of sustainable peace and security. They facilitate an institutional and transparent decision-making process for the use, management, and monitoring of security sectors, and enable civilian oversight and capacity building of key actors. In Burkina Faso, after decades of military rule, the President elected after the recent insurrection is a civilian, as are his ministers of defence, security, and territorial administration – positions previously occupied only by uniformed officials. The role of institutional mechanisms in progressively instilling the subordination of the military to the political may be an evolutionary game changer in democratic transitions.

In Burkina Faso, the SSR process has also been catalytic to a number of sustaining peace objectives. Fora held in thirteen administrative regions to consult populations

on their security needs and expectations triggered discussions on how to rebuild trust between the population and the Forces de Défense et de Sécurité (DFS), especially in remote Sahel districts. The DFS encompass the army, law enforcement, corrections, forest guards and customs. A recommendation in the February 2018 Emergency Plan for the Sahel (PUS) to outsource engineering work to military engineering units²⁰ would increase the military's visibility in these areas outside the context of direct combat, which could help increase confidence in the DFS among the population.

Mainstreaming lessons learned through South-South cooperation is another key to boosting SSR processes, including by redefining suitable entry points in similar and contiguous settings. The SSR capacity in Burkina Faso has benefited from numerous deployments of SSR officers from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), UNOWAS, UNDP Guinea, and UNDP Central African Republic, as well as experts from DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance in The Gambia. They have supported the mapping of the security sector in Burkina Faso and the planning of subsequent steps of the SSR process, such as identifying priorities, establishing institutional mechanisms to elaborate a security architecture, and developing a national security policy and sectoral strategies.

SSR units from MINUSMA and UNOWAS have been instrumental in supporting the UN SSR capacity in Burkina Faso, including on best practices. In Mali, the interior security sector had attempted to lead the SSR process, only to find that the Defence Ministry would not endorse outcomes and had been working to develop its own process. The lesson was mainstreamed among key national stakeholders in Burkina Faso, where a similar pattern was initially seen in connection with the national security forum, which was organized by the Ministry of Security but with a lack of consultation and inclusiveness (including the absence of key actors, such as the military). With advice from the UN SSR capacity, the presidency stepped in to own and lead the process and ensure wider participation, including through popular consultation (in the regional fora mentioned above) and strong engagement by governmental oversight actors, civil society, and the military.

A significant lesson learned from South-South cooperation is related to ownership and its import in non-mission settings. While ownership is crucial across the spectrum of SSR engagement on the peace continuum, its nuances must be understood. In Security Council-mandated operations, ownership is a goal of UN SSR support, but in non-mission settings, as mentioned above, national ownership already exists and it is elected authorities who have requested support, often because they campaigned on the promise of institutional reforms. This distinction is important when engaging with country actors. In Burkina Faso, for example, mapping of the security sector was largely carried out by national actors, with some advice and capacity building in niche areas by UN and EU experts. Compared to Guinea and The Gambia, where security sector mapping was led by regional and

international actors, the process in Burkina Faso demonstrated particularly effective ownership, inclusiveness, and participation.

In the mapping phase and beyond, SSR processes unfold differently in different contexts. Guinean actors had moved promptly on reform plans, but lost momentum when they realized the need for strategic documents to guide the process. Then, when traditional mechanisms from post-conflict environments were introduced, such as a national SSR committee, the support provided in conceptualizing and implementing reforms came with negative impacts that were not immediately appreciated. Because the national security council was not operationalized, for example, the Guinean security architecture was weakened. Indeed, the council did not hold its first session until early 2018, despite an SSR process that began in 2011, and it remains a challenge to merge the competencies of the national SSR committee and the national security council. Further, the SSR committee implemented reform roadmaps itself, limiting the capacity of the executive to carry out these tasks as regular prerogatives and thus build executive capacity to implement, monitor, and evaluate in the future.

Recommendations

This chapter has sought to open discussion on how SSR can play a role in the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas, particularly as SSR experiences are still in progress, some in their early stages. From an analysis of several cases of ongoing SSR processes and lessons learned, a number of recommendations can be made, particularly when it comes to aligning resources and visions, strengthening partnerships, and fostering political primacy.

Matching operational concepts and resources with the overall vision

Bearing in mind that SSR and sustaining peace processes are as important as their outcomes, there is a need to rethink their alignment, adequacy, and flexibility alongside the specific political opportunities that characterize non-mission settings. As underscored by the HIPPO Report:

The security sector must be a particular focus owing to its potential to disrupt peace in many countries, with the UN in a convening and coordinating role, if requested [...]. In sustaining peace, the UN System must overcome structural and other impediments to working together, including through more innovative resourcing options.²¹

In other words, if SSR and other processes or programmes working towards the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas are to be effective, **the UN system and its partnerships must align visions with adequate resources for implementation.**

The UN also has a role to play in gathering its own resources, as well as in synchronizing the comparative advantages of UN entities, whether in country, at the regional level, on standby, or at Headquarters. In particular, the peculiarities of non-mandate and non-mission settings must be factored into responsive and comprehensive context analysis. Untapped opportunities remain available in SSR by which to pursue the aims of the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas through flexible and innovative approaches, especially in non-mission settings. A significant step the UN could take would be to **harness various SSR-related activities, both in-country and regional** (UNODC, UNREC, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)), etc.), **and ensure that their collective impact is assessed and harmonized to enhance cross-fertilization and effectiveness.**

Mainstreaming conflict prevention in partnerships

To mobilize resources, **the UN can play an important role in advocating among partners that SSR be viewed through the lens of conflict prevention.** This may require the UN prove to these partners that it is worthwhile to invest in transitioning democracies rather than merely reacting in response once crises unfold. The EU leads important and resource-intensive missions in post-conflict settings, for instance, such as the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), the EU Capacity Building Mission in the Sahel (EUCAP Sahel), and the Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA), but has only a light footprint in countries like Burkina Faso, where the Project to Support the Strengthening of Internal Security in Burkina Faso (PARSIB) has a comparatively small interior security capacity.

Partnerships in non-mission settings also face SSR coordination issues, including multiplicity and redundancy. These issues are particularly acute in The Gambia and Burkina Faso. In both countries, there is a need for DPO, DPPA, PBSO, and UNDP to synchronize support and ensure strategic back-up, resource mobilization, and sustained interest and momentum. In the case of The Gambia, in-country UN SSR capacities must also develop effective coordination mechanisms with SSR advisors from the EU, the AU, and ECOWAS. Given that challenges to partnerships persist even when Security Council mandates clarify roles, **it is imperative that partners in non-mission settings engage in policy dialogue at both the strategic and operational levels in order to maximize comparative advantages and cross-fertilize delivery.**

Political primacy

It is important to stress among host actors and partners alike that SSR is, at its core, inherently political. SSR strengthens the resolve of political leaders, who are usually civilians learning on the job, to address the intricacies of promoting the acceptance of civilian political control by military and other security actors. It must also balance train-and-equip strategies with the longer-term aim of good governance through civilian oversight, rule of law, respect for human rights, and gender mainstreaming.

However, while SSR is inherently political, there should be no confusion within the UN between the roles of SSR and political affairs, which overlap in scope but should remain complementary and unexchangeable in order to deliver holistic support. While UN SSR capacities evolve along a “political-technical” continuum, the lens of political affairs is crucial in boosting transformative processes (reconciliation, transitional justice, etc.) that bring about societal and institutional change and adherence that is essential to sustainable SSR. This requires that entry points to UN **political support are identified, stakeholders are engaged on the political implications of SSR processes, support is harnessed to advance progress, and cross-fertilization is explored as part of a comprehensive sustaining peace approach to other (ongoing) democratic consolidation processes, including constitutional reviews, national reconciliation, and state building.**

SSR capacities must also ensure that political decision-making addresses the entire SSR process. In that regard, it is not only important that SSR capacities enable this on a political level but also that they **facilitate an effective junction between political and sectoral actors, to support the former in understanding technical constraints and risks and the latter in translating political aims into sectoral delivery.** This is particularly vital in non-mission settings, where political affairs capacities are limited to a peace and development adviser (PDA) who often struggles to meet the numerous, complex, and resource-intensive political demands of the sustaining peace agenda.

Conclusion

The cases from West Africa highlighted in this chapter show the impact of SSR dynamics on the prevention and sustaining peace agendas. West African security contexts reveal the importance of SSR to stabilize post-conflict environments, but also its particular potential in reconstructing security and enabling the consolidation of democratic transitions. More broadly for the UN, experiences in the region have revealed that, even if the Organization’s vision for conflict prevention and sustaining peace appears to be established and promising, the conceptual framework, resources, and innovations – including in efficiently harnessing synergies – do not yet

match the vision. And, as the UN approach to SSR was developed predominantly in post-conflict settings and is thus heavily tied to peacebuilding, it must now be adapted to new contexts in which tools developed specifically for post-conflict realities may not be effective. SSR in non-mission settings can also only be effective when the political framework is shaped through transformative processes such as constitutional reviews, national reconciliation, and transitional justice. Yet, while those processes remain critical enablers of democratic transitions in contexts including post-insurrection and post-coup spaces, the UN presence in non-mission settings has yet to be adequately integrated and equipped to support governments in dealing with the complexities of those processes and meeting the high expectations they raise among citizens.

The contribution of SSR to peace and development remains a critical and potentially game-changing element in non-mission settings considering the disruptive nature of security sectors in these contexts and in sub-regions. By enabling the construction of a security architecture, the definition of national interests, and the capacity to achieve them, SSR processes lay the groundwork for state- and nation-building by democratic means. Indeed, inherent to SSR processes are participation, inclusiveness, a people-centred approach, national dialogue and consultation, a shared security vision, a governance perspective, and respect for human rights – all of which strengthen state-building. Moreover, the creation of a security architecture facilitates state-building more broadly by enabling a transitioning democracy to build the capacity to use its instruments of power (diplomatic, economic, military, etc.) to achieve its national interests within the rule of law.

The identification of entry points and consecutive UN engagement in non-mission settings will require redefining country-level presences. This may involve rethinking Resident Coordinator Offices so that they are more politically robust and strengthening SSR capacities in regional UN hubs. By supporting state- and nation-building as potential outcomes of SSR processes, changes such as these have the strong potential to contribute significantly to the conflict prevention and sustaining peace agendas.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations, Deputy Secretary-General's Remarks at High-Level Roundtable on Security Sector Reform and Sustaining Peace, 23 April 2018. Available from: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/dsg/statement/2018-04-23/deputy-secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-roundtable-security>.
- ² As part of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESGY).
- ³ See United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (A/RES/70/262), 27 April 2016; United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2286 (S/RES/2286), 27 April 2016.

- ⁴ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2286 (S/RES/2286).
- ⁵ For a detailed approach, see Mirko Daniel Fernandez and Kim Piaget, “Rethinking a Human Rights-based Approach to SSR,” ISSAT HRBA Working Group Paper 1, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, June 2016. Available from <https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/104618/1850703/HRBA%20Working%20Group%20Paper%201.pdf>.
- ⁶ See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2018, which notes that “an effective, professional and accountable security sector without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law is the cornerstone of peace and sustainable development...”
- ⁷ Of particular relevance to the development-SSR nexus, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda is dedicated to “the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.” See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>.
- ⁸ For example, see United Nations, Note by the President of the Security Council (S/2002/207), 1 March 2002; and United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/891), 18 July 2006.
- ⁹ United Nations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95– S/2015/446), 17 June 2015.
- ¹⁰ In peacekeeping settings, and within a UN integrated approach geared towards an exit strategy and handover of military and law enforcement tasks to host authorities, military and police peacekeeping units can engage at the earliest appropriate stages – and along HRDDP requirements – to enhance joint deployments and manoeuvres and, when feasible, conduct collective training on niche capacities of host units, usually constituted after a DDR/SSR process. This operational coaching would also enable host units to become familiar in practice with how international standards (International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights and Refugee Laws, protection of civilians, conflict-related sexual violence and child protection requirements, etc.) are effectively implemented in operations.
- ¹¹ SSR is “special” in West Africa, where conditions have been more conducive to the process in recent decades. The emergence from military rule and the success of democratization movements in a number of West African countries, along with the development of security coordination mechanisms within sub-regional organizations (ECOWAS and the West African Monetary and Economic Union (UMEOA)), have led to policy dialogues and frameworks widely endorsed despite differentiated Anglo/French security sector traditions.
- ¹² Josie Lianna Kaye, *What Works in UN Resident Coordinator-led Conflict Prevention: Lessons from the Field: Republic of Guinea 2009-2017* (United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, 2018). Available from <https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/attachment/2850/RC-Project-Guinea.pdf>.
- ¹³ At the technical level, other UN system entities are also involved in SSR-related activities, including UNODC and UNREC.
- ¹⁴ See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sahel Region (S/2013/354), 14 June 2013.
- ¹⁵ See UNOWAS, “Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission,” n/d, <https://unowas.unmissions.org/cameroon-nigeria-mixed-commission>.
- ¹⁶ Economic Community of West African States, “ECOWAS seeks collective ownership of security sector reforms,” press release, 19 June 2016 (posted 3 July 2017), <http://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-seeks-collective-ownership-of-security-sector-reforms>.
- ¹⁷ See Economic Community of West African States, “Political Affairs,” www.ecowas.int/ecowas-sectors/political-affairs.
- ¹⁸ JOCs provide UN peacekeeping operations with integrated situational awareness, facilitate integrated operations coordination, and support crisis management.

- ¹⁹ JMACs (when available) provide integrated analyses for the senior management of peacekeeping missions, and are an integrated tool for information-collection capability at strategic or operational levels.
- ²⁰ See Government of Burkina Faso, “Programme d’urgence du Sahel: 154,9 milliards de F CFA devront être injectés sur le terrain en 2018,” press release, 15 February 2018, <http://www.gouvernement.gov.bf/spip.php?article2087>.
- ²¹ United Nations, *A/70/95-S/2015/446*.

6

UN support to SSR in peacekeeping contexts: A case study of Côte d'Ivoire

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Introduction

In Côte d'Ivoire, a decade of tensions from 2002 to 2011 along ethnic, regional, and religious lines profoundly weakened the cohesion, operational capacity, and legitimacy of the security sector. Before this period of instability, a successful coup in 1999 by soldiers claiming unpaid salaries and poor living conditions,¹ as well as an attempted coup in 2002, underlined the declining security governance that preceded the country's 2002–2003 civil war. The presidential election that took place in November 2010, rather than representing the culmination of a long and difficult peace process that started in 2003, marked the onset of four months of turmoil when defeated President Laurent Gbagbo refused to relinquish power to former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, resulting in a death toll of 3,000 and an even more deeply polarized society.

In the aftermath, reform of security institutions emerged as an important if challenging process that necessitated a wide range of support from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). From 2012–2017, UNOCI engaged in effectively supporting the national SSR process by focusing on holistic changes to the security sector through the development of a national security architecture and the implementation of a comprehensive National SSR Strategy. While UNOCI has contributed significantly to steadily enhancing the country's security governance, the transformative impact of reform has been, and will continue to be, a direct function of the political underpinnings of reform and the quality of social cohesion and national reconciliation, both of which remain a challenge.

This chapter analyses the impact of UNOCI's SSR engagement with the Government and national stakeholders following the 2010–2011 post-electoral crisis. The chapter is divided into five sections. This introduction is followed by an outline of the pre-2010 national context, which defines the framework for the

ensuing analysis. The third section reviews the ‘entry points’ through which UNOCI supported nationally-led SSR efforts in the post-crisis environment. The fourth section focuses on persistent challenges to the SSR process in Côte d’Ivoire, and the fifth and final section offers recommendations to help move the agenda from incremental reform towards holistic transformation.

The national context prior to 2012 SSR engagement

Exclusionary politics and poor governance lie at the heart of Côte d’Ivoire’s recurrent security crises, as manifested by repeated “mutinies” within the armed forces. A decline in the economic prosperity of the 1960s and 1970s was mirrored by the rise of *ivoirité*, “a slogan, a watch-word, [and] a normative category”² aimed at differentiating “authentic” citizens from more recent economic immigrants and other supposed outsiders. At the turn of the century, the pernicious and discriminatory politics of *ivoirité* further evolved from an ethnic and national identifier to a distinction between northerners and southerners.³ The 1990s also saw the erosion of regional representation in the security sector and a trend towards ethnic favouritism, which in turn invited coups and attempted coups from minority junior officers fearing exclusion.⁴ In the decade leading up to the 2002 coup attempt and subsequent civil war, the country’s security forces, which at one time were “arguably among the best trained in West Africa,” ballooned in size while also becoming politicized, fragmented, corrupt, and abusive.⁵ These factors played out in the 2002–2003 civil war, which left the country divided between north and south, with the north controlled by the rebel coalition Forces Nouvelles (FN) under Guillaume Soro, and the south controlled by the government of President Gbagbo.

The signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in January 2003 introduced a coalition government comprised of former belligerents and political and armed groups, and the country’s defence portfolio became the responsibility of the Prime Minister. Several agreements, including the Accra Accords of 2002 and 2003 and the Pretoria Accords of 2005, were subsequently signed, but all failed to properly address the disarmament of FAFN – the military wing of the FN. Following the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (*Accord Politique de Ouagadougou*, APO) of March 2007, brokered through so-called “direct dialogue” facilitated by the President of Burkina Faso, FN’s Guillaume Soro became Prime Minister. Beyond the responsibility to manage defence issues, the APO further delegated to the head of government the responsibility to manage the resolution of tensions, including security issues, social cohesion, and post-crisis reconstruction. As a result, several new institutions were created to implement the Accord, with the aim to hold secure and

fair presidential elections by the end of 2009 (though, due to delays, they were finally held in November of 2010).

The Centre de Commandement Intégré (CCI), a 568-troop joint body comprised of the FDS (government loyalists) and the FAFN (former rebels) was created by Decree No. 2000-82 of 16 March 2007 as part of the implementation of the APO, with the obligation to “unify the forces [...] and to implement the new measures of restructuring of the Defense and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire.”⁶ Among other specific tasks, the CCI was to provide security for public venues, including schools, in areas outside the central government's control, as well as for the presidential election. CCI was also to carry out the disarmament and demobilization aspects of DDR. Along with the creation of the CCI to undertake the “DD” tasks, a reintegration structure was established to serve as the third leg of the DDR process. The National Program for Reinsertion and Community Rehabilitation (*Programme National de Réinsertion et de Réhabilitation Communautaire*, PNRRC) was charged with profiling and reintegrating combatants following their demobilization. This was the first time since the DDR attempt of 2004 (*Programme National de DDR*, PNDDR) that DDR responsibilities were divided between two institutions, namely the CCI (responsible for the “DD”) and the PNRRC (responsible for the “R”). From the outset, this created a challenge in defining where demobilization starts, which in turn led to internal competition between the two bodies as the PNRRC effectively undertook demobilization while the CCI limited its action to disarmament. The APO also allowed for the creation of the National Civic Service Program (PNSC) for ex-combatants seeking careers other than those provided by existing socio-economic reintegration schemes.

At the institutional level, a Working Group on Restructuring and Rebuilding the Army (*Groupe de Travail – Restructuration et Refondation de l'Armée*, GT-RRA) was also set up within the Prime Minister's office and was tasked with establishing the foundations for a future Ivorian armed force, building on the work of the CCI.

The disarmament, demobilization, and security sector reunification processes initially envisioned as a basis for reforms and the pre-conditions for elections were not achieved by the time of the 2010 election.⁷ Rather, recruitment continued alongside parallel command structures while the country remained frozen between war and peace, with periodic clashes precluding any serious attempts to improve security governance.⁸ As a result, Côte d'Ivoire and its security sector were dangerously divided on the eve of the elections, and completely unable to deal peacefully with the political crisis when Gbagbo refused to cede power to Ouattara. Instead, as Arthur Boutellis notes, “almost immediately after the announcement of the disputed outcome of the November 28th presidential election [...] the security forces became partisan participants in the political-electoral crisis.”⁹ Ouattara eventually assumed the presidency with UN and international support, but not before four months of

violence exemplified the profound dysfunction of the country's security institutions and military-dominated politics. The security forces, largely loyal to Gbagbo, enabled him to cling to power despite his electoral defeat, while Ouattara relied on the FN to claim power after his victory.¹⁰

Once in place, Ouattara's government faced a daunting reform agenda. Institutions had become ineffective in providing public security. There was a loss of professionalism as well, and the republican ethos of the police, army, and gendarmerie intersected with the emergence of a multiplicity of new (often non-statutory) security actors with multiple and unclear loyalties, including former FN *Comzones* (regional commanders), *Dozos* (traditional hunters), and private security companies. Côte d'Ivoire has also long been challenged by a lack of discipline among security forces, a large number of former combatants, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. One of President Ouattara's important early acts was to declare on 17 March 2011 that the FN and the Army would be merged into a new Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), as recommended by the APO. However, parallel command structures persisted among these former antagonistic forces, and ex-Comzones essentially retained control of their personnel.

In 2012, acknowledging the difficult challenges it faced, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of UNOCI, embarked on the task of establishing a holistic SSR process that honours the commitments adopted as part of the APO.

UNOCI support to national SSR efforts, 2012–2017

From 2011 until its closure in 2017, UNOCI supported various initiatives of Government-led SSR. This section examines the value added by UNOCI to SSR in Côte d'Ivoire over this period, focusing on support for: (i) national SSR policy and strategy, including to DDR; (ii) sensitization and national dialogues on SSR, including advancing the National SSR Strategy; (iii) efforts to decentralize security; (iv) democratic oversight and security legislation; and (v) coordination of UN and international SSR efforts.

UNOCI's mandating resolutions since 2011 – resolutions 2000 (2011), 2062 (2012), 2112 (2013), 2162 (2014), 2226 (2015), and 2284 (2016) – stipulated that it support the Government in designing and implementing a comprehensive SSR strategy. Resolution 2000 (2011) set the stage by mandating that UNOCI “assist the Government in conducting [...] a sector-wide review of the security institutions and in developing a comprehensive national security strategy” and “advise the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, as appropriate, on security sector reform and the organization of the future National Army.”¹¹ It further called on the Mission to contribute to rebuilding national capacities, consolidating peace in the country, and

coordinating international assistance on SSR-related issues. Resolution 2062 (2012) strengthened the previous mandate, tasking UNOCI with supporting the Ivorian government in swiftly implementing its National SSR Strategy and added support for confidence-building within security and law enforcement agencies and between the security sector and the public. These clear mandates and strong Government interest enabled a comprehensive SSR support role for UNOCI in national efforts, detailed below.

Support to SSR strategy

Given the social and security problems facing Côte d'Ivoire in the post-electoral context, reform of its security sector offered an opportunity for the country to be rebuilt around a commonly agreed conception of security and community in a state offering equal prospects to all its citizens under the rule of law. A strategic approach was adopted that placed defence and security matters under the direct authority of the president. A conceptualization and planning phase was launched by President Ouattara on 6 April 2012 through the establishment of the Working Group on SSR (*Groupe de Travail sur la Réforme du Secteur de la Sécurité*, GT-RSS), comprised of all relevant security actors. UNOCI was invited to participate as a major multilateral interlocutor, alongside the EU and the AU. Robust UNOCI support for the Working Group – which was divided into thematic sub-groups covering government institutions, parliament, and civil society – contributed to the adoption several months later of the country's National SSR Strategy as the foundational document guiding the country's SSR process.

The validation of the Strategy in September 2012 was an acknowledgement of the work undertaken by the GT-RSS and a recognition that the SSR process needed to be holistic in order to respond to the security needs and concerns of all Ivoirians. The Strategy, which establishes priorities and identifies areas, actors, stages, and necessary human and financial resources, includes 108 key reforms clustered into six pillars: (i) national security; (ii) post-crisis reconstruction; (iii) rule of law and international relations; (iv) democratic control; (v) economic governance; and (vi) the human and social dimension. These reforms are grouped accordingly under four implementation timeframes: urgent (0–6 months), short-term (0–1 year), medium-term (0–5 years), and long-term (0–10 years).

The National Policy for DDR was also adopted during this period, on 20 July 2012, and subsequently supported by UNOCI and UNDP. This policy focused on the more practical elements of DDR, such as identifying different target groups and developing eligibility criteria and an institutional framework. The earlier Ouagadougou Political Agreement of 2007 had stipulated that a new Ivorian army be composed of 11,000 FAFN and 12,000 FDS troops. This quota was part of the

DDR of ex-combatants, which served as a benchmark and sine qua non condition for the convening of the 2010 presidential election.¹² Yet, during the post-electoral crisis, the number of combatants increased, with new recruits adding to the already existing FAFN database of over 64,000. This left the country with the challenge of adjusting the agreed pre-election database to address the addition of new recruits without losing credibility vis-à-vis the population and the international community.

The decision not to recruit beyond the previously established 23,000-troop threshold initially led the FRCI's "associated elements" to refuse to join the DDR program. This group of approximately 4,000–6,000 combatants was not on the payroll but wore army uniforms, and many were stationed in army barracks and in some public properties. While they had been used in past operations, particularly after the post-electoral crisis, their presence in various neighbourhoods raised fear among local communities due to recurrent alleged human rights abuses and had become a burden for the Government. In February 2015, the FRCI made clear that there would be no further recruitment and that associated elements intending to join the armed forces should vacate any premises they illegally occupied and join the DDR program.¹³ This proved successful and the move was welcomed by the population. Ultimately, a total of 74,000 ex-combatants were officially registered, of which over 80% were reintegrated. The DDR program was constrained to a two-year period and was officially declared closed on 30 June 2015, three months before Ouattara's re-election in October 2015, leaving behind a monitoring cell (*Cellule de Coordination et de suivi de la Réintégration*, CCSR) to handle the remaining caseload for one additional year.

A major challenge was actual implementation of the SSR process, including its DDR component. One of the most important steps in this regard was the establishment on 8 August 2012 of a National Security Council (*Conseil National de Sécurité*, CNS) in charge of SSR at the strategic level, along with a DDR Authority (*Autorité pour le Désarmement, la Démobilisation et la Réintégration*, ADDR), which leads the operational aspects of the DDR process and which implemented the National Policy for DDR. Both of these institutional structures were elevated within the state hierarchy so that they come under direct authority of the president. With the establishment of the ADDR, the Government abolished the various national structures previously tasked with handling DDR, which had lacked coherence. This welcome decision brought "DD" and "R" back together under one body, increasing efficiency and coordination.

On 31 December 2012, a presidential decree defined the role and mandate of the Secretariat of the National Security Council (S-CNS), including implementation of the National SSR Strategy. The S-CNS was further tasked with ensuring the coordination and coherence of SSR activities. The UN worked closely with the S-CNS to support implementation of the National SSR Strategy while

providing strategic advice and technical support, and the S-CNS functioned as the Government's SSR focal point and interface with the international community, including UNOCI. UNOCI's SSR Division met regularly with the S-CNS for working-level thematic discussions, engaged in monthly strategic and monitoring consultations to measure progress, and developed an annual joint work plan to enhance coordination. UNOCI's support to and partnership with the Government were greatly enhanced through the innovative placement of a UN SSR liaison officer within the S-CNS over a nine-month period, thereby improving trust and communications between UNOCI and the CNS.

UNOCI support also played a key role in decentralizing the implementation of the National SSR Strategy at the local level. Due to the short drafting period of the Strategy and the centrality of the Government's leadership, local input was more limited than would have been ideal. UNOCI assisted the Government in outreach efforts, comprising a communications strategy and field visits that were focused on exposing regions outside the capital to the Strategy. While these visits were initially UNOCI-funded, their success led the S-CNS to expand ownership and fully shoulder the funding and activities of this programme. This laid the groundwork for decentralizing the security architecture, and enhanced inclusiveness in the governance of the security sector, as detailed below.

Support to national dialogue

Following the elaboration of the National SSR Strategy, UNOCI launched the Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) initiative in January 2013. This informal platform for dialogue brought together key national stakeholders: political parties, the security sector, and civil society. Given longstanding alienation and dysfunction in the relationship between security institutions and the public in Côte d'Ivoire, the BBLs were an important advance towards wider consultation and civil society input on new security-related legislation and proposed policies. These discussions spanned all six pillars of the National SSR Strategy and served as an important stakeholder-driven, confidence-building forum, with UNOCI acting as a neutral facilitator. Significantly, the BBLs were continued under the S-CNS with international support, demonstrating UNOCI's value-add in providing initial support for what ultimately became nationally owned.

Military Interactive Sessions, which were also initiated and funded by UNOCI in response to a national request, formed an important counterpart to the BBLs by focusing on intra-military collaboration. Following the 2010–2011 crisis, former rebels had been partially integrated into the armed forces, but split loyalties, lingering mistrust, and internal divisions persisted. These sessions enabled officers to discuss SSR issues among themselves for the first time and were then expanded

to encompass the security sector more broadly through the participation of the police, gendarmerie, and military advisors from local embassies. The invitation of women's and youth associations to exchange views helped enhance the connection of security sector actors to the public they serve. Topics included the army-nation concept,¹⁴ gender, discipline, and human rights. As with the BBL series, the success of this UNOCI-supported national security dialogue led national actors to take full ownership of the process. After six months of UNOCI funding, the army began hosting the sessions, with private sector support.

Support to decentralization

Local security governance has been a key focus area for reform in Côte d'Ivoire. UNOCI recommended and facilitated the decentralization of the security governance architecture as well as wider reforms through the sensitization of local populations to the National SSR Strategy and by supporting the establishment of local security committees comprised of civil society leaders, security providers, and local authorities. These committees were headed by regional administrators and local security institutions, enabling them to focus on local security threats and challenges. UNOCI and the S-CNS worked in 2014–2015 to expand these committees into Regional Security Councils (RSCs) that undertook functions similar to the CNS, but at the local level and with the participation of civil society and locally elected figures. The aim was not only to enhance early warning and threat assessment, but also to provide venues for conflict resolution and information-sharing between the central government and the rest of the country, thereby fulfilling key aspects of the National SSR Strategy.

SSR decentralization strengthened the “bottom-up” approach in a process primarily planned and advocated for at the central (capital) level. The main challenge then was to encourage local populations to understand and buy into the new Strategy in order to best support it. This entailed a series of seminars for regional *Prefets* (33 total) outlining their responsibilities in coordinating decentralization efforts and their role in monthly campaigns on SSR and the Strategy to raise awareness and ownership of the process. However, the RSCs have required additional financial and human resources to become functional and efficient, as well as some special logistical arrangements to ensure that all members – some of whom are located far from the *Prefets* premises – can attend regularly.

The structure of UNOCI itself transformed to reflect this focus on local contexts. In September 2014, UNOCI's SSR Division established two regional offices, serving western and eastern Côte d'Ivoire. These offices liaised with local security institutions and civil society, and enhanced UNOCI's ability to support local authorities and

confidence-building measures, including in their preparation for the abovementioned Regional Security Councils.

Support to democratic oversight and legislation

Lasting reform of Côte d'Ivoire's security sector requires the institutional framework to maintain, oversee, and advance reforms: democratic oversight and governance, as guaranteed by national security legislation. To this end, UNOCI pushed for the adoption of several key laws in 2015–2016: The Organic Armed Forces and Defense Organization Law (*Loi Organique Portant Organisation de la Défense et des Forces Armées*), the Internal Security Programming Law 2016–2020 (*Loi de Programmation de Sécurité Interieure*), and the Military Programming Law 2016–2020 (*Loi de Programmation Militaire*, LPM). The LPM is particularly relevant given repeated mutinies by soldiers. Initially a five-year, 1.45 billion US dollar plan, the LPM seeks to fully equip and professionalize the armed forces and improve living and working conditions through the allocation of housing benefits and opportunities to move up equitably in rank. It also aims to correct the great budget imbalance between fixed costs and professionalization costs by bringing them from a ratio of 97% to 3%, to a ratio of 55% to 45%. This will allow more resources to be directed towards training and modernizing the corps. The LPM also seeks to reduce the military from its current strength of 23,000 to 20,000 by 2020; and correspondingly increase the number of gendarmes from 17,000 to 20,000. This restructuring, aimed at better addressing internal security issues in light of new threats to the country (i.e. terrorism, cybercrime, etc.), is envisaged to take place over the five years of the LPM through “an incremental reduction of troops as a result of a re-balancing of budgetary allocations within the Ministries of Defense and Interior and Security respectively.”¹⁵

UNOCI provided strategic advice and training on parliamentary oversight to national assembly representatives, particularly to members of the Security and Defence Commission, which resulted in parliament's increased ability to comment on draft bills and participate in debates with relevant government authorities prior to voting on the laws mentioned above. Positive participation by parliament at this crucial moment marked a new relationship between assembly representatives and the rest of the Government and brought greater confidence in the role of parliament in monitoring the security sector, including as it relates to defence expenditures.

UNOCI coordination of UN efforts

In addition to UNOCI support for national SSR efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, the Mission also played an important role in enhancing the coherence and coordination of UN and related international SSR actors operating in the country. From the start,

SSR benefitted from the organizational placement of the SSR Division in close alignment with the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG), enabling higher-level attention to SSR priorities. One of UNOCI's most important intra-UN tasks was to create a UN SSR Working Group in 2014, which brought together UN actors undertaking SSR-relevant activities in Côte d'Ivoire under the co-chairmanship of UNOCI's two DSRSGs.¹⁶ This design mirrored the Inter-Agency SSR Task Force at UN Headquarters, promoting a holistic approach and system-wide attention to the SSR process by encouraging UNOCI and the UN Country Team to share information and coordinate activities.

UNOCI coordination of international efforts

UNOCI also provided important backing to national and international efforts to coordinate SSR activities in Côte d'Ivoire. At the national level, the S-CNS created a Consultative Group on SSR in 2012, based on terms of reference suggested by UNOCI. The Group serves as a strategic advisory body to the S-CNS, consisting of national and international SSR actors, including members of parliament, and meets monthly to assess progress on the National SSR Strategy.

Bilateral efforts in Côte d'Ivoire also benefitted from UNOCI's coordination support, including via the P5+EU framework, which assembled the SRSG, the ambassadors from the US, UK, China, Russia, and France, and the EU representative to coordinate political messaging on topics ranging from electoral issues to security sector concerns. The UNOCI SSR Division provided regular SSR updates to the SRSG in preparation for P5+EU meetings.

Persistent challenges

Despite UNOCI's success in supporting a range of national SSR activities and frameworks in Côte d'Ivoire, persistent challenges and several missed opportunities have limited the transformative impact of reforms so far. Ongoing polarization, limits to seemingly robust political will, and missteps in dealing with immediate security issues have all hampered an otherwise successful UN SSR intervention. These problematic areas are explored below.

Ongoing polarization and the limits of political will

The experience in Côte d'Ivoire indicates that successful UN SSR interventions demand that political opportunities arising from strong national interest are seized, but also that those opportunities have limits. Unlike some other peacekeeping

contexts, UNOCI worked alongside a government that was actively interested in UN support to SSR, starting from its invitation to join the GT-RSS in 2012. However, the speed and urgency with which the National SSR Strategy was drafted and adopted did not allow sufficient national consultations on security institutions that were long viewed by much of the population as ineffective at best and malign at worst. The top-down nature of the Government's approach to SSR has at times made the National SSR Strategy a tool used to redistribute power rather than a platform for reconciliation and national dialogue, and this has made the reform process more presidential than national. As Boutellis noted in 2012, despite positive signs that Ouattara's leadership on SSR and DDR indicated political commitment, these initial efforts "for the most part benefited elements associated with the former FN, and the government has focused its resources on a few well-equipped elite security units rather than undertaking broader reform aimed at rebuilding trusted and accountable security forces."¹⁷ And while the FN aided Ouattara in coming to power, the vast challenges of governing and governance (including of the security sector) logically called for a broad coalition of support. SSR could have been used as an entry point for redefining relationships between the state and the people based on a greater public sense of trust, confidence, and belonging.

UNOCI introduced various innovative support efforts to address the political underpinnings of the reform process in Côte d'Ivoire, including through the BBLs and similar initiatives, and through joint efforts with the S-CNS on regional sensitization outside the capital. Ultimately, however, the public perception was of a victor's peace, and this significantly limited the ability of the SSR process to advance national reconciliation or national representation. Resentments over impunity are often focused on the security sector: Human Rights Watch has noted that "the lack of accountability for human rights abuses is indicative of a wider failure to address a longstanding culture of impunity within the army. Mutinies [...] reflect a wider perception that the army is 'above the law'."¹⁸ Worse, perceptions that only Gbagbo supporters have been punished for crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis undermine the possibility of broader dialogue on security arrangements and governance involving actors outside the ruling party.

Mutinies and other security incidents

In a setback for SSR efforts, large-scale protests by elements of the FRCI broke out in Bouaké on 18 November 2014 and escalated in the main cities of Côte d'Ivoire. Grievances pertained to the retroactive payment of salaries, allowances, hazard pay, and other benefits from 2009 for approximately 8,000 soldiers. Protesters included former FN members subsequently integrated into the FRCI who felt they had not been adequately rewarded for supporting President Ouattara in 2011. These protests

reflected limits to progress on advancing the FRCI's professionalism and discipline and demonstrated that attitudes and behaviours within the security and defence forces are yet to be fully transformed. The Government agreed to an initial payment in 2014, but similar mutinies erupted from 6–7 January 2017 and again from 12–15 May 2017, by the same groups, in the same locations, and for the same claims. Another mutiny followed in the final days of 2017, stretching into early 2018.

These mutinies and the related Government responses reveal lingering SSR issues in the management and governance of the security sector in Côte d'Ivoire. The 2014 mutiny could have served as an opportunity to address the politico-social causes of protestors' grievances. Implementation of the LPM's initiative to professionalize the security sector and improve the quality of life for members of the armed forces would likely have addressed these grievances and potentially resulted in broader social progress. But a long-term SSR perspective fell victim to short-term security responses, as the Government largely acquiesced to the demands of mutineers in order to restore immediate stability. This brought about the sudden promotion of some 8,000 corporals to the rank of sergeant, without corresponding new responsibilities, which contributed directly to the abovementioned 2017 mutinies.

Beyond the mutinies, various other security incidents point to a persistent mistrust between different local communities on the one hand, and between the population and security forces on the other. These incidents underscore the urgency of continued support to efforts to professionalize security providers and the need for sustained confidence-building initiatives. Though somewhat isolated, these incidents are prone to potential political exploitation and constitute a risk factor.

Conclusion and recommendations

With UNOCI support, Côte d'Ivoire has made major strides in developing its security architecture and governance. Many challenges remain, however, following UNOCI's withdrawal in June 2017. Inclusive national ownership and international support will be necessary to implement the more transformative and long-term elements of the National SSR Strategy, and to address unresolved aspects of DDR, the cohesion of security forces, and broader social polarization and inequality. Several tasks particularly require attention, and flow from the challenges discussed above:

Build a broader reform coalition for deeper security sector transformation: UNOCI support to SSR-enabled interventions went far deeper than train-and-equip exercises and were intended to enhance crucial governance and civilian oversight aspects that are essential for the transformative impact of reforms. However, ownership and leadership of the reform process and agenda have been largely limited to the ruling party. SSR has not been sufficiently linked with reconciliation efforts in

order to lead all national actors to engage fully in the process. The reform of security institutions must become an all-of-society process and a shared national priority.

Scale up implementation of the Military and Interior Security Programming Laws to fully transition from a post-crisis approach to defence and security towards “orthodox” governance of the sector: The two five-year planning tools in place in Côte d'Ivoire represent important steps towards overall transformative reform. They both address physical improvements to the security and defence infrastructure, including to equipment, but also include aspects related to the conditions and careers of personnel, which will in turn improve their livelihoods and reduce the risk that they reject the established command and control chain. This will also significantly reduce parallel influences on national forces.

Avoid sacrificing long-term security gains for short-term fixes: The government's ad hoc response, involving the negotiation of financial deals each time disgruntled soldiers mutiny, has proved ineffective, unsustainable, and detrimental to the security and stability of the country. A comprehensive and strategic response to this spate of recurring mutinies is needed and should link SSR and socio-economic reintegration to broader political processes, including national reconciliation, to position it within a strategic perspective. Further acquiescence by the Government to the demands of mutineers not only risks undermining important national security legislation and the National SSR Strategy, but is also unsustainable and invites further mutinies. Côte d'Ivoire's long-term security does not rest on appeasement but on addressing the underlying causes of the lack of cohesion and discipline in the armed forces.

Continue to support Ivorian SSR coordination efforts: The S-CNS's Consultative Group on SSR, which remains active following UNOCI's departure, represents a good model for bringing various national and international SSR actors together and should be continued. The role of the UN Resident Coordinator will be particularly important in advocating for a continued comprehensive approach to SSR going forward. The UN will need to sharpen its tools to address the transition from the UNOCI peacekeeping context to more targeted but long-term support that consolidates the gains made under UNOCI.

Maintain inclusive dialogue on SSR-related issues: Building on the inclusive dialogue model of the BBLs – the coordination of which has been successfully transferred to UNDP following the withdrawal of the Mission – national and international stakeholders should continue to meet on a regular basis to maintain sound lines of communication and share views. This format should be replicated in key areas to allow for participation by local populations as well in the construction of a new relationship with security providers. UNOCI effectively opened up space for continued engagement on SSR following its withdrawal, including UNDP's support

to the S-CNS in establishing new civil-military committees as fora for ongoing dialogue on the army-nation concept. Also, it is critical at this important juncture of the country's SSR implementation to revive dialogue among security and defence forces to foster greater cohesion and unity around the shared goal of protecting the population and the state.

Strengthen women's participation in security sector institutions and increase female enrolment in the Gendarmerie: Building on the momentum of the enrolment of 50 women in the gendarmerie academy since 2015, all national stakeholders must advocate for the greater inclusion of women in security institutions, including at decision-making levels. This will contribute to the transformation of the sector overall, and will positively change perceptions while increasing efficiency.

Notes

- ¹ "Ivory Coast Coup Leader Vows Role for Civilians," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 December 1999, 6.
- ² Siddhartha Mitter, "Ebony and Ivoirite: War and Peace in Ivory Coast," *Transition* 12, no. 4, Issue 94 (2003): 35.
- ³ Maja Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and its Ethical Implications," *African Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2009): 3.
- ⁴ Arthur Boutellis, *The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2011), 4
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁶ Ouagadougou Peace Agreement, Section 3.1.1, 4 March 2007.
- ⁷ Boutellis, *The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire*, 1–2, 11.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ¹¹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2000, S/RES/2000 (27 July 2011).
- ¹² It is worth mentioning here that the FAFN presented a list of 9,000 elements prior to the 2010 election, while the additional 2,000 were added when President Ouattara formed the FRCI after assuming power.
- ¹³ "Armée ivoirienne: 'il n'y a plus de numéro matricule à donner' pour les ex-combattants associés aux FRCI (Gal Bakayoko)," 12 February 2015, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/525949.html>.
- ¹⁴ The army-nation concept calls for the full dedication of security and defence forces in serving their population, and for these forces to be reflective of the national population. The army is subordinated to civilian rule. The concept is based on democratic governance, inclusive participation, and the rule of law where all citizens trust their security providers as part of the social contract and are equal before the law.
- ¹⁵ Aline Leboeuf, "La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne," (France/Brussels: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2016). Available from <http://www.ifri.org/fr/publications/reforme-secteur-de-securite-livoirienne>.
- ¹⁶ The UN SSR Working Group included IOM, UNESCO UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, UNOCI, UN Women, and the UNOCI SSR Division, which served as the secretariat.

- ¹⁷ Arthur Boutellis, "Côte d'Ivoire's Ouattara Puts Economic Recovery Ahead of Political Reconciliation," *World Politics Review*, 19 March 2013. Available from www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12799/Côte-d-ivoire-s-ouattara-puts-economic-recovery-ahead-of-political-reconciliation.
- ¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Côte d'Ivoire: UN Peacekeeping Mission Ends," press release, 30 June 2017. Available from www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/30/Côte-divoire-un-peacekeeping-mission-ends.

7

UN support to SSR in peacekeeping contexts: A case study of the Central African Republic

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Introduction

The value of the security sector rests in its ability to deliver security to the state and its citizens. By this measure, the security sector in the Central African Republic (CAR) has been roundly deficient. It has only occasionally succeeded in protecting the state, and still more rarely the people, and requires considerable external support.

CAR faces longstanding challenges in a security sector that has historically been focused primarily on the capital, exclusionary, and unaccountable, and which has long lacked legitimacy among much of the population. Professional and accountable security institutions have been elusive. Instead, these institutions have largely been instrumentalized to secure power and wealth for the ruling regime, leading to a deeply dysfunctional relationship between the people and the security sector. The size of the armed forces (FACA) has dwarfed that of the under-resourced police and gendarmerie, and the division of roles has been unclear, with the military frequently involved in what should be internal security matters. Furthermore, policy frameworks have been inadequate to the extent that they exist at all, and democratic oversight of the security sector has been minimal under a parliament that has been overly deferent to, and may even be considered an extension of, the executive branch.

Insufficient domestic political will, weak institutions, inefficient coordination mechanisms, and limited international commitment have hindered past SSR attempts in CAR.¹ This chapter offers an account of the problematic record of security institutions in CAR and an assessment of the UN's support to national efforts towards an effective and accountable security sector, including by ensuring coherence among UN actors and coordination between the UN and bilateral and regional partners.² The chapter is divided into five parts. Following this introduction, the second part presents the historical and geopolitical context of security sector

governance in CAR, followed by an account of SSR efforts before the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in 2014, discussed in part three. The fourth part focuses specifically on SSR support efforts under MINUSCA, followed by the conclusion.

The historical and geopolitical context of the security sector in CAR

Despite an abundance of natural resources, CAR is among the world's poorest countries. Since gaining independence from France in 1960, it has experienced five military coups, each highlighting the need for comprehensive reform and transformation of the security sector. Like many countries in Africa, CAR inherited an extractive state apparatus, with development and the functioning of state services confined almost exclusively to the capital, Bangui.

In many senses, CAR has never represented a cohesive state, particularly in the marginalized, mostly Muslim northeast. Rather, the politicized security sector has typically mirrored the ethnicity of respective ruling regimes, with each successive regime creating its own core of loyalists. This has protected elite interests with little regard for the average citizen of CAR and has resulted in armed forces that are frequently absent from territories outside of Bangui, predatory where they are present, and lacking in a cohesive republican ethos. As Boubacar N'Diaye notes, CAR's security sector is characterized by "recurrent security crises fuelled by poor governance, military coups, ethnicization of the armed forces, rebellions, attendant widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and dysfunctional institutions."³

The ethnicization of the FACA to reflect the governing regime has had particularly pernicious effects: favouritism in the military has bred resentment among groups that are not in power and has prevented the establishment of a truly representative and cohesive security sector. This follows a pattern well-established throughout CAR's troubled post-colonial history. During the protracted and brutal administration of Colonel Jean-Bédél Bokassa (1966–1979), for example, soldiers were recruited mainly from his ethnic group, the *Ngbaka*. In the same vein, security forces under the administration of General André Kolingba (1983–1993) were dominated by his ethnic group, the *Yakoma*. N'Diaye notes that Kolingba's rule further increased the alienation of the people from the security sector, due to his "unabashed 'ethnicisation' of power," which would eventually "poison irremediably the political system."⁴ Ethnic recruitments continued under Ange-Felix Patassé (1993–2003), who favoured the *Sara-Kaba*. After leading a successful coup in 2003, General François Bozizé in turn recruited from the *Gbaya*. Indeed, the FACA has

been nicknamed the “lasagna army,” with successive presidents building their own layer of loyalists on top of the previous. Currently, the FACA is composed mainly of three Christian-adherent ethnic groups, the *Gbaya* (33%), the *Banda* (27%), and the *Manza* (13%),⁵ reflecting their approximate percentages of the overall population. Muslim ethnic groups are very poorly represented in the FACA.⁶

CAR’s security situation is complicated by both internal and external geopolitics. Poor governance of the security sector and its extremely limited reach outside of Bangui have enabled “political entrepreneurs” to exploit local grievances and mobilize armed groups that challenge the state and dominate access to natural resources. These groups have at times been armed by interests located in neighbouring countries, further weakening the security sector’s already minimal provision of security across the country. Political agreements have consistently rewarded representatives of these armed groups with appointments to security posts, without any overarching process of reform.

Other countries, including neighbours such as Chad, Uganda, Angola, Sudan, the Republic of the Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), have also powerfully influenced the political and security situation in CAR for their own ends. Chad in particular has been preoccupied by a desire to secure its perimeter against cross-border rebel groups. And according to independent analysts, Patassé’s downfall in 2003 and the rise to power of his successor Bozizé was jointly engineered by Chad, France, the Republic of the Congo, and the DRC.⁷ Yet by 2011, Bozizé’s floundering administration had also fallen out of favour, leading him to seek South African support in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to retain control.⁸ Bozizé was ousted in 2013, with assistance from fighters from Chad, Sudan, and Uganda.⁹

CAR remains consumed by the legacy of its most recent security crisis, triggered by the successful 2013 coup led by Michel Djotodia and his mostly Muslim *Séléka* rebels. The FACA collapsed swiftly under the *Séléka* onslaught, but Djotodia’s government was short-lived and was marked by the looting of natural resources as well as human rights abuses by *Séléka* members, who were increasingly beyond his control.¹⁰ Largely Christian self-defence militias, calling themselves the Anti-*Balaka*, clashed violently with ex-*Séléka* forces, injuring and killing thousands of civilians in the process. Djotodia was forced out of power in January 2014 by the Chad-dominated Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) over his failure to contain the violence. The subsequent administrations of Catherine Samba-Panza and Faustin-Archange Touadéra have since struggled to overcome ongoing internal strife and move beyond the legacy of exclusion, Bangui-centrism, and ethnic favouritism in the security sector, despite notable efforts under MINUSCA’s revised mandate, which are described later in this text.

Security sector reform before MINUSCA

Efforts until 2008

Against this challenging backdrop, what is the record of externally supported SSR efforts in CAR and what explains their ineffectiveness? Insufficient national leadership and ownership, combined with uncoordinated international support, are some of the main causes of SSR failures, particularly where a common security vision is lacking and where a problematic relationship exists between the state and society more broadly. The need for SSR emerged as a topic of political discussion only relatively recently in CAR, after Bozizé's successful March 2003 coup made reform of security institutions an urgent priority. Bozizé subsequently won a presidential election and was sworn in on 11 June 2005. This was followed by the 2005 *Déclaration de Politique Générale*, which signalled the Government's growing interest in SSR.¹¹ The UN Development Programme (UNDP) led early efforts and pushed strongly between 2004 and 2007 for a national seminar on SSR, as well as on DDR. The UN peacebuilding office, BONUCA, also implemented human rights training programs for the police.¹²

2008 National Seminar and Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD)

Internationally supported SSR planning began in earnest in 2008. A National Seminar on SSR was held in Bangui on 14–17 April, facilitated by UNDP and funded by the EU and other donors. The Seminar outlined five SSR principles for CAR: (i) a holistic approach; (ii) national ownership; (iii) the commitment of the Government; (iv) democratic oversight; and (v) a role for civil society.¹³ Critically, the National Seminar also resulted in the adoption of a detailed chronogram, or roadmap, for the subsequent two years. Key tasks included the removal of illegal checkpoints, the issuance of uniforms, parliamentary legislation on integrated security sector spending and oversight, and legal clarification of the status of the police.¹⁴ The National Seminar was followed by the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) from 8–20 December 2008, which brought together actors including armed groups and the political opposition, with support from Gabon and other ECCAS countries.¹⁵ This resulted in various recommendations, including the immediate implementation of DDR activities, the restructuring of the armed forces, a multi-year military spending program, and a public information campaign.¹⁶

These promising beginnings stalled, however, when a dearth of political will on the part of CAR authorities was met by a decline in international support. The Bozizé regime's interest in SSR was limited to strengthening its own position and bringing in international funding. According to N'Diaye, Bozizé and his confidants

viewed SSR as “a potentially useful concept [...] given the unsatisfactory, indeed dysfunctional, state of the security apparatus, but only if it [could] be used to consolidate freshly acquired power.”¹⁷ In fact, according to Bagayoko, CAR political actors have viewed SSR as “a means of building up a security apparatus (essentially a militarised one) that can guarantee the State’s legitimate violence and thus ensure political continuity and the hegemonic position of ruling actors.”¹⁸ Thus, while politically expedient reforms, particularly train-and-equip interventions, were on the table in CAR, truly transformative changes to the security sector requiring a redefinition of power relations between the regime and the wider population were not contemplated under Bozizé.

The effect of this dynamic was far-ranging. Not only did Bozizé’s hesitant embrace of SSR limit the impact and scope of reforms, this lack of commitment extended to FACA leadership and the officer corps, raising suspicion among armed groups.¹⁹ As N’Diaye notes, the chronogram’s deadlines passed without progress, “casting a legitimate doubt over the sincerity of the commitment on the part of the CAR authorities to carry out meaningful SSR (and even DDR).”²⁰

Problems existed on a broader level, beyond Bozizé’s leadership, as well. The sensitization campaigns that followed the National Seminar were inadequate and ineffective, and a common vision of the security sector did not emerge for the international community to support. Civil society had no influence on SSR implementation, and the country continued to be threatened by the proliferation of armed groups. Uncoordinated and international efforts also doomed reforms: France supported the restructuring of the FACA and the gendarmerie within the old security framework rather than the new SSR roadmap; China and South Africa focused on security assistance through training and equipping the FACA, including the construction of barracks; the EU suspended financial support in January 2009, following the failure of the Government to implement the SSR roadmap;²¹ and Chad’s involvement was channelled extensively through ECCAS, and focused on maintaining border security. In the end, an ambitious start to 2008 resulted in little more than small-scale technical projects and failed to produce broad security sector transformations needed to break the cycle of instability plaguing CAR.

ECCAS/MICOPAX and AU/MISCA

Parallel peacekeeping efforts that began in 2008 were also met by coordination challenges. Following an attempted peace agreement in Libreville in June 2008, ECCAS expanded the small Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) peacekeeping force, renaming it MICOPAX and ostensibly broadening its mandate to include support for SSR and DDR. However, MICOPAX was composed almost entirely of military forces and lacked the requisite civilian staff to oversee

a meaningful SSR program, due in part to non-payment by ECCAS member states. Even training exercises for the FACA did not come to fruition.²² And despite receiving EU funding, MICOPAX never comprised more than 3,000 troops even during the peak of the 2013 violence.

The direction MICOPAX took under ECCAS was dominated by Chad, the priorities of which centred on immediate stability and border control rather than on transformational intervention. This approach echoed the shortcomings of central African sub-regional security structures in general, and their lack of alignment with an emerging UN focus on governance-focused, sector-wide SSR. Angela Meyer observes that, for “Central African regional communities, security is still defined from a predominantly military and state-centric perspective,” a process which “addresses only the direct manifestations of insecurity – rebellions, fighting, and criminal activities,” rather than root causes such as poverty and ethnic favouritism.²³

In 2013, when it became clear that violence could spread during the Djotodia administration, the AU moved to take over peacekeeping in CAR, through what would become the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). The transition to this Mission was beset by coordination challenges. Tatiana Carayannis and Mignonne Fowlis note that both the Republic of the Congo and Chad resisted ceding leadership to the AU, a grudge Chad continued to nurse in its disinterest in future peacekeeping operations in CAR.²⁴ Martin Welz indicates that strained relations caused a four-month delay in the hand-off from MICOPAX to MISCA, and during an especially violent time.²⁵ And the problems did not end there, as MISCA struggled initially due to “repeated financial delays” from international donors.²⁶

MISCA, which was only active from December 2013 to September 2014, had an SSR mandate under Security Council resolution 2127 (5 December 2013), which outlined its role in assisting a government-led restructuring of the security sector with support from the UN political mission, BINUCA. But MISCA suffered from a lack of unified command, rivalries among troop-contributing countries, and the same Bangui-centrism that had degraded public trust in the FACA over the years.²⁷ It also possessed insufficient military, police, and civilian components.²⁸ Despite a troop ceiling of 6,000, MISCA reached only 5,142 troops at its peak,²⁹ or 85% of its proposed capacity. MISCA was ultimately able to contribute very little to SSR or to CAR’s security in general, and worsening violence resulted in a UN takeover of the mission as of September 2014, via resolution 2149 (10 April 2014). Some members of the AU felt undercut by this sudden “transition” after only nine months of deployment.³⁰

MINUSCA: what is new?

Given such a troubled history of international support, does MINUSCA offer something different, or will the same scattered national reform processes and international involvement likely produce the same results? While political and security issues remain, MINUSCA has greatly expanded support to SSR that is focused on governance and sector-wide issues as well as to the development of laws and policies aimed at enhancing the performance and civilian control of CAR's security institutions. MINUSCA is engaged in multiple aspects of SSR support to CAR: (i) political support for the establishment of a strategic framework and vision for national security, including a National Security Policy and a Higher Council for National Security (*Conseil supérieur de la sécurité nationale*), as well as for the inclusion of minority and marginalized groups in security institutions; (ii) institutional support for effective and professional security institutions; (iii) democratic accountability through parliamentary oversight and civilian control, and sustainability; and (iv) coordination of international support. The following section first introduces the evolution of MINUSCA's SSR mandate before analysing successes and challenges in each of the abovementioned areas of SSR, including support for political processes, institutional strengthening of the security sector, and coordination of internal and international SSR actors.

Getting the mandate right: SSR coordination moves to the centre of MINUSCA efforts

As indicated above, international SSR support in CAR has not necessarily been well-coordinated or sufficiently prioritized in prior peacekeeping operations. As Carayannis and Fowlis point out, "each successive peace operation in CAR has had SSR and DDR as part of its mandate, yet the standard template of SSR has largely been ill suited to the CAR context." This has especially been true where armed groups have opposed a historically malevolent military, and when measures to restore state authority have taken place where "the state generally never held such control to begin with."³¹ The situation therefore called for peacekeeping operations with a mandate and capacity to support more transformative SSR processes than had hitherto been undertaken in CAR.

The succession to MINUSCA from MISCA offered the opportunity to tackle this ongoing need for SSR that would address CAR's recurrent security sector crises. However, MINUSCA's authorizing mandate, resolution 2149 (2014), concentrated on initial priority tasks but not the longer-term strategic objectives that would be included in later mandates. Unfortunately, this positioned SSR as only an "additional task" to be undertaken where possible, and did not directly link it to the initial priority task of DDR. Still, each progressive mandate moved SSR closer to the centre

of MINUSCA's objectives. Resolution 2217 (2015) included SSR in its second level of "essential tasks," reflecting the growing importance of SSR but also the perceived need to prioritize DDR support. MINUSCA was assigned to support Government SSR activities through strategic policy advice in coordination with the EU, and to coordinate technical assistance and training between international partners.³²

Resolution 2301 (2016) greatly clarified the role of MINUSCA in the coordination and coherence of SSR efforts, and rightly included SSR among the Mission's priority tasks under the strategic objective of creating conditions conducive to reducing armed groups. Specifically, MINUSCA was mandated to "provide strategic and technical advice to the CAR authorities to design and implement a strategy for [...] SSR" in conjunction with the EU.³³ Priority tasks also involved supporting the Government in developing vetting and accountability measures, in police development and recruitment, and in creating a clear division of labour among security sector components. The coordination role of MINUSCA is also vital; the Mission was mandated to "coordinate the provision of technical assistance and training between the international partners [...] to ensure a clear distribution of tasks in the field of SSR."³⁴ These roles remain part of MINUSCA's mandated tasks under resolution 2448 (2018).

Political support to a national SSR framework and national security vision

Armed with a stronger SSR mandate, MINUSCA has provided more coherent support to efforts to develop a national SSR framework and a common vision for the security sector in CAR. At the same time, though, MINUSCA's role is essentially advisory and the viability and impact of any SSR initiative in the country will ultimately depend on sustained national leadership and inclusive ownership of the reform process. MINUSCA's attempts to meet these challenges are examined below.

The May 2015 Bangui Forum on national reconciliation was very significant for bringing together the state and the people, and in doing so, addressing a historically estranged relationship. The Forum featured the participation of a wide swath of society, including the Government, armed groups, political parties, and civil society organizations. MINUSCA provided technical support through SSR background documents and facilitated the Forum's planning. A resulting Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction emphasized elections, decentralization, judicial reform, and DDR,³⁵ and reflected "the full commitment of the participants in the Forum to a comprehensive reform of the security sector, including the establishment of accountable, multi-ethnic, professional and republican defence and internal security forces."³⁶ Yet, while the Forum was an innovative and necessary platform for articulating a common national security vision, it was not sufficient to resolve all points of contestation and thus did not result in a common

national security agenda. There was also a lack of effort to sustain the dialogue or implement its recommendations for the next two years.³⁷

MINUSCA has more successfully assisted SSR processes and structures within the Government, including through a December 2015 roundtable that led to a Declaration on the Principles of National Security, which was followed by a draft National Security Policy in March 2016. In response to a May 2016 Government request, the UN, EU, and World Bank jointly undertook a Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment for CAR, which the Government adopted as the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017–2021 (RCPCA) in October 2016. The RCPCA consists of three interlinked pillars, meant to: (i) support peace, security, and reconciliation; (ii) renew the social contract between the state and population; and (iii) promote economic recovery and boost productive sectors.³⁸ The first pillar, which is most germane to SSR, addresses four strategic objectives at a total estimated cost of US \$461 million: (i) violence reduction through disarmament and reintegration; (ii) stability through SSR; (iii) justice reform and ending impunity; and (iv) reconciliation and the creation of conditions for the return of refugees and solutions to displacement.³⁹ With a budget of US \$131 million dedicated to the second, SSR-specific objective, the Government was to finalize and adopt a political and strategic framework for SSR by 2017, including a National Security Policy, National SSR Strategy, and priority reform plans for defence, internal security, and justice, as well as the establishment of a Higher Council for National Security. However, the implementation of RCPCA strategic activities was delayed due to the late establishment of coordination bodies and the slow disbursement of funds pledged at a November 2016 donor conference in Brussels.

Significantly, CAR authorities have agreed to provide a political chapeau over the RCPCA, in the form of the Framework of Mutual Engagement (*Cadre d'engagement mutuel*, CEM-RCA). The CEM-RCA was signed on 17 November 2016 in Brussels by President Touadéra and Jan Eliasson, then the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, on behalf of the Secretary-General and the wider international community. It renews the commitment of bilateral and multilateral partners to support the implementation of the national SSR programme in CAR and states that the main objective of reform of the FACA and the internal security services is to establish national defence and security services that are professional, non-political, ethnically representative, and regionally balanced.

Additionally, MINUSCA played a critical advocacy and facilitation role in the establishment of the Strategic Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Repatriation (DDRR), and National Reconciliation, which is the highest decision-making and coordination body for these three policy areas. Chaired by President Touadéra, the Committee includes the Prime Minister; the Ministers of Defence, Interior, and Finance as well as other relevant ministries; the Chief of

Defence (*Chef d'état-major des FACA*); and the Directors-General of the Gendarmerie and Police. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) as well as senior officials of MINUSCA, the AU, the EU, ECCAS, France, the US, and the World Bank also attend. On 4 November 2016, the Committee endorsed a National DDRR Strategy, a National Security Policy, and a five-year capacity-building and development plan for the police and gendarmerie.⁴⁰

The National Security Policy (NSP) was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 2 February 2017.⁴¹ On 4 July 2018, the National Assembly passed a law establishing the Higher Council for National Security, an inclusive body mandated to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the NSP. In line with its mandate to provide strategic and technical advice on SSR, MINUSCA supported the drafting committee that converted the NSP into a National SSR Strategy. The 2017–2022 National SSR Strategy was adopted by the Strategic Committee for DDRR, SSR, and National Reconciliation on 10 March 2017. The Strategy is focused on three key areas: (i) strengthening security sector capacity, (ii) reinforcing the security of persons and goods and restoring state authority, and (iii) fostering good governance and the rule of law. It represents CAR's first true national SSR strategy and remains a top presidentially-endorsed document. Support to its implementation by MINUSCA is likely to remain on the Security Council's agenda.

An overarching goal has been support to peace talks. In order to address the absence of a political settlement between the Government and the 14 recognized armed groups, the African Initiative for Peace and National Reconciliation supported a dialogue in April 2017. The African Initiative was led by the AU, ECCAS, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), with the support of Angola, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, and MINUSCA. The resulting Roadmap for Peace and National Reconciliation, adopted on 17 July 2017 in Libreville, "reaffirms the legitimacy of the country's constitutional system, the importance of the conclusions reached at the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, held in 2015, and the need for strong national ownership of the peace process to promote reconciliation."⁴² Subsequent discussions focused greatly on the integration of former combatants and a geographically-balanced recruitment of soldiers, police and gendarmerie officers. Consultations from 8–11 January 2019 led by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and senior officials from ECCAS countries and CAR's neighbours led to direct talks in Khartoum and the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in Bangui on 6 February 2019.

The Agreement includes important SSR provisions, including: (i) Government commitment to the inclusion and representation of all social groups in the FACA and internal security forces through equitable and transparent recruitments; (ii)

Government commitment to establishing a mixed commission to address issues of rank harmonization, integration of ex-combatants and re-incorporation of former FACA into the armed and security forces; and (iii) agreement by the parties to establishing special mixed security units, composed of FACA and internal security forces personnel and demobilized armed group elements for a transitional period of 24 months. The implementation of these defence and security measures is likely to be fraught with technical and political challenges.⁴³ The international guarantors and facilitators of the Agreement, led by the AU and with MINUSCA support, will have to provide extensive political, technical and financial support to ensure implementation of this or any future agreements.

Table 7.1: Developments in the institutional, legal, and strategic framework for SSR: Late 2016–Early 2019

Completed

- 16 November 2016: Framework of Mutual Engagement (CEM-RCA) outlines key SSR commitments and national priorities; endorsement of National Security Policy (NSP) and Internal Security Forces Capacity Development Plan in first meeting of Strategic Committee for DDRR, SSR, and National Reconciliation
- 17 November 2016: National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding (RCPCA) sets out key SSR benchmarks (strategic objectives, strategic results, and activities)
- 2 February 2017: Adoption of NSP at Council of Ministers
- 17 February 2017: Presidential Decree establishing National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons
- 10 March 2017: Endorsement of National SSR Strategy in second meeting of Strategic Committee for DDRR, SSR, and National Reconciliation
- March 2017: Military Justice Code adopted by National Assembly
- 11 September 2017: Adoption of National Defence Plan, which, based on the National Security Policy and the National SSR Strategy, offers a vision for the transformation of FACA into a garrison army
- 15 September 2017: Strategic Committee for DDRR, SSR, and National Reconciliation decides to integrate 60 combatants demobilized by a DDR pilot project into the FACA
- 4 July 2018: Law on the Higher Council for National Security (*Conseil supérieur de la sécurité nationale*, the body responsible for coordinating and overseeing implementation of the NSP)
- 18 December 2018: National Assembly passes a five-year military appropriations bill for fiscal years 2019-2023.
- 9 January 2019: Government endorses a national strategy on the demilitarization of the penitentiary system

Pending

Law on National Security Policy: not yet drafted

Legal framework for the Higher Council for National Defence: not yet revised

Implementation of the National SSR Strategy: not yet underway

Drafting of Sector Development Plans based on National SSR Strategy: significantly behind schedule

Slow progress in implementation of internal security forces development plan: delays in revision of legal framework for police and gendarmerie, resulting in lack of clarity on institutional positioning and command and control of gendarmerie (organic law on gendarmerie not yet adopted)

Support to institutional capacity

SSR efforts in CAR are predicated on linking sector-wide reforms (including the national vision and strategies) with component-specific operational changes in defence and internal security institutions, outlined below.

A. Defence sector reform

While there are emerging signs of progress, the most immediate challenges facing defence sector reform are severe institutional and operational capacity gaps, and the urgent need to reform and restructure the FACA. The Ministry of Defence and Defence Headquarters have already been restructured with help from the EU,⁴⁴ so that the FACA are now overseen by the Minister of Defence. And with support from the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA), the Ministry of Defence has formulated several foundational documents for the sector. The National Defence Plan was signed by President Touadéra on 11 September 2017, and on 18 December 2018, the National Assembly passed a five-year military appropriations bill for fiscal years 2019-2023 (*Loi de programmation militaire*, LOPM).

The National Defence Plan provides for a radical transformation of the FACA into a garrison army and the establishment of four military regions aligned with administrative entities (prefectures). It aims to improve the capacity and accountability of the FACA and calls for balanced ethnic representation and diversity, civilian oversight, and support for national reconciliation through the integration of ex-combatants. Vetting and retirement measures will be used to facilitate the departure of some current members of the armed forces, allowing space for re-integration and new recruits. The LOPM provides \$374 million to implement the garrison army concept.

A three-pronged approach was adopted by MINUSCA and the EU to support the restructuring of the FACA. First, international partners focused their efforts on rationalizing the human resource management system. To start, an accurate accounting of the number and identity of military members was necessary: while 7,465 FACA soldiers are registered in the official database of the Ministry of Defence, 8,400 FACA personnel are on the payroll of the Ministry of Finance. By mid-February 2018, CAR military authorities, supported by MINUSCA and EUTM RCA, had verified the identity of 7,737 registered soldiers.⁴⁵ Additionally, in response to a Security Sector Public Expenditure Review undertaken jointly by the World Bank and MINUSCA on the public financial management of the national security forces,⁴⁶ the Government launched an audit of the FACA in February 2017. A March 2018 presidential decree authorized the retirement of over 800 armed forces personnel, making room for new recruits and former combatants.⁴⁷

The second prong of this work was centred around strengthening the capacity of FACA battalions to perform military tasks. EUTM RCA took the lead on retraining FACA troops on an incremental basis. As of March 2019, four deployable infantry battalions have completed their training.

The third prong of FACA restructuring involves the procurement of equipment and arms. FACA rearmament is severely constrained by the general and complete arms embargo first imposed by the Security Council on CAR on 5 December 2013 with the adoption of resolution 2127 (2013). Resolution 2399 (2018) maintains an exemption regime for supplies of non-lethal equipment and assistance (operational and non-operational) to the security forces in CAR for SSR purposes, with advance notice and approval.⁴⁸ Bilateral partners, including France, China, and the US, have taken advantage of the exemption regime to provide non-lethal equipment to the FACA. In a significant development, Russia supplied weapons and ammunition in January-February 2018, mostly to the FACA.

In his National Day speech on 1 December 2018, President Touadéra emphasized the progress made in professionalizing and operationalizing the FACA and internal security forces, including through EUTM RCA training and the procurement of weapons and vehicles. He noted the launch of the recruitment campaign of 1,023 new soldiers as well as the deployment of EUTM RCA-trained FACA personnel to Bambari, Bangassou, Dekoa, Grimari, Obo, Paoua and Sibut with MINUSCA support. However, the FACA still lack the basic command and control and logistics capabilities to effectively plan, deploy, support, and sustain military operations without MINUSCA and Russian support. And given the growing political pressure on authorities to deploy the FACA to fill security vacuums in many regions of the country, an expedited process of defence sector reform is essential.

B. Reform of the police and gendarmerie

Set against the backdrop of a military-centred culture of regime security, the gendarmerie and police have historically been marginalized in CAR. Their current collective strength is approximately 2,817 officers, including 1,684 gendarmes and 1,133 police officers, serving a total civilian population of 4.6 million in a territory as large as France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands combined. This makes for a very low police-citizen ratio of 1:1,277. Furthermore, the presence of these internal security forces is limited in the provinces, with only about 38 percent of gendarmes and 22 percent of police officers deployed outside of Bangui. The average age of officers is 50 years, and 380 are due for immediate retirement. Both the gendarmerie and police face crippling governance deficits – including a high level of politicization resulting in the frequent turnover of directors-general, unclear reporting lines, and weaknesses in management, internal oversight, and accountability.

Recognizing the continued dire need for institutional strengthening and capacity building among the internal security forces in CAR, resolution 2387 (2017) stipulates that MINUSCA:

- Promote and support the rapid extension of state authority over the entire territory of CAR, including by supporting the deployment of vetted and trained police and gendarmerie;
- Co-locate with police and gendarmerie in priority areas outside of Bangui;
- Support CAR authorities in developing an approach to the vetting of security elements, to promote accountability;
- Take a leading role in supporting CAR authorities in implementing the National Capacity-Building and Development Plan for Internal Security Forces;
- Support the CAR Government in developing an incentive structure for police and gendarmerie and for the selection, recruitment, vetting, and training of police and gendarmerie, taking into account the need to recruit women; and
- Provide technical assistance to facilitate the functioning of the Special Criminal Court, in particular in the areas of investigations, arrests, detention, criminal and forensic analysis, evidence collection and storage, recruitment and selection of personnel, court management, prosecution strategy and case development, and the establishment of a legal aid system.⁴⁹

With strong MINUSCA support, the CAR Ministry of Internal Security had developed a National Capacity-Building Plan for the Internal Security Forces for 2016–2020, which was endorsed by the Strategic Committee for DDRR, SSR and National Reconciliation on 4 November 2016. The Plan sets out strategic goals and specific objectives and outlines key benchmarks in five thematic areas: (i) legal and regulatory framework; (ii) human resources management, including retirement, recruitment, and the augmentation of female representation; (iii) logistical and

budgetary requirements; (iv) operations and training; and (v) conduct and discipline matters. The document also details priority activities, including: (i) legislative review and development of a Law on the Gendarmerie, to institutionalize the operational authority of the Ministry of Interior over the gendarmerie; (ii) the rehabilitation and equipping of police and gendarmerie units; (iii) the identification and registration of personnel; (iv) the recruitment of 250 police officers and 250 gendarmes; (v) the development of curricula and training programs for new recruits; (vi) the rehabilitation and equipping of police and gendarmerie academies; and (vii) capacity strengthening of police and gendarmerie academy trainers.

As of March 2019, progress in implementing the Plan has been limited. CAR is not on track with achieving its ambitious objective of a 10,000 strong police and gendarmerie force by 2023, and faces capacity deficits in executive leadership and coordination, as well as oversight. Policing reform has suffered additionally from a lack of consensus on various contentious issues related to the reconstitution of the FACA. The effective development of the internal security forces will require a reallocation of both political engagement and financial resources away from the FACA and towards the police and gendarmerie. One notable success, however, was the recruitment, vetting, basic and specialized training of 250 new police officers and 248 new gendarmes with UN support.

Enhanced democratic oversight and sustainability

Democratic oversight and financial sustainability help underpin the areas discussed above, as part of the larger SSR framework. For CAR, an important milestone in this regard was the adoption of a new Constitution in December 2015. MINUSCA assisted the constitution drafting committee, including by deploying a legal advisor from the UN's standby mediation team. The Constitution includes articles that specifically contribute to a coordinated SSR agenda; in particular, Article 27 underlines that the security sector shall be composed of citizens, barring the use of mercenaries from outside CAR as in the past, and notes the need for the sector to be “professional, multi-ethnic, republican, and politically neutral.”⁵⁰ This article has been adhered to, with recent police and gendarmerie recruitment requiring proof of citizenship. Article 80 is also significant because it specifies that the organization of national defence should be based in law, thereby providing a “constitutional basis for the development of a legal framework for national security.”⁵¹ A Military Justice Code was subsequently adopted by the National Assembly in March 2017, in line with the RCPCA, to address the history of impunity for FACA troops and build public confidence through accountability.

Another area where MINUSCA actively supported oversight and sustainability of the security sector was through the previously mentioned Security Sector Public

Expenditure Review with the World Bank. A review of the public financial management of the FACA, Police, and Gendarmerie was completed in January 2017. As described above, this review has helped identify ghost soldiers on public payrolls and led to an audit of the FACA. It also highlighted the structural imbalance of the current security sector budget: with 83.5% of the FACA budget paying wages and salaries, only 15.5% is allocated for operations and a paltry 1.5% for investments in infrastructure and equipment. The review concluded that the cost of the SSR component of the RCPCA far exceeds the fiscal resources of the Government of CAR, which may thus be forced to rely on voluntary contributions from partners.

Challenges to enhanced oversight remain, with parliament still playing only a minimal role. The traditional dominance of the security sector by the presidency, and the long history of winner-take-all politics in CAR, have not resulted in a culture of effective parliamentary oversight of the security sector. Nonetheless, MINUSCA's support for initiatives to clarify constitutional roles and develop a national security strategy and vision has contributed to improvements in this area, including through constitutional training for members of the defence and security committees of the National Assembly. These efforts have been largely piecemeal thus far, however, and should be part of a more comprehensive approach to supporting enhanced parliamentary oversight. While the National Assembly is finding its voice on security sector governance, it will require further technical capacity building to support security legislation drafting, military expenditure management, and civil society relations.

Coordinating diverse international actors and interests

MINUSCA plays an increasingly important role in coordinating several layers of SSR support from diverse international and regional actors in CAR. These layers of coordination are described below. A first layer relates to internal MINUSCA dynamics; a second to coordination between MINUSCA and the UN Country Team (UNCT); a third to coordination between MINUSCA and some bilateral actors, as well as the EU; and a fourth to coordination between MINUSCA and regional actors, including the AU, ECCAS, and CAR's neighbours.⁵² Each of these actors brings different interests and different conceptualizations of SSR to CAR, which are not necessarily aligned. Just as national SSR efforts have at times struggled to gather around a common vision, as described above, so too have international support efforts.

Layer 1: Internal UN coherence – As a starting point, it is important that MINUSCA is structured to respond effectively to CAR's needs. UNPOL, SSR, DDR, civil affairs, political affairs, and gender components all exist under one

MINUSCA umbrella, but the division of labour has not always been clear. This led to the creation of the MINUSCA Working Group on SSR, which mirrors the structure of the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force at UN Headquarters, bringing potentially disparate components together under the leadership of the Deputy SRSG to advance a coherent and holistic understanding of, and UN approach to, SSR tasks by the full range of relevant actors in MINUSCA. While ongoing challenges remain in this process, both within MINUSCA and at Headquarters, inter-agency meetings play a key role in reducing overlap and encouraging coherence in SSR efforts.

Layer 2: MINUSCA-UNCT coordination – MINUSCA-UNCT coordination is tasked to the Office of the triple-hatted Deputy SRSG/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. With the exception of UNDP, members of the UNCT do not usually participate in meetings of the MINUSCA SSR Working Group. Roles are clearly delineated between MINUSCA and the UNCT, with the former focusing on political and security support, and the latter on programmatic support and technical assistance.

Layer 3: MINUSCA-bilateral and MINUSCA-EU coordination – Though the UN covers the widest scope among SSR actors in CAR, it is not always the most influential. Given the operational imperative that the FACA address continued insecurity, train-and-equip exercises by bilateral actors frequently dominate SSR in ways that are not always conducive to transformative reform processes. Indeed, bilateral support to SSR in CAR has historically focused on immediate stability, rather than on the more complex long-term reconstitution of the FACA into a representative and accountable security actor. Bagayoko notes:

“[The] SSR concept promoting a human-security perspective on security is clearly side-stepping the traditional French approach to military/security cooperation: the French approach to CAR security reform is still deeply informed by the views of a traditional network of security assistance *coopérants* (military and police officers) whose approach is operationally-driven in essence and mainly focused on the security of the state as well as on the re-organisation of the security forces.”⁵³

Such an approach does not always allow for the productive DDR that is needed to underpin more successful SSR efforts. France’s influence is likely to remain significant, including through its role as penholder at the Security Council for CAR-related issues. In the past, MINUSCA structures have existed to help bring French and EU approaches in closer harmony with the approach of the UN. During the transitional administration of Samba-Panza, for example, MINUSCA held strategic level coordination meetings among bilateral actors addressing SSR. Unfortunately, the subsequent administration did not elect to maintain these sector-wide strategic meetings, though monthly meetings are held on technical or thematic areas of SSR, such as defence sector reform.

The EU approach, including through EUTM RCA, tends to align with that of France, such that Europe collectively implements train-and-equip exercises rather than efforts to enhance security governance. Thus, when the UN envisioned defence sector reform in CAR to involve recruitment for a representative national army, the EU policy was simply geared towards training whichever troops the Government provided. However, training and equipping soldiers who are largely supportive of the *Anti-Balaka* or who were part of the old military establishment poses a risk of sustaining predatory behaviour and human rights violations.

MINUSCA has taken important steps to clearly delineate responsibilities and coordinate some diverging bilateral focuses and interests through a Joint Support Plan on SSR and the Rule of Law with the EU Delegation and the EUTM RCA, which was endorsed at the 21st meeting of the UN-EU Steering Committee on 16 March 2017 and signed in Bangui on 17 July by the head of MINUSCA, the Head of the EU Delegation, and the EUTM RCA Mission Commander. The Plan directs collective efforts towards a transformative SSR process and aligns them with CAR's National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017–2021.⁵⁴ In particular, it commits MINUSCA and the EU to supporting the Government on the National Security Policy, National SSR Strategy, and Higher Council for National Security, with specific roles for each participant, based on existing national laws and frameworks. Partners are to undertake joint information exchange and analysis, while employing RCPCA-based coordination mechanisms, with a new MINUSCA Defence Sector Strategic Liaison Team that connects its senior military officers with the EUTM RCA's vetting and training tasks for the FACA. Additionally, the EU and MINUSCA established Coordination Groups made up of international partners, on defence, internal security, justice, and weapons and ammunition management.⁵⁵ The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General chairs regular meetings of the International Coordination Group on CAR Defence and Internal Security Forces.

The Joint Support Plan also underlines MINUSCA's "primary responsibility to support the CAR authorities in ensuring coherence of the SSR process, through provision of strategic and technical advice to national authorities, including formulation and implementation of a national SSR strategy," as well as the coordination of technical assistance and training between international partners in CAR to align them with the broader SSR framework.⁵⁶ Additionally, as regards defence sector reform, the Plan emphasizes that strategic review and renewal of MINUSCA and EUTM RCA's mandates will be "closely coordinated with one other, with a view to maintaining alignment."⁵⁷

In 2018, MINUSCA and EUTM RCA prioritized mobilization of donor funding for the FACA and the internal security forces, with MINUSCA coordinating international partners in support of national priorities.

Layer 4: Regional actors – While this chapter is not focused specifically on regional aspects of the CAR crisis, several regional actors are especially relevant to the UN’s SSR efforts in CAR. Chad has had a problematic role in the conflict in CAR and has often faced distrust from Bangui, particularly given that some armed groups in CAR are known to have sympathizers across the border in Chad. Still, Chad has attempted to support the current peace process. Cameroon has a similarly influential role as the “door” into CAR for various goods and services, both legal and illegal, making it an important player in the political economy of its neighbour.

To gain autonomy from its neighbours, CAR has been attempting to diversify its security partners beyond traditional allies such as Angola and South Africa to include Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Côte d’Ivoire, and Senegal. The AU has supported the broader peace process in CAR, together with ECCAS and the AU, ECCAS, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

Table 7.2: Security sector crises and reform attempts in CAR, 1996–2019

1996-1997	FACA mutinies
2003	March: Coup by General François Bozizé
2005	<i>Déclaration de Politique Générale</i>
2008	April: National Seminar on SSR December: Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD)
2010	SSR process stemming from National Seminar and IPD stalls
2013	March: <i>Séléka</i> coup led by Michel Djotodia December: MISCA deployed
2014	September: MINUSCA deployed
2015	May: Bangui Forum
2016	October: National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA) adopted November: National Security Policy (NSP), national DDDR policy approved by Strategic Committee for DDDR, SSR, and National Reconciliation; Framework of Mutual Accountability (CEM-RCA) signed
2017	February: NSP adopted March: National SSR Strategy adopted by Strategic Committee for DDDR, SSR, and National Reconciliation
2019	February: Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic signed in Bangui

Conclusion

SSR support to CAR has improved, particularly since the permanent members of the Security Council have demonstrated their commitment to MINUSCA leading the

coordination role. During MINUSCA's deployment, various coordination and policy structures have been put into place, and assistance has been provided to nationally-led efforts to build the legal and constitutional foundations of an accountable and professional security sector. MINUSCA's role in coordinating SSR support has been clearly outlined in the Mission's recent mandates, helping both the UN and international actors utilize their comparative advantages in SSR activities in CAR.

However, with the process still ongoing, it is too early to say whether SSR will be deeply transformative for CAR in the long term, and there are some worrying signs. The drive to "operationalize" the FACA threatens to reduce SSR to a concentration on military functionality only.

The future of SSR in CAR depends on expanded work by the UN and international partners in further strengthening coordination, enhancing accountability and oversight, expanding security services beyond Bangui, developing a culture of inclusivity towards a security sector that serves all citizens – including through national dialogue – and bolstering the country's ability to respond to internal and external threats. Specific areas of importance for continued and coordinated international support could include the following.

Political inclusiveness to support SSR: Given CAR's history of exclusionary and elite-oriented politics, supported by an instrumentalized security sector, political progress remains the central challenge to all SSR efforts. The election of President Touadéra may have addressed the issue of the *legality* of the state but it has done little to address the *legitimacy* of the state. This is a significant obstacle given that the centre of gravity in the SSR process remains within the state rather than the wider society. The question of legitimacy largely depends on how inclusive and transformational the reform process is, and the President's commitment to reform is confronted by the presence of an entrenched Bangui-centric elite.

International efforts must collectively encourage political leaders to address the marginalization and exclusion experienced by many CAR citizens. The Government must also promote a "common level of citizenship," such that those living further from Bangui are not considered (and do not feel) any less citizens than those near the centres of power. It should "communicate an inclusive narrative that embraces all religious and ethnic groups as Central Africans."⁵⁸ The security sector's relationship with the public has historically reflected the alienation of certain groups and the sociological strains of an insufficiently shared national identity. A sense of shared citizenship will reflect, and be the true measure of, a transformation of the security sector in CAR. The UN should thus intensify its advocacy efforts to promote greater inclusion of Muslims and other ethnic minority groups in security institutions. As the only guarantors of the peace agreement with a SSR mandate and capacity, the AU and

the UN will have a critical oversight and advisory role in the implementation of the SSR commitments of the signatory parties.

Enhanced policy and coordination frameworks: To avoid the tendency towards incoherent donor projects or bilateral assistance, continued work on national frameworks for international SSR support is vital. The new Constitution provides an important starting point for a national security framework that can address security sector needs holistically, and thereby invite coordinated international support over the long term. Full implementation of the National SSR Strategy, coordinated by the Higher Council for National Security and with enhanced parliamentary oversight and civil society engagement frameworks, will be critical going forward. Another important aspect of this process is support by the UN for implementation of the RCPCA and the CEM-RCA, to better direct international efforts towards SSR priorities determined at the national level.⁵⁹ Within the peacekeeping context, enhanced coherence at Headquarters and among UN agencies on the ground can ensure that all aspects of UN assistance are working together.

National ownership: The UN can enhance the prospects of a coordinated response to SSR needs in CAR by ensuring that all voices, including women, youth, and civil society, are part of the national security vision, and that dialogue includes armed opposition and marginalized groups. Improved oversight capacity by the National Assembly based on more comprehensive constitutional training, as mentioned previously, will be important as well. The National Assembly will also have to ensure that the Government of CAR allocates sufficient budgetary resources to SSR, especially for the implementation of capacity development within the internal security forces.

Maintain political momentum among the leadership: Recent successes in developing frameworks for more coordinated SSR support can help bolster the political process in CAR but cannot substitute for it. While they were not as developed as today's structures, the 2008 National Seminar and IPD were both ambitious projects that failed nonetheless due to insufficient political will amid anxieties over the implications of SSR for existing power relations. Addressing anxieties such as these may be necessary to reach the desired end-state of security institutions that are accountable and responsive to citizens in all parts of the country.

Notes

¹ United Nations Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic: Challenges and Priorities* (2016), xi.

² For the purposes of this chapter, *coherence* refers to efforts within the UN, while *coordination* refers to the alignment between UN efforts and those of other SSR actors.

- ³ Boubacar N'Diaye, "The Central African Republic," in *Disarmament, Remobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, eds. Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2012), 115.
- ⁴ Boubacar N'Diaye, "Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic," in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, eds. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2009), 41.
- ⁵ UN Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic*, 13.
- ⁶ The *International Religious Freedom Report for 2017*, published by the US State Department (available from <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2017&clid=280722>), cites Pew Research Foundation findings that Muslim ethnic groups make up approximately 9% of the population of CAR. They include the *Baggara, Fulani, Furu, Kara, and Hausa*.
- ⁷ Tatiana Carayannis and Mignonne Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union-United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic," *African Security Review* 26, no. 2 (2017): 222.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 223.
- ⁹ Robert M. Perito, *UN Peacekeeping in the Sahel: Overcoming New Challenges* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2015), 11.
- ¹⁰ International Crisis Group, *The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilisation*, Africa Report No. 219 (Nairobi/Brussels: ICG, 2014), i.
- ¹¹ N'Diaye, "Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic," 44.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 53.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ¹⁸ Niagalé Bagayoko, "Multi-level Governance and Security: The Security Sector Reform Process in the Central African Republic," IDS Working Paper 351, November 2010.
- ¹⁹ N'Diaye, "Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic," 49, 57.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ²² International Crisis Group, *Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (I): Central Africa*, Africa Report No. 181 (Nairobi/Brussels: ICG, 2011), 13.
- ²³ Angela Meyer, "Regional Conflict Management in Central Africa: From FOMUC to MICOPAX," *African Security* 2, no. 2–3 (2009): 166–167.
- ²⁴ Carayannis and Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union-United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic," 231.
- ²⁵ Martin Welz, "Briefing: Crisis in the Central African Republic and the International Response," *African Affairs* 113/453 (2014): 607.
- ²⁶ Carayannis and Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union-United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations," 225.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.
- ²⁸ Perito, *UN Peacekeeping in the Sahel*, 12.
- ²⁹ Global Peace Operations Review, "Non-UN Peacekeeping Missions," www.peaceoperationsreview.org/non-un-military-missions.
- ³⁰ Welz, "Briefing: Crisis in the Central African Republic and the International Response," 605–606.
- ³¹ Carayannis and Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union-United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations," 230.

- ³² United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2217 (S/RES/2217), 28 April 2015.
- ³³ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2301 (S/RES/2301), 26 July 2016.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/576), 29 July 2015.
- ³⁶ UN Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic*, 9.
- ³⁷ Carayannis and Fowlis, “Lessons from African Union-United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations,” 227.
- ³⁸ For more, see Central African Republic National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017–2021, 9. The second pillar of the RCPCA aims to renew the social contract between the state and the population by building the presence and capacity of the state to provide basic social services such as education, health, and water and sanitation. It covers four strategic objectives, with a total cost of US\$1.326 billion. The third pillar aims to promote economic recovery and boost productive sectors, to rapidly provide the population with income-generating activities and employment opportunities in core productive sectors, and to improve the business and investment environment more broadly. It covers three strategic objectives at a total cost of \$1.224 billion.
- ³⁹ Central African Republic National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017–2021, 9.
- ⁴⁰ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/94), 1 February 2017.
- ⁴¹ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/473), 2 June 2017.
- ⁴² United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/865), 18 October 2017.
- ⁴³ Mohamed M Diatta, Institute for Security Studies, “Will the latest Central African Republic peace deal hold?” Available from <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/will-the-latest-central-african-republic-peace-deal-hold>.
- ⁴⁴ UN Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic*, 10.
- ⁴⁵ This process is called “*verification simplifiée*.”
- ⁴⁶ World Bank, *Revue de la gestion financière des forces de défense et sécurité en République Centrafricaine*, October 2016.
- ⁴⁷ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, “Situation in the Central African Republic” (S/2018/611), 18 June 2018.
- ⁴⁸ See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2399 (S/RES/2399), 30 January 2018. This exemption was introduced in 2017, by resolution 2339; see United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2339 (S/RES/2339), 27 January 2017.
- ⁴⁹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2387 (S/RES/2387), 15 November 2017.
- ⁵⁰ UN Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic*, 15.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Coordination has occurred between MINUSCA and some international NGOs as well, such as with the National Democratic Institute to enhance parliamentary oversight capacity, and with the US Institute of Peace on national reconciliation.
- ⁵³ Bagayoko, “Multi-level Governance and Security.”
- ⁵⁴ Joint MINUSCA-EU Delegation and EUTM RCA-Support Plan on SSR, 4.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 7.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 8–9.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid. See “Support to Defence Sector Reform (DSR),” 1.
- ⁵⁸ *Applying the HIPPO Recommendations to the Central African Republic: Toward Strategic, Prioritized, and Sequenced Mandates* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2017).
- ⁵⁹ See United Nations Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic*, 27.

PART III:
THEMES

Preventing and resolving conflict: SSR and national security policies, strategies, and plans

JARED RIGG

Introduction

Upon his appointment as United Nations Secretary-General on 1 January 2017, António Guterres began refocusing the Organization and the international community on the priority of conflict prevention.¹ UN support to security sector reform (SSR) emerged in the 1990s, *inter alia*, to better avert and resolve conflict in fragile and conflict-affected states.² This support is critical to achieving prevention, and the UN should therefore prioritize and strengthen efforts to develop national security policies, strategies, and plans (NSPSPs).

To date, much of what the UN has done in the area of NSPSPs has come in response to Member State requests³. The Organization has focused on providing in-country assistance on the basis of requests from Member States and regional partners, or country-specific mandates issued by the Security Council.⁴ Further, it has sought to ensure high-quality, consistent delivery in the field, including through the development of a system-wide policy, articulated in the Integrated Technical Guidance Note (ITGN) on United Nations Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes, and on the basis of UN principles for SSR, such as national ownership.⁵ The ITGN includes functional definitions for national security policies and national security strategies, to guide UN staff in their support, but it notably lacks a definition of a national security *plan*.

In general, UN efforts in the area of NSPSPs have had and continue to have positive impacts on conflict prevention and resolution. However, UN engagement has focused entirely on national security policies and strategies, to the exclusion of national security plans. To realize the truly preventative and responsive value of NSPSPs, the UN should help national partners to both *develop* and *coherently implement* national security plans. This is particularly important in fragile and

conflict-affected contexts where threats can swiftly result in, or further contribute to, instability and violence.

This chapter begins by outlining the UN approach to NSPSPs in the framework of SSR. It then highlights select UN experiences in supporting the development of NSPSPs and presents three related challenges and opportunities concerning UN support to NSPSPs generally and to national security planning more specifically. Finally, the chapter concludes with seven recommendations for both prioritizing and strengthening UN support to NSPSPs. This includes the development of a new instrument for preventing and resolving conflict; namely, an accountable, transparent, and cost-neutral 'NSPSP support mechanism' tasked with ensuring the coherent delivery of NSPSP-related assistance to fragile and conflict-affected states.

The UN approach to NSPSPs in the framework of SSR

NSPSPs outline a vision for national security – including associated principles, interests, threats, and challenges – and detail the implementation of this vision at the strategic and tactical levels. In so doing, NSPSPs guide security provision for a state and assist in both preventing and resolving national security threats and, therefore, conflict itself.⁶ Yet, effectively implementing them requires a range of initiatives in foreign affairs, environmental protection, development assistance, human rights, gender, child protection, health security, security cooperation and operations, and SSR.

NSPSPs are essential in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to establishing the necessary conditions for successful international assistance in the security, development, and humanitarian spheres. But for SSR, NSPSPs are viewed as *critical* to success,⁷ most importantly, because these documents provide the strategic framework required for effective SSR.⁸ However, they also guide security sector budgeting and financing,⁹ and they help improve the social contract between a state and its people¹⁰ – which contributes to national conflict resolution and can assist in mending negative public perceptions of a once-predatory security sector.¹¹

The security and development communities, including the UN, have recognized the need to support national authorities in fragile and conflict-affected states to formulate, promulgate, implement, and monitor and evaluate NSPSPs. The important role of the UN in supporting NSPSPs was acknowledged by the General Assembly in both 2010 and 2011,¹² and was later underscored in 2014 by the Security Council in its first thematic resolution on SSR (S/RES/2151).

As part of the emerging UN approach to SSR, the UN Inter-agency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF) also developed its ITGN on United Nations Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes in 2012.¹³ While the ITGN focuses

on national security policies and strategies, it pays only cursory attention to the subject of national security plans. However, it does introduce the term 'national security plans' and stipulates that national security policies and strategies should result in such plans.¹⁴ It also calls on the UN to "highlight the importance of translating a national security policy into a national security strategy and, subsequently, a plan of action for later implementation,"¹⁵ noting that the UN is "well positioned to assist by ... helping develop national security strategies and implementation plans."¹⁶

The ITGN defines a national security policy as "a formal description of a country's understanding of its guiding principles, values, interests, goals, strategic environment, threats, risks and challenges in view of protecting or promoting national security for the State and its peoples."¹⁷ A national security strategy, on the other hand, is "a formal description of the *methods* to be used by the State and its peoples to realize the vision and goals outlined in national security policy" (emphasis added).¹⁸ While an explicit definition of 'national security plan' is not offered in the ITGN, it can be deduced from the document, and for the purposes of this chapter, is defined as: a formal account by the State of what needs to be done, when, and by whom to *implement* a national security policy/strategy. Importantly, this means that national security plans are not security sector development plans that focus solely on SSR. Rather, they outline the full range of requirements for implementing a national security policy; and depending on the national context, this could include activities in areas ranging from foreign affairs, to health security, to counter-terrorism.

Indeed, according to the ITGN, national security plans should respond to a broad spectrum of issues – requiring a coherent whole-of-government approach to ensure the delivery of immediate security to both the state and its people, as well as a coherent whole-of-system approach to international assistance – addressing:

1. The needs, vision, and objectives of, and threats to national security that are articulated in the related national security policy and/or strategy;
2. Specific SSR activities in response to these elements, ranging from strengthening parliamentary oversight to the development of counter-terrorism capabilities in a national defence force;
3. Specific security operations in response to these elements (for example, to address terrorist threats in rural communities and/or to counter organized crime and related corruption in public service);
4. Crosscutting issues such as human rights, gender equality, and child protection;
5. Clear goals and indicators that encourage measurement of impact and contribute to public communication campaigns that outline the progress of specific reforms; and
6. Information on activities, inter-dependencies, sequencing and timelines, roles and responsibilities, and risk management, as well as financial sustainability.

When it comes to SSR and security operations, the considerations are indelibly linked, and require specific mention. The implementation of a national security policy cannot be pursued without accounting for both. As an example, preventing or resolving a national security threat through a specific security operation may first require that the capacity of a participating agency is strengthened. If an organized criminal network seizes control of a town following a post-conflict gap in national security provision, a country may decide to address the threat militarily, but may first need to implement reforms in the security sector to enhance national oversight mechanisms regarding the adherence of national forces to international humanitarian and human rights law. Alternatively, a desired SSR result may only be achievable following the resolution of an immediate security concern through a security operation. For instance, an SSR effort to build community policing capacities in a village far removed from a nation's capital by focusing on local governance, police training, and police infrastructure may be contingent on the ability of the military to ensure the security environment by addressing threats arising from marauding armed groups in the region.

The UN approach to NSPSPs is based on principles laid out in the Organization's broader approach to SSR, and thus prioritizes national ownership. It also stresses the need to incorporate a human rights perspective and outlines a number of potential support strategies and roles for the UN, such as: facilitation and coordination; communication, awareness raising, and outreach; the provision of technical assistance; and capacity development. A range of challenges and opportunities that may confront the UN and other international actors when supporting NSPSPs are also presented, including: fostering political will and leadership; building trust and confidence; supporting a consultative or governance-driven process; dealing with cultures of secrecy; and addressing capacity shortages. Lastly, the ITGN outlines some UN-specific pitfalls, ranging from short-term mandates, to the risk of undermining national ownership, to ensuring adequate and predictable resources.¹⁹

The UN experience in supporting the development of NSPSPs²⁰

At the continued behest of recipients of UN support, as well as the General Assembly and the Security Council, supporting the development of NSPSPs has become an important element of the UN approach to SSR. This has made it a focus of the UN Secretariat and its peace operations, and of relevant UN agencies, funds, and programmes. The following section briefly summarizes five UN experiences in the area of NSPSP formulation in three countries, led by: the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) starting in 1999; the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2007/8; the UN

Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in the mid to late 2000's; the UN Integrated Mission in East Timor (UNMIT) starting in 2006; and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) from 2014. These cases provide a variety of UN experiences over the past two decades.

Timor-Leste

Following national independence in 1999, and after a brief but severe period of armed violence initiated by pro-Indonesian militias, UNTAET, and subsequently the UN Mission in Support of East Timor (UNMISET), assisted Timor-Leste to develop a range of national institutions, including in the security sector. As noted by Peake, the institutional vacuum following independence meant that the development of national security institutions occurred swiftly and “without much of a policy framework to unite them.”²¹ In fact, no national security policy, strategy, or plan were developed. In their absence, reforms in the fledging national security sector proved ineffective.²² Furthermore, these reforms were not designed to deal with immediate operational problems or any others that might arise in the short term. “SSR planning documents placed little to no emphasis on maintaining coherence in building forces that would counteract pressing security threats,”²³ and therefore did little to deliver the safe and secure environment needed by Timor-Leste during its post-independence nation-building process. As Funaki has highlighted, matters were only made worse by the withdrawal of the UN in mid-2005 “before the [security] institutions and capacity were in place for an effective Timorese takeover.”²⁴ As a result, large parts of the Timorese security sector collapsed in 2006, contributing to a crisis of violence in which thirty-eight people were killed, around 150,000 were displaced, and over 1,650 homes were destroyed.²⁵

In response to the crisis, Timor-Leste made a second, more structured and strategic attempt at SSR. Given the lack of an NSPSP framework, Timorese authorities began in 2007 by developing a national security policy. The process was led by the Secretariat of State for Security and the Office of the President, with significant UN support – including from the newly-established UNMIT and UNDP – as well as that of the Australian Timor-Leste Police Development Programme (TLPDP) and the US Embassy. Notably, there was no parallel initiative to develop a national security *plan*, to ensure effective implementation of the national security policy. Still, following a number of fits and starts as conditions, priorities, commitment, and capacity changed over a four-year drafting process, a draft national security policy was sent in February 2011 to the Council of Ministers for approval.

The development of the country's first national security policy was a significant milestone, but the Government of Timor-Leste never elaborated a national security plan to ensure its successful implementation. One explanation for this could be that

the perceived urgency for thorough implementation of the national security policy, in a period of relative calm four years after the policy development process began and 12 years after independence, had simply evaporated. Or, Timorese leaders may have viewed a national Strategic Development Plan that was submitted to the Council of Ministers a few months after the draft national security policy, in July 2011, as a sufficiently suitable substitute. That Plan offered a “twenty year vision . . . to create a prosperous and strong nation”²⁶ and included general targets for security and defence, but was not focused specifically on operationalizing the national security policy. In 2011, one year before UNMIT liquidated, the mood among national and international authorities was buoyant: Timor-Leste was finally on the path to stability.²⁷

However, the country’s journey to stability following independence was not without challenges. Some security threats were not prevented, including those that led to the 2006 crisis and to the reported attempted assassination of the President and Prime Minister in 2008, and came close to crippling the fledging nation during its first decade of existence. Both the Timorese Government, in its decision to develop a national security policy after the 2006 crisis, and the UN, in its 2006 report on Timor-Leste,²⁸ recognized the error in not drafting such a policy upon independence. Yet, to ensure effective implementation, there should also have been a corresponding national security plan, which could have made the path to peace in Timor-Leste less challenging and investments in SSR – and in the development process more generally – more effective. As noted by Funaki, the primary obstacle to donor coordination in the area of SSR during Timor-Leste’s peacebuilding process, and thus to effective SSR and national security, had indeed been “the lack of a shared strategic framework, with above all an agreed national security policy.”²⁹

Liberia

Liberia was plagued by civil war from December 1989 until August 2003. A return to violence in the country after an original 1996 peace agreement has been linked to a failure to initiate an effective SSR process, which would itself have required the development of an NSPSP framework.³⁰ As such, at the end of conflict in 2003, SSR was considered central to ensuring the country’s future stability, including its economic prosperity.³¹ Stakeholders agreed that SSR was a priority during the signing of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, Ghana, but the need for a national security strategy was not explicitly articulated until 2006 at a conference organized by the Liberia Governance Commission (GC), an entity established by the Liberian Government to promote good governance and reforms in the Liberian public sector.³² This led to an assessment of the national security sector by the GC, resulting in recommendations for developing a national security strategy.

Following a period of national dialogue based on nation-wide consultations and policy seminars, Liberia's first National Security Strategy was approved by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the National Security Council in January 2008. The landmark document, which contains elements of both policy and strategy per UN definitions, represented an outcome of the SSR process as well as a guide for further implementation of that process. It called for the development of an "integrated National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia Implementation Matrix (NSSRL-IM)."³³ Contrary to Liberia's 150-day action plan, which identified the need to "develop a national security plan,"³⁴ the NSSRL-IM was designed to be a "security system development plan showing how each agency can sustainably attain the expertise and other resources required to fulfil its remit together with suggested sustainable financial commitments from the Government and its international partners."³⁵ Unfortunately, it was not designed to be a national security plan outlining the full range of actions required to effectively implement the National Security Strategy.

Nevertheless, the National Security Strategy did include a one-page Implementation Schedule (ISL) that, while brief, took rudimentary steps towards charting out what needed to be done, when, and by whom, to fully implement the Strategy. Step three, for example, was to develop the NSSRL-IM and step four was to prepare a security sector budget. Later steps addressed more operational tasks, such as step nine, to deploy "national security officers throughout Liberia" and step thirteen to hold "national security exercises to prepare for the takeover of security responsibilities."³⁶ Still, the ISL lacks alignment with the Strategy, failing to include actions to address almost every threat – and cause of conflict – and security dilemma listed in the Strategy. These pertain to land and property disputes, ethnic tensions, poverty and unemployment, and poor natural resource management. This ISL is not, therefore, a national security plan in form or in name.

While the adoption of the National Security Strategy and the development of the ISL and the NSSRL-IM represented real achievements for Liberia, successful implementation proved difficult. One challenge came from the time it took to develop the Strategy and any accompanying tools,³⁷ which caused a number of important decisions to mount, including some needed to address both root causes of the conflict and the threats outlined in the Strategy. Additionally, as the Strategy started taking shape, the attention of national authorities was largely elsewhere. Jaye has noted that "a lack of political will may also [have been] a factor" along with "diverging visions of the process, a lack of resources, and difficulties in securing an adequate role for the government."³⁸ As a consequence, while Liberia's path to stability in the period after approval of the National Security Strategy has been characterized by a number of significant accomplishments – including peaceful presidential elections in 2011 and 2017, legislative elections in both 2011 and 2014,

and the transfer of security responsibilities from UNMIL to the Government on 30 June 2016 – various issues identified as root causes of Liberia’s 14-year civil war have remained unaddressed,³⁹ some of which must be better articulated within the Strategy.

The inclusive process through which the Liberian National Security Strategy was developed represents a positive legacy, on one hand, including through the introduction of oversight by parliament and civil society as part of security sector governance. Yet, on the other hand, implementation of the Strategy was largely ineffective, which is not surprising in the light of the fact that the NSSRL-IM came to be seen as the strategy’s implementation plan, and was effectively considered synonymous with a national security plan. By focusing on only a portion of what was needed to implement the National Security Strategy (i.e., SSR elements), the Government of Liberia missed opportunities. And as Shilue and Fagen observed, “although the government of Liberia has made great efforts to set up and develop its internal security apparatus, the country would have relapsed into conflict without the significant external assistance to displaced people and the role played by the international community in helping to preserve peace.”⁴⁰ Chillingly, Shilue and Fagen conclude, therefore, that “current prospects for sustainable peace in Liberia remain weak.”⁴¹

Central African Republic

CAR has struggled with severe instability since it formally gained independence from France in 1960. Following a coup led by General François Bozizé in 2003 and his subsequent democratic election in 2005, the country faced an armed rebellion in the northwest and then, six months later, another in the northeast.⁴² Within this context, President Bozizé asked international partners, including the UN, for help in organizing a national seminar on SSR in 2007, with the hope of improving security and fulfilling an important campaign pledge. The four-day event, held in April 2008, brought together over 150 participants from both national and local government, the judiciary, defence and security forces, customs, immigration services, parliament and civil society (NGOs, media, and religious groups), as well as representatives from the international community. It culminated in a two-year National Security Sector Reform Plan (NSSRP), known as the chronogram, which was formally adopted by President Bozizé and Prime Minister Faustin Touadéra during the seminar’s closing ceremony. The Plan outlined objectives and activities for SSR in the areas of border management, defence, justice, intelligence, and public security.⁴³

While national authorities in CAR had considered preparing a national security policy and/or strategy before the NSSRP was adopted, they ultimately decided against it, largely due to an apathy among national and international stakeholders alike for

the lengthy process the development of these documents was expected to entail.⁴⁴ Instead, national authorities, with significant encouragement from international donors, opted for a document that would be “immediately operational and allowed for clear assigning of responsibility to different national actors/institutions”.⁴⁵

By 2010, little of the NSSRP had been realized. As N’Diaye explained, “promising, although limited, progress achieved by the ... national seminar on SSR ... unravelled.”⁴⁶ Fuior and Law similarly noted that, “notwithstanding initial successes, SSR implementation soon stalled and was then effectively abandoned.”⁴⁷ Attempting to explain this outcome, More contended that the NSSRP may have been too ambitious for CAR at the time,⁴⁸ both the scope and timeline of which were considered “set in stone” by CAR authorities. This resulted in a lack of adaptability to changing circumstances, and the support of international partners was either not forthcoming or swiftly waned. Additionally, a lack of national political will was an impediment to effective implementation of not only the NSSRP but of SSR processes more generally.⁴⁹

According to N’Diaye, implementation of the NSSRP was also hampered by the resumption of armed violence in February 2009, which itself was due to “the failure to implement SSR.”⁵⁰ The connection between the lack of a more robust NSPSP framework, a failed SSR process, and the return of violence in the CAR was further spelled out in a more recent report from London-based Conciliation Resources, which noted that “poor governance of the security sector and the government’s consequent inability to ensure citizens’ security and ultimately the security of the Bozizé regime itself was directly responsible for the onset of the [2013/2015] crisis and Seleka’s takeover in March 2013.”⁵¹ Indeed, N’Diaye warned in 2009 that SSR implementation in CAR – and thus national security overall – would continue to fall flat until the country, with the help of international partners, manages to get “the framework and the overarching features right.”⁵² In this respect, as evidenced from the earlier examples of Liberia and Timor-Leste as well, the most important framework and overarching feature of any successful SSR endeavour, and for national security more generally, is that provided by an NSPSP.

In 2013, five years after the SSR seminar, a coup led by Michel Djotodia’s Séléka rebel coalition ended François Bozizé’s decade-old rule and plunged the country into yet another crisis.⁵³ By early January 2014, more than 600 civilians had been killed in Bangui,⁵⁴ the number of internally displaced persons had reached approximately 838,000, and the number of those forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries had risen to 86,000.⁵⁵ With pressure from President Idriss Déby of Chad, the Economic Community of Central African States, and France, Djotodia and his government were forced to resign. On 23 January 2014, Catherine Samba-Panza was appointed President by the Transitional Assembly.

In 2014, the International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) was transformed into MINUSCA, pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 2149, and planning began for a new national dialogue (i.e., the Bangui Forum) meant to return CAR to the path of peace and stability. In May 2015, prospects for successful SSR were somewhat enhanced when the Bangui Forum was hosted by the CAR Government, with assistance from MINUSCA and the Mission's SSR Unit, and resulted in a Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction. The Pact reflected "the full commitment of the participants in the Forum to a comprehensive reform of the security sector, including the establishment of accountable, multi-ethnic, professional and republican defence and internal security forces."⁵⁶

In December 2015, the Government, again with MINUSCA's assistance, held a roundtable on national security, which led to a Declaration on the Principles of National Security and eventually to a March 2016 draft national security policy. On 2 February 2017, CAR's National Security Policy was finally adopted by the Council of Ministers.⁵⁷ Subsequently, a National SSR Strategy (for the period of 2017–2022) was prepared on the basis of the Policy, and was adopted by the Government on 10 March 2017. The Strategy focuses on: strengthening the capacity of the security sector; reinforcing the security of people and goods, and the restoration of State authority; and good governance and the rule of law.

Though the Government has adopted security sector development plans for defence, internal security, and corrections, with a justice policy and plan to follow, it has not indicated that it will produce an overall national security plan that details the what, when, and who of implementation for the National Security Policy and National SSR Strategy.

The National Security Policy of CAR is undoubtedly a positive and hopeful development, but it is not a guarantor of national security and stability on its own. Instead, as illustrated by other country examples discussed above, a national security *plan* would greatly assist implementation. Yet, given the specific national context in CAR and the lessons learned from the failure of the NSSRP, even a comprehensive NSPSP framework will not alone rectify the country's decades-long tendency towards insecurity. To be successful in CAR, an NSPSP framework must be matched by unwavering national will, substantial and real financial and in-kind international commitment for at least a decade, UN support based on a thorough understanding of the national and international interests shaping CAR's national security environment, and well-managed national security.

UN Support to NSPSP development: Challenges and opportunities

The cases of Timor-Leste, Liberia, and CAR, coupled with the developments at UN Headquarters, highlight three important challenges and opportunities for UN support to NSPSP development in fragile and conflict-affected contexts: first, there is a clear need to develop NSPSP frameworks; second, NSPSP frameworks should be developed without delay; and third, the development and implementation of national security plans should be extended beyond SSR.

The need to develop NSPSP frameworks, and without delay

In the absence of a NSPSP framework in Timor-Leste, from its independence in 1999 through the 2006 security crisis, reforms in the security sector proved ineffective, which ultimately contributed to further instability. Further, if a comprehensive NSPSP framework had been swiftly prepared immediately after the 2006 crisis, as opposed to undertaking the four-year process that led to only a national security *policy*, the country's path to peace might well have been less challenging and national and international investments in SSR (as well as other sectors) might well have been more effective.

In Liberia, the country's return to violence after the original peace agreement in 1996 was due in part to a failure to undertake effective SSR at the first opportunity. Subsequent efforts to develop the National Security Strategy, an implementation schedule (ISM), and an SSR implementation plan (NSSRL-IM) took five years, which was too long. Additionally, without a national security *plan* to ensure the effective implementation of the national security strategy, successful implementation and sustainable peace was ill-fated from the outset. And so, predictably, the National Security Strategy has not been effectively implemented, leaving a number of the root causes of Liberia's 14-year civil war still unaddressed.

In CAR, the national decision not to prepare a national security policy and/or strategy in 2008 also meant the causes of conflict were not addressed; and as national will waned, international support evaporated, SSR implementation failed, and national security broke down, the crisis returned. If an NSPSP framework had been established initially, the situation might have been significantly different, including in terms of preventing successive crises. The country's 2017 National Security Policy is thus a promising development. However, it too is unlikely to be successfully implemented without a national security plan, national will, and international and UN support.

These examples illustrate firstly that NSPSPs are critical to successful SSR and to preventing and resolving conflict. UN support to this area should therefore persist. Secondly, NSPSPs need to be prepared within months of identifying significant

threats to a state or following the cessation of conflict, not after several years have passed. National authorities should lead the development of NSPSPs, and in all cases their preparation should involve some degree of national consultation. In instances involving extreme security threats, for instance, national consultations may span just days, versus environments without immediate threats, where they could span months. Ultimately, determining the length of national consultations and thus the timeline for the completion of an NSPSP framework should involve an awareness that, for many national stakeholders, this is a question of life or death.

The development and implementation of national security plans: extending beyond SSR

On paper, at least and as evidenced in resolutions of both the General Assembly and the Security Council as well as the ITGN on Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes, the UN is committed to supporting national authorities in developing and implementing national security plans. However, as all of the cases discussed above reflect, the reality on the ground is that the UN has yet to actually support the development and/or implementation of such a plan. There seems to be a tendency within the UN, and also within the broader international community, to view national security policies and/or strategies as SSR instruments. Hence, SSR plans are often considered the only plans needed to ensure effective implementation of a national security policy and/or strategy. As experience tells us, this is ineffective.

Indeed, in the absence of national security plans and their effective implementation, national security threats often result in, or further contribute to, unstable and increasingly violent environments. In some cases, this has led to or precipitated a return to conflict. Such extreme environments make SSR implementation increasingly more difficult, to the point that both national and international investments are stifled, or entirely lost, as programmes are forced to conclude prematurely. Thus, while national security plans are critical to preventing and resolving conflict in fragile and conflict-affected states, they are also central to protecting national and international investments in SSR as well as contributions made to sustainable peace across the pillars of peace and security, human rights, and development. In other words, if the UN is to realize the truly preventative and responsive value of NSPSPs, it must help national partners to both develop and coherently implement national security plans.

However, NSPSP frameworks will only be successful if they are not viewed through the lens of SSR alone. This tends to reduce national security policies and/or strategies to little more than “SSR instruments” that can be effectively implemented through SSR planning mechanisms. This misunderstanding impedes NSPSP frameworks from the outset and contributes to failed implementation. Instead, NSPSP frameworks should be viewed first and foremost through the lens

of prevention and should therefore receive analysis-based, whole-of-government (or in the case of the UN, whole-of-system) attention.

Conclusion

NSPSPs are critical to preventing and resolving conflict, both directly through their attention to addressing national security threats, and indirectly through their centrality to successful SSR. Indeed, as the cases above illustrate, national security threats often result in or exacerbate instability and violence in the absence of NSPSP frameworks, and can even precipitate a return to conflict. To take advantage of the full breadth of preventative and responsive elements of NSPSPs, the UN must assist national authorities in *developing* and *coherently implementing* national security plans. In this respect, both SSR and security operations should be seen as *sine qua non*. In fact, lacking a national security plan and the actions it prescribes, the chance that a national security policy or strategy can be successfully implemented is significantly diminished, if not erased.

To be effective, it is clear that NSPSPs should be prepared swiftly – within months of when significant threats to a state are identified, or immediately following the cessation of conflict, not after several years. Success in developing and implementing NSPSPs will also require that they are viewed from a prevention perspective, beyond the narrower context of SSR. National security policies and strategies are not developed for the purposes of SSR alone, and the misunderstanding that they are hampers many NSPSP frameworks from the start. Finally, success will require a whole-of-government (or whole-of-system) approach and a staunch commitment to analysis-driven and context-specific delivery over the medium-to-long term. To this end, delivery should prioritize national ownership while balancing the need to provide immediate tangible results in the areas of national, community, and individual security.

The experiences discussed above have generated seven recommendations that might prove useful in ongoing efforts to reform the UN peace and security architecture, as well as for national and international efforts to both prevent and resolve conflict:

1. Prioritize SSR, recalling its original aims as an important facet of any conflict prevention strategy and/or programme.
2. Strengthen support to ensure the swift development of NSPSPs. In situations where support to the elaboration of national security policies and/or strategies is impossible (for example, in particularly fragile or dangerous operating environments), priority should be given to the rapid development of national security *plans*. Specific technical assistance to the development of national security plans should include:

- analysis and threat assessment;
 - national consultation, appropriate to the security context and immediate security needs;
 - options identification and drafting;
 - coordination of national and international partners; and
 - resource mobilization.
3. Support national authorities to implement national security plans, with a priority in the areas of both SSR and security operations. However, other forms of thematic expertise will also be required, for example in:
- development assistance;
 - environmental protection;
 - foreign affairs;
 - human rights;
 - gender;
 - health security;
 - child protection; and
 - security cooperation.
4. In order to operationalize recommendations two (2) and three (3) above, establish a support mechanism at UN Headquarters in New York, tasked with ensuring the coherent delivery of NSPSP-related assistance to fragile and conflict-affected states across the UN system, together with international partners, in both the development and implementation of NSPSP frameworks. The Secretary-General could, for example, establish a NSPSP coordination structure, which could be used proactively to help states prevent conflict, or reactively to assist countries in or emerging from conflict. Such a coordination structure would be cost-neutral, transparent, and accountable to both the Secretary-General and UN Member States;
5. Strengthen UN SSR capacities in the field and at Headquarters, to support the development and implementation of national security plans;
6. Provide further support to the development of a UN approach to SSR, including through the creation (and/or strengthening) of UN SSR funds, structures, and capacities for support to NSPSPs; and
7. Prepare guidance, knowledge management, research, and training on UN support to the development of national security plans, as well as knowledge management, research, and training on national security policies and strategies.

Notes

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- ² Nicole Ball, “The Evolution of the Security Sector Reform Agenda” in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, edited by Mark Sedra (Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), 29–44; Nicole Ball, *Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: The Security Sector Reform Strategy*, DFID Evaluation Report EV 647, March 2004; and DCAF, *The contribution and role of SSR in the prevention of violent conflict*, April 2017.
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- ⁴ United Nations, *SSR Perspective*, May 2012; Vincenza Scherrer, “UN Support to National Security Policy-Making from an Institution-Building Perspective,” *Sicherheit und Frieden / Security and Peace* 30, no. 3, (2012), 141–147.
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- ⁷ Ann Fitz-Gerald, “Stabilization Operations and Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform: Strange Bedfellows or Close Allies?” in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, ed. Mark Sedra (Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), 159; William A. Byrd, “The Financial Dimension of Security Sector Reform” in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, ed. Mark Sedra (Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), 305 and 307; “National Security Policies,” SSR Backgrounder Series, 1 and 4; United Nations, ITGN on Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes, 118; Albrecht Schnabel, “Ideal Requirements versus Real Environments in Security Sector Reform” in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, eds. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva: DCAF, 2009), 6 and 11.
- ⁸ Fitz-Gerald, “Stabilization Operations and Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform: Strange Bedfellows or Close Allies?,” 159.
- ⁹ Byrd, “The Financial Dimension of Security Sector Reform,” 310.
- ¹⁰ United Nations, ITGN on Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes, 118.
- ¹¹ OECD, “OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform,” 2011, 18.
- ¹² United Nations, Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/64/19), para. 110; United Nations, Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/65/19), para. 126.
- ¹³ United Nations, ITGN on Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

- ¹⁷ Ibid, 122.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 123.
- ¹⁹ United Nations, ITGN on Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes, 134–137.
- ²⁰ This section draws on three unpublished case studies that were commissioned by DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance to support the development of the ITGN on Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes.
- ²¹ Gordon Peake, “A lot of talk but not a lot of action: the difficulty of implementing SSR in Timor-Leste” in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, eds. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva: DCAF, 2009), 218.
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- ²³ Nicholas J. Armstrong, Jacqueline Chura-Beaver, and Isaac Kfir, *Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste: Missed Opportunities and Hard Lessons in Empowering the Host-Nation*, PKSOI Papers, US Army Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute, April 2012, 17.
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- ²⁷ Ibid., 53.
- ²⁸ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628), para. 58.
- ²⁹ Funaki, “The UN and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste: A Widening Credibility Gap,” 7.
- ³⁰ Thomas Jaye, “Liberia: Development of the National Security Strategy,” draft case study report, 2011 (DCAF, unpublished), 2–3.
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- ³³ Republic of Liberia, *National Security Strategy*, 2008, 19.
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- ³⁸ Jaye, “Liberia: Development of the National Security Strategy,” 11.
- ³⁹ Republic of Liberia and the United Nations Mission in Liberia, “Sustaining Peace and Securing Development: Liberia Peacebuilding Plan,” 20 March 2017, 4.
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- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² International Crisis Group, “Anatomy of a Phantom State,” Africa Report No. 136, 13 December 2007.

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- ⁴⁴ Sylvie More, “The Central African Republic: Development of the National Security Sector Reform Plan,” draft case study report, 2011 (DCAF, unpublished), 5.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Boubacar N’Diaye, “Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic,” in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, eds. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva: DCAF, 2009), 61.
- ⁴⁷ Teodora Fuior and David Law, “Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic: Chronicle of a Death Foretold,” Centre for Security Governance, *SSR 2.0 Brief 1* (2014), 1.
- ⁴⁸ More, “The Central African Republic: Development of the National Security Sector Reform Plan,” 20–21.
- ⁴⁹ Fuior and Law, “Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic: Chronicle of a Death Foretold,” 5; and N’Diaye, “Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic,” 57.
- ⁵⁰ N’Diaye, “Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic,” 62.
- ⁵¹ Conciliation Resources, Analysis of conflict and peacebuilding in the Central African Republic, November 2015, 9.
- ⁵² N’Diaye, “Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic,” 62.
- ⁵³ International Crisis Group, “Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition,” Africa Report No. 203, 11 June 2013.
- ⁵⁴ See United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), “Over 600 people killed, 159,000 displaced in Central African Republic,” press release, 20 December 2013. Available from <https://binuca.unmissions.org/en/over-600-people-killed-159000-displaced-central-african-republic---un-0>.
- ⁵⁵ See UNHCR, Central African Republic Fact Sheet, 31 January 2014.
- ⁵⁶ United Nations, Security Sector Reform Unit, Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic: Challenges and Priorities (2016), p. 9.
- ⁵⁷ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2017/473 (2 June 2017), p. 9.

9

UN field operations’ contribution to defence sector reform¹

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 IASSRTE, 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 IASSRTE 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 system⁴⁶ 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 through 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 comprehensively, 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 (2014), 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.

Strengthening the DDR-SSR nexus: A practitioner's personal reflections

AYAKA SUZUKI¹

Introduction

The 2000s were an ambitious decade for UN peacekeeping operations and their “cousins,” special political missions (SPMs). The UN Security Council, as it emerged from the Cold War and debacles in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, and Rwanda in the early 1990s, began to embrace peace operations to help rebuild war-torn countries.² From 1999 to 2007, 14 peacekeeping operations were launched, compared to 50 before 1998, but this period also witnessed increasingly complex mandates for these missions, which have been described by academics and policymakers using terms such as “second generation” and “multidimensional.” Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) have thus become integral aspects of peace operations.

This chapter examines how DDR and SSR evolved in UN peace operations, both conceptually and in practice.³ It notes the limitations that have confronted prevailing approaches to DDR and SSR in peace operations, and why synergy between the two approaches has not been maximized to date. It concludes with recommendations for more effectively strengthening this nexus in order to better assist host countries to pursue DDR and SSR as a means to build a solid foundation for sustainable peace. The main thesis of the chapter is essentially a call to move beyond a technical approach and adopt a new type of engagement between the Security Council, UN field missions, and host governments on both DDR and SSR processes, which are essentially politically-driven transformations with technical aspects. This engagement should be aimed at a more profound and realistic understanding of a country's overall peacebuilding requirements and political dynamics as they relate to DDR and security sector challenges.

Defining DDR, SSR, and their relationship

Before examining the UN's experience with the intersection of DDR and SSR, it is important to define these concepts. A lack of conceptual clarity has misled the approach of many practitioners to both DDR and SSR.

DDR is a time-bound process aimed at transitioning fighters, often members of rebel groups and sometimes armed forces, from active combatant status to civilian life. DDR is typically, though not exclusively, carried out in the aftermath of a conflict and as part of a broader ceasefire or peace agreement. According to the UN definition, the overall objective of DDR is "to contribute to security and stability in post-conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin."⁴ DDR is thus a programmatic intervention meant to support political aims, such as implementation of a peace agreement or a post-conflict reduction of armed personnel. While much attention is paid to the aspect of "disarmament," it is important to keep in mind that this is not simply about physically removing weapons, but about a transformative process of remaking a combatant into a civilian.

A UN approach to DDR was outlined comprehensively in 2006 in the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), which contain extensive guidance and operational planning assistance for DDR practitioners.⁵ Still, while the IDDRS cover management, operations, and cross-cutting issues, they are not the final word on DDR, which has continued to evolve in response to growing security challenges over the past decade as peace operations have deployed to locations that lack peace agreements or inclusive political processes. Challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, and local or regional armed groups (increasingly criminally, rather than politically, motivated) have made DDR more difficult, leading to the development of "second generation" practices. These consist of practical, programmatic activities such as emergency employment measures and community-based approaches to criminality and mediation that can be "conducted instead of, alongside, or after traditional DDR."⁶ They include community violence reduction (CVR) measures, for example, pioneered in Haiti in 2006 to address gang violence and at-risk youth⁷ and since expanded to Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur, the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Another evolving second generation practice is that of integration (discussed later in this chapter), wherein members of armed groups are incorporated into national security institutions at levels appropriate to their experience and rank.

By comparison, SSR is often a longer-term process meant to enhance both the provision and governance of security. Though it is usually conceptualized in broad terms, thus consisting not just of train-and-equip exercises for the military but of wider efforts to enhance the management and civilian oversight of the entire security sector, a tension has existed between the concept of SSR and a training-focused

approach in practice.⁸ The UN definition of SSR contained in the Secretary-General's first report on the subject in 2008 describes it as a process of "assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities," with the goal of creating "effective and accountable security institutions."⁹ Today, UN SSR support is increasingly aimed at serving this purpose not only in the context of post-conflict peacekeeping, but in preventative SPMs and non-mission settings as well.

Michelle Hughes summarizes the relationship between DDR and SSR, explaining: "Unlike SSR, the DDR process is generally finite, with fixed negotiated activities, timelines and objectives. Governance is something that is enabled or strengthened by an effective DDR process, but it is not the focus that it is in SSR. And while DDR may contribute to SSR, neither one is a prerequisite for the other; comprehensive SSR strategies do not even exist in many DDR situations."¹⁰ In theory, DDR may be a precursor to an SSR process or an integral part of it, but rarely have these two concepts been conceived concurrently at the outset of a peace process.¹¹ And, despite the theoretical clarity of their distinct natures, DDR and SSR have often been used interchangeably in policy circles, at least until recently. This extends primarily from a misinterpretation of SSR as narrowed to the defence sector and particularly targeted at enhancing the effectiveness of the national army. In fact, the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR states that "for the UN, the importance of security sector reform is that it demonstrates that security goes beyond traditional military elements and involves a much wider range of national and international institutions and actors."¹² Nonetheless, much discussion of "SSR" at the UN has traditionally focused on the military effectiveness of the national security institutions of host governments where peace operations are deployed.

This is not to say that there is no SSR-DDR nexus per se, merely that the intersection between the two has not been well defined in policy and practice. Indeed, the connection cannot be ignored: as Bryden and Scherrer have noted, "disarmament and demobilization – the initial stages of DDR – are routinely undertaken before wider security sector interventions lift off. As a result, the disarming and demobilization of a designated caseload of former combatants can shape the eventual size and shape of the future military, police and associated security organs."¹³ The size, composition, and governance of a security sector are of vital significance to both SSR and DDR,¹⁴ and an increasing focus on the community level in DDR has important implications for security at all levels of society. Some recent evolutions in practice in both areas can help clarify and elaborate their nexus, as explored in a section that follows.

The evolution of DDR and SSR in the UN context

While DDR has featured prominently in UN peace operations for over two decades, the organization has been engaged in less visible ways in various aspects of SSR for just as long;¹⁵ though a holistic and comprehensive UN approach to SSR was only defined relatively recently. The concept of DDR had already become a staple of post-conflict UN interventions by 2000, when the report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (known as the “Brahimi Report”) was issued. Between 1990 and 2012, DDR was specifically mandated in 12 peacekeeping operations and in four SPMs, with the majority of these mandates issued in the early to mid-2000s.¹⁶

In the context of UN peacekeeping, DDR was operational before formal policies and guidance were developed. DDR exercises became visible aspects of peacekeeping operations as early as 1989, with the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA). At that time, DDR in UN peacekeeping was mostly a military exercise conducted and observed by military personnel. Over time, the civilian nature of DDR became evident, and was increasingly recognized within the UN, which established its first formal civilian DDR component in the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 2002 (though it was not part of the original mission structure). The thinking was that this would situate the multidisciplinary DDR programme clearly within the larger political process in order to ensure close coordination with the military component, different UN development agencies, and the World Bank, which were providing technical and secretariat assistance to the National Commission on DDR.¹⁷

It was also in 2002 that the Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement Unit was created in the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), specifically to address the issue armed groups operating out of eastern DRC – both “ex-genocidaires” (*Interahamwe* and ex-Rwandan Armed Forces who evolved to become the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or FDLR) as well as foreign groups from neighbouring countries. There was no dedicated pool of DDR practitioners available, as no such “occupational group” had previously existed. Consequently, initial staff for the Unit were drawn from the Mission’s political affairs units, augmented by its military observers and retired military personnel. It was not until the mid-2000s that the notion of DDR as a civilian-led political-military development process was universally accepted, but since then, multidimensional DDR components have been routinely established in peacekeeping operations.

This history of SSR has been more complex. For almost 20 years, peacekeeping operations provided support to a number of national authorities in areas pertaining to SSR, such as training of police and the judiciary, but these activities were not conceptualized as SSR. The first time the term SSR was used in the context of a

peacekeeping operation was in February 2004 in the DRC, when SSR was portrayed as an “exit strategy” for what had become one of the UN’s largest and most expensive peacekeeping operations. A first high-level meeting on SSR in the DRC organized by the UN focused solely on enhancing the effectiveness of the armed forces and police.¹⁸ Before the UN developed its comprehensive approach to SSR, many saw such support strictly within the domain of bilateral actors, with a limited UN role. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was quicker than the UN to develop the concept of SSR as we understand it today, and produced its *Handbook on Security System Reform* in 2007.

Even after the issuance of the first Secretary-General’s report on SSR in 2008, “SSR” as a policy instrument remained separate from “operational aspects” of SSR in field missions. In other words, “SSR advisers” began to be deployed to missions, but they remained separate entities from operational components of police, justice, and corrections. As acknowledged in key UN SSR normative documents nearly a decade later, bridging the gap between the policy and operational aspects SSR remains a work in progress.¹⁹ Early SSR mandates in peace operations focused on improving the operational effectiveness of local security forces and putting new police officers on the streets. A US Institute for Peace report observed that “such programmes quickly produce results and clear statistics, including number of trainees, uniformed personnel on duty, and vehicles. They do little, however, to transform institutions, establish government oversight, and create an appropriate civil-military relationship, which are the goals of SSR.”²⁰

The (lack of) SSR-DDR nexus experience in peace operations

By the mid-2000s, DDR and SSR had become even more confused, as they were often lumped together in peace operations.²¹ This was partly derived from the narrow view of SSR outlined above, but it was also because many past peace agreements had contained specific DDR provisions with longer-term implications for security sectors, including ethnic quotas and the harmonization of ranks in the context of integrating ex-combatants into national security and defence forces. Furthermore, since DDR components often had former military staff among their personnel, and SSR was framed as a military issue, SSR was thought to be best handled by DDR components in the absence of SSR experts among civilian staff of missions at the time. Had SSR been more widely understood by the broad definition subsequently used in the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General – involving governance and rule of law, as opposed to narrow “train-and-equip” programming – this trend would have been avoided.

The irony is that, even with the double-hatting of DDR components with SSR functions, synergy between the two processes was never achieved. This is because

both DDR and SSR are essentially political. Their programmatic design should thus follow political consensus, but many peace operations in the mid-2000s operated in settings where there was no such consensus. Moreover, there has been a general lack of policy guidance available on the SSR-DDR link for practitioners.

There is an inherent challenge in dealing with SSR in the context of peace operations, meant to be finite interventions to support countries in establishing a foundation for sustainable peace, based in most cases on a peace agreement. But the UN has increasingly found itself deployed to countries where there is “no peace to keep.”²² Peace operations are intended to help implement peace agreements, which often address immediate issues such as transitional security arrangements and power-sharing pending a future electoral exercise of some kind. The time and trust needed for national actors to agree to a comprehensive SSR framework are by default almost always absent at the outset of any peace operation.

Attempts and difficulties in linking SSR and DDR

The experience of UN peace operations with both DDR and SSR throughout much of the 2000s was characterized by an ad hoc approach and compartmentalized application, in most cases in the absence of a comprehensive political settlement. The UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was a notable exception. There, DDR and SSR tasks were clearly grounded in a carefully negotiated peace agreement (the Arusha Accords). In many other operations, however, these tasks were “add-ons” to mandates. And even in those countries with “no peace to keep,” Security Council members called on parties to “urgently advance” DDR or SSR measures. As a result, peace operations included mandated activities that were not necessarily borne out of inclusive peace agreements or national dialogues but were externally driven. Yet, national ownership is an essential precondition for the success of both DDR and SSR, meaning that these processes must be grounded in political consensus reached between key national actors.

The Security Council implored a wide range of countries, from Sudan to Côte d’Ivoire to the CAR, to implement DDR and SSR in the 2000s, even as larger political problems remained unresolved. For example, Security Council resolutions on Côte d’Ivoire contained references to DDR from the 2004 establishment of the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), in a country that witnessed the collapse of one peace agreement after another deep into 2011.²³ While well intentioned, such an approach makes it inherently difficult to link the two processes conceptually – that is, to make DDR and SSR integral parts of a broader post-conflict transformation. Both DDR and SSR are potential peace enablers, but they cannot by themselves create peace.

In the DRC, the mandates of both MONUC and its successor, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), have both prominently featured DDR and SSR, though unevenly and with no clear nexus between the two. Indeed, DDR and SSR have evolved in different contexts over the years of these mandates. MONUC was initially an observer mission mandated to monitor the disengagement and withdrawal of foreign armed troops that supported the two sides of the conflict in the DRC.²⁴ Gradually, it became a Chapter VII peacekeeping operation, and its mandate became increasingly robust. MONUC/MONUSCO also dealt with two *different* DDR processes – one aimed at foreign armed groups and another at the Congolese. The former was actually known as DDRRR, for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, or reintegration, and in 2000, MONUC was mandated to discharge DDRRR activities operationally in response to increasing pressure to address “negative forces,” i.e. those associated with the genocidal pro-Hutu former Rwandan armed forces and allied militias.²⁵ Around the same time, an ambitious new World Bank initiative on known as the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP)²⁶ spearheaded international support to the national authorities in the DRC in designing a national DDR programme, in close cooperation with key bilateral partners. MONUC was mandated only to assist with DDR in the area of disarmament and through limited coordination.²⁷

The de facto link between DDR and SSR in the DRC emerged at the programmatic level, where a dual-track system offered militia combatants the choice between entry into DDR or integration into the army. Those who chose integration were moved into *brassage* centres for the formation of new units. However, this system was not exploited to its full advantage, for example through the collection of data on integration caseloads, the vetting of candidates for integration, the synchronization of army salaries and DDR benefits, or even the placement of *brassage* and DDR sites.²⁸ Moreover, this dual-track system may have contributed to poor discipline in the army, since combatants were allowed to join with minimal vetting, thus enabling them to continue predatory practices against civilians.²⁹ In fact, in eastern DRC, where instability has continued, several crises prompted ad hoc and accelerated integrations of rebel militia elements into the national armed forces; this may have been politically expedient but probably undermined the long-term goals of SSR, highlighting the risks that stem from a persistent lack of policy on the SSR-DDR nexus.

Another illustrative example is that of Burundi, where the 2000 Arusha Accords led to a series of peace support missions by South Africa (2001–2003) and the African Union (2003–2004), as well as the UN – ONUB (2004–2006), the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB, 2006–2010), and the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB, 2011–2014).³⁰ Primarily, ONUB was to “carry out the disarmament and demobilization portions” of DDR, with a secondary objective of assisting with

institutional reform, including in the security sector.³¹ The successor to ONUB, BINUB, was issued a more detailed mandate as far as SSR, to provide technical assistance in various areas, along with a separate DDR mandate.³² Both ONUB and BINUB operated joint DDR-SSR offices,³³ but the DDR process enjoyed considerable UN and World Bank backing while SSR moved on a separate track, mainly supported by bilateral donors.

As in Burundi, the peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was not a main actor in SSR, which was led by key bilateral partners, but *was* active in DDR – assisting in the DDR of some 75,000 former combatants. In neighbouring Liberia, over 100,000 fighters went through a DDR process, with extensive support from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In both cases, reintegration efforts have been criticized as ineffective, with many ex-combatants drifting into unemployment and highlighting the inherent limitations of DDR in the absence of economic recovery.

UNOCI, in Côte d'Ivoire, was also initially challenged by DDR and SSR. Although the operation was mandated with SSR-relevant tasks as early as 2004,³⁴ it was not until 2008 that the DDR component was relabelled as “DDR/SSR,” and without any change to the composition, and thus expertise, of the staff. A dedicated SSR specialist was not deployed until 2012, and even then the SSR Division initially lacked the funding of the longstanding DDR Division, though UNOCI did eventually implement a robust SSR support program in conjunction with strong national interest.

Beyond sub-Saharan Africa, the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) was established in 2006 with an SSR component but no DDR component, despite the fact that dealing with former armed forces remained a politically sensitive issue. In Haiti, following the establishment of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in June 2004, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council (in June 2006) that the conditions for DDR simply did not exist; instead, the new community violence reduction approach mentioned above was proposed, and mandated. The training of Haitian national police and assisting in the “development plan” of the force, as well as supporting judicial and prison reform, were at the heart of MINUSTAH's mandate, but these activities were not perceived as “SSR” by all peacekeeping officials, even with backstopping from the SSR Unit at Headquarters.

In Afghanistan, in accordance with the January 2002 Tokyo donors' conference, security sector responsibilities were allocated to several bilateral actors as “leads” – which left different security sector tracks isolated from each other. Accordingly, DDR became a stand-alone sector that was closely associated with the professionalization of Afghan military and police forces but not with other aspects of SSR. Because UNDP led implementation of the DDR process (with significant Japanese funding), the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, led by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO),³⁵ was not involved. When armed activities by the Taliban later resurged, DDR and SSR occurred in a notably contradictory context, with the Afghan government, international forces, and private security contractors actively mobilizing local Afghan forces for a counterinsurgency campaign while simultaneously pursuing the disarmament and disbandment of militias.

Efforts to improve integration and specialization

One evolution in the delivery of UN peace support that has had particular implications for DDR and SSR is the increased use and redesign of SPMs, which are mostly led by DPA (now DPPA). Until the late 2000s, DPA managed only Security Council-mandated political missions, which tended to be small and focused on mediation and “good offices” and were typically conducted by the special envoys and representatives of the Secretary-General with a limited political staff. Funding for these missions came from the Secretariat’s regular budget, as opposed to the special account dedicated to peacekeeping operations.³⁶ However, in 2008, the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee decided that all SPMs should become “integrated missions,” to maximize the individual and collective impact of UN response (to consolidate peace) through the strategic partnership between a UN mission and country team.³⁷ Around the same time, the Security Council began to provide multidimensional mandates to SPMs, increasingly similar to those of peacekeeping operations. With this change, SPMs also began to feature sectoral specialists – albeit very few – and since 2010, began to include dedicated SSR and DDR capacities, backstopped by the SSR Unit in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) at DPKO and the DDR Section respectively, in close coordination with DPA.

The rethinking of SPMs has offered unique opportunities for DDR and SSR functions to work more closely together under a political mandate. Still, the strategies of many of these missions emphasize flexible and “light-footprint” solutions, which has created challenges in terms of implementation, especially when an “integrated” approach with UN agencies, funds, and programmes has remained elusive. Interestingly, and perhaps because of their small numbers, DDR advisers in SPMs have been placed in “SSR or security sector development” components under the leadership of a senior SSR adviser (for example, in BINUB, UNIOGBIS, UNPOS, BINUCA, and UNSMIL). In theory, this structure should have promoted more synergy between DDR and SSR, at least at the operational level; yet, in reality, even when DDR is structurally part of the SSR component, the two programmes tend to be pursued separately, in parallel. The “senior SSR adviser” consults directly with the SSR Unit at UN Headquarters on broader SSR policy and conceptual issues,

and DDR advisers are backstopped by the DDR Section, but the SSR Unit and DDR Section seldom discuss how to pursue these processes holistically.

Ongoing efforts at Headquarters aim to move both DDR and SSR beyond the highly ad hoc and fragmented approach seen throughout the early 2000s. OROLSI, established in 2007 and headed by an Assistant Secretary-General, brings together five specialized areas that have become increasingly central to the mandates of peacekeeping operations and SPMs: justice and corrections, DDR, mine action, police, and SSR. These are the raw ingredients for the holistic approach that is required. Since the 2009 establishment of the SSR Unit, there has also been a growing initiative to reframe UN practitioners' understanding of SSR, and to situate SSR at a strategic level in terms of security sector architecture and governance rather than focusing on operational-level competencies. A module on DDR and SSR was added to the IDDRS in 2009 as well, outlining guiding principles for an integrated approach to both areas, as well as programming factors and entry points for SSR-sensitive DDR assessments and design.³⁸ Promoting a more "integrated" approach within OROLSI remains a challenge, but efforts to assign a coordinator for each country, along with other initiatives by the Assistant Secretary-General's office, have represented steps forward.

As described above, evolution in the DDR and SSR disciplines themselves offers an opportunity for strengthened linkages in policy and practice. "Second generation" and CVR practices orient DDR more towards the community level, and similarly, society-wide involvement in national security dialogues and reform processes are similarly reflected in evolving UN SSR practice.³⁹ Additionally, the activities of a joint SSR-DDR working group at Headquarters since 2016, aimed at developing guidance on integrating ex-combatants, also create the potential for programmatic convergences. Progress in this area would enable efforts affecting both activity areas, including the harmonization of ranks, risk mitigation regarding the impact of reintegration on reconciliation, and human rights-based vetting processes.

The way forward: The need for new types of engagement

In light of both the challenges and recent progress described above, this final section offers a few pragmatic policy recommendations on how to strengthen the SSR-DDR nexus in peace operations. Bryden and Scherrer identified a number of ways integrated policy and programming can be pursued, in a volume based on their research underpinning the development of the IDDRS module on DDR and SSR, including by addressing SSR and DDR in peace agreements and undertaking joint assessments.⁴⁰ Beyond programming, however, fundamental changes are needed in how peace operations are conceptualized between national

actors, international stakeholders (e.g. key bilateral and regional member states, and regional organizations), and the UN. The following recommendations are thus far-reaching and cannot be achieved in the absence of overall reforms of the way in which peace operations are planned and implemented.

Strengthen political links to and between SSR and DDR: The nexus between DDR and SSR has not been maximized in peace operations because these processes have often been perceived as mostly technical interventions. It cannot be emphasized enough that *DDR and SSR are parts of broader political transitions that affect how power is distributed between different actors and institutions in a society*. However, they cannot substitute for political will. Where DDR or SSR is faltering in a given context, the question should be asked how the peace process itself is faltering. In fact, because DDR is among the first peacemaking and peacebuilding tasks embarked upon as a confidence-building measure in the aftermath of conflict, it can be a useful barometer. Yet, warring parties who are ready to lay down their weapons in exchange for political gains obtained in a peace agreement may not be prepared to engage in a long-term process to reform governance structures. This requires fundamental trust building between the parties, which is often, if not always, lacking in immediate post-conflict environments.

Furthermore, the success of both DDR and SSR depends on broad national ownership as well as the buy-in of belligerent parties. As Bryden observed: “DDR and SSR share a tension that is inherent to the post-conflict peacebuilding agenda: the difficult balance between the predominantly externally assisted nature of such endeavours, and the need to foster local and national ownership. Achieving such a balance is essential if there is to be a shift from short-term security to longer-term development involving the timely handover of responsibilities to national actors.”⁴¹ In other words, there must be clear acknowledgement – beyond lip service – that SSR is a long-term *national* process.

The peacebuilding and sustaining peace missions in which the UN is increasingly engaged, unlike peacekeeping in a more traditional sense, demand a much more sophisticated level of understanding of the political, social, and cultural underpinnings of any context, and a different mode of interacting with the host government and other national actors, including civil society representatives. In 2015, the report of the High-level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the review of the UN peace and security architecture by the Advisory Group of Experts both emphasized the centrality of politics and prevention.⁴² These documents offer an opportunity to better link SSR and DDR, which are themselves deeply political processes with profound implications for state stability and power relations. As a specific example of the highly political impact of both disciplines, expanded inclusion of integration provisions in peace agreements could support the aims of both SSR

and DDR, as seen in Mali and the CAR, where early discussions of the shape of security forces were linked directly to the political interests of the parties in question. Rank harmonization and the integration of former armed groups into a newly representative national army can serve DDR and SSR goals but also requires ample attention to sensitivities in both areas, including the political-security ramifications of inclusion as well as the need for thorough vetting in line with human rights standards.

Pair DDR programming with an SSR strategy: Unrealistic expectations among Member States for swift results have been another cause for insufficient links between DDR and SSR. If DDR is mandated in a peace operation, the Security Council expects to see clear outcomes in terms of the numbers of ex-combatants disarmed and weapons destroyed within a year; yet DDR must be implemented in coordination with broader post-conflict recovery processes that feature longer timelines. Just because warring parties cease fighting does not mean they have developed mutual trust and are ready to embark on the long process of nation-building and institutional reform. Existing UN guidance on DDR also cautions against starting the process before a well-funded reintegration strategy and programme are in place,⁴³ but this guidance is often superseded by pressure to “maintain the peace momentum.”

These factors often lead to a situation in which DDR is pursued as a priority while a credible SSR process fails to materialize. Nevertheless, even under these circumstances, planners could better integrate SSR and DDR considerations, at least on the programmatic level. For example, as noted in the IDDRS, DDR capacities could gather information on ex-combatants as they go through the DDR process, for later use in SSR initiatives.⁴⁴ Another early-stage link between DDR and SSR is found in peace processes themselves. UN guidance on peace processes and SSR identifies several DDR-SSR intersections in the political sphere, including the necessity to align DDR with a national security vision and the role of mediators in ensuring coherence between DDR and SSR provisions in peace negotiations.⁴⁵ However, such guidance is very difficult to apply when negotiating parties are focused on much more immediate security concerns and “peace dividends.”

The Security Council should recognize that most peacebuilding tasks are long term, and should set realistic expectations. Compacts should be developed between host governments and the Security Council to articulate reasonable benchmarks and chart progress towards SSR or other peacebuilding goals. Measures of “quick fixes,” like the number of police trained or courthouses built, are not meaningful benchmarks in this context. However, this does not mean that everything done in peace operations must take a long view. There should be serious efforts to identify tasks that can be delivered quickly, especially those apt to build confidence and contribute to stabilization. Compared to current quick-impact projects, this approach

is more likely to contribute to broader objectives. For DDR to achieve this, too, a much better matrix of indicators must be developed.

Enable better planning for better missions and improved linkages: If the UN is serious about its ultimate objective of achieving people-centred security in post-conflict environments, the Organization and the international community should reshape the highly compartmentalized and sector-oriented planning process. Despite the existence of an integrated mission planning process since the mid-2000s,⁴⁶ in practice, planning is said to be a “stapling exercise” – that is, each sector assesses its own requirements and develops a concept of operations, and the final mission concept simply amounts to a compilation of these sectoral objectives and plans. But as peace operations have been deployed to situations where conflicts are still ongoing, the tools for planning these missions – a quick technical survey resulting in a concept of operations to be endorsed by the Security Council – have no longer been adequate.

In other words, while the shift to deploy multidimensional peacekeeping operations aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict was the right one, it was not accompanied by a requisite shift in the process of designing and implementing such operations. Even if the craft of planning was itself refined, especially with work on the integrated mission planning process, the focus was on coordinating with other UN entities, so that planning timetables – currently pegged to Security Council mandate expirations and the review windows for budgetary committees – rarely allow for meaningful consultations with national actors. The issue is not necessarily that more time for “assessment” is needed, but that more time is needed to arrive at a negotiated compact between national actors and the international community on how the latter will assist in a fundamentally transformative process such as SSR. A phased approach to mandate formulation by the Security Council, as was attempted in the initial years of UNSMIL, is the only way to ensure that peace operation mandates fully reflect the commitment of relevant parties to discharge responsibilities that can belong only to them.

As the two departments that manage Security Council-mandated missions, DPKO and DPA (now DPO and DPPA) have improved the craft of planning as well as the development of standards and best practices in a number of sectors, but the current ongoing revision of the UN peace and security architecture offers an opportunity to fill the gap between the “strategic objectives” set for missions and their sectoral concepts. This is the gap that must be bridged to ensure a comprehensive approach to SSR that does not treat it merely as another “sector” alongside civilian “components” of peace operations but as a whole-of-government process that is unlikely to be effectively implemented in piecemeal fashion. Similarly, DDR and SSR efforts must be fully integrated into the “whole-of-mission” approach.

Sectoral-level assessments and planning – be they for rule of law, human rights, or civil affairs – tend to happen at the component level in their independent silos, resulting in peace operations compiled of these different civilian components, with their own objectives and concepts, as opposed to a single mission supported by a multidisciplinary strategy. Issues such as rule of law, SSR, and governance are highly political in nature and should not be seen as their own “sectoral” components, apart from the mission’s political mandate. Additionally, since most peacebuilding tasks require in-depth knowledge and understanding of a country’s historical, social, and cultural context, arrangements must be developed whereby UN planners can tap into available expertise to help develop truly country-specific mission plans without “cutting and pasting” from previous operations.

Develop further guidance to reflect evolutions in practice: Just as DDR’s operational development outpaced policy development until the release of the IDDRS in 2006, DDR and SSR practice in the field, including their linkages, have outpaced guidance on how to optimize their nexus. As reflected above, increased attention on communities, prevention, and integration demands policy that reflects these realities on the ground and appreciates that these tasks are fundamentally political in nature. Clarifying the relationship between the DDR and SSR in policy and in practice will improve both exercises, individually and collectively.

Notes

- ¹ The research for this chapter and its original drafting occurred in 2012, while the author was Chief of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Section in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).
- ² For the purposes of this chapter, “peace operations” is used as shorthand to describe both peacekeeping operations and SPMs.
- ³ In this chapter, the focus is on DDR and SSR programmes as conducted by field missions mandated by the Security Council. It is widely recognized that UN agencies, funds, and programmes, notably UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women, also engage in DDR and SSR activities, but they are outside this scope.
- ⁴ United Nations, *Integrated DDR Standards* (2009), 1.
- ⁵ For further details, see United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, <http://www.unddr.org>.
- ⁶ United Nations, *Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations* (2010), 4.
- ⁷ See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1702 (S/RES/1702), 15 August 2006.
- ⁸ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 23 January 2008, 6.
- ⁹ SSR is described as “a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.” *Ibid.*, 6.

- ¹⁰ Michelle Hughes, "The relationship between SSR and DDR" in *Monopoly of Force: The Nexus between DDR and SSR*, eds. Melanne A. Civic and Michael Miklaucic (Washington, DC: Center for Complex Operations, National Defense University Press, 2011), 27–39.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 6.
- ¹³ Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer, "The DDR-SSR Nexus: Concepts and Policies," in *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, eds. Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2012), 11.
- ¹⁴ See United Nations, Integrated DDR Standards, Module 6.10: DDR and Security Sector Reform, 2–3.
- ¹⁵ Hughes, "The relationship between SSR and DDR."
- ¹⁶ Some room for interpretation exists on whether mandates include DDR or not, for example where the text of a mandate only references the demobilization of forces (i.e. the UN Mission in Kosovo).
- ¹⁷ While DDR had been part of the peace process in Sierra Leone since the late 1990s, it did not take off until a major crisis erupted in May 2000, ending with the military defeat of the Revolutionary United Front. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General then became closely involved in DDR negotiations.
- ¹⁸ United Nations, "Communiqué of the high-level meeting on SSR in the DRC," 9 February 2004.
- ¹⁹ See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ²⁰ Sean McFate, *The link between DDR and SSR in conflict-affected countries*, Special Report 238 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2010), 6.
- ²¹ Examples include "DDR/SSR components" in ONUB (Burundi) in 2004 and in its successor mission, BINUB, as well as in UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire) in 2007.
- ²² "The political processes that these [peacekeeping] missions accompany are troubled, stalled or simply absent, and in some cases missions operate with limited consent from key parties on the ground." United Nations, *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping* (2009).
- ²³ See for example, United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2000 (S/RES/2000), 27 July 2011.
- ²⁴ In accordance with the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, troops belonging to the countries allied with Laurent Kabila (Angola, Zimbabwe) and those aligned with the RCD-Goma and RCD-ML (Rwanda and Uganda, respectively) were to disengage along an agreed-upon line and then subsequently withdraw all their troops under MONUC supervision.
- ²⁵ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1291 (S/RES/1291), 24 February 2000.
- ²⁶ The MDRP was operational from 2002 to 2009 and was focused on "greater Great Lakes" countries of Africa to assist in the DDR of 300,000 combatants in Angola, Burundi, the CAR, the DRC, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. See <http://tdrp.net/mdrp/index.php>.
- ²⁷ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1565 (S/RES/1565), 1 October 2004.
- ²⁸ Vincenza Scherrer, "The Democratic Republic of the Congo," in *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, eds. Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer (Münster: LITVerlag, 2012).
- ²⁹ Henri Boshoff, Dylan Hendrickson, Sylvie More and Thierry Vircoulon, *Supporting SSR in the DRC: Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2010), 22.
- ³⁰ A first UN Office in Burundi (UNOB) was operational from 1993 to 2004.
- ³¹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1545 (S/RES/1545), 21 May 2004.
- ³² United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1719 (S/RES/1719), 25 October 2005.

- ³³ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, “Budget for the United Nations Operation in Burundi for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005” (A/59/300), 26 August 2004; United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, “Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council: United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi and United Nations representative to the International Advisory and Monitoring Board” (A/61/525/Add.6), 16 February 2007.
- ³⁴ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1528 (S/RES/1528), 27 February 2004.
- ³⁵ These departments were renamed the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) in 2019.
- ³⁶ For example, the biennium regular budget of the UN Secretariat (which includes the normal operations of the Secretariat as well as SPMs) was \$5.15 billion for 2012–2013; while the projected total peacekeeping budget for the two-year period of July 2011–June 2013 was \$15.15 billion. See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, “Budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 (A/66/721); and United Nations, Programme budget for the biennium 2012–2013 (A/66/6/Add.1), 13 April 2012.
- ³⁷ See United Nations, “Secretary-General’s Decision No. 2008/24 – Integration,” in *UN Integration and Humanitarian Space* (Humanitarian Policy Group/ODI, Stimson Center), Annex 1, 57.
- ³⁸ United Nations, Integrated DDR Standards, Module 6.10.
- ³⁹ See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151).
- ⁴⁰ Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer, “The DDR-SSR nexus: Turning practical experience into good practice” *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Münster: LITVerlag, 2012), 183.
- ⁴¹ Alan Bryden, “Understanding the DDR-SSR nexus: Building sustainable peace in Africa,” UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (2007).
- ⁴² See United Nations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95–S/2015/446), 17 June 2015; and United Nations, Challenges of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490), 30 June 2015.
- ⁴³ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/741), 21 March 2011.
- ⁴⁴ United Nations, Integrated DDR Standards, Module 6.10.
- ⁴⁵ UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force, Integrated Technical Guidance Note on SSR and Peace Processes (2012).
- ⁴⁶ See for example, United Nations, “Integrated missions planning process (IMPP): Guidelines endorsed by the Secretary-General,” 13 June 2006; and the Integrated Assessment and Planning policy, approved by the Secretary-General on 9 April 2013.

Conflicting means, converging goals: Civilian protection and SSR¹

FAIRLIE CHAPPUIS AND ADITI GORUR

Introduction

The protection of civilians (POC) has always been fundamental to the UN's understanding of the relevance of security sector reform (SSR) in post-conflict contexts: even the very first reference to SSR in a 2005 Security Council discussion stated that reform of the security sector and POC (among other agendas) should be priorities in post-conflict environments.² Since then, mandates, general guidance, and mission strategies have increasingly asserted a positive and mutually conducive relationship between POC and SSR, with both POC and support to SSR emerging as core priorities in a growing number of UN peacekeeping missions.³ Over ten years after the first joint reference to POC and SSR, major peacekeeping operations with both elements in their mandates have included the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

UN peacekeeping mandates tend to assume an inherent compatibility between POC and international support to SSR, yet experience reveals that implementing the two simultaneously often causes friction. While both POC and SSR share the ultimate goal of improving human security, the idea that SSR always, everywhere, and necessarily contributes to the immediate goals of POC is a widespread misunderstanding. Conflating the two agendas has allowed potential risks and unintended consequences to go unnoticed.

Existing guidance posits that POC and SSR intersect at the point of making people feel safe, but the tensions that exist in implementing them side-by-side are

exacerbated by the fact that there has never been a clear explanation of how these two agendas interact in practice. Failing to acknowledge the tensions between these apparently complementary activities leads to poor policy and practice in both POC and SSR support, creating risks to civilians and to the credibility and legitimacy of peacekeeping operations. It also leads to missed opportunities in both POC and SSR, because recognizing and resolving these tensions would maximize the benefits of aligning these two related but separate agendas.

This chapter begins with an overview of existing UN policy linking SSR to civilian protection, arguing for a clearer distinction between these elements in peacekeeping contexts. The remainder of the chapter describes two major sources of friction between POC and SSR in practice, before turning to the natural convergences between these two agendas, and finally, presents ways to mitigate tensions arising out of their implementation.

Existing UN frameworks linking POC and SSR

In the years since the connection between POC and SSR was first asserted in a UN context, their relationship at the level of implementation has been neither explicitly articulated nor effectively operationalized. Thus, in 2014, UN Security Council resolution 2151 on SSR recognized only rather vaguely “the interlinkages between security sector reform and other important factors of stabilization and reconstruction, such as . . . the protection of civilians.”⁴ In some peacekeeping mandates, the two agendas are grouped together, such as in the 2004 mandate that established the UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti, which positioned both POC and SSR under the “Secure and Stable Environment” umbrella.⁵ In others, these agendas are entirely separate, as in the 2010 mandate for MONUSCO, the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the train-and-equip aspects of reforming the army and police are categorized as SSR under the heading of “Stabilization and Peace Consolidation”, while activities related to preventing security force abuses are listed as “Protection of Civilians.”⁶

This lack of consistency regarding the relationship between POC and SSR stems from the fact that both became part of UN mandates before a policy definition and approach were established. Progress in defining SSR was made relatively quickly between its first explicit inclusion into the UN context in 2004 and the first UN Secretary-General’s report on SSR only four years later.⁷ In contrast, POC was first included in a UN peacekeeping mandate in 1999, yet still remains an agenda in the making: while its status as a moral priority is clear, confusion over its policy application and prioritization in UN peacekeeping operations persists.

POC first became a major issue for UN peacekeeping in the 1990s, following massive failures to protect civilians, most notably in the Rwanda and Srebrenica atrocities. In the wake of these events, the Security Council recognized that UN peacekeepers needed to take proactive measures to protect civilians in their areas of deployment, both to respond to a moral imperative and to preserve the credibility and legitimacy of peacekeeping. As a result, the Security Council began issuing POC mandates for peacekeeping operations without having defined what this meant in practice. The lack of guidance about how to operationalize and implement POC created confusion on the ground, as peacekeepers were uncertain what was required of them and what actions were permitted under a POC mandate.⁸

To address this confusion, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) put forth a draft operational concept on POC in 2010 that offered a working definition. Then, in 2015, an official policy on POC was finally produced. The 2015 policy defines POC as consisting of three tiers:

- **Tier 1** – *Protection through dialogue and engagement*: e.g., supporting local or national reconciliation efforts, mediating peace negotiations, and reporting on the protection of civilians.
- **Tier 2** – *Provision of physical protection*: e.g., conducting deterrent activities, physically intervening between perpetrators and civilians, and implementing early warning systems and conducting conflict analyses to identify potential hotspots.
- **Tier 3** – *Establishment of a protective environment*: e.g., promoting the rule of law, facilitating humanitarian assistance and advocacy, and supporting SSR.⁹

Links between POC and SSR may plausibly feature across Tiers 1 and 2 of civilian protection. For example, the mission may support dialogue or mediation efforts that touch on the future of state security forces (Tier 1), or the mission could engage in military cooperation with state security forces against perpetrators of violence against civilians (Tier 2). However, the only *explicit* link between POC and SSR made in the 2015 policy definition posits SSR as one activity (among others) that contributes to building a protective environment under Tier 3. The policy thus frames SSR as a component of POC (see Figure 1).

This framing of SSR as a constituent element of POC may mark the first time in the history of UN peacekeeping that this relationship has been unambiguously defined. However, a notable weakness in the draft operational concept of 2010 was carried into the 2015 policy insofar as Tier 3 of POC – the establishment of a protective environment – is so broad that it creates confusion about what activities constitute POC and, further, about the relationship between POC and other peacekeeping mission activities.

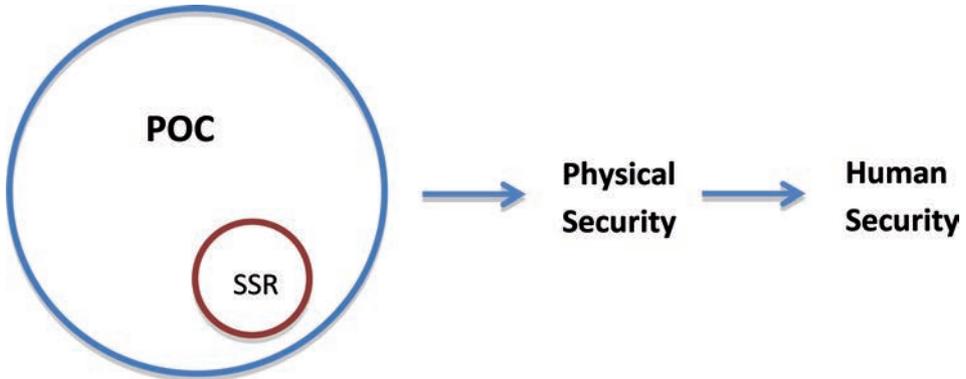


Figure 11.1: SSR as a component of POC: POC contributes to physical security, which in turn contributes to the ultimate goal of human security

This very broad interpretation also contradicts more traditional understandings that POC comprises activities undertaken *directly by components of a peacekeeping operation* to prevent, interrupt, or mitigate violence against civilians. The 2015 DPKO/DFS framework places these more traditional activities largely within Tiers 1 and 2. Tier 3 of the 2015 policy broadens the definition of POC beyond this narrower, traditional sense to include activities that facilitate the protection of civilians *by other actors* (such as the host-state government). Expanding the definition in this way makes POC so wide-ranging that, in theory, nearly all peacekeeping tasks could be said in some way to constitute POC.¹⁰

The problem with this characterization of POC is that it offers little guidance to practitioners as to how policy should be implemented on the ground. It is unclear what the Security Council means when it issues a mandate that instructs a peacekeeping operation to prioritize POC while also supporting SSR, as it did the peacekeeping operation in the DRC, for example.¹¹ How should personnel, assets, and resources be allocated? Which specific tasks should be undertaken first?

The 2015 policy thus inherited the same problem that Alison Giffen pointed out in the 2010 DPKO/DFS draft concept: it “asserts that the three tiers are mutually reinforcing, but does not discuss the dilemmas and trade-offs that are likely to arise during planning and implementation of the three tiers,” particularly the potential problems missions may face when working closely with host-state governments that are also engaged in abuses against civilians.¹² In light of this, a formulation that limits POC to activities performed directly by peacekeepers to prevent or limit harm to civilians (thereby making it distinct from many SSR activities) provides practitioners with more helpful guidance on implementing POC and SSR simultaneously.

If POC is understood more narrowly to include only *direct* interventions by peacekeepers to protect civilians, then not all SSR activities qualify as POC activities.

By this definition, POC and SSR are separate but overlapping agendas (see Figure 2), and this overlap is restricted to activities carried out by UN peacekeepers that:

- a) reduce the level of violence perpetrated by security forces (e.g., training on human rights, international humanitarian law, and how to minimize civilian casualties during operations; vetting of security forces; political negotiations and advocacy to remove abusive elements from security forces; and support for efforts to uphold high standards of discipline, oversight, and accountability in security forces); or
- b) improve the ability of host-state security forces to support peacekeepers to protect civilians from immediate physical violence (e.g., training and equipping state security forces for the specific purpose of making them more effective and accountable in combined operations with peacekeeping forces in order to boost the capacity of peacekeepers to protect civilians from violence).

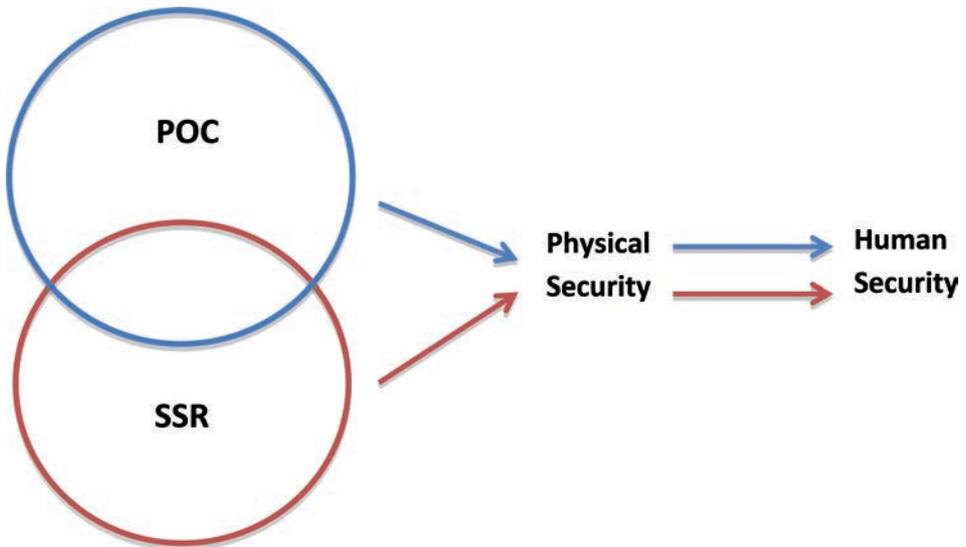


Figure 11.2: POC and SSR are separate but overlapping agendas, both of which contribute to physical security, which in turn contributes to the ultimate goal of human security

This narrower definition of POC highlights specific areas of overlap where POC and SSR components could coordinate more closely or jointly implement activities in a peacekeeping context. It also accommodates the fact that POC and SSR mission components may have different short-term objectives that could steer their activities in different directions (a point to which we return later). Indeed, even the 2015 DPKO/DFS policy seems to acknowledge that activities in Tier 3 of POC, including SSR, are not treated *in practice* as subsets of POC, when it says that these activities are

“sometimes presented as separate mandated tasks under country-specific resolutions . . . and are generally planned for independently of the POC mandate.”¹³

Defining POC more narrowly also recognizes the reality that the UN is not the only or most important SSR actor in many contexts. SSR must be led by national actors, but typically entails the support and close cooperation of bilateral and regional actors aside from the UN. While a UN mission has the scope, responsibility, and moral obligation to implement a comprehensive POC strategy across its own operations, realistically it is only a supporting actor in a larger national SSR strategy that usually includes support from other partners. The variety of domestic and international actors supporting national SSR agendas, and the typical lack of coordination among them, means that a mission typically has little or no direct influence over how support to SSR affects its own POC strategy.

Drawing a distinction between POC and SSR in policy does not mean that protecting civilians is unimportant to the SSR agenda. In fact, people-centred security is a core tenet of SSR. As a result, conflict sensitivity and a “do no harm” approach are fundamental principles of SSR implementation, reflecting its origins as a development-driven agenda.¹⁴ Since Do No Harm Analysis in the context of SSR is meant to “help understand the impact that an assistance program could have on the relationships between actors in a fragile state environment,” highlighting POC within the framework of existing SSR assessment methodologies offers an opportunity to better align the two agendas and avoid potential contradictions between them.¹⁵

Distinguishing between POC and SSR agendas in this way also lays bare the flaws of approaches to implementation that assume improvements in security sector effectiveness alone provide for civilian protection over the long term. This assumption typically underpins POC and SSR activities that focus on enhanced training, equipment, and operational capacity. However, an integrated reading of the UN policies on POC and SSR should lead to the conclusion that *greater effectiveness is linked to better governance*. Improving the training, equipment, and operational capacities of security actors are important elements of an SSR strategy, yet these activities alone cannot lead to long-term and sustainable improvements in public security provision or civilian protection because they do not institutionalize improved capacity or address issues of accountability and impunity related to the security sector’s use and abuse of force.

Experience from SSR shows that better public security results from an approach to reform that squarely anchors the use of force by the host state within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law, and respect for human rights. In the absence of such a strategy, stand-alone capacity-building activities conducted in the name of POC actually risk making the security sector more dangerous over time, since improved capacity can as easily be used to abuse as to protect; and stand-alone efforts establish no institutional safeguards to prevent such abuse. This dilemma is

a trap that SSR explicitly seeks to avoid by emphasizing the importance of both accountability and effectiveness; nevertheless, poor SSR implementation tends to skew reform towards train-and-equip activities in practice. Thus, the policy-practice gap remains when it comes to implementation.

Distinguishing between POC and SSR demonstrates that strategies to systematically improve the accountability of the security sector must be given as much attention as security sector effectiveness, not only because this is the goal of SSR but also because it is necessary to ensure civilian protection in the long term. A policy approach that clearly differentiates between the two agendas would help practitioners to identify and avoid these tensions. It would also help to improve existing UN frameworks linking POC and SSR.

One of the only policy guidance frameworks that addresses the risks of conducting POC while supporting SSR is the UN human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP), which is intended to ensure that the UN closely monitors at least those parts of the security sector to which it is providing support. Since monitoring security forces for human rights violations can be an important role for UN peacekeeping operations in preventing and deterring abuses, the policy constitutes a bridge between POC and SSR activities. The HRDDP “sets out measures that all United Nations entities must take in order to ensure that any support that they may provide to non-United Nations forces is consistent with the purposes and principles as set out in the Charter of the United Nations and with its responsibility to respect, promote and encourage respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.”¹⁶ It requires UN entities to perform a risk assessment prior to providing support to a security force, whether directly or indirectly, and prohibits a UN entity from providing support where there are grounds to believe that the security force is likely to commit grave violations. In cases where security forces are already committing such violations, the HRDDP requires UN entities first to work with relevant authorities to stop these abuses and, if this fails, to suspend support.

The HRDDP framework was deliberately designed to be flexible so that it could be adapted as appropriate to various contexts, and UN peacekeeping operations in different countries have implemented it in different ways and to different extents. For example, while the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) made little progress on implementing the HRDDP in its first three years, having collected sparse information on perpetrators by its change of mandate in 2014,¹⁷ MONUSCO in the DRC maintained and proactively populated a robust database of grave violations of human rights committed by all in-country actors, including members of the security sector. During the July 2012–June 2013 reporting period, MONUSCO created “1,062 profiles of high-ranking individuals serving in Democratic Republic of the Congo security services” and recorded information about “3,079 alleged perpetrators of human rights violations” in order to implement its policy of conditionality.¹⁸

Despite its flexibility, the HRDDP can compel a mission to withdraw support from the security sector altogether, even at the expense of other POC and/or SSR objectives, and particularly if support is being exploited by the host-state government. This was true, for instance, when tensions arose between MONUSCO and the DRC Government in early 2015. In that case, MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade had planned a joint offensive with the Congolese armed forces against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) rebel group (one of the most notorious armed groups in the country), but MONUSCO suspended the offensive because the DRC government selected two generals accused of serious human rights abuses to participate in the operation.¹⁹

Although the HRDDP bridges POC and SSR policy, it does so without clearly defining either, or the terms for their joint implementation. The HRDDP explicitly states that guidance on SSR developed by the SSR Task Force must be consistent with the HRDDP, but it offers no advice on how to support SSR while ensuring POC.²⁰ Moreover, the aspects of SSR that are defined in the HRDDP are limited to technical, programmatic, and financial capacity building of security forces. Yet the activities most intimately related to fostering good governance of the security sector – such as training and sensitization, standard setting, and compliance with human rights and international legal norms and standards – are not included in the HRDDP risk assessment framework.

While it may seem far-fetched that training on international humanitarian law or human rights law could cause harm to civilians, the problem lies in the assumption that interventions in the interest of good governance (such as support for democratic processes and institutions) are inherently benign and pose no potential risks. The chances of such interventions succeeding or failing ought to be accounted for in HRDDP risk assessments because both outcomes could have potentially egregious effects on human rights and POC. For example, attempts to change lines of control within security institutions through new norms and rules often trigger violent reprisals. Similarly, encouraging security sector personnel to report abuses in the absence of a system that can guarantee minimum accountability and protect whistle-blowers recklessly endangers individuals who do report abuses as well as the larger agenda for reform.

The lack of clear guidance on implementing the HRDDP in the context of SSR was carried over into the 2015 DPKO/DFS policy, which refers to implementation of the HRDDP as a means to prevent violations of humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law and minimize the collateral damage caused by security forces (be they of the host state, the UN, or any other international affiliation). Preparing a “standard operating procedure” for implementing the HRDDP, is thus a key element of in planning for risk mitigation in the context of a POC action plan, which is itself part of a comprehensive POC strategy that missions are required to develop

and oversee through a strategic management group on protection.²¹ While this may sound like progress in terms of institutionalizing a response to the likely dilemmas of supporting SSR in potentially dangerous contexts, the fundamental frictions between POC and SSR have not been resolved. And, because it remains unclear as to how the HRDDP should be implemented with regard to SSR, the 2015 DPKO/DFS policy only formalizes the current practice of allowing each UN peacekeeping mission to improvise. In other words, this approach institutionalizes ad hoc responses to the potential conflicts between POC and SSR, in effect shifting responsibility to field staff to reconcile whatever dilemmas may emerge in implementation as they arise.

At the time of writing it remains too early to gauge the effects of the DPKO/DFS 2015 policy on POC in practice. But until more specific guidance is developed, it seems unlikely that implementing the HRDDP will “strengthen the POC mandate implementation and provide peacekeeping operations with leverage to influence behaviour and establish harm mitigation measures,” as the POC policy intended.²² These types of risks and the lack of practical guidance on how to respond to them are just some examples of why it is important for UN policies to address the frictions that can arise in implementing POC and SSR simultaneously. To that end, the next section identifies two specific ways that POC and SSR can clash in the context of UN peacekeeping operations.

Friction between POC and SSR in implementation

While the POC and SSR agendas share the same goal of human security, the lack of clarity and consistency in approaches to implementation leads to friction between them. This stems from two main differences between POC and SSR in the context of UN peacekeeping, related to their timelines and the ways in which they treat relationships with host-state governments.

Conflicting short- and long-term objectives

POC activities are intended to be short-term measures by which external actors seek to ensure the immediate security of civilians from physical violence during a peacekeeping mission, whereas SSR is a long-term agenda for institutional change on the part of the host government. The differences between the short-term focus of POC and the long-term focus of SSR can create tensions and missed opportunities. For example, a POC mandate promotes the existing tendency of international actors to support short-term SSR activities that focus on developing the capacity and integrity of state security forces without developing or reforming the governance institutions that would make them credible security providers. In this way, efforts to protect civilians from immediate physical threats may strengthen incentives to

conduct poor SSR. Thus, even though the three tiers of POC policy may be intended to integrate seamlessly, in practice, POC is typically broken down into distinct categories with conflicting time frames.

The short-term nature of POC interventions may particularly encourage missions to prioritize train-and-equip activities by framing “successful” SSR as an exit strategy for the mission. POC-focused missions may prioritize the development of state security forces sufficiently capable of taking over the task of civilian protection thus allowing peacekeepers to withdraw; and in fact, some peacekeeping operation mandates explicitly link POC and SSR in this way. For instance, UN Security Council resolution 2098, which authorized the Force Intervention Brigade – an unprecedented military unit within the UN peacekeeping operation in the DRC with a special mandate to protect civilians proactively by “neutralizing” foreign armed groups – specified that the Brigade would fulfil its protection function only until a rapid reaction force had been developed within the Congolese army with the capacity to take over its duties.²³ Resolution 2147 further instructed the mission to prioritize the establishment of this rapid reaction force “as a first step” in its efforts to support military reform.²⁴

An immediate focus on POC can also complicate approaches designed to foster sustainable improvements in security sector accountability. While POC guidance identifies training on humanitarian law and POC norms for local security forces as a way of preventing harm to civilians, this training alone does little to protect civilians if a police officer or soldier has no reporting procedure, no means of communication or transport, and, crucially, no support from the command hierarchy in providing accountability for abuse that is reported. The failure to grasp the import of such intersections goes some way in helping to explain why isolated short-term interventions, like training for security sector actors, have not translated into an accountable and non-abusive security sector and hence better POC over a longer timeframe in peacekeeping contexts such as the DRC.

Conflicting relationships with the host-state government

The simultaneous implementation of POC and SSR support mandates can also expose tensions in relationships with host-state governments. In theory, both POC and SSR recognize that state security forces may abuse a population, and both agendas try to prevent such abuse. However, SSR activities require strong ties to the state security sector that can undermine the ability of a peacekeeping operation to protect civilians in certain circumstances. In addition, because SSR principles emphasize national ownership of reform processes, peacekeepers are put in a difficult position if asked to judge whether host-state governments have crossed a line in discriminatory behaviour and whether a mission should disengage in response. While

grave abuses distinguish themselves by their scale and seriousness, and clearly call for a proportionately serious response, more minor abuses of force and authority are a reality of poor service provision in an unreformed security sector that also threatens civilians.

In practice, the distinction between supporting SSR and becoming complicit in dysfunctional security provision may be slight. In Burundi, for example, external actors found themselves deeply engaged in supporting reform processes within a police force that was also increasingly accused of committing politically motivated extrajudicial killings. While tolerating such abuse is obviously out of the question for external supporters of SSR, punishing these acts by withdrawing support and ending reform altogether would arguably have made the situation worse, by removing the last vestiges of external influence and the most likely means of preventing future abuses.²⁵ Crafting a response to these intolerable human rights violations that took a strong stance against impunity without jeopardizing promising elements of the ongoing reform programme proved a delicate challenge for the external actors that supported SSR in Burundi, and one that is typical of the dilemmas that arise in any SSR environment.²⁶

There may also be tensions related to how peacekeepers involve state security forces in peacekeeping operations. While SSR cannot advance without national political will, POC must advance always and especially when national political will to provide civilian protection is lacking. SSR agendas are premised on national responsibility (with international support) and no international actor can credibly advance SSR if a host government decides against it. In contrast, POC makes peacekeepers directly responsible for physical protection insofar as they are capable, by making police and military components of the mission responsible for this task under Tier 2. This obligation to protect civilians applies regardless of whether the host nation is disposed to fulfil its primary moral responsibility to protect its own population. Although both POC and SSR aim to enhance human security, this difference in approaches creates tensions between a POC mandate that encourages peacekeepers to take direct action and an SSR agenda that prioritizes encouraging and facilitating national security forces to respond themselves. This friction can arise in operational contexts when the multiple responsibilities of UN security personnel become blurred, and especially when the crucial distinction between security provision and security reform is lost. In situations where troops provide security as well as training and advice, it may not always be possible to tell when the line has been crossed that makes an agent of civilian protection into an unwitting and unwilling accessory to civilian abuse.

The danger of conflicting responsibilities between POC and SSR is perhaps greatest, and most often underestimated, in the case of the UN Police (UNPOL), because UNPOL personnel are often deployed to handle both security provision

and security reform tasks at once. For instance, in situations where the UN does not have executive police authority (which is frequently the case), UNPOL provides law enforcement in cooperation with host-nation police forces, with a goal of simultaneously providing support, advice, and mentoring to build national police capacity. This arrangement can be complicated when national police are abusive of civilians by either intention or neglect, and the POC imperative would require UNPOL personnel to act immediately to stop such abuse. Neither POC nor SSR support policies offer adequate guidance for such situations, leading to the chaotic operationalization of both agendas. This helps to explain how a police force such as the Liberian National Police has continued to threaten the population with high levels of petty corruption and abuse despite close mentoring by UNPOL personnel.²⁷

These experiences demonstrate that continued support to SSR when national security forces are abusive of the civilian population risks doing dramatic harm to the people whose safety is at stake, as well as the credibility of UN actors charged with their protection. However, it is also clear that simply withdrawing support at any sign of human rights abuses leads to disengagement and the loss of future influence over reform and, ultimately, civilian protection. This suggests that POC and SSR align better when a range of constructive responses exists to confront the abuse of civilians by host-nation security forces. This range should define a spectrum of responses that has full disengagement with reform only at its extreme.

The following section outlines some points of convergence between POC and SSR on which better UN strategies for tackling abuse and impunity may find footing, and discusses opportunities for better aligning these agendas in implementation.

Reinforcing convergences in implementation

An approach to POC and SSR that treats them as separate but overlapping agendas provides opportunities to implement both in more complementary ways. Tasks that constitute both POC and SSR support include: the vetting of security forces, training for these forces on human rights and international humanitarian law, and monitoring and reporting on abuses by these forces. These activities could be undertaken jointly or with coordination by the POC and SSR components of peacekeeping operations such that they reinforce both agendas.

Vetting security forces

SSR in post-conflict contexts usually requires audits of new and existing personnel within the security sector to ascertain whether a record of human rights abuses should disqualify them from service. Vetting of state security forces can also be a critical aspect of the POC agenda to prevent abuses against civilians, both by

removing individuals who are likely to reoffend and by deterring other individuals from committing abuses.

The involvement of UN peacekeeping operations in vetting can range from a strong implementation role to a more limited support role. Several missions, such as MINUSTAH in Haiti, have been authorized to vet the state security sector directly (in that case, the Haitian National Police).²⁸ Some missions, like UNMIL in Liberia, have not been explicitly authorized to conduct vetting but interpreted their mandates to include it. In the DRC and Côte d'Ivoire, UN missions are mandated to support their respective host-state governments in developing vetting mechanisms for the security sector,²⁹ and the operation in CAR is mandated to support vetting "through the provision of strategic policy advice and coordination of technical assistance and training."³⁰

From an SSR perspective, this is only likely to contribute to POC if the vetted forces are also given sufficient institutional support to resist pressure towards corruption and human rights abuses. A clean record can quickly be compromised in the absence of institutionalized measures for accountability, such as internal controls, disciplinary mechanisms, and codes of conduct. Moreover, robust mechanisms for external oversight are required to ensure the credibility and integrity of the system – which, besides professional and apolitical civilian management structures within the executive branch of government, include parliamentary oversight and control, independent specialist oversight bodies such as ombuds institutions and human right commissions, and public scrutiny by civil society and the media. POC provides an added incentive to emphasize these oft neglected institutional aspects of reform in UN support to SSR.

Training security forces on human rights and international humanitarian law

While training tends to be over-emphasized in SSR support at the expense of more governance-focused reforms, it is nevertheless essential to a comprehensive and people-centred approach to security provision and reform. The goals of both POC and SSR can be better served if training provided in the context of SSR is adapted to address POC issues, by improving awareness of human rights protections and international humanitarian law.

In cases where a peacekeeping mission supports SSR by other actors, the mission's POC priorities may help to reinforce the centrality of a people-centred approach to security provision in a reform sector that tends to be dominated by technical elements of security training. When funding ran short in US-sponsored basic training for the first class of recruits to the new armed forces of Liberia, it was the international humanitarian law and civics lessons that were cut from the curriculum to make up the shortfall.³¹ Barely six years later, this force was accused of abuse of civilians the very

first time it deployed on active duty. This does not mean that the absence of civics lessons directly caused the abuse that followed years later (the immediate catalyst was more likely a break in supply lines); but it shows that an institution that did not prioritize POC in its own training failed to foster the development of a force inclined to provide it.

Training on human rights and international humanitarian law cannot be viewed as effective POC or SSR unless it is linked to performance and accountability measures; and without such measures to institutionalize new norms and standards, there is little reason to believe that training alone will contribute to improvements in POC or SSR. Nonetheless, training often constitutes a one-off intervention, decontextualized from existing conditions within the security sector and disconnected from other relevant POC and SSR activities. In the July 2012–June 2013 reporting period, for instance, UNMISS conducted 71 training sessions on human rights and protection for 2,090 participants from “the SPLA, the South Sudan Police Service and other security organs of the Government, including at the state level.”³² This was a considerable effort that reached a large number of participants, but effectively provided only brief instruction on these concepts for the individuals who attended the sessions. This kind of ad hoc training misses opportunities to link new expectations for individual behaviour to internal institutional measures for integrity and oversight, direct oversight by independent external authorities, or even public scrutiny by media and civil society.

By contrast, in the same reporting period, the activities of the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) included not only individual training sessions like those provided by UNMISS, but also regular daily activities including the “provision of advice . . . to the police and gendarmerie academies, including modules on gender and protection of minors.”³³ Moreover, UNOCI made efforts to address human rights training in a more sustainable way by carrying out “several training-of-trainers sessions, including on gender issues and the protection of minors”³⁴ – interventions that could at least contribute to the possible future institutionalization of new norms and standards. These examples demonstrate the need to institutionalize training on POC-related subjects if such measures are to qualify as both POC and SSR.

Mitigating friction in implementation

We have argued that treating POC and SSR as separate but overlapping agendas helps to identify ways to reinforce their convergences. It also helps to identify potential points of friction that stem from their different approaches to promoting physical security. Ensuring that POC and SSR activities respond to the perceptions of

communities to strengthen a mission's impartiality offers an entry point to mitigating this friction.

Community responsiveness

Community responsiveness is fundamental to POC, and protection strategies that do not incorporate information about the needs, perceptions, and priorities of communities under threat are less likely to succeed. Not only do communities often have critical information about how to combat threats, but their perceptions affect how they react to protection interventions.³⁵ The UN Secretariat formally recognized this in 2010 when it issued guidance requiring that all peacekeeping operations with a mandate to protect civilians engage communities in the development, implementation, and assessment of protection strategies. The 2015 DPKO/DFS policy on POC similarly emphasizes that community engagement is necessary for successful protection.³⁶

Community responsiveness is also central to SSR methodologies that pursue reforms based in the principles of good governance, to improve inclusiveness, participation, transparency, and accountability. This promotes a culture of service within the security institutions under reform, and supports reform that is rooted in real community needs and is responsive to actual concerns and threat perceptions. In practice, this has meant that UN SSR missions have supported broad-based and inclusive consultation on SSR strategies and visions for national security, that community perceptions have become integral indicators in SSR evaluation, and that service-focused reform strategies have been developed (for example, supporting access to justice, community policing, or public complaints mechanisms, among others).

Community responsiveness not only improves the success of both POC and SSR interventions, but also helps align the two operationally. For example, if a particular community is extremely distrustful of the police force due to its history of abusing the population, and a peacekeeping operation is seen to be working closely with the police for SSR purposes, the community may grow to distrust the peacekeeping operation. Without the trust of communities, peacekeeping operations have a very difficult time trying to protect civilians because community members are less likely to give peacekeepers important information about threats or to cooperate with a protection plan peacekeepers propose.

If peacekeeping operations instead conduct POC and SSR activities in order to respond to the perceptions and priorities of communities, this tension could be mitigated. Peacekeepers could respond to community distrust of the police, for instance, by working on reforming other branches of the security sector that are better trusted while conducting human rights monitoring of the police. Engaging with the community to ascertain why the police are distrusted and subsequently

focusing SSR activities on resolving the specific issues raised would build confidence in peacekeepers. And community security meetings could offer a chance to gain feedback from community representatives and ensure that the efforts of peacekeepers to reform the police are perceived as constructive rather than as bolstering abusive or illegitimate security institutions.

One important way for peacekeeping operations to improve community responsiveness is to incorporate community perceptions of peacekeepers and the state security sector into the monitoring and evaluation of POC and SSR interventions. These perceptions do not necessarily have to be obtained by an expensive or time-consuming process (such as a large, statistically representative survey) if this is not feasible; they could instead be gathered through interviews or focus groups with a diverse sample of a community.³⁷ This would allow peacekeepers to determine whether their POC and SSR efforts are responsive to the priorities and needs of the community or whether these efforts are perceived as ineffective or even unwelcome.

Monitoring and internal reporting of human rights violations also provide a source of information that can help UN missions respond better to community needs. This type of monitoring and reporting is a requirement under the HRDDP, but peacekeeping operations may monitor and report on human rights violations by security forces more broadly, beyond the individuals or units to whom the mission is providing support. Public reporting of this kind can encourage community responsiveness but may also be a very sensitive matter, as peacekeeping officials have sometimes been expelled for publicly reporting on government violations of human rights. For this reason, some peacekeeping operations employ this option selectively and strategically while others use it more regularly, depending on the environment and the mission's relationship with the host-state government. For example, the Human Rights Section of MINUSTAH in Haiti has put out biannual reports on the human rights situation in the country as well as specific reports condemning human rights abuses by the Haitian National Police (such as on alleged torture and killings).³⁸ Leveraging existing monitoring, reporting, and evaluation offers a potential means to improve the link between POC and SSR by making both processes more responsive to the community's experiences of security.

Impartiality

Impartiality is one of the fundamental principles of peacekeeping³⁹ and is critical to the success and legitimacy of a mission. It can also help mitigate friction between POC and SSR support activities by clarifying the relationship between the peacekeeping operation and the host-state government. In the context of missions mandated to protect civilians, adherence to the principle of impartiality (and the perception of impartiality) is particularly important and requires that

mission components protect civilians from physical violence regardless of their identities, characteristics, or affiliations and regardless of the source of that violence. If peacekeepers were perceived as protecting only people of a particular ethnicity, or protecting against abuses committed by only one side of a conflict, it would be extremely difficult to secure the trust needed to protect all civilians effectively and would turn POC into a partisan tool rather than a moral imperative.

SSR support, like all peacekeeping activities, requires impartiality; yet, this standard can be difficult to uphold in practice when dealing with a security sector that is itself discriminatory. Maintaining a strong and clearly defined adherence to the principle of impartiality can help to ensure that peacekeepers are not confused about their responsibilities when it comes to protecting civilians against violence perpetrated by state security actors. Peacekeepers should understand that even if they are mandated to work together with state security forces, the principle of impartiality requires them to protect civilians against violence perpetrated by those security forces just as much as if that violence had been perpetrated by a non-state actor. This means, for example, that UNPOL personnel providing technical assistance to a national police force should not see themselves solely as mentors or trainers but also as watchdogs on the lookout for violence perpetrated against civilians by the police.

The DPKO/DFS policy on UN Police in peacekeeping operations and special political missions states that the “promotion, protection and respect for human rights must be incorporated into every aspect of the work of United Nations police,” and that UNPOL officers must “be prepared to raise issues of human rights if confronted with violations.”⁴⁰ However, it can be difficult in practice for UNPOL officers who have been working closely with particular units to speak out directly against abuses they witness. They should receive training on how to recognize human rights abuses, how to respond in the moment to violence perpetrated by police officers, how to report incidents of violence (for example, to the mission’s human rights division), and how to follow up with the relevant actors afterwards to ensure these abuses do not occur again. This should also apply to UN peacekeeping personnel working with any other part of the security sector.

Clarity about the principle of impartiality can help guarantee that any support a peacekeeping operation provides to the security sector in the context of violence perpetrated by state security forces does not undermine the population’s trust in peacekeepers as protectors. The civil war in South Sudan in the period 2013-14 illustrated the critical role that impartiality can play in this respect. UNMISS originally had both POC and SSR support mandates; but after the political conflict turned violent in December 2013 and led to widespread attacks on civilians by both government and opposition forces, the Security Council emphasized the importance of UNMISS remaining impartial and, in May 2014, revised its mandate to prioritize POC strongly and suspend state-building and SSR support activities, allowing only

a limited engagement with the South Sudanese police for specific purposes. The extreme circumstances of the conflict, which included atrocities perpetrated by state armed forces and police as well as opposition forces, meant that any SSR support from UNMISS in the midst of ongoing attacks against civilians and impunity for violators would inherently compromise the mission's impartiality and thus its legitimacy.

Conclusion

The UN peacekeeping experience shows that attempting to protect civilians while supporting SSR often creates conflict despite assumptions about the intrinsic alignment of these efforts. While POC and SSR may share the same ultimate objective – to improve security for civilians – there can be tensions in implementation arising from the competing short- and long-term goals, and their different approaches to working with host-state governments. The notion of SSR support as a subset of POC, as advanced by the 2015 DPKO/DFS policy on POC, reinforces the false assumption that POC and SSR activities are inherently compatible. The alternative interpretation we propose, which frames POC and SSR support as separate but overlapping agendas, enables peacekeepers to identify where and how the two agendas align and conflict, and thus encourages them to find ways to reinforce convergences and mitigate tensions.

Activities such as the vetting of security forces, the provision of sustained training on human rights and international humanitarian law, and the monitoring and reporting of abuses all overlap across POC and SSR support, inviting joint or coordinated planning for these activities. Ensuring that POC and SSR efforts are responsive to the perceptions and priorities of local communities, and that peacekeepers clearly understand and reinforce the principle of impartiality, can also help to mitigate tensions that arise.

Still, the interaction between POC and SSR support is complex, and it can be very difficult for peacekeepers to know how to respond when POC and SSR goals appear to be in opposition. While UN Security Council resolution 1894 instructs peacekeepers to prioritize POC over other mission activities in terms of allocating resources, it does not offer enough detail to help resolve many dilemmas that peacekeepers face on the ground.⁴¹ UN guidance that acknowledges these complex challenges could help to better equip peacekeepers to manage tensions on the ground between the agendas of POC and SSR support. The United Nations, and the DPKO in particular, could take the following steps to encourage a mutually reinforcing relationship between POC and SSR.

Develop SSR-specific guidance on the link with POC: A new Integrated Technical Guidance Note (ITGN) on SSR should be developed to explain the links between

tasks that peacekeepers undertake themselves to protect civilians and SSR support offered to host-state governments.

Assess the POC impact of SSR activities: It is important to ensure that SSR components of peacekeeping operations account for the potential effects of their activities on POC. This could mean, for example, explicitly including POC dimensions in SSR Do No Harm Analyses and mapping studies, or preparing for potential changes to the balance of power within security sectors with adequate measures to guarantee POC in response to both intended and unintended consequences.

Clarify and strengthen the response of peacekeepers to security sector abuses: Peacekeepers must have clearer guidance about how they should respond in the moment and after the fact if they witness or learn about security sector abuses (including preventive measures). Standard operating procedures developed to implement the HRDDP should address this issue and training should be provided to peacekeepers. Regular assessments of a mission's overall posture should ensure that its relationship with the government does not compromise the perception of its impartiality when it comes to protecting civilians against abuses by security actors.

Emphasize a community-responsive approach: Both the POC and SSR components of peacekeeping operations should receive regular feedback about the perceptions and expectations of the population as to security and safety. This should be the starting point for the development of POC strategies and SSR support. Community perceptions should guide POC and SSR needs assessments, programme design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Emphasize governance-focused SSR: The contradictions between POC and SSR support are greatest when a focus on operational capacity building of security forces leads to neglect of measures to improve accountability. POC interventions that overemphasize technical capacity tend to pit short-term order against sustainable long-term security if SSR does not provide for the necessary internal controls and independent external oversight mechanisms that make POC and SSR compatible. Emphasizing accountable and effective state security provision is the only way to enhance POC.

Notes

¹ This chapter is a revised and updated version of: F. Chappuis and A. Gorur, "Reconciling security sector reform and the protection of civilians in peacekeeping contexts," *Civilians in Conflict Issue Brief No. 3*, DCAF and Henry L. Stimson Center, Geneva and Washington, January 2015.

- ² See Statement by President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2005/20), 26 May 2005. The relevant section reads: “The Security Council underlines that priorities in the post-conflict environment should include, where appropriate: protection of civilians; disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants; security sector and economic and social reform; the end of impunity; establishment and re-establishment of the institutions of Government, the rule of law and transitional justice, respect for human rights; and economic revitalization.”
- ³ See for example UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN Department of Field Support, “Protection of civilians: Coordination mechanisms in UN peacekeeping missions,” 2012, 56. It asserts that UN peacekeeping missions’ SSR components are among those for which “added value should be considered in the context of POC strategy.” See also UN Security Sector Reform Task Force, “Security sector reform integrated technical guidance notes,” 2012, 74. It advises SSR actors to draw “impetus and support” from POC operational concepts.
- ⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 1542 (S/RES/1542), 30 April 2004.
- ⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 1925 (S/RES/1925), 28 May 2010.
- ⁷ Implicit references to SSR became increasingly common after 1999 with UN interventions in Kosovo, Timor-Leste, and Sierra Leone, but the first official use of the term “security sector reform” appeared in UN Security Council resolution 1565, adopted 1 October 2004 (S/RES/1565) as part of the mandate for the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. See Heiner Hänggi and Vincenza Scherrer, eds., *Security Sector Reform and UN Integrated Missions: Experience from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti and Kosovo* (Geneva: DCAF, 2008), 9.
- ⁸ For more, see Victoria Holt, Glyn Taylor and Max Kelly, *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2009).
- ⁹ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “Policy on the protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping,” 2015. The definition adopted in this policy is based on the previous working definition adopted in the 2010 draft operational concept.
- ¹⁰ Justin MacDermott and Måns Hanssen, *Protection of Civilians: Delivering on the Mandate through Civil–Military Coordination* (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2010), 28–29. See also Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *International Affairs* 87 (2011): 825–850.
- ¹¹ See also UN Security Council Resolution 1894 (S/RES/1894), 11 November 2009. In para. 19, it instructs that “mandated protection activities must be given priority in decisions about the use of available capacity and resources” in any mission with a POC mandate. This instruction is difficult to interpret if almost all mission activities constitute POC.
- ¹² Alison Giffen, *Enhancing the Protection of Civilians: From Policy to Practice* (Queanbeyan: Asia Pacific Civil-Military Center of Excellence, 2011), 7.
- ¹³ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “Policy on the protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping,” para. 30.
- ¹⁴ On the origins of SSR as a development-driven agenda, see Albrecht Schnabel and Vanessa Farr, eds., *Back to the Roots: Security Sector Reform and Development* (Geneva: DCAF, 2012).
- ¹⁵ DCAF International Security Sector Advisory Team, “Do No Harm Analysis,” <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/SSR-Glossary/Do-No-Harm-Analysis>. See also UN Security Sector Reform Task Force, “Security sector reform integrated technical guidance notes,” 64; Alan Bryden and Rory Keane, *Security Sector Reform: What Have We Learned?* (Paris: OECD, 2010); Michaela Friberg-Storey, et al., *Security Sector Reform Assessment Framework* (Stockholm: Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2012); and *Handbook on Security System Reform* (Paris: OECD, 2007), 52.

- ¹⁶ United Nations, “Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces” (A/67/775–S/2013/110), 5 March 2013.
- ¹⁷ See Alison Giffen, et al., “*Will They Protect Us for the Next 10 Years?*” *Challenges Faced by the UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2014), 25. Following revision of the UNMISS mandate of May 2014, which had been issued in response to the outbreak of civil war in December 2013, UNMISS was no longer able to support South Sudanese security forces beyond limited engagement with the police to relocate displaced persons safely away from UNMISS bases. This engagement was to be done in compliance with the HRDDP. UNMISS’s subsequent efforts with regard to the HRDDP were, therefore, focused on investigating the background of those police officers with whom they were beginning to re-engage.
- ¹⁸ United Nations, “Budget performance of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013” (A/68/686), 23 December 2013, 25.
- ¹⁹ These events may also be interpreted as an example of the policy being shrewdly manipulated for political purposes, since the DRC government had long been accused of delaying operations against the FDLR and may have deliberately appointed the generals knowing that the HRDDP would prevent MONUSCO from being able to carry out the joint operation. From remarks made at “UN Peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Successes and Lessons Learned,” hosted by the Better World Campaign and United Nations Association, Washington, DC, 18 March 2015.
- ²⁰ The UN SSR Task Force developed guidance notes for UN-wide SSR, but these do not provide specific guidance on the relationship between SSR and POC. See UN Security Sector Reform Task Force, “Security sector reform integrated technical guidance notes.”
- ²¹ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “Policy on the protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping,” Part IV(i), also para. 57.
- ²² *Ibid.*, para. 31.
- ²³ UN Security Council Resolution 2098 (S/RES/2098), 28 March 2013.
- ²⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2147 (S/RES/2147), 28 March 2014, para. 5(f).
- ²⁵ This scenario is not hypothetical; in South Sudan, SSR activities were halted because the new mandate issued after the outbreak of civil war in December 2013 required a near-complete disengagement from the security sector. Mission staff who were previously engaged with these activities complained that the sudden suspension of activities cost them access to and influence over police and military actors. See Lisa Sharland and Aditi Gorur, *Revising the UN Peacekeeping Mandate in South Sudan: Maintaining Focus on the Protection of Civilians* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center and Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2015).
- ²⁶ In this case, the bilateral donors supporting SSR eventually chose to withdraw access to certain aspects of the reform programme that were perceived by some national stakeholders as perks, such as overseas travel for training. As the situation deteriorated in the context of a deepening political crisis, support was eventually withdrawn entirely. From public remarks made by an independent expert involved with the reform programme at “SSR+G: Reviewing Germany’s contribution to SSR” conference, Berlin, 4 May 2015.
- ²⁷ Human Rights Watch, “*No Money, No Justice: Police Corruption and Abuse in Liberia*” (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2013).
- ²⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 1542 (S/RES/1542).
- ²⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 2147 (S/RES/2147), para. 5(e), authorizes MONUSCO to “provide good offices, advice and support to the Government of the DRC to enable the development and finalisation of a clear and comprehensive SSR implementation roadmap including benchmarks and timelines to establish effective and accountable security institutions, including vetting mechanisms.” UN Security Council Resolution 2162 (S/RES/2162), 25 June 2014, para. 19(e), authorizes the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) to “offer support to the

- development of a sustainable vetting mechanism for personnel that will be absorbed into security sector institutions.”
- ³⁰ UN Security Council Resolution 2149 (S/RES/2149), 10 April 2014, para. 31(a). This activity is not one of the initial priorities identified for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR; the mandate authorizes it “as conditions permit and requests the Secretariat to begin planning for these tasks.”
- ³¹ International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform* (Brussels: ICG, 2009).
- ³² United Nations, “Budget performance of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013” (A/68/616), 21 November 2013, 23.
- ³³ United Nations, “Budget performance of the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire for the Period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011” (A/66/616), 16 December 2011, 33.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Alison Giffen, *Community Perceptions as a Priority in Protection and Peacekeeping* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2013).
- ³⁶ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “Policy on the protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping,” 2015.
- ³⁷ 35 See Aditi Gorur and Alison Giffen, “Engaging community voices in protection strategies: Annexes on lessons learned,” Stimson Center, Washington, DC, 2013.
- ³⁸ Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/LACRegion/Pages/HTReports.aspx.
- ³⁹ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “United Nations peacekeeping operations: Principles and guidelines,” 2008, 31. For more information on the meaning of the term “impartiality” in the context of UN peacekeeping, which has changed significantly over time, see Dominick Donald, “Neutral is not impartial: The confusing legacy of traditional peace operations thinking,” *Armed Forces and Society* 29, no. 3 (2003): 415–448.
- ⁴⁰ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “Policy on UN Police in peacekeeping operations and special political missions,” 2014, 7.
- ⁴¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1894 (S/RES/1894).

*Following the money:
The role of public financial
management in SSR*

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Introduction¹

A critical component of the security-development nexus is the relationship between peace operations and the ability of a state to (re-)establish and sustain security for itself and its population, broadly defined as national and human security. UN peace operations, deployed in settings where there is an absence of security and where the state does not have a monopoly on the means of violence, increasingly place peacekeepers in environments where violence is both fragmented and extreme.² This makes it more challenging for peace operations to meet their broad objective to transition and exit once security has been restored and effective and accountable security institutions have been established. Moreover, in the current international climate, peace operations are under pressure to achieve these tasks as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.³

Much of the peace and state-building policy discourse focuses on this process of reconstituting the state, and particularly the security apparatus. The constant reminder to practitioners⁴ is that this endeavour is not only fundamentally political, but is often at the heart of any political settlement between various ruling elites. Further, in conflict settings, political settlements (how elites share power)⁵ are closely related to and greatly impacted by security arrangements (how elites configure the means of violence), including the reform of the security sector and its future composition.⁶ Such negotiations thus have significant resource implications for the state and its international partners, yet one key aspect commonly absent from political-security discourse is the fiscal.

A major question facing states undergoing reform and the peace operations supporting them is how the reconstitution of the security apparatus (including the potential integration of armed forces into national armies) will be resourced and sustained in an accountable and transparent way. States are primarily responsible for financing and supporting their own security sectors, yet whether states have sufficient

revenues to afford and sustain professional and accountable security institutions over the long-term is often disregarded. However, reductions of more than US \$500 million in the UN peacekeeping budget in 2017 highlighted the importance of ensuring nationally-owned and sustainable security sectors in an era of diminishing external support.

In recent years, the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO, previously the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, or DPKO) and the World Bank have been working in partnership with governments to address these very issues and to strengthen the nexus between public finance and security sector reform (SSR), adopting a commonly used tool called the Public Expenditure Review (PER) – which is widely employed to assess questions such as the affordability, efficiency, and effectiveness of government allocations in the context of a country’s macroeconomic framework and sectoral priorities. The innovation here has been the adaptation of the PER to the security sector. Approximately twenty PERs focused on the security and justice sectors have been undertaken by the World Bank in the last decade;⁷ and increasingly, such exercises are being carried out collaboratively with DPO, including the two examples examined in this chapter, of Liberia and Somalia.

Our preliminary findings are that this work has been critical in placing issues of affordability and sustainability at the heart of policy dialogue in the security sector. Additionally, the process of integrating public finance into security decision-making has the normative value of focusing on issues related to broader SSR aspirations around accountability, oversight, and transparency. This normative development was recognized in UN Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) on SSR, which underlines the importance of PERs as key to sector-wide initiatives aiming to “enhance the governance and overall performance of the security sector and address the foundations upon which security institutions in each component area are built.”⁸

This chapter will elaborate further on why PERs have come to the attention of international actors and, most importantly, of governments pursuing SSR agendas. In so doing, it will review the following: (i) peace operations in the modern context and their relationship with SSR; (ii) the link between SSR, public finance, and the sustaining peace agenda; (iii) the development of the public finance perspective and the use of PER tools; (iv) case studies of PERs in Liberia and Somalia; (v) lessons for practitioners; and (vi) conclusions and the way forward.

Peace operations in the modern context

The persistence of intrastate conflict, the emergence of new threats and actors, the fragility and breakdown of state institutions, and the destabilizing effects of so-called ungoverned territories within states and regions, have resulted in a growing demand

for UN peacekeeping efforts. Today, practitioners are being called upon not only to support reform efforts in the aftermath of conflict but also to examine how SSR can underpin efforts aimed at conflict prevention.⁹ This has led to an exponential increase in funding for peace operations in the past decade, so that even with recent cuts, the 2017–2018 UN peacekeeping budget was approximately US \$7.3 billion.¹⁰

At the same time, peacekeeping has become more complex and multidimensional. Peace operations are now expected to both facilitate early recovery from conflict and also assist national authorities in rebuilding institutions and establishing governance structures. To this end, an increasing number of UN peace operations, including peacekeeping missions and special political missions, have been mandated to undertake SSR activities. While only four missions comprised dedicated SSR capacities and teams in 2007, this number had grown to ten in 2017.¹¹

At the outset, this increased demand for SSR support stimulated new sources of funding. For example, between its launch in 2006 and 2012, the UN Peacebuilding Fund supported SSR-related projects in ten countries, constituting approximately US \$50 million, or 21 per cent, of its total US \$228 million expenditure.¹² Of this, approximately 72 per cent was allocated to infrastructure, operations support, and equipment; 21 per cent to training and discipline-related efforts; and only 7 per cent to governance and oversight.¹³ Most of this new funding was thus directed towards “hardware” gaps as opposed to investments in important “software” priorities. This was despite the experience that hardware expenditures invariably put significant pressure on national budgets in terms of recurrent and maintenance costs and the knowledge that successful SSR processes should focus more on enhancing the entire security sector architecture, in particular its governance and accountability aspects.

In recent years, Peacebuilding Fund investments in SSR-specific projects have fallen, as indicated in Figure 1. More generally, while UN SSR support is increasingly requested in mission mandates, funding does not appear to be increasing proportionately or predictably. This requires that both the UN and national governments do more with less.

The unevenness of SSR spending is further reflected in official development assistance (ODA) trends. ODA is again increasing, reaching a new high in 2016 of US \$142.6 billion,¹⁴ after the financial crisis of 2007–2008.¹⁵ However, very little is directed towards security and justice outcomes, and recent measures indicate that aid to the security sector comprises a mere fraction of sector-allocated aid (some 1.4 per cent for security and 3.1 per cent for justice).

Today, the focus of various international partners is moving from security hardware to software. For example, the 2014 US Security Governance Initiative – a US \$65 million multi-year programme focused on six countries in western and northern Africa – acknowledged that the emphasis on military operations and

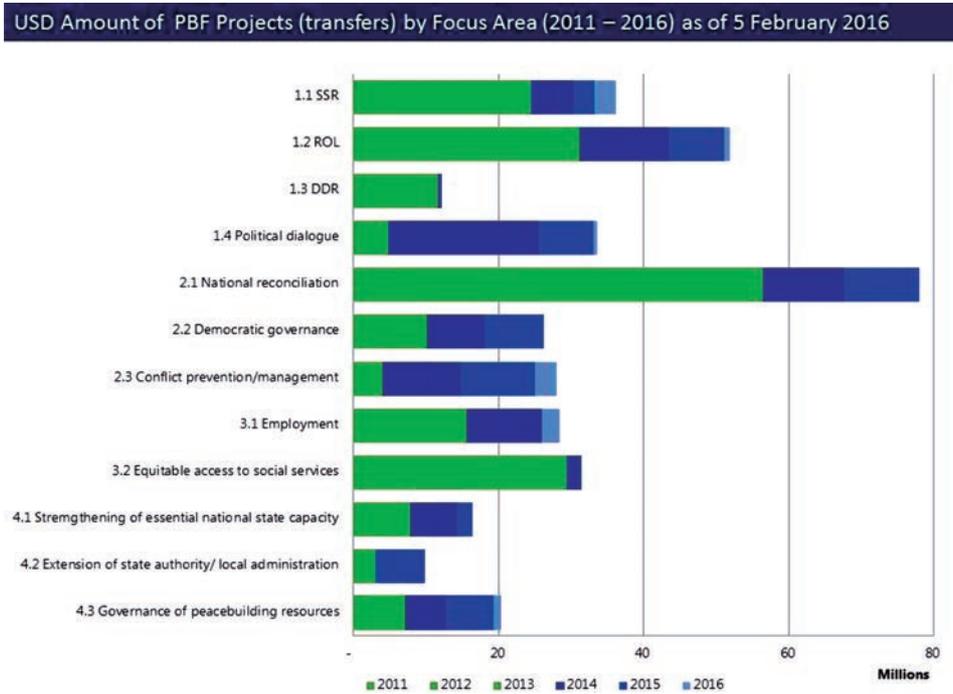


Figure 12.1: UN Peacebuilding Fund investments by focus area

Source: UN Peacebuilding Fund, “What We Fund,” unpbf.org/what-we-fund/.

support has come at the detriment of civilian institutional capacity.¹⁶ Hence, the Initiative is *not* a classic train-and-equip effort but aims to “improve management, oversight, accountability and sustainability of security sector institutions.”¹⁷ The EU has also developed a strategic framework for support to security sectors, encompassing both the political security elements of the European Council as well as the development arm of the European Commission, which aims to support individual and state security as well as the “legitimacy, good governance, integrity and sustainability of the security sector of the partner countries.”¹⁸

This policy shift by international partners recognizes that it is ultimately national governments that assume responsibility for the provision of security and justice services as well as other public goods, and that this may take place in the absence of large-scale international support. Operationally, the critical challenge is that support for transformational institutional change and the alignment of political-economic incentives towards integrity and accountability must be inter-generational. Research indicates that even for the “fastest-movers,” military-to-civilian transition has taken approximately 17 years.¹⁹

In many challenging contexts, the clock for UN peace operations is ticking. But, “in sustaining peace, the UN System must overcome structural and other impediments... including through more innovative resourcing options... [and must] work closely with their national counterparts... and regional partners to ensure that the least disruption is caused when they transition and depart.”²⁰ This is an extraordinarily complex and challenging task; while supporting peace and stability, the UN must also assist necessary national institutions to take on these responsibilities in such a way that is both accountable to citizens and sustainable.

SSR, public finance, and sustaining peace

The most dramatic historical transformations of security sectors have been associated with the social and political changes brought about by demilitarization and democratization processes in Latin America, and shifts in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union.²¹ However, the involvement of international donors and agencies in security and justice service provision as a development process is still relatively new,²² emanating from a number of bilateral actors in the late 1990s and ultimately the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).²³

Extensive programmatic work on SSR in various countries has evolved in parallel to these policy developments. National and international expertise in SSR has thus grown and now entails strategic and policy advice, arms control, governance and oversight, and criminal justice support. Further, various networks and nongovernmental organizations have been formed at the global, regional, and national levels in this area.²⁴ Nonetheless, the literature suggests that while the policies and norms associated with the SSR framework are increasingly accepted, evidence of impact is more mixed.²⁵

Largely missing from this growing body of policy and practice has been the connection between public finance and the security sector, even though evidence indicates links between resourcing and the shape and pathways of security institutions. For instance, Bates, Greif, and Singh relate levels of military expenditure to military coups and ask whether state militaries are rent-seeking actors who decide to support or overthrow a civilian government based on the level of military spending.²⁶ One large historical survey found the following: a successful coup can bring an increase in the defence burden, as it directly affects the bargaining power of the military; no effect or a decrease in the defence burden is often the consequence of a democratization process triggered by a coup; and failed coups, instead, produce a smaller and mostly positive effect on the military burden, possibly as a result of coup-proofing strategies.²⁷ A recent example of this link between military spending

and military overthrow was the 2012 coup in Mali, where tales of corruption and mismanagement in the security sector, coupled with a lack of proper equipment, food, and housing, were at its origins.²⁸

Another example of this critical relationship can be found in an examination of external financing to domestic security institutions, which is certainly a feature of the ongoing counter-insurgency in Afghanistan against the Taliban. Central to the tension between national responsibility and external support in Afghanistan has been the ability of the state to generate sufficient resources to combat an insurgency while absorbing armed groups into the national army as a means of political consolidation.²⁹ The cost of sustaining some 352,000 people in the Afghan national security forces amounts to approximately US \$5 billion per year. This is out of reach of an Afghan state that “depends entirely on the willingness of the international community to continue covering most of its cost over the medium-term.”³⁰ The question of the sustainability of security provision has been at the heart of international foreign policy towards the country for the last several years.

Such financial analysis of the security sector is also enlightening, in hindsight, as to the potential entry points for external support to prevent conflict. The case of South Sudan and the fracturing of its political economy is a sobering one.³¹ The 2005 peace agreement between northern and southern Sudan ushered in an extraordinary financial windfall, in the form of oil revenues, for the autonomous government in the south. This supported an elaborate patronage network, primarily among the military class.³² A massive increase in government revenues followed, from a meagre US \$100,000 in 2005 to US \$3.4 billion in 2011–2012. At the same time, insurgent militias were offered amnesty and integrated into the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) as part of a policy of stabilization, thereby creating an enormous security sector. Indeed, just before the 2005 agreement, the SPLA numbered around 40,000; by 2011, some 240,000 SPLA, together with 90,000 “organized forces” (including police and wildlife services) and some 745 generals, were on the government payroll. The sector absorbed approximately 60 per cent of the state budget. As oil production and revenues declined, the loose political settlement that existed at independence in 2011 (along with respective militias) broke apart.³³

These examples provide anecdotal evidence that the financing and sustainability of security sector institutions should be examined more seriously. Further, these and associated issues are not only pertinent for peacekeeping strategies in post-conflict settings, but also for conflict prevention, which aligns with the emphasis in international policy on UN approaches to peacebuilding that focus on prevention and long-term sustainability.³⁴ The UN Security Council has called for a sustaining peace approach that “encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting

parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.”³⁵

Part of this policy realignment should thus involve developing a better understanding of the factors of sustainability for security sector institutions comprised of critical actors who influence whether a country is likely to achieve stability or relapse into conflict. However, despite a prominent place for national ownership³⁶ and the commitment of financial resources³⁷ in the policy literature (relating to generic aid³⁸ as well as security sector doctrine³⁹), we find a gap in practice. Sustainability, much like other commonly used cross-cutting concepts, such as “government buy-in,” has become a catchphrase; easy to promote in policy rhetoric but difficult to operationalize on the ground.

In theory, the process of ensuring sustainability in SSR programming should start in the design phase and be maintained throughout implementation, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation phase. However, in practice, the urgency to build and extend state authority as quickly as possible after the cessation of hostilities has led many international partners to favour “quick-impact” interventions, with little consideration for sustainability. Such projects can be important in catalysing stabilization efforts, but they are, by design, short-term, ad hoc, and often output-focused rather than geared towards long-term outcomes that address institutional deficits and build indigenous local capacities within the security sector. And in some cases, footing the bill for salaries, fuel, maintenance, and other recurrent costs associated with these projects places an additional burden on already strained national resources.⁴⁰

We argue that part of the reason for this gap between policy and practice is the lack of data and awareness about revenue and expenditure in security sectors undergoing reform. While the UN, bilateral donors, and regional organizations have for years invested significant resources into building and reforming security institutions to avoid a situation in which countries return to conflict, insufficient attention is paid to analysing how money is spent. Further, inadequate information about the cost of a security sector complicates the coordination and implementation of interventions in a space often crowded with many international players. More importantly, it makes it difficult for national authorities to reach informed decisions about how to best spend scarce public resources and what the trade-offs are for other important sectors, such as education and health. Public finance tools like the PER are helping governments and partners better understand these issues.

The PER and understanding sustainability

Over the last 20 years, there has been a concerted push among both developed and developing countries to standardize and improve measures around public financial

management.⁴¹ The focus of that effort has been the strengthening of public budgeting as it relates to two key tasks of government: (i) *public expenditure policy*, particularly regarding fiscal stability, efficiency, and effectiveness; and (ii) *public financial management* of budget implementation and systems.

Public expenditure policy (PEP, or macroeconomic and fiscal policy) concerns the overarching balance sheet of government – that is, its revenues and its expenditures. The goal of macroeconomic and fiscal policy is to achieve potential output, full employment, and macroeconomic stability, which together provide the economic foundation for sustainable growth.⁴² Of central importance to this formula is the fiscal deficit. The government cannot spend more than it collects through taxation and borrowing beyond the short run, because high debts and high inflation are destabilizing. A government must therefore set and adhere to fiscal targets related to debt sustainability and fiscal balance. But doing so requires reasonably accurate revenue projections and a comprehensive process for estimating current and potential expenditures. The framework for this analysis is drawn from existing World Bank tools (as well as those of the International Monetary Fund).⁴³

Public financial management (PFM) is concerned with the management of and controls on the use of public funds. PFM particularly focuses on budget processes, resource allocation, how expenditures are made (such as for public service payroll or capital investments), and the ways public funds are accounted for. The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework is now the internationally recognized basis for assessing and measuring budget planning, implementation, and control through a series of indicators, including budget reliability, transparency of public finances, management of assets and liabilities, policy-based fiscal strategy and budgeting, predictability and control in budget execution, accounting and reporting, and external scrutiny and audit.⁴⁴

The PER has been a critical instrument in supporting governments that are undertaking the data collection and analysis required to manage fiscal and sector policy. PERs have been used extensively to assess issues relating to the equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of government allocations in the context of a country's macroeconomic framework and sectoral priorities, and to identify the reforms to budget processes and administration that are needed to improve the efficiency of public spending. A PER can focus on critical economic policy questions, such as affordability and sustainability, or on PFM and the quality of budget implementation. The latter focus highlights control and management functions and the mechanisms in place to ensure that public monies are used for their intended purposes, are deployed quickly and efficiently, and are properly accounted for.

An innovation over the last decade has been the use of PERs in the security sector, as part of an effort to integrate security into normal government budgeting processes as well as (and increasingly) to inform governments and international partners on

critical policy questions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states. One such question relates to the affordability and sustainability of security sector financing, i.e. can security spending be prolonged or maintained at a certain rate or level. In this case, a PER can be focused narrowly on “fiscal sustainability” as a central measurement of the resilience of security institutions and the long-term impact of reform.

Fiscal sustainability relates to “the ability of the government to indefinitely maintain the same set of policies while remaining solvent.”⁴⁵ For governments to remain solvent, particularly when levels of development aid and other sources of external support decrease or are absent, public finance becomes key, meaning government is able to “collect revenue, allocate resources, and manage expenditure in a manner that is regarded by its citizens as effective and equitable.”⁴⁶ By applying the concept of sustainability and investigating the public financing of the security sector, we have found a number of challenges that are unique to the sector.

First, in many instances, national authorities are incapable at the outset of financing the security sector, for a number of reasons. After prolonged conflict, the sector may have to be rebuilt from scratch, requiring the costly priority expenditures associated with training and equipping modern, professional, and accountable armed forces. An added burden may stem from the security arrangements embedded in peace processes, which often envisage the integration of various armed forces and their placement on the government payroll.⁴⁷ The success of this process is inevitably contingent on the ability of states to finance it. Some states viewed as geopolitically critical, such as Afghanistan, do receive rather significant contributions from international partners to the sector. However, despite general aspirations for aid effectiveness and transparency,⁴⁸ there is a tendency for external assistance to be off-budget and disjointed. In Sierra Leone, for example, more than half the total security sector expenditure in 2005 was reported to be off-budget.⁴⁹

Beyond the costs of reconstituting a modern security sector, fragile states and those beset by conflict are plagued by very low revenue thresholds. Intrastate conflict particularly is associated with the breakdown of the social contract between a state and its citizens, resulting in weak capacities of the state to generate revenue. And here we find a clearly virtuous or vicious relationship between the ability of the state to establish stability, the rule of law, and levels of revenue generation.

A second challenge relates to the exceptionalism that traditionally shrouds the security sector, which frequently resists engaging in whole-of-government exercises aimed at achieving a better understanding of expenditures. Many governments do not include security expenditures in their budgets, and where they are included, they tend not to be disaggregated (studies have shown a discrepancy between official statistics and actual expenditures).⁵⁰ Security ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) are often concerned about secrecy and confidentiality, which can impede

attempts to strengthen transparency and accountability or to undertake a review. Indeed, on national security grounds, it can be quite difficult to ascertain accurate budget details for the sector. Yet, research has found that budget deviations shielded by confidentiality can include significant security finances kept off-budget, revenues that are secretly banked, and accounts held overseas.⁵¹

A third challenge relates to defining what constitutes the security sector, especially in contexts where public institutions are contested or non-existent. The reach of formal, statutory security structures may be extremely limited and may not extend far beyond the seat of government and major urban areas. Moreover, ill-disciplined and unaccountable security institutions may have given rise to a lack of trust between the population and state institutions, particularly security providers. In such conditions, citizens may opt for informal, hybrid, non-statutory actors as security and justice deliverers.⁵²

An exponential growth in private security companies over the past few decades brings further challenges. Reliable data are difficult to obtain, but some studies suggest that the ratio of private security guards to police in developed countries is 3:1, whereas in developing countries it may be as high as 10:1.⁵³ In sub-Saharan Africa, private security companies have mushroomed in the last 30 years, and this growth has been linked to the declining ability and or willingness of the state to provide security and protection to all citizens.⁵⁴ The provision of security services is not the only role that private actors play. Increasingly, they have taken on train-and-equip functions and other related tasks as part of national SSR efforts. For example, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2003 for Liberia assigned the US with primary responsibility for defence reform, the US Government outsourced the work to two private military companies (PMCs) – DynCorp International and PAE – which managed the restructuring and overall reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). This US \$95 million programme, administrated by the US State Department, focused on vetting, recruitment, and the provision of basic training and logistics for the AFL.⁵⁵

It is clear that for SSR to be successful, the long-term fiscal sustainability of public institutions is essential, and non-statutory and informal security actors should also be considered. When costs of sustaining the security sector are discussed, these non-state actors should be factored into the equation, while remaining cognizant of the government's primary role. Below, we turn to how these types of public finance and sustainability challenges have been addressed in context, by looking at the cases of Liberia and Somalia.

Country Studies: Liberia and Somalia

After the partnership between the World Bank and the UN was established at the headquarters level, focus and effort were directed towards strengthening the collaboration in order to examine public finance aspects of security sector governance at the country level. In 2012, in response to a request from the Government of Liberia, the UN and World Bank came together to support the first-ever analysis of security sector public expenditure in a peacekeeping context.⁵⁶ This was followed by a joint PER in Somalia, published in 2016, with ongoing partnerships on this work in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau.

Liberia

In August 2003, after 14 years of civil war in Liberia, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra, triggering the deployment of UNMIL under UN Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) to support the Agreement.⁵⁷ With an authorized troop level of 15,000 at its peak from 2003–2006, UNMIL was among the UN's largest peacekeeping operations, and was tasked with SSR support to the national Government. In 2006, the Security Council authorized a phased, gradual consolidation, drawdown, and withdrawal of UNMIL's troop contingent, as the situation permitted, and without compromising the security of Liberia.⁵⁸ An initial drawdown from 15,000 to 8,000 troops was carried out between October 2007 and May 2010. Then, between 2012 and 2015, the mission further reduced both numbers of troops and enablers by 4,200. For the Government, the challenge during these transitions was to maintain public order and security across the country.

In November 2011, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected for her second term, and while socially and economically still fragile, Liberia exhibited all the signs of a country beginning to overcome the risk of relapse into conflict.⁵⁹ However, serious obstacles remained, including a significant disconnect between the capital and periphery, ongoing crime and violence including offences attributed to security personnel,⁶⁰ police corruption,⁶¹ and land disputes.⁶² It was in this context that the Government was reconstituting a security sector that had been previously associated with the regime of Samuel Doe and the subsequent civil war.⁶³ Significant resources were being devoted to the sector, including a US \$210 million commitment from Washington, DC, meant to support the AFL through the use of private contractors (as outlined above).⁶⁴ However, despite this substantial effort, a critical question lingered: would the Liberian Government have the capacity to provide security and justice services in the absence of UNMIL⁶⁵ and in such a way that is affordable for the state and accountable to Liberian citizens?⁶⁶

To answer to this question, the government turned to UNMIL and the World Bank, which conducted a PER between late 2011 and June 2012.⁶⁷ The PER had three core objectives: first, to assess the fiscal space available to support the security sector within the Liberian budget over a multiyear period; second, to identify the core security package (at minimum standards) required to facilitate the UNMIL transition, while taking into account the recurrent costs that would have to be absorbed into the overall budget as well as responding to the security risks facing the country; and, third, to analyse expenditure and public financial management systems in the sector. The scope of the review encompassed all budget entities organized across the security sector, including those with oversight, integrity, and compliance functions. Special attention was paid to security institutions likely to be most directly affected by the UNMIL drawdown – notably the Liberian National Police and the Bureau for Immigration and Naturalization – as well as to links between policing and the delivery of justice functions. Other key institutions also covered by the assessment included the Armed Forces (albeit with limited purview), the Liberia Coast Guard, and the prosecutorial services, court system, and prison system.

The PER concluded that sustaining a minimum package to ensure security in the absence of UNMIL would cost approximately US \$167 million from 2012 to 2019. This amount accounted for maintenance of the current security system along with an increase in manpower, equipment, and recurrent costs. Given that the Liberian Government had allocated 4.9 per cent of GDP for the security sector at the time of the review, with a projected spending growth rate that mirrored inflation (5 per cent), a financing gap of US \$86 million needed to be covered. According to the PER, this gap would be largest during the first three years of the transition (2012–2015), mainly reflecting an upfront investment cost to replace UNMIL logistics capacity, totalling US \$77 million.

The Government was faced with the dilemma of how to close this financing gap while simultaneously ensuring that its security apparatus and personnel attained the organizational competence and skill level required to replace UNMIL, without compromising the peace dividend achieved to date. The PER underscored that there were no easy choices or silver bullets to address this challenge. Thus, the Government had to pursue a combination of options to reduce transition costs and increase its fiscal space. The PER provided detailed recommendations to the Government to scale up financial support for the security sector within the budget. In its budget for fiscal year 2012–2013, the Government integrated many of these recommendations, increasing overall support for rule of law and security from US \$67 million to US \$81 million, and specifically increasing the budget of the Liberian National Police from US \$14 million to almost US \$18 million. This was matched by policy recommendations to grow the size of the police force and, with an anticipated surge

in policing recruitment and training, a plan to build five regional justice and security hubs to strengthen service provision for underserved populations.

On the public financial management side, the PER made clear that budgetary controllers within most security sector agencies in Liberia required capacity development in order to prepare effective budgetary submissions to the Ministry of Finance as well as to monitor spending and apply standardized PFM systems. Equally evident was a lack of regular consultation and dialogue between the Ministry of Finance and security sector budgetary controllers, leading to frequent misunderstandings. At the strategic level, the PER stressed that the National Security Council (NSC) would need to play an active role in giving direction to the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) process. As the body responsible for coordinating security sector policy, it was incumbent on the NSC to participate in decisions concerning budgetary prioritization and sequencing given limited fiscal space. At the time, the financial resource envelope for the security sector was set by the Ministry of Finance with minimum input from the security sector. As recommended in the PER, the Minister of Finance became a permanent member of the NSC, and further, the NSC was viewed as a participant in the discussion on the MTEF and the annual budgetary process, which sets the government resource envelope and establishes priorities for the sector.

The new administration of President George Weah, elected in December 2017, faced severe constraints, with flat revenue growth and declining donor support resulting in spending cuts. The fiscal deficit was forecast to contract from a revised estimate of 7.9 per cent of GDP in 2017 to an average of 3.1 per cent in 2018–19. And higher average oil prices along with a depreciating Liberian dollar mean that inflation were expected to remain at over 11 per cent for that same period. These prospects are somewhat countered by an anticipated average growth rate of 4.1 per cent in 2018–19, based upon stronger prospects in certain sectors, such as palm oil and rubber.⁶⁸

In this context, the Government has requested that the UN and World Bank update the expenditure analysis of the security and justice sectors. Similar challenges to those assessed in the 2012 PER remain, including the expansion of service provision throughout the country and the use of hybrid mechanisms that could be cheaper and thus more cost-effective.⁶⁹ With around 77.3 per cent of security personnel still reportedly working within the capital and its environs,⁷⁰ and only one of five regional justice and security hubs fully operational, some are questioning whether the “European model” represented in the National Security Policy of 2008 renders the Liberian security sector fit-for-purpose and affordable in a post-UNMIL era.⁷¹

Somalia

In late 2013, the Ministry of Finance of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) asked the World Bank and the UN mission, UNSOM, to conduct a PER of the country's security and justice sectors.⁷² The origins of this request were seemingly two-fold: first, the Government was concerned about the confusing number of mechanisms and policies being put in place for donor stipend support to military and policing compensation; and second, development partners were increasingly concerned that the financing of the security sector was becoming unsustainable. Three years later, the FGS underwent a transition with the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi "Farmajo" Mohamed, and in early 2017, the PER was finalized and presented to the new Government. The three years this exercise took to complete reflects the extensive consultations that occurred between key stakeholders, as well as the challenge of collecting sufficiently rigorous data in a difficult environment.

Given the background of the PER request in Somalia, its focus was on the real-time affordability of spending on the security sector and its projected sustainability (or not) over a ten-year period, as well as on critical issues having to do with control and oversight of public financial systems. In addition to the difficulty of accessing verifiable data, there were a number of other real challenges to this effort, ranging from the conceptual (the interplay between state and non-state, referred to above) to the operational (limited access beyond Mogadishu due to insecurity).

The PER in Somalia was undertaken in an environment in which the security and justice "sectors" were largely dominated by two related trends – the ongoing insurgency of Al Shabaab (AS), countered by the African Union mission, AMISOM, together with Somali and international support; and the gradual consolidation of the Somali political settlement resulting in the establishment of legitimate governance institutions and the formation of federated regional entities. To this day, AS exerts temporary, and at times sustained, control over significant areas of Somali territory using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against Somali and international actors.⁷³ Where it has retained territorial control, it has sought to provide its own particular form of governance, setting up political structures, courts, and policing functions, while also recruiting members of the local population, sometimes forcibly, to further its military and political objectives. Over time, AS has been greatly weakened, with many key leaders killed in a number of high-profile air strikes, but it remains organizationally resilient, launching the deadliest bombing in Mogadishu in October 2017, when over 350 civilians were killed and 400 injured.

AS continues to pose three key threats: (1) it has extensive control of primarily rural territories in southern and central Somalia, where it governs and retains considerable freedom of movement; (2) it continues to launch asymmetrical attacks, designed to probe, terrorize, and undermine the Somali population's resolve,

particularly in urban areas such as Mogadishu, and occasional conventional attacks against exposed military bases; and (3) it retains the capacity to break the morale of AMISOM and international efforts to stabilize the country.⁷⁴ Beyond AS, armed conflict in Somalia since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 has mostly been associated with contestations over the nature, form, and control of a future Somali state between various elite groupings. A notable manifestation of the fragmented aspect of conflict in Somalia has been the creation of clan and sub-clan militias that have served as the primary fighting forces since the dissolution of Barre's large army.

Since its establishment in 2012, the FGS has pursued a constitutional and political settlement process meant to incorporate regional factions that emerged in the preceding decades, with recent progress involving established and emerging Federal Member States (FMS). The finalization of the Constitution will define relationships between different political groups in Somalia, primarily between the centre and periphery/the FGS and the FMS. As this political process develops, the *de facto* security force structure is also evolving; the FGS is building a Somali National Army (SNA) while the FMS have separate regional security institutions. As part of ongoing political negotiations, consensus is being reached on security arrangements, which are critical in terms of a final determination of the structure and composition of the armed forces and the police, and ultimately the state.⁷⁵

With the relatively straightforward policy objective to first counter the insurgency, and subsequently integrate political and security institutions in Somalia, albeit in a highly complex context, key stakeholders received a timely injection of data and analysis from the PER, informing them on critical issues in the sector. The PER found that an estimated US \$1.5 billion was being spent each year by international partners on peacekeeping, counter-insurgency, and support to the Somali security sector. This was complemented by uneven FGS spending: US \$67.5 million in 2014, US \$44 million in 2015, and US \$28 million in 2016, representing 45 per cent, 33 per cent, and 25 per cent of the national budget. The main cost driver in the sector was personnel, and while "counting" in Somalia was extremely difficult, the PER estimated there were 40,000–45,000 armed Somali personnel (in the army, police, and security service or paramilitary) receiving some type of official compensation. In addition, 20,000–25,000 members of the militia were part of well-organized systems of informal taxation and extraction.

Estimated costs of financing the envisaged military and police development plans were US \$150–220 million per year, depending on the cost scenario. Given that projected FGS revenues were US \$246 million per year (as of 2016), including about US \$100 million in non-security on-budget external grants, this was unsustainable without a dramatic increase in domestic revenue or external support.⁷⁶ And these estimates did not even include additional costs such as: US \$10 million a year for justice institutions; the potential cumulative costs over 10 years of US \$50 million

for capacity development in the Air Force; US \$100 million for the Coast Guard; US \$30–70 million for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and US \$35–73 million for pensions.

The PER was also concerned with PFM, and due to the nascent character of the FGS and weak institutional capacity and systems, it covered all aspects of the budgetary process, from planning to budget execution to accountability systems to controls. However, since personnel was such a cost driver, most attention was given to strengthening payroll systems and the registration and verification of members of the military and police. There was also serious concern that non-payment of military salaries was undermining the SNA's ability to address the insurgency⁷⁷ and sending a signal that serious corruption continued inside FGS structures.

A few months after publication of the PER, in April 2017, the FGS and FMS settled on a new National Security Architecture. This was a significant breakthrough that heralded further formalization of the federal relationship, despite serious doubts about its sustainability. The agreement comprised an SNA of 18,000 troops, special forces of 4,000, and a Somali Police Force numbering 32,000 (8,000 financed by the FGS and the remainder by the FMS). If fully implemented, this would be unsustainable unless there is a significant increase in internal revenues, the pace of implementation is slowed to align with revenue generation, and security sector personnel recruitment particularly is extended, or there is an increase in on-budget international financing.

What we see in the cases of Liberia and Somalia is an illuminating interplay of political and economic factors that directly influence the course taken by security sectors. In Liberia, the government had to scale back its original plans for regional security and justice hubs, relying instead on a policy of projection and operational mobility from the capital. The question is whether this can be an efficient security model, or whether it will simply reinforce the capital-periphery divide as in years past. In Somalia, an AMISOM drawdown scheduled for 2018 was postponed on the basis of a joint UN-AU review that raised serious concerns about the ability of Somali security institutions to take on counter-insurgency functions.⁷⁸ At the same time, perceptions of grand-scale corruption within government circles continue to fuel grievances and provide a rallying cry for radical opposition.

Lessons for practitioners

This is new territory and practice for the UN and the World Bank, and it will be some time before the two institutions can incorporate these methodologies as standard approaches. Still, we are able to draw a number of useful lessons from experiences to date.

Strengthening coherence

The PER process can provide an opportunity to strengthen coherence around a multilateral platform, provided by the UN and the World Bank, in what is traditionally a crowded bilateral space. Donor partners will always take the lead in what is a privileged sector in terms of special and often confidential relations between governments negotiating security assistance. However, links between geopolitical interests and the support offered to individual governments' security arrangements can result in sectoral competition and incoherence, as has certainly been the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, where competing donor agendas have been among the challenges to SSR support.⁷⁹ And in Afghanistan, where sub-sector donor leads were designated to strengthen coordination, this often resulted in sectoral silos and a lack of overall strategic coherence.⁸⁰

While neither the UN nor the World Bank can pretend to assume strategic leadership in the security sector, their partnership can provide an opportunity to strengthen sectoral coherence. The PER exercise plays to the complementary strengths of each organization. The UN offers sector expertise and its role in political transitions, and the World Bank offers its use of data and analytics, in this case to strengthen the integration of security into budgetary processes. The PER is contingent on inter-disciplinary skills and relies on peacekeeping and security practitioners interacting with Ministry of Finance staff, budget planning officials, presidential economic advisers, controllers, and parliamentary budgetary committee staffers – all of whom are critical interlocutors for a twenty-first century peacekeeping mission. In turn, financial practitioners are introduced to security officials at key MDAs. The links with the World Bank allow for policy dialogue to be opened on the tensions and trade-offs between fiscal and security objectives and policies.

An example of the greater coherence that can result from a PER came in Somalia, where important donors to the security sector worked in tandem with the Government to create the Comprehensive Approach to Security. This comprises technical bodies that support various working groups assisting reform measures as well as an executive forum comprising the partners, FGS, and FMS. In parallel, in 2016, the Ministry of Finance issued a consolidated security budget that outlined both domestic and external financing in support of the sector as well as a joint taskforce to push through payroll and registration reforms.

The political economy of reform and ensuring that security PERs are politically viable

It is imperative that SSR practitioners understand the political economy context of different settings, which may feature varying degrees of interest in reform, in order to assess whether a PER is viable.⁸¹ PERs are technical and financial exercises that

have enormous potential political impact. On one hand, technical assistance is often required to fill gaps and provide training in areas where there is limited local capacity and expertise. On the other hand, technical support to such reform processes may be futile, even harmful, if the approach, methodology, and implementation are not adapted to the local context and in line with the vision and wishes of national stakeholders – including the government, but also society more broadly. This is why policy and guidance on SSR highlight national ownership as an essential component of reform efforts that are politically viable and sustainable.⁸²

National authorities, donors, and UN peacekeeping and special political missions are increasingly confronted by the difficult question of what type of security sector a country can afford, and how the UN and partner governments can help sustain it. To answer necessitates an in-depth analysis of not only the security threats facing the country but also the current and projected resources available to the sector. In short, informed analyses based on economic data and financial and security risks are required.

The basis for successfully undertaking assessments such as these is to foster a close partnership with the host government; such PER exercises can only be undertaken with the explicit request of a government. Working closely with the Ministry of Finance is particularly critical, not only to gather more information and knowledge on government revenue projections and available fiscal space, but also to facilitate policy dialogue between the Ministry of Finance and traditional security sector MDAs. In many cases, the Ministry of Finance may not be properly informed regarding critical SSR gaps and challenges, or adequately sensitized to the value of investing in the security sector. It is often the Ministry of Finance, though, that has an interest in addressing the issues raised by a PER, such as those relating to sustainability and efficiency.

Conversely, security MDAs may resist such an exercise, seeing it as an “audit” in which their interests are threatened and the exceptionalism of the sector is challenged. If these sentiments prevail, there is little point in undertaking a PER as there will be no data forthcoming and no dialogue to hold. Because national security is understood as the prerogative and primary function of the state, discussions on the reform and capacity of the security sector, in particular those of the defence and intelligence institutions, are likely to be confidential due to fears that the state’s territorial sovereignty and internal stability may be jeopardized if sensitive information about capabilities, structures, and policies is made public. Additionally, the predictability of the status quo is often preferred and defended by those in power over the unpredictability that change and reform may bring.

Countries emerging from conflict tend to experience relative instability, fragility, and contestations of power during their transitions. In such contexts, formal institutions typically play a weak role in defining the rules that govern society, or

in enforcing those rules. Instead, governing elites often derive their influence from informal, yet highly complex and interconnected, networks that extend across the political, economic, and security spheres. Given that PERs assess these types of informal networks and transactions, and put forth recommendations to formalize and institutionalize systems that promote affordability and transparency, it is in the interest of some actors to not only avoid collaboration but to oppose and undermine reform efforts.

Hence, for PERs to be effective and lead to intended outcomes, it is essential that the experts undertaking them have an intimate understanding of the political environment in which they operate. This should also help ensure that national actors understand the objectives of the work, are willing to provide the necessary data to produce an informed analysis, and actively consider how best to implement the recommendations, all of which require patience and trust between experts and their counterparts. Sceptical actors may only be convinced through extensive consultations that probe the PER process and specifically explore how it can provide solutions to their major sector challenges. These may range from a detailed examination of how to extend greater security to create an environment conducive for domestic and foreign investment that promotes economic growth, to measures that generate greater revenues such as taxing illegal fishing and tightening customs.

The PER can also be very useful in exposing sector leadership issues relating to greater effectiveness and efficiency. In this sense, the PER is geared towards finding value-for-money as opposed to seeking fiscal cuts. Identifying “ghost” workers or mapping out a pathway to pension reform can result in MDAs ultimately accessing greater resources for much needed capital investment and equipment. Further, undertaking public financial reforms will in the long run encourage donor partners to put financial assistance on budget, making it more predictable and reliable.

A process and not a report

The PER is as much a process as it is a report, providing important data and analytics for key stakeholders related to difficult policy issues that are, at times, existential – such as when examining right-sizing options. For this reason, it has been incumbent on UN missions and the World Bank to be engaged in the PER process, alongside governments. This requires patience as well as resources. In Somalia, the PER process took three years and is now being followed by a small technical assistance grant to provide advisory services focused on PFM reform, as well as follow-up reviews to examine the capacity of the respective Federal Member States to sustain their allotted police forces. Likewise, in early 2017, the government in Liberia requested UN and World Bank support to undertake a follow-up PER exercise in response to difficulties generating revenue that meets current security planning objectives.

A significant goal here is to facilitate the greater integration of security sector MDAs into the normal government budgetary process, and thereby address the traditional exceptionalism that can render security budgets a “black box.” To that end, PERs are able to examine: the links between security sector policy and national budgetary processes; the predictability and quality of control of security sector budget execution managed by the budgetary controllers in individual security sector agencies and/or ministries; the quality of security sector accounting, recording, and reporting; the effectiveness of external scrutiny of the security sector, including the role of parliamentary committees dealing with both security sector and budgetary matters and the role of national independent auditing entities; and lastly, the quality of donor coordination and harmonization in the sector.

*Right-sizing and right-financing*⁸³

Finally, in line with their mandates, UN peace operations can join with partners to play a key role in advising host governments on the size, capacity, and competence required for their security sector. However, determining these metrics remains a rather academic discussion if the finances are not available to scale-up and maintain a given security sector agency in line with the required size and capacity. Thus, talk of right-sizing security sectors must go hand in hand with talk of right-financing, to help prioritize key reforms pragmatically in light of the available fiscal space. For example, while it may be considered prudent to significantly increase the size and capacity of a police force to respond to critical gaps, there may be insufficient resources to do so. In such a case, a PER can facilitate dialogue around potential solutions. This may include, for example, the realignment of funds from other budget lines to make up the projected deficit, a reduction of the projected size of the police in line with available levels of finance, the initiation of further dialogue with international partners to increase donor support, and cost savings through enhancement of the PFM system.⁸⁴

Both Liberia and Somalia were confronted with serious financial constraints to their desired objective to build up their security sectors, and they are still working to mobilize additional resources. In Liberia, some hard decisions were made in terms of scaling back infrastructure plans and relying more on the mobility of personnel than their deployment throughout the country. In Somalia, solutions have yet to be found to cover the fiscal gap related to the costing of the new National Security Architecture agreement, and so the most likely result will be a slower adoption of the agreement than planned.⁸⁵

Although these political and practical constraints present challenges to PERs, the exercise itself offers opportunities and entry points for SSR practitioners in their work. Compared to otherwise important but less tangible aspects of SSR,

questions around security sector revenue and expenditures tend to evoke interest among national counterparts and donors alike. Over time, such discussions may help to facilitate dialogue on security sector governance, oversight, and management challenges more broadly.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined issues related to security sector sustainability and recommends that PERs be undertaken as an important basis for improving security sector sustainability. There is always a risk that short-term SSR gains will be lost in the longer term if insufficient attention is paid to sustaining them. Among other functions, PERs undertaken in security sectors “follow the money” to assess a state’s ability to pay and train personnel and begin to invest in the necessary infrastructure, operational support, and maintenance required to deploy modern and professional security and justice services.

While questions of security sector financing are sensitive and go to the heart of state sovereignty, Liberia and Somalia are good examples of governments that have been open to a full and transparent interrogation of these matters. Yet, it is evident that, until recently, UN peace operations have not sufficiently prioritized security sector right-financing or have not had the expertise to address this complex issue. The World Bank, which does possess such expertise, does not share the territorial presence and reach of the UN in many conflict-affected and fragile contexts; thus, more regular partnering on the ground between UN peace operations and the World Bank is a practical means to maximize the skill sets of both organizations to support the development of a multilateral platform that strengthens domestic and international engagement in the sector.

For SSR to be financially sustainable over time, it is necessary, but not sufficient, to concentrate on the technical aspects of reform. A stronger emphasis on the political dimensions of reform is also required, in particular regarding the role of non-state actors and the political economy in which SSR takes place. While this chapter mainly focuses on financial sustainability, it is important to stress that money is only one aspect of sustainability. Democratic institutions and a working social contract are also required to sustain reform. To this end, there is a need for SSR practitioners to facilitate processes that aim to rebuild the social contract from which rule of law and security institutions derive their legitimacy. Such initiatives may address governance and oversight deficits through bottom-up or top-down approaches (or both), but a common denominator must be the objective to enhance the trust and confidence between citizens and security institutions. In the end, social contracts are promoted if people feel safe, trust the security sector, and see results, and this

is the ultimate basis for sustainability. While PERs, including those carried out in Liberia and Somalia, have provided assessments of institutions and systems related to accountability and oversight, it is far too early to evaluate whether they have had any impact in strengthening the ability of those institutions to sustain this accountability.

Ensuring the sustainability of institutions is a key factor in addressing the security challenges facing many countries where DPO and the World Bank work. Despite the potential value of PERs in this effort, only a handful of reviews have been undertaken, and sector-wide assessments of the financial dimensions of SSR seem to be the exception rather than the rule in contemporary practice.⁸⁶ However, steps are being taken to ensure that these reviews become part of a standard approach undertaken by the UN and World Bank in support to governments.⁸⁷ This will be an important area of international SSR work going forward.

Notes

- ¹ An earlier stand-alone version of this chapter was published as “Money Matters: Addressing the Financial Sustainability of the Security Sector,” SSR Paper 11 (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2015). Available from <http://www.dcaf.ch/money-matters-addressing-financial-sustainability-security-sector-reform>.
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- ⁵ See Tim Kelsall, “Thinking and Working with Political Settlements,” ODI Briefing, Overseas Development Institute, January 2016.
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- ⁷ Bernard Harborne, William Dorotinsky, and Paul M. Bisca, eds., *Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector* (Washington, DC: World Bank and United Nations, 2017)
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Human rights and UN engagement with SSR

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Introduction

In the work of the UN system, it is important to handle the complexity of balancing the urgency of politically sensitive operations or technically complex SSR processes on the one hand, and the imperative of aligning such operations and processes with national, regional, and international human rights frameworks and core UN values on the other. Indeed, in many cases, the UN operates in complex environments with daunting political and security challenges where key actors, including security forces, are often accused of being involved in violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL). Yet, the UN is mandated in most of these instances to work closely with security forces – who may constitute both a part of the problem and a part of the solution. In recent years, the UN has been compelled to adopt an approach to intervention that is more strategic and operational, but still principled, in order to better address this duality. There has therefore been an increasing recognition that the integration of a human rights dimension into regular forms of engagement between the UN system and security actors in local contexts is essential to achieving mutually shared objectives.

The cross-cutting nature of human rights and their contribution to peace and security, as well as to development and governance initiatives, makes their integration into SSR processes even more consequential. Integrating human rights into the institutional design and operations of the military, law enforcement, and other security sector actors, and into related policy and strategic frameworks, provides an opportunity to align important human rights principles, norms, and standards with the overall objectives of SSR – to ensure that relevant institutions are more professional and responsive to the population. This further solidifies the normative basis on which the activities and performance of security entities are monitored and evaluated against universally acceptable standards, thereby contributing to more effective and accountable security institutions that are seen as legitimate by the population and are part of a clear SSR process.

The UN Secretary-General's first report on SSR in 2008 underlined that it is meant to contribute to the "enjoyment of human rights by all" and that it should be undertaken on the basis of human rights laws and standards.¹ But establishing this link between human rights and SSR has not always been easy, especially given the two different "cultures" of the human rights and security pillars of the UN. It took many years for UN security actors to begin to see human rights as useful to their work, rather than as a hindrance, and for UN human rights actors to feel comfortable developing relationships with military and security actors. Today, there is a greater appreciation for the value of working across disciplines: the promotion and protection of human rights not only enhances the professionalism of security actors, but helps them in the practical work of building bridges and creating partnerships. In turn, the work of human rights actors is supported when normative human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled on the ground by security actors and institutions.

The UN's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), described below, is a concrete manifestation of efforts to apply a human rights-based approach (HRBA),² by linking UN human rights and security efforts, including SSR. There is general agreement that compliance with human rights is important to achieving the overall objectives of support to effective, sustainable, and legitimate SSR. Still, the relationship between human rights and SSR has only recently been made explicit in this way, and more experience, monitoring,³ and research is needed to further demonstrate this link.

It is important to note that the scope of UN engagement in SSR is context specific, and is dependent on a mandate and on the operational capabilities of the UN entity(-ies) assigned to carry it out. In other words, the depth of engagement and the kind of support provided in a conflict situation that calls for peacekeeping may be different than that provided in a non-conflict setting. In peacekeeping contexts, UN involvement in SSR may include direct technical and logistical support to security sector institutions, close mentoring, performance monitoring, and the provision of expertise on institutional reform. In non-peacekeeping contexts, the UN plays a more advisory role vis-à-vis security and justice sector institutions.

This chapter explores the integration of human rights considerations into UN SSR efforts. The next section will situate human rights as an essential component of security, address certain recurring myths or misunderstandings about the relationship between human rights and SSR, and consider the specific implications of the HRDDP for UN support to non-UN security forces and SSR efforts. This is followed by a discussion of some of the human rights support currently provided by the UN in SSR-related areas, including standard setting, policy advice, institution building, and training. Finally, some concluding observations are offered, along with recommendations on how to further mainstream human rights into the UN approach to SSR and ensure they are enshrined in national reform efforts.

Links between human rights and SSR, and the role of the HRDDP

While SSR is a relatively new doctrine, human rights law and practices as they relate to security issues have been developed extensively since the 1970s and must be appropriately employed to ensure successful and lasting outcomes from SSR processes. Various human rights treaties⁴ contain provisions that are relevant to understanding the scope, mandate, and limits of security institutions, including the duty of states to respect and protect human rights, investigate abuses, and hold perpetrators accountable. This means that states must be able to provide effective remedies when the rights stipulated in national, regional, and international instruments and codes are violated.

The full realization of human rights and SSR therefore requires that the critical and central role of states be acknowledged. International human rights law is premised on the primary responsibility of states in protecting and promoting human rights, and Security Council resolution 2151 places the state and its actors at the centre of all SSR initiatives by focusing on *national ownership*⁵ as fundamental to sustainable reform. It could be argued that national ownership is in fact crucial to meeting both objectives, and also that it constitutes a strategic and operational link between human rights and SSR. Human rights and security are indivisible, and have a cause-and-effect relationship: without individual security, collective security is impossible; and where insecurity is present, the enjoyment of human rights is undermined. It is not a balancing act whereby human rights can be sacrificed for the sake of security or vice versa. In fact, human rights violations erode social harmony, weaken security, and hence further enable more human rights violations.

The joint UN-World Bank report *Pathways for Peace* emphasizes that “exclusion from access to power, opportunity, services, and security creates fertile ground for mobilizing group grievances to violence, especially in areas with weak state capacity or legitimacy or in the context of human rights abuses.”⁶ Similarly, the OSCE *Handbook on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel*, which supports the integration of the military into society, notes that “respect for human rights in the barracks prevents the military from being misused by the government and turned against the civilian population.”⁷ When human rights violations are carried out by security actors, this injustice can fuel popular radicalization and give rise to violence and instability. But states are under an obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all persons under their jurisdiction.⁸ This obligation should thus be included in the mandate of security sector actors. At the same time, security oversight institutions must provide individuals recourse when their human rights have been violated. This applies both to individuals abused in the course of interactions with security actors, as well as to those working within the security sector itself.

To this end, the UN is shifting from a conceptualization of human rights as a *ceiling* or *limiting factor* for security activities, to a *platform* or *enabler* for engagement. Among the tools that have been used to support this approach is the HRDDP, which was adopted by the UN Secretary-General in July 2011. The Due Diligence Policy originated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where the UN was perceived (rightly or wrongly) to be complicit in serious human rights violations, as a result of support it was providing to the national army. These violations were considered serious enough to adopt the relatively drastic approach of conditionality, so that support to operations by national security forces was contingent on their fulfilment of specific conditions – including compliance with international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law – as well as on the effective joint planning of these operations.⁹

The principle of the HRDDP is simple: “Support by United Nations entities to non-United Nations security forces must be consistent with the Organization’s purposes and principles as set out in the Charter of the United Nations and with its obligations under international law to respect, promote and encourage respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Such support should help recipients to attain a stage where compliance with these principles and bodies of law becomes the norm, ensured by the rule of law.”¹⁰ That is, before providing support to non-UN security forces, UN entities must assess the risk of these beneficiaries committing grave violations of international humanitarian, human rights, or refugee law. However, an important element of the HRDDP is that the UN does not necessarily have to refrain from support if the risk is high, but has the option to integrate so-called ‘mitigatory measures’ in order to reduce the level of risk to a (hopefully) more acceptable level. It would be tempting to say that these mitigatory measures are merely “conditions” by another name, and therefore amount to a regime of conditionality – which is always difficult in a relationship between donors and recipients, and/or between partners. Ultimately, though, these mitigatory measures are the means by which the UN seeks to influence the behaviour of security forces they support, so that they carry out security operations more responsibly, reduce the risk of violations, and ensure that violations are addressed when they are committed, thereby contributing to overall operational objectives.

The HRDDP also says that UN entities which support non-UN security forces should always be in a position to know how these beneficiaries are behaving. These entities cannot concurrently provide support and remain blind to the actions of support recipients. While the HRDDP clearly raises obstacles for certain forms of engagement with certain security forces, it has created openings for such engagement by many parts of the UN system that previously considered this an unreasonable and potentially compromising risk. The HRDDP has been adopted in a number of contexts – including in the DRC, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, and the Central African

Republic (CAR) – where the UN system has engaged in SSR activities with national security forces that have previously been involved in various forms of human rights violations. In these settings, the Policy has encouraged UN entities to consider the human rights history of the security institutions targeted for reform, in order to address the root causes of past behaviours within these institutions by integrating relevant measures into subsequent SSR programming. This approach has, *inter alia*, contributed to an increased understanding, especially among non-human rights experts, that impunity for past human rights violations is not only wrong from an international human rights perspective but may also be an obstacle to successful SSR.

The practice of incorporating specific mitigatory measures into SSR has generally been seen by SSR experts as a constructive approach that invites opportunities to influence the behaviour of security actors rather than stepping away from engagement because of reputational risks. While more research and monitoring of the integration of human rights into SSR processes is needed, the HRDDP will continue to be a useful tool for this purpose because, when adequately applied, it may help increase the chances of meeting objectives and avoiding potential obstacles. And, the HRDDP intersects with other similar policies applied by international actors supporting SSR processes.

By now, most UN peace missions have adopted a standard operating procedure for implementation of the HRDDP and have established an HRDDP forum (a working group or task force), which is generally chaired by a senior official of the mission, such as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) or the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG). These fora bring together participants from various mission components, allowing proposals or requests for support to national or regional security forces to be discussed from humanitarian, human rights, military, and operational points of view, and further, to perhaps reconcile them with adequate mitigatory measures. Leaders within the UN peace infrastructure have taken the HRDDP seriously, as evidenced by the creation of HRDDP working groups and advisers meetings that report to the SRSG. Most recognize that the policy provides a form of protection for both the mission and themselves in the case that a mission could be associated with an incident involving human rights violations. HRDDP processes have also been generally well documented in reports of the Secretary-General, mission reports, and policy statements, which has contributed to standard practices in operations. Today, thanks to the establishment and implementation of various HRDDP-related mechanisms, the Policy has become part of the everyday vocabulary across different components of these operations.

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions, the UN has developed new practices and methodologies for engaging security sector institutions in addressing *specific* human rights issues related to SSR as well, including conflict-related sexual violence¹¹

and the protection of children in armed conflict.¹² The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) both engage with military and police forces, as well as other parties to a conflict, in implementing their mandates and developing frameworks. This has led to structural and operational changes within security institutions, capacity-building programmes, and accountability measures that are ultimately contributing to SSR. In 2009, for instance, the Security Council created a Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict that reports to the SRSG-SVC, and focuses on supporting governments in criminal investigations and prosecutions, military justice administration, and security sector oversight.¹³

Human rights and SSR in action

Multiple cases demonstrate the interplay between human rights and SSR in the field, and the role of the HRDDP. The following section presents both positive examples in which respect for human rights norms has contributed to enhancing the public legitimacy of security institutions and thus of SSR, and negative examples in which violations of human rights have undermined SSR processes.

DRC: Difficulties in balancing military cooperation and application of the HRDDP

Implementation of the HRDDP by UN entities has not been an easy task, in particular when senior officers or officials from national armed forces and/or law enforcement entities are involved. Engaging national authorities regarding concerns about the involvement of their military commanders in human rights violations and the implications of this on UN assistance has always been a delicate task. In some cases, this requires carefully balancing the need to work with national authorities in enhancing their fundamental role of protecting civilians and the risk of backlash from those authorities, who may decide to sideline the UN and undertake complex operations on their own, potentially resulting in additional human rights violations. This was the case in the DRC, where the UN mission had to suspend support to a major military operation due to the alleged involvement of senior commanding officers in serious violations of human rights – including forced disappearances, torture, and the systematic denial of access to human rights officers to investigate reports of illegal detention – leading to significant tension between the DRC Government and the UN. The UN was thus faced with the challenge of striking the right equilibrium between the obligation to *not* provide support to alleged perpetrators of human rights and IHL violations, and the need to work with national security forces to ensure the protection of civilians.

Somalia and CAR: The importance of screening and background checks

In the summer of 2014, the nomination of a new national Police Commissioner by the Government of Somalia led to an outcry from across Somali civil society and the media, because the nominee had allegedly been involved in various forms of human rights violations, including torture, while serving as a senior official in the national security services of a previous regime. After researching the case, the UN Operation in Somalia (UNSOM) HRDDP Task Force recommended that the SRSG intervene with relevant national authorities to share concerns of the UN, and suggested delaying the appointment of the Police Commissioner until the allegations had been adequately investigated. The issue was addressed by Somali authorities and the individual was not appointed.

In CAR, a vetting process designed to generate a minimal level of public confidence in the reconstituted armed forces (FACA) has been facilitated by the international community through support in identifying human rights offenders from the opposing anti-*Balaka* and ex-*Séléka* armed groups, to prevent them from joining the FACA. As noted in a UN report on human rights abuses in CAR from 2003–2015, SSR and DDR, “if implemented in a manner that is inclusive, with civilian oversight, and in line with relevant international human rights norms and standards . . . can constitute an important vehicle to combat impunity and prevent the recurrence of violations. . . . An immediate priority should be the development of a nationally owned vetting process that includes human rights background checks, including in the context of integration of demobilized armed group elements.”¹⁴ At the same time, the political nature of the vetting process reveals constraints to this human rights-SSR link. There is a reluctance in some corners in CAR to vet or prosecute members of the anti-*Balaka*, who are perceived to be associated with the Government. Though the process remains imperfect, CAR exemplifies growing efforts to strengthen the relationship between human rights frameworks and SSR.

South Sudan and the DRC: Human rights as an entry point

South Sudan can be considered the first place the HRDDP was applied in a real-life scenario. There, the Policy was raised at a meeting of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Senior Management Team in the midst of consideration of a December 2011 request for the transportation of troops of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) by UN helicopter. The newly adopted HRDDP triggered an important discussion about how to balance findings of a risk assessment that cited a past record of human rights violations by the SPLA (and the relatively high probability that they would commit violations in the operation at hand) with the purpose of the operation, which was to protect civilian populations. On the basis of the HRDDP, a strategic

decision was made that the UN peace operation would proceed with providing the support requested, but a letter was sent to the Government referring specifically to the Policy and emphasizing the strict limits within which the operation had to be carried out (i.e. protection of civilians) along with other stipulations, including that the SPLA had to provide a list of all officers who would take part in the operation.

In the DRC, discussions on the protection of children and how to address conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) were critical in the recalibration of efforts by the national armed forces (FARDC) and police (PNC) to respond to specific human rights violations linked to the conflict. With support from the UN and other partners, the FARDC and PNC undertook structural and operational changes that helped build their capacity to address the kinds of conflict-related violence that affect children. To that end, the FARDC developed two Action Plans: one addressing the six grave child rights violations in conflict (recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming of children, abduction of children, sexual violence against children, attacks against schools or hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access) and the other addressing CRSV explicitly.¹⁵ The PNC also developed its own Plan to address CRSV.¹⁶

A common thread among these plans is the objective to improve the capacity of relevant entities to prevent and respond to these challenges in a manner that is consistent with the principles and standards of human rights and humanitarian law. In practice, this has been illustrated by the prosecution of officers, and an increased sensitization and awareness raising among FARDC personnel. Specifically, these plans stipulate capacity building and training for commanders and their staff, as well as enhanced mechanisms to fight against impunity; and as a preventive measure, they oblige commanders and their personnel to be trained prior to and monitored during operations, to ensure compliance. The Action Plan to address CRSV also includes a requirement that commanders sign Undertakings that bind them to various commitments.¹⁷ This reinforces their individual and command responsibilities and is seen as a requirement for promotion. These plans remain a key tool in supporting efforts to address impunity, as they provide the basis and justification for holding perpetrators within the FARDC, PNC, and other parties to the conflict accountable.

Furthermore, based on these plans, the FARDC has created dedicated internal structures to oversee their implementation, thereby reinforcing the institution's overall responsibility in addressing these human rights challenges. To implement the Action Plan addressing the recruitment and use of children in conflict and other grave violations of child rights, for example, the FARDC has established a multi-dimensional working group that brings together the different government entities responsible for addressing these crimes. Implementation of the Action Plan to address CRSV is being overseen by a specially mandated commission. These new

structures enable the FARDC to assume a leadership role and demonstrate ownership in efforts to confront these crimes. Moreover, it is clear that the development and implementation of these plans have been catalysts for capacity building in the FARDC and PNC. This has strengthened a professional and institutional approach to addressing human rights violations, and has promoted a paradigm shift within these institutions on their role in preventing and responding to these violations, while concurrently contributing to their reform.

The Sahel: Placing non-UN forces within a human rights framework

Efforts by the UN and other international actors to place non-UN forces within a human rights compliance framework offer promising signs for improved security sector governance. One recent example is that of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, a primarily military operation that seeks to address the worsening security situation in the Sahel, where terrorism, armed groups, criminality, and weak state presence all threaten peace and development. The Joint Force is comprised of members from the G5 Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. In a report on the operationalization of the Joint Force, and to ensure that any UN support to the Joint Force would be delivered in compliance with the HRDDP, the UN Secretary-General noted the necessity of establishing “a robust and effective international human rights and humanitarian law compliance framework or a similar mechanism that will allow for the integration of protection considerations in the planning and conduct of military operations, in order to prevent and address human rights violations.”¹⁸ While the Joint Force is largely focused on fighting terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, these efforts are part of a larger goal to strengthen state authority and support humanitarian assistance and development. Yet, unlike peacekeepers, all Joint Force members come from the G5 Sahel countries, meaning they will be active in or near their societies of origin; it is therefore crucial that actions of the Joint Force do not undermine the trust in state and security institutions that its operations are meant to bolster.¹⁹

For this purpose, the Joint Force and the UN system have together been designing a human rights and IHL compliance framework, consisting of a package of concrete measures and mechanisms to prevent and address violations that could be committed by the Joint Force in the context of its operations. These include measures for pre-deployment, prevention, mitigation, monitoring, and accountability and, along with associated mechanisms, were integrated into a Technical Arrangement signed between the G5 countries, the UN, and the EU on 23 February 2018.²⁰ These measures include:

- A screening and selection process that consists of background checks of units or individuals taking part in operations, as well as a system of identification for the specific individuals who are part of the Joint Force;
- Rules and regulations on operational conduct based on international law, and standard operating procedures that cover the protection of civilians, conduct and discipline, child protection, sexual violence, and the arrest, detention, and transfer of detainees, among other areas;
- Training and mentoring in human rights, IHL, and other relevant fields to all personnel, pre- and post-deployment;
- Mechanisms to integrate human rights, IHL, and the protection of civilians into the planning of military operations and after action reviews;
- A casualty and incident tracking mechanism within the Joint Force, which meets frequently with the UN team;
- Accountability mechanisms for casualties and human rights violations;
- A police component that will be integrated into the military component (Provost Police Unit) that is responsible for monitoring military units; and
- An investigations police unit responsible for collecting, analysing, and sharing information, as well as for investigating crimes, gathering evidence, and pursuing perpetrators of human rights violations.²¹

The purpose of this compliance framework is to translate international human rights and humanitarian law into specific mechanisms and measures that fit within the modus operandi of the military and can help the Joint Force conduct its operations in a way that will preserve the trust of civilian populations on the ground, and to which the military can relate concretely. This is particularly relevant in counter-terrorism operations, which are very different from classic military operations and often involve police work in highly populated civilian areas. To implement the compliance framework, a series of trainings have been held with staff at Joint Force Headquarters, and with sector and battalion commanders, to improve their understanding of: the law of armed conflict; the principle of command responsibility, the use of force, and context-specific differences (e.g., hostilities versus peacetime law enforcement); obligations related to the detention and transfer of individuals; the integration of protection of civilians into planning and operations; child protection issues; the integration of gender; and the prevention of CRSV and other sexual exploitation and abuse. Existing selection and screening standards and processes have also been reviewed, as have relevant pre-deployment training and plans in each country, which are critical to ensuring that only forces with the proper knowledge are deployed.

These examples make it clear that the conceptual link between human rights and SSR is both practical and mutually beneficial. And the process of developing relevant frameworks ensures inclusivity, offering an additional opportunity to engage

security institutions in order to understand their institutional cultures, strengths, and challenges in addressing human rights concerns. These processes are crucial to building trust and ownership and also provide a mutually developed tool for monitoring and evaluating the performance of security personnel and the commitments made by political or military leadership in line with international human rights norms. In some cases, these frameworks have been used by security institutions not only to showcase their progress and mobilize additional resources, but also to provide clarity on specific actions, promote a platform of civil-military dialogue, and enhance the overall institutional response to human rights issues in synergy with other relevant government institutions.

Concluding observations and recommendations

While more research and monitoring is needed to ascertain the most effective ways to both reinforce and gain from the nexus of human rights and SSR, progress has been made in bridging the security and human rights cultures at the UN, at Headquarters and in the field. In particular, the **HRDDP provides an appropriate framework** by which the international community (through multilateral organizations) can support the conduct of military operations in accordance with international standards, rendering it an “enabler” of peace operations.

The HRDDP itself will not always prevent human rights violations, but it applies an internationally-recognized architecture and system of evaluation to operations. Indeed, it appears that the HRDDP may well be the most appropriate tool for providing this architecture and its supplementary guarantees. It offers the right mix of (1) risk management, (2) monitoring and reporting, (3) specific responses to violations, and most importantly, (4) the identification, acceptance, establishment, and implementation of specific mitigatory measures and mechanisms to prevent and address violations of human rights and IHL. The added value of this architecture resides in the combination of measures and mechanisms that provide a variety of tools to influence the *behaviour* of the military, towards operations in accordance with international standards. In this regard, the HRDDP is also an opportunity for military and human rights actors to work constructively together. Rather than the military operating first in isolation and human rights actors later denouncing violations, the Policy encourages the latter to work with the former on the premise that military campaigns which better respect human rights standards from the start are more successful.

The HRDDP architecture has therefore helped break the myth that better behaviour by security forces can be achieved *only* through training, proving that successful prevention is achieved through a blend of various measures and

mechanisms. Practitioners have worked to identify and strengthen the measures and mechanisms that can prevent or address international human rights or IHL violations committed by security forces, including in relation to selection and screening, training, accountability, monitoring and reporting, rules and regulations, and planning. Furthermore, human rights- and HRDDP-based mitigatory measures have been developed to reduce the risk of human rights violations by security forces. In total, these now comprise a “compliance framework.”

In the area of **selection and screening**, there has been a good deal of reflection in recent years, and notable achievements. Within the UN, there is now an increased recognition that the right people must be chosen for the right jobs, and that anyone who may have been involved in past human rights violations/abuses should not be selected. As described earlier, this can be ensured in different ways. This work has led to the understanding among Member States that selection and screening can play an important preventive role in helping them avoid the growing scrutiny on this front, and as a consequence, they tend to be more careful about who they send on missions. But equally important, such mechanisms provide an incentive for *maintaining* good behaviour and promoting the right competencies. Finally, experience has shown that an effective selection and screening mechanism that allows for the proper identification of individuals deployed as part of an operation can also be used for the purpose of tracking possible future violations, therefore increasing accountability.

When it comes to **accountability**, the challenge is to establish mechanisms to ensure that investigations into allegations of violations are carried out promptly, preserving all evidence, and with the appropriate level of independence. This also implies creating mechanisms of control and response that are faster and more simplified, and more importantly, developing adequate communication related to the violations committed. Accountability mechanisms will always remain the most challenging part of a human rights compliance framework because they are triggered when the damage has been done and can be affected by political considerations.

While it is critical for effective **monitoring and reporting** to be carried out independently, it is also a fact – though it should be an obligation – that military operations carry out their own monitoring and reporting of civilian casualties or human rights violations. This helps the military bring focus to the consequences of their operations and understand the ways that civilian casualties are detrimental to military objectives, leading to adjustments in operations and reductions in collateral damage and human rights violations. Multiple sources documenting the same cases enables the triangulation of information.

Increased involvement by civilians in the **planning** of military operations and the **daily operation** of security institutions has been challenged by a historical reluctance among security actors. On top of this, civilian organizations are usually careful to avoid being overly associated with military planning, in case these operations end up associated with serious violations. But a genuine integration of human rights and civilian protection dimensions may well represent a real opportunity for uniformed personnel to significantly increase their chances of success in operations, and with greater respect for human rights. This could include joint analysis on the impact of military operations on human rights and humanitarian conditions, carried out by relevant government entities (e.g. national human rights institutions) and partners (e.g. humanitarian organizations or the UN), and the fostering of a culture of collaboration during operations to facilitate human rights monitoring. In the DRC, for instance, the military had to work closely with the UN and child protection partners in dealing with former child combatants who were captured or who had escaped from armed groups.

More can still be achieved concerning **rules, regulations, and policies**. While human rights and IHL standards are well known and quite elaborate, concrete regulations and guidance meant to help *prevent* violations are needed; for example, having to do with indirect fire or the handling of detainees. Rules of engagement should highlight key human rights and humanitarian law elements such as the treatment of prisoners, and their arrest and detention, as well as the handling of certain crimes, such as sexual violence. Also useful are joint protocols and training exercises on military cooperation with police forces, where police may act as a human rights law/IHL mechanism.

While **training** and mentoring in human rights and IHL alone is not sufficient to prevent violations, more can be done to ensure that training is provided by the UN in the right way, at the right time, by the right people, in the right language, and with the right methodology.

The mutually beneficial relationship between human rights and SSR could be additionally enhanced by efforts to identify “champions” within security sector entities at the **leadership** level, ideally chiefs of defense staffs and inspectors general of the police who provide leadership and ownership while exercising the appropriate level of responsibility required to integrate human rights issues within reform processes. A pool of such champions could be an ideal resource, sharing experiences and lessons learned from one context to another.

Integrating human rights within SSR processes will require sustained engagement at the **strategic and operational levels** as well. UN peace operations should strive to adopt approaches that embed specific human rights expertise within SSR components, or to the extent possible, should provide such expertise to national

armed and security forces in a formal and institutionalized manner with clear terms of references and reporting lines. These experts must have access to military and police leadership, as well as to the national security adviser.

Today's security challenges provide an opportunity to thoroughly reflect on how security actors are operating on the ground and how a human rights/civilian-centered approach can help these actors better achieve their goals. At a time when the world is facing evolving and increasingly sophisticated threats, there is growing agreement that any use of force to prevent human rights violations and abuses that occurs in security and counter-terrorism contexts must be categorically professional and responsible so that these efforts do not play into the hands of terrorists and armed groups. Effectively preventing and addressing violations and better taking into consideration civilian populations dramatically increases the chances of successful peace operations and SSR processes, and ultimately enhances the legitimacy of security institutions. This will require further investment by the UN and its Member States at the political level, to convince security actors of the benefits of this approach; and at the technical level, to develop and promote civilian accountability and monitor the prevention mechanisms that support a professional and responsible security sector.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 23 January 2008.
- ² The UN Statement of Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming (the Common Understanding) was adopted by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in 2003.
- ³ The UN and other major SSR donors have established protocols and guidance on monitoring the HRBA. However, interviews with key focal points from these organizations indicated a general lack of application of these guidance and protocols, despite the fact that monitoring is directly linked to institutional learning and experience sharing.
- ⁴ See the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW), the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- ⁵ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ⁶ United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (2018).
- ⁷ ODIHR & DCAF, *Handbook on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel* (Warsaw: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2008), 23.

- ⁸ ICCPR, ICESCR, and General Comment 31 [80] of the Human Rights Committee on the Nature of Legal Obligation Imposed on State Parties to the Covenant (GC-CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13), 26 May 2004.
- ⁹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1906 (S/RES/1906), 23 December 2009.
- ¹⁰ United Nations, Identical letters dated 25 February 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and to the President of the Security Council (A/67/775–S/2013/110), 5 March 2013, annex.
- ¹¹ Resolutions on conflict-related sexual violence include: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 2106 (2013).
- ¹² Resolutions on the protection of children in armed conflict include: 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), and 2225 (2015).
- ¹³ See United Nations Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Annual Report 2017*.
- ¹⁴ United Nations, *Report of the Mapping Project Documenting Serious Violations of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law Committed within the Territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015* (2017), 23.
- ¹⁵ See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/67/845–S/2013/245), 15 May 2013; and United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2015/203), 23 March 2015.
- ¹⁶ Plan d'Action des Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo pour la lutte contre les violences sexuelles; Plan d'Action sur la lutte contre le recrutement et l'utilisation d'enfants ainsi que les autres violations graves des droits de l'enfant par les forces armées et les services de sécurité de la République Démocratique du Congo entre le Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo et l'Equipe Spéciale des Nations Unies sur les enfants et les conflits armés; and Plan d'Action de la Police Nationale sur la lutte contre les violences sexuelles et la protection de l'enfant en rapport avec le communiqué conjoint RDC-ONU.
- ¹⁷ Commanders and troops make a number of commitments, including that they will respect human rights law and IHL, collaborate with the military justice system, and participate in and organize sensitization activities.
- ¹⁸ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/869), 16 October 2017.
- ¹⁹ In May 2018, the Malian armed forces, under the control of the Joint Force, killed 12 civilians in retaliation for the deaths of a number of their soldiers. See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/541), 6 June 2018. Additionally, human rights NGOs have expressed concern over alleged human rights violations in Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger. See Human Rights Watch, "Mali: Unchecked Abuses in Military Operations," 8 September 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/08/mali-unchecked-abuses-military-operations>; and reports of Amnesty International for 2017/2018 on Niger, Mauritania, and Chad, available from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/niger/report-niger>, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/mauritania/report-mauritania>, and <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/09/chad-increasing-use-of-repressive-laws-amid-brutal-crackdown-on-human-rights-activists>.
- ²⁰ The Technical Agreement was mandated by: Security Council Resolution 2391 (S/RES/2391), 3 December 2018. The signing of the Agreement as well as its role in ensuring respect for human rights law and IHL was noted by the European Commission in a Communiqué by the co-chairs of the International High-level Conference on the Sahel, 23 February 2018. Available from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-1166_en.htm.
- ²¹ The conceptual framework, agreed in December 2017, defines the procedures for interaction between the police and the military component of the Force, and establishes a judicialization mechanism. See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/432), 8 May 2018.

The UN approach to gender-responsive SSR

SARAH DOUGLAS

Introduction

In every society, women, men, girls, and boys face different security threats based on their age, sex, race, class, religion, or sexual orientation. In particular, a lack of gender perspectives and women's participation in everything from the planning of security interventions to their implementation and evaluation have often resulted in a failure to tackle the insecurity experienced by less powerful groups and to address gender-related drivers of insecurity. Given that security sector reform (SSR) is a process aimed at transforming weak or predatory security actors into accountable and professional ones, SSR must respond to the different needs, priorities, and capacities of women, men, girls, and boys if it is to be effective and inclusive.

The process of transformation that SSR entails offers unique opportunities to promote security institutions that operate within a framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights. However, security is frequently defined from the perspective of only a small group within society – usually those who were directly engaged in conflict and who have been and continue to be governed by or linked to a small group of military (and male) authorities. According to Salahub, “traditionally, security institutions and debates around security, stabilization and law enforcement have been the purview of a select few, the vast majority of whom are elite, adult men.”¹ Indeed, throughout history, almost all societies have viewed the security sector as the domain of men, with women playing roles that, if at all acknowledged, usually conform to stereotypes such as victim, nurse, camp follower, or comfort woman.²

It is therefore critical to increase women's participation in SSR as members of security institutions, civil society, and parliamentary oversight committees. However, attempts to integrate gender into SSR have often adhered to the “add women and stir” approach, with a focus mostly on structural fixes, such as increasing the numbers of women employed in the security sector and establishing more forums through which women can interact with the security sector. While research has shown that increasing

women's representation in security sector institutions may improve outcomes, the increased presence of women does not alone affect the hyper-masculine *culture* of those institutions, especially when women's participation is tokenistic.³ Thus, an awareness is growing among practitioners and researchers alike of the necessity to unpack and understand concepts of masculinity and femininity and their impact on SSR.

Indeed, transforming weak and predatory institutions into professional and protective ones requires a fundamental shift in culture that is intimately entwined with the gender roles of men and women as citizens and as members of security sector institutions, as well as a recognition that gender roles and relations in society are often dramatically impacted by conflict. According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), men and boys who take part in armed conflict can experience an acute sense of loss of perceived power after hostilities end, which can manifest in various negative behaviours, including violence against women and girls, and alcohol and drug abuse.⁴ There is now near-universal agreement that engaging men and boys is therefore crucial to improving women's security.⁵ If SSR initiatives are to go beyond the tokenistic approach, they must grapple on some level with the social and political transformations required to promote women's empowerment.

A growing body of Security Council resolutions has followed the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security to call on Member States and UN entities to consider women's security as a matter of national and international security. The Secretary-General's 2008 report on SSR affirmed the centrality of a gender perspective to SSR by stating that "effective responses to violence and insecurity must be based on a recognition of... differences" in the ways in which conflict impacts women, men, girls, and boys.⁶ Still, despite a significant focus on gender in international security policy and a commitment to gender issues at the highest levels,⁷ in practice, the field of SSR remains male-dominated and gives insufficient consideration to gender implications and women's participation. In fact, a 2013 review of twelve UNDP SSR projects in six post-conflict countries showed that SSR performed worst among nine thematic areas in terms of incorporating a gender-based approach.⁸ In just one of these projects, representing a mere 0.31 per cent of budget allocations for SSR in six countries, was gender equality and women's empowerment a main objective; and in half of the projects, representing 98 per cent of spending, contributions to gender equality were insignificant.⁹

Given the persistence of these issues, it is essential that continued progress is made within the UN to improve support to gender-responsive and gender-sensitive SSR. The UN defines a gender-responsive approach as one that "addresses the specific gender dynamics and social and cultural reference points that prescribe the roles of men and women in any given society" and how this might affect intervention.¹⁰ Gender-sensitive interventions, in turn, "equitably consider the needs and capacities

of women, men, girls and boys.”¹¹ Practically, in the context of SSR, this means ensuring the meaningful representation and participation of women throughout the SSR process and in security institutions themselves, based on an understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics at play. An expanding body of UN policy, guidelines, and practice in this area is examined in the following sections, which, together with increasingly sophisticated efforts in the field, is helping move beyond the “add women and stir” approach, towards SSR programmes that are more comprehensive and transformative.

This chapter presents the basic elements of the normative framework guiding the UN’s approach to gender-sensitive SSR, identifies key lessons learned from UN experiences, and highlights four modes of support that have proven effective in promoting gender-responsive SSR, namely: (1) increasing women’s participation in uniform and in decision-making, (2) establishing policies and mechanisms to promote gender-sensitive SSR, (3) building on indigenous mechanisms where appropriate, and (4) facilitating productive partnerships between women’s civil society organizations and security sector institutions. While the main topic of this chapter is gender-responsive SSR, examples focus in particular on the role of women in gender-responsive SSR, exploring instances of women’s enhanced participation in security services and SSR processes, support to gender-sensitive policies and mechanisms, interactions with indigenous decision-making and dispute resolution mechanisms, and partnerships. On this basis, some good practices for gender-responsive SSR are identified as well as recommendations for moving the agenda forward.

Mandates, policy, and guidance supporting gender-responsive SSR, and why they matter

The move towards gender-responsive SSR extends from an expanding appreciation for gender and women’s issues at the international level, reflected in specific policy documents, including many international mandates relevant to gender-responsive SSR. The Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) enshrines Member States’ obligations to ensure gender equality in employment opportunities and representation in public life. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action commits Member States to end impunity for police, security, and armed forces who perpetrate violence against women and girls in conflict situations, as well as to promote the participation of women in all aspects of security decision-making.¹² Following on from Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) emphasizes that “persistent barriers to full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will only be

dismantled through dedicated commitment to women's empowerment, participation and human rights."¹³

In highlighting women's empowerment and participation, resolution 2122 echoes and reinforces the *transformative* spirit of resolution 1325 and the Beijing Platform for Action. While resolution 1325 did not mention SSR specifically, resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 2106 (2013) all called on international security actors to protect women and girls in the context of SSR. And resolution 2282 (2016) on sustaining peace stresses "the importance of women's equal participation in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the need to increase women's role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding."¹⁴

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development further reinforces these normative frameworks and their relationship to SSR. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, while ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities in decision-making¹⁵ – which logically includes participation in the security sector, especially in its governance mechanisms. SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions aims to promote the rule of law and equal access to justice, develop effective and accountable institutions, and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making.¹⁶ Taken together, these two SDGs suggest a strong role for women in representative, inclusive, and accountable institutions responsible for security provision, management, and oversight.

The establishment of policy and guidelines governing the UN approach to SSR over the past decade has reflected these broader developments. The Secretary-General's first report on SSR in 2008, which laid out key principles and building blocks of the UN SSR agenda, noted clearly that "the integration of a gender perspective in security sector reform is inherent to an inclusive and socially responsive approach to security. Gender-sensitive security sector reform is key to developing security sector institutions that are non-discriminatory, representative of the population and capable of effectively responding to the specific security needs of diverse groups."¹⁷

Five years later, the Secretary-General's second report on SSR in 2013 also underlined the need for "an inclusive and transparent approach to security sector reform based on dialogue between authorities and communities around security challenges and longer-term institution building... [taking] into account the fact that security is often defined differently by women, men, boys and girls."¹⁸ This was soon followed by Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), the first stand-alone resolution on SSR, which emphasized "the importance of women's equal and effective

participation and full involvement in all stages of the security sector reform process, given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding.”¹⁹

Among the most significant policy developments impacting the UN approach to gender-responsive SSR have been generated by the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force. The Task Force, of which UN Women is a member, is comprised of 14 UN entities spanning areas of expertise that include political affairs, gender, development, and human rights. In 2012, the Task Force launched its first set of SSR Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (ITGNs) to provide UN Headquarters and field entities with broadly applicable guidance in key SSR practice areas. UN Women led the drafting of the ITGN on gender, which outlines five thematic areas and related interventions meant to help security institutions better address the diverse security threats faced by women, men, girls, and boys:

1. *Effective service delivery*, including through gender-sensitive national security policies, strategies, and plans, together with sufficient financial resources for gender-related programming;
2. *Participation and equal opportunities*, including through the increased representation of women in the security sector, higher recruitment targets, and the involvement of women in planning reforms;
3. *Prevention and protection*, including through the development of national capacity to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence;
4. *Accountability*, including through parliamentary and civil society oversight of the security sector; and
5. *Monitoring and evaluation*, to assess the impact of UN SSR activities.²⁰

The thematic areas identified in the ITGNs were subsequently reflected in the UN’s 2018 Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Policy, with which all UN peacekeeping operations must be compliant.²¹

Gender-responsive approaches can ensure that women’s priorities are addressed and can maximize women’s contribution to SSR. Moreover, SSR processes that include a gender-based approach take the needs and priorities of all members of the population into account, so that security sector actors can deliver the most effective services. This awareness guides the thematic areas of the ITGNs, the role and benefits of which are described in more detail below.

Effective Service Delivery: Understanding the differences between the security needs and priorities of various members of society is the first step towards ensuring that security services respond appropriately and are needs-based. If a security sector institution only addresses the needs of one or a few dominant groups in a society, it cannot be considered effective, as many potentially serious security threats will be overlooked. And if some crimes are ignored or tolerated, an environment of impunity will undermine efforts to strengthen the rule of law, thereby impeding the

SSR process. Empirical evidence points to a correlation between the vulnerability of women and girls to violence in a community and security in that community at large. The joint World Bank-UN study on conflict prevention, *Pathways for Peace*, underscored this connection between interpersonal violence and intercommunal violence by examining districts in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Liberia, and revealing that women in conflict-prone communities had a 15 per cent higher likelihood of falling victim to intimate partner violence, and that districts with higher levels of violence against women had a 30 per cent higher rate of fatal violence once conflict erupted.²²

Beyond protecting women and girls, men and boys are often more vulnerable to specific types of security threats. Furthermore, gender dynamics between different groups of men can sometimes drive conflict. SSR that fails to recognize the role of masculinities in certain types of conflict will struggle to address those drivers. Gender-blind approaches, or conceptualizing gender in a limited “women and girls are victims” paradigm, results in a partial diagnosis or misdiagnosis of security problems, making effective solutions much harder to identify.

Participation and Equal Opportunities: As in other fields, the increased participation of women has been shown to improve the performance and professionalism of security sector institutions in many areas.²³ Yet too often, women and girls are viewed as a “special interest group” instead of as key constituents and stakeholders of SSR, even though they account for half or more of the population served by security sector institutions. According to the ITGNs, national ownership requires the representation of all segments of society in security sector institutions, not only the dominant group, in order to create a security sector that is seen as legitimate and is trusted by the entire population.²⁴ A study issued by UN Women in 2011 found a positive correlation between the proportion of female police and rates of reporting of sexual assault in a given country, for instance, and noted that both male and female victims preferred reporting to women officers.²⁵

The ITGNs also identify the role of gender-responsive SSR in maintaining female participation in, and influence on, the security sector and security policies, noting, “Gender-responsive SSR can address specific biases and systemic discriminatory practices manifested in the security sector, including women’s confinement to traditional roles and tasks, conditions of work and employment that inhibit their full and equal participation (e.g. maternity policies), and women’s lack of access to higher ranks within the sector.”²⁶ Efforts to increase women’s involvement in policy and planning are outlined in the next section.

Prevention and Protection: A thorough gender analysis of security threats helps to identify priorities for all groups in a society. In both conflict scenarios and peacetime, women and girls are usually much more vulnerable to sexual assault

and harassment; male survivors of sexual assault and harassment, although fewer in number, may face particular challenges related to stigma and shame and in accessing services. In many contexts, security sector actors themselves have been implicated in widespread human rights abuses, including abuses against women and girls. In such environments, establishing trust between the security sector and the population is of utmost importance, both by addressing past failures and by enhancing prevention and protection efforts against future threats.

Accountability and Oversight: Women's civil society organizations have a unique role to play in monitoring the implementation of gender-responsive SSR, and in holding security institutions and policymakers accountable for this implementation and for any violations. Additionally, parliamentary oversight, in particular by women's commissions or caucuses, can participate in this process, as can national human rights institutions and ombuds offices.²⁷ Technical support for enhanced accountability and oversight increases the likelihood that the security sector will be compelled to serve all members of society, including women and girls.

Monitoring and Evaluation: From a programmatic perspective, effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) measures the degree to which a given initiative has been successful in order to adapt and change as needed to achieve the intended impact. M&E frameworks for any SSR intervention should include sex-disaggregated data and questionnaires, all-female focus groups, and gender expertise in external evaluations to enable a better understanding of the differing impacts on women, men, boys, and girls.²⁸

In sum, these thematic areas reflect the specific benefits of gender-responsive SSR interventions, and where they can be most effectively undertaken by practitioners. While some good practices in implementing gender-responsive SSR are highlighted in the following text, more work must be done to raise awareness of the ITGNs to ensure they inform planning and programming on the ground. Nonetheless, these principles are reflected in many of the modes of UN support described below, even those which predate the ITGNs.

Good practices in gender-responsive SSR

As noted by Kunz and Valasek, “transformative participation” – in which participants are viewed as agents – is increasingly seen as essential to realizing the security and developmental aims of SSR.²⁹ In addition to integrating solutions put forth by women themselves, this approach emphasizes gathering intelligence from women, promoting their leadership in decision-making, and facilitating their access to security sector institutions. With this in mind, this section will focus on some

lessons learned from UN experiences and will highlight four modes of support that have proven effective in promoting gender-responsive SSR: (1) increasing women's participation in uniform and in formal decision-making, (2) establishing policies and mechanisms to promote gender-sensitive SSR and security service provision, (3) building on indigenous security and justice mechanisms where appropriate, and (4) facilitating productive partnerships between local women's organizations and security institutions.

(1) Increasing women's participation in uniform and in decision-making

While increasing the number of women in uniform may not on its own lead to a gender-sensitive institutional culture, improvements in gender parity have been shown to result in better service provision. Increasing diversity and gender balance in the security services and in security sector decision-making is, therefore, a key strategy for improving gender sensitivity.

In line with the ITGNs, UN peacekeeping missions have supported national partners in increasing women's participation in national security services. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) supports the development of gender-sensitive strategies by the SSR National Committee, for example, and in 2018, the Agreement Monitoring Committee that oversees the 2015 peace agreement established a MINUSMA and EU-led working group to increase women's participation in the peace process.³⁰ The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) also actively promoted women's participation in the security sector and in decision-making during its deployment. As part of its support to gender-responsive policing, UNOCI provided mentoring and training to national counterparts, with outcomes that included the entry of the first female cadets into the gendarmerie academy, as well as the creation of resources to support victims of sexual and gender-based violence.³¹ And during the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), UN support to national security institutions helped increase women's participation in the security services from six per cent in 2006 to 17 per cent in 2016.³²

While campaigns and recruitment drives are important in order to raise awareness among potential recruits to the security services, institutional obstacles to women's recruitment and retention must be addressed. In Kosovo, in accordance with the UN presence mandated by Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), UN Women has supported the formation of the Association of Women in the Kosovo Police, resulting in a growing number of women within the ranks and more gender-sensitive policies that enable the retention and promotion of women.³³ Where the culture of policing has not been welcoming for women, UN support has gone beyond women's recruitment to ensure that women are not only serving in the security sector,

but are able to affect organizational cultures and decision-making. For instance, UN Women supported a 2015 training and mentorship initiative in Albania that promoted women's leadership and management skills and equipped female officers to move into more supervisory roles.³⁴

(2) Institutional policies and mechanisms to promote gender-sensitive SSR and service delivery

In many countries, the UN has supported military, police, corrections, border management, and justice sector institutions to develop gender strategies, policies, and action plans. This is a critical first step, not only to putting an institutional framework in place, but to ensuring national ownership of gender-responsive SSR. As such, these policies may be designed to support the increased participation of women in the security sector and in decision-making, but can also be more wide-ranging. The process of developing strategies and policies requires close engagement with national partners, as well as buy-in and ownership within security institutions.

In Ukraine, a new area of gender-sensitive SSR support has been explored. There, experts from UN Women conducted a Gender Impact Assessment of the security and defence sectors in 2017, assessing gender equality on the basis of data from bodies such as the Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs, the police, and border management.³⁵ The Assessment – which followed the 2016 launch of Ukraine's National Action Plan for implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 along with broader efforts to improve gender parity in the military, integrate gender issues into reforms, and reduce abuse and harassment in the military – presented recommendations that included: integrating a gender perspective into the defence sector reform process, including through a gender equity strategy and reporting; increasing commitment and accountability at the leadership level to gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the reform process; enhancing available expertise on equal rights and opportunities, including through a system of uniformed gender experts and advisors; implementing systematic training on gender in the military; and developing gender-sensitive recruiting and retention policies for the defence sector.³⁶ The Assessment, considered a success, offers a model for governments, the UN, and donors to establish a common set of priorities for gender-responsive SSR.

Formal policy development, in consultation with the public, has also provided lasting and nationally-led support for gender-sensitive SSR and security governance. In Liberia, UNMIL and UN Women assisted in developing a gender policy for the police, the Corrections Bureau, and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, which in turn fed into the country's 2017 National Security Strategy. This process created government-wide buy-in, and though grave security and justice challenges continue to exist for women and girls in Liberia, several important advances have

been made, such as the establishment of a cross-government Gender and Security Sector Task Force that includes representatives from both the UN and Liberian civil society.³⁷ The creation of a special criminal court to address cases of sexual and gender-based violence was an important step, although the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) found in 2016 that a lack of forensic capacities, an inability to handle the caseload, and low reporting meant that only two per cent of cases referred for medical treatment ultimately resulted in conviction in court.³⁸

In Bangladesh, the UN has supported government efforts to develop a National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security that includes a greater role for women in peacebuilding and in preventing violent extremism. As part of consultations with the Government and civil society aimed at enabling broad citizen input into the process, UN Women has worked in partnership with local women's organization Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha to build capacity among civil society groups to influence the Plan's development.³⁹

When authorities in Rwanda interpreted a constitutional obligation that women comprise 30 per cent of the government as applicable to the police, UNIFEM (UN Women's predecessor) and UNDP supported their adoption of a gender policy, the establishment of a Gender Desk within the Rwanda National Police, and mandatory gender training for police officers.⁴⁰ Subsequently, officers with specialized training on gender-based violence and protection were deployed at the local level and an awareness-raising campaign was implemented around the country, drawing on local women's organizations and religious groups. Rwanda witnessed an increase in gender-based violence reporting in the several years that followed, indicating survivors were aware that gender-based violence is wrong and that redress was available to them.⁴¹

UN support to new institutional mechanisms has been another important aspect of gender-responsive SSR support. In Timor-Leste, UN Women and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) helped the national police build capacity in its Victim Protection Unit (VPU) and establish links with a referral network for survivors of gender-based violence. A key component of the work of VPU officers is outreach with village chiefs, and according to local officials, raising awareness among these chiefs has contributed significantly to community-level understanding of domestic violence as a crime.⁴²

(3) Building on indigenous security and justice mechanisms where appropriate

Indigenous security and justice mechanisms are frequently dismissed by gender experts for not complying with international standards of due process, confidentiality, and equality of men and women.⁴³ While these criticisms often have merit and

the UN in particular has a duty to comply with international standards in its programming, indigenous systems also should not be denied or ignored – especially in remote rural areas far from the reach of state authority. As such, the first report of the Secretary-General on SSR acknowledged “customary and informal authorities” as part of the security sector,⁴⁴ whereas the second report noted that non-state security actors can play both positive and negative roles and underlined the importance of ensuring that the UN “supports frameworks and interventions in the area of security sector reform that are inclusive and accountable [and] comply with human rights standards.”⁴⁵

By its own admission, the UN needs to “better understand and address [informal and indigenous security actors’] role in the provision of security and in security sector reform more broadly,”⁴⁶ but UN Women has observed interesting cases in Liberia in which women have harnessed traditional mechanisms in order to improve gender-responsiveness in this context. In Liberia, Peace Huts were an outgrowth of the Liberian Women’s Mass Action for Peace, for example. The Peace Huts are a permutation of a traditional mechanism known as the *Palava* Hut, in which community members (both male and female) share information and discuss important issues, and where male leaders in the community hear disputes and dispense decisions according to local custom.

Though the Peace Huts were initially envisioned to focus on reconciliation and peacebuilding, women leaders in Totota town began using their meeting space for conflict resolution and mediation, resulting in enhanced security governance and community policing. In the Totota Peace Hut, women began hearing cases of domestic violence, marital disputes, and violence against women in 2006 under the guidance of Annie Nushan, a local preacher’s wife who gained experience as a community organizer and peacebuilder during the Mass Action for Peace. The Peace Hut women were trained to refer serious cases, such as rape, to the police, but they adjudicated and mediated interpersonal conflict within the community that may have otherwise escalated into violence. These women have also been known to gather together in large groups to pressure suspects to turn themselves into the police or to support the police to follow up investigations of serious crimes. Following the success of women in Totota, UN Women and the Liberian Ministry of Gender and Development replicated the Peace Hut model in over twenty communities across the country. The national police officer in charge of liaison with UN Women and local partners in Monrovia noted that the engagement of police with the Peace Huts is part of a nation-wide “proactive policing” approach aimed at stopping crimes before they occur.⁴⁷

(4) Facilitating partnerships between local women's organizations and security institutions

The best way for the UN to determine how to improve women's security is *to ask women what they need*. The Secretary-General made clear in his first report on SSR that "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."⁴⁸ When it comes to oversight, civil society is a key stakeholder and actor, and local women's organizations can play an especially important role in communication and trust building between the population and the security sector. As Bastick and Whitman have noted, "Women's distinct experiences of conflict and violence and knowledge of community priorities can help SSR truly reflect local needs."⁴⁹

UN SSR initiatives have achieved the best results when relationships between national security actors and local women leaders are created or strengthened. These leaders may play a role in monitoring and oversight, offer input on new policies and programmes based on local knowledge, shape the provision of security services within communities, and facilitate national-local dialogue.⁵⁰ As mentioned above, the UN has supported the efforts of community organizations to engage women in this way through partners such as Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, which has enabled citizens to add their input into nationwide consultations on the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.⁵¹

In Haiti, UN Women achieved results that improved security by linking women's community organizations to the Haitian National Police and the justice system through the establishment of Local Security Committees. On a monthly basis, these Committees bring together representatives from local women's organizations, police, local magistrates, religious leaders, and other key stakeholders to discuss key security threats faced by women and girls; as well as possible solutions, such as redeploying police to a site where several attacks against women and girls have occurred or mobilizing the police to apprehend suspects. A crucial component of the work of UN Women and its partners in Haiti has been facilitating the relationship between women's organizations at the local level and the national justice system so that women and girls are more likely to be able to access justice when crimes are committed against them. When women and girls come forward to the police in select communities, local UN Women partners are notified, and these partners accompany survivors through every step of the justice process, from assisting them in obtaining the requisite medical certificate, to facilitating transportation, to ensuring child-care is provided if necessary. Reports from these communities indicate that potential perpetrators are being discouraged from committing acts of violence as they see levels of impunity decreasing in their communities.⁵²

The World Bank-UN *Pathways for Peace* study further highlighted the importance of linking grassroots women's peacebuilding to formal security structures, particularly at the local level. Indeed, the Liberian Peace Huts described above have served a crucial watchdog function and, given their proximity to communities and the trust local people have in their impartiality and effectiveness, the Huts provide an essential early warning system to police and justice actors.⁵³

Conclusion

In 2015, the UN system was subject to three peace and security reviews on the organization's peacebuilding architecture, its peace operations, and the women, peace, and security agenda. This resulted, inter alia, in Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on sustaining peace and resolution 2242 (2015) on enhancing implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda. Several common themes across these assessments were the need for more inclusive approaches, better analysis, and responses to peace and security threats that are more politically nuanced. The inclusion of SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development further underscored the acknowledgement among Member States that anti-discrimination measures and those to protect women and ensure their participation in decision-making are crucial, and their recognition of the link between citizen security, inclusive and responsive security and justice institutions, and better development outcomes for the poorest and most vulnerable. Gender-responsive SSR will play a vital role in realizing these priorities.

Although other tools and resources exist, and continue to evolve as new priorities and opportunities emerge, the ITGN on gender remains the primary source of guidance for practitioners and policymakers in the UN system.⁵⁴ Still, much remains to be done to institutionalize the principles and practices in these guiding resources so that programme delivery better responds to the security needs of women and girls and mobilizes and supports their capacities. Within the UN system, the Department of Peace Operations, UNDP, and other relevant entities must ensure better gender analysis of security threats, opportunities for transformation, and the capacities of different stakeholders. Gender experts must also be deployed within SSR teams on the ground, as these subject matter experts are essential if decision-makers are expected to plan and implement SSR activities with a strong gender perspective. Further, assessments like the one undertaken in Ukraine, as well as gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, are key to ensuring security issues are properly diagnosed and results are captured. Consultations with civil society and women leaders in the context of decision-making must also be a priority. The recently released *Beyond*

Consultations resource provides useful guidance on how to engage women's civil society meaningfully and respectfully.⁵⁵

Budgeting for such gender-specific activities within SSR programmes must be adequate, must be tracked, and must be reported. Mandates and directives exist, such as the Secretary-General's commitment to allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of all peacebuilding funding to gender equality and women's empowerment.⁵⁶ However, accountability for such commitments is lacking.⁵⁷ And while all UN entities are supposed to report their financial allocations to gender equality under the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, compliance with these commitments is inadequate. One way to incentivize better compliance among senior managers may be to report good practices in the annual reports of the Secretary-General on women, peace, and security or in periodic reports on SSR.

In addition to following the guidance of the ITGN, gender-responsive SSR for the UN must translate into strategies aimed at increasing women's participation in decision-making, improving policies and architecture overall, linking to local security dynamics, and fostering strong relationships with civil society and security sector institutions. Above all, the success of any intervention must be measured by how it improves security and well-being for all women, men, boys, and girls in society.

Notes

- ¹ Jennifer Erin Salahub, "Hearing from Women on Both Sides of the Thin Blue Line," in *African Women on the Thin Blue Line: Gender-Sensitive Police Reform in Liberia and Southern Sudan* (Ottawa: North-South Institute, 2011), 1–2.
- ² Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000).
- ³ Jacklyn Cock, *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- ⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Blame It on The War: Gendered-Dimensions of Violence* (2012).
- ⁵ See the Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/unite>.
- ⁶ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659-S/2008/39), 23 January 2008.
- ⁷ See United Nations, Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), and 2467 (2019).
- ⁸ The report, commissioned jointly by UNDP, UN Women, and the Peacebuilding Support Office, examined projects in the areas of climate change and disaster risk reduction, SSR, rule of law, health, governance, electoral assistance, economic recovery, DDR, and support to civil society in Afghanistan, Burundi, Sudan, Iraq, Guatemala and Sierra Leone. See Sudarsana Kundu, *Budgetary Baselines and Methodology Development for Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and Seven Point Action Plan (7PAP)* (UN Women and UNDP, 2013).

- ⁹ This study assessed the Gender Marker scores of projects. GEN3-rated projects feature gender equality as a main objective, while GEN1-rated projects make insignificant contributions to gender equality.
- ¹⁰ See United Nations, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (2012), vii; and UN Women, *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Programming Essentials* (2013).
- ¹¹ United Nations, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (2012), vii.
- ¹² Beijing Platform for Action (1995), paragraphs 142, 143(c).
- ¹³ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2122 (S/RES/2122), 18 October 2013.
- ¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2282 (S/RES/2282), 27 April 2016.
- ¹⁵ See United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, “Sustainable Development Goal 5,” <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>.
- ¹⁶ See United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, “Sustainable Development Goal 16,” <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>.
- ¹⁷ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659-S/2008/39), 23 January 2008.
- ¹⁸ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970–S/2013/480), 13 August 2013.
- ¹⁹ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ²⁰ United Nations, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (2012), 9, 38–50.
- ²¹ See United Nations, Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Policy (1 February 2018), paragraph 39.
- ²² World Bank and United Nations, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank and United Nations, 2017).
- ²³ United Nations, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (2012), 38.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.
- ²⁵ UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice, 2011–2012* (2011), 59.
- ²⁶ United Nations, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (2012), 38.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ²⁹ Rachel Kunz and Kristin Valasek, “Towards Participatory, Gender-sensitive SSR,” in *Back to the Roots: Security Sector Reform and Development*, Albrecht Schnabel and Vanessa Farr, eds. (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2011).
- ³⁰ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/262), 26 March 2019.
- ³¹ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/958), 29 October 2018.
- ³² “Hailed as ‘role models,’ all-female Indian police unit departs UN mission in Liberia,” *UN News*, 12 February 2016, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/02/522102-feature-hailed-role-models-all-female-indian-police-unit-departs-un-mission>.
- ³³ UN Women, “Bringing women on equal footing with men in Kosovo Police,” 24 February 2017, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/2/feature-bringing-women-on-equal-footing-with-men-in-kosovo-police>.
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- ³⁵ UN Women, *Gender Impact Assessment of the Security and Defense Sector in Ukraine 2017* (Sweden and UN Women, 2017), 6.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10–14.
- ³⁷ Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, “Liberia SSR Snapshot” (2018).
- ³⁸ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Addressing Impunity for Rape in Liberia* (2016).
- ³⁹ UN Women, *Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities: 2017-2018* (2018), 27.

- ⁴⁰ UNIFEM and United Nations Development Programme, *Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies* (2007).
- ⁴¹ For more on the positive impact of special police units addressing gender-based violence, see comparable support provided to Sierra Leone, detailed in Annalise Moser, *Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in post Conflict Contexts* (UNIFEM, 2007), 11.
- ⁴² UN Women, “In Timor-Leste communities mobilize to confront domestic violence,” 26 April 2013, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/4/in-timor-leste-communities-mobilize-to-confront-domestic-violence>.
- ⁴³ UN Women, UNICEF, and UNDP, *Informal Justice Systems: Charting a Course for Human Rights-Based Engagement* (2012).
- ⁴⁴ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 23 January 2008.
- ⁴⁵ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970–S/2013/480), 13 August 2013.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Officer Leo Tay, Liberian National Police, Monrovia, 27 March 2012.
- ⁴⁸ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 23 January 2008.
- ⁴⁹ Megan Bastick and Tobie Whitman, *A Woman’s Guide to Security Sector Reform* (Institute for Inclusive Security and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2013), 8.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 7–8.
- ⁵¹ UN Women, *Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities: 2017-2018*, 28.
- ⁵² UN Women. “Haiti: Efforts at the local level to improve women’s access to justice and security” (19 September 2012); available from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2012/9/haiti-efforts-at-the-local-level-to-improve-women-s-access-to-justice-and-security>.
- ⁵³ World Bank and United Nations, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank and United Nations, 2017); available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>.
- ⁵⁴ In 2018, UN Women, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights launched a revision of the 2008 Gender and SSR Toolkit, which is slated to launch in 2019.
- ⁵⁵ *Beyond Consultations: A tool for meaningfully engaging with women in fragile and conflict-affected states* (2019).
- ⁵⁶ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/354–S/2010/466), 7 September 2010.
- ⁵⁷ See Kundu, *Budgetary Baselines and Methodology Development for Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and Seven Point Action Plan (7PAP)*.

PART IV:
PARTNERSHIPS

National ownership and SSR: Towards a common framework for action

ADEDEJI EBO

Introduction

The United Nations, along with various other actors supporting security sector reform (SSR), recognizes that national ownership (often referred to as local ownership)¹ is essential for the sustainability and “success” of SSR processes. The centrality of the principle of national ownership has been underscored by UN legislative bodies such as the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as by various UN offices and agencies.² The Secretary-General has described national ownership as the “cornerstone” of UN support to SSR processes,³ and the Security Council has stated that SSR “should be a nationally-owned process that is rooted in the particular needs and conditions of the country in question.”⁴

Beyond the UN, other bilateral and multilateral actors also recognize the centrality of national ownership as a key principle underpinning their support to SSR processes. For instance, the African Union (AU) Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform notes its “responsibility to lend an African character to an African ownership of SSR processes,” emphasizing leadership of the SSR process by a broad and inclusive range of national actors as well as the commitment of national resources.⁵ The EU’s Concept for ESDP Support to Security Sector Reform similarly asserted that “to contribute to sustainable development, SSR has to be locally owned” and that “EU action should build on national ownership and partnership.”⁶

These approaches fundamentally acknowledge that national ownership is essential for the viability and sustainability of SSR processes, meaning “the reform of security policies, institutions and activities in a given country must be designed, managed and implemented by local actors rather than external actors.”⁷ Despite its broad normative appeal, however, the operationalization and application of national ownership faces several challenges, ranging from a lack of conceptual clarity to political realities. This chapter discusses obstacles to the practical application of national support to SSR processes.

The chapter is divided into four parts. This introduction is followed by an iteration of the UN's national ownership framework and its conceptual approach, rationale, assumptions, and main elements. The third section considers various attempts by the UN to apply national ownership, and lessons learned. All the activities and programmes of the UN related to institutional reforms of security institutions are not and cannot be captured here, but the section focuses on the sector-wide dimensions of SSR, particularly since the introduction of the SSR agenda in 2007–2008.⁸ The fourth section of the chapter offers a set of policy recommendations informed by and based on lessons learned, which could enhance the viability of the concept of national ownership.

The emerging common UN framework for national ownership in SSR support

National ownership of SSR is manifested in relations among national stakeholders, and between national stakeholders and external actors like bilateral bodies and regional and international organizations. The UN is one such external actor – and a critical one in this regard, given its unique global role and reach.

Within the UN, the Inter-Agency SSR Task Force is the main mechanism for the articulation of norms and standards in SSR, and for the coherent implementation of the principle of national ownership.⁹ The Task Force recognizes the multiple roles that national ownership can play in SSR processes, describing it as encompassing an “inclusive and consultative process, methodology and outcome that are predicated on the perspectives, priorities and vision of stakeholders within the society undergoing reform.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, there is also broad recognition that despite its universal normative appeal, the implementation and application of national ownership are challenged by issues ranging from a lack of conceptual clarity to operational problems. The UN is particularly confronted by challenges in the practical application of national ownership in support of national and regional SSR processes.

One example of this was in UN support to the AU to draft and operationalize its policy framework. Recognizing that regional approaches are building blocks for the UN's global norms on SSR, much premium was placed on this support; yet, while the collaboration was cordial and key norms were commonly agreed upon, the specificity of “African realities,” the difference in organizational culture and priorities, and the insistence of AU Commission staff on “African regional ownership” were all lessons in ‘corporate humility’ for the UN. In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a consistent mandate from the Security Council for a comprehensive approach to reform of the security sector has confronted the entrenched “ownership” of the Congolese government, which has preferred piecemeal approaches predicated

not on global actors and norms but on bilateral relations dictated more by short-term pragmatism than normative ideals.

The Inter-Agency SSR Task Force has introduced a common normative and operational framework that identifies key elements of national ownership, to address the lack of clarity that plagues the concept. The UN Integrated Technical Guidance Note (ITGN) on national ownership provides suggestions on how to best support its application in the field, and therefore represents a suitable conceptual framework for this chapter. But while such a framework is necessary for coherent and coordinated UN support to SSR, it is far from sufficient and faces important challenges of operationalization. Still, it serves as a positive contribution to taking “national ownership” beyond the normative level, providing practical advice to those tasked with supporting national SSR processes and serving as a reference point for national actors. It also guides external actors, whereby national ownership can be made integral to the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of SSR programmes, which in turn are reflective of and responsive to local aspirations and security needs.

An SSR process based on national ownership should include the basic elements of: a common national security vision; national implementation capacity; M&E; and financing, including mobilization, allocation and public expenditure.

A common national security vision

A key aspect of national ownership is the degree of consensus among national stakeholders and actors on a common national vision for security governance. Particularly after protracted conflicts, such as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan, there are often different or even opposing visions of the direction and priorities of security governance, the nature of essential security institutions, and the relationship between those institutions. A common national security vision is essential to national ownership because it sets a strategic direction and ensures that the entire reform agenda is predicated on a social contract that is responsive to the security needs of a majority of the population. Given that security visions and broader reform agendas in immediate post-conflict environments are often inconsistent among key actors, inclusive national consultation and dialogue is necessary. Through this process, a national consensus on security needs and priorities can evolve and a common national security vision, including the objectives of and approaches to national security architecture and arrangements (such as strategies and policies), can be formulated and derived. However, a national dialogue on SSR does not, *per se*, guarantee a consensual national security vision, nor does it guarantee the sustainability of the reform process. The most it can do is to enhance the prospects for such.

National implementation capacity

The ability of national stakeholders to not only participate in but also lead the implementation of SSR processes is another crucial component of national ownership; which is a function of the human, institutional, and financial capacity of national actors. Indeed, this is at the core of national ownership, but is also a prerequisite to sustainability. If national actors can increasingly direct, finance, and coordinate implementation, their sense of ownership grows. Assessments of national capacity in these areas are therefore essential to ensuring the feasibility of national ownership. The qualitative and quantitative enhancement of national capacity should thus be among the overriding strategic objectives of UN support to SSR processes.

Yet, the reality is often that protracted conflict has had a debilitating effect on a country's already meagre implementation capacity. Hence, building the capacity of national actors to implement and lead SSR processes is vital. This demands a coordination mechanism through which national authorities interact with international partners and donors to map and direct their intervention, to achieve coherence and complementarity with the broader national vision and agenda. It is also important to establish short- and long-term benchmarks as a common basis for measuring national capacity needs and assessing progress.

Monitoring and evaluation

M&E is a crucial aspect of SSR that has been closely tied with national capacities since the Secretary-General's first report on SSR, which described it as "a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities."¹¹ Thus, rather than being imposed by external actors, M&E should be conducted by national actors – who are best able to determine which aspects are most important to the reform process – though care must be taken to avoid bias. Often, national actors also come at a lower financial cost than international actors.¹²

The challenge then is to strengthen national capacities to conduct M&E. National capacity may be particularly lacking in the realm of statistics, for example. Further, SSR experts may need to be sensitized to the utility and necessity of M&E. In some cases, national security policies may offer a helpful starting point, as various indicators may already have been developed as part of the policy development process. It must also be noted that a distinction should be made between improving national capacity in M&E and in other areas. As has been noted, "there is a general misconception that capacity building in the area of evaluation can be added on to any type of training initiative,"¹³ but M&E expertise must be strengthened explicitly, not merely as an afterthought.

Financing, including mobilization, allocation, and public expenditure

The process and the product of financing and public expenditure provide an important opportunity for national ownership of SSR processes and governance. It is increasingly recognized within the UN as a growth area, including by Security Council resolution 2151, which refers to the ability of public expenditure reviews to “enhance the governance and overall performance of the security sector and address the foundations upon which security institutions in each component area are built.”¹⁴

The ITGN on national ownership advises that national actors, as much as possible, should commit financial resources to oversight of the reform process in a manner that reflects the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, as appropriated by relevant legislative authorities. In conflict-affected states there may be a tendency for the security sector, especially the defence and intelligence components, to be treated as somehow distinct or “exempt” from normal budgetary constraints. However, unquestioned and non-transparent security allocations can entrench the military’s potentially undue influence in fragile states and draw public funds away from other areas of society that need strengthening, including but not limited to the judiciary, the legislature, and social services. The key guiding principle is that allocation of resources should be based on the national security needs of the country and on a national security policy that is, ideally, the outcome of national consultation and dialogue.

An element of balanced public financing can address concerns about distribution of resources while contributing usefully to the norm that security allocations are as subject to interagency competition as other areas of the government during the appropriations process. The legislature’s involvement in balancing funds across sectors also reinforces its role (and the civilian role) in military funding.

UN experiences in applying national ownership in SSR

Achieving conceptual clarity, while necessary, does not alone ensure the UN’s coherent application of national ownership. The UN’s experience in applying national ownership has exposed important lessons that are relevant to enhancing service delivery on the ground. It has been consistently demonstrated, for instance, that national ownership extends beyond “state ownership” and that national dialogue is necessary to forge a common national security vision – an essential element of national ownership. Ultimately, the task of practically operationalizing the primacy of national ownership is a delicate and challenging one, particularly when power relations between national and external actors are routinely tipped in favour of the latter.

The UN has encountered a number of challenges (or “challenging realities”) that singularly and collectively illustrate the gap between the normative aspirations of national ownership on the one hand and the record of its actual application on the other. If they remain unaddressed, these challenges can undermine future efforts to promote and implement national ownership of SSR processes; but attempts to address them also offer important guidance on national ownership of SSR processes in UN contexts. Several lessons, both positive and negative, gathered from UN experience in this area are described below.

Resist the pressure of expediency, and ensure follow-up: A situation of widespread instability and the pressure to “do something” to return a country to normalcy can often concentrate the energy of international actors on train-and-equip interventions (with short-term visible results) and move them away from qualitative and transformative elements of reform, such as the articulation of a common security vision through consultative national dialogue processes. This was amply demonstrated in the Central African Republic (CAR), where a sheer absence of law and order meant that SSR support was concentrated on restoring public order, with an emphasis on restructuring the armed forces and the police but without a guiding political framework. Even though a higher level of public order was achieved in CAR, an inability to sustain this order in the face of repeated counterattacks by parties on both sides of the conflict was a reminder of the need for dialogue that could create a basis for legitimacy and a common understanding of security institution reforms. To this end, the UN-facilitated Bangui Forum for National Reconciliation in the CAR, held in May 2015, brought together more than 600 members of opposing armed groups, political parties, and the transitional government “to define their collective vision of the country’s future.”¹⁵ The Forum’s Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction included commitments to an accountable, multi-ethnic, and professional security sector,¹⁶ but little follow up to the Forum and its national vision occurred for more than two years. While subsequent initiatives in 2017 – such as the Political Accord for Peace in CAR of 19 June 2017 and the African Initiative’s Roadmap for Peace and National Reconciliation of 17 July 2017 – offered ways forward, the long gap in focus since the Forum and resulting loss in momentum underline not only that long-term, transformative initiatives must be at the heart of SSR processes, but that these nationally owned efforts require ongoing action and the political will to sustain and implement them.

The people are the basis of reform: This second lesson is informed by the first. The legitimacy, viability, and sustainability of the reform and governance of security sectors are based in the expressed needs and visions of all of society; this should be the core driver of any SSR process. There is often no single vision that serves as a platform

for coherent reform of the security sector, and such a common vision may only be possible after a consultative process facilitated by international assistance providers, in consonance with international standards of human rights and the rule of law, ideally leading to a national security policy. The security reform process must directly benefit the population in their daily lives and must therefore be informed by their experiences and realities. Thus, the ideas that frame national SSR processes should not be generated wholesale from and by external partners.

Frequently, there is a preponderance of local and national debate around competing and conflicting visions of security, particularly in societies emerging from protracted conflict. Interpreting this as an absence of ownership by national actors is a mistake. Rather, it is an opportunity for the international community to facilitate nationally-led processes of dialogue, through which conflicting visions can merge into a common vision of national security. The objective is that all major national stakeholders can identify themselves in the country's new security arrangements and governance framework. The interests of the weak and vulnerable in any given society, such as minorities, women, children, refugees, people in rural communities, and other such groups, must be especially recognized and addressed.

In Mali, where conflict and issues of underdevelopment and decentralization have continued to delay the implementation of the 2015 Peace Agreement between the Government and armed groups, the March–April 2017 Conference of National Understanding offered a potential opening for national dialogue and the formulation of a vision that included SSR. The Conference Report included recommendations on depoliticizing and rebuilding the Malian security forces for full deployment throughout the country, for example, but insufficient preparation for the Conference resulted in only minimal inclusiveness, weakening its impact.¹⁷

In South Sudan, the UN promoted and facilitated an inclusive consultative process in the articulation of a national security policy not by focusing on writing the policy, which was produced by the South Sudanese authorities, but by leading discussions with stakeholders to generate feedback. These were conducted with state security committees, non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups across the country, with the goal of achieving a more representative national security policy. Nonetheless, despite the positive role played by UN consultations, an attempted coup in December 2013 and ensuing unrest indicated that a common national security vision was not yet shared by all members of South Sudanese society.¹⁸ Because SSR is itself a political process, national security dialogues are strongly affected by larger political processes. SSR can and should be an element of these wider processes, but it cannot serve as a substitute for political will.

Buy into the national agenda and national processes, as opposed to seeking buy-in: The fundamental and abiding principle of national ownership is that

external support and engagement must be informed, directed, and led by national stakeholders. It is therefore crucial, to the extent possible, for external actors to buy into national reform processes, rather than attempt to bring national actors on board with ideas and processes that are externally generated and inspired. In fact, national stakeholders should be encouraged and supported to seek the commitment or buy-in of external actors to locally generated, negotiated, and inspired ideas and their vision of security. Where the reverse is the case, a strategic opportunity for sustainability of the reform process will have already been missed.

States recovering from extended armed conflict may not have the institutional capacity to oversee their own SSR processes, though, and often rely on external partners to facilitate and coordinate these processes. Thus, there is an omnipresent risk of dependency syndrome, perpetuated as much by national actors as by external partners. The lack of capacity of national actors to manage SSR should not mitigate their responsibility in this regard, nor erode national lines and mechanisms of accountability. National stakeholders can provide leadership to shape an SSR process that responds to the security needs of the people, to guide external actors and ensure that their support aligns with the national needs and context and not to external interests. An emphasis on the transfer of skills to nationals must therefore be an important criterion for reform processes.

Post-conflict settings pose specific buy-in challenges in what can be termed “post-liberation contexts” – where society has acted more or less in unison to battle an external foe or colonial power, and in which liberation forces sometimes have a sense of privilege and entitlement following the end of the struggle. Societies liberated in this way often tend to acquiesce to these victorious forces out of a sense of obligation or out of support for the larger liberation movement. The fact that post-liberation administrations born in such contexts tend to be hypersensitive to perceived foreign interference presents special challenges for international actors seeking to support SSR.

The experience of the UN Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) illustrates the challenge of gaining post-liberation buy-in, and points to the importance of SSR being demand driven. The Timorese Government’s initial aversion to a UN presence led to a premature exit in 2002, despite UN assertions that this was too soon. When violence in 2006 did indeed necessitate the UN’s return, relations were clouded by this complicated history.

Gaps between Timorese and UN/international priorities meant that cooperation was complicated from the start. UN Security Council resolutions consistently tasked the UN with assisting the Timorese Government in conducting a security sector review, but national aspirations and interests were generally elsewhere. The position of the Government was that such a review had already been conducted and that efforts should instead be directed towards implementation. Delayed establishment of

a security sector support unit within the mission also caused UNMIT to miss the six-week window of opportunity in which it might have collaborated more closely with local authorities.

In this atmosphere, a revolutionary post-liberation zeal fed further resistance to external SSR initiatives, particularly to the timetables and budgets of international donors. As Armstrong et al. noted, UN approaches were initially designed to satisfy internationally determined mandates and goals rather than applying local skills and knowledge, with the result that “most of the SSR initiatives implemented in Timor-Leste lacked the local input needed to allow the country to truly ‘own’ its program, diminishing buy-in from local leaders.”¹⁹

Hänggi and Scherrer noted similar problems in former missions in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and Burundi (ONUB), all of which struggled at times to support SSR with local ownership because “national governments were not willing to engage in SSR at all, or in the way suggested by the UN.”²⁰ Reforms that are imposed, rather than articulated by the host country and supported by the international community, face challenges in sustainability and implementation.

National ownership extends beyond “state ownership”: There is a tendency and pressure to focus SSR support on incumbent governments and statutory security structures. Yet, in reality, security governance extends beyond the executive branch to the legislature (including opposition political parties), civil society, and informal traditional security institutions that often have an ambivalent relationship with the state and its citizens. Experiences from several SSR processes demonstrate that the broader the national constituency engaged in SSR, the higher the prospects for sustainability.²¹ Therefore, in contexts in which the state can be either a guarantor of security or a source of insecurity to citizens, deliberate steps must be taken to encourage a broader constituency beyond the state.

The issue of extending the concept of ownership beyond the central government was compounded by buy-in problems in the missions in Haiti and Kosovo. In those cases, organizational culture was initially characterized by “imposition rather than consultation in the sense that SSR activities were prepared or carried out with the consent of the local government but without involvement of local stakeholders, leading to the alienation of the latter.”²²

UN mission leadership should back national ownership approaches at the highest level: As requested by Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), it is important for the Secretary-General to encourage his special representatives and envoys to “fully take into account the strategic value of security sector reform in their work, including through their good offices, where mandated.”²³ For national approaches to SSR to be successful in the UN context, the Special Representative of

the Secretary-General must be committed to this principle and to incorporating it into countrywide strategies. At times, the “messy” nature of the SSR process can be a disincentive to engage in it, including with regard to national ownership. SSR takes time, and pressures for swift results amid a diverse array of challenges may divert attention elsewhere.

Differing approaches to leadership can also present challenges as far as national ownership. Liberia represents a missed opportunity for national dialogue on SSR in the early and mid-2000s, for instance, when the obvious need for national dialogue was met by an absence of political will on the part of the UN.²⁴ In the years following the civil war there, instead of focusing from the start on qualitative dimensions of reform and the legitimacy of security institutions, the UN and bilateral actors pushed to abolish the military and develop well-trained police and border forces – which ultimately decelerated reform of the defence sector. Adding to this problem was the “strong public perception that the UNMIL [UN Mission in Liberia] senior leadership disregard[ed] their views on how the country’s problems should be addressed.”²⁵ Without a unified, top-level understanding of the value of national ownership in SSR, it is difficult for this priority to take hold in the UN’s approach. At the same time, a distinction must be made between avoiding domineering leadership and acquiescing, particularly where human rights are concerned. It is important for mission leadership to help host governments understand policy choices and their probable results, both without dictating and without abrogating responsibility for human rights and the rule of law.

Capacity is an essential element of ownership: The task of facilitating and coordinating SSR processes is a national responsibility without which ownership can be neither effective nor sustainable. However, states emerging from conflict often lack the capacity for such coordination. In such cases, the UN may, with the consent and/or engagement of national authorities, temporarily coordinate international support to SSR, with a constant eye on developing national capacity to take over coordination functions. The higher the national capacity to coordinate international support to SSR processes, the higher the degree of national ownership. From this perspective, national ownership denotes national capacity.

National capacity development should be outcome oriented, meaning that the focus must be on how the benefits of national capacity development will trickle down to the population in terms of tangible improvements in their day-to-day lives – for example, in accessing and using services and facilities related to the security sector, such as the police, courts, immigration offices, etc. National capacity development initiatives should also have a clearly phased exit strategy that reflects how increased knowledge transfer (including mentoring) is coupled with and translates into increased national takeover and, eventually, the complete transfer of responsibilities.

Capacity development cuts both ways: Credible and sustainable SSR requires both technical capacity and in-depth knowledge of the context. While national actors often lack the former, they are unrivalled in the latter, and while external actors (including UN personnel) often have technical skills, they frequently lack the in-depth knowledge of the local environment necessary to transform a security sector. Therefore, national actors should be recognized as agents in developing the capacity of external actors, and increasing emphasis should be placed by the UN and other international actors on facilitating the exchange of experiences and best practices between countries which have undergone reform.²⁶

Liberia provides a good example of this capacity development dynamic. An assessment of the security-related needs of citizens found that residents of the impoverished West Point neighbourhood of Monrovia were most concerned about their vulnerability to fires during the dry season. In response, UNMIL focused support to strengthening firefighting capacity in the area. While external actors can provide skills and training, local actors have the best knowledge of their needs and context, which affects where and how support should be directed.²⁷

Effective coordination and partnerships are essential for success: In SSR, the key to facilitating and enhancing national ownership and sustainability is not just technical proficiency and the regular exchange of information, but also the ability to build effective partnerships based on mutual trust and confidence. Good working relations among a broad range of actors – official and non-official, local and international – are essential to ensuring national ownership of an SSR process. Partnerships with national actors should be built not only at the national level but also at the subnational and regional levels, which is not without challenges. Given wide-ranging interests and interventions, the difficulty of coordinating activities with other international actors is another factor that confronts UN actors on the ground. Such challenges are related to both intra-UN coordination on the one hand and coordination between the UN and other bilateral and multilateral actors on the other.

One key challenge has been the lack of clarity regarding the roles of various external actors. As noted in resolution 2151, the UN “has broad experience as well as comparative advantages” in coordinating sector-wide reforms in collaboration with international and regional actors, a role increasingly reflected in peacekeeping mandates in places like CAR, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, and Liberia.²⁸ In reality, however, this coordination role is not commonly understood and the local contours of coordination must often be defined in each context. This lack of predictability informed a recently published joint mapping study²⁹ by the UN, AU, EU, and OSCE meant to help define a clearer “division of labour” in SSR processes.

In CAR, for instance, MINUSCA’s most recent mandates have tasked it with “coordinat[ing] the provision of technical assistance and training between the

international partners in the CAR [...] in order to ensure a clear distribution of tasks in the field of SSR.”³⁰ However, SSR support from bilateral partners and the EU has in the past tended to focus on more traditional train-and-equip exercises to increase the operational effectiveness of the armed forces, a focus not always in line with the comprehensive, sector-wide UN approach. Efforts to better align these approaches have included the Joint Support Plan on SSR and the Rule of Law, signed by MINUSCA and the EU in July 2017, which notes that “the delineation of roles between the EU actors in the field [...] and MINUSCA [...] should be defined by the missions on the ground,” a process to be facilitated through the Joint Support Plan “with a view to clarify the division of labour.”³¹

Conclusion

While national ownership is widely acknowledged as essential for sustainable SSR, it faces several challenges in terms of practical application. The development of a common conceptual framework for national ownership is a major achievement and milestone for the UN, and has enabled the articulation of a common set of agreed guidelines, with clarity on the key elements of national ownership: common national security, national capacity, monitoring and implementation, and finance. Training modules need to be produced and training provided to staff on how to best apply these guidelines in specific contexts.

The UN’s challenges and lessons learned in the conceptual development and practical application of national ownership may indeed mirror the experiences of other external actors and multilateral organizations engaged in supporting SSR processes. There remains a significant gap between national ownership policy and practice by the UN, and the recommendations below offer ways to narrow the gap.

Recommendation 1 – Use normative and operational frameworks for national ownership of SSR but with an eye for specificity of context: As exemplified in the ITGN on national ownership, normative and operational frameworks can be used to plan, design, implement, and monitor SSR programmes more effectively. At the same time, these frameworks are not simply templates that can be replicated by rote. Instead, practitioners are reminded to adopt nuanced and context-specific approaches to SSR that are sustainable and responsive to the needs of all sectors of a country.

Recommendation 2 – Move beyond a focus on “easy wins” in SSR to a governance approach: There are limits to the effectiveness of quantitative, rapid-success models in SSR, such as train-and-equip efforts directed at national militaries. It is vital to develop deeper relationships between external and internal actors in SSR, and among a greater variety of stakeholders, to ensure that SSR

processes are sustainable and benefit all citizens. As noted by Nigeria in its capacity as President of the Security Council in April 2014, “viable reform of the security sector must extend beyond train and equip activities to include democratic governance and civilian oversight.”³²

Recommendation 3 – Coordinate partner/donor approaches to SSR using national ownership as a guiding principle: Too often, bilateral donors fail to speak with one voice on SSR, leading at best to uncoordinated efforts and at worst to contradictory approaches. When the normative and consultative role of the UN works in tandem with bilateral assistance, much more can be achieved, and duplication and confusion in-country can be minimized.

Recommendation 4 – Increase understanding of the UN’s consultative role in approaches to national ownership: The UN has been able to capitalize on its position as an impartial actor to help advance consultations and dialogue among various sectors of conflict-affected societies to enable a broad-based approach to SSR. Given the increasing acknowledgement by bilateral and multilateral stakeholders of the importance of national ownership, the UN should better articulate its consultative capacity, to both domestic stakeholders and international partners, to ensure it is engaged alongside other efforts.

The UN normative and operational framework for support for national ownership of SSR is a work in progress, but both the ITGN and Security Council resolution 2151 have focused momentum, attention, and practice in this area. Actual progress in operationalization will depend on the efforts of both national and international actors to coordinate over the long term on national ownership approaches. Growing bilateral and multilateral recognition of the necessity of national ownership makes it more important than ever for the UN to play a leading role in operationalizing this approach, based on past experiences and a common desire for the coherence and coordination of UN support to SSR processes.

Notes

- ¹ In some contexts, “national ownership” is used interchangeably with, and as a synonym for, “local ownership.” However, the former has been noted as having a statutory connotation and relating more to government ownership; whereas the latter is recognized as centring more on “the people” in the context of security sector governance. See Timothy Donais, *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform* (München: LITVerlag, 2008); and Laurie Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2007).
- ² See United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014; Statements by the President of the Security Council S/PRST/2007/3, S/PRST/2008/14, S/PRST/2011/19; Reports of the Secretary-General A/62/659–S/2008/39, A/67/970–S/2013/480; Reports of the

- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations A/64/19, A/65/19, A/66/19, A/68/19, and A/69/19; and Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes.
- ³ United Nations, 5589th Meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.5889), 12 May 2008.
- ⁴ United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2011/19), 12 October 2011.
- ⁵ African Union, *Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform*, adopted at 20th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, 2013, 7, 9–10, 27.
- ⁶ European Union, *EU Concept for ESDP Support to Security Sector Reform (SSR)*, 13 October 2005, 5. The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 2009.
- ⁷ Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment*, 4.
- ⁸ This was marked by the Secretary-General's first report on SSR in 2008. See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39), 28 January 2008.
- ⁹ The UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force was created by the Secretary-General in 2007 to develop a holistic and coherent system-wide approach to SSR and to deliver coordinated support to national SSR processes. Membership includes 14 different UN entities, and the Task Force is co-chaired by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Development Programme.
- ¹⁰ United Nations, Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes.
- ¹¹ Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659–S/2008/39).
- ¹² *Measuring the Impact of Peacekeeping Missions on Rule of Law and Security Institutions: Report of the Expert Workshop* (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions and DCAF, 2012), 8.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ¹⁵ See Amy Copley and Amadou Sy, "Five takeaways from the Bangui Forum for National Reconciliation in the Central African Republic," *Africa in Focus*, Brookings Institution, 15 May 2015, www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2015/05/15-bangui-forum-central-african-republic-copley-sy.
- ¹⁶ United Nations, Security Sector Reform Unit, *Security Sector Reform in the Central African Republic: Challenges and Priorities* (2016), 9.
- ¹⁷ Delphine Mechoulan, "Mali's National Conference: A Missed Opportunity for Reconciliation," *The Global Observatory*, International Peace Institute, 14 April 2017, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/04/mali-reconciliation-conference-national-understanding-azawad>.
- ¹⁸ Baboucar Sowe (officer-in-charge (2012–2013), UNMISS Security Sector Reform Unit), interview, 12 May 2016.
- ¹⁹ Nicholas J. Armstrong, Jacqueline Chura-Beaver and Isaac Kfir, *Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste: Missed Opportunities and Hard Lessons in Empowering the Host-Nation* (Carlisle: United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2012), 11–12.
- ²⁰ Heiner Hänggi and Vincenza Scherrer, *Towards a Common UN Approach to Security Sector Reform: Lessons Learned from Integrated Missions*, DCAF Policy Paper No. 25 (Geneva Institute for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007), 21.
- ²¹ Adedeji Ebo, "The Role of Security Sector Reform in Sustainable Development: Donor Policy Trends and Challenges," *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 1 (2007): 32.
- ²² Hänggi and Scherrer, *Towards a Common UN Approach to Security Sector Reform*, 21.
- ²³ Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151).
- ²⁴ See Adedeji Ebo, "The Challenges and Opportunities of Security Sector Reform in Post-conflict Liberia," DCAF Occasional Paper No. 9 (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), 16.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 16 and 27–28.

- ²⁶ See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict* (A/66/311, S/2011/527), 19 August 2011.
- ²⁷ Liberia Governance Commission, “Community security service perception survey of Monrovia,” November 2007.
- ²⁸ See United Nations, Security Council Resolutions 2301 (S/RES/2301), 26 July 2016; 2226 (S/RES/2226), 25 June 2015; 2364 (S/RES/2364), 29 June 2017; and 2239 (S/RES/2239), 17 September 2015.
- ²⁹ Vincenza Scherrer and Alba Bescos Pou, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform* (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2018).
- ³⁰ United Nations, Security Council Resolutions 2387 (S/RES/2387), 15 November 2017; and 2301 (S/RES/2301), 26 July 2016.
- ³¹ Joint MINUSCA-EU Delegation and EUTM RCA-Support Plan, 3.
- ³² See United Nations, 7161st Meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.7161), 28 April 2014.

Enhancing the inter-agency coordination of UN assistance to SSR

SNEZANA VUKSA-COFFMAN

Introduction

Inter-agency coordination of United Nations support to security sector reform (SSR) has, for the past ten years, been focused on developing tools and mechanisms for more effective integration of political good offices, technical expertise, and programmatic support into coherent SSR strategies. By providing the tools through which relevant UN departments, offices, funds, and programmes can speak in one voice to national, bilateral, and regional actors, and align their support behind commonly agreed objectives, inter-agency coordination is critical to enhancing the impact of international SSR support and to strengthening national ownership and leadership of SSR. This chapter discusses key coordination tools and approaches that have been developed in the institutional framework of the UN Inter-agency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF) to improve SSR analysis, planning, and implementation in the field. While arguing that these specific institutional arrangements have added value to UN support to SSR, various challenges that still confront SSR coordination are also discussed within an organization-wide framework.

This chapter first outlines the institutional context and identifies gaps that served as a rationale for the Secretary-General's call for enhanced coordination and coherence in UN SSR support. Then, the ways this call has been translated into institutional arrangements via the IASSRTF and a dedicated SSR capacity at UN Headquarters will be described, followed by an explanation of how the working mechanisms for inter-agency coordination were created, through the example of system-wide SSR guidance development. This is followed by a discussion of successes and challenges in coordinated Headquarters support to the field. Finally, the chapter looks at the role of inter-agency coordination on SSR in peacekeeping transitions before offering some key lessons to guide recommendations for added coherence and coordination of UN SSR support in the future.

The institutional context and coordination gaps prior to 2007

In 2009, it was noted that the UN's "greatest challenge to coherence and integration is the United Nations structure itself, with a highly fragmented and complex bureaucracy, 17 departments and offices, 14 funds and programmes, 16 specialized agencies, all with different mandates, governing structures and procedures."¹ Thus, when it comes to SSR, the issue of UN inter-agency coordination must be viewed in the context of broader efforts towards "system-wide coherence," which emerged in the mid-2000s amid institutional reforms that aimed to overhaul the UN's work in peacekeeping and development settings. Those changes drew largely on two reports of the Secretary-General, *Renewing the UN: A Programme for Reform* (A/51/950) and *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All* (A/59/2005). Hence, in early 2008, when Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon introduced the SSR agenda in his first thematic report on SSR, the system was in the midst of significant changes that impacted operations at Headquarters and in the field. The focus of this agenda was primarily on improving effectiveness through better coordination of all parts of the UN system and more integrated planning and delivery of support, as well as by ensuring coherence across thematic areas such as SSR, rule of law, and DDR. The importance of coordination and integration has since been reaffirmed by Secretary-General António Guterres, who has introduced far-reaching reforms aimed at further reducing structural, procedural, and policy barriers that continue to undermine the ability of the UN to deliver integrated solutions.

While the demand for SSR support from Member States started to increase and the number of Security Council mandates for SSR support grew exponentially in the 2000s, the UN was ill-equipped to meet this growing need through its fragmented project-based approaches to SSR. In the absence of commonly agreed principles and objectives of UN SSR support, "field missions receive[d] only limited guidance in implementing reform related tasks or projects."² In the worst cases, SSR activities were "put in motion without adequate strategic assessment or analysis," often resulting in "under-resourced and piecemeal activities."³ Consequently, the Secretary-General called for the establishment of an inter-agency task force to "assist the Organization in linking the different and interrelated components of security in order to deliver coherent and coordinated support to national security sector reform processes [and to] provide a strategic policy development and backstopping capacity for the United Nations system."⁴

Inter-agency coordination of UN SSR support at the Headquarters level

Inter-agency coordination has been a key concern in the context of UN support to SSR since the outset of the Organization's formal involvement in this area. The institutional arrangements relevant to SSR figured prominently on the agenda of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee in early 2007, when the objectives of the UN approach to SSR were discussed for the first time.⁵ These discussions resulted in the decision to establish the IASSRTF – which was open to any interested Headquarters entities involved in SSR support – to elaborate standards, principles, and guidance based on lessons learned and best practices.⁶ An SSR Unit was also established within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO, now the Department of Peace Operations, or DPO).⁷ It was mandated to provide technical expertise across the UN system and to serve as a focal point for both UN entities and partners, as well as to act as the secretariat of the IASSRTF.⁸

The nascent IASSRTF quickly grew from seven members in 2007 to its current fourteen-member composition.⁹ It is co-chaired by the DPO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to ensure that support provided in the aftermath of conflict is aligned with the long-term needs of sustainable development and national capacity building. In recognition of the political and context-specific nature of SSR processes, the IASSRTF is mandated to maintain a repository of national SSR experiences and to facilitate ongoing consultations and policy dialogue on SSR with Member States to articulate and disseminate these lessons.

As the secretariat of the IASSRTF, the SSR Unit facilitates the work process of the IASSRTF and has developed the work methods and practices through which it advances its mandate and produces joint results. Building on the framework set out by the Policy Committee, and in line with the vision outlined by the Secretary-General in his first SSR report in 2008, the SSR Unit engaged in consultations over an 18-month period, including through a series of expert-level meetings and four principals meetings, that led in early 2009 to the adoption of a set of strategic priorities that continue to guide the work of the IASSRTF. These include:

1. The development of system-wide policies and guidance on SSR
2. Support to coherent SSR strategies in the field
3. Joint outreach and advocacy on SSR (SSR sensitization briefings)
4. Support to regional consultations and the development of partnerships
5. The development of an SSR community of practice
6. The development of a roster of civilian SSR experts for rapid deployment to the field

Over the subsequent five years, these priorities were translated into multi-year results frameworks that served as a basis for joint annual work plans developed for the IASSRTF. While the SSR Unit coordinated overall programme implementation,

individual projects were assigned “leads” who managed implementation on behalf of the IASSRTF with support from its secretariat.

Through this approach, concrete results have emerged in all six of the outcome areas listed above. A comprehensive joint guidance framework was completed in 2012, in the form of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes, described in detail in the next section. A series of inter-agency SSR field assessments produced recommendations on SSR strategies in the field and presaged the joint programming that is described later in this chapter.¹⁰ Joint outreach through single and multi-day SSR sensitization briefings conducted from 2009 to 2011 helped expand interest and engagement in SSR within the UN system, as well as in the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the South African Development Community (SADC). For the AU, discussions at these briefings led to an AU-UN partnership to strengthen AU SSR capacities and develop the AU SSR Policy Framework, which was issued in 2013. The IASSRTF also developed guidance in partnership with the World Bank that has served as basis for joint work on Public Expenditure Reviews of the security and justice sectors in many countries. And the UN Roster of SSR Experts, which was officially launched by the IASSRTF in 2010, continues to provide a pool of highly qualified advisors for rapid dispatch to the field. The IASSRTF hosts annual inter-agency workshops as well.

The IASSRTF works through two main mechanisms – principals meetings and plenary expert-level meetings. Principals meetings are typically held once a year and are co-chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions (from DPO) and the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (from UNDP). These meetings offer an opportunity to review progress in implementing previous decisions and the overall work of the IASSRTF, and to set the strategic direction and priorities for the coming period. Expert-level meetings take place once a month and are held in various configurations, tailored to specific objectives, ranging from country-related discussions to thematic policy debates. Agendas for expert meetings are developed by the IASSRTF secretariat, with input from all members and in line with jointly agreed priorities. These meetings bring together mid-level representatives from the 14 IASSRTF members and, depending on the objective, may also include representatives of partners, regional organizations, or independent experts. Members participate in meetings that are relevant to their mandates and priorities. The representatives who participate are delegated by their parent organization and are expected to represent the views of their respective offices and agencies, and to bring relevant issues back to those organizations.

The IASSRTF also meets every June for an intensive multi-day workshop that brings together representatives from designated Headquarters representatives as well as from peacekeeping operations and special political missions. These meetings are

an important opportunity for in-depth discussions that include input from field representatives on IASSRTF priorities for the coming year and on specific policy issues. Member States, donors, and partners also take part in the annual inter-agency workshops.

Initially, the effort to align over a dozen entities – each with different mandates and work cultures – on a new area of policy and operational engagement, was a challenge. The establishment of the SSR Unit as a dedicated SSR focal point for the UN system was thus critical to maintaining momentum for the work of the IASSRTF, and it continues to provide continuity for inter-agency engagement.

The development of system-wide guidance: a basis for coordination and coherence

In his 2008 report on SSR, the Secretary-General recognized that the UN was already involved in providing elements of SSR support in many contexts, but with neither the relevant policies nor methodologies to guide coherent support strategies. As a result, he identified the development of an overarching system-wide SSR guidance framework as a high priority. Given that any national SSR process involves many different fields and institutions (the Secretary-General named defence, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services, border management, justice, and civilian oversight bodies¹¹), this guidance framework had to be designed with an appreciation for the sector-wide and political elements of SSR that are vital to ensuring individual institutional reforms are not siloed from a broader political strategy, and are thus aligned with long-term national development goals and aspirations.

To inform guidance development and to better understand the main policy gaps experienced in the field, the SSR Unit conducted a scoping study in 2008 for which it consulted field practitioners, along with Member States and representatives of the IASSRTF. The results were presented during the first inter-agency SSR workshop held in 2008, where the SSR Unit laid out the fifteen thematic areas¹² that had been identified as priorities for guidance development. All of these themes represented sector-wide aspects of SSR, from design to assessments to analysis and planning, as well as coordination and consensus building among the internal and external actors who play a role in SSR. Workshop participants agreed on eleven immediate priority areas for guidance development.¹³ Taking into account its available resources, the IASSRF agreed to start developing guidance in six of these areas, with additional areas to follow.

The process of drafting this system-wide guidance was foundational for establishing UN SSR policy priorities, as well as the working methods of the

IASSRTF. Considering that the initial terms of reference (ToR) of the IASSRTF outlined only broad roles and responsibilities for the group and its members, significant effort was required to build agreement on methodology, format, and work process, and to ensure buy-in and consultations with both colleagues in the field and Member States. To share the burden and build ownership by different members of the IASSRTF, it was agreed that individual members, in accordance with their respective mandates and area of expertise, would take the lead in drafting relevant guidance. In turn, DPKO, in its dual function as secretariat and co-chair, provided the driving organizational and coordinating force necessary to sustain this multi-agency effort over two years. The secretariat developed ToR to define the length, style, and key sections/issues to be covered in the draft guidance, and the IASSRTF also developed a common template to facilitate compatibility across thematic areas. Finally, a comprehensive work plan was put forth by the secretariat for the development of guidance notes, outlining the drafting and consultation process for each note. Process design was critical, considering that the UN, despite its focus on integration and coherence, had no template for the development and adoption of system-wide guidance.

Following the endorsement by principals of a joint work plan in 2010, the development of six Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (ITGNs) was initiated, each under the lead of an IASSRTF member:

1. Introduction to the United Nations Approach to Security Sector Reform (led by the DPKO SSR Unit)
2. National Ownership of Security Sector Reform (co-led by DPKO and UNDP)
3. Gender Responsive SSR (led by UN Women)
4. Democratic Governance of the Security Sector (led by UNDP)
5. United Nations Support to National Security Policy- and Strategy-Making Processes (led by the DPKO SSR Unit)
6. Peace Processes and Security Sector Reform (led by the Department of Political Affairs, or DPA¹⁴)

Additional Notes were planned as part of a continuous process, with a note on SSR and Transnational Organized Crime (led by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, or UNODC) following shortly thereafter. In their decision to support the guidance development process, IASSRTF principals committed to assigning experts to work in dedicated thematic working groups. The IASSRTF also relied on independent experts, and in particular on DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, which contributed significantly by providing background research, substantive expertise, and drafting support. To ensure broad buy-in and validation of the guidance framework, extensive consultations were also held with experts from field missions and UN offices and presences from around the world. By the end of

the drafting process, the IASSRTF secretariat had received input from over forty field missions, offices, and presences reflecting a deep pool of experience, best practices, and lessons learned from across the Organization and from Member States.

Following the inter-agency review of nearly forty different drafts and the incorporation of feedback from numerous field offices and operations, the ITGNs were formally released in 2012. Inviting IASSRTF members to lead the development of individual guidance notes had not only enabled simultaneous work on multiple draft documents, but had also enhanced ownership of the agenda by entities across the UN system, effectively building the capacity of those members and the community of practice as a whole. Moreover, broad structured consultations on these draft documents had provided a platform for in-depth discussion within the UN system on linkages between SSR and various thematic areas, facilitating the emergence of a fully-integrated guidance framework on sector-wide aspects of SSR.

The development of the ITGNs validated the IASSRTF as an institutional mechanism with its own working practices, rules, and procedures, and as a vibrant community of practice. In the course of the drafting process, the IASSRTF secretariat built a dedicated knowledge management platform that enables easy access to documents and timelines, and has made the input received by any IASSRTF member, enhancing transparency and strengthening a sense of shared purpose among members. Since the adoption of the ITGNs in 2012, the IASSRTF has actively supported their dissemination among UN staff, Member States, and partners, including through ministerial-level events in New York and Geneva. This, too, has reinforced a standard of transparency in an area previously reserved for a small group of technical and security experts.

In early 2013, the ITGNs were translated into Arabic, French, and Spanish, and were then integrated into the training of Roster experts that took place in March 2013. The ITGNs have become a point of reference for various peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping contexts, have been used and shared with governments and missions involved in SSR-related efforts from Iraq to Côte d'Ivoire, and are drawn upon by SSR advisors in the field for their daily work. The language of the ITGNs has also increasingly informed the language of SSR in peace agreements, as well as the work of regional organizations.

Inter-agency support at the Headquarters level: successes and challenges in enhancing the coherence of SSR efforts in the field

The expansion of mandates

A lack of coherent and timely solutions has repeatedly been identified as a cause of inadequate UN responses in post-conflict situations where the Organization has had

to act fast and deliver within a short window of opportunity. Too many UN agencies have traditionally operated to support narrow institutional reforms, each acting based on their own analysis and delivering piecemeal projects. The need for system-wide solutions in broad areas of work, such as SSR – which is considered critical to ending conflict and building peace – led to a 2011 Decision by the Policy Committee to strengthen the mandate of the IASSRTF by providing direct support to the field, a change which came just as the IASSRTF was embarking on the development of the first set of ITGNs.¹⁵ This differed from the initial model for the IASSRTF as an exclusively Headquarters-based capacity, which had emerged from a traditional understanding of the role of Headquarters.

It is important to stress that this change in the mandate of the IASSRTF came in the context of the Secretary-General's key priorities for response in the immediate aftermath of conflict.¹⁶ His “action oriented vision” strongly focused on integrated solutions on the ground, supported by an integrated Headquarters ready to provide backing in “re-occurring priority areas” such as security and safety, political processes, core government functions, and basic service provision. Dedicated system-wide arrangements organized around thematic priority areas were envisioned as capacity hubs to: mitigate chronic challenges to effective delivery in the field by developing policies and guidance to lead system-wide action, identify qualified civilian experts, ensure the adequate management of staff rosters, develop partnerships, and support resource mobilization. These dedicated arrangements would also continue with policy and guidance development and offer further support to coherent strategies for the field through system-wide assessments (jointly with partners if necessary), utilizing existing system-wide mechanisms, including the integrated mission planning process.

Modalities for field support

To ensure direct support to the field, the IASSRTF employed two key modalities: first, dedicated country-specific working groups at Headquarters focused on developing joint analysis, strategic advice, and messaging; and second, the facilitation of joint SSR programmes among IASSRTF members at the country level. A good example of one of these country-specific working groups was the group on Guinea (see Box 1), established in May 2011 at the request of the Peacebuilding Support Office (an IASSRTF member). Since 2007, Guinea had been on the agenda of the IASSRTF, which monitored and discussed its national SSR process in numerous expert meetings. The SSR process in Guinea had gained momentum through the strong political commitment of a new interim President and the involvement of ECOWAS as a facilitator of political transition in the country. By forming a dedicated Headquarters-level working group, the Peacebuilding Support Office

sought to ensure regular dialogue and support for Guinea, both during programme development and in monitoring the SSR process.

Box 1. Joint IASSRTF analysis and advocacy in Guinea

Based on a 2010 inter-agency SSR assessment mission to Guinea that was supported by the IASSRTF, ECOWAS, and the AU, the Peacebuilding Fund was prepared to allocate significant resources to support the SSR process in Guinea. The IASSRTF and the SSR Unit provided the platform to assemble a group of experts from across UN Headquarters, the UN country team in Guinea (a non-mission setting), the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), ECOWAS, and the World Bank, to serve as a backstopping mechanism for the SSR capacity of the UN country team. This ensured coherent guidance and oversight for implementation of the overall SSR strategy as well as for individual projects and activities.

On the ground, and upon the request of Guinea's President, a unique SSR support modality was configured that aligned the UN's funding, programmatic, and political support behind a nationally-owned SSR strategy. The Peacebuilding Fund supported the establishment of a small SSR Advisory Team embedded within the President's office to provide ongoing advice and mentoring. An IASSRTF working group advised on the development of the Peacebuilding Fund-backed SSR programme as well as directly supporting and participating in key SSR events on the ground.

In 2014, the IASSRTF undertook its first joint assessment mission to Guinea to take stock of the SSR process and evaluate the implementation of recommendations made by the 2010 mission. The joint mission noted that progress had been made in developing a national SSR architecture, including the finalization of SSR policies and strategies. It also recognized improvements in national SSR coordination, rooted in strong national ownership and commitment by Guinean leadership. The mission produced a series of recommendations, highlighting the need for long-term reforms to be undergirded by a legal framework for the SSR architecture, as well as for continued leadership and enhanced parliamentary oversight of the security sector, and sustained international investment alongside improvements in the management of security expenditures.

Despite challenges stemming from the lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework for either the programming or the mission in Guinea, the country has successfully moved off the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. Support for Guinea also provided a successful model for subsequent IASSRTF support to Burkina Faso and The Gambia, and its non-mission focus reflects the Secretary-General's current approach to sustaining peace through preventive measures.

Another example of such support was the joint engagement on SSR in Iraq (see Box 2), where UNDP had been working since 2012 to support the development of a national security strategy, and was working with the Office of the National Security Advisor as well as mid-level managers from different security institutions

to develop support for democratic governance of the security sector. When the Iraqi Government decided to adopt a draft security strategy in mid-2014, UNDP requested support from DPKO and DPA, through the IASSRTF, to ensure a common UN position towards the strategy and the SSR process that was to follow its adoption.

Box 2. Joint IASSRTF analysis and political engagement in Iraq

The highly-sensitive nature of SSR can lead senior UN political leadership to be cautious in engaging directly with high-level government representatives on SSR-related issues or in consulting with donors and coordinating international assistance to SSR. The IASSRTF has played an important role in advising senior UN leaders on options for political engagement strategies and the role of the UN in SSR. In Iraq, the IASSRTF co-chairs deployed a small mission of senior Headquarters representatives to consult with UN representatives and partners on the ground and to participate at the National Conference to launch the National Security Strategy in 2014. Based on this mission and on dialogue held with different stakeholders on the ground, the IASSRTF provided a uniform assessment of the needs and priorities for SSR in Iraq going forward, and successfully supported the fundraising for a second phase of the UNDP-led SSR project in Iraq, which developed into an important pillar of international assistance and engagement in the sector from 2015–2018.

The Iraq case demonstrated a limit of programmatic engagement on SSR, and the importance of complementing the work of the UN country team with political advocacy and good offices. This is a key consideration at a time when the demand for SSR support is increasing in non-mission settings, in which UN country teams are on the ground but typically have very limited capacities to implement SSR programmes. In these cases, the IASSRTF has played an important role by providing a platform for joint analysis, advocacy, and knowledge sharing, and ensuring connectivity to regional partners while linking UN country teams and national representatives to the SSR policy dialogue with Member States in New York.

The second modality for IASSRTF support to the field has been the facilitation of joint SSR programming among its members. Utilizing funding from the Government of the Netherlands, the co-chairs of the IASSRTF issued calls for proposals that would bring members together around jointly agreed initiatives, with the objective of using joint programmes and funding as incentives for field colleagues to not only work together but also develop programming that would implement the newly developed ITGNs. Funding was thus premised on a clear articulation of initiatives that were sector-wide in nature and aimed at strengthening governance, national ownership, and the coordination of a respective country's security sector. In the first round of applications in 2013, they were received from thirteen countries, and in a second round in 2015, from eleven countries. Following a rigorous selection process,

the IASSRTF provided funding for SSR programmes in five of these countries.¹⁷ Importantly, this provided an opportunity and incentive to implement the ITGNs in country-specific contexts and thus promote a coherent and integrated approach to SSR.

Attempts to move towards support for joint programmes in the field proved more challenging in practice than expected. At the outset, considerable effort was required at Headquarters both to improve the integrative nature of proposals, which tended to frame support in terms of sector components without clearly identifying sector-wide aspects, and to bring together the contributions of individual members around a common strategy for a given country. Funding structures for field activities made these difficulties even more pronounced. Joint funding was not new for the IASSRTF as such, as its original Headquarters operations had been supported by joint funding from Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Norway. However, Member State funding for field-based IASSRTF projects ran into particular structural obstacles. UNDP was the designated funding recipient, but it was challenging for the IASSRTF to obtain regular project updates on implementation because there was no mechanism through which its secretariat received progress reports or information on the allocation of funds, which impacted monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy efforts. And, on several occasions, institutional regulations hindered the rapid disbursement of funds, resulting in missed political openings for SSR support to the field.

In 2015–2016, during IASSRTF discussions on developing a joint strategic plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), the first thematic resolution on SSR, lessons learned from previous support to joint programmes were carefully considered. A decision was reached, and was endorsed by IASSRTF principals, to continue supporting joint programmes in the field but only where such support may have a catalytic effect and clear consensus exists regarding the added value the IASSRTF could bring. Additionally, building on the provisions of resolution 2151, the principals agreed that the IASSRTF should increasingly focus on developing SSR-specific analysis and assessments to enable the presentation of coordinated positions on SSR during integrated mission planning processes and during the preparation of reports of the Secretary-General on country contexts with SSR mandates.

In terms of field support, the IASSRTF has added value by developing innovative system-wide policies and guidance, coordinating with regional partners, and playing an advocacy role at the country, regional, and international levels. Owing to the challenges experienced in supporting joint programmes, the IASSRTF has been less active in this area since 2016. In 2018, during the review of the UN Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections (GFP), and considering the operational and policy linkages between these areas and SSR, it was proposed that the GFP add SSR

as a thematic area of its engagement. The GFP was established in 2011 and is almost exclusively focused on developing joint programmes in the field. It makes a natural partner for the IASSRTF, as each platform has developed work practices suited to its specific objectives. The IASSRTF has a broader membership than the GFP, but all the members of the GFP (except UNHCR) are also members of the IASSRTF. Hence, discussions in the IASSRTF framework on sector-wide SSR assessments and strategies, and coordination with partners, will benefit programme development and monitoring done in the framework of the GFP. At the same time, the GFP offers an opportunity for SSR practitioners to develop joint programming, providing an important channel of funding and capacity for small SSR teams that struggle to balance political engagement and technical support.

Inter-agency coordination at the country level: ensuring successful transitions from post-conflict to long-term development support

The configuration of inter-agency SSR coordination at the country level is shaped by many factors, including the scope of an SSR mandate, the number of UN entities involved in SSR, and the disposition of senior national leadership towards SSR support and coordination. The example of Guinea, noted above, illustrates the role of the IASSRTF in non-conflict settings – where the focus is on strengthening the capacity of UN country teams that often include just one or two SSR advisors, through system-wide support and expertise from Headquarters, while also maintaining a political analysis of SSR developments.

Where SSR is implemented in the framework of a Security Council mandate, inter-agency coordination is critical to ensuring that the progress achieved by peace operations can be sustained with support by the UN country team and under the leadership of the national government. SSR is typically among the tasks that cannot be fully realized during the lifespan of a peace operation. While work undertaken during a Security Council mandate will ideally put in place an inclusive and nationally-owned policy and planning framework for SSR and see the initiation of politically-sensitive institutional and legal reforms, long-term institution building mostly falls on UN country teams, regional actors, and donors. Yet, this transition does not happen automatically or seamlessly, and experiences from Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia show that the readiness and commitment of a UN country team to take on SSR-related tasks depends largely on the extent of inter-agency coordination and the degree to which SSR efforts were integrated into peace operations.

In Côte d'Ivoire, starting with Security Council resolution 2000 (2011), UNOCI supported a comprehensive SSR mandate involving many actors. The mission invested significant efforts in developing strong coordination mechanisms with the

host government to support the coherent delivery of SSR initiatives by all UN actors as well as by international partners. In 2014, when the Security Council began preparing for the closure of UNOCI, it articulated a set of SSR benchmarks that led the UNOCI SSR team to establish an SSR inter-agency working group modelled on the IASSRTF. The group had two objectives: first, to ensure agreement on an integrated approach to SSR programming implemented to achieve Security Council benchmarks and to provide integrated reporting to the Security Council on progress; and second, to plan and execute a coordinated handover of critical SSR tasks from UNOCI to the UN country team. Under the joint leadership of the two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, thereby linking the political and development and humanitarian arms of the organization, the SSR working group was able to successfully support the national government in meeting SSR benchmarks and thus ensured that the UN country team would take over important SSR tasks from UNOCI.

While the SSR process mandated by the Security Council in Côte d'Ivoire is widely recognized as a success, the security sector there remains a latent source of instability and a potential risk to sustained peace. For this reason, the IASSRTF has remained engaged on SSR in the country through quarterly meetings that bring together the UN country team with relevant Headquarters entities and regional stakeholders to exchange information, undertake joint analysis of SSR developments, and produce joint messages for senior leadership and Member States as needed. In 2018, in cooperation with the UN Group of Friends of SSR,¹⁸ the IASSRTF supported high-level dialogue on SSR experiences in West Africa, which was co-chaired by Côte d'Ivoire and Belgium. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire spoke about achievements and remaining challenges related to SSR in the country, and the dialogue also included a report on lessons from Côte d'Ivoire among Member States, which provided a platform for the Government to seek political and financial support for reforms that are still underway.

Since the Secretary-General's first report on SSR in 2008, which strongly emphasized the need to better coordinate the UN response regarding SSR, field missions have increasingly established SSR coordination mechanisms. The establishment of coordination structures at the field level is dependent on many factors, including the prominence of SSR in the mandate and specific references to SSR coordination therein. But other factors play a role, too, such as the commitment of heads of missions and SSR capacities on the ground. Specific contexts also determine the substantive relationship with other closely related agendas, in particular DDR and rule of law, which may be reflected in the configuration of relevant inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

Conclusion

The IASSRTF has made great strides in enhancing UN inter-agency coordination on SSR in a short span of time. Sporadic and piecemeal approaches were the norm before 2007, but have now been replaced by a common body of guidance, policy, and practice, as well as a central platform for coordination, joint analysis, and advocacy. Despite inherent challenges in coordinating across a vast bureaucratic organization, the IASSRTF and SSR Unit have been able to serve as anchors for the UN SSR agenda and for shared results. Thus far, experience shows that certain conditions are necessary for success. First, the existence of a structured and inclusive process for the development of common priorities and plans has ensured that the IASSRTF has remained responsive to changing needs in the field. Second, developing work practices that take advantage of the expertise and experience embedded in the broad membership of the IASSRTF, as well as that of partners and Member States, has been critical to advancing a global and system-wide approach to SSR. Third, the dedicated coordination and facilitation capacity of the SSR Unit has enabled steady progress and the translation of priorities into action. As highlighted in the development of the ITGNs, task-specific focal points within the member entities have been vital as well. The IASSRTF has functioned as an important joint platform for knowledge management, institutional memory, and outreach.

Recognizing successes and challenges to this point, it is important to consider which coordination functions and outcomes have had the most significant impact on furthering SSR objectives in the field, while keeping in mind that dedicated resources for coordination will remain limited. The focus of Secretary-General Guterres on fostering political solutions and preventing the outbreak and re-occurrence of conflict demands comprehensive reforms that will streamline administrative processes, decentralize decision-making at all levels, and ensure strategic political engagement in cooperation with regional partners. This reform process not only validates the integrative focus of the UN SSR agenda over the past decade, but offers the opportunity to remove structural challenges that have hindered effective implementation of integrated SSR strategies in the past. To fully realize the potential of these reforms, the IASSRTF should build on achievements of the past decade and set ambitious goals to advance the SSR agenda. Three immediate priorities are outlined below.

First, the IASSRTF should develop more knowledge, analysis, and advocacy to strengthen the practice of international coordination of SSR support. Mirroring work in other areas of international assistance in the 1990s, the IASSRTF is well placed to lead a process, in close coordination with Member States and regional partners, to enhance the transparency and predictability of international support

to SSR. Security Council mandates have increasingly tasked peace operations with supporting the coordination of international support to SSR, so that today, virtually all mission mandates reference coordination beyond the UN. Hence, in most cases, SSR inter-agency coordination in the field is closely linked to and takes place in the context of a Security Council mandate for national and/or international support to SSR, as is the case in Mali, the Central African Republic, Somalia, and Libya. UN SSR advisors in non-mission contexts, such as The Gambia or Burkina Faso, also perform coordination functions.

Yet, despite the recognition that effective coordination of international assistance to SSR is among the key factors of successful reforms, coordination practices are developed on a case-by-case basis and are typically vague and difficult to understand for those not closely associated with the specific context or process. While there are numerous reasons why national governments, which are both providers and recipients of SSR assistance, may seek to keep this support private, more transparency and a general agreement regarding good practices for international coordination of SSR would benefit all and improve the overall impact of international assistance.

Second, the IASSRTF should further enhance its function as a facilitator of dialogue and work with senior leaders, partners, and national counterparts to strengthen international dialogue on SSR processes in the field. Over the past ten years, the IASSRTF has found particular success in advocacy and in maintaining a close policy dialogue with Member States, including on politically sensitive issues. Through its policy and advocacy role, the IASSRTF has supported SSR teams in conveying politically-sensitive messages to national counterparts through country-specific or thematic SSR events in New York. It has also served as a fundraising platform and a mechanism for information sharing and coordination with bilateral and regional partners.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, continued international attention and support to SSR is an important aspect of preventive engagement by the UN, and the IASSRTF has effectively performed this function through light and nimble engagement. However, it will be very challenging to maintain the level of awareness and analysis of SSR developments in Côte d'Ivoire required for preventive political engagement without knowledge of the history of SSR in the country, a link to a network of experts already engaged there, and access to partnerships with actors like the UN Group of Friends of SSR, the AU, the European Union, the World Bank, and ECOWAS. SSR policy dialogue must be informed by and based on country-specific developments and circumstances, which means the IASSRTF must closely follow and jointly analyse relevant country processes.

Third, building on its system-wide guidance framework, broad membership, and strong network of partners, the IASSRTF should remain focused on

developing methodologies and knowledge products to improve analysis, assessments, and high-level policy advice to Member States and senior UN leaders. While bilateral and international support to SSR is rapidly growing, many areas of SSR remain under-researched, and the effects of various reform approaches and their inter-linkages are poorly understood. A key lesson learned from the support provided by the IASSRTF to joint programmes was the indispensable role of evidence-based and unbiased analysis as the basis for impactful inter-agency programme development. In the absence of agreed strategic priorities and sound analysis to drive joint programming, there is a risk that significant time and effort will be invested on what can be jointly agreed, rather than on addressing the most pressing challenges in any given context.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations, Joint Inspection Unit, *The Role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinators: A Benchmarking Framework for Coherence and Integration within the United Nations System* (JIU/REP/2009/9), 2009, p. 3.
- ² United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659-S/2008/39), 23 January 2008, para. 44.
- ³ *Ibid.*, para. 42.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 60.
- ⁵ Under Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, the Policy Committee was designated to deal with issues requiring strategic guidance and policy decisions on thematic and emerging issues affecting the United Nations. The Secretary-General chaired the Policy Committee, which closely coordinated its efforts with the UN system chief executive board for coordination (CEB). The bi-annual meetings of the CEB are chaired by the Secretary-General and attended by heads of 27 UN system organizations. The CEB, with its three subsidiary bodies – the high-level committee on programmes (HLCPP), the high-level committee on management (HLCM), and the UN development group (UNDG) – form the organization's principal coordination and system-wide coherence machinery. In 2017, Secretary-General Guterres established an Executive Committee that took over the functions previously performed by the Policy Committee.
- ⁶ United Nations, Decision of the Secretary-General, 16 February 2007 Policy Committee Meeting, Decision No. 2007/11, 16 February 2007.
- ⁷ Prior to 1 January 2019, the Department of Peace Operations was called the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). It is referred to in this text by the acronym relevant to the time period being discussed.
- ⁸ When it was established in 2007, the SSR Unit in DPKO consisted of one professional staff and one administrative support staff, as well as one Junior Professional Officer. Over the following years, the Unit gradually grew to its current size of six professional staff, and one uniformed seconded SSR officer.
- ⁹ Current members include DPPA, DPO, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, ODA, OHCHR, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNODC, UNOPS, and UN WOMEN.
- ¹⁰ These assessments were carried out in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, southern Sudan, and Guinea.

- ¹¹ Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659, S/2008/39).
- ¹² The fifteen areas were: 1. Advocacy; 2. Political Will and National Ownership; 3. Consensus and Coordination; 4. Peace Agreements; 5. Trust and Confidence; 6. Regional Organizations; 7. Governance, Oversight and Management; 8. Assessments and Reviews; 9. National Security Strategies; 10. SSR Development Plans; 11. Civil Society; 12. Security Sector Stabilization; 13. Component Capacity Building including resources (DSR); 14. Education, Training and Research; and 15. Monitoring and Evaluation.
- ¹³ Of the areas discussed during the workshop, participants agreed these eleven should take priority: 1. Political Will and National Ownership; 2. Consensus and Coordination; 3. Trust and Confidence; 4. Governance, Oversight and Management; 5. Assessments and Reviews; 6. National Security Strategies; 7. SSR Development plans; 8. Civil Society; 9. Security Sector Stabilization; 10. Component Capacity Building (DSR); and 11. Monitoring and Evaluation.
- ¹⁴ DPA was renamed the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) as of 1 January 2019.
- ¹⁵ United Nations, Decision of the Secretary-General, 11 January 2011 Policy Committee Meeting, Decision No. 2011/1, 12 January 2011.
- ¹⁶ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/881–S/2009/304), 11 June 2009.
- ¹⁷ These were: the DRC (UNDP and DPKO through MONUSCO); Honduras (UNDP, OHCHR, and UNODC); Kosovo (UNDP and DPKO through UNMIK); Myanmar (UNDP and UNODC); and Guinea-Bissau (UNODC, UNDP, and DPA through UNIOGBIS).
- ¹⁸ The UN Group of Friends of SSR is an informal group of Member States, chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, that lead policy dialogue on SSR among UN Member States and work closely with the IASSRTF to advance advocacy, knowledge, lessons learned, and partnerships on SSR.

Better together: Partnering with regional organizations in SSR

KRISTIANA POWELL AND NORMAN MLAMBO

Introduction

Regional and other multilateral organizations play a concrete and increasingly important role in the manifestation of the UN vision of international peace and security. The operationalization of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter (calling for Security Council collaboration with regional organizations) received a significant boost from former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, which called on "regional arrangements and agencies" to consider the potential part they could play in preventative diplomacy, peacekeeping, peace-making and post-conflict peacebuilding. Since then, the UN has cooperated with, among others, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The approach of the UN to security sector reform (SSR) has developed with an emphasis on partnerships with these regional organizations – which are regarded as critical building blocks of the UN SSR framework. Indeed, both the first and second reports of the Secretary-General on SSR (issued in 2008 and 2013 respectively) acknowledge the centrality of partnerships to the success of reform.¹ Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), the first stand-alone Security Council resolution on SSR, further underlines the importance of partnerships in supporting SSR and fostering greater regional engagement.²

Against this backdrop, this chapter explores how the UN and the AU have worked together and considers a number of useful lessons for enhancing this partnership. The chapter begins by highlighting the rationale for the partnership, based on mutual benefits and comparative advantages. This is followed by an assessment of UN engagement with the AU on SSR support specifically, which draws instructive conclusions about this unique and relatively new partnership.

Opportunities and constraints in partnering on SSR

From the perspective of the UN, regional organizations are essential to its global approach to SSR, and developing strategic, operational, and capacity-building partnerships in SSR is a core element of the UN SSR framework – as detailed in the two reports of the Secretary-General on SSR and in Security Council resolution 2151.³ Thus, the legitimacy and sustainability of the UN approach depends to a large extent on the degree to which it is informed by and responds to regional approaches. Regional organizations can serve as a vital bridge for information and knowledge-sharing between actors at the community, national, and global levels, which can help improve the efficacy of international support to nationally-led SSR processes as well as the perceived legitimacy of this support. Additionally, the UN has discovered that the transnational character of many security threats means they can be addressed only through regional approaches.⁴

From the perspective of a regional organization such as the AU, the UN offers global legitimacy to its activities in the context of peace and security. SSR is a highly political issue that cuts to the very core of state sovereignty, and it is often viewed with scepticism by Member States who may consider external engagement in SSR an excuse or proxy for the promotion of reform models that reflect external priorities and interests rather than those of the societies undergoing reform. Given this concern, “the global mandate, political neutrality and legitimacy of the United Nations uniquely position the Organization as the most suitable partner to provide support to regional organizations, in this important but delicate area.”⁵ Moreover, the UN is able to provide or assist in leveraging much needed resources in the area of peace and security, including for SSR. The UN also has expertise in planning, deploying, and supporting peacekeeping and other operations and can draw from diverse experiences around the world, particularly in Africa.⁶

However, UN collaboration with multilateral and regional organizations in peace and security-related issues is not without its challenges, for both partners. In some cases, interests or approaches diverge, or the UN and partner organizations compete for jurisdiction and influence. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), some analysts have observed that the EU SSR Mission (EUSEC) and the UN Mission (MONUC) competed with one another for influence over national authorities and in the international community, ultimately undermining the efforts of each to enhance donor coordination in the area of defence sector reform.⁷ With this in mind, the AU, UN, and EU have been working to address issues of coherence and coordination in SSR support to the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali.

An inverse challenge also exists: Partnering with the UN in specific peace and security contexts may compromise the capacity of some partners to fulfil their mandates. One example of this is in the lack of convergence between the AU and

UN during the conflict in Libya in 2011. The AU Peace and Security Council articulated a political roadmap that it believed would have provided a diplomatic solution to the Libyan crisis, but other members of the international community supported NATO's bombing campaign in Libya on the strength of what some have characterized as a deliberate misinterpretation of UN Security Council resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011). Critics of UN-NATO action on Libya have charged that the Security Council ignored the AU peace plan in favour of military action.⁸ Importantly, this lack of convergence made partnership between the UN and the AU virtually impossible in this context.

Still, despite these challenges, the benefits of working in partnership have led the UN and regional organizations to explore ways to strengthen their collaboration in peace and security, including in SSR. The 2009 New Horizon initiative, for example, placed great emphasis on strengthening internal and external partnerships to create capacity-driven responses to conflict, citing UN technical and capacity-building support to AU deployments in Darfur, Sudan, and Somalia in the areas of SSR, DDR, and mine action.⁹ In the aftermath of conflict, the UN's work in building civilian capacity also prioritizes strong partnerships, including with regional organizations, to better leverage non-UN resources in support of sustainable peace and development.¹⁰ Recently, the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations again stressed the importance of a strong global-regional framework to respond to both emerging and long-standing crises.¹¹ And this is reflected in the current conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda of the UN as well, which places a high premium on partnerships with regional organizations.

Since 2008, the UN SSR Unit and the UN Inter-agency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF) have undertaken various initiatives to advance the commitment of the UN to partnering with regional organizations in SSR. In 2009 and 2010, the IASSRTF and SSR Unit held regional consultations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Asia-Pacific region, and Africa with the intention of laying the foundation for longer-term SSR partnerships with the Organization of American States (OAS), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the AU.¹² In addition, the SSR Unit has pledged to expand its information exchange with the AU and undertake joint assessments, described below. Several limitations to partnerships do remain, however, including: different normative bases and priorities for SSR, the recipient/provider divide, and the lack of clarity related to roles and dedicated counterparts.

Different normative bases and priorities for SSR

Many regional organizations have unique normative bases and priorities for SSR that did not necessarily align with the emerging UN approach at the time the SSR

Unit and IASSRTF held consultations, which were primarily focused on SSR in post-conflict contexts. For example, the regional consultation in Latin America and the Caribbean underscored that the focus of SSR in that region had shifted over the previous decade from addressing post-conflict priorities to those linked with security threats such as organized crime and corruption, increased violent crime, sexual violence, gang violence, narco-trafficking, and the proliferation of unregulated private security companies. These threats, which are not unique to the region, require defined SSR responses. Yet, the approach of the UN to SSR at the time was perceived as too narrowly focused on post-conflict conditions to resonate with Latin American experiences and compel the OAS to collaborate.

Similarly, consultations in the Asia-Pacific region did not lead to the development of an SSR-focused strategic partnership between the UN and ASEAN, though this may be due to the political sensitivities of SSR in the region. Indeed, a discussion of SSR was intentionally downplayed on the agenda of the consultations due to concerns that it was too controversial a subject for a standalone event. This is reminiscent of some of the concerns expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement in the first few years of developing the UN's approach to SSR, as mentioned elsewhere in this volume.

The recipient/provider divide

As Ebo notes, “[i]ntergovernmental organizations (IGOs) are essentially reflections and products of their constituent members, and thus manifest the trends, contradictions, challenges and opportunities within and between various clusters of states in the global system.”¹³ Most of the organizations mentioned above are *providers* of SSR support; that is, while many of their members have undergone SSR, sometimes with assistance from other members, the bulk of their SSR support is directed towards non-member states. In fact, during the Buenos Aires and Jakarta consultations mentioned above, many OAS and ASEAN countries stressed that they are generally “exporters” and not “recipients” of SSR support and that member countries within these regions have, for the most part, deliberately chosen to undergo SSR without external support. This “recipient/provider divide” is also evident in relations between the UN and these organizations; which, as providers, have little need for operational or capacity-building support from the UN or its capacities to help mobilize resources. Thus, for some organizations, the value of an operational or capacity-building partnership with the UN in SSR is unclear.

The fact that *recipients* of support do not typically participate in the decision-making of provider organizations can lead to an imbalance of power between recipients and providers. If not carefully managed, this may create the impression that the SSR programming and norms of these organizations are externally generated, i.e. “imported.” The UN must therefore be cautious not to align itself too closely

with these organizations, lest it be perceived as representing external interests or norms, weakening its position as an impartial global partner offering a global SSR framework. Notably, the UN has long recognized these dynamics, and this is among the reasons the Organization is so committed to promoting and protecting national ownership. Indeed, the 2008 and 2013 reports of the Secretary-General on SSR, as well as Security Council resolution 2151, identify national ownership as a guiding principle and central priority of reform processes. The UN's Integrated Technical Guidance Note (ITGN) on national ownership specifically outlines a UN approach based on support for a common national security vision, as well as implementation that relies on national participation and capacity, is nationally led, and is focused on monitoring and evaluation.¹⁴

Roles and counterparts: A lack of clarity

One major feature of international support to national SSR processes has been the lack of clarity regarding the role(s) of respective organizations. While it is commonly agreed that SSR is a multidisciplinary endeavour, there has been a trend of regional organizations engaging in SSR support without a clear grasp of the plans and priorities of international organizations. In Mali, for example, the 2013 UN intervention (initially led through the short-lived UN Office in Mali, UNOM) needed to align with the activities of EU engagements such as EUTM, which was already on the ground, along with various bilateral efforts. Lessons from Mali contributed to better clarity in roles and enhanced coherence in SSR support between the EU and the UN in the subsequent case of CAR.¹⁵ But in South Sudan, UNMISS found itself tangled in a complex web of well-intended multilateral and bilateral support, including to SSR, from providers as wide-ranging as the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Norway, the UK (mostly through Adam Smith International), and several other international actors. This problem of ambiguity regarding roles in international SSR support has been a recurring one; and it eventually informed the decision of the UN SSR Unit to commission DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance to undertake a mapping study of the roles played by the AU, UN, EU, and OSCE in this context. The findings provide a clearer picture of the normative frameworks and institutional and operational capacities of these actors, helping to clarify roles and achieve greater predictability in multilateral support to SSR.¹⁶

A lack of clarity regarding roles has been compounded, in many cases, by the absence of a single dedicated counterpart that engages alongside the UN. However, much progress is being made on this front. In the particular case of the AU, the establishment of its own SSR Unit has created a “single door to knock on.” Similarly, the adoption of a common EU SSR policy has had a positive impact on EU

partnership with the UN, including in SSR support, as has the introduction of liaison offices in New York and Brussels.

The special case of the UN-AU partnership in SSR

SSR is a major element of the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which itself is crucial to the implementation of the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP) adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in 2004. Thus, SSR has been incorporated into the AU Agenda 2063 as well as the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, which was adopted by the Assembly in January 2017. In the view of the AU, SSR is vital to transforming the national security elements of its Member States, in order to make them more effective, efficient, and responsive to the democratic control of national institutions and to the security and justice needs of citizens. The mandate for AU SSR activities is well laid out in the 2006 Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy, the AU Assembly decision on SSR of January 2008, and the AU Policy Framework on SSR adopted by the Assembly in January 2013. In collaboration with partners, the AU has thus far undertaken SSR engagements that include developing SSR guidance documents, leading joint SSR assessment missions to AU Member States, deploying SSR experts to assist Member States, and providing SSR training and outreach, with a focus on assisting Member States to implement national SSR initiatives that are guided by the Policy Framework on SSR.

The strategic SSR partnership that has developed between the AU and the UN is unique. Though the AU has enjoyed fruitful collaborations on SSR with other organizations – including the EU, African sub-regional organizations, and civil society organizations such as the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) – its partnership with the UN stands out. The origins of this partnership can be traced to an international workshop in Cape Town, South Africa on “Enhancing UN support for SSR in Africa,” consolidated during the March 2009 African Regional Consultation on SSR that was held at AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, referenced earlier. Initially, the partnership was built upon two pillars: (i) UN support for the development of an AU SSR Policy Framework, and (ii) building the capacities of the AU to implement this Framework across the continent.

The pillars of partnership

The **first pillar** involved UN support for the elaboration of an AU Policy Framework on SSR, drafted in response to a 2008 decision adopted by the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government, which encouraged the AU Commission to develop a continental Policy Framework on SSR to guide the AU in supporting

the implementation of SSR in Member States.¹⁷ This was based on the recognition that the AU lacked clear strategic and operational guidance for both Member States and other stakeholders on how to support SSR implementation on the continent, presenting a major impediment to ensuring African ownership and sustainability of SSR initiatives. The AU Policy Framework on SSR was drafted by staff of the AU Peace and Security Department and the UN SSR Unit, following extensive consultations, including with government experts from AU Member States as well as with African sub-regional and civil society organizations.

The UN actively supported AU efforts to strengthen the Framework through a series of joint AU-UN consultations. In May 2010, the Governments of Nigeria and South Africa co-hosted a High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR in New York with technical support from the UN SSR Unit, substantive support from the ASSN, and financial support from the Government of the Netherlands. The event, meant to offer an opportunity to African Member States to share their perspectives on SSR as both recipients and providers of SSR support on the continent, focused on three main themes: national ownership, coordination of SSR assistance, and the regional dimensions of SSR. Significantly, discussions at the Forum played a role in expanding the definition of a “donor” in international SSR support beyond the context of financial contributions alone. As noted by the Co-chairs of the Forum, “an increasing number of African countries, including Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania, have been providing SSR-related assistance to fellow African states. . . . This is a positive development that provides an encouraging basis for the successful implementation of the AU’s SSR policy framework and for expanding the global community of SSR support.”¹⁸ The statement of the Co-chairs served as a key source for the elaboration of the AU Policy Framework.

In October 2011, under the presidency of Nigeria, the UN Security Council held a debate on SSR that emphasized the need to give greater consideration to African perspectives on the process. The Presidential Statement that emerged welcomed the partnership between the AU and the UN in developing a continental policy framework for SSR and facilitating its implementation. At a second High-level Forum, hosted in October 2012, a number of key elements of the AU SSR Policy Framework were addressed and further political support for the document was generated. Throughout this period, the UN and AU co-hosted a series of drafting workshops for participants from the SSR capacity in the AU Commission, the UN SSR Unit, and the ASSN, which helped to refine the Framework and highlight points of alignment and divergence between the AU and UN approaches to SSR. In January 2013, the Framework was adopted during the 20th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly.

The **second pillar** of UN-AU partnership was focused on building AU capacities to implement its Framework. To this end, the AU, the UN, and the EU developed an innovative multi-year capacity-building programme in SSR with implementation support from the ASSN.¹⁹ The programme centred around five main objectives:

1. Facilitating a process for the production, adoption, and promulgation of the AU Framework and related instruments, in accordance with AU Summit decisions and based on the principle of African ownership;
2. Supporting and facilitating capacity-building within the AU for SSR;
3. Strengthening the AU Commission as well as field-based consultation and collaboration between the AU, the UN, the EU and other partners in SSR;
4. Institutionalizing AU input into the elaboration of a global approach to SSR, along with the development and deployment of tools to implement this approach; and
5. Ensuring the emerging AU approach to SSR informs and is informed by the SSR-related policies and practices of AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities.

To achieve these objectives, the UN and AU developed policy tools and guidance, undertook capacity-building for human resources, offered advocacy and regional training, and carried out Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs) in countries requiring SSR support. In particular, JAMs represent a crucial element of the AU SSR Framework and a major area of collaboration with the UN, and paragraph 78(b) of the Framework specifically cites “joint SSR assessment missions and assisting national authorities with the development of strategies on SSR” as areas of UN support to the AU.²⁰ Beyond the UN, Article 79(d) invites international partners generally “to provide support for, and be part of joint SSR assessment missions to the AU member states together with national authorities, the AU, the RECs and the UN as may be required.”²¹

JAMs are central to the UN-AU partnership because the record of international support to SSR is one of notable incoherence, reflecting the often conflicting agendas of a multiplicity of organizations, bilateral actors, and regional organizations. When operational space is crowded by disconnected approaches, the result is disparate political messaging, and divergent analyses and understandings of the context and of reform processes. This leads to a lack of coherence in the prioritization, sequencing, monitoring, and evaluation of SSR support. JAMs provide the key actors who support SSR processes with a platform for common understanding. To date, the AU SSR Policy Framework has guided the AU, the UN, the EU, and the ASSN in undertaking JAMs in CAR, Madagascar, Guinea Bissau, and Mali, at the request of those states.²²

Still, much can be done to improve JAMs. For example, while each successive mission has represented an advancement from the one before it, working methods and planning assumptions have not yet been standardized, and doing so could enhance the predictability and timelines of these missions. Establishing common protocol and procedures would thus be useful. But there is no doubt that JAMs represent a significant and practical area of collaboration between the AU and the UN on SSR support.

Another major area of collaboration between the AU and UN has resulted in the production of seven Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs), which serve as manuals for the operationalization of the Framework and enable informed, competent, and pragmatic implementation of various phases and aspects of SSR in AU Member States. Modelled after the UN's Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (ITGNs) on SSR, the AU's seven OGNs are designed to guide the implementation of various aspects of any SSR process and cover a number of specific action areas. Drafted with the technical support of the ASSN, the OGNs were evaluated and validated through consultative workshops held in Addis Ababa, where African civil society and SSR experts provided inputs, and were comprised of the following:

1. OGN on Gender and SSR;
2. OGN on Monitoring and Evaluation of SSR Processes;
3. OGN on Conducting Needs Assessment Missions;
4. OGN on Harmonization of National Security Legislation;
5. OGN on the Development of Codes of Conduct for African Security Institutions;
6. Manual for SSR Training;
7. Handbook on SSR Good Practices in Africa.

To date, across both pillars of the partnership, both organizations claim success in making critical contributions to the development of the AU SSR Policy Framework and the establishment of a dedicated SSR capacity in the AU Commission, thereby enhancing the prospects for SSR field support to AU Member States. The reasons this initiative, compared to other attempts at partnership-building, has been successful thus far serve to highlight some best practices for the UN as it seeks to expand its regional partnerships.

Partnership as part of a broader framework: The AU-UN strategic partnership on SSR fits within a number of broader frameworks, which help to enhance its legitimacy and sustainability as well as build system-wide support in both organizations for SSR initiatives. First among these frameworks is Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, in which Article 52 encourages regional arrangements to undertake the peaceful resolution of local disputes. Yet, Article 53 precludes the use of force

without prior authorization by the Security Council, necessitating partnerships to enable both organizations to ensure the overall maintenance of peace and security.

In addition, an objective of the AU, articulated in Article 3(e) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union is to “encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”²³ The Protocol Establishing the AU Peace and Security Council also stresses cooperation with the UN Security Council as well as other relevant UN agencies.²⁴ And given the UN’s role in setting global norms and standards and as a major coordinator of international SSR support, the UN is considered a uniquely essential contributor to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The AU-UN strategic partnership on SSR is part of the “Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP)” – the UN’s overarching strategic framework for cooperation with the AU.²⁵ It aligns and is consistent with the UN’s “building block” approach. But the SSR collaboration also fits within the framework of the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhancing Partnerships on Peace and Security, which was signed by both organizations in New York on 19 April 2017.

The AU and the UN have the accumulated experiences of working together in peacekeeping, and have established different types of peacekeeping partnerships in countries like Burundi, Darfur, Somalia, Mali, and CAR.²⁶ These partnerships have exposed challenges and the need to continue to develop working methods, but they have also revealed the advantages and the necessity of cooperation, particularly where resources are strained. Thus, more than with many other regional organizations, the UN’s partnership with the AU is strengthened by shared “frontline” experiences that have helped to increase its legitimacy, which leads to results that are more consistent with the normative commitments and best practices of both organizations.

Normative alignment and shared/complementary values: The alignment of the normative approaches of the AU and UN to SSR has reflected shared values and complementary views that have laid the foundations for strategic partnership in this area. Both organizations followed similar trajectories in developing their respective approaches to SSR when the end of the Cold War ushered in an enlargement of the security agenda and a shift in the concept of security itself, which was no longer understood as the exclusive preserve of states and became increasingly linked to the wellbeing of communities and the individual (i.e., the human security approach). The AU and the UN have evolved in response to and as part of this more comprehensive agenda.

The AU’s approach is guided by the definition of security put forth in the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP),²⁷ in which a multi-dimensional understanding of security is laid out, inclusive of traditional state-centric concepts, along with notions of human, collective, and continental

security. The APSA is also guided by a broader agenda for peace and security that includes conflict prevention, early warning and preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacebuilding, and the promotion of democratic practices.

Similarly, the UN has developed an inclusive conception of security. The Millennium Declaration envisions that security extends beyond the narrow auspices of the State; and in 2001, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted in “Towards a Culture of Peace” that security could no longer be understood in purely military terms but “[r]ather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.”²⁸ These shifts towards a broader understanding of security have coincided with an evolution in the nature and composition of UN peacekeeping operations. Over the past few decades, these operations have developed from narrowly focused support for specific activities (e.g., monitoring ceasefires and patrolling buffer zones) to multi-dimensional efforts comprising a range of diverse civilian and military capacities aimed at addressing the myriad security challenges prevalent in conflict and post-conflict settings.²⁹

On SSR specifically, the AU’s approach is grounded in ten “core African principles for SSR.”³⁰ These echo the core principles of the UN, but also encompass values that are particularly relevant for or unique to the continent. For example, the AU’s Policy Framework on SSR stresses the importance of national ownership but additionally underscores that national ownership entails national responsibility, noting that national ownership cannot be viable or realistic if the financial burden for reform is borne exclusively by external actors. In addition, like the UN, the AU SSR Policy addresses the role of informal and customary security and justice providers, but the AU discusses customary security institutions much more comprehensively, directly citing actors who are addressed more generally by the UN.³¹ The AU Policy Framework even details the roles of these non-state actors in national SSR governance and reform processes, placing important emphasis on the critical support these entities can offer states in delivering security and justice services to a population.³²

The similar normative paths followed by both organizations and their close collaboration during the conceptualization, drafting, and endorsement of the main tenets of the AU Policy Framework on SSR strengthened the AU-UN partnership on SSR and generated momentum around joint efforts in this area. This arrangement – unique for the UN – also served to strengthen joint working practices and set a solid basis for further collaboration.

Mutually-reinforcing legitimacy: Despite initial controversy among some UN Member States during the development of the UN’s approach to SSR, there has been broad political and financial support for the AU-UN strategic partnership on SSR, which, as noted earlier in this chapter, was endorsed by a statement of the co-chairs

of the High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR.³³ The Security Council was also supportive of the partnership in its October 2011 Presidential Statement,³⁴ and reports of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (the C-34) consistently take note of the partnership and welcome the efforts of the AU to develop a policy framework on SSR for the African context.³⁵ This political support has helped leverage much needed resources for the partnership, including from the EU, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and other partners.

The legitimacy this affords both organizations in their respective roles in SSR has been reflected in increased requests for SSR support from Member States over the past few years. For example, the AU has received requests to engage on the development of SSR plans and activities in CAR, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Somalia, and South Sudan. But this legitimacy was also noticed at UN Headquarters, where a number of senior-level officials were particularly keen on moving the AU-UN partnership forward.

Operational alignment and dedicated counterparts: In addition to a normative alignment, the AU and UN shared similar experiences in building their SSR capacities. This “operational alignment” proved conducive to exchanges that helped strengthen their emerging partnership. Since 2007, the UN has developed a number of mechanisms by which its approach to SSR is implemented, including the IASSRTF and the SSR Unit at UN Headquarters as well as dedicated SSR capacities in UN peacekeeping and special political missions. By the time the first AU SSR Advisor was seated at AU Headquarters in early 2009, the UN and the SSR Unit in particular had already accumulated useful experience related to developing a system-wide approach to SSR and building both field and Headquarter capacities to implement it. As the AU has crafted its own approach to SSR and has established its own capacities, the UN has shared best practices and lessons learned. For example, the UN SSR Unit helped the AU Commission to elaborate the functions of an SSR Unit in the AUC's Peace and Security Department, which have been articulated in the AU SSR Policy Framework. However, the AU has not applied the UN model across the board, for instance, opting out of establishing an inter-departmental mechanism on SSR and choosing instead to position it within the larger AU Inter Departmental Task Force on Conflict Management and Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (CMPCRD).

This operational alignment would have been impossible if either organization had not established a dedicated SSR capacity that could provide a direct focal point/counterpart on this issue. In the face of escalating responsibilities alongside stagnating staffing, many AU desk officers are tasked with numerous and diverse portfolios; limiting the amount of time they can dedicate to any one area. In the area of SSR, the AU Commission had only one dedicated SSR Advisor from

January-December 2009, when this capacity was temporarily supplemented by the ASSN, which provided one SSR Advisor and two SSR Associates to the AU on secondment. But the SSR staffing situation improved for the AU with the establishment of a dedicated SSR Unit starting in January 2013, owing to support offered through the UN-EU capacity-building project.

In mid-2010, when the UN General Assembly established the Office to the African Union (UNOAU), a dedicated SSR officer was stipulated. The position has been filled since August 2011 and provides a key Addis Ababa-based focal point on SSR that has strengthened the capacity of the UN SSR Unit to provide direct support to the AU. It is clear that both the AU and the UN have benefitted from having dedicated counterparts in the area of SSR and that this has been vital to successful partnership-building.

Relationship-building and additional expertise: An incredibly important but intangible factor that also contributes to the success of the AU-UN strategic partnership on SSR is a considerable investment of trust by both organizations. The partnership has evolved through shared experience and confidence building; with the AU SSR team travelling to UN Headquarters in New York on a number of occasions to be familiarized with the workings of UN SSR Unit and to participate in annual UN IASSRTF workshops, and members of the UN SSR Unit co-locating with AU SSR capacity for short periods on a regular basis. The arrival of the SSR Advisor in the UNOAU helped triangulate this already innovative working relationship, which has continued to develop over time as project partners increasingly understand each other's institutional perspectives, requirements, strengths, and weaknesses.

Challenges and lessons

The AU-UN SSR partnership provides important lessons that can inform UN efforts to expand SSR partnerships to other regions.

Partnership requires relinquishing full control: The AU-UN partnership, like any other, has demanded that all parties give up full control on one hand, and display a good deal of patience and humility on the other. Flexibility and adaptability have also proven crucial. For example, when the AU SSR Policy Framework originally scheduled for discussion at the January 2011 Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government was delayed until January 2013. There were a number of reasons for this. First, a number of AU Member States expressed initial reservation about the elaboration of a continental Policy Framework on SSR, concerned that it might be used as a tool to interfere in their internal affairs. Addressing and managing these concerns required necessary but time-consuming consultations, delaying the

finalization of the Framework. Moreover, political upheaval in Libya in 2011 meant that much of the attention of AU Member States was focused on addressing Libyan instability. With internal issues pertaining to leadership succession in the AU emerging in 2012, thematic issues like SSR were pushed off the agendas of the 2011 and 2012 AU Summits.

These delays, which effectively postponed solidifying the AU-UN partnership, were frustrating for both organizations, but the process was the AU's and the UN had to step back and provide support only if and when requested, to avoid being seen as aggressively pushing a particular agenda and to fulfil its commitment to the principle of national ownership. The lesson learned here, which may be applicable in the context of other inter-organizational partnerships, is that partnership-building takes patience and perseverance. And in this case, it also required a degree of humility from the UN: a recognition that the Organization may be a critical actor in the SSR space but it is not the only actor or necessarily the most important one, particularly where regional players are active and engaged.

Overcoming bureaucratic obstacles requires time and resources: As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the AU SSR capacity-building programme – the second pillar of the initial AU-UN strategic partnership – has involved various partners, including three multilateral institutions (AU, EU, UN). Developing the programme thus required reconciling the procedures, rules, priorities, strengths, and weaknesses of each of these multilateral organizations. Just securing three signatures on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that guided the partnership took close to a full year, as each organization's legal team had to approve every aspect of the MOU, sometimes multiple times and even when only minor changes were made. Still, in the end, the capacity-building programme led to the development of templates and procedures that should serve as important precedents for further collaboration. And, in developing future partnerships, the UN must factor in the time and resources it may take to navigate bureaucratic obstacles to partnership-building and manage expectations accordingly.

Sustainability is not ensured: While some resources are available for the AU-UN strategic partnership, there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the AU approach to SSR. The capacity-building programme ended in December 2015, and the majority of AU SSR activities are now funded by the EU under its APSA Support Programme. Starting in 2016, however, the EU began to reduce its financial support to AU peace and security projects, including on SSR. Over the long term, it will be critical that the AU integrates its SSR activities into its regular budget, funded by Member States. Challenges of sustainability should be considered at early stages of partnership-building in the future.

Joint action requires clarity regarding roles: As this partnership moves from Headquarters to the field and as both organizations, often in collaboration with other partners, work jointly in specific national contexts, it becomes progressively more important that the roles and responsibilities of each respective partner are clearly defined. This is one of the major lessons learned from Joint Assessment Missions undertaken within the framework of the AU-UN capacity-building programme. Therefore, it is vital that relationships are carefully managed and an appropriate, context-specific division of labour is developed.

Conclusion

There are significant prospects for mutual gain in collaborations between the UN and regional organizations, including in the area of SSR. The UN has made some progress in SSR partnership-building with a variety of multilateral organizations, but with varied results. At the same time, it has faced challenges in developing sustainable and strategic SSR partnerships, from differing normative priorities, to a lack of dedicated focal points in potential partner organizations, to the fact that some partners view themselves as support “providers” and therefore see no immediate value in partnering with the UN.

The AU-UN strategic partnership on SSR therefore stands as a unique but important success to date. A number of factors or best practices have contributed to this, including the fact that the partnership aligns with a number of broader frameworks and agreements, which has helped to enhance its legitimacy and sustainability and build system-wide support for SSR initiatives. The normative and operational alignment of the approaches of the AU and UN to SSR have led to shared values and experiences, which have strengthened the partnership and enabled a culture of collaboration. The mutually-reinforcing legitimacy applied to both organizations as a result of their partnership has also helped to secure political and financial support for joint activities, further contributing to the sustainability of the partnership. Crucial to this success has been the dedication of staff capacity and SSR focal points/counterparts by both organizations, as well as additional support provided by civil society partner ASSN.

That is not to say the partnership has been without challenges, but these also serve as the basis for important lessons as the UN seeks to develop strategic partnerships with other regional organizations. A viable partnership requires that both parties relinquish full control of outcomes and exhibit patience and humility, for example, even when facing seemingly insurmountable bureaucratic obstacles that impact funding. Moreover, it is important to consider long-term sustainability at the initial stages of a partnership-building process.

As the AU-UN partnership advances, especially as the collaboration moves towards joint activities in the field, there is no doubt more lessons will emerge. Normative principles are relatively easy to agree on, but actual implementation inevitably presents unseen obstacles, often related to confronting bureaucratic realities. It would be useful to undertake an assessment of AU-UN joint field activities in the area of SSR in coming years, to provide valuable feedback to the UN as it explores partnerships with other regional organizations. What is clear already is that the AU and the UN have developed a mutually reinforcing and advantageous partnership on SSR support that has made them demonstrably better together. Still, it is important to exercise some caution before drawing any general conclusions from this, as one size does not fit all when it comes to partnership building. While the UN can and should integrate important lessons from its experiences with the AU, it must also recognize the necessity that all such partnerships are specifically tailored to the context, dynamics, and requirements of every region and partner organization.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659-S/2008/39), 23 January 2008; and United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970-S/2013/480), 13 August 2013.
- ² United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.
- ³ Reports of the Secretary-General A/62/659-S/2008/39 and A/67/970-S/2013/480; and Security Council Resolution 2151.
- ⁴ See for example, United Nations, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446), 17 June 2015, para. 53–58.
- ⁵ See Adedeji Ebo and Kristiana Powell, “Why Is SSR Important? A United Nations Perspective,” in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, Mark Sedra, ed. (Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), 45–58.
- ⁶ For instance, the New Horizon initiative highlights the support the UN provides to AU peacekeeping as a Chapter VIII organization, including in the area of SSR. See United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “A new partnership agenda: Charting a new horizon for UN peacekeeping,” July 2009. Available from <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/newhorizon.pdf>
- ⁷ See Henri Boshoff et al., *Supporting SSR in the DRC: Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (The Hague: Clingendael, 2010).
- ⁸ President Jacob Zuma of the Republic of South Africa, statement on the occasion of the United Nations Security Council Summit Debate on UN-AU Cooperation in Peace and Security, 12 January 2012.
- ⁹ United Nations, “A New Partnership Agenda.”
- ¹⁰ The report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacities in the aftermath of conflict was released in September 2011 (A/66/311-S/2011/527). It identified several priority actions to increase the availability of civilian capacities to build and sustain peace along three axes: developing greater national capacity and ownership in post-conflict response; building external partnerships and making necessary adjustments within the UN to source the increasingly specialized civilian capacities required in post-conflict settings; and exercising the organizational agility necessary to respond nimbly to fast-changing post-conflict environments.

- ¹¹ Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446).
- ¹² Consultations were held in Buenos Aires in September 2009 with the Governments of Argentina and Slovakia at the International Workshop on Contributing to the United Nations Approach to Security Sector Reform: Insights from Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Jakarta in March 2010 with the Governments of Indonesia and Slovakia at the International Workshop on the Role of the United Nations in Peacekeeping and Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Towards an ASEAN Perspective. See United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970-S/2013/480), 13 August 2013. The AU Commission and DPKO co-hosted consultations in Addis Ababa in March 2009, at the African Regional Workshop on SSR.
- ¹³ Adedeji Ebo, "Intergovernmental Organisations and Security Sector Governance: Towards a Common ECOWAS Agenda," in *Intergovernmental Organisations and Security Sector Reform*, David Law, ed. (Geneva: DCAF, 2007), 157.
- ¹⁴ United Nations, Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (2012), 10. Also, in this volume, see "National ownership and UN support to SSR: Towards a common framework for action."
- ¹⁵ In this volume, see "United Nations support to SSR processes in peacekeeping contexts: Coherence and coordination in the Central African Republic."
- ¹⁶ See Vincenza Scherrer and Alba Bescos Pou, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform* (Geneva DCAF, 2018).
- ¹⁷ Assembly of the African Union, Tenth Ordinary Session, Decisions and Declarations, Assembly/AU/Dec.177 (X), 31 January 2008–2 February 2008.
- ¹⁸ United Nations, "African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform: Final Report," New York City, 14 May 2010 (DPKO, 2011), 18–19.
- ¹⁹ The two-year programme, titled "Building African Union Capacities for Security Sector Reform (SSR): A Joint United Nations/European Union Support Action," began in January 2013 and ended in December 2015.
- ²⁰ African Union, Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (2013), Article 78(b).
- ²¹ African Union, Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, Article 79(d).
- ²² ASSN-AU-EU-UN Joint Assessment Missions took place in: the Central African Republic (18–24 May 2014); Guinea Bissau, including ECOWAS and CPLP (2–12 March 2015); Madagascar, including SADC and OIF (4–13 October 2014); and Mali, including OIF and ECOWAS (16–22 November 2015).
- ²³ Constitutive Act of the African Union, 11 July 2000, Article 3(e).
- ²⁴ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, 9 July 2002, Article 17(1).
- ²⁵ For more information, see United Nations, "Letter dated 11 December 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly" (A/61/630); and United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 60/1 (A/RES/60/1), 24 October 2005.
- ²⁶ The African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was re-hatted into a UN peacekeeping mission (ONUB) in 2004. The AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) was re-hatted into a joint AU/UN Hybrid operation (UNAMID) in 2007. The UN provided logistical and financial support to the AU's enforcement mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In July 2013, AFISMA was absorbed by the UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The AU's MISCA was transformed into a UN peacekeeping operation, MINUSA, by the UN Security Council in April 2014.
- ²⁷ Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), adopted at the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Sirte, Libya, 28 February 2004.

- ²⁸ Kofi Annan, "Towards a Culture of Peace," in *Letters to Future Generations* (UNESCO, 1999), 15.
- ²⁹ See United Nations, *Handbook on Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations* (2003).
- ³⁰ See African Union, Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform.
- ³¹ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970–S/2013/480), 13 August 2013.
- ³² African Union, Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, Article 16(f).
- ³³ See United Nations, "African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform," 20.
- ³⁴ United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2011/19), 12 October 2011.
- ³⁵ United Nations, Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/66/19), 11 September 2012. See also subsequent reports of the C-34.

PART V:
CONCLUSIONS

UN support to SSR: From peacekeeping to sustaining peace

ADEDEJI EBO

Introduction and overview

When the Secretary-General first highlighted the UN's role in SSR in his foundational SSR report in 2008, the concept was relatively new to the organization. Though the UN was already engaged in various activities that could come under the rubric of "security sector reform," there was little consensus on the meaning of the concept itself and significant cleavages and contestations existed in the political environments and approaches of Member States. Strategic and operational policies and guidance were absent or unclear, or both, leading to significant incoherence and a lack of coordination in UN SSR support.

In 2012, the Secretary-General concluded that "over the past five years, security sector reform (SSR) has become an integral part of UN assistance to countries and regions affected by conflict. SSR features prominently in the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations, and is increasingly recognized as an essential element in post-conflict peacebuilding."¹ One year later, the Deputy Secretary-General more conclusively referred to SSR as "a core element of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development."² A workable UN approach to SSR has thus been developed, SSR support structures and offices have been created (evidenced by the growing number and complexity of SSR-mandated UN missions), partnerships with regional and other organizations and actors have been and are being developed, and coherence and coordination mechanisms have been put in place (though these are not fully resourced and integrated). These operational aspects are backed by an increasingly consensual normative framework, with the introduction of a second report of the Secretary-General in 2013 and a dedicated standalone Security Council resolution on SSR in 2014.³

This concluding chapter reviews how SSR has moved from the periphery to the centre of the UN's peacekeeping and peacebuilding agenda (section 2) and demonstrates how normative frameworks and guidance have been developed and

are being operationalized both at Headquarters and in the field (section 3). The UN has, within political and organizational constraints, made substantive progress in positioning SSR as a key element of multidimensional peacekeeping, with a primarily post-conflict focus. In this context, this chapter suggests that there is a need and an opportunity to fully integrate SSR into the UN's sustaining peace agenda more broadly, spanning the entire peace spectrum to cover conflict prevention, stabilization, and post-conflict contexts (section 4). The key pillars of the UN's sustaining peace agenda – namely, human rights, development, and peace and security – are found to intersect closely with, and reflect, the necessary conditions for creating security institutions that are both effective and accountable, and predicated on legitimacy, respect for human rights, and an inclusive social contract. The chapter concludes by examining remaining gaps and challenges and offering a framework for action (section 5).

From the periphery to the centre

The UN SSR agenda has come a long way in a relatively short time, achieving important milestones. This section identifies strategic and normative gains in the UN's foray into SSR support. The UN has SSR teams in the field as part of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, and an SSR Unit was established in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)⁴ to serve as the focal point and technical resource capacity on SSR for the United Nations system.⁵ Guiding principles of the UN approach to SSR have also been formulated, shaped first by the Secretary-General's 2008 report on SSR and then by the 2013 report.⁶ The UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force supports the coherence and coordination of this approach, and also provides guidance and policies through sector-wide tools including the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes and a Roster of Experts in SSR.

The state of play prior to 2008

The position of SSR in the work of the UN has dramatically evolved over the past decade. To contextualize the following analysis, it is important to recall the political and geo-strategic environment in which the UN's SSR journey began. On the one hand, a post-Cold War evolution in security theory shifted the focus from national security to the security of individual *citizens* and broadened the concept of security to include "human security."⁷ The United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), for instance, underlined the right of people as well as states to live "in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice."⁸ The post-Cold War era thus witnessed increased focus on the protection of civilians,⁹ and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) brought specific attention

to the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict. In 2000, the Brahimi Report also advocated “a doctrinal shift in the use of civilian police, other rule of law elements and human rights experts in complex peace operations to reflect an increased focus on strengthening rule of law institutions and improving respect for human rights in post-conflict environments.”¹⁰ As such, there was an enabling global public policy environment for the inclusion of SSR on the UN peace and security agenda.

On the other hand, the dynamics of post-9/11 geo-strategic politics posed the imminent risk of delegitimizing the SSR agenda during its infancy. In the wake of controversies around the indefinite detention of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the human rights abuses in Abu Ghraib Prison, coupled with contestations around UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq and chemical weapons, the level of political will and consensus on security cooperation was far from optimal. Calls for democratic security governance were therefore received with caution among some developing countries concerned that SSR could be a “backdoor” for interference with their security arrangements, or even for regime change, reminiscent of Iraq.¹¹

While the reform of security and justice institutions may have become recognized as essential for multidimensional peacekeeping, the emergence of SSR on the agenda of UN peace and security coincided with a debilitating period of political struggle and controversy in global affairs. This made it challenging to generate consensus among Member States on an issue that was both new and politically sensitive. Therefore, SSR entered the UN largely via peacekeeping and post-conflict contexts, and the evolution of the SSR agenda was constrained as far as it relates to broader peacebuilding. In marrying the concerns of some Member States with an imperative for action, the UN SSR agenda has been necessarily cautious and modest in scope.

Towards the centre

It should be emphasized that the UN was already widely engaged in SSR-related activities prior to 2008, though these were mostly ad hoc, frequently incoherent, and routinely uncoordinated. As the Secretary-General’s 2008 report on SSR underlined, various UN offices had “been involved in assisting national actors to maintain and enhance security for many years” through activities supporting the rule of law, institution building, and post-conflict development.¹² DPKO had undertaken police and defence sector reform, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA)¹³ incorporated SSR into its peacemaking work, and the Office for the High Coordinator for Human Rights (OHCHR) was involved in human rights training for security institutions. Projects of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) also sought to bolster justice and security expertise, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provided

support to local security institutions in combatting the trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons. Still, these engagements were sporadic and lacked cohesion.¹⁴

As the Cold War came to an end and the new millennium approached, elements of SSR increasingly featured in multidimensional UN peacekeeping. The UN supported the early stages of post-transition military institutions in 1989 as Namibia moved towards independence, and assisted in military reform and training in Angola and Mozambique in the 1990s in conjunction with bilateral partners.¹⁵ Police reform has also been an important element of UN peacekeeping since the 1990s.

By the turn of the century, there was a steady progression in the SSR-related mandates of peacekeeping missions. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was the first peacekeeping operation to explicitly focus on SSR, beginning with the recognition, in authorizing resolution 1270 (1999), of the need for the Government to “expedite the formation of professional and accountable national police and armed forces, including through their restructuring and training” – a goal that was subsequently realized via extensive bilateral support from the UK. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), established by resolution 1509 in 2003, was mandated with SSR tasks since its inception. 2004 in particular witnessed a spate of SSR-related resolutions for missions in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI, via resolution 1528), the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC, and later MONUSCO, via resolution 1565), and Haiti (MINUSTAH, via resolution 1542). Following on this trend, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) was tasked with supporting national police sector reform via resolution 1704 (2006). Given this post-conflict trajectory, DPKO emerged as the “host” for UN support to SSR processes.

Normative and policy tools for a holistic approach

The development of the UN approach to SSR began with the creation of the tools needed to address key recommendations of the Secretary-General in his 2008 report on SSR. A dedicated SSR Unit was created within DPKO and charged with serving as the secretariat of a newly established Inter-Agency SSR Task Force, co-chaired by DPKO and UNDP.¹⁶ The SSR Task Force has had a positive impact on the coherence and coordination of UN SSR engagements, and has become the hub of a vibrant UN SSR community of practice. And, while the Task Force has promoted sector-wide coherence and coordination, the UNDP-DPKO-led Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections emerged as a mechanism for joint delivery of component-specific support to specific security and justice institutions in the field. In addition, a Roster of Experts has been created to enable the UN to deploy expertise speedily and effectively.

What is now known as “the UN approach” to SSR has evolved through a combination of official statements and guidance documents, coupled with the development of working methods and practices among and between the various departments and offices engaged in SSR support. The conceptual framework for this approach is encapsulated in the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes (ITGNs), produced by the SSR Task Force and based on the Secretary-General’s first and second reports on SSR. The ITGNs provide a common body of guidance for UN SSR practitioners, comprised of the following key elements:

- Introduction to the UN approach to SSR
- Democratic governance of the security sector
- National security policy and strategy making
- Peace processes and SSR
- Gender-responsive SSR
- National ownership of SSR

The ITGN chapter on the UN’s conceptual approach to SSR sets out its normative and operational roles, aimed at the *effectiveness* and *accountability* of security institutions:

“This approach is predicated on a context-specific combination of the individual components (pillars) of the security sector on the one hand, and the sector-wide interventions that define the strategic framework for reform, particularly its governance and oversight aspects, on the other. Components of the security sector are country-specific, and could include defence, law enforcement, corrections, border and immigration services, and other institutions whose operational competence defines the effectiveness of security service delivery. Sector-wide interventions – such as the development of policies, strategies and plans, the facilitation of national dialogues on SSR, the development of national management and oversight capacities, the design of national security sector strategies, the development of security sector legislation, and the conduct of security sector reviews – determine the quality of governance of the security sector. In this regard, the ITGNs outline a United Nations approach to SSR that seeks to support development of security *architectures*, moving beyond isolated support to *security pillars*.”¹⁷

As detailed in an earlier chapter on the topic, the UN has clearly defined the concept of *national ownership*, identified its key elements, and provided clear guidance on how national ownership can be practically supported and facilitated in national reform and governance processes. This is a significant step towards coherence. Through the ITGNs, national ownership has been taken beyond a mere normative aspiration to an operational concept.

Within the broader framework of SSR, defence sector reform (DSR) had been identified as requiring particular attention. To this end, the SSR Unit includes a DSR

capacity. The UN Defence Sector Reform Policy was adopted in 2011, benefitting from consultations with UN Member States and setting out core principles and tasks for this sub-sector.

Despite this progress, a significant gap between the normative framework of the UN SSR approach and its implementation in the field lies in predispositions to focus on the institutional *pillars* rather than the *architecture* of SSR. As important as police reform, defence reform, and other institutional reforms may be, they do not amount collectively to the systemic transformative change that is often required to sustain peace. The socio-political relations that underpin the legitimacy of security institutions represent the foundation of an entire security architecture, and relevant strategic policy frameworks provide coherence and strategic support to the functioning of security institutions.

United Nations Approach to SSR

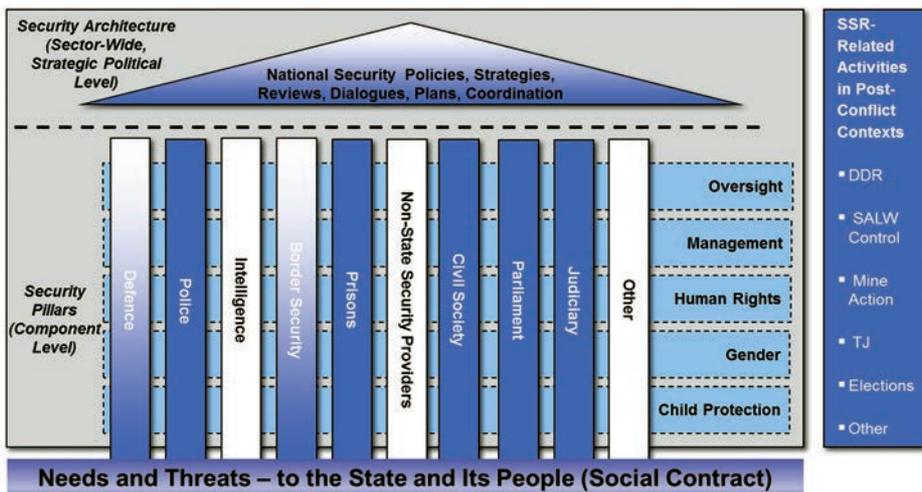


Figure 18.1: United Nations security governance (and reform) architecture
Adapted from: United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *The United Nations SSR Perspective* (2012), 17.

As Nicole Ball notes in a 2014 Clingendael report, the 2008 financial crisis added a layer of challenge to SSR support, with donors “increasingly focusing on ‘value for money’ approaches to programming that require measurable outputs and predictable rates of expenditure. This approach does not mesh well with lengthy, unpredictable and difficult-to-quantify programmes to strengthen security sector governance.”¹⁸ The quantitative cannot substitute for the qualitative, and attention to pillars alone cannot translate norms into implementation.

This balance is articulated in Security Council resolution 2151 on SSR, adopted unanimously in 2014. Resolution 2151 frames the UN approach to SSR, underlining the importance of governance and sector-wide initiatives alongside individual security pillars,¹⁹ and provides a strategic framework for advancing norms and operational roles on UN SSR support.

From the normative to the operational

The norms and principles described in the preceding section have been, and are in the process of being, operationalized – through a variety of channels at Headquarters and in the field, in mission and non-mission settings, and in collaboration with key regional, multilateral, and civil society partners. To be sure, the UN is by no means the only actor providing SSR support; thus, partnerships, particularly with regional organizations, are crucial to the success of UN SSR efforts.

Field support

The UN has supported various national SSR processes, particularly in post-conflict settings, on the basis of Security Council resolutions and mandates. Thus far, the objective has been to support national processes for effective and accountable security institutions in the wake of protracted conflicts as a main element of peacekeeping “exit strategies.” In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire, for example, the UN has provided technical and strategic support to SSR processes. Beyond component-specific institutional reforms, sector-wide reforms have come to represent a new “practice area,” with national security policy and strategy, civilian oversight, and national security dialogues viewed as key aspects of UN SSR support.²⁰

There has been a marked increase in the creation and deployment of SSR teams as part of peacekeeping and special political missions (SPMs), with increasingly effective coordinated and coherent support from Headquarters. Indeed, UN SSR mandates have continued to grow in number and complexity. At peak in 2016, 21 out of 40 country-specific Security Council resolutions made references to SSR. 21 peacekeeping operations, SPMs, and non-mission settings supported national SSR efforts (up from three in 2007).²¹ Effectively, 15 of these 21 contexts had dedicated SSR capacities.²² Some illustrative examples follow below.

In Liberia, in collaboration with other international partners, UNMIL supported the Government in building the capacity of the Liberian National Police, the Bureau for Corrections and Rehabilitation, and other major security institutions. In addition, the Mission’s SSR Advisor assisted national authorities in undertaking a variety of sector-wide activities, including the development of a national security strategy and

a plan for its implementation, a public expenditure review of the security sector, and the strengthening of parliamentary and civil society oversight.²³

In Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI support focused on sector-wide engagements such as the development of the National SSR Strategy and the establishment of the National Security Council, with advisors deployed to the Council's Secretariat and the Office of the President. Democratic oversight was enhanced through sensitization of the parliamentary Security and Defence Committee and through substantive support to the development of key legislation, such as the Military Programming and Internal Security Programming Laws. UNOCI also recommended and facilitated the decentralization of security governance architecture and reform by supporting the establishment of local security committees comprising local civil society leaders, security providers, and authorities as well as through the sensitization of local populations on the National SSR Strategy. Work on gender and SSR included recommending and supporting the establishment of gender focal points in the military and police, while international SSR support was coordinated via a Consultative Group for bilateral and multilateral stakeholders and a UNOCI Working Group for UN-related support.

Beyond peacekeeping contexts, the SSR Unit, as the system-wide resource on SSR, also collaborates with other relevant offices, departments, and agencies – including DPPA, UNDP, the Peacebuilding Support Office, and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) – in responding to national requests for SSR support (for example, in Guinea, Burkina Faso, Comoros, and Madagascar), and through special political missions (SPMs). Although coherence and coordination of UN SSR support was, at least initially, directed primarily towards peacekeeping efforts, non-peacekeeping contexts have actually proved more amenable to coherence and coordination. Integrated SSR structures consistently feature in SPMs, which situate all security and rule of law subject areas under a common coordinated mission structure.

In Guinea Bissau, UNIOGBIS is one of a new generation of UN missions featuring an integrated institutional structure that combined component-specific reforms with sector-wide reforms. Until 2018, the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Service (ROLSI) within UNIOGBIS focused on providing strategic and technical advice to national authorities and partners for the review and implementation of national SSR and governance strategies, legal frameworks, and policies and action plans in the areas of defence, security, criminal justice, and corrections. In Somalia, UNSOM provides support to security sector development through a similar Rule of Law and Security Institutions Group (ROLSIG). There, the Mission has engaged in the development of the Somalia National Army, federal police system, and national security policy, and jointly conducted a security sector public expenditure review with the World Bank.

At the continental level, the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) hosts an SSR support capacity which interfaces with the AU Commission. The United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWAS, previously UNOWA) has also worked actively with the UN SSR Unit in New York and with relevant UN Country Teams to respond to national requests for SSR support.²⁴ The SSR Unit provided technical support to the UN SSR Advisory Team deployed to support the Guinea SSR process, facilitated by a resident technical advisor who was initially deployed from the UN SSR Roster of Experts. In Guinea, legal texts have been developed, reforms have been implemented in defence and police units, the National Police School was reopened in September 2016 after 16 years, and a reform process has been progressively and locally funded.²⁵ In response to a request made by President Kabore of Burkina Faso to the UN Secretary-General, UNOWAS has been involved in defining the UN response and assistance to the Burkinabe Government in the development of a process for SSR. It is instructive that in the case of Burkina Faso, this request has had a catalytic effect on the UN's wider collaboration with the country, and this call for SSR support has been broadened to a request for "peace sustainment" support. A similar country-specific response to the SSR process was developed in the Gambia.

In addition to responding to national requests, UNOWAS has also supported the ECOWAS Commission in the development and implementation of the ECOWAS Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) Framework.²⁶ This framework aims to promote a coherent and coordinated approach to security sector reform and governance in West Africa. UNOWAS, together with the DPO SSR Unit and UNOPS, has provided support to the ECOWAS Commission for the roll-out of ECOWAS policy in the form of an ECOWAS-UN programme on SSRG, for implementation at the regional level and by respective Member States. The UN has collaborated with ECOWAS on defence sector reform in Guinea Bissau, while UN SSR support has been provided to Burkina Faso, the Gambia, and Guinea on the basis of the abovementioned national requests.

Partnerships and building blocks

The global SSR framework of the UN is based on the understanding that regional perspectives are critical building blocks of any viable SSR agenda. UN SSR support therefore depends on collaboration and partnership with regional organizations, which can often act as vital bridges between global norms and principles on the one hand, and national specificities on the other. The SSR Task Force has facilitated the organization of regional consultations in Addis Ababa with the African Union, in Buenos Aires with the Organization of American States (OAS), and in Jakarta with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).²⁷

Given the prominence of the African continent on the UN's peace and security agenda, the UN has placed a premium on its partnership with the African Union; and SSR is a key element of the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security signed on 19 April 2017. The AU Commission and UN SSR Unit have engaged in a strategic partnership on SSR since 2009, within the framework of a multi-year capacity-building programme in conjunction with the EU and the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), and managed by UNOPS. This pivotal relationship has facilitated the development and implementation of the continental AU SSR Policy Framework, adopted by the AU Summit in 2013. Of all the African sub-continental organizations, ECOWAS is perhaps the most visible in addressing security governance, including through the adoption of the ECOWAS Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in 2007 and the ECOWAS Security Sector Reform and Governance Framework in June 2016.²⁸

Multilateral organizations

The UN has also built partnerships with other multilateral organizations, such as the EU and the World Bank, to support national and regional SSR processes in fragile contexts. Thus, the UN has worked with and through multilateral donor organizations, particularly the EU, to support SSR processes by recipient organizations such as the AU and ECOWAS. The UN has collaborated with the EU on both financial and operational support to the AU in building its SSR capacity. Beyond the regional policy and programmatic framework of the AU, UN-EU collaboration has also featured as a part of peacekeeping mandates.

The political economy of SSR is increasingly an issue of concern, and the affordability and sustainability of reform-generated gains have particularly informed a dynamic partnership with the World Bank. The World Bank and the UN have jointly supported the governments of CAR, Liberia, and Somalia to conduct security sector public expenditure reviews (SSPERs), which promote sound public financial management practices and ensure that security spending is affordable and sustainable. This partnership also resulted in the joint publication in 2016 of a sourcebook on the practice entitled, *Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector*.²⁹

Think tanks and civil society

The UN's partnerships with a wide array of think tanks, research institutions, and civil society organizations have enabled a global SSR community of practice. These non-state actors offer perspectives, tools, constituencies, and networks beyond the formality of state and government institutions, and thus provide added flexibility to the UN's otherwise state-centric agenda.³⁰ Prominent among them, the UN has

established close partnerships with the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), particularly in support of the AU; and with DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance in developing policy, guidance, and best practices (normative function), as well as in delivering SSR support in the field (operational role).³¹

Political facilitation and advocacy with Member States

Given the political and conceptual contestations that surround SSR, facilitating the necessary consensus among Member States to sustain the SSR agenda has been a key area of engagement by the UN. The SSR Unit recognized early on that partnership with political stakeholders (Member States) was essential to enabling and sustaining a coherent and coordinated UN approach to SSR. In this regard, close collaboration with and support to the UN SSR Group of Friends, first established in 2007 under the initiative of Slovakia and now co-hosted with South Africa, has been a crucial element in the evolution of a platform and forum for political dialogues, confidence building, and consensus on a UN SSR agenda.³²

A high-level Group of Friends meeting was held in November 2013 to launch the Secretary-General's second report on SSR, which called for the Group "to continue to be engaged and to facilitate strategic discussions on strengthening the UN approach in this critical area."³³ The Group of Friends held an open meeting in June 2014 to welcome and support Security Council resolution 2151 and emphasize its key messages as well as a high-level meeting on the margins of the 2 October 2015 general debate of the General Assembly – co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa in cooperation with the SSR Task Force – on the links between SSR and the proposed sustainable development goals, particularly SDG 16. In June 2016, a dialogue in New York, again co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, brought together senior officials from the UN with donors, multilateral organizations, and the CAR Government to discuss the challenges and opportunities of SSR, marking the first time a Group of Friends discussion focused on a specific peacekeeping context. In 2017, high-level meetings hosted in New York and Bratislava focused on the links between SSR and sustaining peace (a link discussed later in this chapter). These were followed by dialogues in New York in February 2018 regarding SSR in West Africa and in March 2018 concerning SSR in South Sudan. Both were held under the auspices of the Group of Friends as preparatory events for a April 2018 roundtable that brought together senior UN officials and national actors to discuss national ownership, partnerships, and financing for SSR and sustaining peace.³⁴

Political dialogue among UN Member States on SSR has not been linear and has not occurred through a single channel. In addition to the Group of Friends, African UN Member States initiated the African High Level Forum (HLF) on SSR on 14 May 2010, co-chaired by Nigeria and South Africa. This was based on the rationale

that only limited dialogue had taken place among countries receiving external SSR support, with few opportunities to openly discuss the dynamics of SSR assistance, including donor coordination, conceptual issues, and other challenges. The HLF made reference to the rise of African “Southern donors” providing non-vertical support to international SSR efforts, including Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania,³⁵ and noted the need to more broadly incorporate African perspectives on SSR as an essential element in the legitimacy, viability, and sustainability of SSR support. The decision was made to institutionalize the HLF by hosting it every two years, creating a forum for generating the perspectives of African Member States (as both recipients and providers of assistance) on the priorities and challenges for SSR policy and practice.

The role of SSR in sustaining peace

SSR has only recently become a core issue on the UN peacebuilding agenda, which has long understood and approached peacebuilding as a purely post-conflict activity, often narrowly interpreted as comprised of time-bound, exogenous interventions that are “left as an afterthought: under-prioritized, under-resourced and undertaken only after the guns fall silent.”³⁶ A 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and subsequent initiatives of the Secretary-General have sought to usher in a new paradigm of “sustaining peace” that expands UN peacebuilding from post-conflict settings (or liberates it from its post-conflict confines) to include a larger focus on conflict prevention.³⁷ Accordingly, sustaining peace “encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.”³⁸ Based essentially on the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, the sustaining peace agenda is aimed at “preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.”³⁹ The sustaining peace agenda is therefore admittedly political, with an objective to “build a common vision of society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account.”⁴⁰

While some interpret *sustaining peace* as little more than an expansive definition of *peacebuilding* and argue that these concepts “should in practical terms not be distinguished” from each other, there appears to be a broader acceptance that *sustaining peace* does in fact represent “a clear break from the past where efforts to build peace were mainly restricted to post-conflict contexts.”⁴¹ Some analysts have even explicitly referred to “the language of sustaining peace as a counterpoint to the term peacebuilding.”⁴² Regardless of the conceptual blur that may exist between

peacebuilding and sustaining peace, what is clear is that this latter concept forms the basis for the Secretary-General's current reforms aimed at reconfiguring the UN's peace and security architecture from primarily conflict response to more proactive conflict prevention or mitigation.⁴³

SSR is intrinsic and central to the sustaining peace agenda, as encapsulated in resolution 2282 on the UN peacebuilding architecture. The resolution notes specifically that "a professional, accountable and effective security sector, including through its reform [is] critical to consolidation of peace and stability."⁴⁴ Ultimately, the objective of SSR processes is to enhance the sense of safety and security within societies (for both citizens and states) through effective and accountable security institutions. It is thus relevant as part of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that spans "all along the arc leading from conflict prevention, [. . .] through peacemaking and peacekeeping, and on to post-conflict recovery and reconstruction."⁴⁵ The three key pillars of the UN's work comprising the sustaining peace agenda – peace and security, human rights, and development – intersect with the reform of security institutions at the point of inclusion and governance. SSR, as undertaken by the UN, is a matter of both effectiveness (tied to component-level support to security pillars) and accountability (tied to sector-wide support of the security architecture). Inclusivity is the basis of accountability, which in turn forms the basis of legitimacy. The three pillars required for sustaining peace are premised on these same ideas: inclusive economic development, security for all citizens through legitimate institutions, and the consistent observance of human rights.

Given that the normative framework for SSR as a political and preventative tool is already elaborated in a number of key UN documents, the emergence of a sustaining peace agenda comes at an appropriate juncture and is a unique opportunity to expand UN SSR support to be more proactive pre-conflict, and longer-term and more transformative post-conflict. It is important to note that this is not a zero-sum shift. The call to expand the purview of UN SSR beyond post-conflict contexts and to place it within the larger peace continuum does not undermine the role of SSR in peacekeeping contexts. Rather, the sustaining peace agenda enriches the prospects for SSR before, during, and after conflict, including in both mission and non-mission settings.

The aim of sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development intersect on the centrality of inclusion and the importance of institutions. This intersection is manifested in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most directly though not exclusively in SDG 16. In calling for "effective, accountable and inclusive institutions (including security institutions) at all levels," SDG 16 places the reform of security institutions at the very centre of the sustaining peace agenda. In addition, SDG 5 addresses gender equality, and SDG 11 addresses the issue of safe cities and communities. Given the importance of education as a tool of

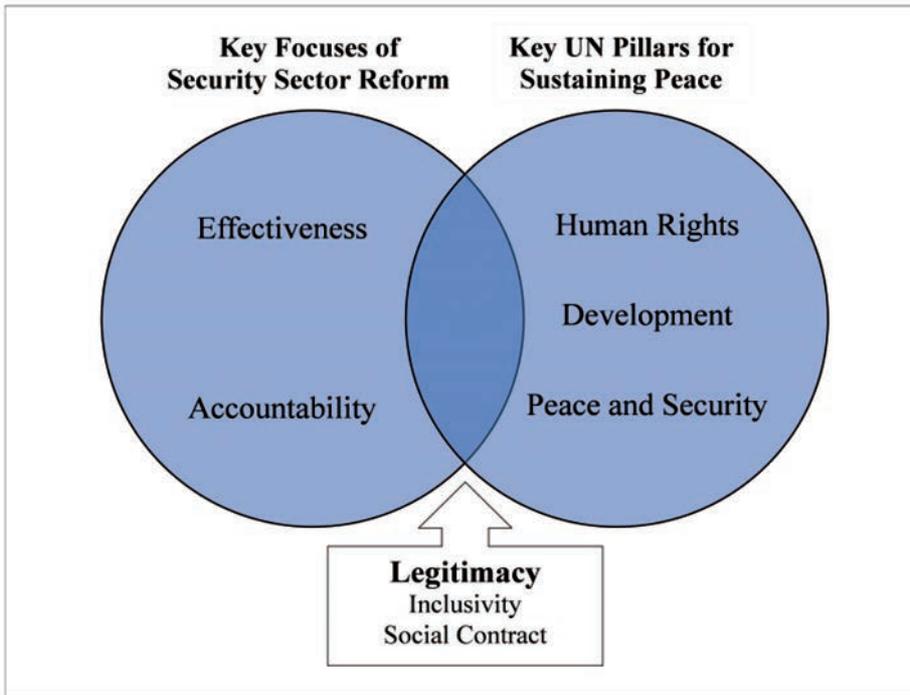


Figure 18.2: SSR and sustaining peace

empowerment, SDG 4 may also be considered an integral link to the sustaining peace agenda.

This political economy of peace exposes an interrelated set of issues that must be addressed ahead of a transition from a post-conflict approach to sustaining peace. By addressing the economic basis of peace, the SDGs expose the importance of financial sustainability, responsibility, and accountability in the consolidation of the gains of peacekeeping and peacebuilding and all efforts to avoid the recurrence of conflict. As noted elsewhere,

“Lack of adequate financing, misappropriation of funds, or poorly executed budgets have commonly contributed to poor performance of SSR processes, endemic corruption, and limited public confidence in the sector. Lack of salary payments have been a contributing factor to low morale and ineffectiveness of security forces in a large number of post-conflict and fragile contexts, contributing to a lack of preventative capacity and often contributing to risks that security institutions become purveyors of insecurity.”⁴⁶

The limits of SSR in post-conflict contexts

The UN and the broader international community have focused mainly on SSR in post-conflict and stabilization contexts. In both peacekeeping operations and SPMs, the prevailing logic has been that security institutions must be rebuilt after (and sometimes during) protracted violent conflict, based on a rule of law and human rights framework. This ostensibly enables an “exit strategy” premised in part on the sufficient effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, allowing UN activities to be fully transferred to national actors. This has been the case, for example, in Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Timor-Leste.

These post-conflict contexts are often characterized by an urgency that emerges from weak institutions, fragile political situations, tension and insecurity among various groups, oversized and influential armed groups, and precarious economic conditions.⁴⁷ Yet, essential as SSR may be in these contexts, reforms can also pose significant challenges in terms of impact and sustainability. The tendency towards train-and-equip SSR approaches, already common in peacekeeping and stabilization contexts, often deprive these processes of any prospect of improving the inclusivity and legitimacy of security institutions. Indeed, resolution 2151 acknowledges “the necessity for the United Nations to balance its support for the reform of individual components of the security sector [...] with sector-wide initiatives that address strategic governance, management and oversight aspects in order to ensure their long-term sustainability based on the particular needs and conditions of the country in question.”⁴⁸

It must be stressed therefore that tension exists between the long-term perspective of SSR, which is often generational, and the short-term timeframe of peacekeeping mandates. The result is that resources are often devoted to strengthening the institutional pillars of the security sector (such as defence, police, and corrections institutions) – which deliver more immediate quantifiable results, frequently centred around the number of personnel recruited, trained, and/or equipped – and not to enhancing the security architecture and its legitimacy, including the capacity for parliamentary oversight and good governance. The latter approach is more transformative but requires a longer timeframe. The sustaining peace agenda provides a much-needed framework for addressing key limitations of SSR in peacekeeping by expanding its application across the full spectrum, from prevention to long-term sustainability. Predicated on the notion that peacebuilding is “an inherently political process” and emphasizing root causes through inclusive “national ownership,”⁴⁹ the sustaining peace agenda can complement the post-conflict scope of SSR, ensuring a focus not only on incremental technical changes but on transformative impact, including before conflict can begin. It also provides the impetus for engaging in SSR early and throughout the peace process, as examined in the following sub-section.

Preventing conflict and sustaining peace through SSR: Policy and practice

Conflict prevention encompasses various steps and actions undertaken to address fragility and pressures that threaten violent conflict. Political facilitation and mediation to address simmering tensions are vital as part of early responses to potential crises, and therefore to sustaining peace. Thus, there is a mutually reinforcing dynamic between conflict prevention and security sector reform. In many contexts in which the UN has been engaged, there is a gap between the legality and the legitimacy of state institutions, including security institutions. As has been noted, “security and justice institutions are commonly the primary interface between the State and the population they are meant to serve. In many cases, they are the litmus test for the effectiveness of the State. Their protracted ineffectiveness or poor integrity represent potential for the escalation of conflict, as has been the case in South Sudan, DRC, Somalia, and CAR.”⁵⁰ When security institutions are dominated by particular groups and instrumentalized to threaten other groups, or are used only for regime security, the security sector itself becomes a source of conflict. Further, poor governance of the sector and a failure to protect the population from human rights abuses play important roles in triggering and prolonging conflicts. Okwudiba Nnoli has aptly characterized the inevitable but undesirable conclusion of such dynamics:

“Eventually, opposition to the state arises as a result of the reckless abuse of state power in a process in which the accumulation of power and its ruthless projection gradually generates a critical mass of desperate enemies. . . . The people react with hostility towards [the] government, which in turn oppresses them, setting off a spiral that culminates in violence.”⁵¹

Hence, addressing security sector deficits early (through inclusivity and good governance) serves as a tool of conflict prevention. Conflict prevention and sustaining peace, in turn, enhance the prospects for transformative reform of the security sector, which is ultimately a function of a broader peace and security framework. A culture of governance of the security sector that is inclusive and enhances the prospects for legitimacy and respect for human rights is a key element in preventing conflict and sustaining peace, and from this perspective, the relevance of SSR is not limited to post-conflict contexts. Rather, routine governance of the security sector by all UN Member States, based on the principles of inclusivity, accountability, sustainability, and accountability, would contribute directly to sustaining peace and preventing conflict.

To be sure, there was already a normative recognition of the link between SSR and conflict prevention prior to the current sustaining peace agenda. Resolution 2151 affirms that “an effective, professional and accountable security sector without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law is the

cornerstone of peace and sustainable development and is important for conflict prevention.”⁵² Similar normative provisions are manifest in the key documents of other multinational and regional organizations, including the AU, ECOWAS, and the OSCE. But despite these normative declarations, conflict prevention, including through SSR, has been largely deprived of necessary political attention and resources.⁵³ In this regard, the key challenge facing the UN is bridging normative provisions and actual implementation – in other words, moving from a culture of conflict management to a culture of conflict prevention and early action to sustain peace.⁵⁴

However, several cautionary notes on preventing conflict and sustaining peace through SSR must be taken into consideration. First, the strength of the conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda lies in its holistic and comprehensive nature, albeit in the context of state-based organizations where sovereignty is often jealously guarded, with “[s]ome suspicious stakeholders fearful that the concept (sustaining peace) is another Trojan horse for outside intervention.”⁵⁵ In post-conflict settings, states are often more amenable to UN oversight through mandates issued by the Security Council, or through budgetary processes – a much narrower and more precise enterprise. Second, while conflict prevention and sustaining peace are ultimately less costly than post-conflict approaches, the former necessitates initial investments as well as additional resources in order to bring actors and partners to the table (such as civil society, religious leaders, private sector, and regional organizations). Third, while post-conflict engagements are often characterized by a focus on short-term tangible results, the benefits of a preventive approach are characteristically long-term and intangible. Therefore, a shift from managing conflict to preventing it at the outset and sustaining peace over the long term – including via SSR – requires a new ethos in assessing “value for money” by donors, as well as additional tolerance to allow for the transition from one culture to another.

Conflict prevention has been a much-heralded aspect of the sustaining peace agenda but it has not historically enjoyed commensurate implementation and attention. The “corporate energy” of the UN needs to be further and significantly directed towards, and driven by, “building on peace where it already exists and by reinforcing structures, attitudes and institutions that underpin it.”⁵⁶ This is a paradigmatic shift which places all states, not merely post-conflict and fragile states, on the UN peace and security agenda. It entails various partnerships, including within and between UN departments, offices, and agencies, that supplant a post-conflict lens with a culture for sustaining peace. As noted in the 2015 Report of the Peacebuilding Group of Experts, the necessary approach “goes far beyond the limited scope of the entities created in 2005 that have been labelled ‘the peacebuilding architecture’.”⁵⁷

The new UN peacebuilding framework calls for engagement by all three principal intergovernmental organs, as well as by the Secretariat, the Organization's programmes and specialized agencies, and UN operations on the ground.⁵⁸ Given the multidisciplinary nature of security sector governance and reforms, an SSR agenda for conflict prevention and sustaining peace would also require integrating the three pillars of the UN agenda (peace and security, development, and human rights) into a common platform for advocacy and action. Indeed, there is a discernible new trend of UN support to SSR processes that extends beyond post-conflict settings to include preventative and sustaining peace contexts in cases where no widespread armed conflict or civil war has yet necessitated a Chapter VII Security Council resolution or mandate. This trend is underpinned by voluntary national requests for UN support on the basis of, and as a part of, regular national efforts at governing the security sector.

In West Africa, for instance, Guinea sent a presidential request to the UN Secretary-General in 2011 for assistance in coordinating and supporting SSR efforts following a military coup in December 2008 and a subsequent return to civilian rule in 2010. With UNDP support, a UN Senior SSR Advisor was embedded in the Office of the President to facilitate implementation of the recommendations of a Joint Assessment by the UN, the AU, and ECOWAS, and to coordinate bilateral assistance in support of national efforts. This SSR engagement contributed to a Guinea-owned National Strategy of Priority Actions for implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Assessment Mission.

In Burkina Faso, where the military dominated national politics and governance for nearly half a century, a similar request for SSR support reached the Secretary-General in 2015 after a failed military coup, the election of a new president, and a series of terrorist attacks. Following two UN SSR assessment missions in July and September 2016, a support programme for SSR was approved by the Government in February 2017, and Burkina Faso was designated a pilot country for the Secretary-General's sustaining peace approach. A high-level SSR advisory support team and a Principal SSR Advisor have been embedded in the Office of the President to provide advice and support on an inclusive SSR process and to assist with the coordination of international support. A civilian now heads the Ministry of Defence in Burkina Faso, and the heads of the police, gendarmerie, and military have all been replaced. The Principal SSR Advisor has also supported the drafting of a presidential decree establishing an Inter-Ministerial Evaluation Committee on security sector dysfunction.

The most recent example of this movement towards preventative UN SSR engagement is in the Gambia, where the newly elected Government inherited deep-rooted security governance challenges resulting from 22 years of authoritarian rule. Over this time, state institutions had become personalized and politicized to

benefit the regime, but more specifically the president, and citizens were subjected to an abusive state security apparatus characterized by arbitrary arrests, torture, and extra-judicial killings. The new Government's request for UN support to comprehensively overhaul the security sector led to a UN inter-agency mission in February 2017. This inter-agency support is predicated on a comprehensive approach to reform of security and rule of law institutions that combines operational and strategic reforms and is linked with a broader agenda of national renewal in the Gambia.

Common to the contexts in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and the Gambia are joint strategic analyses and joint efforts to support multidisciplinary frameworks for comprehensive review and reform of these security sectors. This acknowledges that no single UN office, agency, or department can alone respond effectively to the multiplicity of challenges facing the security sector. In Guinea, the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force functioned as a key mechanism for coordination and coherence in the formative years of UN support. In Burkina Faso, the UN SSR Unit has functioned as a "system-wide capacity" to support the identification of experts and provide advice to the UN system on the ground, working with the UN SSR Advisor. In the Gambia, the 2017 inter-agency assessment mission (under the aegis of the Working Group on the Gambia, co-chaired by DPA and UNDP) produced a joint report and joint recommendations that form the basis of an integrated One-UN support programme, including on SSR, to which the SSR Unit contributed analysis, identified experts, and made recommendations.

In all three contexts, there was close collaboration between the head of UNOWAS and respective Resident Coordinators. While further work will be needed to sharpen the UN's delivery tools for more preventative SSR engagements, these non-mission contexts represent a promising step in expanding UN SSR support beyond the post-conflict paradigm.

The future UN SSR agenda: Challenges and a framework for action

The UN SSR approach has made significant strides, but gaps and challenges remain. While normative elements have become fairly well established, they have unevenly permeated the organization and the international system more broadly, and significant discrepancies persist between the normative and operational roles of the UN in SSR support – which has so far been centred on post-conflict contexts. From the perspective of sovereignty-based multilateralism, security is the prerogative and responsibility of every state, unless it represents a threat to international peace and security, in which case it falls on the agenda of the Security Council. This has made SSR largely a Security Council matter, rather than a General Assembly matter;

though, Member States do also have the option to request SSR support through the Secretary-General.

The challenges and gaps identified and discussed in this section inform and define the focus of a next generation UN SSR agenda, centred on augmenting the ability of the UN to support states in advancing democratic governance of the security sector as a hallmark, routine, and intrinsic element of statehood across the entire peace continuum. Associated action items for this agenda rest on prioritizing the implementation of Security Council resolution 2151 within a framework that balances the imperatives of good governance with the effective operational capacity building of security institutions.

Challenges of conceptual contestation, novelty, and implementation

SSR, which is relatively new to the UN, was initially a contested, even controversial, and sometimes misunderstood concept that was at times misperceived as a pejorative, derogatory remedy for inappropriate practices or “bad behaviour” in security sector governance, reserved for failed and collapsed states. The notion of “reform” may evoke a strict regime and corrective procedures, and thus, a loss of sovereign power by the state. This is a significant challenge for a states-based organization such as the UN, predicated upon the principle of sovereign equality of those states. The SSR label thus brings side-effects and opportunity costs. The concern of states over their sovereignty in the context of SSR at first produced a cautionary approach to an area aiming for both security and reform. Indeed, challenges emanating from the state-centricity of multilateralism largely account for the gap between the normative basis and operational aspects of the UN SSR support approach.

Recommendation 1 – Develop and operationalize an implementation framework for resolution 2151, including national action plans: As a key element in articulating a preventive SSR agenda, the UN should support its Member States in developing inclusive national action plans (NAPs) for security sector governance on a voluntary basis. A NAP is a proposed security governance framework for individual countries, and the UN should have the capacity to respond to requests to support national efforts to develop NAPs. The ongoing use of NAPs in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security offers a useful model. In addition, regular dialogue among and between Member States is essential for establishing that SSR is not reserved for any particular group of states but is an essential element of conflict prevention for *all* states. Co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, the UN Group of Friends of SSR has become a key platform for advocacy and for defining the UN SSR agenda, and its continued engagement will be particularly instrumental in this regard.

Addressing socio-economic and political challenges at the local level

In many contexts in which the UN is engaged, security sector governance deficits are underpinned by socio-economic and political exclusion and the absence of legitimate and viable social contracts, leading in many cases to protracted conflicts (as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, CAR, Timor-Leste, and Libya). The security sectors in a number of countries have long been viewed as distant and mythical forces of oppression that serve as a source of mystery for citizens.⁵⁹ Security actors are too often viewed with distrust, not as fellow citizens or providers of a public service. And historically, many political leaders have inherited security apparatuses with an outward orientation, aimed at coercive extraction of taxation and maintaining elite control. Though these dynamics have not always “exploded” into conflicts that call for peacekeeping, UN involvement is often required where states have had a problematic and disarticulated relationship with the populations they ostensibly serve.

Here, it is worth emphasizing that the very vocabulary with which African indigenous languages describe security institutions denotes mistrust and portends a troubled relationship between the state and the citizen. An analysis of this vocabulary indicates that the effectiveness of many security sectors has been based on coercion rather than legitimacy. For example, in Yoruba (spoken in Nigeria, Benin, and Togo), the word for police is *olopa*; in Hausa (spoken in Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Cameroon, and many states throughout West Africa), it is *dan sanda*; and in Ewe, (spoken in Ghana and Togo), it is *kpovi* – all of which, interestingly, have the same meaning: “the one wielding the baton.” Batons, traditionally used as an enforcement tool in the pre-independence era to literally whip local populations into compliance, symbolize a coercive pattern of relationships between security institutions and society that has not been fundamentally transformed, despite the advent of political independence. In fact, these patterns have not only been maintained, but in some cases, they have become further entrenched for the benefit of the ruling elite. Transforming these inverse relations through the reform of security institutions is a key element in sustaining peace and preventing conflict.

It is therefore essential to place UN SSR support within a political framework that enhances the quality of the social contract that builds inclusivity and legitimacy (see Figure 2, above). As aptly described in the 2015 Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations: “... many conflicts are caused by governance, where the state is captured by elites who monopolize its levers for power and enrichment and use the security apparatus to contain social and political challenges to their rule.”⁶⁰

In this context, operationalizing national ownership is a challenge where visions of security are antagonistically contested. And in the absence of an agreed national security vision to guide qualitative changes that can transform

security sector governance, technical train-and-equip exercises often emerge as the only “feasible” form of UN support. In addition, ruling elites often dominate discussions surrounding an inclusive reform agenda and in many cases interface with international SSR actors, to the potential exclusion of political opposition, women, and other marginalized groups. The net result is a national ownership deficit, typically lacking in transformative impact and sustainability.

Recommendation 2a – Demystify SSR and enhance legitimacy through national security dialogues: The UN should support Member States in demystifying the security sector as a seemingly exclusive and opaque asset of the state by bringing it closer to the population through inclusive political processes. For reform to be transformative, it must be inclusive, and inclusivity is not possible without citizen participation. Citizens cannot participate in processes about which they are uninformed and from which they are disarticulated, disempowered, alienated, and ultimately excluded. This recommendation underlines the UN’s role, stipulated in multiple UN SSR documents, in facilitating inclusive national security dialogues.⁶¹

Recommendation 2b – Advance an SSR prevention agenda: From a prevention perspective, the quality of the security sector is found in its legitimacy, which is predicated on inclusive democratic governance. Thus, the UN’s role should include the empowerment of all legitimate national stakeholders and citizens in security governance. For example, the UN should help transform perceptions (and realities) of the police, from “the one wielding the baton” to “the one providing a service.” The UN should also support local responses to insecurity as well as local voices in security governance more broadly. Civil society organizations have a large advocacy role to play, especially in articulating the NAPs in their respective societies. In this way, civil society will be central to collating and conveying support and participation in NAPs, and monitoring and evaluating their implementation.

Recommendation 2c – Begin to address the reality of hybridity: The Secretary-General’s second SSR report notes the undeniable relevance of traditional and informal security actors and admits that challenges remain as far as how to best engage with sub-national security governance actors and institutions.⁶² In many states, including those undergoing SSR, informal security actors may enjoy more local legitimacy than state security actors. Yet, UN assistance is predisposed to be state-centric, as the organization is composed of states, including those represented by governments whose presence and legitimacy in parts of their territory is weak, contested, and/or absent. UN engagement should be more responsive to the hybridity of security sectors, appreciating the resilience, continuing relevance, and legitimacy of customary security institutions in many contexts.⁶³

Ensuring a coherent approach within the UN

The UN, in all its constituent parts, continues to adjust to the cross-cutting, multidimensional, and multidisciplinary modes of engagement that SSR represents and necessitates. Officials, departments, agencies, and offices are still in the process of aligning their work with the implications of the UN SSR agenda. Resolution 2151 “encourage(s) the Secretary-General’s Special Representatives and Envoys to fully take into account the strategic value of security sector reform in their work, including through their good offices, where mandated.”⁶⁴ It also “*stresses* the importance of security sector reform, which better integrates policing, defence, border management and security, maritime security, civil protection, and other relevant functions... and *urges* the effective integration as regards sector-wide and component levels of UN support both at headquarters and in the field, as appropriate.”⁶⁵ The adequate tools to facilitate the integrative function of SSR are not yet fully in place and the tendency for component-specific institutional reforms is indeed a resilient feature. The novelty of SSR relative to other elements of multidimensional peacekeeping therefore presents operational challenges, particularly related to coherence of the structure and sufficiency of the tools.

The SSR Unit, which is charged with the integrative function of SSR, currently has no such capacity beyond defence sector reform. However, the integrative function requires capacity in all relevant security institutions as may be necessitated by any national security sector reform process, including in policing, border management, and civil protection. This has become a particularly relevant, and arguably urgent issue, in view of contemporary (often transnational and interconnected) threats to security at the community, national, regional, and global levels. These new threats necessitate an expansion of the UN SSR agenda to encompass the integrative function of SSR beyond the defence sector. For example, the relevance of national border security and immigration services in addressing migration, violent extremism, terrorism, and other new sources of insecurity demands an integrative SSR function that includes a broader circle of security institutions.

Recommendation 3a – Sharpen UN SSR delivery tools: Key offices and members of the SSR Task Force should be periodically sensitized on the UN approach to SSR and relevant developments. The associated UN SSR Roster of Experts should be strengthened and expanded to ensure that it remains a useful resource for the rapid deployment of experts to the field. Additionally, the current capacity of the UN and of the SSR Unit’s integrative function should be enhanced.

Recommendation 3b – For coherence and coordination of SSR support in UN field missions, standardize the creation of mission-wide SSR support strategies and working groups: Human rights, political, rule of law, socio-economic

development, and gender aspects of component-specific and sector-wide efforts often need to be brought under a common strategic framework. While the Inter-Agency SSR Task Force performs this coherence and coordination function at Headquarters, there is an uneven record of coordination in the field, i.e., in peacekeeping and SPMs. In this regard, the creation of UN mission-wide SSR Working Groups (such as in UNOCI and MINUSCA) is a best practice that should become standard to all UN missions with SSR mandates. Regarding coherence at Headquarters, the roles of the SSR Task Force and the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections may require better alignment so that sector-wide engagement of the SSR Task Force is bridged with programmatic support of the Global Focal Point.

Coordination gaps and challenges with partners

The coherence and coordination of international support is a persistent challenge. The global SSR support “system” – developed by myriad bilateral and multilateral actors, including the UN – has evolved unevenly. There has been undeniable progress, with the adoption of universal normative principles, regional policy frameworks, and support policies (by the EU, UN, AU, and ECOWAS). But much work remains to achieve coordinated and coherent support to holistic and comprehensive SSR processes. With international actors often engaging in SSR support along the dictates of their respective exigencies and policies, a lack of clarity regarding roles remains and requires a more defined “division of labour” among these actors. This is needed for predictability, and is a key challenge facing the UN, particularly as coordination of international SSR support is a common feature in Security Council mandates.

Recommendation 4a – Clarify roles and develop compacts: The UN and its partners should create mechanisms and processes that clarify roles and divide labour to ensure predictability of support by international actors. Frameworks of mutual accountability (compacts) with Member States can also be developed based on clear and specific national ownership benchmarks, as in CAR. The signing of an SSR Joint Support Plan between the EU and the UN on CAR is also a model which could inform future institutional collaboration between other interlocutors and in other contexts.

Recommendation 4b – Build partnerships: The UN is a key actor, but by no means the exclusive or even the most significant actor in SSR support. Indeed, the UN has unique normative and operational roles that require partnership with other actors, since it cannot ensure the goal of effective and accountable security sectors on its own. The future UN SSR support agenda should therefore actively and strategically promote partnerships, including with other multilateral organizations, bilateral actors, civil society, and think tanks.⁶⁶ The UN should also continue to

position regional ownership as a critical building block of its approach, through active support to regional SSR frameworks, including the AU SSR Policy Framework.

Recommendation 4c – Encourage South-South cooperation: As indicated in Security Council resolution 2151, the next generation of UN SSR support will depend on enabling and employing diverse partnerships in SSR delivery between the UN and regional, sub-regional, and bilateral actors. Experience has shown that the sharing of experiences by and between states on SSR represents a significant and defining aspect of SSR support. South-South cooperation is therefore an expanding area of importance, and the UN will need to explore additional ways of developing synergies in this area.⁶⁷

Conclusion

A decade after its launch, the UN SSR support agenda has become firmly established and a workable normative and operational UN approach has been developed. SSR support structures and offices have been created, partnerships with regional and other organizations and actors have been and are being developed, and coherence and coordination mechanisms and integrated guidance have been put in place.

However, the significant gains in UN SSR support in post-conflict contexts need to be further consolidated, while efforts should be devoted to the mainstreaming of SSR as an element of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Resolution 2151 is the crystallization of attempts to develop a coherent and coordinated UN approach to SSR support, and it provides a common strategic framework for advancing the normative and operational roles of the UN in SSR processes. In this way, resolution 2151 encapsulates the UN SSR approach and represents the “guiding light” for the future UN agenda. It is important, too, that the UN SSR agenda find a home in the General Assembly as much as it has in the Security Council. This would contribute directly to the evolution of the UN SSR agenda’s focus from peacekeeping to sustaining peace more broadly.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *The United Nations SSR Perspective* (2012), 3.
- ² Jan Eliasson, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, remarks to the High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, 4 November 2013. Available from <http://www.un.org/sg/en/content/dsg/statement/2013-11-04/deputy-secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-meeting-group-friends>.
- ³ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970, S/2013/480), 13 August 2013; and United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), 28 April 2014.

- ⁴ DPKO was renamed the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) as of January 2019.
- ⁵ United Nations, Secretary-General's Bulletin (ST/SGB/2010/1), 5 February 2010. This is based on the vision originally outlined in: Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659-S/2008/39), 23 January 2008.
- ⁶ Reports of the Secretary-General, A/62/659-S/2008/39 and A/67/970-S/2013/480, respectively.
- ⁷ Heiner Hänggi, "Making Sense of Security Sector Governance," in *Challenges of Security Sector Governance*, eds. Heiner Hänggi and Theodor H. Winkler (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2003), 5–6.
- ⁸ United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 55/2 (A/RES/55/2), 18 September 2000.
- ⁹ The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was the first to be assigned a protection-of-civilians (POC) mandate, through resolution 1270 (1999).
- ¹⁰ Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809), 21 August 2000, 8.
- ¹¹ See Eboe Hutchful, "Developing Concepts of Security in Africa," in *State and Human Security in the "Age of Terrorism": The Role of Security Sector Reform*, compilation of presentations made at the 2nd Joint Seminar of the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) and DCAF, 26 January 2004.
- ¹² Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/659-S/2008/39), 7.
- ¹³ DPA was renamed the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) as of January 2019.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-10.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ¹⁶ The Task Force has grown from seven to fourteen members, and currently includes DPO (formerly DPKO), DPPA (formerly DPA), OHCHR, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNODA, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.
- ¹⁷ United Nations, Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (2012), 3.
- ¹⁸ Nicole Ball, *Putting Governance at the Heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Programme* (The Hague: Clingendael Conflict Research Unit, 2014), 18.
- ¹⁹ Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151).
- ²⁰ As mentioned above, whereas component-level reforms strengthen individual pillars of the security sector such as defence, police, and the judiciary, strategic sector-wide reforms seek to be more transformative by strengthening the overall security sector architecture through enhanced oversight, governance, and management.
- ²¹ UN contexts with SSR mandates and/or activities included: 10 PKOs (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, UNAMID, UNIFIL, UNMIK, UNMIL, UNMISS, and UNOCI), 7 SPMs (UNAMA, UNAMI, UNIOGBIS, UNOAU, UNOWAS, UNSMIL, and UNSOM), and 4 non-mission settings (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Guinea, and Yemen).
- ²² Contexts with dedicated SSR teams included six PKOs (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNMIL, UNMISS, and UNOCI), five SPMs (UNIOGBIS, UNOAU, UNOWAS, UNSMIL, and UNSOM), and four non-mission settings (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Guinea, and Yemen).
- ²³ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *The United Nations SSR Perspective* (2012), 35.
- ²⁴ Following DPA's strategic review of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel, the Office was merged with UNOWA in 2016 to form UNOWAS, in order to enhance synergies between the offices and ensure high-level attention to the implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel – which was already closely tied with West Africa and which includes strengthening

- governance of the security sector. See United Nations, letter dated 14 January 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/88), 28 January 2016.
- ²⁵ A workshop on elections and security was held in Conakry in November 2008, including a session on SSR and elections security.
- ²⁶ The ECOWAS SSRG Framework was adopted in June 2016.
- ²⁷ The first regional workshop on the role of the UN in SSR in Africa was held in Cape Town from 7–8 November 2007 and was co-hosted by South Africa and Slovakia. The UN SSR Task Force also facilitated an African Regional Workshop in Addis Ababa from 23–24 March 2009; an International Workshop, “Contributing to the UN Approach to SSR: Insights from Latin America and the Caribbean,” in Buenos Aires from 28–29 September 2009 (co-hosted by Argentina and Slovakia); and an International Workshop on “The Role of the United Nations in Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Towards an ASEAN Perspective,” in Jakarta from 29–30 March 2010 (co-hosted by Indonesia and Slovakia).
- ²⁸ See Adedeji Ebo, “Towards a Common ECOWAS Agenda on Security Sector Reform,” Policy Paper No. 23 (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007).
- ²⁹ See Bernard Harborne, William Dorotinsky, and Paul M. Bisca, eds., *Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector*, eds. (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016).
- ³⁰ The collaborations with key research institutions and think tanks described in this sub-section are illustrative but not exhaustive; other partners include the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC).
- ³¹ The importance of these partnerships is outlined in: Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970–S/2013/480).
- ³² As of 2018, the Group of Friends, co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, had more than 40 members.
- ³³ See Co-chairs’ Statement, High Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform on the occasion of the launch of the United Nations Secretary-General’s report on Security Sector Reform, 4 November 2013; and Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970–S/2013/480).
- ³⁴ See Co-Chairs’ Statement, High-Level Roundtable on Security Sector Reform and Sustaining Peace (A/72/930–S/2018/680), 17 July 2018.
- ³⁵ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform: Final Report*, 14 May 2010, 3.
- ³⁶ United Nations, Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, (A/69/968–S/2015/490), 29 June 2015.
- ³⁷ Ibid.; United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2282 (S/RES/2282), 27 April 2016.
- ³⁸ Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490).
- ³⁹ Security Council Resolution 2282 (S/RES/2282).
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, discussion note, High Level Event and Expert Level Workshop, “The Role of SSR in Sustaining Peace: Challenges and Opportunities,” Bratislava, 5–6 June 2017.
- ⁴² Youssef Mahmoud and Anupah Makoond, “Sustaining Peace: What Does It Mean in Practice?” International Peace Institute Issue Brief, April 2017.
- ⁴³ See United Nations, 7857th Meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.7857), 10 January 2017.
- ⁴⁴ Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490).
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.

- ⁴⁶ *The Contribution and Role of SSR in the Prevention of Violent Conflict* (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2017).
- ⁴⁷ The Peacebuilding Initiative, “Security Sector Reform & Governance: SSR and Peacebuilding Processes,” <http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/index477a.html?pageId=1794>.
- ⁴⁸ Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151).
- ⁴⁹ Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490).
- ⁵⁰ *The Contribution and Role of SSR in the Prevention of Violent Conflict*.
- ⁵¹ Okwudiba Nnoli, “Security of Africa in the Emerging Global Environment: What role for the military?” Graduation Lecture Series No. 8, National War College, Abuja, Nigeria, 29 July 2003, 25.
- ⁵² Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151).
- ⁵³ See Antonio Guterres, *Vision Statement: Challenges and Opportunities for the United Nations*, 4 April 2016.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Mahmoud and Makoond, “Sustaining Peace: What Does It Mean in Practice?”
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968–S/2015/490).
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ See Nnoli, “Security of Africa in the Emerging Global Environment: What Role for the Military?”
- ⁶⁰ United Nations, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95–S/2015/446), 17 June 2015, para. 13.
- ⁶¹ This role is emphasized in the two SSR reports of the Secretary-General as well as in Security Council resolution 2151.
- ⁶² Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/970–S/2013/480), 5.
- ⁶³ Niagale Bagayoko, Eboe Hutchful, and Robin Luckham, “Hybrid Security Governance in Africa: Rethinking the Foundations of Security, Justice and Legitimate Public Authority,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1–32.
- ⁶⁴ Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151), para. 15c.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., para. 7.
- ⁶⁶ The need for multilateral partnerships and greater predictability of multilateral SSR support is addressed in: DCAF, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform* (Geneva: DCAF, 2018).
- ⁶⁷ See Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform: Final Report*; and Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151).

ANNEX



Security Council

Distr.: General
28 April 2014

Resolution 2151 (2014)

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 7161st meeting, on
28 April 2014**

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Stressing that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict, and *further stressing* that, in this regard, a professional, effective and accountable security sector and accessible and impartial law-enforcement and justice sectors are equally necessary to laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development,

Recalling the sovereign right and the primary responsibility of the country concerned to determine the national approach and priorities of security sector reform and recognizing that it should be a nationally owned process that is rooted in the particular needs and conditions of the country in question and encouraging the development of expertise in the field of security sector reform at the national level,

Recognizing that the political leadership and political will of national authorities are critical for the progress of security sector reform and *reaffirming* the lead role of national authorities in developing an inclusive national vision for security sector reform, coordinating the implementation of the vision, dedicating national resources towards national security institutions, and monitoring the impact of the security sector reform process,

Recalling the statements by its President of 21 February 2007 (S/PRST/2007/3), 12 May 2008 (S/PRST/2008/14) and 12 October 2011 (S/PRST/2011/19), and noting with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Securing States and societies: strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform" (S/2013/480) of 13 August 2013,

Recalling reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, which have provided guidance to the United Nations Secretariat on the subject of security sector reform and the development of a United Nations approach to security sector reform,



Expressing concern at the range of challenges that weak and dysfunctional security institutions pose, including impairing the ability of the State to extend public security and rule of law within its boundaries, and *noting* that good governance and oversight of the security sector is important in ensuring that security institutions are capable of protecting the population, and further *noting* that failure to address operational and accountability deficits can undermine the positive gains of peacekeeping and necessitates the return of peacekeeping and special political missions in previous areas of operation and recognizing that effective security sector reform processes have been an important element of the stabilization and reconstruction of some post-conflict countries,

Reaffirming that an effective, professional and accountable security sector without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law is the cornerstone of peace and sustainable development and is important for conflict prevention,

Recalling that the bulk of Security Council-mandated United Nations assistance in the area of security sector reform takes place in, and is directed to, countries in Africa and that a number of African countries are becoming important providers of such assistance,

Noting the support provided by bilateral actors, as well as regional actors, including the European Union, to security sector reform efforts and other initiatives in the area of security sector reform, in particular in Africa, and stressing the importance of coordination as appropriate between the different actors involved in supporting security sector reforms through bilateral contributions and emphasizing the role United Nations peacekeeping operations or special political missions can play in enhancing this coordination,

Recognizing the centrality of security sector reform as a key element of peacekeeping and special political mission mandates, *noting* the increasing number and complexity of mission mandates on security sector reform, and *emphasizing* the importance of the United Nations, including through its peacekeeping operations and special political missions, supporting national Governments, upon their request where appropriate, to develop security institutions that are accessible and responsive to the needs of their population, and the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund in supporting security sector reform,

Recalling the important role that the United Nations has played in supporting national efforts to build sustainable security institutions, and commending the efforts of the United Nations, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including the Security Sector Reform Unit and the United Nations Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, in further strengthening a comprehensive United Nations approach to security sector reform, through the development of guidance and civilian capacities, coordination mechanisms, and collaboration with regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union,

Underlining the importance of the close coordination of the range of United Nations Security Sector Reform activities, both at headquarters and in the field, in particular between Security Council-mandated missions and the United Nations Country Team, as appropriate, and encouraging relevant United Nations entities

mandated for security sector reform activities to work through the existing coordination mechanisms, as appropriate,

Acknowledging the necessity for the United Nations to balance its support for the reform of individual components of the security sector, which in some contexts include defence, police, corrections, and border and immigration services, with sector-wide initiatives that address strategic governance, management and oversight aspects in order to ensure their long-term sustainability based on the particular needs and conditions of the country in question,

Reiterating the importance of the rule of law as one of the key elements of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding and reiterating the statement by its President of 21 February 2014 (S/PRST/2014/5), and *recalling* that security sector reform must take place within a broad framework of the rule of law, and *noting* in this regard the contribution that effective, professional and accountable police services, that provide security to the population, can make in building trust between State authorities and communities and restoring the rule of law in post-conflict countries,

Reaffirming its commitment to address the impact of armed conflict on women and children, and *recalling* its resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013) on women, peace and security, resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006), 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as well as resolutions 1261 (1999), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012) and 2143 (2014) on children and armed conflict,

Recognizing that security sector reform constitutes a key element of the political processes of States recovering from conflict and of the strengthening of the rule of law institutions,

Recognizing the interlinkages between security sector reform and other important factors of stabilization and reconstruction, such as, but not limited to, transitional justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as well as long-term rehabilitation of former combatants including in particular women and children, national small arms and light weapons management, arms embargo implementation, reduction of armed violence, organized crime and anti-corruption measures, protection of civilians, including in particular women and children, as well as gender equality and human rights issues,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of security sector reform in the stabilization and reconstruction of States in the aftermath of conflict and *resolves* to continue to include and prioritise, as appropriate, security sector reform aspects as an integral part of the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions;

2. *Reiterates* the centrality of national ownership for security sector reform processes, and further reiterates the responsibility of the country concerned in the determination of security sector reform assistance, where appropriate, and *recognizes* the importance of considering the perspectives of the host countries in the formulation of relevant mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions;

3. *Encourages* Member States undertaking reform to take the lead in defining an inclusive national vision on security sector reform, informed by the needs and aspirations of the population, and *acknowledges* the important role of the United Nations, including its Peacebuilding Commission, and Member States, regional and subregional organizations in assisting States in this regard;

4. *Recognizes* that security sector reform needs to be in support of, and informed by, broader national political processes, inclusive of all segments of the society, including the participation of civil society, that lay the foundations for stability and peace through national dialogue and reconciliation efforts, and *resolves* to link security sector reform to such efforts;

5. *Stresses* that security sector reform is critical to addressing impunity for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, where applicable, and contributes to the rule of law;

6. *Encourages* Member States, when undertaking security sector reforms, to mainstream child protection, such as the inclusion of child protection in military training and standard operating procedures, as well as in military guidance as appropriate, the establishment of child protection units in national security forces, of effective age assessment mechanisms to prevent underage recruitment, of vetting mechanisms to ensure that those responsible for violations and abuses against children are not included in the ranks of national security forces and of measures to protect schools and hospitals from attack and to prevent the military use of schools in contravention of applicable international law;

7. *Stresses* the importance of security sector reform, which better integrates policing, defence, border management and security, maritime security, civil protection, and other relevant functions, including through the development of professional, accessible, and accountable policing capabilities that strengthen community resilience, as well as the institutions responsible for their oversight and management, and *urges* the effective integration as regards sector-wide and component levels of United Nations support both at headquarters and in the field, as appropriate;

8. *Stresses* the importance of the relevant bodies of the United Nations undertaking mission planning processes for security sector reform, where mandated, that gives full consideration to supporting national security sector reform efforts, taking into account the specific needs of the host country, and collaborating with other relevant international and regional actors providing security sector reform assistance to the national government;

9. *Underlines* the importance of strengthening support for sector-wide initiatives that aim to enhance the governance and overall performance of the security sector and address the foundations upon which security institutions in each component area are built, such as through support to national security dialogues; national security sector reviews and mappings; national security policy and strategy; national security legislation; national security sector plans; security sector public expenditure reviews; and national security oversight, management and coordination;

10. *Underlines* that the management of a transition from a peacekeeping operation or special political mission in relation to its security sector reform activities should be based upon a timely analysis, in consultation with the host country, of any assistance beyond the duration of the mandate to enable

peacebuilding and development actors to undertake the necessary strategic planning and fundraising, working in close partnership with the national authorities, and to transfer skills and expertise to host country officials and experts as quickly as possible in order to ensure a successful and durable transition;

11. *Notes* that the United Nations is particularly well positioned to support and coordinate sector-wide reforms as necessary in specific situations and has broad experience as well as comparative advantages in this area working in close collaboration with relevant international and regional actors, and *encourages* Member States to continue to be engaged and to facilitate strategic discussions on strengthening the United Nations approach in this critical area, including through the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission;

12. *Notes* the important role that United Nations police can play in supporting, and coordinating international support for, reform of national police institutions and building police capacity in a comprehensive way that emphasizes a community-oriented approach and inter alia builds strong governance, oversight and accountability mechanisms within the framework of a functional judicial and corrections system;

13. *Recognizes* the need for the United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions with relevant mandates and the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force to further strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of United Nations security sector reform initiatives with the aim of ensuring the effectiveness, coordination and coherence of the support provided by the United Nations to national Governments;

14. *Encourages* Member States to provide voluntary support to security sector reform efforts, including at a sector-wide level, in accordance with the priorities set forth by national authorities;

15. *Resolves* to continue to promote the role of the United Nations Secretariat in supporting security sector reform, and *requests* the Secretary-General to consider undertaking the following in the context of relevant country-specific mandates:

(a) Strengthen the comprehensive approach of the United Nations in security sector reform;

(b) Develop additional guidance for relevant United Nations officials, including for Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and Envoys, and assist relevant senior United Nations management to understand how to deliver mandated security sector reform tasks;

(c) Encourage the Secretary-General's Special Representatives and Envoys to fully take into account the strategic value of security sector reform in their work, including through their good offices, where mandated;

(d) 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, in order to improve Security Council oversight of security sector reform activities;

(e) Continue to develop integrated technical guidance notes and related training modules, as well as other tools as appropriate, to promote coherent and coordinated United Nations support to security sector reform, and develop modalities for joint delivery of assistance to national reform efforts;

(f) Ensure that assistance related to security sector reform takes into account the operation of Security Council-mandated arms embargoes, where applicable, including the availability of exemptions to such embargoes specifically intended to support security sector reform;

16. *Underlines* the importance of partnerships and cooperation with regional and subregional arrangements and organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, and in supporting security sector reform, as well as fostering greater regional engagement;

17. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, consistent with the framework agreement for the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, towards its efforts to strengthen its continent-wide policy framework for security sector reform, informed by and in support of the African Peace and Security Architecture, and *further encourages* all partners to continue to assist the African Union in building its capacities in this regard;

18. *Reiterates* the importance of sharing experiences and expertise on security sector reform among Members States and regional and subregional organizations, and in this regard *encourages* a deepening of South-South exchange and cooperation;

19. *Underscores* the importance of women's equal and effective participation and full involvement in all stages of the security sector reform process, given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding, and in strengthening civilian protection measures in security services, including the provision of adequate training for security personnel, the inclusion of more women in the security sector, and effective vetting processes in order to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence from the security sector;

20. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

About DCAF

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.

DCAF assists partner states, and the international actors supporting them, to improve the governance of their security sectors through inclusive and participatory reforms that are grounded in international norms and good practices and are adapted to specific local contexts and challenges.

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DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

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HEINER HÄNGGI is Deputy Director and Head of the Policy and Research Department at DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.

“This book skilfully captures the intricacies of the United Nations’ efforts in supporting the reform of the security sector in both peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping contexts. It highlights that supporting nationally-driven SSR processes is of relevance to all efforts to prevent violent conflict and sustain peace.”

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