



**Security Sector Reform in
Transitioning Environments:
Potential and Challenges
to Peace-building and Post-Conflict
Transformation**



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Foreword

DPI aims to foster an environment in which different parties share information, ideas, knowledge and concerns connected to the development of democratic solutions and outcomes. Our work supports the development of a pluralistic political arena capable of generating consensus and ownership over work on key issues surrounding democratic solutions at political and local levels.

We focus on providing expertise and practical frameworks to encourage stronger public debates and involvements in promoting peace and democracy building internationally. Within this context DPI aims to contribute to the establishment of a structured public dialogue on peace and democratic advancement, as well as to create new and widen existing platforms for discussions on peace and democracy building. In order to achieve this we seek to encourage an environment of inclusive, frank, structured discussions whereby different parties are in the position to openly share knowledge, concerns and suggestions for democracy building and strengthening across multiple levels.

DPI's objective throughout this process is to identify common priorities and develop innovative approaches to participate in and influence the process of finding democratic solutions. DPI also aims to support and strengthen collaboration between academics, civil society and policy-makers through its projects and output. Comparative studies of relevant situations are seen as an effective tool for ensuring that the mistakes of others are not repeated or

perpetuated. Therefore we see comparative analysis of models of peace and democracy building to be central to the achievement of our aims and objectives.

This paper specifically focuses on one of the first and most important stages in peace-building and post-conflict transitions processes, namely the Security Sector Reform. It does so by highlighting the importance of reshaping the security sector in order to build sustainable peace and development in the long-term, as well as stressing on the need for a proper implementation of these processes to promote grassroots reconciliation and capacity building. This paper seeks to provide a broad and comprehensive understanding of what SSR contextually means, who are the actors involved and how their active participation could significantly transform the security sector, thus creating the conditions conducive to democratic liberal peace, governance and rule of law. The paper adopts a context-sensitive approach, and constantly refers to selected case studies. This approach allows drawing different lessons depending on the local context where SSR has been implemented. The main suggestion is that no universal model for SSR exists. Each country presents its own set of specificities, which will result in different challenges according to local dynamics. SSR needs to acknowledge these differences and relate them to broader processes of post-conflict transformation and reconciliation. As this paper submits, to be effective and sustainable, SSR needs to be grounded in contextual local specificities, in order to enhance and improve local realities, achieve a broader inclusion and ultimately promote long-term development.

This paper forms part of DPI's ongoing research on democracy building and aims to support and strengthen collaboration and research on democratic advancement.

This working paper was prepared with the invaluable assistance of Elisa Benevelli.



Democratic Progress Institute
October 2016

Executive Summary

Aims

The aim of this policy paper is to provide a useful overview of SSR, its implementation strategies and the main challenges faced by internal and external actors in post-conflict settings. It moves from the important consideration that security and development are closely linked and mutually enforcing, especially in transitioning countries. This paper also places greater emphasis on sustainable development, long-term stability and democratic peace as core objectives that SSR should help promote in post-conflict environments.

Another crucial objective of the paper is to demonstrate that SSR can be beneficial to longer-term objectives and goals. Indeed, if properly implemented, SSR can promote broader goals of reconciliation and conflict resolution, this latter to be understood as the need to address, and overcome, the root causes of conflict and socio-political divisions.

Rationale

In line with this reasoning, Security Sector Reform (SSR) has emerged as the cornerstone of post-conflict reconstruction and assistance programmes, which are both increasingly oriented towards the promotion of a system-wide process of adaptation, in order to create conditions conducive to democratic liberal peace, including the promotion of democratically-reformed security governance, rule of law and civilian oversight. Over time, some

general principles have been established to define the scope of SSR and guide its implementation process at the local level, thus constituting the theoretical framework for externally-sponsored reforms. However, as this paper extensively shows, systematic gaps between theory and practice – or more simply, the mismatch between what SSR is, according to the definition, and the form it actually takes once this definition is applied to challenging environments, are yet to be completely bridged. This of course might impact on the implementation of SSR reforms, thus limiting the prospects for sustainable development that the reform of the security sector should naturally embed. The second section presents and analyses core challenges emerging at the level of SSR practical implementation, showing once again the difficulty of overcoming the policy-practice divide. It is suggested that SSR should not be implemented in the form of a one-size-fits-all mechanism, but rather respect local specificities, perceptions and socio-political structures. This is to suggest that general principles should always adapt to changing conditions on the ground.

Structure

This paper engages with both theory and practice related to SSR. In the first section, it highlights the relevant theoretical framework which usually guides SSR implementation, but at the same time it stresses on the need to adopt context-sensitive, flexible and dynamic approaches, as well as on the importance of SSR as a medium to promote broader reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction at all levels of society.

The paper considers SSR issues and challenges from a context-sensitive perspective. Drawing from the experiences of areas and countries as diverse as Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, Northern Ireland, South Africa and the Balkans, it tries to provide a meaningful understanding of what SSR practically means once implemented in different realities. This choice is motivated by the fact that different experiences may help assess the record of SSR success according to different realities and contexts, and learn useful lessons from each country. Moreover, by considering SSR in different countries and presenting the outcome of single reforms in relation to the overall SSR programme, the paper submits that SSR does indeed have a potential for conflict transformation and local reconciliation.

Of course, not all the case studies presented here can be considered instances of success, but they were nonetheless included to show how same reforms may have completely different outcomes according to the context. In any case, the other side of the same coin should always be taken into careful consideration to avoid

repeating the same mistakes again, in order to enhance the prospect for democratic peace, sustain long-term development and promote mechanisms for society-wide reconciliation and transformation at different levels of reform.

I. CONTEXT AND DEFINITIONS: WHAT IS SSR?

1. Definitions

Despite sensible changes both in the conceptualisation of SSR and improvements in its adaptation to the context, not many clear instances of success with regard to SSR programmes as a whole can be identified. SSR's success should be measured by evaluating the success of the single reforms, which all together are part of the broader reform process. The extensive reform and transformation of police and policing mechanisms in Northern Ireland, or Sierra Leone's military and police reforms are good examples of SSR's relative success in some areas of the overall reform agenda.¹ Breaking down the overall SSR programme to focus on the single reforms does not mean that these have to be considered in isolation. On the contrary, the relative success of single reforms is crucial to promote a sustainable security sector and simultaneously contribute to the consolidation of peace and post-conflict reconciliation.

Given the complexity and specificity of the environment to be reformed, as well as a lack of any reliable institutional and political framework to refer to, SSR is indeed extremely difficult to undertake. This may discourage external actors, international donors and non-governmental agencies from sincerely engaging with the local structures.

1 David H. Bayley, (2008) Post-conflict Police Reform: Is Northern Ireland a Model?, *Policing* 2(2): pp. 233-240, DOI: 10.1093/police/pan026

They have all too often over-relied on general assumptions, guidelines and precepts about how states should function, and how their security sector should be reformed, thus failing to take into proper consideration both the nature of the context and the political viability of the reform.²

1.1 The security community

As part of comprehensive peacebuilding efforts, SSR in post-conflict settings necessarily implies a system-wide process of adaptation, in line with the notions of liberal peace, namely standards of democratic security governance, promotion of the rule of law and principles of democratic civilian control.³ As such, the promotion of a holistic approach means that the security sector itself transcends a mere security perspective, related to the hard-core military enforcement of state authority and legitimacy, to include the facet of governance and civil society bodies. Accordingly, the so-called security community refers to all actors formally and legitimately responsible for protecting the state and its citizens from internal and external threats, either by enforcing the state's coercive power or as monitoring mechanisms.⁴ The security community includes:

- statutory and non-statutory security forces,
- law enforcement institutions,
- civil society and oversight bodies.

2 Paul Jackson (2012), IDD Policy Brief: The Risks of Security-led State-building, 1(12), *University of Birmingham*, accessed August 31 2016, available at: birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/idd/policy-brief/01-2012-paul-jackson.pdf

3 Hänggi, 'Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction,' pp.10-12

4 Baly Dick, Dylan Hendrickson, and Colin Roth, *Understanding And Supporting Security Sector Reform*, (London: DFID, 2002), pp. 7-9

1.1.1 Breaking down the security community

For a matter of clarity, the security sector in its broader definition can be broken down in different constitutive parts, depending on the type of actors and the activities they perform. These are the following:⁵

- Core security institutions
 - o Armed forces and police,
 - o Paramilitary forces,
 - o Security and intelligence services;
- Security sector oversight bodies
 - o Security ministries,
 - o Legislative committees,
 - o National security advisory bodies
 - o Ombudsmen and policing oversight mechanisms: the establishment of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland is a good example of how the promotion of community-based policing and oversight mechanisms can not only improve the security environment, but serve multiple goals. Most importantly, they can function as trust-building mechanisms within hugely divided (post-conflict) societies, and provide incentives for the normalisation of social interactions by overcoming cross-sectional and group divisions and violence;⁶

5 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Security System Reform And Governance*, (Paris: OECD, 2005), pp. 15-29

6 Graham Ellison and Aogán Mulcahy (2001) Policing and social conflict in Northern Ireland, *Policing and Society*, 11(3-4), pp. 243-258, DOI: 10.1080/10439463.2001.9964865

- Non-core security institutions
 - o Judiciary,
 - o Human rights commissions,
 - o Correctional services;
- Non-statutory security forces
 - o Militia groupings
 - Guerrilla armies,
 - Liberation armies,
 - Political party militias;
 - o Private military companies;
- Civil society actors: NGOs and the media.⁷

1.2 What is SSR?

Bearing in mind that no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach is likely to be ever successful, and that SSR cannot be isolated from the political, societal and institutional context,⁸ it is however recognised that some general guidelines and principles need to be established in order to define the scope of SSR, set its main priorities vis-à-vis the local context and allow for a greater coordination between the different actors involved in the process. Although no single definition of SSR can be identified, it is generally agreed upon that SSR involves a political and dynamic process characterised by the interplay between the different actors of the security sector in order

7 Mark Sedra. *Security Sector Reform 101: Understanding the Concept, Charting Trends and Identifying Challenges*, (Waterloo: the Centre for International Government and Innovation, 2010), pp. 3-22

8 Andzei Karkoszka, ‘The concept of security sector reform,’ in Sergei Ordzhonikidze and Theodor H. Winkler (eds.), *Security sector reform: its relevance for conflict prevention, peace building, and development*, (Geneva: United Nations, 2003), pp. 1-8

to strengthen – or rebuild – the security apparatus’ capacity and efficiency, and to counter the risks of weak governance, instability and violent conflict that can arise from inappropriate, oversized and inefficient security structures.⁹

Since the security sector extends far beyond its traditional security-centred interpretation, SSR is defined accordingly, in the attempt to harmonise the different phases of a post-conflict reconstruction process which were previously conceived as separate efforts. This means that SSR promotes the transformation of the security sector so that, as a system, it operates efficiently and effectively, and in a manner which is more consistent with democratic norms, the rule of law and sound principles of good governance, namely transparency and accountability.¹⁰ In other words, SSR comprises a series of incremental policies and mechanisms specifically devised to tackle both security and democratic deficits, and by so doing it aims at establishing a secure environment conducive to development, thus ideally serving the ultimate goal of promoting sustainable peace. Therefore, SSR embodies the double objective of developing a well-functioning and reliable security system, by rightsizing and putting it under the control of the civilian authority, and creating a framework of democratic transparency and accountability.¹¹

9 Vanessa A. Farr, ‘Voices from the Margins: a Response to “Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries,” in Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer, and Oliver Wils (eds.) *Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005), pp. 63-69

10 Louise Bell, *The Global Conflict Prevention Pool. A Joint UK Government approach to reducing conflict* (London: DFID, 2003), pp. 6-12

11 Bryden and Hänggi, *Reforming and Reconstructing the Security Sector*, pp. 27-30

Civil oversight bodies should be explicitly mandated to ensure that the security forces respect the liberal principles of democratic governance and political pluralism, thus playing a vital role in ensuring the effectiveness of the reform process, conducive to socio-political reconciliation and, in the long-term, stability and development.¹²

2. The evolution of SSR

Since the late 1990s, the concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) has become increasingly important in both development and policy discourses, and has been widely accepted as a way to improve prospects for sustainable and long-term peace in post-conflict, transitional, fragile or failing states. Hence, with the end of the Cold War, previous practices of ideologically-driven military funding and economic assistance to developing countries started to be replaced by the international community's growing recognition of the fundamental interdependence between security and development.¹³ Ever since, this 'new aid paradigm' has emerged as one of the guiding principles among donors and development agencies, and has become increasingly centred upon the idea that long-term democratisation, stability and development – from both an economic and social perspective – cannot be successfully promoted, nor implemented, if not properly backed by an efficiently and effectively functioning military and security sector. In other

12 Michael Brzoska and Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, 'Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Reconstruction under International Auspices,' in Bryden and Hänggi (eds.) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, pp.121-143.

13 Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi, *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005) pp. 23-43.

words, security and development are mutually enforcing, to the extent that internal security and stability are necessary prerequisites for broader development and democracy consolidation.¹⁴

3. SSR in theory and practice

Unfortunately, theory and practice rarely match, and the implementation of these principles at the practical level still represents an extremely complex undertaking, usually involving different actors, both internal and external, with different – if not conflicting – interests, aims and expectations. Moreover, international security assistance and development aid are usually delivered in naturally challenging contexts, where internal distress, post-conflict or post-authoritarian transitions are taking place, thus defining an extremely unstable and volatile setting to operate in, and where the risk of unintentionally fostering further destabilisation is particularly high.¹⁵

4. SSR and peacebuilding

Arguably, the inner complexity of reforming a country's security sector also stems from the fact that, following global developments and major transformations, such as the changing nature of war and violence since the late 1990s, including, but not limited to, the proliferation of the so-called intra-state and ethnic conflicts,¹⁶ SSR

14 Alex J. Bellamy (2003), *Security Sector Reform: Prospects and Problems*, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 15(1), pp.101-119.

15 Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, 'Post-conflict societies and the military: Challenges and problems of security sector reform', in Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (eds.), *Security Sector Reform And Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005) pp. 6-16

16 Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012)

is no longer, or at least not as it used to, conceived as a stand-alone practice, but rather as a dynamic process. In order to assist fragile countries in their transitional processes, SSR should be part of, and integrated into, broader, wider and necessarily long(er)-term stabilisation and post-conflict (or post-authoritarian) transformation and reconstruction programmes.¹⁷ As a result, SSR has been increasingly seen as one of the core instruments and components of all peacebuilding agendas, especially in post-conflict situations, where at least minimal levels of security need to be provided in order to secure the environment allowing for the initiation of the reform process.¹⁸

5. Approaches to SSR: people-centred and holistic

As a relatively new concept dealing with security deficits, SSR, including the operational guidelines to its implementation at the local level, have adapted to match an evolving definition of security, which now encompasses multi-faceted dimensions and providers, and takes into deeper account both the human sphere and the societal strata involved in the entire process.¹⁹ Accordingly, SSR today acknowledges the necessity of reconciling traditional state-

17 Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer, and Oliver Wils, 'Dilemmas of Security Sector Reform in the Context of Conflict Transformation,' in Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer, and Oliver Wils (eds.) *Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005), pp. 5-9

18 Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, 'Post-conflict societies and the military: Challenges and problems of security sector reform,' in Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (eds.) *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2005), pp. 1-16

19 Heiner Hänggi, 'Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction,' in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds.) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, pp.3-18

centred conceptions of security with a more comprehensive and people-centred approach, which focuses on the local populations' own perceptions of security rather than states' security and strategic considerations. A people-centred approach thus reflects a human security dimension, which SSR programmes can address by putting individuals and local communities at the centre of peacebuilding and reconstruction initiatives. Further, a people-centred approach can be understood in two different, yet not mutually exclusive, ways.

5.1 Increased human vulnerability: urban warfare

On the one hand, contemporary armed conflicts, either in the form of intra-state conflicts or internationally-led interventions, such as the US' engagement in both Afghanistan and Iraq, all include a certain degree of military asymmetry, which results in what is usually referred to as irregular or urban warfare.²⁰ As a matter of clarity, military asymmetry is simply understood here as a military confrontation between two opponents, whose tactics and strategies differ disproportionately. The military capabilities of the belligerents are unequal and cannot make the same types of attacks. For instance, guerrilla warfare, such as, to cite just one of the multiple examples, the post-2003 strategy adopted by the Taliban against Western Coalition's conventional armies; or any kind of terrorist attack, including hijackings and suicide bombings, are considered examples of asymmetric warfare. In other words,

²⁰ For a deeper analysis on irregular warfare, as well as a detailed account on the new forms of warfare and strategic implication of insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, see Hew Strachan, *The Directions of War: Contemporary Strategy In Historical Perspective*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

asymmetric warfare always involves a smaller and weaker group attacking a stronger one, usually represented by conventional armies.²¹ The nature of these conflicts, which in most cases are nowadays fought between combatants whose strategy and military power differ significantly, makes them extremely pervasive, and this necessarily affects the sphere of human security by blurring the line between civilians and the armed forces. As a result, local populations are exposed to open fighting, which deteriorates the security environment, thus making it necessary for SSR initiatives to restore general levels of security in conformity with what civilians perceive on the ground, before even starting the reform itself²²

5.2 Local-level inclusion and people-centeredness

From another perspective, people's centrality in SSR initiatives is strictly linked to a specific perception of human security which is centred on people not just as recipients or objects of the interventions, but especially as active participants to the provision of their own security. This is essentially the reason why SSR should directly engage (with) the local population, in order to promote a flexible model for the reconstruction and transformation of the security sector. This can only be achieved by taking into proper consideration the needs of the local populations, their capacities and participation.

21 Bruce W. Bennett, Christopher Twomey and Gregory E. Treverton, *What Are Asymmetric Strategies?* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1999), pp. 1-21

22 Michel John-Hopkins (2010), *Regulating The Conduct Of Urban Warfare: Lessons From Contemporary Asymmetric Armed Conflicts*, *International Review of the Red Cross* 92(878), pp. 469-493, DOI:10.1017/s1816383110000391.

Consequently, since both the sustainability of the security sector and the security situation overall largely depends on the interaction between the state, its institutions and its own population, the international community should equally support, and help strengthen, local capacities and leadership to enable local response strategies to conflict and post-conflict criticalities.²³

So understood, a people-centred approach also fits into the tendency to better integrate security and development as peace-building operations are carried out. The pivot here is that stability, peace and sustainable development are strictly interdependent and can only be successful if promoted through responsible SSR and human security agendas.²⁴ As a result, internal security becomes the precondition for sustainable socio-economic development. At the same time, the ‘expansion’ of security, both as a concept and as a goal to be achieved, also expands the scope and the type of reforms to be carried out. This may create a potential mismatch between how SSR is conceived and concretely carried out in post-conflict settings, that needs addressing because it could potentially hinder prospects for peace, good governance, conflict resolution and democracy promotion.²⁵

23 David Chandler (2001), The people-centred approach to peace operations: The new UN agenda, *International Peacekeeping*, 8(1), pp.1-19, DOI: 10.1080/13533310108413876

24 U.N. Security Council, 7161st Meeting, *Resolution 2151 (2014) (S/RES/2151)*, 28 April 2014 (Masthead).

25 Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone, 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action*. Whitehall Paper 82, (London: RUSI, 2014)

5.3 Limitations of the holistic approach

SSR's holistic approach, which means going beyond a strict focus on the state's security sector to address multiple levels of security providers and actors, is problematic from a double perspective. Firstly, there is a growing recognition that in most developing and transitioning countries the state is not the only, and in some cases not even the primary, provider of security, but the nature of SSR efforts locally is still mostly state-centric. Secondly, various cases of countries transitioning from a state of war to post-conflict reconstruction illustrate that levels of violence actually spiked after the formal cessation of hostilities, thus worsening the security deficits. These recurring cycles of violence marking post-war periods are usually a consequence of the fact that, beyond the existence of formal ceasefire or agreement frameworks, the 'security demand' internally far outstrips the state's capacity to provide it. In these contexts, non-state security providers often aggravate the security deficit by feeding upon a security vacuum, but at the same time for the local population they function also as other means to cope with situations of extreme insecurity. Simply put, informal and non-state actors emerge as alternative, and in many cases even more effective, security providers in the early stages of the transition, where chaos and violence can often pervade the post-conflict setting.²⁶

26 Mats Berdal, 'Reflections on Post-war Violence and Peacebuilding, in Astri Suhrke and Mats Berdal (eds.) *The Peace In Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 309-327.

5.3.1 SSR in the context (I): Afghanistan

The proliferation of the so-called agents of insecurity and the emergence of armed politics in post-2001 Afghanistan is an interesting case in point. This refers to the proliferation of warlords and strongmen who were able to strengthen and become increasingly influent after the fall of the Taliban following the US' intervention. These networks of non-state armed groups have historically been concentrated in specific geographical areas, thus being locally structured and well-established, benefiting from community-based support and legitimacy. In addition, today as in the past, they still often act as personal armies and militias, by simultaneously providing security for the local communities in the areas under their (in)formal control.²⁷ Even with the external support of international actors, namely the United States and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), from the very beginning the levels of security in Afghanistan were never sufficient to prevent these internal actors from posing serious threats to the overall internal stability, thus limiting the possibilities for substantive development in the long-term. This was especially true given the fact that the central government in Kabul lacked the capacity to provide the population with basic levels of security. In other terms, the exacerbation of this security vacuum, at least initially, created an opportunity for the local warlords to consolidate their regional power and tighten their control over poppy cultivation and smuggling, alongside other criminal activities.²⁸ Ultimately, the

27 Antonio Giustozzi, *Decoding the New Taliban* (Chichester, West Sussex: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2009)

28 M.D. Capstick, 'Establishing Security in Afghanistan,' in Geoffrey Hayes and Mark Sedra (eds.) *Afghanistan: Transition Under Threat* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), pp. 263-281.

central government's persistent lack of credibility and legitimacy created an environment of suspicion and uncertainty, conducive to – and favourable for – the re-organisation and re-emergence of the (new) Taliban insurgency from 2003 onwards.²⁹ This example clearly shows that SSR programmes must be considered in security and stability vacuums, which means that the reform of the security sector is crucial for post-conflict reconstruction processes, because they initially serve as stabilisation tools in the short-term, and once the environment has been stabilised, as starting points for broader reforms.

5.3.2 SSR in the context (II): the Balkans

Quite similarly, multiple agents of insecurity continued to operate almost undisturbed in the Balkans even after the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in 1995. In Bosnia, the division of roles between the police and the military still represents an extremely volatile grey area, with no clear distinction as for their respective activities on the ground.³⁰ In addition to that, organised crime still represents one of the major challenges to establishing internal and regional security, consolidating the rule of law and advancing democracy. This phenomenon, has its roots in the fall of communism in the region, and was then exacerbated by the warring parties' exploitation of the 'economic profitability' of war once the conflict broke out. As a result, organised crime has now become increasingly ingrained in the socio-political and economic fabric of all regional countries that are still trapped in the post-conflict transition, without having completed it. Criminal

29 Giustozzi, *Decoding the New Taliban*, pp. 1-23

30 Lucia Montanaro-Jankovski, *Security Sector Reform in the Balkans: a key to ending conflict*, Policy Brief (Brussels: European Policy Centre, June 2006)

activities, mainly trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings, as well as illegal immigration, are among the most serious challenges to SSR consolidation and internal stability in the region. Further, corruption, inherently linked to organised crime, corrodes the reform process from within, thus necessarily re-dimensioning the effectiveness of the improvements so far made. Over time, criminal groups have been able to expand to the extent that they now represent one of the greatest threats to regional stability in the Balkans, especially because these groups' survival largely depends on opposing, and crushing, any effort to establish transparent, functioning and accountable state institutions.³¹

6. The actors involved in SSR programmes

Dealing with informal – and often illegal – security structures, is inherently complex, and this is the reason why the non-statutory dimension of security, and its reform, is often neglected, with a variety of non-state actors ending up being sidelined, if not completely excluded from the reform process.³² These non-state actors include:

- local militias,
- insurgent groups,
- liberation armies.

31 Emil Giatzidis, (2007) The Challenge of Organized Crime in the Balkans and the Political and Economic Implications, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 23(3), pp.327–351, DOI:10.1080/13523270701507022

32 Rita Abrahamsen, (2016) Exporting Decentred Security Governance: the Tensions of Security Sector Reform, 17(2), pp. 1-15

The effectiveness of the security sector, or lack thereof, is still often measured according to the traditional understanding of the state³³ as the sole legitimate provider of security and entitled to the monopoly over the use of force.³⁴ Aside from being the point of departure for all SSR activities, a dysfunctional security sector is so defined when it fails to provide internal and external security in an effective and efficient way. Yet, the main and primary target of externally-sponsored SSR policies still remains the public sector, namely the armed forces and the police, thus partially limiting the possibilities offered by implementing inclusive and system-wide reforms.

33 The traditional understanding of the state is hinged upon the principle of Weberian statehood; according to the sociologist Max Weber, the monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force (or violence) in a particular territory is the necessary condition for statehood in the modern conceptualisation of the state. This means that the state should be the sole source of such force, which is exercised by the means of public police and the military. Accordingly, the state should also be the only provider of both internal and external security. For a deeper understanding of Weber's theorisation, see Kristen R. Monroe (eds.), *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 259-263.

34 Bryden and Hänggi, *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, pp. 27-30

Specifically, externally-sponsored interventions and operational support usually follow different patterns of implementation depending on the actors involved. These actors, intervening to assist or guide the reform process include:

- one or more states, Western countries as well as neighbouring ones. To cite some examples, the UK-sponsored SSR in Sierra Leone or the role of the Australia in East-Timor.
- International coalitions, led by states, international organisations or alliances. This type of external support usually takes the form of international assistance missions, either sponsored and set up by the UN and other international organisations, or led by regional actors. To name a few, NATO in Afghanistan or ECOMOG in Liberia.

While security and development objectives undoubtedly overlap in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, externally-driven SSR has overtime tended to prioritise, and partially still does, hard-core security at the expenses of development, thus potentially jeopardising the long-term objectives of sustainable and self-sustaining reforms, transformation and capacity-building.³⁵

35 Jackson, *The Risks of Security-led Statebuilding*

At the local level several challenges to the implementation of SSR may emerge, thus seriously limiting the reform's chances of success and possibly leading to detrimental by-side effects, including unreformed security sector, unchanged or even worsened security situation, and relapse into conflict. Given their impact on the overall success of SSR programmes, these aspects will be addressed in details in the second section, dealing with challenges to SSR implementation.

II. CHALLENGES TO SSR IMPLEMENTATION

By its very nature, the reform of the security sector in post-conflict societies is often extremely challenging, especially considering the fact that it represents, and is conceived as, one of the crucial activities to be included into broader (post-)conflict management and post-conflict peace and state-building practices. Notwithstanding the evolution of internationally-sponsored and assisted SSR programmes, which have increasingly emphasised the need to articulate more inclusive, people-centred and locally-owned approaches to SSR, several problems and challenges may damage the actual implementation of these reforms on the ground.

Hence, despite being broadly understood as all-encompassing, the promotion of a predominantly holistic and governance-focused approach to SSR is not easily implemented at the practical level, due to a variety of circumstances and internal conditions, which generally characterise extremely fragile environments and war-torn societies. In other words, SSR often fails to translate into feasible programmes vis-à-vis local complexities, thus feeding into a policy-practice gap which still remains largely unaddressed.³⁶

In addition, since SSR is all about realigning power and power-holding elites to democratise the security forces, strengthen civil society and re-engineer state-society relations, it is also inherently political – and politicised. Concretely, this means that, from the very beginning, SSR has to deal with a multidimensionality of actors, both statutory and non-statutory, and both influenced by the legacy of the conflict as well as determined to preserve their interests and positions in light of institutional changes that SSR would supposedly bring about.³⁷ For this reason, at a very general level, SSR risks being skewed by multiple structural challenges, which stem directly from previous spirals of violence and conflict. This suggests that, in many post-conflict realities, the basic conditions necessary to start the reform process do not exist, and have to be somehow created from scratch, thus possibly complicating and delaying further the beginning of the reforms’

36 Mark Sedra, *Security Sector Reform 101: Understanding the Concept*, pp. 5-17

37 Eirin Mobekk, ‘Security Sector Reform and the Challenges of Ownership,’ in Mark Sedra (eds.) *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (Waterloo, Canada: The Centre for International Governance and Innovation (CIGI), 2010), pp. 229-242

actual implementation.³⁸

Against this backdrop of “overarching” and context-induced challenges, the complexity of SSR per se, as well as the nature of the contexts where the reform is to be operationalised, both explain why a series of further problems and dilemmas can often emerge during the implementation phase.

1. SSR and context-sensitivity

Although many post-conflict countries share similar experiences in terms of post-conflict destabilisation, and similarly struggle to return to normality once the phase of open fighting is over, it is neither possible nor concretely helpful to generalise the nature of SSR and the required steps for its implementation, and no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach actually works. Understandably, SSR cannot be divorced from the political, social and economic conditions of the country where such reform is activated in the first place. Indeed, SSR encompasses different dimensions, which are not only limited to addressing security deficits.

38 Mark Dowes and Robert Muggah, ‘Breathing Room: Interim Stabilization and Security Sector Reform in Post-War Period,’ in Mark Sedra (eds.), *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, pp. 136-153

Other than ensuring the political governability of the security forces according to democratic standards of good governance and rule of law, SSR is designed to link the different dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction: economic, social and institutional. These refer, respectively, to the appropriate allocation of resources to the security sector, the actual guarantee of internal and external security of the population and ultimately, to the effective separation of the various forces constituting the security sector, and their clearly defined tasks.³⁹

1.1 No universal model

It goes without saying that no universal model for SSR exists, and that contextual specificities matter the most when it comes to truly and deeply transforming problematic environments, further suggesting that for this transformation to be meaningful, a long-reaching engagement with and within the local context is vital. From another perspective, this implies that contextually-rooted SSR programmes need to be hinged upon accurate analyses of the situation, and not vice versa: to put it simply, SSR should adapt to the context, not attempt to modify local traditional structures accordingly.

39 Herbert Wulf, 'Security Sector Reform in Developing Countries,' in Clem McCartney, Martina Fisher and Oliver Wils (eds.) *Security Sector Reform. Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation*. Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 2 (Berlin: Berghof Research Centre, 2004), pp. 71-73

Therefore, external actors' strategies and SSR implementation policies should be based on a deeper appreciation of the domestic characteristics which are unique to each country, not only in terms of identifying and addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict. Most importantly, a context-informed SSR needs to acknowledge pre-existing socio-political structures and specific dynamics in order to create realistic entry points for SSR and make it fit the local framework.⁴⁰

1.1.2 Context-informed peace process: the case of Colombia

In the aftermath of conflict, or even in the case of ongoing and protracted violence, a context-sensitive analysis should always guide the establishment of legal and political frameworks, both in terms of peace negotiations and peace agreements conducive to peaceful political dialogue, conflict resolution and grassroots reconciliation. Recent positive developments in Colombia's long-attempted peace process between the FARC-EP forces and the government demonstrate the need for a careful evaluation, and understanding, of the situation on the ground, including the legacies of the past. If the issues specific to that particular country are left behind or only superficially addressed, neither constructive dialogue, nor reconciliation processes and conflict resolution can be truly effective.

40 Jane Chanaa, *Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002), pp. 33-60

In the case of Colombia, a context-specific approach ensured that sensible issues, both as historical root causes of conflict and consequences of a situation of protracted violence, became an integral part of conflict resolution and peace-building agendas. These factors include a persisting social divide between rural and urban areas, land reform, illegal drug production, narcotic trafficking and criminality, and the question of rebels' socio-political status at, and after, this stage of post-conflict transition. The inclusion of these themes in the agreement reached in March 2016 between the FARC and the government⁴¹ also positively impacted the overall peace process, by laying the foundation for a comprehensive peace process, which aims to promote internal normalisation, reconciliation and further reforms, including SSR, this latter being a process so far limited in Colombia.⁴²

1.2 Why context matters

Along these lines, a context-sensitive approach is essential if SSR is to deliver concrete results and positively influence the internal evolution of security structures to further enable sustainable development. Ultimately, the importance of context also pertains to a double level of analysis. On the one hand, it means recognising that, even apparently contiguous cases, such as the oft-cited comparison between Afghanistan and Iraq, actually display a constellation of differences which cannot be underestimated nor

41 DPI Briefing Note, *Current Peace Talks in Colombia* (DPI, London, April 2016), 1-4

42 Wolf Grabendorff, 'Limited Security Sector Reform in Colombia', in Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (eds.) *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, (Münster: Lit Verlag, DCAF, 2009), pp 69-86

overlooked. This further implies that the same SSR model or strategy, even if successful in a given country, cannot be simply exported unchanged to any other country, unless sensibly re-adapted and taking account of the local environment.⁴³ This is not to suggest, however, that successful instances should not guide future planning for implementing SSR, but rather that, for example, the police reform programme implemented in Sierra Leone is unlikely to work if prescriptively applied to a completely different environment, for a variety of reasons and circumstances, including the history, traditions and institutional configuration of the country. Recognising the centrality of the context also deeply influences the way in which SSR programmes interact with local populations. This interaction should be encouraged in the forms of local inputs, ownership and extensive consultations to engaging local community in order to design and implement SSR programmes, which local actors should not just deliver but especially accept and interiorise.⁴⁴

43 Mark Sedra (2007), Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan and Iraq: Exposing a Concept in Crisis, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 3(2), pp. 7-23, DOI: 10.1080/15423166.2007.486990145914

44 Timothy Edmunds, 'Security Sector Reform: Concept and Implementation,' *DCAF Working Paper*, No. 86, October 2002, available at www.dcaf.ch/content/download/36494/528205/file/01_Edmunds.pdf, accessed October 4, 2016

On the other hand, the concept of context-sensitivity also suggests that superimposed and template-driven solutions to local dysfunctions, mostly inspired by Western ideals of security and governance that completely neglect the domestic dimension of SSR, are likely to become rapidly unfeasible, unsustainable and result in essentially 'empty' structures in terms of their concrete applicability. As the case of Iraq shows, all attempt to construct a Western-like state created an artificial, and partly dysfunctional state apparatus, which exists through the support of external donors, not because it is actually sustainable or legitimately recognised by the local population.⁴⁵

While it is widely accepted that effective reforms are context-dependent, and that SSR implementation differs according to context, the adoption of a context-sensitive approach is naturally challenging, especially from the donors' perspective, because it requires a better understanding and appreciation of the local conditions. These have then to be translated into practical reforms and implementation strategies. However, since many externally-led initiatives are time and resource-constrained, donors tend to underestimate the impact of reforms which are not sufficiently informed by a thorough understanding, and knowledge, of local realities.⁴⁶

45 Paul Jackson, 'SSR and Post-conflict Reconstruction: the Armed Wing of Statebuilding,' in Mark Sedra (eds.) *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, pp.118-135

46 Eirin Mobekk, 'Security Sector Reform and the Challenges of Ownership,' pp. 230-233

Rather, although maybe not deliberately, SSR is often implemented in the form of a ‘quick-fix’ mechanism, which is expected to bring concrete changes to the situation in a ‘reasonable’ amount of time, usually a few months after the beginning of the entire reform process. As a result, it is safe to say that if unrealistic deadlines, as well as wrong assumptions over politics, context and governance in the country of intervention continue to inform SSR programming and implementation phases, the entire process risks being completely haphazard.⁴⁷ This is to restate that SSR – considered as a reform in itself but especially in relation to a broader post-conflict transformation – plays a crucial role in the overall process of laying the foundation for a constructive and durable peace.

47 Carley Robb-Jackson, *Making Security Sector Reform Work for Local Populations*, Policy Brief September 2012 (Ottawa, Canada: North-South Institute, 2012), available at < <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2012-Making-Security-Sector-Reform-Work-for-Local-Populations.pdf>> accessed September 14, 2016

2. Short-term stabilisation vs. long-term sustainability

To varying degrees, each post-conflict setting is characterised by an (in)security dilemma, which directly stems from a condition of unfinished civil war, relating to the fact that the lines between war and peace are still extremely blurred in the aftermath of major internal turmoil or violent conflict. Given the volatility of such a setting, SSR's first priority is to stabilize the environment and fill the security vacuum usually emerging as a consequence of institutional, political and socio-economic collapse and internal fragmentation, which might be both a cause and a consequence of the conflict outbreak, thus fostering a vicious cycle of bad governance, rampant insecurity and underdevelopment.⁴⁸

2.2 Security-Development Dilemma

On this basis, in post-conflict settings, the recognised interconnectedness between security and development, which donors' approaches to SSR have increasingly acknowledged,⁴⁹ gives rather rise to a security-development dilemma based on different objectives to be achieved at different stages of the reforms' implementation. In other words, if properly conceived, SSR should initially stabilise the environment in order to create the conditions conducive to sustainable development over a longer timeframe. However, this is rarely the case, and external actors have often strived to best sequence the provision of basic security in the short

48 Adedeji Ebo, (2006) The challenges and lessons of security sector reform in post-conflict Sierra Leone, *Conflict, Security and Development*, 6(4), pp. 481-501

49 Adedeji Ebo, (2007) The role of security sector reform in sustainable development: donor policy trends and challenges, *Conflict, Security & Development*, 7(1), pp. 27-60, DOI: 10.1080/14678800601176485

term, while strengthening the structures which could ensure the sustainability of the reforms in the long-term.⁵⁰ The emergence of apparently clashing and time-dependent priorities is likely to be a by-product of a 'security first' paradigm, which mainly focuses on rapidly establishing acceptable levels of internal security in order to further proceed with the reform.

If this approach is understandable in a situation where extreme instability and residual violence would frustrate any transformative initiative promoted by SSR, the overemphasis on hard security reconstruction, such as the military and the police, could detrimentally impact on the entire reform process, especially if this limited approach is pursued in isolation from the broader evolution of the context. Moreover, short-termism also means that the development dimension of SSR is often postponed and transcended, if not completely omitted, to curb immediate security needs, thus ignoring that SSR is no post-conflict panacea. Further, since the prospects of a long-term commitment on the part of external donors is usually highly unattractive, the tendency is rather to limit the scope of the reform in a manner which is more easily manageable and controlled. Following the rationale of using SSR as a stabilisation tool to respond to domestic pressures, donors often tend to selectively engage with only some of the actors, mainly those with shared views and goals, or those deemed to be the best medium to meeting contingent priorities.⁵¹

50 Doves and Muggah, 'Breathing Room,' pp. 136-153

51 Adedeji Ebo, (2007) The role of security sector reform in sustainable development

2.3 Short-term priorities: possible implications

According to the need to ensure quantifiable results in challenging environments, external actors may choose to bypass the national level of participation to engage directly with influential local-level (usually non-state) actors. For instance, the Afghan Local Police Initiative is only one example of the risks linked to prioritising short-term objectives. In that specific case, the external actors' preference for immediate stabilisation led them to engage with parallel structures of power, namely local warlords. However, this form of direct international engagement with non-state security providers then undermined Afghan state-building, not only by eroding the legitimacy of national authorities, but especially by limiting the sustainability of the reforms, which were either abandoned after the international actors' drain of resources or failed to have a lasting impact. As a result, in Afghanistan the attempts to adjust the SSR agenda to the conditions on the ground, including still high levels of internal insecurity and quite limited capacity, and meet immediate security challenges have inevitably changed the nature of SSR towards its minimalist definition. This has meant maximising the effectiveness of the security forces at the expenses of underlying and broader goals, leaving Afghanistan still prevalingly unstable.⁵²

52 Mark Sedra, (2006) Security sector reform in Afghanistan: The slide towards expediency, *International Peacekeeping*, 13(1), pp.94-110, DOI: 10.1080/13533310500424868

2.4 SSR in the context of broader reforms

Particularly relevant to this discussion is the relationship that exists between Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and SSR programmes.

2.4.1 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and SSR

DDR programmes contribute to stability and security in post-conflict environments, so that reconstruction and development processes can begin. Since DDR processes are concerned with the status of combatants in the early stages of the transition from conflict to peace and development, they aim to deal with the post-conflict security dilemma by laying the groundwork for sustaining individuals at the local level while building the national capacity of the state for long-term peace, security and development.⁵³ As neither SSR nor DDR can resolve conflict alone, prevent violence, or enable development, they can however help establish a secure environment so that other elements of a recovery and peacebuilding strategy can proceed. Similarly to SSR, DDR is also incremental, and characterised by ‘cumulative’ activities, which extend over the short-to-long term and all contribute to creating a sustainable peace.⁵⁴

53 Mats Berdal, *Building Peace After Civil War*, Adelphi Papers 407 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009), pp. 11-28

54 For an extensive account on DDR’s potential and challenges in a post-conflict setting, see Joseph Parkes, *DPI Working Paper: DDR and the Complexity of Contemporary Conflict* (DPI, London, June 2012), pp. 1-48

This suggests that DDR's three components usually take place at different times, but should not be conceived as separate stages in a sequential process, exactly in the same way that SSR's activities should be considered a process rather than a series of isolated reforms. The following definitions may thus be useful for understanding the deeply intertwined characters of DDR and SSR initiatives, and in grasping the importance of their link:

- Disarmament usually takes place when the lines between war and post-conflict transition are still extremely blurred and refers to the physical disposal of small arms, ammunitions and heavy weapons, which are collected and documented, usually by external actors. Disarming (ex-)combatants is obviously pivotal to remove, or at least contain, a potential risk of a relapse into violent conflict.
- Demobilisation is the formal and controlled disbandment of armed forces or other non-state armed groups. Ex-combatants are discharged from conscription and can start receiving assistance in the form of social rehabilitation and reinsertion, the latter not to be confused with the longer-term reintegration phase.
- Reintegration is the long-term process through which ex-combatants acquire civilian status by gaining sustainable employment and income. The time-frame of reintegration is usually open and highly dependent on the overall process of socio-economic reconstruction and development. For this reason, it is also the most difficult phase to successfully implement.⁵⁵

55 U.N. General Assembly, 60th Session, *Report of the Secretary General on*

Despite the recognition that DDR and SSR are strictly interconnected, this link is difficult to operationalise properly. This represents a missed opportunity, which leads to a loss of ‘potential synergies’ between the two and, inevitably, to uncoordinated approaches responsible for conflicting practices and outcomes.⁵⁶ Addressing all the multiple deficiencies that often flaw the correct interaction between these two sets of activities is beyond the scope of this analysis. However, it is important to note that one of the major problems identified concerns the right timing and sequencing of DDR and SSR. Specifically, although it is quite obvious that downsizing the security forces in a way that is numerically more manageable as well as cost-effective – which pertains to the DDR realm – is crucial, it is quite difficult to draw a clear-cut line between the two programmes, and almost impossible to decide exactly when SSR takes over from DDR, or vice versa. Interestingly, DDR and SSR are often referred to as two sides of the same coin, at least in terms of their most basic objective of ensuring immediate post-conflict stability and reducing the likelihood of renewed violence. However, this view is operationalized quite inconsistently on the ground, and what usually emerges is rather the tendency to delink the two processes, leaving their mutually enforcing character largely unexploited.⁵⁷

Committee on Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (A/60/705), 2 March 2006, (A/51/18), Official Record

56 Michael Brzoska, “Embedding DDR Programmes in Security Sector Reconstruction,” in Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Münster: Lit Verlag, DCAF, 2005), pp.94-115

57 Michael Brzoska, “Embedding DDR Programmes in Security Sector Reconstruction,” pp. 98-105

2.4.2 Reintegration: the missing 'R' in the DDR-SSR linkage

As previously mentioned, DDR and SSR share similar socio-political and economic objectives, because they both represent important aspects of a post-conflict reconstruction and peace processes. They also aim at setting the conditions for the promotion of longer-term stability, security and development. However, the positive outcomes possibly emerging from this link are often limited by a lack of cohesiveness between the two sets of initiatives. In particular, despite being a crucial aspect both of DDR and SSR, the reintegration phase has an extremely poor record of implementation.⁵⁸ On the one hand, downsizing measures and cost-cutting initiatives promoted as part of DDR programmes are undoubtedly essential to rationalise SSR efforts and reshape the composition of the security sector. On the other hand, the entire reform process and all peace-building efforts could be easily fraught by the effects of a failed or incomplete reintegration process.⁵⁹ Limited reintegration, with scarce socio-economic opportunities for ex-combatants could encourage and motivate them to rearm and remobilise.

Most importantly, reintegration is about providing ex-combatants with new opportunities for socio-economic normalisation, so that the incentives which motivated their previous mobilisation are gradually reduced to the point where fighting starts to be perceived as largely inconvenient.

58 Ibid

59 Sean McFate, *The Link Between DDR and SSR in Conflict Affected Countries*, Special Report 238 (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2010), pp. 1-16

However, new opportunities are only created by promoting internal stability, thus adopting a developmental, and necessarily longer, approach to post-conflict reconstruction. As a result, reintegration becomes the most difficult activity to implement, especially in a limited time framework, especially in light of the fact that it is extremely expensive, both in terms of economic and human resources.⁶⁰ For these reasons, it is not surprising that not only does incomplete reintegration hamper the prospects for a positive interplay between DDR and SSR, but it may also spoil the entire reconstruction process by heightening the levels of internal insecurity. Moreover, ex-combatants' dissatisfaction with the reintegration process, and generally speaking, the persistence of low levels of ex-combatants' integration into the regular economy can result in social unrest, increase of criminal activity – or both.

3. Local ownership

More directly concerned with the actors involved in SSR implementation processes, as well as their interactions, instances of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction demonstrate the importance of local ownership and public engagement, both as means of building acceptance and credibility while restructuring the states' security forces, and strengthening the state's domestic legitimacy. In the context of post-conflict SSR, locally-owned implementation strategies are pivotal to ensure the sustainability of the reforms even beyond the scope of external actors' commitment, in terms of funding as well as supporting activities. In other words, local participation in SSR should be encouraged in order for the

60 Michael Brzoska, "Embedding DDR Programmes in Security Sector Reconstruction," pp. 96-100

reforms to be interiorised by the local population, thus promoting a self-sustaining and independent process of internal transformation, adaptation and enhanced security and governance.⁶¹ At the same time, it is also necessary to differentiate between local ownership at the national level, which mainly includes the political and security elites, and local ownership at the community-level of engagement, so that the reform process can actually mirror the changes in local communities' security concerns and needs overtime.

3.1 What is local ownership?

Local ownership is one of the challenges to SSR implementation, yet it also entails further complexities, namely, and perhaps most importantly, establishing what local ownership practically means and who are the locals entitled to it. First of all, a general ambiguity surrounds the concept of local ownership, not just within the development debate, but especially around the connotation it assumes in relation to SSR policies and initiatives.⁶² As a matter of clarity, local ownership recalls the transformative character of SSR: rather than being a pre-fixed and static concept to be put into practice, local ownership can be better understood as an evolutionary process resulting from the interaction between different stakeholders. Specifically, in the context of SSR implementation, a locally-owned process entails the gradual devolution of responsibilities to local actors, including the stages of SSR planning, assessment, decision-making and complete control.

61 Atsushi Yasutomi and Jan Carmans, *Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Post-Conflict States: Challenges of Local Ownership* (Leuven: Institute for International and European Policy, Katholieke University, 2005), pp. 109-131

62 Yasutomi and Carmans, *Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Post-Conflict States*

More broadly, the process should aim at empowering local structures throughout the peace-building process, up to the point where external support is no longer needed.⁶³

At the same time, local ownership does not necessarily mean that local actors are in control of the whole process, but rather that they have, or should, be supported in building the necessary capacities to take responsibility for the reform agenda(s). In addition, external actors' consultation with local and national actors, if involved, as well as their participation and contributions to the implementation of SSR programmes does not equate local ownership, but is only part of it. At the practical level, local ownership is all too often reduced to buy-in and 'train-and-equip' practices, which are a form of external solution to internal problems rather than being truly conceived as sincere bottom-up reforms.⁶⁴

63 Jens Narten, *Dilemmas of Promoting Local Ownership: Statebuilding in Post-war Kosovo* (Ottawa: Research Partnership on Post-War Statebuilding, 2006), pp. 19-20

64 Dowes and Muggah, 'Breathing Room'

3.1.1 Sierra Leone: a model for evolving local ownership

Active participation and community-based inclusion are central to effectively transforming societies in post-conflict states. The case of SSR in Sierra Leone offers some positive insights into how flexible approaches to local ownership, which should change according to evolving security needs locally, may well ensure a more inclusive reconciliation process. To be effective, local ownership should primarily focus on empowering groups and individuals previously marginalised, or negatively impacted by more powerful forces, such as the military and the police in Sierra Leone. Before and during the conflict these forces had been hugely politicised, serving the interests of small and corrupted military and political elites rather than protecting the population.⁶⁵ Therefore, following the early stabilisation attempts to create the conditions conducive to further reforms, SSR implementation in Sierra Leone started to engage local structures and communities more directly.

For instance, the Security Review commissioned by president Kabbah in 2005 to establish efficient, appropriate and affordable security services officially required a society-wide consultation with a heterogeneous range of stakeholders, inclusive of both the government and civil society. In addition, the media were encouraged to function as oversight mechanisms to monitor the report, encourage public participation and debate in the evaluation of its outcomes.⁶⁶ This form of multilevel consultation was

65 Ebo, *The challenges and lessons*, pp. 481-501

66 Brig Kellie Conteh, 'Sierra Leone Case Study: Local Ownership of the Security Sector Review and Transformation Process,' in Laurie Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*, (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, October 2007)

specifically designed to assess the improvements made so far, and to identify persisting security deficits that needed tackling in order to improve the population's own perception of security.

Throughout the consultation process, the inclusion of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) also signals an official commitment from governmental bodies to proceed further with the reform process to encompass the justice sector and create effective transitional justice mechanisms to deal with crimes and atrocities committed during the war. This also contributed to the creation of a political and legal frameworks enabling for a broader and long-lasting reconciliation process, which was partly facilitated by the decision to conduct a series of locally-based workshops, held in different districts across Sierra Leone. In addition to official governmental bodies, the consultation extended to a wide range of participants, including civil servants, local administrators, traditional rulers, and members of other civil society groups, thus seeking to engage with the local communities, share information and building trust among the population.⁶⁷ Drawing from the Sierra Leonean experience, it is safe to assume that these initiatives are extremely important not only to create entry points to local ownership, but especially to reestablish a sense of unity and cohesion among the different actors and groups in a post-conflict society. By virtue of a shared commitment to pursue long-term stability and development, which can only be achieved through coordinated actions engaging as many actors as possible, the reconciliation process can also be positively impacted. This means bringing together previously opposed groups, with divergent principles and

67 Ibid

maybe political aspirations, to overcome social, ethnic, cultural or religious divisions, which in some cases might have motivated the conflict in the first place.⁶⁸ In relation to local ownership, Sierra Leone represents a positive example not only in terms of broadening local ownership horizontally, which means expanding the range of actors to include to broader segments of civil society. It also perfectly illustrates the need to deepen local ownership, in order for civil society engagement to evolve from a project-based, ad hoc contribution toward mainstreamed participation. In Sierra Leone this was made possible through the implementation of joint initiatives, including joint assessment, planning and monitoring of human security challenges and strategies.⁶⁹

The implementation of SSR in Sierra Leone is also a useful example of how a constructive engagement with the public can help legitimise the reforms which are being undertaken. In order to avoid the manifestation of a sense of alienation or marginalisation among the population, in the context of externally-sponsored reform and peace-building initiatives, public ownership undoubtedly plays a crucial role. In Sierra Leone, the principle of public ownership emerged as one of the core aspects to be embedded in SSR programme.

68 Lisa Schirch and Deborah Mancini-Griffoli (eds.), *Local Ownership in Security: Case Studies of Peacebuilding Approaches* (The Hague: Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC, Kroc Institute, 2015), pp. 28-30

69 Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli, *Local Ownership*, pp. 19-26

Locally, it took the form of training initiatives, mentoring and technical assistance. This joint cooperation between local and international actors was aimed at building local capacities for human and internal security, to be ultimately turned into self-sustaining state and security structures.⁷⁰

3.2 The complexity of implementing local ownership

Beyond the case of Sierra Leone, which does not attempt to be exhaustive nor does it account for an absolute success, also in the case of local ownership, good intentions are not always followed by concrete steps to implement what is believed to be a cornerstone of SSR, upon which SSR should be built and conceived. If possible, integrating the concept of local ownership into SSR projects and implementation policies is even more complicated, not only because the question of ownership is a challenge in itself, but it also, and perhaps most importantly, naturally poses further problems as for how to reconcile the different levels of engagement that SSR presupposes, namely the interaction between the international community on the one hand and the national-level and community-based actors and politics on the other hand.⁷¹ Hence, the fact that the importance of local ownership for the sake of SSR's successful implementation has become increasingly popular and mainstreamed among external actors unfortunately has not yet solved all tensions. These consist of a predominantly

70 Vandy Kanyako (2012) Think Global, Transfer Local: The Perils and Opportunities of a Locally Owned Peace Process in Post-War Sierra Leone, *African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes*, Issue 2, pp. 1-11.

71 Geoff Burt, *SSR 2.0 Brief: Security Sector Reform, Legitimate Politics and SDG 16*, 5 (Ontario, Canada: Centre for Security Governance, July 2016), pp. 1-14

international-to-national dialogue and the necessity to support national-local interactions, while at the same time respecting the legitimacy of national-level actors.⁷²

72 Burt, *SSR 2.0 Brief*, pp. 1-14

This tension is ultimately reflected in the enduring challenge of incorporating SSR projects into the framework of legitimate politics and local acceptance.

3.3 Policing within the community

To be effective in the context of SSR implementation, local ownership should be broadly inclusive and cross-sectional. This means that the security sector should be restructured and managed by a broader constituency of actors, both at the local and national level. However, external actors tend to identify as owners mainly governments, institutional structures and security sector leadership, thus sometimes limiting the prospects offered by society-wide inclusion and dialogue.⁷³ Drawing from the normalisation of policing and security in Northern Ireland, the practice of ‘policing within the community’ should be encouraged as an effective strategy to avoid external actors’ tendency to minimise the role of local and community-level “owners”. This approach prioritises local ownership as a means to first ensure and then improve the provision of human security by engaging the police directly with civil society. This is motivated by the idea that local communities and individuals, by being active contributors to day-to-day life and experience, are better equipped to identify possible security deficits, define their own protection needs and actively participate in planning, implementing and evaluating solutions to their problems.⁷⁴

73 Yasutomi and Carmans, *Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Post-Conflict States*

74 Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli, *Local Ownership* pp. 55-57

This is the rationale behind the comprehensive and successful police reform implemented from 2001 by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI),⁷⁵ whose main features and themes will be outlined in the following section.

3.3.1 PSNI and the policing with the community strategy in Northern Ireland

In many post-conflict realities, including deeply divided societies such as Northern Ireland, relations between police and civil society are marked by hostility, deep mistrust and suspicion, either grounded in the legacies of the conflict or stemming from other forms of sectarian and religious divisions responsible for the conflict outbreak. Since the very beginning of the post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland, police reform emerged as one of the crucial issues to be tackled, in order for the reconciliation and peace-building processes to take root in Northern Ireland.⁷⁶ Both the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and the follow-up Patten Enquiry Report (1999) acknowledged the need for a radical reform of the police services, so that previous malpractices and abuses could be addressed and social tension stemming from them contained.⁷⁷

75 Jonny Byrne, *Reflections on the Northern Ireland experience The lessons underpinning the normalisation of policing and security in a divided society* (Northern Ireland, UK: PSNI, INTERCOMM, Saferworld, June 2014)

76 Branka Mrijan and Sean Brennan, 'Policing Past and Present in Northern Ireland,' *Security Sector Resource Centre*, September 2014 [online] available at: <http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/2014/09/18/policing-the-past-and-present-in-northern-ireland/>, accessed October 5 2016

77 DPI Concept Note, *A comparative study of conflict resolution from a gendered perspective Comparative Study Visit to Ireland* (London: DPI, May 2016)

In the context of the process of post-conflict reconciliation in Northern Ireland, the police reform is often considered as a positive model to be drawn on, because it successfully managed to transform the previous Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) into the more accountable, professional and legitimate Police Service of Northern Ireland.⁷⁸ Following the reforms, what was previously perceived as a Protestant-dominated tool of state oppression became susceptible to political and civil society demands, and turned into a more balanced body representative of the society more widely.⁷⁹ One of the strengths of Northern Ireland's police reform lies in the fact that, from the reform's outset, civil society played a significant role in fostering a constructive relationship between the local community and the police services, which was essential to formulate and deliver policing with a community strategy, underpinning the broader institutional transformation process. In addition, the police reform encouraged reconciliation by the temporary enforcement of an affirmative action policy, which took the form of an equality initiative to ensure equal recruitment opportunities for both Protestants and Catholics.⁸⁰ These factors all contributed to transforming historical perceptions, thus positively impacting on the reconciliation process overall.

One of the main methods of generating community-level support for policing consisted in creating tangible outcomes that could be evaluated, measured and monitored through improvements in the local population's quality of life and day-to-day delivery of security.

78 Mrijan and Brennan, 'Policing Past and Present in Northern Ireland'

79 PODEM - DPI Comparative Study Visit, *Towards Advocating Police Monitoring Mechanisms in Turkey: an exploration of police reforms and policing oversight in Great Britain and Northern Ireland* (London: DPI, march 2016)

80 Ibid

PSNI frequently consulted with the community representatives and local residents, in order to adapt the strategy and match actual needs and concerns.⁸¹ The success of this strategy hugely depended on whether communities felt actually empowered by and within this new community policing system. In order to increase institutional legitimacy, gain acceptance and build trust, the PSNI, by means of local consultation processes, incorporated the population's opinions, fears and expectations into policing strategy.⁸² By doing so, the PSNI created a more joined-up approach between the national and local level, successfully informing the community that it was a crucial actor within the process of delivery the community policing strategy. Overall, these initiatives had a significant impact on the broader effort to reconcile communities, overcome social divergences and help mitigate the causes of conflict.

3.4 National vs. local ownership

One of the reasons why engaging with local-level structures to promote and enhance community-based initiatives to SSR implementation has proven so challenging is mainly due to the fact that there is no accurate definition on who actually owns and runs the process locally, and these actors usually remain unidentified and undifferentiated. On the contrary, international donors' approaches to the implementation of SSR through forms of 'local' empowerment are quite often misled by the tendency to consider locals as a mass of homogenous groups and actors, sharing same objectives and with similar expectations.⁸³

81 Byrne, *Reflections on the Northern Ireland experience*, pp. 9-12

82 Ibid

83 Sedra, *Security Sector Reform 101: Understanding the Concept*, pp. 5-17

In addition to that, since donor states or multilateral organisations are those who in many post-conflict scenarios develop and fund SSR programmes by providing expertise and support, deliberately or not, they have the natural inclination to promote their own reform models, and what they think people locally need. Consequently, local ownership's potential to legitimise externally-driven reforms by embedding them into the socio-political fabric is inhibited from the very beginning, thus compromising the efforts to both improve the security situation and reform the institutions concerned with its provision.⁸⁴ Further, if the policies developed through SSR are irresponsive of local needs, confidence-building mechanisms and local trust in the state and its (security) institutions is likely to be largely limited.⁸⁵ It follows that, in order to enable for sustainable security services and improve the security environment on a day-to-day basis, a better understanding and inclusion of local, and not just national actors, is essential.⁸⁶

3.4.1 Bilateral engagement

Another critical aspect is the oversimplification which usually characterises international actors' interactions with local actors – or better, with whom they believe to be the most influential, and more easily accessible, 'locals.' In other terms, beyond the stated

84 Eleanor Gordon (2014), Security Sector Reform, Local Ownership and Community Engagement, *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 3(1), pp. 1-18, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.dx>

85 Bruce Baker and Eric Scheye (2007), Multi-layered justice and security delivery in post-conflict and fragile states, *Conflict, Security & Development*, 7(4), pp. 503-528, DOI:10.1080/14678800701692944

86 Heiner Hänggi, "Security Sector Reform," in Vincent Chetail (eds.) *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: A Lexicon*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.337–349.

goal of promoting a locally-owned and legitimate reform process respectful of local priorities, security sector assistance in most cases neglects the local dimension of these reforms to *bilaterally* engage with national-level actors, thus tiding the process to the formal statutory framework. If this approach can be explained as an attempt to interact with one single party to simplify an already challenging process, it also sensibly limits the positive impact that informal and non-statutory structures, including civil society, can make on the overall process.⁸⁷

These shortcomings are also symptomatic of the fact at the international level, the concepts of national and local ownership are usually conflated, or used interchangeably, although local ownership does not mean ownership by political and institutional elites. It then follows that the process of SSR implementation only holds on a tacit consensus between political elites and international donors.⁸⁸

87 Burt, *SSR 2.0 Brief*

88 Dowes and Muggah, 'Breathing Room'

4. Gender-responsiveness

The lack of an effective inclusion of gender and gender-based approaches to SSR is one of the major limitations to the successful implementation of SSR itself, but it also has major repercussions on the overall processes of post-conflict reconstruction and inclusive peace-building. Despite the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000,⁸⁹ which acknowledged the need to refocus gender in peace and security discourses and partially encouraged the promotion of gender-sensitive initiatives as an integral part of SSR, gender perspectives are still often marginalised, if not completely neglected. This inevitably prevents the reform process from being truly inclusive, thus consequently spoiling its potential of redesigning a security sector in line with rule of law and democratic and human rights standards.⁹⁰

As in the case of local ownership, the integration of gender-responsiveness is believed to be one of the key principles of SSR, and this implies that failure to ensure it negatively impacts on the nature of the security sector which is being reformed, especially in terms of its democratic aspiration and sustainability. Strategic and sustainable engagement of women in SSR process is thus needed to promote an equal and balanced representation, which accounts for the different individual security needs, but at the same time acknowledges the fact that insecurity impacts men and women differently.⁹¹

89 U.N. Security Council, 4213th meeting, *Resolution 1325 (2000) (S/RES/1325)*, 31 October 2000 (Masthead).

90 Marina Caparini, "Civil Society and the Future of Security Sector Reform," in Mark Sedra (eds.), *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, 244-262

91 Frida G. Kjäll, *Gender-Responsive SSR: What Does it Mean and What are the*

Gender-responsiveness is one of the most critical aspects to be promoted within the broader process of implementing a society-wide SSR. Hence, this aspect embodies both the rationale and the nature of more general challenges which SSR usually faces during the implementation phase. In other terms, most of the challenges to implementing gender-sensitivity and women empowerment also generally affect SSR more broadly. Further, encouraging a gender mainstreaming approach should not be limited just to the practical implementation of SSR, but most importantly, it should be implemented throughout the other stages of programming, decision-making and monitoring, in order to define a reform framework which is as inclusive as possible.⁹²

4.1 South African gender-sensitive security sector

South Africa provides a positive example of how gender-responsiveness can be integrated into different, yet complementary, levels the transitional and post-conflict reconstruction phases. In the late 1990s, the country undertook an extensive SSR programme to restructure its security apparatus, heretofore fraught by the strong militarism which has characterised the former Apartheid regime.⁹³ In this context, the active role of women in demanding governmental and military accountability, as well as engaging grassroots participation of civil society, was crucial to

Challenges for its Implementation? FBA Brief 06/2016 (Sweden: Folke Bernadotte Academy, Swedish Agency for Peace, Security and Development, 2016), pp. 1-9

⁹² Eirin Mobekk (2010) Gender, Women and Security Sector Reform, *International Peacekeeping* 17(2), pp. 278-291, DOI: 10.1080/13533311003625142

⁹³ DCAF, *Gender and Security Sector Reform: Examples from the Ground* (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), pp. 19-29

shape the defence review process as a nationwide consultative and participatory undertaking. The organisation of public dialogues ensured that local and gender-based needs and concerns were given a formal space in which to be expressed, allowing for the formulation of new strategies to address and tackle new emerging issues.⁹⁴

Although referring more to a transitional environment rather than a post-conflict setting, the case of South Africa illustrates how a participatory and gender-sensitive approach to security sector and defence reform could be beneficial to broader socio-political and reconciliation processes, by helping build national consensus around security issues, and generating public legitimacy for the newly reformed security structures and actors. Ultimately, among civil society, the inclusion of women's representatives and organisations, including the involvement of female parliamentarians, ensured the creation of relatively gender-sensitive security structures, with a particular emphasis on integrating a gender perspective into the security sector.⁹⁵

94 Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Negotiating the Transition to Democracy and Reforming the Security Sector: The Vital Contributions of South African Women*, (Washington D.C.: Hunt Alternatives, 2004), pp. 23–24

95 DCAF, *Gender and Security Sector Reform*, pp. 23–24

4.2 Gender balancing

A complete analysis of the major issues around the integration of gender-responsive practices within SSR policies is beyond the scope of this paper, and it would require an in-depth assessment on its own. For the purpose of this research, however, it is worth noting that one of the deep-rooted causes of the neglected dimension of gender is strictly linked to the nature and composition of the security forces. In other words, the security sector in developed, developing or transitioning and fragile countries is perceived as, and largely is, mostly male-dominated, thus inevitably complicating the overall process of shifting mind-sets and effectively transforming the security environment.⁹⁶ That considered, the very first step to curb the current limitations to a meaningful integration of gender in SSR policy and practice should address primarily the need to achieve a balanced – if not equal – representation of men and women in both security sector institutions and oversight bodies. This aspect is crucial, to the extent that the promotion of gender balancing as a tool to recruit and include women in the security sector and governance bodies could be also extremely beneficial to the establishment of a more representative security sector, and ultimately, to the overall strategy of building trust and acceptance locally.⁹⁷

96 Caparini, “Civil Society and the Future of Security Sector Reform”

97 Mobekk, Gender, Women and Security Sector Reform

4.2.1 Equality initiatives in Northern Ireland

Enhancing gender balancing within security structures is also crucial to achieve the broader goal of reshaping society according to the principles of balanced representation, egalitarianism and political inclusion. With this regards, several equality initiatives in Northern Ireland illustrate that equal representation goes beyond the cross-sectional divide between Protestants and Catholics, to encompass a gender-oriented approach. In the context of Northern Ireland's deeply divided society, the introduction of quotas and balancing systems, such as Women in Local Councils, is aimed at facilitating reconciliation through the provision of equal employment opportunities, not just for people from different religious groups, but also between males and females. These initiatives, backed up by the establishment of the Equality and Diversity Group in 2011,⁹⁸ could help streamline a gender-oriented approach to SSR on equality grounds and equal representation within policy and security sector.

4.3 Gender mainstreaming

On the other hand, in order for gender to be truly implemented as part of broader post-conflict initiatives, and SSR specifically, increasing participation might not be enough. Alongside gender balancing, it is crucial that gender and gender-sensitive approaches become mainstreamed, especially at the practical level. This further

98 Although the positive impact of these initiatives on the overall reconciliation process, women in Northern Ireland remain largely underrepresented, see Michael Potter, *Review of Gender Issues in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014), pp. 6-15, [online] available at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2014/ofmdfm/1514.pdf>, accessed October 7, 2016

means that rather than treating gender and gender-related issues as later add-ons to pre-existing, and already set, SRR implementation models, the strategy of gender mainstreaming aims at encouraging an institutional and structural transformation, according to which women are not considered just recipients of reform, but play an active role in the entire process, helping identify key security concerns and how to address them.⁹⁹

4.3.1 Gender mainstreaming in Colombia

The key to gender mainstreaming resides in the link between the concepts of gender-sensitivity and society-wide participation. In other words, in order for gender issues to become truly mainstreamed, an active role of women in shaping public dialogues and constructive consultation, alongside other civil society organisations, should be encouraged and enhanced. As the case of Colombia illustrates, the participation of women, both in civil society and at the national level, including around the formal negotiating table, could be extremely useful to promote the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's rights across peace and reconciliation processes.¹⁰⁰ Alongside the implementation of gender-sensitive DDR programmes and initiatives, women's leadership has been at the forefront of the peace-making efforts, and has hugely contributed to the creation of a legal and political framework to further the peace process. Recent developments in Colombia clearly show that

99 Mobekk, Gender, Women and Security Sector Reform

100 Mayesha Alam, "Despite 'No' Referendum, Colombia Peace Process Remains a Model for Women's Participation," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed 7 October 2016, <http://blogs.cfr.org/women-around-the-world/2016/10/03/despite-no-referendum-colombia-peace-process-remains-a-model-for-womens-participation/>

a proactive participation of women is fundamental to promote as constructive and inclusive a peace process as possible.¹⁰¹

Colombia's strong tradition of women's advocacy and mobilisation across civil society has played a remarkable role in the (ongoing) process of conflict-resolution between the FARC and the Colombian government. Indeed, women's public engagement, outreach and proposals have positively influenced grassroots peacebuilding, and have shaped conflict resolution and reconciliation agendas during high-level peace talks.¹⁰² Beyond multiple problems related to the peace process as a whole, the case of Colombia does represent a positive model of gender mainstreaming and inclusion, especially in light of the fact that the role of women in conflict resolution and peace-building is still largely underestimated.

Broadly speaking, the main problem is that gender is still conceptualised, and treated, as being outside the dominant models of security and the security sector, and gender-sensitivity is largely considered to be of secondary importance – an afterthought rather than broadly and positively included as a fundamental element. In turn, this means that representation and inclusiveness – both crucial aspects associated with SSR, and that SSR should be promoting – suffer from a lack of multi-layered approach to security concerns.¹⁰³ This ultimately leaves (more) marginalised stakeholders, such as women or civil society broadly understood, outside the process of reforming the security – and state – institutions.

101 DPI Briefing Note, *Current Peace Talks in Colombia*, p.4-5

102 Alam, "Despite 'No' Referendum"

103 Kjäll, *Gender-Responsive SSR*

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this paper was to shed some light on the concept of security sector reform (SSR), and its prospects for success in the context of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. As reiterated throughout the paper, SSR is a complex undertaking, and its definition cannot be reduced to a simple quick-fix mechanism, interchangeably implemented in different cases. On the contrary, SSR is context-dependent and context-sensitive, to the extent that reforms successfully implemented in Sierra Leone might not have the same outcome in Liberia or Iraq, or anywhere else.

Drawing from different cases and examples, it is safe to state that SSR's complexity is a function of the nature and features of the setting in which reforms are to take place, and stems directly from the country's internal specificities – be these socio-political, economic, cultural, or simply relating to well-established structures of power. It goes without saying that in the aftermath of a violent conflict or civil war, these complexities are amplified by what could be defined as a condition of unfinished civil war: the lines between war and peace are still extremely blurred, the environment is extremely volatile and characterised by a security vacuum which has to be addressed before any meaningful reform may be initiated. Against this background, the need for a careful evaluation of a temporal divide between short and long-term objectives has emerged as one of the recurrent themes throughout the paper. Recognising that, over different timeframes, SSR has fundamentally different objectives is germane to the interconnected character of security and development in any post-conflict environment.

Two main aspects reveal the importance of this link in the context of post-conflict or post-authoritarian transitions. Firstly, SSR cannot be conceived as a stand-alone practice, but it has to be integrated into broader society and nation-wide transformations, of both the structures and actors who oversee those structures. Secondly, to be sustainable in the long-term, SSR should be conceived and implemented as part of a holistic approach. This means that the focus of the reform programmes should extend beyond a limited definition of the security apparatus to encompass the multiple actors involved in the process of transforming a post-conflict environment. Ultimately, the human dimension of security is central to understanding how a holistic approach may be operationalised at the practical level, because it focuses on people as active participants in their own security.

Further, a problematic gap between SSR's principles and practice has been identified. This clearly relates to the multiple challenges to SSR implementation on the ground, which this paper has extensively analysed. The most complex examples are probably those regarding the implementation of grassroots strategies, community-level engagement, participation and gender-oriented approaches to SSR. Some of the case studies proposed here offer positive insights on the outcome of the reforms locally implemented, suggesting that there is no single or universal solution to apparently similar issues and deficits. Each of the case studies accounts for more or less successful outcomes, which are highly context-specific. As a matter of conclusion, to be effective and sustainable, SSR should always be grounded in the specific characteristics of the country where it is to be delivered.

General guidelines and operational principles could be useful when chaos and post-conflict residual violence prevail, however they should not overshadow the need for tailored solutions and well thought out strategies. By means of its transformative and dynamic character, SSR should enhance and improve local realities and specificities, as opposed to sideline and neglect them.

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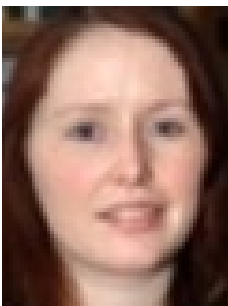
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Rajesh Rai:

Rajesh Rai was called to the Bar in 1993. His areas of expertise include Human Rights Law, Immigration and Asylum Law and Public Law. He is Founding Director of HIC, a community centred NGO based in Cameroon, and of Human Energy (Uganda) Ltd. He was previously Director of The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI). He lectures on a wide variety of legal issues, both for the Bar Human Rights Council and internationally in India, Africa, Asia and the USA.



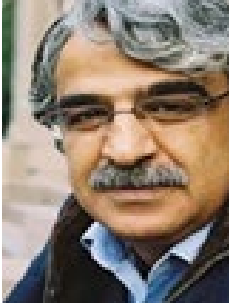
Sir David Reddaway:

Sir David Reddaway now works as an adviser, board member and consultant in the private and university sectors. He previously served as British Ambassador to Turkey and to Ireland; High Commissioner to Canada; UK Special Representative for Afghanistan; and Charge d’Affaires in Iran, where he had first worked during the Iranian Revolution. He has also worked in Argentina, India and Spain. He was a Fellow at Harvard University and a volunteer teacher in Ethiopia. He read History at Cambridge and Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.



Prof. Naomi Roht-Arriaza:

Professor Naomi Roht-Arriaza is Distinguished Professor of Law at, San Francisco, USA. She is an expert on transitional justice, human rights violations, international criminal law and global environmental issues, and has authored several works on these issues.



Prof. Dr. Mithat Sancar:

Professor Dr Mithat Sancar was formerly Professor of Law at the University of Ankara, Turkey. He is an expert on constitutional citizenship and transitional justice. He has written extensively on international human rights law and constitutional issues. He is a member of the former Wise Persons Commission in Turkey, established by then Prime Minister Erdoğan. In Turkey's 2015 general election he was elected as an MP for Mardin Province.



Catherine Woollard:

Catherine Woollard is an independent consultant based in Brussels. Previously she served as the Director of the Brussels Office of Independent Diplomat, and from 2008 to 2014 she was the Executive Director of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) – a Brussels-based network of not-for-profit organisations working on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. She previously held the positions of Director of Policy, Communications and Comparative Learning at Conciliation Resources, Senior Programme Coordinator (South East Europe/CIS/Turkey) at Transparency International and Europe/Central Asia Programme Coordinator at Minority Rights Group International. She has also worked as a consultant advising governments on anti-corruption and governance reform, as a lecturer in political science, teaching and researching on the EU and international politics, and for the UK civil service.



Prof. Dr. Sevtap Yokuş:

Professor Dr Sevtap Yokuş is a Professor of Law at the University of Kemerburgaz, Istanbul, Turkey. She holds a PhD in Public Law from the Faculty of Law, Istanbul University, awarded in 1995 for her thesis which assessed the state of emergency regime in Turkey with reference to the European Convention on Human Rights. She is a widely published expert in the areas of Constitutional Law and Human Rights and has multiple years' experience of working as a university lecturer at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level. She also has experience of working as a lawyer in the European Court of Human Rights. Since 2009 she has been contributing to the ongoing work to prepare a new constitution in Turkey.



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