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REPORT
THE CONTRIBUTION AND
ROLE OF SSR IN THE PREVENTION
OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

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BACKGROUND

As evidenced by a growing number of programmes and actors providing support, Security Sector Reform (SSR) is increasingly recognised as an essential element in effectively addressing a vast array of security challenges commonly facing fragile or post-conflict countries. The prevention of violent conflict has traditionally been one of the core aims of SSR. The direct and indirect contribution of SSR to the prevention of violent conflict has been highlighted in virtually all SSR policies, including the UN Security Council Resolution 2151[1], AU SSR Policy Framework, European Union Elements for a SSR policy framework, and the OSCE Guidance on SSR. Organisations like ECOWAS or the United Nations Office for West African and Sahel (UNOWAS)[2] have even included SSR as an integral element of their conflict prevention strategies at country and regional levels.

SSR is seen as a means of progressively building resilient security and justice systems while addressing many of the root causes and drivers of conflict that stem from ineffective, poorly managed or unaccountable security and justice institutions. Security and justice institutions are commonly the primary interface between the State and the population they are meant to serve. In many contexts they are the litmus test for the effectiveness of the State. Their protracted ineffectiveness or poor integrity represent potential for the escalation of conflict, as has been the case in South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Central Africa Republic.

Due to its political nature and technical complexity, SSR is a difficult and challenging undertaking in virtually all contexts. Hard but valuable lessons have been learned in recent years about the shortcomings, strengths and challenges of international support to SSR. While there are a significant number of encouraging examples of the important contribution of SSR to preventing violent conflict, the experience of the broader international SSR community confirms that more must be done to enhance the effectiveness and consistency of donor support to national SSR processes. Approaches to SSR must be seen as contextual, as one size fits all approaches have repeatedly yielded mediocre results. Nonetheless, there is an opportunity to build on examples of the application of SSR principles that have demonstrated an indispensable role in preventing violent conflict and addressing the underlying drivers of conflict. As demonstrated in the case of SSR processes in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Timor-Leste, and most recently the Ukraine, a sustained, comprehensive and integrated SSR approach significantly contributes to conflict prevention in times of transition.

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[1] http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2151.pdf
[2] https://unowas.unmissions.org/security-sector-reform

One of the most noticeable long-term trends in SSR is the gradual shift towards bottom up approaches to reform, moving away from the traditional state and capital centric approaches to SSR. In countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Timor-Leste and Kyrgyzstan the bottom up approach to SSR has often provided more direct and visible results in regards to creating inclusiveness, legitimacy, and responsiveness in security and justice provision for the population, which otherwise can be key drivers of conflict.

There has been a continued growth in the number of policing programmes supported by the donor community, and promoted by national Governments. Such programmes have focused on delivering improved policing at the community level and ensuring that tailored and responsive security approaches are developed that can quickly deal with threats before they escalate into larger violence and conflict. In many countries faced with fragility or recovering from conflict, one of the key contributors to emergence of conflict in communities has been the lack of effective provision of security and justice in the communities outside the capital or urban centres.[3] Countries emerging from conflict, including Liberia and Timor-Leste, have continued to struggle to deconcentrate policing and security capacity to the communities, leaving critical vacuums in governance and security provision and risk that the vacuum can stimulate violent conflict.

While there is no standard or agreed definition of community policing within the donor community, common characteristics associated with the concept include an emphasis on police-community relations, service delivery, and developing a community specific strategy to crime prevention. In contexts where it has been rolled out effectively it has been well aligned with the unique and diverse security needs of the specific communities, and has had a direct impact on the prevention of violent conflict. By increasing the visibility and transparency of the police through joint action and dialogue with communities, community policing has also been an important element in increased public trust in security institutions in countries like Jamaica[4] while innovative community policing approaches in Sri Lanka had also demonstrated a key contribution to increased public trust in the police.[5] In both cases, trust is an important element in encouraging communities to work and collaborate with the police to collectively tackle the underlying threats that may otherwise escalate into conflict.

As an example, in Bougainville, the New Zealand community policing programme has been credited as playing an important role in prevention of recurrence in conflict[6]. The programme focused on providing rural villages with community based officers, who provided policing services over much of Bougainville for the first time, and set up accountability systems for the police that encouraged reporting and community focus. It has been especially effective in integrating women into the policing structure, which is a highly appropriate mechanism of conflict prevention in Bougainville given the core traditional role of women as peace-makers. Greater inclusion of women into the state

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[3] https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Economic_Brief_-_Drivers_and_Dynamics_of_Fragility_in_Africa.pdf

[4] https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8957.pdf

[5] https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9387.pdf

[6] https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/_securedfiles/Aid-Prog-docs/Evaluations/2013/Feb-2013/Bougainville-Commuity-Policing-Project-BCPP-Independent-Evaluation-February-2013-Public-Version.pdf

policing system aligns it with traditional, female led, conflict resolution approaches. In the case of Sri Lanka, community policing has positively impacted the communities' perception of the legitimacy of the state police, as evidence by increased interaction between the two parties. It has also improved the effectiveness of the police in mitigating conflict by providing information from the community more proactively, before security situations escalate.[7]

In contrast, in Timor-Leste the continued failure of community policing to take hold despite various donor initiatives was only resolved once the responsibility for initiating and designing the community policing approach was assumed by national actors. Traction in instituting community policing was only achieved once a local owned process was developed that allowed national actors to formulate their own community policing approach, drawing largely from a mix of international community policing models and indigenous structures. It is notable that even within Timor-Leste various community policing models have been developed by individual communities.[8] The result of the new police models included improved perception of the effectiveness of police and decreased perception of serious threats to peace and conflict felt by the citizens. In this regard, the community policing approach has contributed to reducing underlying drivers of conflict in Timor-Leste that stemmed from unresponsive security institutions that were lacking public confidence.[9]

Similar emphasis by donors has been recently given to developing local security councils and fora to help devolve management and oversight functions over security and justice institutions to the community level. In Nigeria, local security accountability forums, which include civil society, non-state and customary actors, and the police, have demonstrated the positive influence on conflict resolution at community levels and a channel for communities to hold police to account.[10] In Hyderabad, India such community peace and security structures also provided a forum that could proactively identify and address emerging communal conflicts.[11] Similar structures have been developed in Kyrgyzstan, where periodic meetings between the community and the police have allowed for more proactive resolution of conflict and ensured that policing strategies are better aligned to local community needs. This cooperation has also helped to ensure that the police and community complement each other with information and assistance in dealing with emerging cases of radicalization in the communities. In this case joint action plans between the community and the police at local levels ensured systematic cooperation and partnerships in tackling threats in the community level.[12] In Sierra Leone the introduction of such structures contributed to significant improvement on the effectiveness of police institutions in gathering intelligence and detecting crime, in turn influencing the extent to which such institutions could address drivers of conflict in the community stemming from crime. The joint structures, which included partnership boards between a

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[7] https://eu-civcap.net/2017/03/01/community-policing-in-sri-lanka-a-foundation-for-wider-police-reform/

[8] https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/LocalleadershipofCPpracticesinTLEnglish.pdf

[9] https://timordata.info/media/publications/Chinn_2008_Survey_of_Community_Police_Perceptions_report_-_English.pdf

[10] Justice for All Annual Review (2016)

[11] http://www.hrpub.org/download/20141201/IJRH4-19290153.pdf

[12] http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/case-study/71-building-bridges-to-improve-community-policing-in-kyrgyzstan

wide array of stakeholders, provide examples of effective and coordinated responses to tackling local conflict and preventing it from escalating further. [13]

The Mano River Women's Peace Network, with support from DCAF, has proven to be an effective mechanism is convening multi-stakeholder dialogue at community levels in the Liberian border regions. This in turn has helped to prevent the escalation of local conflicts in a historically volatile region. The key success of the initiative is the sensitization of local community leaders, including state and non-state security and justice institutions, to the positive contribution of women in sustaining peace. This has allowed women to influence and participate in policy and strategy development for community level approaches to addressing justice needs. The programme demonstrated that even a relatively modest programme intervention, which provided basic gender and SSR training at community level to a wide range of stakeholders, has helped to increase community engagement in security initiatives. As a case in point, the training empowered and enabled local women's networks to advocate for female police officers to be stationed in the District. This in turn contributed to women reporting a larger number of cases of abuse or violations if the female police officer was present. These trainings also encouraged local chiefs to have more inclusive and representative council meetings. This allowed women to more active participate in the decision making processes, and such inclusive dialogue at community levels allowed the police to promote the concept of the local community becoming more active in detecting and preventing drug trafficking within the community.

There has been a long standing recognition that in many transition or post-conflict contexts as much as 80% of the population access their security and justice needs through informal institutions, including customary justice and security providers.[14] It is common to find that local communities perceive informal institutions as more effective in resolving disputes, and see them as legitimate. They are institutions with which they are more familiar with and have greater access to due to proximity. Such structures are also indispensable as a frontline source of knowledge on emerging threats within the community. Yet, while the influence and importance of such institutions has been widely recognized in SSR policies and guidance, examples of donors committing resources to substantially engage with the informal sectors remain scarce. Donors remain hesitant to engage with such actors largely because of the perceived unconformity of such systems to their own governance structures but also because of perceived lack of accountability and respect for fundamental human rights that are commonly associated with such structures. Yet, if conflict prevention efforts are to prove effective then local justice structures are critical not only in addressing security and justice provision gaps left by the limited capacity of state institutions, but also in serving as a source of early warning when drivers of conflict become more prevalent and serious within the community.

A case in point, DCAF mapping studies of donor support to SSR in Nigeria and Mali have provided only a single example of a programme directly providing capacity building to such institutions. That single programme, the UK funded Justice for All project in Nigeria, demonstrated positive outcomes by substantially engaging with the Voluntary Police Services (VPS). The programme not only assisted VPS to improve their relations with the formal police institutions, but also ensured greater accountability of VPS, and built their capacity to effectively resolve disputes in conformance with

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[13] http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17502970701810864
[14] https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/access-to-justice-and-rule-of-law-institutions/informal-justice/

human rights standards. The support contributed to the VPS becoming more effective agents in tackling community security issues and creating a safer society, especially in areas where the formal security institutions lacked sufficient resources to do so. In this regard, the VPS became effective agents in ensuring security provision gaps were addressed in a context where commonly local level incidence have previously escalated to more significant sub-regional conflicts.

DIRECTLY FOCUSING ON WHOLE OF SYSTEM COHERENCE

Security and justice institutions have a sectoral role in the prevention of violent conflict. To the extent that they all function effectively, and coordinate well together, they contribute better to the stability and security of the country. Security sector reform policies and guidance place a strong emphasis on holistic and cross sector approaches to reform, whereby all institutions, both state and non-state, should be integral parts of the reform process. Yet, in practice in many fragile and post-conflict countries SSR support tends to cluster around a select number of institutions, namely the police and military. The unbalanced approach to reform is often influenced by the domestic agenda of donors, where donors focus on institutional reforms that are in the donor national interest, such as border guards to help stem the flows of migration, or supporting institutions that are more inclined to reform rather than those that are the greatest threats to peace and stability. In order for the security and justice sector to contribute effectively and proactively to prevention of conflict, there is a need to ensure that all institutions are able to do so and that reform is balanced and holistic.

Commonly one of the areas of SSR that has seen relatively fewer resources from donors has been reforms of probation and penitentiary institutions. Yet, evidence has shown that even modest efforts at introducing effective rehabilitation in penitentiary institutions can directly contribute to decreasing crime through reduced recidivism rates and help reduce instances of radicalization in inmates, helping to address two key drivers of conflict. The roll out of rehabilitative programmes and improving conditions in prisons, even in challenging developing or transition contexts, has shown to help reduce recidivism rates by up to 25 percent.[15] Globally, prisons remain a key contributor to radicalization in communities and de-radicalisation programmes in prisons have shown to help tackle this growing global challenge. A combination of tailored programmes, external and internal monitoring, improved management systems, and change in treatment of prisoners have all shown to contribute to more effective approaches to dealing with radicalization within prison systems.[16]

The functions and important roles of the Ministries in effective conflict prevention is commonly understated or poorly understood. In countries at risk of conflict, or emerging from conflict, the emphasis is given to reform of agencies that have operational functions and mandates. Fewer donor resources are committed to transforming line Ministries responsible for management and oversight of the subordinate institutions, including the police. Given the political nature and mandates of the Ministries, especially Ministries of Defence and Interior, Ministries themselves are often reluctant to receive external support for major reforms of the institution, commensurate with the reforms that are ongoing at operational and tactical levels in subordinate institutions. Yet the barriers to transforming how operational institutions deliver services, appoint staff, or ensure adequate

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[15] Human Rights in African Prisons: Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Africa Prisons, Amanda Dissel

[16] ICSR Prisons and Terrorism, De-radicalisation in 15 Countries (2010)

allocation of resources, depend on the effectiveness and political will of the responsible Ministry. As an example, in Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan, the inability to build the capacity of the Ministries of Interior was a contributing factor to the uneven impact of SSR efforts on prevention of recurrence of conflict and ultimately impacted the outcomes of police reform despite the significant resources dedicated to SSR.[17]

A promising trend in recent years has been the re-engagement of donors to strengthen the law-making and oversight functions over the security and justice sector of Parliaments. The role of Parliament is widely recognized as critical in sustainable and accountable SSR processes, as political engagement in peaceful development is a fundamental component of preventing conflict. In practice Parliaments have received little direct support through SSR programming in post-conflict and fragile contexts. In Mali, a DCAF programme demonstrated that even a small programme focused on improving Parliament relations with key stakeholders and building basic awareness on SSR can have a positive outcome in promoting the role of Parliament in overseeing and supporting the national SSR process. This in turn should help ensure that Parliament is able to more constructively engage with the community and state stakeholders. This can help in ensuring that through its law-making and representation functions Parliament can adopt more relevant and effective conflict prevention legislation as well as detect crucial warning signs of potential risks of further conflict.[18] In Sierra Leone, the Women's Caucus in Parliament as an example was effective in initiating and leading an investigation of GBV cases in Kono district, and addressing the findings with the Vice President.[19] In contrast, in Liberia the limited capacity of Parliament to engage in SSR has proven to be a contributing factor in the delayed revisions of the legal framework governing the security and justice sector, with key provisions dating back to 1986. Some of the impediments to critical reforms of structures and mandates of security and justice institutions in Liberia are directly related to limited capacity and political will of Parliament to effectively engage on the subject matter. Without this political engagement in necessary reforms the security and justice institutions remain a potential driver of conflict, and have limited capacity to mitigate potential conflicts.

In an example of building international system coherence, DCAF has supported Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia to develop EU standards, best practices, solutions and mutual trust in their cross-border law enforcement cooperation. Through a combined top-down (political, management and expert level) and bottom-up approach (operational and practitioner level), all necessary levels of national law enforcement authorities were included in order to meet the priorities and exploit the provisions offered by this multilateral treaty. Such an approach contributes to the building of mutual trust among the countries from the region, and can reduce tensions at the high political level that could contribute to violent conflict. The recent increased extraordinary mixed migratory pressure affecting several countries and their efforts to contain the latter and jointly fight threats emerging thereof in particular illustrates this process from a conflict prevention perspective.

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[17]

https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Special%20Report%20223_The%20Interior%20Ministry's%20Role.pdf
http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20100400_cru_paper_smore.pdf
[18] Evaluation of Mali/DCAF Programme (2016)
[19] Strategy for Parliaments to Support Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP

INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS

SSR lessons learned and policies confirm that an inclusive approach is indispensable to developing a durable, robust, efficient and effective SSR process able to tackle drivers of conflict. The fundamental element of an inclusive approach to SSR is supporting transparency and a culture of openness that treats SSR as a public policy issue. This includes ensuring that the full range of social actors are involved, as security and justice needs are not uniform across the spectrum of society; they vary based on gender, location, wealth and age. Despite growing examples of the positive outcomes that stem from local driven and owned process and inclusive approaches to SSR, there remains a gap between policy and practice. As a case in point from Macedonia and Iraq, the inability to create ethnically and geographically balanced security institutions, despite improvements in the capacity and capability of those institutions, has had a negative impact on political stability and social cohesion in the countries. While overall the trust in the police has increased over time in Macedonia, there remain stark differences in the level of trust of the police by various ethnic groups in the country.[20] In both cases the lack of perceived and actual inclusion and representation within the institutions has been perceived as a source of continued tension, fragility and even conflict.[21]

The influence of local ownership of the reform process can be clearly demonstrated in the case of Timor-Leste. While donors played a leading role in the first decade following independence, many of the instrumental reforms that have increased public trust in the state security and justice institutions were brought about once the donor's footprint had started to decline in the reform process, and national actors became more assertive in leading the reform process. These included successful efforts in community policing, devolving conflict resolution to communities where appropriate, and creating interlinkages between formal and informal institutions. The net result was continued improvements in public confidence and trust in the security and justice institutions, highlighting the increased perception of legitimacy which was previously a key challenge and key driver of conflict in Timor-Leste.[22]

In Sierra Leone a move away from a state centric approach, towards a people centred approach to formulating and implementing the SSR process has also been credited with positively improving political stability and social cohesion in the country, which previously were contributing factors to instability and conflict in the country.[23] The move to a more people centred approach was largely achieved by creating a number of inclusive institutions at community level that brought together non-state actors and locally elected actors to oversee and govern security provision through formalized structures empowered to hold institutions to account, and to make strategic decision regarding how security services will be provided. The decentralisation of decision making and more inclusive consultations on structures and strategy to peace and security at local level strongly

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[20] http://pointpulse.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/POINTPULSE-2016-MKD-ENG.pdf
[21] http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq1176.pdf
[22] http://secgovcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Second-Generation-SSR-in-Timor-Leste-January-2017.pdf
[23] http://secgovcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Second-Generation-SSR-in-Sierra-Leone-January-2017.pdf

contributed to increased public confidence in the institutions and improved perception by the public of the legitimacy of the institutions.[24]

Various policies and international research has confirmed that empowering women and youth is important in sustainable and effective prevention of violent conflict efforts. DCAF programmes focusing on mainstreaming gender in SSR in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mali, Ukraine and Guatemala have also positively influenced the extent to which gender sensitive policies have been adopted by security and justice institutions. Policies and increased gender awareness within the institutions have been noted to contribute towards more effective responses to gender based violence and gender responsiveness of security and justice institutions.[25]

Gender specific programming in SSR has steadily grown year to year and has yielded more positive and concrete results. As an example, Nicaragua used a multifaceted approach including strong political commitment, revising recruitment procedures, training, and instituting dedicated women's police stations, to have 26 percent of the police staffed by women. This represents one of the highest proportion of female officers in the world.[26] This measure has directly contributed to Nicaragua having one of lowest homicide rates in the region[27]. Overall, research has shown that globally an increase in the number of women police officers in the police force can have direct impact on reducing the misconduct of police but also reduce the instances of police using excessive force to deal with emerging threats.[28] In both cases misconduct and predatory behaviours of police have shown to be common contributor's to conflict at community levels.

An inclusive approach is a complex and challenging undertaking that involves creating systems of decision and policy making, dialogue on programme design, open discourse on performance and conduct, and technical exchange of expertise and views. Too often consultations and measures to ensure wider ownership of SSR processes are limited to initial consultation on needs, and rarely do they extend to ownership of implementation. The politically sensitive nature of SSR, and a lack of robust information sharing by security sector institutions and donors, creates barriers to establishing inclusive approaches to SSR. Without access to crucial information, including policies, strategic plans and information on performance and conduct, it is difficult for non-state actors to substantively engage with security sector institutions or to have a basis for dialogue and engagement. Transparency and openness are important means of improving public trust and perception of legitimacy of state security and justice institutions which can otherwise contribute to violent extremism or emergence of conflict.

MANAGEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY

A lack of effective democratic control, accountability and management over security institutions, notably the military and police, can trigger points for conflict, such as in South Sudan. A large part of

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[24] http://secgovcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Second-Generation-SSR-in-Sierra-Leone-January-2017.pdf

[25] http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Gender-Security-Sector-Reform-Toolkit

[26] http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Gender-Security-Sector-Reform-Toolkit

[27] http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/insight-crime-homicide-round-up-2015-latin-america-caribbean

[28] Prenzler, Tim and Sinclair, Georgina (2013). The status of women police officers: an international review. International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, 41(2) pp. 115–131.

the population directly blames security institutions for the insecurity and conflict in the country[29]. A closer examination of the SSR process shows that from the onset the focus of the national Government and donor community was predominantly on capacity building and structural reforms at operational and tactical levels of the military and police. In contrast relatively little attention was paid, and minimal progress was made, in improving security force accountability and management systems, which were the key issues that needed to be addressed given that some of the underlying drivers of conflict stemmed from unaccountable security institutions.

Various studies have highlighted that in most countries donors typically spend 90 to 80 percent of their financial resources on tactical and operational reforms.[30] This includes programmes that are predominantly focused on training and providing equipment, which aim to strengthen the basic capability of security and justice institutions. While there has been a growth in the number of SSR programmes that have significant governance components aimed at strengthening management and accountability systems, such efforts are commonly overshadowed by the attention given to these standard 'train and equip' programmes. A 2013 joint Government of Liberia, UN and DCAF review highlighted that an imbalance in support, and the stagnation of management and accountability reforms, contributed to limited changes in the overall effectiveness of the prosecution, judiciary and police. As a result the significant effort in building capacity had little impact on public trust and confidence in security and justice institutions, and limited value in preventing violent conflict.[31]

Changing the culture of impunity of security and justice institutions, which remains a critical driver of conflict in many post-conflict and fragile contexts, is a long-term undertaking. To develop a robust accountability mechanism requires a combination of three models of accountability: internal, external by state institutions, and external by non-state institutions. Each model has advantages and disadvantages, and only collectively can they be an effective mechanism of accountability. State level accountability is recognised as legitimate but may lack impartiality and often fails due to weak institutional capacity, cost implications, and the need for sustained political commitment to a culture of accountability. Non-state (often community or media driven) can be cost effective, quick to put into place and accessible, but may lack political clout, access and coherence. Internal mechanisms can be an effective way of holding peers to account, but often lack transparency and public trust. A combination of all three models is regarded as the most effective means of holding armed security forces to account. Such a balanced approach has been deployed by the UK's Justice for All project in several states in Nigeria, and has directly contributed to an increase in public perception of the police. By improving public complaints' mechanisms at central level, within the Police Service Commission body mandated to oversee conduct of the Nigerian Police Force, as well as creating local community based accountability forums where citizens could directly address their complaints to the police, there was an increased trust in the integrity of the police. These measures contributed to a rise in the public perception of the police by 19 percent over five years in the communities and States

[29] http://iissonline.net/security-sector-reform-in-south-sudan-identifying-roles-for-private-military-and-security-companies/

[30] http://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Countries-Regions/Mali/EU-SSR-Policy-Country-case-studies-Mali-DRC-and-Ukraine;
United Nations, SSR and Peacebuilding, Thematic review of Security Sector Reform (SSR) to Peacebuilding and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund, 2012

[31] UNMIL-UNDP-GOL-ISSAT; Review of Management and Accountability Systems in Police, Prosecution and Judiciary in Liberia (2013)

where this system was rolled out.[32] In Timor-Leste, even modest investment by donors in strengthening the capacity of civil society in monitoring and reporting on police performance and conduct has positively influenced the accountability of state security and justice institutions. Due to their wider acceptance by the communities, civil society has shown to also be effective in detecting potential triggers of conflict and raising the issues to forefront of attention of state and non-state security providers.[33]

Ineffective security institutions, or a sense of injustice or inequality before the law, are often the lead cause of individuals or groups looking to fill the security vacuum through force of arms or recourse to non-statutory or armed groups as providers of security. The perception of impunity can be a leading trigger of internal conflict. In 2006, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was created by an agreement signed by the Government of Guatemala and the UN, providing it the unique powers to support, strengthen and assist the national institutions responsible for the investigation and prosecution of crimes allegedly committed by Illegal Security Forces and Clandestine Security Structures (CIACS). Since then, figures from the Public Prosecutors Office and UNDP (National Human Development Report 2009/2010) show a decrease in the level of impunity in Guatemala during 2008-2014, indicating a trend towards greater effectiveness and accountability of the criminal justice system. These figures were accompanied by an increase in the public confidence of the work of the Public Prosecutors Office and their partnership with the CICIG. Moreover, the issue of impunity has acquired greater prominence on the national agenda. This has also has encouraged the mobilization of different social sectors, a greater perception by judges and other officials to feel less threatened to do their job, as well as a greater political demand to curtail corruption.

PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT AND SSR

Lack of adequate financing, misappropriation of funds, or poorly executed budgets have commonly been contributed to poor performance of SSR processes, endemic corruption, and limited public confidence in the sector. Lack of salary payments have been a contributing factor to low morale and ineffectiveness of security forces in a large number of post-conflict and fragile contexts, contributing to a lack of preventative capacity and often contributing to risks that security institutions become purveyors of insecurity. In practice public finance management has been inconsistently part and parcel of SSR processes, and often a parallel discipline. Yet, the recent growth in the number of examples of mainstreaming PFM into SSR has yielded positive results in the prevention of violent conflict.

In Cote d'Ivoire, a lack of salary payments contributed to a surge in low scale conflict, while in DRC the poorly managed system of salary payments was linked to the repressive behavior of the military towards the population. In the DRC an EU implemented small scale chain of payments project reformed the system of direct payment of salaries to officers and new recruitments, which positively influenced troop morale by preventing such salaries from being syphoned off by superiors.[34] The

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[32] Justice for All Annual Review (2016)

[33] http://secgovcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Second-Generation-SSR-in-Timor-Leste-January-2017.pdf

[34] http://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Case-Studies/Chain-of-payments-project-within-the-Armed-Forces-of-the-Democratic-Republic-of-Congo-FARDC

more timely payment of even a basic remuneration had a positive influence, reducing the predatory behavior patterns of the military on local communities that was often used to compensate for lack of payment. This predatory behavior would otherwise contribute to a lack of public trust and escalation of conflict at community levels. Similarly, a pension system for war veterans developed in Guinea Bissau has also contributed to ensuring war veterans are not a destabilizing factor.[35] In this case, the pension system provided an incentive to war veterans and decommissioned staff to demobilize. This was an important conflict prevention measure as it ensured that former military officers and leaders had fewer financial incentives to remain in power, and reduced their periodic influence on regime change. Similar efforts are underway to help create a pension system for retired police officers in Somalia, with the aim that the reform will contribute to right sizing the police force over time, and ensure that the police become more effective in prevention of crime and conflict. Similarly, increased salaries of new police force in both Georgia alongside wider accountability reform efforts have helped to reduce the extent of corruption within the police force and increased public confidence in the institution in a relatively short time frame.[36]

SECTION ON PPP – PRIVATE SECURITY

Many of the sources of conflict in fragile and post-conflict environments can be directly linked to management of natural resources and private assets. One of the pressing challenges faced by SSR is to ensure adequate governance and security of this space, including effective accountability of private security companies tasked with protecting such assets. While in practice the linkages between mainstream SSR and business communities, including the extractives industries, remains largely ad hoc, growing attention has been given to this in recent years.

Particularly in complex and fragile environments, security functions traditionally provided by the state are increasingly undertaken by a range of private actors. Moreover, commercial entities, such as the global extractives sector, work directly with public and private security providers, as well as security sector management and oversight bodies. However, the influential role private actors play within the wider security sector governance landscape is rarely acknowledged, and legal and policy frameworks, accountability mechanisms and capacities have not evolved accordingly. By filling this gap, global regional and local efforts to promote good private security governance in line with international human rights and international humanitarian law, directly contributes to preventing violent conflict.

Several international norm setting initiatives supported by DCAF have in recent years are making a significant contribution to promote more effective oversight and accountability and raise standards within the private security industry. The Montreux Document is influencing the practices of states by providing a focus on needed legal and policy reforms to ensure effective oversight of private security. The International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers is influencing the conduct of the private security industry by changing their operating practices in areas such as vetting, training and grievance procedures.

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[35] DCAF assessment Guinea Bissau (2016)
[36] https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/sites/successfulsocieties/files/Policy_Note_ID126.pdf & http://sna.gov.it/fileadmin/files/workshop_seminari/Selection-of-case-studies.pdf & http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/518301468256183463/pdf/664490PUB0EPI0065774B09780821394755.pdf

Global, regional and local efforts to regulate the private security sector, including support in relation to the registration, handling and stockpiling of weapons, combined with more effective national legislation and regulation, form part of a prevention-based approach that can contribute to fewer incidents of armed violence, as well as to greater oversight and accountability of this sector. In this respect, DCAF provides expertise for the formulation of new private security legislation as well as engaging more broadly with security sector management and oversight bodies. In Costa Rica and Peru, DCAF engagement is helping to structure the audit and certification of private security companies by national regulators; and assisting private security industry associations in fostering self-regulation. Additionally, as a result of multi-stakeholder dialogue supported by DCAF, in Costa Rica the industry and government are jointly committing to a significant reduction in weapons holdings by private security as part of a new prevention based approach.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION/ANALYSIS

One of the persistent challenges of SSR has been the lack of quality monitoring and evaluation systems to continuously track the extent to which SSR is successful and contributes to the prevention of violent conflict. As seen in the Central Africa Republic or South Sudan, a failing or stalled SSR process can be an important early warning sign of potential escalation in conflict, yet a recognition of the shortcomings of SSR come to the fore often too late. SSR does not have a standard set of global indices that can proactively track and highlight deterioration in the effectiveness of state security and justice institutions, or the extent to which security management and accountability mechanisms are developing. The underlying challenge is that the value of even marginal improvements in the efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness of institutions is often understated by standard donor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and too often such systems lack the sophistication to document such changes.

With little real time data being collected, SSR tends to rely on public perception surveys as a key source of information regarding the extent to which citizens trust security and justice institutions. Measuring the extent to which various groups within society trust state and non-state institutions and perceive their effectiveness goes to the heart of the legitimacy of such institutions. Legitimacy and trust are crucial indicators in the extent to which state security institutions can collaboratively work with the community to address potential conflicts and perceived grievances. Such surveys also help to identify the extent to which society has grievances – actual or perceived – towards the security and justice institutions. The limitation, however, is that such surveys are conducted on an ad hoc basis and thus do not allow a study of trends and evolutions in the security sector and serve as an early warning mechanism for detecting possible surge in conflict or emerging risks. In many countries that are at risk of conflict they are lacking altogether.

Amongst the few exceptions was the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), implemented by Australia and New Zealand with assistance from other countries in the region, which overcame this challenge by incorporating periodic public perception surveys in its project design as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework of the programme[37]. The consistency of data collection on perceptions of local justice and security institutions demonstrated the positive trends in reform, while also providing evidence of what remained to be done. It supported the donors and the

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[37] http://www.ramsi.org/media/peoples-survey/

Solomon Islands government understanding what security responsibilities could be handed back when, and what elements of security and justice needed more support to be able to maintain peace and stability and prevent a return to violence.

For SSR to be a relevant tool to prevent violent conflict it must address emerging needs and challenges. Yet, the underlying assessments and analysis informing programming tends to overly focus on the extent to which standard functions of security and justice institutions are in place and effective. In depth political analysis is rarely undertaken in the project design process, and thus SSR programmes tend to focus on technical aspects of reform irrespective of the actual contextual drivers of conflict. Similarly, programme design outline unrealistic assumptions of the local context, political will for reform, and requirements for effective outcomes. This is compounded by the underlying assumptions rarely being revisited during implementation, and adaptive/corrective measures taken when needed. SSR programmes have continued to struggle adopting flexible approaches that allow change in approach based on change in context or windows of opportunity. The unbalanced and incomplete approach to analysis is a key reason why SSR programmes in practice inconsistently include direct conflict prevention elements in programme aims and objectives, and fail to adopt a problem solving approach.

The Zimbabwe Peace and Security Programme (ZPSP) provides an example of how a programme has overcome these challenges by periodically reviewing and conducting conflict analysis and stakeholder analysis exercises to understand change in context and emerging windows of opportunity to intensify reform efforts.[38] This has allowed the programme to make inroads in promoting inclusive dialogue between a vast array of state and non-state stakeholders on challenging issues facing citizens and security and justice institutions.

PROGRAMMING TRENDS

Increasingly donors have had a more reactive approach to SSR programming. Commonly most donor attention to SSR only occurs once a conflict has finished, or in fragile contexts where the drivers of conflict have become visible and serious enough to garner international attention. As a case in point, Mali has seen a significant increase in donor support to SSR in recent years following the insurgency in 2012. The total investment by donors in SSR since the insurgency has significantly exceeded the cumulative amount of donor support to SSR in Mali in the preceding two decades.[39] Similar increases in donor support have been registered in both Ukraine and Nigeria following the emergence of conflict.

Arguably, the long-term nature of SSR is poorly suited to the underlying needs of such contexts given the requirement for quick results and immediate action to build institutional capability to address underlying security deficits. Considering that inclusive and holistic approaches are defining characteristics of SSR, and inherently require longer time frames to implement effectively, SSR has rarely been able to produce measurable and visible outcomes in short-time frames. Even with significant resources, attempts to jump start SSR processes when inclusive dialogue and legitimate

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[38] http://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Case-Studies/Zimbabwe-Peace-and-Security-Programme/ZPSP-Conflict-and-Stakeholder-Analysis
[39] http://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Countries-Regions/Mali/Mappings-of-Donor-Support-to-SSR-in-Nigeria-and-Mali

processes were lacking, as was the case in Libya, have shown that SSR is unable to show significant impact on prevention efforts in accelerated timeframes.

In contrast, post-conflict and fragile countries, such as Sierra Leone or Timor-Leste, that have had sustained long-term SSR processes have typically only been able to see significant and noticeable improvements in the effectiveness and accountability of security and justice institutions after roughly five to ten years. In these cases SSR has helped to progressively diminish some of the underlying drivers of conflict that originated from ineffective security and justice institutions and lack of perceived legitimacy and trust of those state institutions by various parts of the population that have otherwise historically have contributed to sparks in social unrest and even violent conflict. Liberia which has been undergoing an SSR process with significant donor support for over a decade is only now demonstrating the net positive outcomes of the process whereby it is incrementally taking over responsibility for delivery of security and justice from UNMIL and addressing security gaps that have previously contributed to the internal conflicts. Yet, even after ten years Liberia continues to work on some of the fundamental aspects of SSR, including defining the types of structures that are commensurate to the needs of the various regions of the country as well as defining the underlying legal framework guiding security and justice institutions.

This has remained one of the key challenges facing SSR programmes. Donor SSR programmes commonly operate on one to three year programme cycles, not allowing sufficient time to make significant inroads in substantive reforms. The short-times frames, and demands from donor agencies for visible results, influence programmes to set unrealistic expectations in regards to outputs and outcomes at the onset. The short time frames contributes to programmes sacrificing inclusiveness in the approach, uneven local ownership of the process and choosing activities that are achievable rather than priority reform needs. In the case of Sierra Leone, which has progressively achieved important progress in addressing underlying drivers of conflict stemming from ineffective and unaccountable security institutions, the United Kingdom effectively navigated around these challenges by signing a long-term Memorandum of Understanding with Government of Sierra Leone. The MoU provided mutual assurances of long-term commitment to supporting the reform process, providing space and flexibility for pursuing an incremental and sequenced approach to reform over the longer time frame required to achieve results.

SSR is a high risk endeavour in virtually all contexts, with a significant chance that setbacks or stagnation in reforms is likely over any extended period of time. Yet, such setbacks in the process have commonly resulted in donors downsizing or withdrawing their support altogether. This has been the case of the Central African Republic where in 2008/2009 donors committed significant resources to SSR but after limited traction in the reform process gradually downsized their support and withdrew altogether in 2013 following the emergence of conflict. Today, SSR has re-emerged as a priority for the donor community in CAR. Yet, this uneven approach to supporting SSR over time has also been a missed opportunity to iteratively address some of the root causes contributing to the continued fragility of the country and requires the national and government and donor community to essentially start a new process from scratch. In this case the failure of the national Government and donor community to effectively jump start the SSR process resulted in the drivers of conflict remain unaddressed, and eventually contributed to escalation of conflict in 2013.

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Given the sensitivities of engaging in security and justice issues, which go at the heart of state sovereignty and power structures, SSR is fundamentally a political process. To ensure that security and justice institutions effectively do not become a hindrance to the reform process and a source of conflict themselves, such as in Guinea Bissau, DRC, or South Sudan, it requires that there is effective political will to transform the accountability and management of those institutions by the political elite. A case in point was in 2016 when DCAF assisted the parliamentary intelligence oversight committee in the Republic of Macedonia[40] develop a set of bi-partisan supported intelligence reform recommendations. Subsequently the Government launched a comprehensive intelligence reform process aimed at consolidation and increased accountability within the intelligence sector, formally seeking DCAF support in the process. Yet, while the political dimension of SSR has been highlighted in UN Security Council Resolution 2151 and the EU Policy Framework for SSR, there is commonly an absence of high level political dialogue to reinforce technical aspects of SSR. In this regard, technical approaches that aim to overcome the common stumbling blocks to effective SSR, which are usually political in nature, have typically yielded poor results. In practice donors and international organisations de-link SSR programming from political engagement, avoid politically contentious issues of SSR altogether, or focus on cosmetic reforms in the dialogue process. One of the remaining challenges in this respect is the need to sensitise Heads of Mission and senior policymakers on the basics of SSR to ensure that such political dialogue is aligned to needs and priorities. Evidence shows that SSR is infrequently discussed at senior policy levels on country or regional specific issues. As such, SSR needs to be more regularly integrated into senior level political dialogue between Governments or between multilateral organisations.

DONOR LANDSCAPE

On the aggregate, donor financing earmarked for SSR has noticeably increased in comparison to a decade ago. Much of the increase is explained by a growing engagement in SSR by intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union, United Nations and OSCE largely targeting countries that have emerged from conflict and are at risk of re-emergence of conflict. Multilaterals have increasingly led the policy and normative developments related to SSR globally and regionally. In contrast, in this time frame bilateral donors have continued to decrease their footprint in the SSR agenda. Year to year bilateral donors have accounted for a dwindling share of SSR programming. Instead bilateral donors have favoured channelling support through multilaterals or providing grant funding to private consultancy companies and NGO's.

While the SSR agenda had originated from the development community, today the lead responsibility for programming and policy related to SSR is commonly under the purview of crisis management structures of intergovernmental organisations and bilateral donors. One of the noticeable trends in recent years has been the sizeable growth in SSR programming in stabilization and crisis contexts with a parallel decrease in SSR programming in developed and transition contexts. This includes a decrease of attention and funding for SSR to countries that are perceived to be stable, but are at risk of emergence of potential conflict in the medium to long-term if the underlying security threats remain unaddressed through more effective and accountability security and justice

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[40] The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

institutions. In many parts of Eastern and Southern Africa and the Middle East there are singular examples of SSR programmes or absence of SSR programmes altogether. This highlights the continued challenge faced by the SSR community of matching resources with growing demand for support.