

UN Peace Operations: What Needs to Change?

Security Sector Reform, an integrating function or a separate discipline?

Security Sector Reform is increasingly perceived as the answer to the vast array of security challenges that beset post-conflict and fragile communities. It is hyped as the answer to the exit strategy dilemma faced by the international community. It is not the concept of SSR that matters, but the integrated approach it brings to police reform, defense reform, justice reform, governance reform and national security planning. It can also be the bridge that conceptually links the security-development nexus.

SSR has always been about four relatively simple assertions, it was about¹

- 1) Taking a human security approach – focus not only on state security but also on how an individual experiences insecurity and accesses justice. Treat security and justice as public policy issues.
- 2) Recognising that security and justice reform in all contexts is first and foremost a political process rather than solely a technical activity.
- 3) Re-balancing support to both the effectiveness and the accountability of security and justice services. Hard but valuable lessons have been learned about the consequences of increasing the effectiveness of security actors without ensuring adequate accountability.
- 4) Recognising the inter-linkages across the security and justice sector—the reform of the police, for example, is not only about the police force but also those other actors who have policing functions, as well as those who manage and oversee policing services.

Police reform, justice reform, governance reform and national security planning have long been part and parcel of how national governments have functioned. SSR is not a new discipline, it is merely a new approach to activities that have become siloed, overly technical, disconnected and lacking accountability.

Rather than being about integrating these simple principles into on-going work, SSR is now recognised by some as a separate all-encompassing discipline, the panacea for all the challenges faced by post-conflict or fragile states. This trend to see SSR as a separate discipline, rather than something that plays an integrating function adds a level of complexity to SSR that was never intended and hampers the ability of SSR to influence and work with others already engaging on issues ranging from police reform to parliamentary oversight.

There is equally a need for a discussion on how the UN is approaching SSR. There are in-effect two questions here; the first is where UN peacekeeping missions can best target their assistance, at the strategic or programmatic levels. While the second issue is whether SSR is viewed as a separate discipline or whether it plays an integrating function.

Within the UN there appears to be a number of different structures developing within peacekeeping and political missions. In Liberia, the SSR advisor is part of the SRSG's office, underlining the political nature of SSR and the role that an SSR advisor/unit can play in supporting the SRSG in these political-

¹ These four pillars of SSR can be seen in all of the key policy documents on SSR including the SC resolution 2151, UN Secretary-General's report "Securing Peace and Development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform" (2008), the AU Policy Framework on SSR in 2013; the EU Concept on SSR (2005); and the OECD DAC Handbook on SSR (2007).

level discussions. Also by being within the SRSG's office, the SSR advisor can work across the mission more effectively, ensuring linkages between sectors, whilst also providing advice to the likes of the Police Component, Military or Civilian Component on issues of governance, and the political process around the reforms. In other missions, the UN SSR Unit may be much larger but in terms of positioning is located further down the organigram. Instead, in the previous UNMISS mission the SSR component is on a par with those working on justice, military justice, and corrections reform. While the SSR component was also focusing on an oft neglected area of national security architecture and strategy, amongst other issues, it seems to suggest a more programmatic approach to SSR. It appears to recognise SSR as a separate discipline rather than something to influence and to enhance the work of colleagues within the police, justice, corrections, human rights and civil affairs sections.

Let's call it an 'SSR approach to police reform', for example, but what is important regarding SSR is the application of the key principles into how we tackle security and justice issue: recognising the political nature of reform, the need to balance effectiveness with governance, the need to recognise the inter-linked nature of the system, and that people should be at the core of all reforms.

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