DCAF
Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SECTOR ADVISORY TEAM (ISSAT)

Operationalizing Synergies between Disaster Risk Reduction and Security Sector Governance and Reform

Web-talk discussion paper

June 2020

Background

DCAF-ISSAT started to conceptually explore the linkages between DRR and SSR first in a blog post, which then was subsequently developed into a Thematic in Practice paper. To get first reactions from practitioners, this was discussed in a web-talk on "Operationalizing synergies between Disaster Risk Reduction and Security Sector Governance and Reform" in May 2020, bringing together SSR and DRR practitioners[1] to identify the following areas and proposals presenting the biggest potential leveraging security actors' potential for making societies resilient to disaster.

Introduction

Under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted by UN Member States and endorsed at the UN General Assembly in 2015, states committed themselves to mainstreaming DRR considerations and efforts throughout all sectors.

From a human security perspective, the origin of a particular threat is irrelevant. Risks and threats origin from crime, war and conflict to climate change, natural disasters, or a pandemic may all affect physical security, safety and health. In high-income countries, integrated crisis management concepts are often being put in place, while in fragile and conflicted affected states, there are fewer such structures and linkages between DRR and SSR communities. Exploring the SSR-DRR nexus offers great potential to connect and build bridges between the humanitarian-security-development actors in order to better meet the needs of populations and increase human security, as well as integrate the Agenda 2030 and SDG16 with SDG13.

Based on the Sendai Framework's four priority areas for action[2] in order to move beyond the most obvious areas such as relief and response, the Web-talk focused on identifying operational level synergies between SSR and DRR around the following key questions:

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[1] **Speakers:**

Ms. Letizia Rossano, Director Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Mr. Jonathan Marley, Policy Analyst, Crises and Fragility, OECD

Ms. Anne Bennett, Head of the Sub-Saharan African Division at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

Dr. Patrick Hagan, Deputy Head of the International Security Sector Advisory Team at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

Mr. Alessandro Mattiato, Civil-Military Assistant, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)

Moderators:

Ms. Viola Csordas, Security Sector Reform Officer, International Security Sector Advisory Team at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

Ms. Camilla Arvastson, Project Assistant, International Security Sector Advisory Team at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

[2] *Understanding* disaster risk; *Strengthening* disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; *Investing* in disaster risk reduction for resilience; *Enhancing* disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

What is the security sector's role in the various stages of disaster risk reduction such as assessments, planning and mitigation, relief and recovery? What capabilities need to be built or adapted to play this role, including in terms of a service-delivery mindset, and what limitations as well as controls need to be in place to ensure this DRR role is played in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner governed by the rule of law and human rights?

> *SSR like DRR is naturally a long-term effort and works best when consistent effort is put into building more sustainable, resilient and effective systems.*
> *Patrick Hagan, ISSAT-DCAF*

Key elements for leveraging security actors to create resilience

1. Legitimacy and Trust

The security sector's DRR efforts directly aim at improving human security through service delivery. DRR is a community-oriented activity with a very limited enforcement role. DRR incentivizes a service-delivery oriented mindset, and DRR engagements of the security sector can build trust between security actors and the community. This increases citizens' trust in the state and its legitimacy, contributing to building social cohesion and preventing violent conflict. From an SSR perspective, DRR as a focus for SSR is useful in terms of emphasizing the need for governance and accountability that SSR should ideally focus on, broadens the basis for credible, legitimate and relevant reform, as well as stress the civilian primacy over security actors.

Roles, mandates and legal frameworks

Operationally, there needs to be a focus on clear definition of roles among the stakeholders and an exploration of the distinct added value and limits of the security sector in DRR, with a primary responsibility of civilian agencies. This needs to be reflected in legislation regulating national crisis management activities as well as the specific mandates of the security sector institutions involved. Moreover, clear guidelines are needed as a framework for a principled involvement of security forces and preventing for example discriminatory delivery of relief efforts or marginalization of specific groups in risk assessments and planning.

> *Views on the role of security actors can be entrenched. Challenging the mindsets of political and security leaders to extend security sector reforms to include DRR can be difficult but it is necessary to build political will to support the case for security actors' value in DRR. - Jonathan Marley – OECD-DAC*

Civilian primacy, oversight and accountability

Secondly, as with all other activities of the security sector, clear civilian oversight and accountability mechanisms need to be in place to ensure compliance and respect for the legal frameworks and guidelines, as well as national DRR standards, the rule of law and human rights.

DRR includes a key role for civil society organizations, maintaining dialogue between the public and security institutions. To uphold the standards and legal mandates, external stakeholders such as civil society, parliaments and the media need to have access to the necessary information, tools and resources to complement internal oversight and accountability mechanisms within the security sector.

The successful development of DRR capability can naturally strengthen the accountability of security forces by linking them to a wider range of civilian stakeholders and guaranteeing the continued relevance of security services to the demands expressed by citizens. Permanent interaction between civilian populations and security institutions contributes to the establishment and consolidation of mutual trust and responds to the need for transparency. This can improve the operational effectiveness of security forces, since they are more likely to succeed in carrying out their activities if they have public support than if they are constantly faced with hostility.

2. Right Capacities

Trust in the state and its institutions can only be built if the security sector is enabled to effectively deliver on its DRR role and mandate. Therefore, it requires the right types of capabilities and management structures. Moreover, building defining DRR mandates and strengthening effectiveness can also be pathway to further governance reform, and DRR focused project activities can be used to deliberately build internal security force governance, responsiveness to civilian direction, and practice in cross-organization functioning.

There is a direct link between the public's perception of its police and military, and the functioning and behaviors of internal security forces, particularly in an environment in which the absence of rule of law and accountability mechanisms have resulted in widespread impunity. - Anne Bennett, DCAF

Consistent focus on DRR in assessments

Operationally, this first calls for a consistent focus on DRR roles of security actors in needs analyses and gap assessments as well as capacity building activities, taking into account the impact on required capabilities for DRR.

Capabilities for DRR – soft skills, equipment and infrastructure

Secondly, in order to maximize the security sector's capabilities throughout the DRR cycle, the question needs to be further explored as to what specific capabilities for DRR are required.

Specific capabilities for DRR are include transport, logistics and engineering as unique capabilities of the military that can offer crucial support to civilian responders and civil protection agencies. Additionally, capabilities of security actors for engaging in "protection" activities need to be strengthened: This encompasses leveraging security actors' planning, forecasting and early warning capabilities to conduct vulnerability and emergency assessments (similarly to the community security assessments which are already being conducted to inform SSR processes), train them in community engagement and building community capacity for protection strategies, as well as training all security sector actors in principles such as do-no-harm, non-discriminatory assessments and service delivery, GBV, protection of vulnerable groups and the ability to operate and engage with civilian actors and communities. Due to their close contact with the population and building on concepts such as community policing, a special focus needs to be on civilian police. All security sector actors need to be supported in developing the skills and mindset to provide clear, accurate, timely, open, coordinated and honest communications to the media and the public. As in any behavioral change process, a sustained and long-term effort is required.

3. Partnerships, local ownership and peacebuilding

Beyond contributing to making communities disaster-resilient, the SSR-DRR nexus has additional potential for creating sustainable peace and preventing violent conflict.

If done in partnership between security sector actors, civil government agencies as well as civil society involving traditional leaders, religious authorities, associations and volunteers, DRR can enhance and foster partnership as well as local ownership, and strengthen social cohesion to build sustainable peace.

Joint security-civilian activities

At the operational level, this means joint DRR activities such as joint risk assessments, developing specific scenarios, trainings and exercises involving security sector actors, civil DRR management bodies and civil society. If designed as joint problem solving and dialogue or drawing on methodologies from environmental peacebuilding, these activities could also be used to foster reconciliation and rebuild trust between different groups as well as between the security sector and the population in the aftermath of abuses or violence.

We should further invest in joint civil-military trainings and exercises on disaster management to enhance our preparedness. - Alessandro Mattiato, DG ECHO

Empowering civilian actors to be equal partners

In order to be able to participate in such activities and dialogues as equal partners to secure their communities, civil society actors and leaders, the media and parliamentarians need to have access to the necessary information, tools and resources. Security sector actors, with the right skills and mindset, can further train communities on the technical aspects of DRR, while media and civil society leaders can be educated to engage in a public discourse on safety, security and risk.

4. Integrated approaches also needed in terms of funding

Integrated programming between SSR and DRR has the potential to not only contribute to more effective disaster risk reduction, but also to sustainable reforms of an accountable and people-centred security sector, as well as building social cohesion and building peace.

To realize this potential through actual programming, the question of how such integrated programmes could be funded was raised. While SSR usually draws on stabilization, crisis management and prevention budgets, DRR is financed from overall development budget lines. Some donors are increasingly working with more flexible budget instruments allowing for multi-sectoral and cross-cutting programming, such as the EU which is using an Integrated approach to external conflicts and crises, bringing together all EU external instruments and tools including humanitarian assistance, disaster relief as well as SSR through the CSDP missions and operations. However, in order to fully benefit from these opportunities, there is still a need to emphasize integrated approaches much more and translate them also into flexible budget lines and funding instruments.

The Way forward

As one of the leading institutions providing support to the international community on SSR, DCAF-ISSAT is well placed to leverage its convening power to bring together representatives of its Governing Board Members from various segments of government, such as diplomatic, stabilization and peacebuilding, disaster risk reduction and development institutions, to jointly develop operational guidance and tools for integrating the Sendai Framework's principles and priorities into security sector governance and reform programming.