Spotlight on a Mission: Reinvigorating SSR in the Central African Republic

The Spotlight on a Mission column seeks to provide the reader with a firsthand account from our Missions – an article about the field, by the field. This report was written by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA).

Assisting national authorities in the area of security sector reform (SSR) is a core component of the mandate of BINUCA. Within BINUCA, the Security Institutions Unit (SIU) plays the lead role in implementing the SSR elements of the Mission's mandate. Between April 2008 and December 2009, the SSR process in the Central African Republic (CAR) advanced significantly. The CAR authorities have adopted a comprehensive approach to SSR on the basis that such efforts are vital for peace and development in the country.

The short-term strategy emerging from a national seminar held in April 2008 presented a number of priority activities to be undertaken before embarking into a longer-term strategy. Activities included, for example, the establishment of technical- and ministerial-level coordination structures, further development of the legislative framework of a number of components of the security sector, and modest infrastructure development and training. While progress was delayed due to the challenges of operating in a post-conflict context most of the activities highlighted in this short-term strategy had been completed by the end of 2009 and were funded exclusively through the national budget.

However, after December 2009, the SSR process in CAR stalled. There were a number of reasons for this, including the fact that national authorities had not developed a longer-term national SSR strategy, which was seen as essential for the legitimacy and sustainability of SSR in CAR. Moreover, donors were hesitant to provide funding to the security sector in the absence of a strategy that would provide a common framework for all national stakeholders and their international partners.

The Minister Delegate for Defence distributed diplomas to officers for completion of BINUCA-supported trainings in engineering and emergency assistance.

In mid-2011, the CAR Minister Delegate of Defense officially requested the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) of BINUCA for support in the elaboration of a national SSR strategy. In response to this request, the SIU drafted a roadmap for the preparation of a national SSR strategy, which was adopted by the Government of CAR in mid-February 2012. The roadmap calls for the revitalization of SSR through the development of six sub-sectoral strategies, which will be brought together to form a three-year national SSR strategy. These six sub-sectors cohere with the holistic vision adopted by the Government in April 2008 and include police, justice, army and gendarmerie, public finances and borders, decentralization and environmental protection, and democratic control.

With technical and financial support from the SSR Unit, BINUCA has secured expertise to assist the Government with the elaboration of four of these six strategies. In this regard, an expert from the SSR Unit deployed to Bangui in late March. The SSR Unit also provided financial support to the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) to deploy an expert from its SSR team. The purpose of these short-term deployments was to support the SIU in its efforts to assist the Government with the revision and elaboration of sub-sectoral strategies on the democratic control of the security sector and on the police, to facilitate preparations for the development of a national SSR strategy, and to strengthen partnership-building with the African Union (AU) in order to help ensure alignment between the CAR national SSR strategy and the AU draft SSR policy framework.

In addition to supporting this important strategy development process and as part of its SSR awareness-raising strategy, the SIU conducted a three-day workshop on Introduction to SSR at the Police School for Senior Police Officers at the request of the Minister of Public Security. The SIU also continues to provide ongoing technical assistance to national SSR efforts. For example, the SIU is providing technical advice for the elaboration of a new statute on the municipal police, supporting public outreach on the roles and responsibilities of the municipal police, and delivering training on

sexual and gender-based violence and community policing. BINUCA also loaned computers to the National Police School's computer centre, which was inaugurated in November 2011, and provided technical advice on the National Police training curricula. The SIU has also assisted the army by providing modest training in military engineering, emergency medical assistance and communications as well as some financial support for the restoration of army infrastructure, including a military classroom, an emergency medical centre, and a dormitory.

Planning for Security Sector Assistance in Libya

Following the formation of Libya's new Government in November 2011, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) initiated a field-based integrated Mission planning process in full cooperation with the United Nations (UN) Country Team, and in consultation with the Government of Libya. In early January, the SSR Unit was asked to deploy to Libya to assist this process, and to contribute security sector-specific guidance and lessons learned.

The planning process and the consultations with Libyan interlocutors reaffirmed the continuing relevance of the Mission's mandate, as set out in Security Council resolutions 2009 and 2022, and recommended that UNSMIL focus on a range of areas over the next 12 months, including security sector assistance.

UNSMIL will support Libyan efforts to develop an accountable security sector.

Specifically, UNSMIL will support Libyan efforts to develop an effective and accountable security sector that respects human rights, upholds the rule of law and has the confidence of the people. To this end, the Mission's role will include the provision of strategic and technical advice to national stakeholders on security sector issues, including those pertaining to civilian oversight and management and to the demobilization and integration or reintegration of ex-combatants.

At the request of national authorities, the SSR Unit also presented lessons learned in the area of military integration to senior army officers and Thuar brigade commanders, in both Tripoli and Misrata.

Assessment Mission to Côte d'Ivoire

It has been almost a year since the end of the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the arrest of former President Laurent Gbagbo. While most of the country has been stabilized, many challenges remain in rebuilding national institutions and effectively reforming the security sector. Against this backdrop, a UN assessment mission was deployed to Côte d'Ivoire between 7 and 17 February with the objective of reviewing the situation on the ground and providing recommendations on possible adjustments in the structure and size of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

The SSR Unit participated in the assessment mission which, in addition to holding consultations with national and international interlocutors in Abidjan, also visited the border area with Liberia, as well as the northern regions of the Côte d'Ivoire. The assessment mission found that while overall security had improved in Abidjan, insecurity continued to be

a concern in many other parts of the country. In addition, complex challenges remains to extend state authority and define a national vision and strategy for the reform of the security sector.

Right-sizing and Reforming Guinea's Security Sector

A joint UN-World Bank mission to Guinea, led by the Peacebuilding Support Office and with the participation of the SSR Unit, took place between 12 and 16 March to assess the progress in key areas if the broad national SSR process. The mission coincided with a visit by the Peacebuilding Commission Country-Specific Configuration on Guinea which also had SSR at the top of its agenda.

One of those significant SSR initiatives had been the recent retirement of some 4,000 military personnel in an effort to right-size the armed forces. The retirement project, which received funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, started in January and was implemented by national authorities with technical assistance from the UN Development Programme (UNDP). To qualify, officers had to have successfully completed 35 years of military service. The severance package amounted to the equivalent of three months of salary.

The implementation of this potentially sensitive project was hailed as a success by counterparts in Guinea, including the beneficiaries themselves. Much emphasis was put on proper sensitization during the process, logistical and administrative preparations, and transparent vetting mechanisms based on biometric data.

Many pressing SSR challenges remain in Guinea. Law enforcement agencies suffer from inadequate training and a lack of equipment, as well as insufficient sector-wide plans, strategies and management. The UN continues to provide technical

assistance to Guinea and the deployment of a high-level SSR Advisor to the President is expected to be finalized by mid-April in order to facilitate sector-wide coordination.

Supporting Security Sector Development in Somalia

The first quarter of 2012 is witnessing an increase in both the opportunities and challenges for the further development of the security sector in Somalia, with the expiration of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in August, ongoing military success by the AU and its allies against the Al-Shabaab group of insurgents, and a recently-expanded mandate for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In that context, the Security Sector Development Office (SSDO) of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) is facing an unprecedented number of urgent and complex requests for support.

In light of these demands, the SSR Unit deployed to Nairobi for ten days in March to assist the work of the SSDO in a number of key areas. This included: working with the UNPOS Joint Planning Unit to finalize the concept note, agenda and programme for a joint retreat with the UN Country Team to explore collaboration on security sector issues; reinvigorating the Security Sector Assessment of "Somaliland" being conducted in conjunction with the United Kingdom; hiring a consultant to support the integration of security sector governance arrangements into the constitution-drafting process; and assisting in elaborating quick impact projects consistent with the priorities identified in the National Security and Stabilization Plan.

On 13 March, the SSR Unit also travelled to Mogadishu to attend a meeting of the Joint Security Committee which brings together senior representatives of the TFG, its armed forces, allies and international partners to consult on security sector issues. The meeting focused on reports from its Military and Police Technical Working Groups, which updated participants on existing projects and areas requiring urgent support in the upcoming six months.

In its efforts to stabilize Somalia, the TFG has identified security sector development as a key priority.

Addressing Governance and Oversight of the Security Sector in Burundi

In the second half of March, the SSR Unit deployed to Burundi to assist the efforts by the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) to enhance democratic governance and oversight of the security sector. Since the June 2010 elections, during which a large part of the opposition did not participate, the country's political landscape has been dominated by a single political party which has added complexity to the challenges of strengthening governance.

The SSR Unit met with a broad range of representatives from the security sector, including from the police, military, National Assembly, civil society, and the intelligence services. The Unit also met with international partners working on security sector issues, most notably representatives of the Netherlands and Belgium. As discussions developed, a gap became increasingly apparent between the mandated role of a n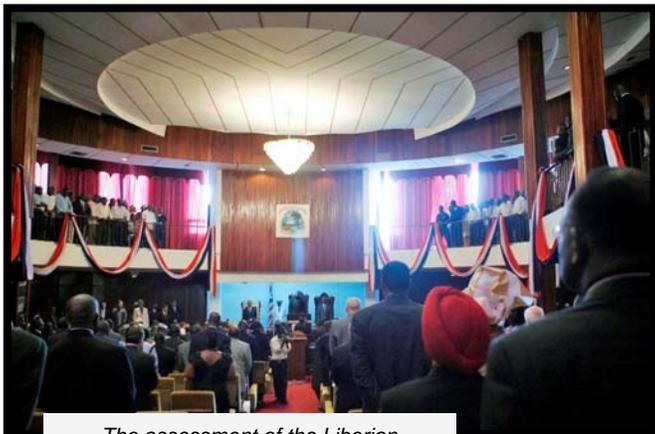umber of oversight institutions and their capacity to effectively exercise their responsibilities. The SSR Unit will provide recommendations to the Mission on how BNUB could use its comparative advantage to help close those gaps, including through the good offices of the SRSG and briefings to the various oversight institutions on their respective roles.

Technical Assessment Mission to Liberia

In its resolution 2008, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to deploy a technical assessment mission (TAM) to Liberia to focus on the ongoing transition and drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and conduct a thorough review of the progress made towards the core transition benchmarks.

The SSR Unit participated in the TAM which visited Liberia from 20 February to 2 March, and led the work of the thematic cluster on SSR. Issues relating to SSR were central to the TAM focus, especially given the fact that bridging the UNMIL transition gaps will require the enhanced support for and effectiveness of the Liberian security sector. In this regard, while building the capacity and capabilities of service providers must continue, a key finding was that more needs to be done to assist national authorities in enhancing the oversight and accountability of security institutions. In addition, challenges around SSR coordination in Liberia and overall security sector prioritization remain to be addressed.

In the margins of the TAM, the National Governance Commission facilitated the launch of the report entitled *"The Liberian Legislature and Oversight of the Security Sector: An Action-Oriented Assessment",* which was commissioned by the SSR Unit and jointly undertaken with UNMIL. The report analyzes the extent to which the Liberian Security Committees have the necessary authority, ability and attitude to

The assessment of the Liberian Legislature identified major gaps with regard to capacity and effectiveness.

exercise their oversight responsibilities. It finds that while the Parliament enjoys broad powers, poor facilities, limited knowledge of SSR and lack of dedicated support staff have hampered effective oversight efforts. The report responds to these deficits by outlining concrete steps in which UNMIL and other partners could enhance security sector oversight, including: capacity-building of the Committees; establishing an independent civilian complaints board; and strengthening civil-military relations by appointing legislative liaison focal points in the various security institutions.

Update on SSR to the Committee on Peacekeeping

On 23 January, the SSR Unit provided an informal briefing to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), ahead of its deliberations on its 2012 report. In his introduction, the Chief of the SSR Unit thanked the Committee for its continued guidance and support, which was actually echoed by the Security Council Presidential Statement of 12 October 2011.

He then explained that the number and complexity of the requests for SSR support have been increasing significantly. Indeed, the SSR Unit is currently assisting SSR activities in 14 countries and regions, and half of those involve Missions or offices led

by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). The Chief of the SSR Unit further explained that despite important constraints in human and financial resources, the SSR Unit had delivered on key accomplishments, including guidance notes, the Policy on Defence Sector Reform, and the further development of the partnership with the AU on SSR.

The briefing also highlighted some deficit areas, particularly with regard to the limited and strained capacity to meet the demand for support. In charting the way forward, the Chief of the SSR Unit highlighted four priority areas of work, including field support, guidance and policy, partnerships and, as per the Security Council's request, assessment of the UN support to SSR.

SSR Briefing for the Department of Political Affairs

The SSR Unit was invited to deliver, on 9 March, a briefing on SSR to those DPA colleagues in charge of supporting special political Missions and other DPA-led field presences. It was an opportunity not only to present and discuss concepts and principles related to the UN approach to SSR, but also to provide further evidence of the role of SSR in political, mediation and peace negotiation processes.

The SSR Unit highlighted its increasing role in support of non-peacekeeping contexts such as the Central African Republic, Burundi, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Somalia, and of regional Missions working with the African Union or on the West Africa sub-region.

The briefing was also an opportunity to discuss the role of the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF), of which DPA is a member, and to

debate controversial issues faced by field colleagues in supporting the political and strategic aspects of SSR.

New Members Welcomed to the Task Force

The IASSRTF had the privilege of welcoming two new members in January: the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Task Force has more than doubled in size since its establishment in 2007, and now comprises a total of thirteen UN entities engaged in providing SSR support.

Coming Soon...

▪ **Support visits**
In support of SSR developments and initiatives, the SSR Unit plans on deploying to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan during the next quarter of 2012.

▪ **ASSET meeting**
The SSR Unit will participate in the Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Association for Security Sector Education and Training (ASSET) in Geneva, from 23 to 25 April.

▪ **Task Force joint assessment mission to Guinea**
The IASSRTF has selected Guinea as one of the two pilot countries for exploring joint programming initiatives in the field and will visit the country in the spring of 2012.

About the SSR Newsletter

The SSR Newsletter, published on a quarterly basis, is aimed at providing an update on recent activities of the SSR Unit and an overview of upcoming initiatives, in addition to sharing relevant information and announcements with the greater SSR community.

In support of national efforts, the SSR Unit brings together multi-disciplined specialists providing a UN focal point and a technical resource for the UN system as well as for national and international partners. Contact us at ssr@un.org.