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Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Post-Conflict States: Challenges of Local Ownership

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Introduction

Security Sector Reform (SSR) is a vital measure for building sustainable peace in post-conflict states. Although the significance of SSR has recently gained recognition in peace-building literature, deeper understanding of what it entails has yet to be fully provided. Many experiences with SSR implementation in various post-conflict states illustrate the importance of local ownership – where local authorities participate in the reform programmes with the view to continue them independently, without the support of international donors – accompanies SSR efforts. In spite of this acknowledgement, there are not enough studies identifying the challenges that domestic and external actors face. Identifying these challenges makes it feasible to draw up policies and strategies for effective and efficient SSR implementation. This article identifies various challenges to building local ownership in SSR. This helps provide new resources for more effective strategies for future SSR activities in post-conflict states.

1. Conceptualising SSR

While the term Security Sector Reform has been widely used in the post-conflict peace-building context, further clarification is needed to reveal a larger significance. The OECD's Guidelines on Security System and Governance Reform defines security sector reform as;

> [it] includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions − working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more

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> consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework.[2]

Nicole Ball wrote in 1998 that SSR must "integrate issues pertaining to internal security such as policing, administration of justice, and rule of law with issues relating to the armed forces, the intelligence service, paramilitary forces, and the civilian institutions responsible for managing and monitoring them."[3] Similarly Dyland Hendrickson and Andrzej Karkoszka define SSR as "an attempt to develop a more coherent framework for reducing the risk that states weakness or failure will lead to disorder and violence. It is the transformation of security institutions so that they play an effective, legitimate and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens."[4]

These definitions of security sector reform show that SSR has two different, but closely connected goals. The first one is to ensure that security sector authorities function effectively and efficiently. The second one is that these authorities have effective democratic oversight of the sectors' functions. Hendrickson and Karkoszka refer to the first as the "operational effectiveness and efficiency aspect" and the second as the "democratic governance aspect."[5]

Operational effectiveness and efficiency: Security forces in post-conflict states need to be reformed so that the security forces fulfil their functions. A professional force with clearly identified duties and missions has to be established, together with a clear chain of command. The size of the forces must correspond to the needs of the country and excess weapons must be safely disposed of while there must also be a downsizing of any surplus personnel. Other tasks include, among others, removal of excess weapons, removing surplus officers and commanders, modernising their weapons and other equipment and providing officers and soldiers with training and the necessary education in order to improve democratic oversight.

Democratic governance: Effective democratic, civilian control of the security sector is one of the key components to democratisation. In post-conflict states, clear democratic civilian control over the armed forces must be established so that the armed forces do not abuse their power by intimidating and blackmailing civilians. If the security forces become politicised, they can be a powerful instrument of one or more political groups which want to influence their rivals. The armed forces and other security forces including police and the gendarmerie could also attempt a coup d'etat to topple the existing

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2 OECD, Security System Reform and Governance: Policy and Good Practice (2000): 16.

3 Dyland Hendrickson and Andrzej Karkoszka, "The Challenges of Security Sector Reform," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, (Oxford University Press, 2002).

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

government. Moreover, without appropriate democratic civilian oversight budgets may be misappropriated. Corruption amongst the border police can flourish thus allowing weapons and drug smuggling. Parliamentarians also need to be provided training opportunities on how to deal with public inquiries regarding defence policy, military spending and weapons procurement for the security forces and related ministries. Transparency over these issues must also be maintained so journalists, non-governmental organisations and concerned citizens may scrutinise the security forces and have adequate information regarding potential wrongdoing. Thus building a mechanism of good governance for managing and controlling these forces is a key security sector reform target.

SSR can be explained through drawing a piece of cake:

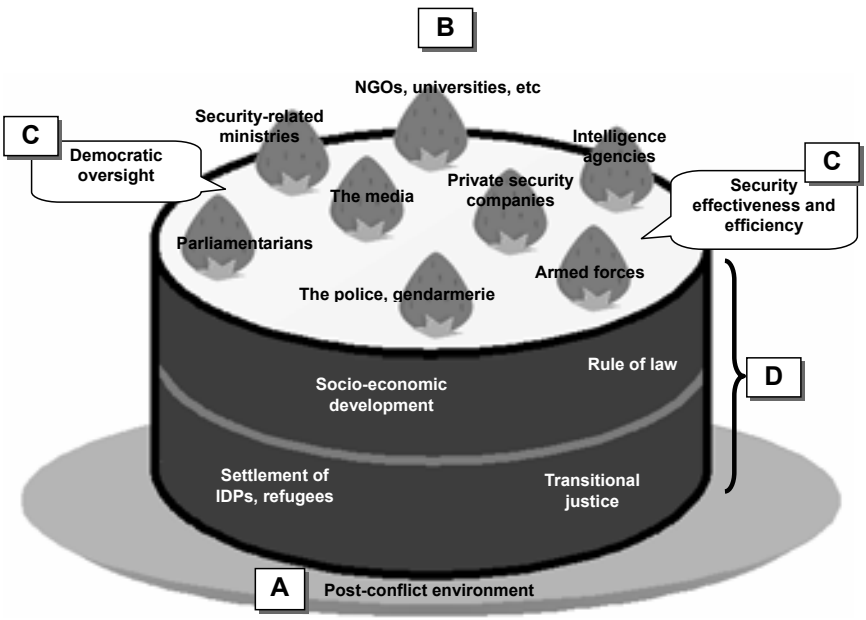

Chart 1 The security sector reform cake

Context: SSR originally stems from, and has been developed by international development donor communities which act as an instrument to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of security sectors based on the principle that a well-governed security sector is a tool for sustainable economic develop. Since the 1990s, SSR programmes have based their efforts of democratisation on the post-communist states in East-Central Europe, and beyond. Much of these security sector tasks in both developmental and post-authoritarian contexts are also relevant in the context of post-conflict peace-building. In this environment the armed forces and other security forces are usually poorly-organised; their C^3 (command, control and communications) establishments

are generally weak, their morale and doctrinal orientations often misguided breeding an atmosphere where internal corruption and human rights violations may occur; there are lots of small arms and light weapons (SALW)[6] and profits from black and grey economy are used for illegitimate armed groups (e.g. rebels and guerrillas). Unemployed, former combatants often return to join such groups in order to survive. − [A: Represented as the cake dish]

Actors: The actors involved with SSR can be broadly categorised into two groups: external and local actors. The former includes donor communities (international organisations, individual countries, and international NGOs) that implement security sector reform policies in post-conflict states. The latter includes, amongst others, armed forces and other security forces, parliament, national governmental offices including the ministries of defence, of the interior, of justice and home affairs in post-conflict states. Civil society organisations, such as local NGOs, are also included. − [B: Represented as strawberries]

SSR goals in the three dimensions: As mentioned above (page 2), the tasks for security sector reform retain two chief goals: 1) making armed forces and other security forces function effectively and efficiently; and 2) building capabilities essential for democratic oversight and the management of the security forces. − [C: Represented as the icing on the cake] However, in order to ensure that security sector reform programmes are maintained, solid socio-economic reconstruction programmes must also be established. Thus, in addition to the above mentioned tasks SSR must fulfil, socio-economic reforms are the necessary means by which security sector reforms can be maintained in the long-term. − [D: Represented as the cake layer] Economic development in the post-conflict region is vital for security sector reforms as societal and economic instability – such as the failed reintegration of ex-combatants, the presence of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and growth of black and grey economies in the region – jeopardises security sector reform programmes.

2. The challenges to local ownership in SSR

Local ownership in the context of SSR

According to Jens Narten *local ownership* is "the process and final outcome of the gradual transfer to legitimate representatives of the local society, of assessment, planning and decision-making, the practical management and implementation, and the evaluation and control of all phases of state-building [i.e. peace-building] programmes up to the point when no further external assistance is needed."[7] The difficulty of implementing security sector reforms

[6] For definitions of small arms, see United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Governmental Experts on Small Arms* (1997).

[7] Jens Narten, Dilemmas of Promoting Local Ownership: Statebuilding in Postwar Kosovo (2006): 19–20.

in a post-conflict context is the presence and/or absence of interaction between external and local actors, namely the donor communities (international organisations and individual countries) that implement security sector reform policies in post-conflict states on the one hand; and the governments, parliament, judicial systems, the media and other civil society organisations of the post-conflict states on the other.

The question is to what extent local actors should be involved in peace-building operations. Simon Chesterman suggests that there are different levels in which local actors are involved in the peace-building processes;

(1) External actors base their peace-building policies on their own analyses of the local needs while not getting involved with the local authorities. [minimum or no local ownership];
(2) External actors promote local leaders (e.g. traditional leaders of villages and tribal units) and so participate as consultants with the local stakeholders over their peace-building strategies;
(3) External actors promote local actors and participate in some peace-building implementation tasks (e.g. border control activities and national election committees);
(4) Local actors participate in activities to enhance accountability of the peace-building activities (e.g. participating as ombudsman in the peace-building activities in the region);
(5) Local actors participate in the decision-making processes of the peace-building operation under the supervision of the external actors;
(6) External actors hand the power over to the local authorities. [maximum ownership][8]

Decisions over which peace-building approach (often referred to as the "footprint") is appropriate to the specific context should be taken according to an analysis of various factors and the actors involved. For example, the root causes of the conflict, the local people's ability to change and the degree of international commitment that is available to bring about change.[9] Sustainable post-conflict security sector reform depends on how the implementation strategy leads to local ownership. In other words, assessing how local actors may proceed with their reform tasks, free from external actors' involvement, is essential. Agneta M. Johanssen writes that a lack of meaningful local ownership can cause violence to break out again.[10] Tania Höhe also discusses how a lack

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[8] Simon Chesterman, You, the people: The United Nations, transitional administration and state-building: 242.

[9] Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, United Nations Peace Operations: Making War and Building Peace (2006): 70.

[10] Agneta Johansson, *Participatory action research in post-conflict situations* (2001). This document is available at: http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/johannsen_hb.pdf.

or failure of local ownership can contribute to a breakdown of the post-conflict reconstruction efforts.[11] When the footprint of an externally-led peace-building intervention is not in sync with local needs, the local population may become frustrated with, and suspicious of, the external donors.[12] Such a situation can become detrimental to the peace-building process.[13]

In Sierra Leone the government maintained effective control over the security sector, however this was only made possible by the presence of foreign security sector reform advisers stationed inside the country who drove reconstruction efforts. The reform effort slowed after their withdrawal. In Bosnia the donor communities were hesitant to provide the federal government responsibility over the security sector. Moreover, the ethnic divisions in Bosnia contributed to undermining local ownership at the state level too.[14] The footprint under the UN missions in East Timor (UNTAET) was blindly copied from the cases of Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, resulting in a mismatching of the needs and expectations between the external actors and the local population.[15]

In order to establish local ownership, external actors have two broad tasks: planning and implementing security sector reform agendas in the appropriate manner and ensuring that local actors are well trained and have enough resources to continue the effort after the external actors' withdrawal.[16] External actors' SSR plans and implementation policies need to be based on analyses of the domestic characteristics and the root causes of conflict unique to each country and the SSR programmes adopted must correspond to the local realities of the state.[17] Local actors on the other hand must collaborate with the external security providers and advisers by giving appropriate feedback in order to retain financial as well as political backing for the security sector reforms.[18] Of course not everyone is cooperative; internal actors who play as a spoiler become major obstacles to the reform effort. Often they are the internal elites who perceive that their interests are threatened and thus they often disagree over the sources of legitimacy.[19] Other spoilers are groups of people who similarly believe that their immediate political and financial interests would be threatened by reforms and so they try to impede, if not halt the process

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11 Tania Höhe, "Developing local governance" in Junne, G. & Verkoren W. (eds), *Post-Conflict development: Meeting new challenges:* 59–72.

12 Richard Caplan, International Governance of War-torn Societies: Rule and Reconstruction (2005): 180.

13 Jens Narten, op. cit.: 19–20.

14 Timothy Edmunds, Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation (2002): 13.

15 Simon Chesterman, op. cit.: 135.

16 Albrecht Shnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, "Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Challenges and Problems of Security Sector Reform," in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (eds) (2005): 9.

17 Jane Chanaa, Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects (2002): 35.

18 Albrecht Shnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart, op. cit.: 9.

19 Ibid.

altogether through the use or threat of force to the security providers, local actors who cooperate with the external actors and the local people.

1. Mismatches over the means and goals between external and local actors

The first challenge to building local ownership in post-conflict states stems from the nature of a foreign intervention in the process of reconstruction. The potential to mismatch between external and local actors about their expectations, the implementation policies, the political and the financial interests of those involved with security sector reforms is nearly always present. The international donor community's interest is to maximise its efforts with the limited financial resources and personnel it has at its disposal and to withdraw from the operation as soon as possible. Implementation costs are high; consensus and support in each donor state tends to vanish very quickly; there may be a high security risk in the later stage (e.g. suicide bomb attacks against foreign intervention forces) particularly if the operations are prolonged.[20] On the other hand, local actors demand a quick transition in the expectation of a rapid improvement of the security in the country and great growth for the country's economy. This is compounded because some local actors may inhibit processes of change as such changes may reduce their personal political or economic authority. Thus, there is a clash between members of a local population and the external actors' policy where more pressure is put on local authorities to solidify the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction.

Secondly, local ownership is also compromised when security sector reforms are conducted in a strong "one-way" principle. There is a danger of foreign involvement undermining indigenous reform projects. This is particularly the case when security sector reform agendas are enshrined as a part of the post-conflict agreements and are set under the aegis of the international donor communities. External involvement in peace processes often exerts external influence on setting reform agendas so that externally driven approaches become less flexible and cannot readapt to the needs and conditions of the region. Nascent reform projects are jeopardised and reform processes may be hindered as a consequence.[21] Kosovo and Bosnia are two examples where externally imposed SSR were shown to constrict sustainable reform.[22] Reviewing these two cases, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi assert that externally driven SSR must be coordinated alongside with local actors who

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[20] Michael Brzoska and Andreas Heinemann-Gruder, "Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Under International Auspices," in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hanggi (eds) (2004): 131.

[21] Luc L.P. van de Goor, Eugenia Piza-Lopez, and Paul Eavis, op. cit.: 5.

[22] Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi, "Reforming and Reconstructing the Security Sector," in *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) (2005): 34.

should be involved from the very outset of the reform programmes so that they could themselves continue with the reforms and so that the responsibilities of the external actors could be handed over gradually.[23] It is for these reasons that appropriate feedback must be given and adjustments made throughout SSR implementation.[24] External donors need to identify where the local political will for reform is the strongest. Therefore, the donor community must carefully evaluate to what extent the local political will is ready for reform.

2. Build and maintain legitimacy

The second challenge relates to the legitimacy of externally driven security reform efforts. It is crucial for external actors to have legitimacy on three different levels: legitimacy from local actors, from within the donor country and from the international community. It is vital that the local population consents to foreign involvement, especially when it comes to sensitive areas like the security sector. Without sufficient consensus among the domestic and the external actors, achieving success will be difficult. It is equally important that external donor states be granted legitimacy for involvement from within their own constituencies. If there is no domestic consent in donor states this would mean insufficient funding and personnel for the implementation of SSR activities. This would not only undermine the cohesion of the operations with other donor countries, but it would also cause the military and civilian staff on the ground to risk losing their funding and other resources for their activities. Furthermore, insufficient support from their own donor states would cause a decrease in the credibility of the operation as far as the local actors are concerned.

While UN-led operations generally enjoy popular mandates for intervention,[25] their legitimacy is often questioned over the current United Nations Security Council (UNSC)'s unbalanced representation. Moreover, the credibility of the UN-sponsored peace support missions are sometimes challenged because means are not, in all cases, sufficiently balanced according the needs of the security sector.[26] Where the credibility of the UN-sponsored operations is low, it would be difficult to gain firm legitimacy for long-term interventions that aim at sensitive fields like that of security sector reform.

Ensuring that the operations are politically legitimate may become more difficult in post-colonial states where the memory of foreign domination is still fresh. For local authorities in such states, entrusting responsibility to the international peace-building organisations may not be easy even if elaborate

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Luc L.P. van de Goor, Eugenia Piza-Lopez, and Paul Eavis, op. cit.: 8.

[25] James Dobbins, et. al., America's role in nation-building: from Germany to Iraq (2003).

[26] David M. Law, "The Post-Conflict Security Sector," Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces Policy Paper No. 14 (June 2006): 7.

accountability mechanisms are set into place.[27] It would be even more difficult for such states if the peace-building operations were carried out by a single state since it may even further decrease the credibility of the foreign involvement. In order to ensure that the operation is endorsed externally, peace-building operations must be accompanied by at least a minimum level of local ownership.[28]

3. Operational coherence

The third challenge for building local ownership is to establish and maintain a sufficient degree of operational coherence between external and local actors. There is broad consensus among the external actors that achieving operational coherence is necessary to maximise the use of the limited funds available by identifying counterproductive interference and incompatibilities between the different actors' roles and by making the roles compatible.[29] Nevertheless problems arise when it comes to agreeing on how to implement policies.[30] Bruce D. Jones concludes that operational coordination fails when actors pursue conflicting intervention strategies, goals and means when it comes to peace-building operations.[31] However, Roland Paris warns that too rigid international coordination could make peace-building operations less effective, thus he calls for some degree of flexibility within the coordinating mechanism so that individual agencies still have the freedom to adapt their programmes to the changing situation.[32]

The problems related to achieving operational coherence in SSR can be discussed on two different levels: coherence among external actors and coherence between external and local actors.

1) Establishing coherence among external actors

Operational coherence among external actors becomes difficult when there is deep-seated disagreement over the specific objectives and priorities of the security sector reforms. This disagreement often has to do with various commercial as well as political interests of the donor governments involved in security sector reforms.[33] Second, connected with the first level, it is dif-

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[27] Richard Caplan, International governance of war-torn territories: rule and reconstruction (2005): 34.

[28] Ibid.: 180.

[29] European Centre for Development Policy Management, *EU mechanisms that promote policy coherence for development* (2006): 14.

[30] Jane Chanaa, Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects (2002): 60.

[31] Bruce D. Jones, The Challenges of Strategic Coordination: Containing Opposition and Sustaining Implementation of Peace Agreements in Civil Wars (2002): 89–90.

[32] Roland Paris, International Machinery for Post-war State-building: Dilemmas of Coordination (2006): 9.

[33] Ibid.: 56.

ficult to establish coherence when there is a lack of an overarching decision-making framework that coordinates the interests and priorities between the players.

The international community's commitment in Bosnia after the 1995 Dayton Agreement is a good example of this. There were security sector reforms put forward by various international and individual donors, yet there was no general agreement about the specific objectives of reform. The operations were based on a structure where five different international organisations (the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU)) were duplicating the functions rather than complementing each other.[34] As a result the generally accepted conflict resolution, institution building and the setting up of key security sector institutions were not driven for the security sector reform.[35]

Cambodia is another example. The IMF and the World Bank were the direct financial sources for military reform programmes in Cambodia but their priorities clashed with the wider goals of SSR and the rehabilitation that UNTAC was coordinating. On the other hand the external actors dealing with security sector reform in the country focused their efforts on downsizing the armed forces and on reducing military spending.[36] This lack of coordination among the external actors undermined the internal security needs particularly in rural areas where most of the country's poor population resided.[37]

2) Building operational coherence between internal and external actors

A further challenge is in regards to communication between external and local actors over setting the priorities for implementing security sector reforms.[38] Many scholars have pointed out that there is a gap between the policy and the practice due to a lack of understanding as to how external interventions can be carried out in a way that corresponds with the local political culture in the state.[39] Brzoska and Heinemann-Grüder point out that there is always a contradiction between the external actors who have the ability to implement change, the principles of the popular sovereignty and their accountability that

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[34] Ibid.: 57.

[35] David M. Law, op. cit.: 8.

[36] Jane Chanaa, op. cit.: 58.

[37] Marina Caparini, "The Relevance of Civil Society," in *Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation*, Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils (eds) (2004): 58.

[38] Tania Paffenholz, Designing Transformation and Intervention Processes (2004).

[39] Alan Bryden, "Understanding Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction," in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) (October 2004): 267.

is inconsistent with the external actors' policy.[40] A major reason for this is the gap between the principles of the external donors and the beneficiaries who by setting aside their domestic security needs endanger the security sector reform as a whole. Marina Caparini studying the case in the West Balkans maintains that there is a dilemma when there is a difference between the effective security sector reforms and the domestic security sector needs when the reform programmes have been externally imposed and the domestic political process has been sidestepped.[41] After violent conflict, various political and societal legacies remain even after changes were brought about by the conflict and foreign military interventions. The difficulty for external actors is to measure how they may formulate reform plans and implementation policies in such a way that the reforms remedy such legacies.[42] One solution is to assist local organisations aimed at civil society in facilitating discussions between the security, the armed forces personnel and the local population so that a sector that has traditionally been characterised by secrecy becomes more transparent. While both the concept and the practice of SSR has been externally driven, the local civil society's participation can help address this imbalance.[43]

Chanaa discusses how external assistance in security sector reform has often overridden local processes since it failed to take local conditions into account.[44] Studying the successful example that local communities in South Africa that set up networks to enhance the local security and their initiatives was supported by external actors, Chanaa reaffirms that a much deeper understanding of the internally driven security reforms is necessary in order to bridge the gap between the external and local actors. Ideally, according to Chaana, external actors should support already existing locally initiated projects.[45]

4. Building individual and institutional capabilities in post-conflict states

To enhance the skills and knowledge of individuals and institutions in post-conflict states is another challenge to building local ownership for security sector reforms. The international community needs to promote training for the local population and institutions so they have the skills and knowledge necessary to continue peace-building efforts on their own in the future.[46] It is commonly observed that focusing on the short-term needs by outsourcing

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40 Michael Brzoska and Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, "Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Under International Auspices," in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) (October 2004).

41 Marina Caparini, op. cit.

42 Michael Brzoska and Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, op. cit.: 131.

43 Alan Bryden, op. cit.: 269.

44 Jane Chanaa, op. cit.; 65–66.

45 Ibid.

46 Luc Reychler and Tania Panffenholz (eds), *Peacebuilding: A field guide* (2001): 277.

skilled foreign civil administrative staff and other experts tends to crowd-out initiatives of indigenous development of skills through joint projects with external actors.[47] Efforts to facilitate local ownership by training local individuals and institutions are vital for an eventual handover of power to the local authorities.

1) Parliamentary oversight

Parliamentarians play an important role in civil society by establishing democratic oversight over the security communities. One of their major roles in security sector reform is to set the defence budget. They are expected to be capable of examining budget estimates and inspect reports and analyses compiled by experts on issues concerning defence and security projects, measures for efficiency and rationalisation of the Defence Ministry and security-related institutions. Moreover, parliamentarians are expected to examine and report on policy initiatives (such as defence planning, reorganisation of the armed forces proposals for which equipment to purchase) that are put forward by the defence and other security-related ministries. They are to conduct inquiries into issues of special concerns regarding defence and security issues.[48]

However, a lack of appropriately skilled parliamentarians may also make it difficult to examine budget spending and the budget projected for the future, so the defence ministry tends to take a de facto dominant role in decision-making on major defence and security issues and the parliamentarians play a symbolic role in legislative issues. This could remove the budgetary policy from democratic control. The same is true of defence and security policy. Without knowledgeable parliamentarians, particularly in parliamentary committees on defence, defence policies would be drafted mostly by the defence ministries themselves, providing a "free pass" to legislature without having lawmakers examine the prudence and possible effectiveness of such policies. This raises the question of how much democratic control there is of the defence policy because, for instance, the purchase of equipment and weapons can go unchecked and surplus personnel can be retained. This results in unnecessary redundant expenses.

Legacies from past conflicts hinder parliamentarians' role in security sector reform. In many post-conflict states, the executive body reigns supreme particularly in the ministries of defence and interior. Consequently, bureaucrats maintain a culture of secrecy and often neglect the legislative body. On the other hand, in the legislative branch there is a tendency to oppose executive power even when it comes to insignificant matters.[49] This may result in a clash between the two bodies, making it difficult to proceed with security reforms.

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47 Richard Caplan,op. cit.: 241.

48 Willem F. van Eekelen, The Parliamentary Dimension of Security Sector Reform (May 2003): 12.

49 Ibid.: 60.

Assisting parliamentarians' acquire necessary skills is a time-consuming task. Nevertheless a lot can be learned "on the job" when armed forces are cooperative and willing to provide the necessary information for the reforms. Other ways for parliamentarians to acquire new skills is through visits to parliaments of other states. They could also increase their knowledge by attending courses on security issues as sponsored by specialised non-government organisations, universities and the armed forces from donor countries.[50]

2) NGOs and the media

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have greatly proliferated since the early 1990s and they have acquired a variety of skills that help them with various aspects of post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Their roles in security sector reform, as watchdogs and providers of information, are crucial. They can examine and evaluate the post-conflict reconstruction development to see, for example, if basic human rights are protected and whether there is a proliferation of SALW. They can help donor communities with the planning of progress reports and they can make suggestions for policy changes. Such reports can be presented to local governments and parliamentarians for future security sector reform planning. NGOs can also help narrow the gap between armed forces and the local population that had been exacerbated due to the past conflicts. In many post-conflict environments, local populations are fearful of abuses, NGOs can provide opportunities for forums and dialogues that can help build confidence between these two entities. NGOs, whose main activities are focused on providing aid, play an important function in consolidating the local and regional security in post-conflict states. Additionally, NGOs can help child soldiers by providing a basic living standard, opportunities for formal education and specialised counselling. NGOs can also help with ex-combatants' re-insertion into non-combat economic activities (e.g. construction, agriculture etc) which can play a crucial role in reducing the potential threat of ex-combatants taking up arms again.

The media may also play constructive roles. They can provide warnings about false and misleading information that was deliberately delivered by security communities so they could cover up scandals and other wrongdoing. They can raise public awareness of democratic oversight of security sector reforms. The media could do so by investigating and evaluating crucial security issues in the security communities and by suggesting policy alternatives. The media could also speak for the general public. For example, by providing media coverage on local security needs, on the proliferation of SALW and by reporting corruption by local police forces. The media could help raise consciousness over the progress of security sector reforms by the central government.

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[50] Nicole Ball and Michael Brzoska, in *Voice and Accountability in the Security Sector*, Paper 21 (July 2002): 52.

However, the media in post-conflict zones needs to evolve to be able to fulfil such functions. Journalists and reporters often have only a limited knowledge about the defence and security issues and they are not familiar with how the media could influence the policy building process of the security sector.[51] This requires that the media be trained and sponsored by specialised governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as universities so that journalists in these environments can be better informed and more skilled in investigative reporting and interviewing techniques. Changes are also necessary in the security communities as in the case of the relationship between the legislative and executive branches. Secrecy within the armed forces, the ministries of defence and other security-related fields, is a common obstacle for the media. In this context, as discussed in the following section, it is crucial to train the armed forces and other security forces so they can cooperate with the media.

3) Training the armed forces and other security-related officials

Training armed forces and other security-related officials is a vital task to help enhance local ownership of post-conflict security sector reforms. Training, in this context, refers mainly to educating them on democratic oversight. This may include courses on basic human rights, the principles of democratic civilian control over the armed forces and training designed to enhance accountability. These specific measures have been taken in many post-conflict states with the support of the international community. Exchange visits between the militaries of donor and beneficiary states are useful and the police and other forces could also carry out similar office-to-office missions. Special forums can be organised under the framework of multilateral and regional organisations in order to discuss security-related issues where specialists and trainers are involved.[52]

Given the nature of security forces, which maintain a monopoly on the use of force, weak or non-existent democratic control could trigger military coups or the return of other forms of political violence. Military officers could control and manipulate more democratic officials. Conversely, the government could control and manipulate the armed forces in order to advance their particular political party objectives.[53]

While training is vital for the promotion of democratic oversight over security forces, perhaps changes in attitude among the armed forces and other security officials is one of the most challenging tasks for post-conflict reconstruction. Ironically but understandably, democratisation of the armed forces and increasing the public's access to information related to the armed

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[51] Ibid.: 55.

[52] Nicole Ball, "Good Practices in Security Sector Reform," in *Security Sector Reform*, Herbert Wulf (ed) (June 2000): 19.

[53] Laurie Nathan, "Reform in New Democracies," in *Security Sector Reform*, Herbert Wulf (ed) (June 2000): 23.

forces are generally least liked by the decision-makers in the armed forces in post-conflict states.[54] Their prestige and individual interests (e.g. access to power and money) may well be threatened as the result of the democratisation reforms. Hence, those who are unwilling to cooperate are major obstacles when it comes to security sector reforms in the armed forces. It is important for donor communities to identify the so-called "help agents" who are committed to security sector reforms and who cooperate with the donor countries and their reform programmes. The donor communities must encourage these agents so that they can play a leadership role in the long run.

5. Enhancing domestic and regional security

1) Enhancing security on the national level

The resurgence of violence in a post-conflict area would threaten the actors involved in the security sector reforms in various aspects. It would also be a threat to establishing local ownership. For this reason demilitarisation, demobilisation and the reintegration of former combatants in the post-conflict areas are important before SSR can be implemented. The reintegration process of ex-combatants into newly formed armed and other security forces and/or into the domestic economic activities is of great significance for the success of SSR. The DDR literature has highlighted that some ex-combatants, after having been demilitarised and demobilised, might not be able to be socially and economically reintegrated and they often return to their former activities as combatants as they remain unemployed. They are either re-hired by warlords or they form criminal groups like bandits and take part in other criminal activities as witnessed in, among others, Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia.[55] The failure of DDR efforts in a post-conflict area could lead to an influx of easily obtained weapons, particularly small arms; and armed groups could pose a security threat to internal security sector actors − governmental officers, politicians, civil society organisations among others. In Haiti, for example, UN-sponsored peace operations were not accompanied by more long-term DDR programmes and a reintegration of ex-combatants into newly-established police forces and into non-combat economic activities (e.g. agriculture). There were many ex-combatants who were not re-integrated and they posed a serious security threat to the local population and to the external donor actors. Their presence contributed to the instability in the country and slowed down the peace-building efforts as a whole.[56] Re-integration is one of

[54] Michael Brzoska, "The Concept of Security Sector Reform," in *Security Sector Reform*, Herbert Wulf (ed) (June 2000): 11.

[55] Michael Brzoska, "Embedding DDR Programme in Security Sector Reconstruction," in *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) (2005): 99.

[56] David M. Law, op. cit., 8.

the most difficult tasks of the DDR because post-conflict states' markets are usually impaired and the economy as a whole is still undergoing recovery.[57]

Enhancing political security for local actors refers to keeping reform-oriented officers and officials in all branches of the country safe from threats posed by those who resist reform. Such spoilers could blackmail reform-oriented actors by, for instance, hiring ex-combatants who had been left out from the re-integration process.[58] For example, after President Slobodan Milosevic was replaced in the former Serbia-Montenegro the new president Vojislav Kostunica found it necessary to make tacit agreements between commanding officers and politicians in order to retain the support from the armed forces and replace a number of pro-Milosevic figures in the armed forces while avoiding attacks through blackmail from the opposition.[59]

2) Enhancing security in the regional level

Security sector reforms are easily undermined if neighbouring states are unstable. If there is a variety of domestic and regional instability − including small arms smuggling, drug smuggling, organised crime and human trafficking (particularly of women as financial source for organised crime) − this could jeopardise the security sector reforms. Therefore, strengthening regional security is vital.[60] In areas where SSR efforts are making progress, domestic and regional instability may not only disturb the progress, but could also result in regression. Moreover, it could negatively influence efforts to nurture local ownership in SSR. Organised crime threatens the agents who help promote change (those engaged in security sector reform with the external donors) who are active in the armed and other security forces and they could be intimidated into giving up the reforms. They could also be blackmailed and so discouraged from confronting opposition groups which reject the need for change. In the same way criminal organisations could finance opposition groups to discourage the domestic reformers as well as external donor actors. The proliferation of SALW could create an atmosphere of danger and thereby lessen the prospect for stability and order throughout the area.[61]

Some hardliner military officers within the Indonesian Armed Forces that resisted East Timor's independence and UN-sponsored missions, continue to pose a threat and thus undermine the building of local ownership in East-Timor.[62] In Kosovo, the settlement of various powerful groups, particularly the

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[57] Charles T. Call, "Conclusion: Constructing Justice and Security After War," chap. in *Constructing Justice and Security After War* (2007): 384.

[58] Jane Chanaa, op. cit.: 37.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Alan Bryden, "Understanding Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction," op. cit.: 264.

[61] Adedeji Ebo, "Combating Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse After Conflict," in *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (eds) (2005): 139.

[62] Jane Chanaa, op. cit.: 35.

former KLA, made peace fragile. Consequently, violence has recurred; spread locally and to surrounding regions, further complicating the security sector activities in Kosovo.[63]

The extent to which security sector reform has been disturbed by external factors – regional conflicts, interstate rivalries and the smuggling of SALW and other illegal goods – has often been neglected.[64] To avoid this, Cawthra and Luckham point out that ensuring that reforms across the countries where security sector reforms are being carried out complement each other helps build confidence among the local and external actors involved in SSR.[65]

Conclusion

Security sector reform is a vital measure for building sustainable peace in post-conflict states. Peace-building is a multi-dimensional process that requires comprehensive strategies for structural reform in the security, legal, economic and other spheres. Security sector reform is one such comprehensive strategy that focuses on reforms of the armed forces and on other security forces such as the police.

Security sector reform needs be implemented in such a way that local actors are able to continue with reform efforts after external actors have withdrawn their personnel. A number of case studies of SSR efforts in various post-conflict states have taught us the significance of establishing local ownership. However, problems arise over how best to proceed. The main reason for this problematic is the fact that there is no clarity regarding the agenda for building local ownership in security sector reform efforts.

Thus, five major challenges to local ownership for SSR operations were identified. The first one stems from a mismatch between the expectations and the implementation strategies for security sector reforms between the external and the local actors. Building local ownership becomes difficult when local actors have high expectations for rapid and drastic improvements from short-term operations. External actors, on the other hand, project SSR strategies for the long term thus results are slow to come and often not visible to local actors. At the same time, external actors do not often favour stationing forces and experts for long periods due to corresponding costs. Local ownership is difficult when SSR efforts are carried out in such a way that external actors neglect indigenous reform projects. Doing so may very well undermine programmes initiated by local actors that are better adapted to the needs of the people and the conditions of the region.

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63 David M. Law, op. cit.: 8.

64 Dylan Hendrickson and Andrzej Karkoszka, "Security Sector Reform and Donor Policies," in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (eds) (2005): 38.

65 Alan Bryden, "Understanding Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction," op. cit.: 264.

The second challenge to building local ownership for SSR is to secure legitimacy for the implementation of SSR programmes. It is crucial for external actors to have legitimacy on three different levels: legitimacy from the local actors, from within the donor country and from the international community. It is vital that the local stakeholders have consent for reform particularly for sensitive areas like the security sector. Equally essential is that external donor states obtain approval for interventions from within their own constituencies. Insufficient domestic consent in donor countries would mean insufficient funding and a lack of the personnel required to successfully implement SSR activities. This would not only undermine the operational coherency with other cooperating donor countries, but it would also endanger the military and civilian staff on the ground, as their funding and resources would be disrupted. Furthermore, insufficient support from their own donor countries would make their operations less credible from the point of view of local actors. External donors need to receive a well-established political endorsement from the international community such as the UNSC.

The third challenge is to maintain the operational coherence of SSR activities among all actors involved. Operational coherence has to do with the coordination between the external actors who participate in the SSR activities and those who maintain their own separate interests, resources and priorities for interventions. The need for coordination is a common criticism; however, the lack of an overarching decision-making framework for such coordination among external actors is a more serious challenge. It is equally important to establish operational coherence between the external and local actors. In general, there has been a lack of understanding about policies and practices between external and local actors over how external interventions are to be carried out so they correspond to local political cultures. There has also been a tendency that externally driven SSR activities neglect the needs of the local communities because they have insufficient knowledge of the indigenous political developments.

Promoting training for local populations and institutions is important if the security sector reforms are to continue after external actors have withdrawn. Civil society organisations, such as NGOs, and the media, play an essential role in promoting local ownership in SSR. Their primary function is to provide democratic oversight over the armed forces and other security forces although access to defence and security information was restricted under former regimes. There is a strong legacy of secrecy among the military and security officers in post-conflict states and much of the information is classified to cover up corruption and the mismanagement of financial resources and protect those implicated in such acts. On the other hand, many civil society organisations have insufficient knowledge of security and defence issues and lack the necessary skills to scrutinise and research such issues. Education and training on both sides (civil societies and the security-related institutions) is necessary.

Additionally, external actors tend to help the statutory rather than the non-statutory security institutions and the civil management authorities rather than civil society organisations. This imbalance has contributed to preventing civil society organisations from growing in influence. Parliamentarians in post-conflict states have faced similar difficulties. Their primary role, examining the budget and ensuring transparency needs to be strengthened as their knowledge on defence and security issues is limited and it has made it difficult for them to conduct effective oversights into the ministries.

The fifth challenge is to enhance the domestic and regional security in post-conflict states. A resurgence of violence threatens all actors involved in SSR. When DDR efforts in the area fail then there is an excess of weapons and armed groups who are a security threat to the internal security sector actors such as governmental officers, politicians and other civil society organisations. Moreover it is important that the local reformers have political security. They are likely to be targets of blackmail by those who want to disturb reform programmes. It is essential to strengthen the security on the regional level. SSR can easily be undermined if neighbouring states remain unstable. Domestic and regional instability such as the illicit proliferation of SALW, drug smuggling, organised crime and human trafficking also jeopardise SSR. In order to reduce the risk, it is necessary to make sure that reforms across the countries where security sector reforms are being carried out complement each other.

The chart below presents major challenges that international donor communities as well as local actors face in constructing a regime of local ownership in security sector reform. With the identification of these challenges, the agenda for the actors involved in security sector reform in post-conflict states – local authorities and external actors alike – is to re-examine their policies and strategies for more effective and efficient implementation of security sector reforms so that the reforms would continue after the external actors have withdrawn.

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