

# CSG PAPERS

## Assessing the Impact of Orthodox Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone

Ibrahim Bangura

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

This paper is the product of a multi-year CSG research project, titled *Exploring the transition from first to second generation SSR in conflict-affected societies*. Led by CSG Executive Director Mark Sedra, the project assesses and evaluates the impact of orthodox security sector reform (SSR) programming in conflict-affected countries. Employing a common methodology, the project features original research on four case study countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. The case study countries chosen each feature two broad characteristics: they are recovering from conflict and making transitions from war to peace; and they are mature cases of SSR, in that they have been subjected to at least ten years of externally supported SSR programming of some form. It is also important to note that geographical diversity played an important role in case study selection, with four distinct regions represented— Balkans, Central America, West Africa, and Asia-Pacific.

The SSR model as it is applied in war-to-peace transitions and broader state building projects is in the midst of a period of change. Over a decade of case study analysis, particularly in conflict-affected environments, has shown that the SSR model, as outlined in formative documents like the *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform*, has had a meager record of achievement. A survey of key SSR implementation cases demonstrates a distinct conceptual-contextual gap. The principal tenets and features of the SSR model, like its holistic character, focus on governance, and human security orientation are rarely translated into practice in conflict-affected SSR settings. It can be argued that the SSR model in its fundamental form has never actually been applied as designed in conflict-affected environments, prompting many scholars and practitioners to explore new approaches seen as more viable in difficult implementation settings. This thinking is often loosely grouped under the heading of second generation SSR, involving a move to a new, more contextually attuned reform approach. This second generation SSR discourse is still nascent and ill-defined but rapidly taking form and gaining momentum.

The dominant objective that has united the still disparate second generation SSR thinking is the imperative of narrowing the conceptual-contextual gap. This discourse has already spawned some ad hoc programmatic initiatives in conflict-affected settings, often revolving around notions of empowering non-state security and justice providers as a means to build more sustainable and locally legitimate reform outcomes, or employing interim stabilization measures to help shape conditions for more conventional SSR interventions. In spite of the SSR model's mixed record, SSR stakeholders and observers are not calling for its jettisoning, but rather a refashioning of the model's core methods and good practices to make it more applicable in conflict-affected environments.

This project seeks to contribute to the gradual shift or transition in SSR policy and practice, through comparative analysis of four prominent conflict-affected SSR cases. By investigating the impact of conventional SSR and tracking entry-points for alternative approaches, the project aims to generate innovative, evidence-based insights and practical recommendations to improve SSR policy and programming in conflict-affected contexts. Importantly, the project will provide a detailed evidence base on how SSR has been applied to transform the security and justice architectures of states making war-to-peace transitions. The project will ascertain what works and does not work in the application of the orthodox SSR model, and by extension if and how a second-generation SSR approach could deliver better results in conflict-affected environments.

As already mentioned, alternative or second-generation SSR initiatives are already emerging organically in many reform contexts, thus part of the purpose of the project will be to identify these instances and investigate whether they can inform changes to the wider SSR model. On a broader level the project seeks to advance constructive dialogue on the future of the SSR model, which has come under increasing scrutiny and pressure among policy-makers, practitioners and analysts in donor and recipient states alike due to its mixed record of achievement in conflict-affected environments.

The project seeks to answer the following main research questions for each case:

1. To what extent and how have SSR efforts followed the orthodox SSR model as described in the *OECD-DAC Handbook on SSR*? In assessing SSR efforts in each case study country, how have orthodox SSR approaches succeeded and failed and why?
2. What alternative approaches or entry-points for security and justice development programs are available? Are they used, and if so, how? If not, why?

The project has produced two reports per case study country—eight in total—one for each of the aforementioned research questions. The final report of the project—the ninth in the series—will synthesize the results of the case study research, drawing conclusions about the efficacy of orthodox SSR approaches and the potential for second generation SSR ideas.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The launch of a security sector reform (SSR) process in 1997 was a key element of a broader push for sustainable peace and security in Sierra Leone, a country with a chequered history characterized by bad governance, corruption and a violent civil war since 1991. The country presented a peculiar case for SSR as its military had joined forces in 1997 with the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against the democratically elected government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Given the political context within the country and the perceived threat posed by conventional state security actors, a state-centric approach to SSR was endorsed with the principal goal of reorienting the security apparatus and stabilizing the country. Given that key SSR stakeholders had yet to fully appreciate the concept's holistic orientation and governance focus at the time of its launch, the SSR process initially had a fairly narrow focus that missed opportunities to engage influential actors like non-state security and justice providers.

Between 1997 and 2002, with no clear policy or strategy in place, SSR took an ad-hoc approach dictated by fluid events and perceptions on the ground. The process was more reactive than constructive during this foundational period. However, with the declaration of the end of the conflict in 2002, a more structured and effective approach was employed, which saw several Ministries, Departments and Agencies benefit from reforms. Despite such encouraging signs, SSR has faced immense challenges since its inception, including limited political will, mistrust of political elites, poor coordination among local and international actors, and inadequate investment by the government of Sierra Leone. The process has remained heavily donor driven, with the British government being by far the greatest contributor to the process. It is worth noting that while this paper is focussed on the record of conventional approaches to SSR in Sierra Leone, it does shine a spotlight on some early efforts to develop innovative second generation SSR initiatives.

**ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AFRC</b>	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
<b>APC</b>	All People's Congress
<b>ASJP</b>	Access to Security and Justice Programme
<b>CCSSP</b>	Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project
<b>CISU</b>	Central Intelligence and Security Unit
<b>CHISEC</b>	Chiefdom Security Committee
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>DDR</b>	disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DISEC</b>	District Security Committee
<b>ECOMOG</b>	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
<b>EVD</b>	Ebola virus disease
<b>GoSL</b>	Government of Sierra Leone
<b>IMATT</b>	International Military Advisory and Training Team
<b>INGO</b>	international non-governmental organization
<b>IPCB</b>	Independent Police Complaints Board
<b>ISAT</b>	International Security Advisory Team
<b>JSCO</b>	Justice Sector Coordination Office
<b>JSDP</b>	Justice Sector Development Programme
<b>LNP</b>	Local Needs Policing
<b>LUC</b>	Local Unit Commander
<b>LPPB</b>	Local Police Partnership Board
<b>MIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<b>MDA</b>	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>MoFED</b>	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NPRC</b>	National Provisional Ruling Council
<b>NSA</b>	non-state actors
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Council
<b>NSCCG</b>	National Security Council Coordination Group
<b>ONS</b>	Office of National Security
<b>PROSEC</b>	Provincial Security Committee
<b>RUF</b>	Revolutionary United Front
<b>SILSEP</b>	Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme
<b>SLA</b>	Sierra Leone Army

<b>SLCS</b>	Sierra Leone Correctional Service
<b>SLFF</b>	Sierra Leone Fire Force
<b>SLP</b>	Sierra Leone Police
<b>SLPP</b>	Sierra Leone People's Party
<b>SSR</b>	security sector reform
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNIOSIL</b>	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
<b>UNIPSIL</b>	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

## INTRODUCTION

Security sector reform (SSR) in Sierra Leone maintained a traditional state-centric approach that was top down with emphasis on traditional security institutions. Consequently, within the government, it became a case for more investment in first generation SSR, which prioritizes traditional security institutions. This approach is gradually shifting to a more human-security-based approach (second generation SSR) with people-centred methods such as the creation of local structures that encourage the participation of people in security and justice-related issues. This shift from first to the second generation SSR is seen as more effective and less antagonistic as it promotes inclusivity and collaboration among the relevant actors. It is also of significance to note that the SSR process in Sierra Leone is heavily donor driven, with the British government being by far the greatest contributor to the process.

The SSR process in Sierra Leone started in the mid-1990s during the war period with an ad hoc approach based on needs and developments on the ground. There was no clear SSR strategy or policy guidance until after 2003, and this undermined a holistic approach that saw the military and the police being more engaged, while other actors within the sector such as the Sierra Leone Prison Service (now referred to as the Sierra Leone Correctional Service [SLCS]) were less engaged. However, the postwar period saw a shift with more policies and strategies available that guided the process with the principal donor, the British, providing technical and financial support to the process. In spite of this, political will dwindled over time, which affected cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

For this paper, a mixed-method approach was used in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected through desk research, semi-structured interviews, field consultations with relevant stakeholders and focus group discussions. Four focus group discussions, each with 10 participants and held in the four regions of Sierra Leone, were very useful in helping to assess the perception of members of different communities of the security sector in Sierra Leone. Key actors consulted included people working in ministries, department and agencies (MDAs), parliamentarians, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), academic institutions, community and traditional leaders and community members.

## OVERVIEW OF THE SSR PROCESS IN SIERRA LEONE

Failing and failed states are not able to provide equitable safety, security and justice to their people through the traditional state mechanisms of police, judiciary, courts, and penitentiaries. In such situations, state mechanisms are ineffective, predatory or absent (Hill, Temin and Pacholek, 2007: 38). This was the case in Sierra Leone, a country that went through three decades of a one-party dictatorship and was characterized by civil war and anarchy in the 1990s. The genesis of this chequered history commenced after a bitterly contested general election in 1967<sup>1</sup> that saw the emergence of the military into Sierra Leone's political limelight. Since then, the once well behaved army lost the trust of its people and most certainly its politicians. On his return to power in 1968, Siaka Probyn Stevens downsized the military and created parallel structures for his personal safety and the safety of his regime. One of the structures created was the Internal Security Unit, which was used as an instrument for the suppression of people opposed to the regime (Keen, 2005: 15-17). In spite of a weakened and disengaged military, Stevens faced multiple coup attempts and throughout his time in power was fearful of the military. He, however, had the backing of the police, which was used as an agent of oppression.<sup>2</sup> In 1985, the aging Stevens handed over power to his hand-picked successor Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh, who was the head of the military.

A few years into Momoh's control, people came to realize that he was not up to the task (Koroma, 1996) and frustration and discontent further engulfed a country already plagued with corruption and bad governance. Apprehensive and disillusioned, young people, in particular from the rural areas, lost faith in the government. This context was compounded by the high levels of illiteracy and unemployment that these young people experienced. Unfortunately, the government failed to respond to the needs of the rural youth and instead receded from those areas, creating a sense of abandonment and absolute neglect (Richards, 1996).

On March 23, 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh, started a rebellion in Sierra Leone. Ill-prepared and caught off-guard, the military struggled to contain the marauding band of RUF fighters. As events deteriorated, middle-level officers within the military staged a coup d'état, overthrew the APC and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). While the NPRC's principal motivation for the coup was to end decades of APC misrule and poor governance that bequeathed a weak state that could hardly contain the RUF, the NPRC promised a speedy conclusion of the civil war.

After four years of the NPRC, democratic elections were held in 1996 with Ahmad Tejan Kabbah emerging as the president of Sierra Leone. He inherited a military that had lost the trust of its people and that could also not contain the RUF. A few months after taking office, the military staged another coup and Kabbah fled to neighbouring Guinea. In trying

to consolidate power, the military entered into a marriage with the RUF, thereby creating what it called the “People’s Army.” This time around, the military faced widespread internal and external condemnations and nine months later they were kicked out of power with the help of the Economic Community of West Africa Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and soldiers loyal to Kabbah. The military intervention in Sierra Leone politics not only created a lasting legacy of unease between the civilian-political class and the military, but also exacerbated the weaknesses of state institutions and contributed to an eventual collapse of the state.

On his return to Sierra Leone in 1998, Kabbah threatened to disband the military, relied on ECOMOG and Kamajors<sup>3</sup> to pursue his war efforts (Bundu, 2001: 233) and started discussions on SSR. In pursuing his desire to reform the army, Kabbah “approached ECOMOG in Freetown to assist in preparing a position paper on armed forces reform and restructuring. ECOMOG recommended the establishment of a 5,000 strong force consisting of a brigade headquarters that included a presidential guard, three infantry battalions, one light tank/reconnaissance battalion, one artillery regiment, and one rapid deployment force that would consist of a paratrooper battalion, a coast guard, and an air wing” (Gbla, 2002: 18). Other options considered were a “civil defense force” and the Costa Rica model for Sierra Leone – “the Central American nation endured years of upheaval before disbanding its army but had suffered no coups since that move.”<sup>4</sup>

It appeared that Kabbah, harbouring mistrust and doubt in the military, was closely examining the possibility of having structures other than a standing army, which would pose less of a threat to his government and the people of Sierra Leone. Such a narrow conceptualization of SSR reform not only exposed him and his SLPP government’s deep-seated suspicions of the state security institutions, but also intensified the polarization of Sierra Leonean society as a whole. At this point, Kabbah executed 24 senior military officers for supporting the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on October 19, 1998, which further put relations on edge.

As Kabbah intensified his consultations with his allies (notably the Nigerians and the British), the conflict intensified as the RUF/AFRC made a desperate attempt at retaking Freetown in early January 1999. This led to the death of thousands of people with more than 7,000 homes destroyed (Koroma, 2004). After ECOMOG and the British repelled the rebels from the city, the international community encouraged Kabbah and the RUF to sign a ceasefire agreement in Ghana and later a peace agreement in Lomé on July 7, 1999. The agreement included a provision for the establishment of a government of national unity, with the RUF having positions in cabinet and other agencies in the government.<sup>5</sup> To keep the fragile peace, the United Nations (UN) deployed the largest mission in its history in Sierra Leone.<sup>6</sup>

However, in spite of the agreement signed, the recalcitrant RUF continued its war effort until 2002 when the war was officially declared over. Alongside other postwar transition processes such as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR), the government was faced with the challenges of transforming the security sector from an “ill-disciplined, untrustworthy force into an effective body”<sup>7</sup> (Godwin and Haenlein, 2013: 30). Understanding that this undertaking required extensive support and long-term political engagement from international partners, the British committed to providing assistance by signing a 10-year memorandum of understanding with the Sierra Leonean government in 2002 (*ibid.*: 31). However, as indicated by Godwin and Haenlein (*ibid.*), the British commitment to supporting Sierra Leone predated 2002 as it provided short-term training to the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and developed a set of recommendations that were implemented by its International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) in June 2000.<sup>8</sup> The deployment of the IMATT was preceded by Operation Palliser “the largest British military overseas intervention since the war in the Falkland Islands in the 1980s” (Evove, 2008: 2). Thus, a significant part of British support to Sierra Leone was channelled to support the reform of the country’s security sector.

As early as the mid-1990s, the British oversaw support for police reform through the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force and the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP). The “CCSSP constitutes the ‘heyday’ of police reform in Sierra Leone, when massive donor investment occurred and the position of Inspector-General of Police (IGP) was held from 1999-2003 by a retired UK police officer. During the life of the project, from 1999-2005, a total of £25 million was spent on the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) alone” (Albrecht, 2010: 12). However, activities were conditioned by events and exigencies on the ground (Barakat, Waldman and Varisco, 2014: 166).

With the end of the conflict, both the British and the Sierra Leone governments started developing well-defined policies and strategies. Kabbah “dismissed his initial idea of disbanding the military altogether and opened a new Ministry of Defence (MoD) building in Freetown and officially re-established the armed forces” (Godwin and Haenlein, 2013: 30). Very little is known as to why Kabbah changed his mind and decided not to disband the army. Possible reasons could be local or international pressure, or Kabbah probably came to the conclusion that it simply did not make good sense for national security and social cohesion to disband an army that so many thousands depended on for their livelihood and security.

As the SSR process evolved, it faced immense challenges, including the absence of an effective security apparatus and limited governance capacity across a security system in which most ministries and agencies “served only as offices to sign off financial disbursements” (Fitz-Gerald, 2004: 5). The conflict and the dysfunctionality of the state had immense effects on the military, police and other agencies within the security sector,

contributing to this adverse situation. Coupled with limited resources to design and finance an extensive SSR program, the support of the British became vitally important for the viability of the process.

## EVOLUTION OF THE SSR PROCESS

The first comprehensive SSR agenda, the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP), was initiated in 1999 and primarily financed by “pooling funds from both the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), but...received support through the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP)” (Albrecht, 2009: 2).<sup>9</sup> Under SILSEP, the British embarked on setting up systems and structures that were crucial to the reform process. The support of these three British agencies (DFID, FCO and ACPP) drove the process. Specific support to “police reform until mid-2005 went through the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) which was terminated when the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) was established” (Albrecht 2009: 2).

Key areas of the security sector that succeeded in gaining immediate attention and support were the military, police and intelligence apparatus. The program moved to form an Office of National Security (ONS), a Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU) and a new MoD. The British IMATT also established the Africanus Horton Academy for the training of the army’s officer corps.

As the process progressed, several gains were made, which included the restructuring of the military and the police and the establishment of an intelligence system coordinated by the ONS.<sup>10</sup> A British police officer named Keith Biddle led the reforms of the police service. The police rank system was cut down from 22 to nine and new offices and departments were established such as the Media and Public Relations Department, the Community Relations Department, Corporate Services, Family Support Unit and the Complaints, Discipline, and Internal Investigations Department. Also, a gender mainstreaming policy was developed that called for at least 30 percent female representation in the different units of the police. This policy contained an accelerated promotion scheme for female officers and a sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment policy geared toward protecting and promoting the interests of women in the force. Training programs and activities were reviewed to ensure relevance and quality.

The Assistant Inspector General of Police and Head of the Gender Directorate Elizabeth Turay stated “there was the need for a complete overhaul of the police force if it was to be meaningful in the transformation process in Sierra Leone. The people wanted a force that could ensure their safety and security and by 1999 the SLP was not that force.”<sup>11</sup> According to the head of Community Outreach of the SLP, Assistant Superintendent Alhaji

Bangura, “the primary focus of the Police Reform process was to restore the trust and confidence that was lost in the police and also to enable the police function effectively and efficiently.”<sup>12</sup>

With the immense support provided in the form of restructuring systems and structures, developing infrastructure (such as the construction of new police stations and posts across the country), establishing internal disciplinary mechanisms and the equipping of the force, the SSR process was able to make significant strides in programs. Related initiatives such as DDR, Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) reduction, refugee and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) resettlement and the Twin-Track Transitional Justice Mechanisms (Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) were given a boost by the progress in SSR. Crucial to the gains of the SSR process was the establishment of community security structures such as the Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPB),<sup>13</sup> Provincial Security Committees (PROSEC), District Security Committees (DISEC) and Chiefdom Security Committees (CHISEC).<sup>14</sup> These community-level structures created the synergies and complementarity needed at the local level between SSR and other reform and reconstruction processes. The significance of such structures to the transformation from first to second generation SSR is that for the first time, decentralized security structures were created and there were more non-state than state actors in them. Also, it demystified the once complex security apparatus to something that is people friendly and people centred. This critical approach established a change from a relationship that was characterized by mistrust and resentment to one based on trust, respect and collaboration.

With the military, some of the key changes that the SSR process tackled were the reconstitution of the SLA, the establishment of a new MoD, the training and retraining of different military cadres and the strengthening of civilian oversight mechanisms. Civilianization of the military was a significant goal of the process. A senior military official explained: “the focus was to have a professional army that sticks to its primary responsibility of protecting the country from external aggression and not the seizure of political power. Also, the process of image transformation and building civil-military cooperation was of fundamental significance to the SSR process.”<sup>15</sup>

The establishment of the ONS and CISU (through the National Security and Central Intelligence Act of 2002) were also processes that helped to democratize and further strengthen the security sector. Three key structures that were established as part of the security network were the National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the president, the National Security Council Coordination Group (NSCCG), chaired by the national security coordinator (who is the head of the ONS and briefs the president on security related issues), and the Strategic Situation Group, which is chaired by the chief of staff of the ONS. The head of the ONS also chairs the Joint Intelligence Committee, which oversees all the different intelligence units in the country.

According to Dr. Henry Mbawa, “the establishment of the ONS was principally instigated by a civilian-political mind-set that was uncomfortable with the security sector. Hence, the strategy sought to achieve two things: ensure civilian control over the security, hence the ONS; and develop the capacity of the security sector to be effective enough to shore up civilian control of the state but not too powerful to usurp civilian control of the state.”<sup>16</sup>

The immediate postwar period was characterized by significant political will to advance reforms; however, as time progressed, Kabbah “gradually lost interest and continued relying on trusted individuals for advice on national security issues” (Albrecht 2009: 4).<sup>17</sup> Additionally, as indicated by Albrecht (ibid.), “intelligence officials began to expose corruption within state institutions. Certain officials, whose vested interests in the status quo were inevitably exposed, began to resist SSR. With these developments, the internal political will and support that was required to strengthen the process dwindled.” This statement was heavily contested by a senior ONS official who indicated that “the focus of ONS at its inception was not on fighting corruption but rather on preventing a relapse into violence.”<sup>18</sup> However, as there appeared to be a semblance of stability, the priority of the Kabbah administration shifted to other areas such as the re-establishment of state institutions, delivery of social services and infrastructure development.

In spite of this apparent declining interest in SSR, the British continued their efforts and in 2005 established the JSDP that complemented SILSEP. Mohamed Barrie, who served as JSDP’s project manager for grants, expressed satisfaction over the work of JSDP in the area of police reform: “We built several police stations and posts, provided trainings to police officers and supported joint SSR and JSR activities. This paved the way for the Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP), which succeeded the JSDP.”<sup>19</sup> The JSDP was phased out in September 2011 and the ASJP was established in 2012. Also, on March 31, 2013 IMATT transitioned to a smaller International Security Advisory Team (ISAT), which commenced operations on April 1, 2013 with the mandate of providing support to the security sector. Heavily critical of the litany of different SSR reform and reconstruction processes, Abu Koroma, an independent security sector consultant stated: “These reform processes are of a superficial nature. They were simply repainting or rebranding, but lacking in content and did not address the core challenges faced by the targeted institutions. Significantly, these reforms failed to construct a constructive customer service relationship between these state institutions and the citizens [...] the same culture of aloofness, condescension and arrogance that characterised the pre-war years easily returned to permeate these institutions. The police in particular continue to privilege order over human rights while in general security sector institutions continue to be reactionary towards perceived civil society intrusion.”<sup>20</sup> This was a widely shared belief among the interview subjects for this study who were outside the security sector. It demonstrates that much still needs to be done to forge a productive relationship between the security establishment and population at large.

Like the JSDF, the ASJP is also a DFID-funded program with a broad mandate of “securing the conditions for peace and stability in Sierra Leone, and to provide an exit strategy for SSR programmes with the GoSL [Government of Sierra Leone] taking increasing responsibility for funding and delivering justice and security as core state functions.”<sup>21</sup> The ASJP focuses on building the capacity of institutions such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Judiciary, SLCS, JSCO, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), ONS and the SLP. It also provides grants to CSOs to promote access to security and justice through mediators, paralegals and early warning mechanisms and structures, especially in remote and isolated communities. This stimulated a shift from the mainstream SSR process to a much more community-security-based approach.<sup>22</sup>

However, the limited political will and financial support from the government is affecting the potential for reform sustainability, as there is a heavy reliance on donor institutions and funding. Increasingly, the main funder of SSR activities, the UK’s DFID, has scaled back and even ended its support for various institutions such as ONS and CISU, a development that has reduced their efficacy. These institutions now tend to spend more time lobbying for external funding than it does implementing its core mandate.<sup>23</sup> In seeking to overcome this challenge, the ASJP public finance management advisor has been working with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) and the relevant MDAs to secure a budgetary increase for security and justice related MDAs and to ensure a stable transition from donor to government funding through a systematic increase in the budgetary allocations to the relevant MDAs.

It should be noted that other actors provide support to SSR activities in Sierra Leone, although on a smaller scale. The United States, on a limited scale, and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone through its military and police units provided technical and financial support to the military and police (Bendix and Stanley, 2008: 18). The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), created in 2008, and subsequently the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) in 2014 (UNIOSIL succeeded UNIPSIL), were mandated to address SSR-related issues (ibid.). UNIOSIL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) thus supported security and justice-related activities, although to a limited extent. In 2014, the UNDP received funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund to support the inception phase of the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) and build police stations in key border towns. However, with the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) in 2014, a significant proportion of the funds were diverted to support the fight against the disease.

## IMPACTS OF THE SSR PROCESS

The following section assesses the impacts of the SSR process in terms of operational effectiveness, governance, economic viability and public perceptions.

### Operational Effectiveness

Since the end of the conflict in 2002 and with the implementation of SSR, Sierra Leone has avoided a relapse into civil war. While there may be several reasons for this, key factors are the effectiveness of the security sector and the shift toward a community-driven approach to security and justice provision. The relationship between the security actors and the local populace improved significantly with the formation of security structures such as LPPBs, DISECs, PROSECs and CHISECs. These structures serve as early warning mechanisms that identify and report conflict triggers before they erupt. They also identify abuses and violations of human rights and refer victims to appropriate authorities. They have emerged to be very useful, especially for the country's approximately 13,000-strong police force, to deal with a population of about six million people.

Though faced with two general elections (2007 and 2012) that tested the operational capacity and professionalism of the security sector, the country sailed through, with minimal and easily contained outbursts of violence. However, the sector has increasingly found itself unready and unable to cope with emerging threats, such as drug trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, terrorism, cybercrime, piracy and smuggling. Steps have been taken to address these challenges, including the launch of a Financial Intelligence Unit, a Transnational Organised Crime Unit and a Joint Maritime Committee; however, these bodies are poorly financed and lack the capacity needed to effectively combat these emerging threats.

Although the relationship between the security sector and the local population improved markedly after the conflict, it has nonetheless been tested on many occasions, as evidenced by the poor human rights record enjoyed by the police.<sup>24</sup> This led the government to establish the IPCB under the auspices of the Independent Police Complaints Board Regulations, which were enacted in July 2013 with the intention of building a strong accountability mechanism. The IPCB is supported by the ASJP, UNIPSIL and the UNDP Security Sector Reform Project 2014. The military, by contrast, is seen to be more effective and professional than the police. On several occasions – in 2007, 2012 and 2014 – the military was called upon under the auspices of the Military Aid to Civil Power to support the police and no incidents of military misconduct were reported.<sup>25</sup> This is not to say that the military is without problems; in 2014, there was an ongoing military court martial for an alleged coup plot.<sup>26</sup>

A major area of concern in the security and justice sectors is the SLCS. Conditions within Sierra Leone's overcrowded prisons are extremely poor. For instance, the country's largest prison, the Pademba Road Maximum Security Prison, was built to hold approximately 324 inmates but presently holds 1,391 male prisoners.<sup>27</sup> This is coupled with the fact that more than half of that number are in pre-trial detention for petty crimes. A prisons officer interviewed for this study expressed dissatisfaction over the case management system in the prisons: "We do not have files on most of those we keep at the Pademba Road Prison, they have not seen a magistrate or judge for years but we keep them because they are perceived to be criminals. I believe they should be set free and even compensated because our system failed them."<sup>28</sup>

Paul Turay, the justice sector advisor of ASJP, shares the frustration of the prison official: "The system is faced with a huge backlog of cases and people are kept in prisons for several years with no trial. This is inhumane and a gross violation of the rights of people the law is supposed to protect. ASJP is committed to engaging the judiciary to ensure that the rights and welfare of those incarcerated are respected and those that do not deserve to be in prison are released."<sup>29</sup>

The reality is that almost a quarter of Sierra Leone's districts do not have resident magistrates, judges and state counsel. The system heavily relies on circuit courts that are poorly funded and meet irregularly. This negatively impacts access to justice, thus, left with no option, people turn to informal or semi-formal justice structures such as the local courts, which are readily available and easily accessible. The inability to deploy resident judicial officials could be attributed to financial constraints faced by the judiciary as well as low salaries and poor conditions of service. Most people prefer private legal practices over working for government, where the pay is seen as insufficient.<sup>30</sup>

Another significant challenge faced is the limited prospect of accessing legal aid across the country. However, with the establishment of the LAB in 2014 it is hoped that more people will be able to access and benefit from legal aid assistance.

### **Governance**

Since the inception of SSR programming in Sierra Leone, several acts, policies and strategies have been developed and implemented including the Policing Charter of 1998, the National Security Policy Paper of 2000, the Defence White Paper of 2003, the National Security and Central Intelligence Act of 2002, the National Security Sector Strategies I, II and III, the Reports of the Security Sector Review (2005 and 2014), the Protective Security Manual for Government Ministries and Departments (2005), the Standard Response Guidelines for the National Security Architecture (2005) and the Correctional Service Act of 2014.

However, very little investment has been made by both the GoSL and the donors in strengthening some of the security sector's core oversight institutions, such as the MIA. In addition to this, the Parliamentary Committees on Defence and Internal Affairs and Local Government have not been very effective and have largely failed to make significant contributions to the transformation of the MDAs. Some of the key bills that went through parliament took a long time to become Acts of Parliament, including the Correctional Service Act and the Criminal Procedures Bill (which, after three years, still remains to be passed into an Act of Parliament). Coupled with this, there is limited expertise in SSR-related issues among the parliamentarians in the core security and justice sector committees. It is important to note that as enshrined in Part iii, Section 93 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone,<sup>31</sup> Parliament has residual oversight responsibilities over all MDAs of the GoSL. However, with limited technical expertise and knowledge in these committees, Parliament has not been able to constructively contribute to change processes in the sector.

On June 17, 2015 the GoSL validated a policy that will empower the MIA to fully carry out its oversight responsibilities. The document, which is in the process of being sent to cabinet for approval will get institutions, such as the SLP, SLCS, Sierra Leone Fire Force (SLFF) to become more accountable to the MIA on all activities undertaken.

### **Economic**

The war and immediate postwar periods witnessed a massive increase in the defence budget, but this increase was not replicated in the other security and justice sector institutions, such as the prison system, immigration service, fire force, the judiciary and the MoJ, which have continued to face major budgetary pressures and shortfalls. The SSR process did see significant investment and direct funding provided by DFID to frontline security institutions such as the MoD, SLP, the ONS and CISU. There was an agreement between DFID and the GoSL that the GoSL would gradually assume full financial responsibility for these heavily subsidized institutions and other externally sponsored bodies within the justice sector such as the Anti-Corruption Commission.

To facilitate this process, the JSDP previously worked with, and the ASJP is currently working with, the relevant MDAs in preparing budgets for submission to the MoFED. Institutions such as the SLP and the SLCS have witnessed a steady increase in their budgets, as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Budgetary Allocation of some MDAs from 2011 to 2015 (in million Leones)**

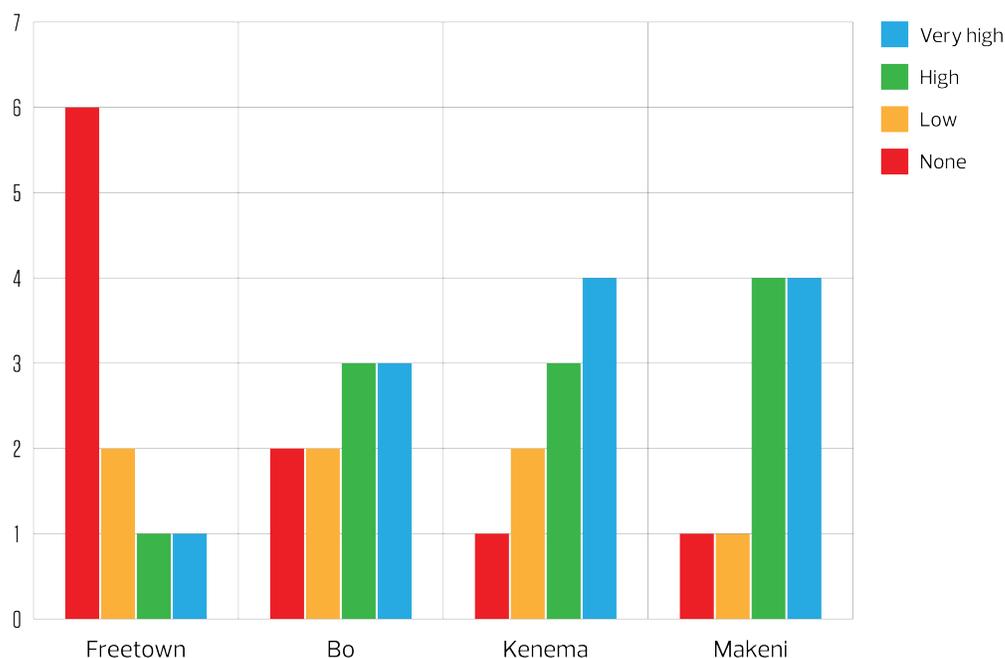
No.	Institution	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1.	SLP	71,236	93,290	132,464	171,462	225,316
2.	SLCS	14,593	20,068	24,091	43,009	56,857
3.	MIA <sup>32</sup>	-	18,169	16,238	20,748	6,290
4.	MoD	110,328	118,783	134,558	176,709	179,215
5.	Immigration Department	2,238	3,850	2,825	3,766	5,338
6.	CISU	-	-	-	6,405	6,209
7.	ONS	5,448	8,234	14,115	13,697	16,221
8.	National Fire Authority	4,507	6,096	6,549	8,702	12,927

However, while there appears to be a steady increase in the budgetary allocations, the MDAs are still faced with serious financial and technical challenges as the allocations of government are far below the actual needs of the MDAs. MDAs are accordingly struggling to meet their benchmarks. Also, some clearly do not even have the resources needed to implement the reforms mandated. For instance, there are little resources available to meet the demands of the transformation process from a prison system to a correctional service. Further, tackling emerging crimes such as terrorism, piracy, money laundering and cybercrime is very costly. Sierra Leone lacks the requisite laws to confront such challenges, as was demonstrated by a high-profile drug trafficking case in 2008.<sup>33</sup>

### Public Perceptions

This study revealed mixed perceptions on the part of the general populace concerning their level of trust in the security sector. Levels of trust appeared to be higher in the interior of the country than in the capital, Freetown. In a focus group discussion (see Figure 1) of 10 civil society activists in Freetown, six indicated distrust in the security sector, two indicated a low level of trust, one indicated a high level of trust and one indicated a very high level of trust, with one member expressing indifference. In Makeni in Northern region, four people indicated a very high level of trust in the sector, four indicated a high level of trust, one indicated a low level of trust, and one indicated no trust. In Kenema in the Eastern region, four indicated a very high level of trust, three indicated a high level of trust, two indicated a low level of trust and one indicated no trust. In Bo in Southern region, three indicated a very high level of trust, three indicated a high level of trust, two indicated a low level of trust and two indicated no trust.

**Figure 1: Focus Group Discussion on the Level of Trust in the Security Sector in Local Communities**



This disparity in perception can be attributed to the fact that the LPPBs, CHISECs, PROSECs and DISECs ensured that people in the interior enjoyed greater direct engagement with the government on security-related issues than those in the capital, who complained of a lack of engagement. Also, it was realized that those in the capital have more distrust in the police and specifically its traffic unit, which is in many cases the first point of contact between the general populace and the police. A civil servant, Sheku Kallon, expressed frustration and disappointment in the traffic unit of the police: “All they care about is taking bribes and making the police fearful to the public.”<sup>34</sup>

Public perceptions of state corruption is not limited to agencies within the security sector. The Anti-Corruption Commission’s National Public Perception Survey on Corruption 2010 reported that corruption was seen as the third most serious problem in the country, after poverty and unemployment.<sup>35</sup> According to the Afrobarometer Survey on corruption in Sierra Leone conducted in 2013, “Sierra Leoneans perceive that a large number of public officials are involved in corruption. Specifically, 69% of Sierra Leoneans believe that most or all of the police are corrupt.” The National Public Perception Survey on Corruption (2010) also identified the SLP and the National Revenue Authority as the most corrupt state institutions in the country.<sup>36</sup>

From interviews conducted, it became obvious that most of the negative perceptions of the security sector are fed by the public's perception of how the security and justice systems work and the challenges they face. Persistent constraints to public access to security and justice services due to a variety of factors, such as poor infrastructure, limited human capacity in the security bodies and funding shortfalls, continue to undermine public trust and confidence in the sector.

## **EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: ASSESSING ORTHODOX SSR IN SIERRA LEONE**

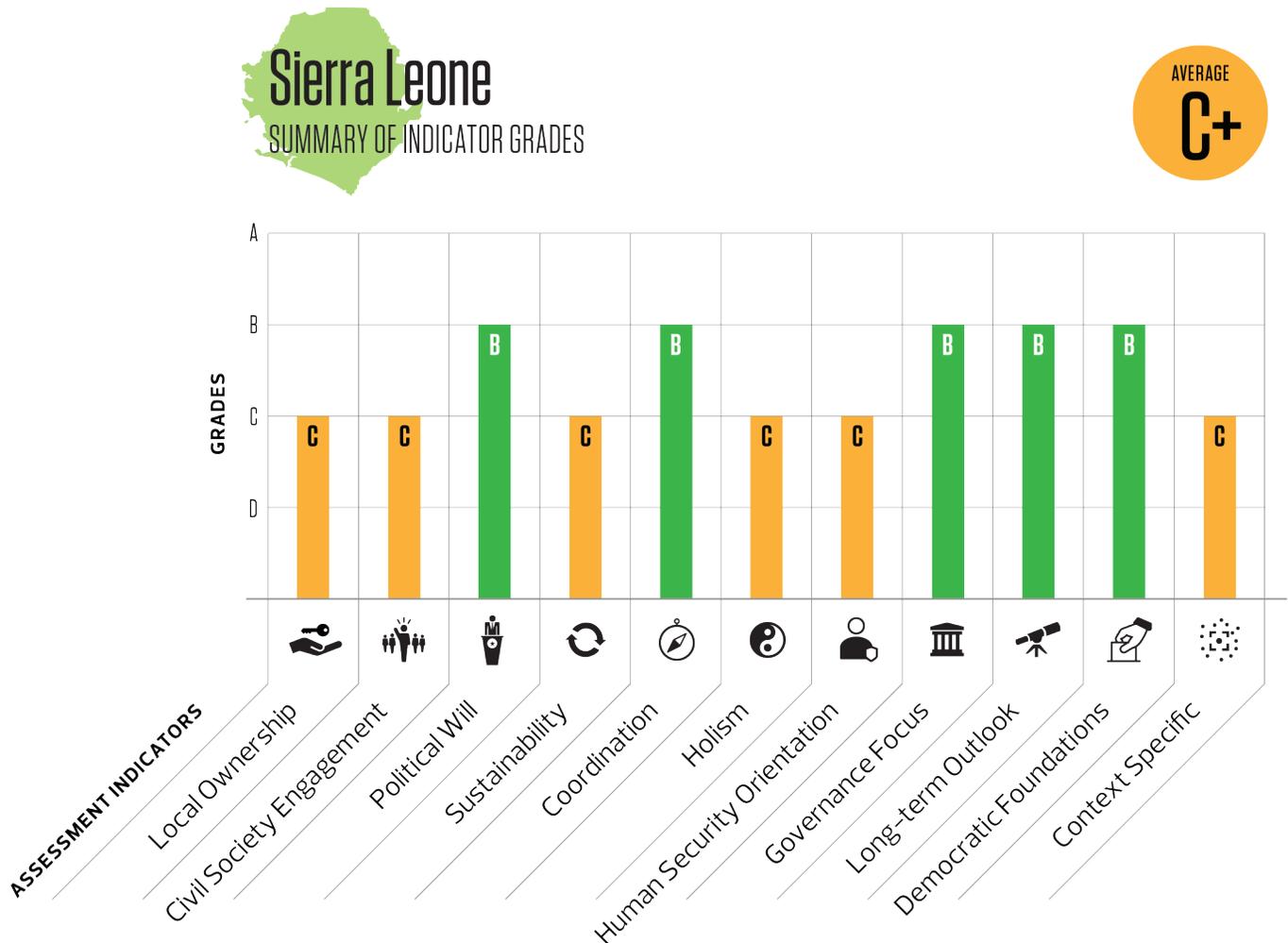
The following section provides an assessment of the application of SSR norms and principles in Sierra Leone. The evaluation framework for this project comprises 11 indicators that mirror the core SSR norms and principles.<sup>26</sup> These 11 indicators are assessed and a letter grade (A, B, C, D) is assigned for each indicator, with an 'A' grade representing the most effective possible application of the core SSR norm/principle in the country and the 'D' grade signifying the worst. A summary of the assessment for this case study is provided in Figure 2.

### **Local Ownership**

*Indicator grade: C*

The SSR process in Sierra Leone has been externally led from the inception stage. The principal actors have been the British through DFID, with UNDP and UNIPSIL providing support to some elements during the advanced stages of the process. The ad hoc nature of the process at the inception stage and also the difficult context within which it commenced provided little room for local ownership. Albrecht (2009: 2) stated that "in fact SILSEP had no applicable methodology to guide the design of the programme during its start-up phase. The design was based on reactions to events and need identified on the ground." Nonetheless, the government was interested in the process, appreciating its great significance to the country's war-to-peace transition. Thus, a heavy reliance on the British developed as the government lacked both financial and human resources to drive the process.

The inability to promote local ownership was further intensified as the government appeared to have lost interest in the process after the end of the conflict. Thus, even in 2016 there is very little ownership as donor activities are only aligned in a limited manner to the government's security and justice sector strategies. This lack of interest could be attributed to the government focusing on other priority areas such as infrastructure development and poverty reduction.

**Figure 2: Summary of Indicator Grades**

In some cases, the MDAs have to design activities to meet the priority of donors rather than donors designing activities based on the needs of MDAs. However, the recent introduction of the Second Security Sector Report, the NSPS and the Security Sector Conference, alongside commitments by the GoSL, are indicating renewed government interest in the sector. Recently, the ASJP has sought to closely link its activities to the Agenda for Prosperity and the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (III). Furthermore, the ASJP is “also encouraging the GoSL to engage the British government and take a lead on determining the priorities of the sector rather than allowing DFID to determine the priorities for SSR in Sierra Leone.”<sup>37</sup>

## Civil Society Engagement

### *Indicator grade: C*

The war and immediate postwar period saw very limited involvement of civil society actors in the SSR process as the predominant focus of the SSR process was on transforming the armed forces, which posed an immediate threat to the peace process in Sierra Leone. The overarching priority of SILSEP was to “develop the capacity of the Sierra Leone MoD to establish civil and political management of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF); and to build a functional Office of National Security (ONS) and increase the capacity of the Central Intelligence Support Unit (CISU)” (Albrecht, 2009: 2). The engagement of CSOs became much more visible with the introduction of community security measures such as the LPPBs, and PROSECs, DISECs and CHISECs. These structures fostered local needs-based policing and endeavoured to link SSR and justice sector reform processes. Momoh Conteh, a civil society activist, expressed dissatisfaction at the level of involvement of CSOs in the SSR process in Sierra Leone: “The process could have been all-inclusive to provide the legitimacy and buy-in required especially from Civil Society. This was however, not the case and thus when faced with challenges from government agencies Civil Society was not readily available to exert the pressure on the government that was needed.”<sup>38</sup>

A government official at the MoD countered that “the timing was not right for the full involvement of civil society as the tension within the country was immediately posed by the security forces and they needed to be handled exclusively.”<sup>39</sup> An opportunity may have been missed to engage civil society in setting up oversight structures to ensure transparency and accountability in the administration of the security apparatus. One of the few areas in the early postwar era that civil society became involved in was the AFRC, which was mandated to “periodically review incentives such as salary, medical and health plans as well as the levels of pension and gratuity benefits for military personnel” (Kabbah, 2010: 287).

The SILSEP “missed an opportunity to strengthen Civil Society capacity and engagement in the security sector, a problem that has only intensified as time passed. Two key factors responsible for this lack are the GoSL lack of trust in CSOs and the belief that security related issues are exclusively state matters.”<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, through the JSDP, DFID supported financially and technically several CSOs to work on community security and justice-related activities. Some of the organisations that participated in the process were Prison Watch, Defence for Children International, Movement for Resettlement and Rural Development and Timap for Justice.

## Political Will

*Indicator grade: B*

The heavy involvement of the military in the politics of Sierra Leone coupled with the various crimes that it committed during the civil war has fostered open distrust between the military on the one hand and the government and wider populace on the other. This distrust prompted President Kabbah to develop plans to disband the entire military in 1998. In a speech in the United States in 1998, he stated: "We as a government have decided that our military is completely discredited and should be disbanded."<sup>41</sup>

However, with a shift in the conflict and the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999, the clear and immediate priority became the reformation of the military and other security structures. During that crucial period, there was robust political consensus and will on the part of the GoSL and its international partners to advance reform. However, a senior security analyst, Abu Koroma, explained: "as the security situation stabilised, the political will decreased and Kabbah's administration shifted its focus to other priority areas especially the fight against poverty and post-war reconstruction. Alongside this, animosity developed between some high-level government officials and some security actors, especially ONS, which was believed to be providing intelligence on their activities. Whatever these activities are, they are left to one's imagination as they were never disclosed to the public."<sup>42</sup>

In spite of this, the British were relentless and their commitment to the process continued until 2008 and beyond. Alongside the activities of the UK-led ASJP, the UNDP and UNIPSIL through a Peacebuilding Fund<sup>43</sup> have supported the police with the building of police stations and posts across the border areas. Recent activities (e.g., development of the NSPS and Security Sector Conference) and commitments by the GoSL indicate growing political will. There are prospects for the improvement of political will if the commitments of the government are actualised.

## Sustainability

*Indicator grade: C*

The SSR program was implemented with a limited focus on sustainability. This lack of appreciation for reform sustainability persisted from the conception phase of the program. Albrecht (2009: 2) stated that "there was no applicable methodology to guide the design of the programme during its start-up phase. Instead, immediate needs demanded immediate responses....." "SILSEP was never a project set up with log-frames; people prepared them, but after the event. There was never a clear programme design." It was based on a reactive approach to the situation in Sierra Leone and the primary focus was to avoid an immediate

relapse into violence and to develop forces that would not pose a threat to the citizens of Sierra Leone. During the inception phase, “the bulk of the activities undertaken were executed with a short-term focus without looking at the bigger picture which establishes the medium and long term priorities.”<sup>44</sup>

The lack of a sustainability strategy created heavy reliance by MDAs on donor support for survival. The potential for institutional breakdown in the event of a significant cut in donor support prompted DFID (having realized its initial mistake in not adequately considering reform sustainability) to devise a slow reduction in the budgets of the main security institutions as the government transitioned to absorb the full financial burden for the security sector. The ONS was one institution impacted by this reduction. It has seen its effectiveness and impact decline as its external funding has been reduced and it has faced financial hardships. The ASJP supports budget development and submission by relevant MDAs in order to foster a systematic increment as DFID reduces its financial and technical support to them. It is important to note that until 2015, DFID was providing direct financial support for most activities undertaken by institutions such as the ONS, CISU and the ACC. Table 1 provides an idea of the increase in the budget of some MDAs over a five-year period.

### Coordination

#### *Indicator grade: B*

Given the number of actors involved in Sierra Leone’s SSR process in its initial stages, coordination was not perceived as a major challenge. The only major donor was the British government, with DFID providing direct support to MDAs. However, coordination among national actors deteriorated as time progressed and as political will dwindled. For instance, a key challenge was the provision of direct oversight over security institutions including the ONS, the police and the prison services. “The Ministry of Internal Affairs felt that too much power was in the hands of ONS and it was the ministry that should have provided the required oversight of that institution,” explained a ministry official.<sup>45</sup> This statement was challenged by a senior official at the ONS who asserted that “the ONS is under the Office of the President and not under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and as such the Ministry should not expect to provide oversight of the ONS.”<sup>46</sup> Such confusion over mandates, responsibilities and jurisdictions created coordination problems.

Also, there have been reports of coordination challenges among the various UK departments and agencies operating in Sierra Leone. “The soldiers [IMATT] had different ideas of what SSR should entail while the civilians [DFID] had their own ideas. This had significant implications for the process and at some point even led to duplication of efforts.”<sup>47</sup> Post-SILSEP support to the “security sector also witnessed this challenge as ISAT

and institutions such as ASJP have different forms of support for institutions such as the police and they seldom have coordination meetings but rather implement activities in isolation.”<sup>48</sup>

As indicated in previous sections, Kabbah came to rely heavily on a narrow cadre of trusted officials and less on the MDAs and key security sector coordinating bodies for information and advice. As indicated by Albrecht (2009), the NSC met less and less and key decisions were made without consulting the NSCCG or the NSC.

### **Holism**

*Indicator grade: C*

The approach to SSR in Sierra Leone was, to a very large extent, ad hoc until 2002 when the postwar recovery phase started in earnest. As indicated earlier, the bulk of the response was based on immediate needs and identified threats. With this approach, some institutions such as the military, the police and the intelligence units (ONS and CISU) were prioritized while others such as the Sierra Leone Prisons System and oversight institutions were not provided with a commensurate level of support. Moreover, the strategies, policies and plans developed did not fully involve key stakeholders such as civil society. It was a top-down approach with most of the plans and priorities for the process set in the United Kingdom, before being presented to the GoSL for approval. A senior minister in the Kabbah administration illustrated this situation: “with the police, Keith Biddle had immense say and control over the reformation process (developing systems and structures) while IMATT had the same level of control over the military. As an administration we could have done better in developing a holistic approach but rather focused on a piecemeal method with the British doing the dishing.”<sup>49</sup>

A holistic approach could have gone a long way in reducing the challenges currently faced in Sierra Leone especially with institutions such as the Correctional Service. Also, more investment in strengthening civilian oversight mechanisms could have helped to promote cross-sectoral dialogue especially in areas where the justice and security sectors interact.

### **Human Security Orientation**

*Indicator grade: C*

From the 1990s to 2003, the approach of the SSR process was regime-centric and heavily statist. For instance, the Security Sector Strategy and Investment Plan I was wholly state centred, with little consideration for the human security dimensions of the SSR model of security assistance. There is little sign that this approach will shift with a new SSR

strategy developed between 2014 and 2015. A former MoD official reflecting on the process expressed regret about the omission of human security: “We did not think beyond the immediate post-war period. We were victims of circumstance as our greatest interest was on ensuring that the military did not continue causing havocs through coup d’états or uprisings. There were several missed opportunities to move towards human security and move away from the traditional sense of security.”<sup>50</sup>

An exception to the regime-centred approach that dominated the SSR landscape was a British government program to support Local Needs Policing (LNP). LNP was intended to improve the relationship between the police and local communities and ensure that those communities were engaged in processes of security provision. The LPPBs are part of LNP. Alongside this, the Correctional Service Act has a basis in human security principles, given its focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. However, the SLCS strategy for 2015-2017, which is being developed to roll out the strategy will require significant financial and human resource capacity to produce the expected impact and ensure sustainability.

There were some ad hoc efforts to engage civil society, consisting of grants to support the work of CSO activities in the areas of mediation and the development of conflict early warning mechanisms. This initiative was advanced by the JSDP and was seen as a concrete linkage between the justice and conventional security reforms process. The ASJP continues to support such initiatives.

Emerging threats such as human trafficking, piracy, terrorism, cybercrime and money laundering, among others, can only be successfully curbed if the security sector strategy is based on a human security approach. The argument for this approach is that such crimes can only be defeated if there is the support and buy-in of the general populace. Addressing these challenges faced by the populace will hinder the potential of external actors using nationals to get involved in transnational organized crimes. Laws also have to be developed to ensure that such crimes could be dealt with as they emerge, instead of waiting for the legal system to be compromised due to the absence of legal tools to deal with them.

### **Governance Focus**

#### *Indicator grade: B*

Governance did receive significant attention from the government and British in the SSR process, but good governance programming was largely confined to priority institutions, such as the military, police, the ONS and CISU. Comparably little was done to enhance governance across the rest of the security sector. The focus on good governance led to changes in numerous structures and systems, with the police adopting the motto “A Force

for Good.” However, the level of financial support required to ensure the sustainability and long-term functionality of these new governance structures was in short supply. With both the military and the police, IMATT, through its Horton Academy, provided several training programs, some in collaboration with the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme of the University of Sierra Leone on governance and peace building. Madame Memunatu Pratt, the head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, University of Sierra Leone explained, “the University was interested in helping to train officers on governance and peacebuilding as we believed that good governance promotion will help change the attitude of officers and shape their minds in understanding the role of the police and the military in the wider governance framework. This knowledge was lacked in the past and the security sector actors though it was their business to run the state rather than to help secure lives and properties.”<sup>51</sup>

The limited funds provided to the process has meant that major governance challenges remain, especially with the police. With the new Correctional Service, the government has mandated a complete transformation of the system, but the roll out of the change process has been adversely affected by limited financial and technical capacity. A holistic governance approach targeting all actors in the sector would have created much more sustainable impact than that which was realized in practice.

### Long-term Outlook

*Indicator grade: B*

The focus of SSR was mostly on short- to medium-term priorities rather than long-term goals. However, with the end of the conflict in 2002, a longer-term focus became more realistic with institutions such as the military, the police, the ONS and CISU benefitting from a wide range of reform and capacity-building activities. With the military, two areas that helped to create a focus on the future were the introduction of the Horton Academy and the creation of a new MoD in 2002. The responsibility of the new MoD was to “formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate a strategic defence policy for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces that is effective and fostered within a framework of democratic governance” (Kabbah 2010: 285). In 2003, a Defence White Paper was published that outlined the new direction of the MoD, thereby seeking to provide the ministry with a long-term reform outlook.

With the police, the appointment of Keith Biddle with back-up from a Commonwealth Technical Team and resources from DFID jump-started long-term comprehensive reforms of the police (ibid.: 296). The new Policing Charter, with an objective of “creating a Police Service which will be a credit to the nation,”<sup>52</sup> led to the roll out of the LPPBs, seen widely as a major step forward for policing in the country. Despite these positive developments,

Sierra Leone's dependence on donor funding coupled with the limitations in capacity and political will in the government has hamstrung efforts to develop and implement long-range reform plans. The potential to undertake effective long-term activities will immensely depend on the priorities of the British government after 2016 when its current commitment to SSR in Sierra Leone ends. It is up to the GoSL to convince the British government of the need to prioritize SSR in the support to be provided to Sierra Leone after 2016.

### **Democratic Foundations**

*Indicator grade: B*

The SSR program in Sierra Leone was implemented with the aim of transforming the country's forces, which had traditionally posed a significant threat to democratic governance, subordinating them to democratic civilian control. The process was largely based on democratic principles, which infused the overall peace-building and democratic transition that the country was undertaking. However, the isolationist approach used by Kabbah undermined the democratic foundation of the process. Kabbah (2010, 284) appeared to be overwhelmed by foreign and local security advisers, as he stated in his autobiography: "I benefitted from the good counsel of qualified national and external advisers on security matters, sometimes too many and varied for my comfort. However, the prevailing circumstances demanded tough decisions." These tough decisions ended up isolating some individuals and institutions, which subsequently rendered some MDAs less effective than they could have been. Subsequently, institutions such as the ONS, CISU and MIA were unable to provide strategic advice on security and intelligence-related issues. The NSC became meaningless as Kabbah relied on a close circle of friends and trusted advisers for advice on security-related issues. This undermined the democratic foundation of the process as the state-established systems were not relied upon, thereby rendering them ineffective. Accordingly, the level of interest of key stakeholders in advancing the democratization of the security sector weakened as attentions turned to other post-war reconstruction priorities.

### **Context Specific**

*Indicator grade: C*

The SSR program was introduced in a volatile wartime context with the British and the GoSL faced with the immense challenge of taming and transforming a defence force that posed a significant threat to its people. Under substantial pressure, many early activities were initiated without thorough consideration or consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Activities were reactive measures that often did not benefit from thorough

assessments and mapping exercises. The assessments and mapping exercises that were conducted to inform programming were largely desk-based in nature and often prepared by experts from outside of the country. This hindered efforts of the core SSR stakeholders to contextualize the SSR model to the unique conditions on the ground in Sierra Leone. As a result, many SSR initiatives were ill-informed and ad hoc, based more on international policy templates and generic strategies than on-the-ground needs and realities. Compounding this disconnect was the fact that the process had limited engagement with local and non-state actors. Recent activities such as those undertaken by the ASJP, the UNDP and UNIPSIL appear to better reflect the Sierra Leone context and the needs of the key MDAs, but much time was lost.

## CONCLUSION

The inception phase of the SSR program in Sierra Leone was characterized by ad hoc arrangements (in terms of designing and implementing projects and programs) that were meant to stabilize the security sector in the midst of an ongoing conflict. This severely limited the prospects for a holistic and inclusive approach to SSR. However, with the declaration of the end of the conflict in 2002, a more structured and effective approach was employed, which saw several MDAs benefitting from the reforms. The key institutions targeted by the SSR process were the military, the police, the ONS and CISU. A new MoD was established with support from the UK's IMATT, which provided technical support to both the military and the police. Alongside this, the structures of both the military and the police were revamped to give both bodies a more democratic character. In essence, the SSR was effective but lacked a holistic approach as some key actors such as the Prisons Service and the Sierra Leone Fire Force received very limited attention as compared to the military and the police. Some MDAs with oversight responsibility such as the MIA actually lost authority vis-à-vis the institutions they were mandated to oversee. This fostered corrosive tension between the main security institutions and their oversight bodies that persists to this day.

The atrocities committed by the military during the conflict and consequent lack of trust between the security sector actors and the general public generated the political will needed for the reform process. Thus, from 1996 to 2003, both the GoSL and its international partners (principally the British) saw SSR, working hand-in-hand with the DDR process, as one of the most significant components of the postwar transition process. However, this indispensable political will dwindled over time, as Sierra Leone gradually enjoyed greater stability and the attention of the government shifted to other areas.

The SSR process was faced with significant challenges throughout, including a postwar economy and government budget that was driven by donor funding, thereby creating

heavy dependence on donors. This aid dependence hindered the ability of the government to devise and lead SSR-related activities. Other challenges to the process included weak capacity in government institutions and badly damaged or non-existent infrastructure. Corruption, abuse of power and politicization in the security sector also posed a substantial threat to the SSR process, with some government officials and politicians expressing concern that state security organs such as the ONS were being employed to advance the political interests of powerful state actors.

The emergence of a second generation SSR approach in Sierra Leone can be detected, in the form of more people-centred initiatives that have better engaged civil society actors. A good example of this is the community security and LNP approach employed by the SSR process. The new Security Sector Strategy (2013-2022) takes a more pragmatic, human security-centred approach, rooted to the realization that emerging threats such as drug trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, terrorism, cybercrime, piracy and other forms of transnational organized crime can only be successfully tackled with the involvement of all stakeholders in the country. The most profound obstacle to the rollout of this more holistic and inclusive strategy is limited funds.

SSR in Sierra Leone was and continues to be confronted with immense challenges (as indicated above) that countries facing similar conditions can learn from. The shift from a first to second generation SSR approach and mindset is ongoing, and presents a massive opportunity to strengthen the human security and access to justice enjoyed by Sierra Leoneans.

## NOTES

1. The Sierra Leone's People's Party (SLPP) lost to the All Peoples Congress (APC) with Siaka Probyn Stevens emerging as the prime minister of Sierra Leone. A coup d'état was staged by the military during the inauguration ceremony of Siaka Probyn Stevens.
2. Author interview with Dr. Henry Mbawa, coordinator of the Justice Sector Coordination Office (JSCO), Freetown, February 12, 2015.
3. Kamajors were civil militias made up of traditional hunters from the South-Eastern parts of the country.
4. See: <http://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/disband-military-sierra-leone-president-urges>.
5. See the Lomé Peace Agreement signed on July 7, 1999 between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. See: <http://peacemaker.un.org/sierraleone-lome-agreement99>.
6. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone consisted of 17,000 military and civilian personnel, thereby making it the largest UN peacekeeping mission at that time.
7. The soldiers were referred to as Sobels, which means soldiers during the day and rebels at night. This nomenclature was adopted due to the way the military conducted itself during the conflict.
8. See also Jackson and Albrecht (2010: 64–66).
9. Also see DFID 2007: 5
10. It should be noted that CISU is the unit responsible for external and internal intelligence that have to do with threats to national security. However, CISU is part of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which is chaired by the head of the ONS who is the national security coordinator.
11. Author interview in Freetown, February 10, 2015.
12. Author interview conducted in Freetown, February 10, 2015. The initial gains of the SSR process within the police provided it with the national and international credibility required to ensure its participation in a peacekeeping mission in Haiti in 2004.
13. The LPPBs are formed at the district level with the local unit commander (LUC), the chief and other community members constituting it. The board members (with the exception of the chief and the LUC) are nominated and voted into the board by community members. Below the LPPBs are the Community Police Partnership Committees and the Area Policing Partnership Committees, which operate at the lower level.
14. It should be noted that the LPPB is part of the local structure of the police while the PROSEC, DISEC and CHISEC are part of the decentralized national security structures. However, they coordinate and collaborate as they work on similar issues like early warning and crime prevention in local communities.
15. Author interview with a senior military officer in Freetown, February 11, 2015.
16. Author interview with Dr. Henry Mbawa, coordinator of the JSCO, Freetown, February 12, 2015.
17. Similar challenges are faced with the present government, according to an interviewee (interview conducted in Freetown on April 3, 2015) – NSC has not met for over a year and there are crucial policies that need to be endorsed by the NSC, which include the National Disaster Policy, Military Aid to Civilian Authority, Counter-Terrorism and Implementation Plan, National Threat Assessment Policy and the National Security Policy and Strategy. After a year, a meeting was scheduled for March 2015 but has been postponed indefinitely.
18. Author interview with a senior ONS official, Freetown, April 13, 2015.
19. Author interview with Mohamed Barrie, now the grants administrator of ASJP in Makeni, March 23, 2015.
20. Author interview conducted in Freetown, April 1, 2015.
21. Author interview with Olusegun Victor Garber, the deputy security sector advisor, ASJP in Freetown, March 11, 2015.
22. Ibid.

23. Author interview with a senior ONS official in Freetown, March 12, 2015.
24. The Bumbuna shootings of 2012 and the Koidu Holdings shooting of 2007 and 2012 were related to conflicts between mining companies and local communities during which the police allegedly resorted to violence while trying to disperse demonstrators.
25. 2007 and 2012 were election years and in 2014, the military was called in to support the fight against the EVD, which broke out in the Mano River Basin.
26. In August 2013, some soldiers were arrested at the Teko Barracks in Makeni in relation to an alleged coup plot but were later released by a military court.
27. A senior correctional service official stated that each December and during the rainy season (May to October), when the crime rate tends to rise, the Pademba Road Prisons usually have more than 2,000 inmates.
28. Author interview conducted in Freetown, March 13, 2015.
29. Interview conducted in Freetown, March 17, 2015.
30. A state counsel at the Law Officers Department earns Le 3,234,851.00, which is less than \$650 a month, while a private practitioner earns several times more than that in a month.
31. See the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.
32. The MIA, which is the oversight ministry, is the only institution with a reduced budget. When interviewed, officials of the ministry could not provide answers as to why this happened.
33. An airplane with 600kg of cocaine flew into Sierra Leone from Venezuela, landed in Freetown on July 13, 2008 and was apprehended by the GoSL. Investigations revealed that Sierra Leone was used as a trafficking point for drug cartels. Several Sierra Leoneans and other nationals were arrested and put on trial. However, it was realized that there was no existing law on drug-related offences and other transnational organized crimes. The government, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, passed stringent laws, which made it possible for drug offence convictions to carry a mandatory sentence. See <http://afrol.com/articles/29930>.
34. Author interview conducted in Freetown, March 4, 2015.
35. See: <http://tisierraleone.org/priorities.html>.
36. See the findings from the Afrobarometer report on police corruption in Africa (Wambua, 2015).
37. Author interview with Olushegu Garber, ASJP's deputy security sector advisor, Freetown, July 27, 2015.
38. Author interview conducted in Kenema, March 19, 2015.
39. Author interview conducted in Freetown, March 25, 2015.
40. Author interview with Alice Lahai, the voice and accountability advisor of ASJP, Freetown, February 10, 2015.
41. See: <http://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/disband-military-sierra-leone-president-urges>.
42. Author interview conducted in Freetown, March 3, 2015.
43. With the outbreak of the EVD, a significant percentage of that fund was used to provide temporary holding centres for prisoners at the former facility of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown and to also provide anti-Ebola materials and training to the police and military.
44. Author interview with Dr. Henry Mbawa, coordinator of the JSCO, Freetown, February 12, 2015.
45. Based on an interview with an official of the MIA, Freetown, March 16, 2015.
46. Identity withheld as requested. Interview conducted in Freetown on April 14, 2015.
47. Author interview with Olushegu Victor Garber, deputy security sector advisor of the ASJP, Freetown, February 13, 2015.
48. Ibid.

49. Interview conducted in Bo, February 11, 2015.
50. Interview conducted in Freetown, March 18, 2015.
51. Interview conducted in Freetown, March 13, 2015.
52. See the Policing Charter of 1998.

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## ANNEX I - EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation framework applied to the four case studies for this project - Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste - comprises 11 indicators that mirror the core SSR norms and principles. Taken together these SSR norms and principles provide a good lens to assess the efficacy of SSR programming, and thus form the backbone of the methodology for this project. While it may be difficult to determine with any precision the short-, medium-, and long-term impacts of SSR programming on local security, development, and political conditions given the range of other variables at play, it is possible to assess the extent to which reform processes have adhered to the core norms and principles of the SSR model.

Based on their field research, the case study researchers were tasked to assign a letter grade (A, B, C, D) for each SSR indicator, with an 'A' grade representing the most effective possible application of the core SSR norm/principle in the country and the 'D' grade signifying the worst. This annex details the criteria that informed the grading for each of the eleven SSR indicators.

### 1. Local Ownership

A - SSR process was fully designed and led by local stakeholders with state and non-state engagement. There is a clear consensus on the goals and end state of the process among domestic stakeholders. External donors limited to a supporting role.

B - Local ownership and leadership of the process was limited, with the bulk of local stakeholders buying into an externally designed and led process across much of the sector. Non-state engagement is confined to a narrow set of issues.

C - Little state engagement in the SSR process altogether. State involvement centers on a small coterie of reformist leaders (primarily Western oriented) supporting an externally designed and driven reform agenda. Very limited engagement of non-state actors.

D - An entirely externally designed and driven, top-down reform process with little local legitimacy. Local capacity or will to engage in the process is practically non-existent

### 2. Civil Society Engagement

A - Broad-based grouping of civil society actors actively engaged as a full partner/stakeholder in the planning, implementation and oversight of every aspect of the SSR agenda.

B - Diverse set of civil society actors involved in the SSR process, but it is limited to

particular issues and institutions. Civil society not perceived as a full partner in the process. Rather, it has been engaged on an ad hoc basis to fulfill particular tasks such as monitoring and evaluation or project implementation.

C - Limited outreach to narrow grouping of civil society actors in the form of information sharing, not planning, implementation or oversight. Noticeable hostility among government actors toward a more concerted civil society role in SSR. Civil society engaged only peripherally by external donors.

D - No meaningful engagement with civil society actors as a part of SSR. They are viewed as a competitor for authority and external funds by most government stakeholders and largely ignored by external donors.

### **3. Political Will**

A - There is robust political consensus surrounding the SSR project within the executive and legislative branches of government, with external donors investing significant political capital to consolidate that consensus. SSR was included in all major peace agreement(s) and treaties.

B - Significant political will for SSR expressed by certain constituencies in government and across the state, with some donor investments of political capital. Few significant political spoilers have emerged.

C - SSR only supported by a narrow stratum of elites, and largely in rhetoric only, with powerful factions opposing the process. Donors investing limited political resources to advance the process. Several spoilers have sought to obstruct parts of the process.

D - No natural SSR constituency, with widespread distrust of a process seen as a form of external interference. Open political opposition to SSR activities with meager and ineffective donor political interventions.

### **4. Sustainability**

A - SSR process designed with explicit consideration of long-term economic sustainability. Direct attention provided to government budget capacity over the short, medium and long-term. The security sector is projected to be completely self-sufficient in the medium to long-term. Strong emphasis placed on building public finance management practices and procedures in the security sector.

B - Significant but not universal consideration provided to economic sustainability of the security sector. Some reform projects and institutions of the security sector more attentive

to sustainability concerns than others. Some external subsidies will be required in the medium to long-term for the continued development of the security sector. There has been modest engagement to build public finance management systems in the security sector institutions.

C - Marginal consideration given to economic sustainability issues. Concern is expressed in government and donor policy and public statements, but there are few concrete plans for translating policy into practice. The security sector projects will be significantly dependent, although not entirely so, on external subsidies for the medium to long-term. There has been little effort to develop public finance management capacity.

D - Almost no attention paid to issues of economic sustainability. Reforms being implemented are not sustainable on a financial basis. The security sector will be an external dependency for the foreseeable future. No effort to construct sound public finance management systems.

## 5. Coordination

A - Comprehensive and holistic coordination system established that engages donors, the state, and civil society actors. Involves the establishment of coordination bodies with oversight and enforcement capabilities.

B - Modest coordination systems established surrounding particular segments and actors of the security sector. Coordination structures have some capacity and influence, but lack teeth for enforcement.

C - Ad hoc approach to coordination dependent largely on opportunistic alliances and agreements between different constellations of like-minded actors within the security sector. Few if any institutional structures established.

D - Coordination almost totally absent, with various actors advancing their own interests with little consideration of broader coherence within the sector. There have been many instances of duplication, waste and clashing interests in the security sector.

## 6. Holistic

A - Strong linkages have been developed across the various pillars of the SSR process, reflected in unified strategies and mechanisms for joint assessments, project implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Communication lines between stakeholders in the various security sector pillars are strong. The SSR process has been advanced according to a coherent common vision for change.

B - The SSR strategy is holistic in character, but there are few practical mechanisms to facilitate cross-sectoral coherence in implementation. There is some cross-sector dialogue, but joined up implementation activity among the various security sector pillars is modest in scope. A common vision for the security sector is recognized across its various pillars but there is uneven adherence to it in practice.

C - The references to a holistic approach in SSR strategies, policies and plans are weak. Divisions and contradictory interests within the security sector and among external donors have obstructed constructive cross-sectoral dialogue and there is no joined-up implementation. A common vision for the security sector exists, but it is largely window dressing that is not taken seriously by domestic or external stakeholders.

D - The SSR process is entirely siloed and compartmentalized in policy and practice, with no connectivity between the various pillars of the process. There is very little communication between the various SSR pillars and no joined-up implementation. A common vision for the process was never articulated.

## **7. Human Security Orientation**

A - The SSR process in both planning and implementation has a clear people-centered vision, prioritizing human above regime security. The process has accorded equal emphasis to regime-centric and people-centric reform processes.

B - The main SSR stakeholders have articulated human security principles, but only modest headway has been made to mainstream those principles into concrete reform programming. Significant emphasis on people-centric reform programs, although the bulk of resources invested in conventional regime-centric initiatives.

C - Human security principles recognized in SSR policy and planning, but little influence on reforms, where regime-centric approaches are the norm. With the exception of a few ad hoc initiatives, the process is regime-centric and heavily statist in orientation.

D - The process is wholly regime-centric with human security considerations an afterthought at best.

## **8. Governance Focus**

A - Good governance promotion is a central pillar of the SSR process, receiving commensurate funding and support as security force train-and-equip programs. Robust, well-funded initiatives have been established to improve governance capacity (human and institutional) within the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the state.

B - Strong attention provided to good governance promotion in the security sector, but with some variance in impacts across institutions. Still, levels of funding provided to governance projects have been disproportionately low as compared to train and equip initiatives.

C - While rhetorical support has been provided to good governance initiatives, they are clearly a secondary priority for donors and the government. Improving governance across the security sector is largely perceived as a long-term objective rather than an immediate priority. The bulk of the resources for the SSR process are channeled to developing the operational capabilities of the security forces.

D - Good governance promotion is largely ignored in the SSR process, an afterthought in policy and practice. This is typically justified with references to security or political crises that militate against complex and disruptive governance programs. The SSR process has an overwhelmingly technical focus on improving the operational capabilities of the security forces.

## 9. Long-Term Outlook

A - Donor and government planning is clearly long-term, with programs and strategies projected at least a decade into the future. Funding and resource commitments are extremely durable. Planning takes into account short, medium, long-term time horizons.

B - Long-term ramifications of SSR programming are considered, but most initiatives are short to medium-term in focus and duration, projecting five years into the future. Donor resourcing is perceived as reliable but no guarantees of protracted engagement exist.

C - SSR outlook is predominantly short-term, with planning and programming cycles typically 1-2 years in duration. Stakeholders aspire to long-term approaches, but these rarely materialize, principally due to adverse conditions on the ground. Donor funding is fragile and prone to cuts.

D - SSR programming and donor funding is entirely reactive and short-term. No long-term planning, and donor funding commitments are tenuous.

## 10. Democratic Foundations

A - Core democratic principles, including accountability, transparency and respect for human rights, are mainstreamed throughout the SSR agenda and unconditionally embraced by all major stakeholders. The sector has effectively been subordinated to democratic civilian control and is seen as a vanguard of the democratic transition.

B - The SSR process has a strong foundation in democratic principles, as reflected in planning and policy documents, but these principles have been unevenly applied in SSR programming. The sector has largely been placed under democratic civilian control although some deficits exist.

C - Democratic principles are observed on a selective and opportunistic basis by stakeholders and reformers, an outgrowth of a mixed commitment to those principles. Many aspects of the SSR agenda could be considered illiberal and undemocratic. Democratic civilian control of the security sector is largely hollow, with security sector actors wielding significant independent power.

D - Democratic principles of SSR are observed in rhetoric only, with little to no demonstrable effort to mainstream them in practice. Illiberal practices are widespread in the security sector with few remedies being considered. Violations of fundamental rights are commonplace. Security sector actors are not beholden to democratic civilian authority and have the power to undermine the civilian government at will.

## 11. Context Specific

A - Strong efforts have been made to tailor SSR programming to the local context, based on robust initiatives to assess and map the security sector. Attention has been paid to local culture, historical tradition and political dynamics in programming, as well as engagement with a plurality of local actors, and security/justice traditions (including non-state actors).

B - A concerted emphasis has been placed on contextualizing reforms, but the impact on programming has been piecemeal. Adequate assessments and mapping have been undertaken to inform planning and reform design, although with limited engagement of a broad cross-section of societal actors.

C - Limited efforts have been made to contextualize the SSR process. External actors demonstrate inconsistent desire to understand and engage local context. Assessment and mapping exercises were weak and had little influence on planning and programming. Little engagement with local non-state actors and traditions.

D - SSR processes and programs have been largely transplanted from other contexts with marginal adjustments for local conditions. No adequate assessments or mapping done to inform programming and societal actors outside of a narrow clique of elites within the state were largely ignored.

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