



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



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Security Sector Reform

Expected Council Action

The Security Council will hold an open debate on security sector reform (SSR) on 20 February. Slovakia holds the presidency and the debate will be chaired by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ján Kubiš.

SSR is a term which has evolved quite recently. It is now used by many observers to collectively describe a series of activities in which the Council has been involved in a piecemeal way over a number of years. These include processes aiming to improve:

- the security of a state and its people,
- the justice system, and
- the governance of security sector institutions.

The debate on 20 February will have the benefit of an impressive amount of preparatory work convened by Slovakia and various partner countries it has involved from outside the Council. This has resulted in reports from a series of workshops held in 2006 on this topic. In addition a concept paper has been prepared by the presidency. The Council has also agreed to convene an Arria formula meeting on SSR, facilitated by the UK Mission and scheduled for 16 February.

A presidential statement is the likely outcome. The Council is expected to use it to outline plans for future action. In addition the statement may declare a commitment to effective SSR as part of comprehensive and sustainable peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies. It may go further and suggest a working definition of SSR, state the principles on which it should be based and describe an appropriate role for the UN. A request to the Secretary-General to prepare a report on UN approaches to and lessons learned from its activities in SSR work is likely. This would open the way for subsequent proposals to develop policies on SSR implementation policies, frame the allocation of UN resources and establish a division of labour.

Key Facts

The debate comes at a time in which the Council is increasingly including matters relating to SSR in mandates. Sierra Leone and Burundi are two examples. SSR issues were addressed in Council resolutions related to these two countries, for example those which created the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB). Also, there were:

- Direct references to SSR in United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo's (MONUC) mandate renewal in October 2004 and reaffirmed in June 2006, and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire's (UNOCI) in November 2006 and January 2007 mandate renewals; and
- Other missions with mandates explicitly or implicitly referring to one or more SSR areas such as: United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK); United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH); United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS); and United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor Leste (UNMIT).

The contemporary prominence of SSR in the UN follows decades of Council and UN agencies involvement in SSR in practice if not in name. Supporting the reform of national security institutions, and civilian control, oversight and governance of the security sector have all been recognized in the past as part of the overall equation in helping to restore peace and security in a post-conflict situation. However, it is only in the last five years that the UN, researchers, states and other organisations have begun to utilise SSR as an organising term for those activities. This parallels the evolution of thought on peacekeeping and peacebuilding included in:

- The 2000 *Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations*;
- The 2004 *Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change*;
- The Secretary General's 2005 *In Larger Freedom* report;
- the 2005 *World Summit Outcome*; and
- The General Assembly and Security Council resolutions creating the Peace Building Commission (PBC).

The term *security sector* is now being used to describe institutions legitimately entitled to intervene in society, using force if necessary to protect citizens, uphold law and order and state institutions, and protect the borders of the state. In some cases especially in the aftermath of recent internal conflict peace agreements may allocate parallel legitimate roles in these areas also to some non-state security actors such as former rebel forces or militias. There is increasing recognition that solutions to complex security sector problems must also involve the promotion of the rule of law and good governance; protect the security of individuals; uphold human rights and address a broader range of collective security actors and threats.

The growth in thinking about SSR as an integrated concept is also related to the growing recognition of the linkages between security and development.

Security sector issues and reform in this sector is at the heart of some of the most critical and complex challenges facing the international community in current peace operations, something recognised in the July 2005 presidential statement in which the Council stressed the importance of security sector reform as an essential element of any stabilisation process in post-conflict environments. However, these high expectations for an expanded UN role in SSR have been hampered by the absence of common understanding of the basic concepts and a lack of a comprehensive policy framework. Hence the current initiative.

Key Issues

The Council has in recent years exhibited a growing reluctance to take on new thematic issues. An important question for the Slovak initiative therefore, has been persuading Council colleagues that it is both important and advisable to grapple with the lack of a comprehensive policy on SSR that would guide both it and the overall work by the UN in this field. Other issues may include how assiduous the Council should be at this stage in seeking an agreed SSR definition and to whom it applies. Also what activities fall under the SSR umbrella, and the underlying normative principles, standards and means of assessment, will all be issues. By contrast supporters of the initiative will be stressing that this lack of clarity and consistency has until now undermined the implementation of Council SSR mandates in the field.

Terminology and Framework for UN's SSR Activities

The term itself is contested: some prefer “*system*” to “*sector*” to emphasise the inclusion of actors beyond the armed forces. In its 2005 report the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations called for SSR measures not to be confined solely to armed forces, but also to policing and the rule of law. Some prefer *transformation* over *reform* on the grounds that this better describes the profound changes required to alter the relations of power towards civil control and respect for the rule of law, and for establishing legitimacy with the population.

It is suggested that a narrow conception of SSR risks underplaying problems in practice of the emergence of private security (or non-state) entities. Also it is argued that the importance of civil society groups as core SSR actors and stakeholders can be underplayed. The following table demonstrates the range of actors identified in OECD/DAC terminology dealing with SSR.

Core security actors	Armed forces; police; gendarmeries; paramilitary forces; presidential guards, intelligence and security services (both military and civilian); coast guards; border guards; customs authorities; reserve or local security units (civil defence forces, national guards, militias)
Security management and oversight bodies	The Executive; national security advisory bodies; legislature and legislative select committees; ministries of defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs; customary and traditional authorities; financial management bodies (finance ministries, budget offices, financial audit and planning units); and civil society organisations (civil review boards and public complaints commissions)
Justice and law	Judiciary; justice ministries; prisons; criminal investigation and prosecution services; human rights commissions and ombudsmen; customary and traditional justice

enforcement institutions	systems
Non-statutory security forces	Liberation armies; guerrilla armies; private body-guard units; private security companies; political party militias

With respect to non-state actors one option is to place the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants within an SSR framework as has been the case in DRC under MONUC auspices. However, most current missions treat DDR as a separate discipline with DDR completion as a precondition for commencing a future SSR strategy.

Clarity of Mandates

An area affecting implementation of current Council resolutions is uncertainty arising from the overlap between SSR and “train-and-equip activities” designed to improve operational effectiveness. It is generally agreed that procuring and issuing weapons to soldiers and training them to shoot properly and perform counter-insurgency tactics is not SSR. However, improving the accountability and transparency of the system that acquired and issued the weapons, and the wider professionalism of soldiers including training in international humanitarian law and accountability is.

Similarly, SSR activities typically do not apply to military operations by UN formed police and military units operating under Rules of Engagement in UN peace enforcement operations. However, the distinction between tactical and operational tasks and SSR activities is sufficiently blurred that some mandates collapse them. UN police is tasked to restore and maintain public security as well as to train and conduct institutional development of national police forces and the responsible line ministries, for example in Timor Leste, as part of UNMIT.

MONUC is an example of one of the more ambitious SSR mandates. However, it must still implement it “within its capacity and without prejudice” to its primary peace and law enforcement mandate.

The tension lies between meeting short and long term mandate goals simultaneously, where UN forces that need ‘quick wins’ nonetheless must avoid establishing weak institutional processes that may fail in the future. For example, the formation of Joint Integrated Units in Sudan composed of formerly opposing combatants for the future national army must differentiate war-fighting and institution-building tasks, otherwise those units “risk becoming part of the problem, not part of the solution” according to a recent Secretary-General’s report.

A common UN SSR framework would help to provide mission leaders with clarity on how to reconcile these competing activities.

Principles and Standards

A common UN approach to the principles and standards by which an SSR activity should be conducted, and its performance evaluated, is another area that would be useful to missions in the field. The centrality of the rule of law underpinning all SSR activities suggests that the UN's rule of law and transitional justice framework initiated by a ministerial level Council debate in September 2003 and systematised in two Secretary-General's reports, in 2004 and 2006, could be used as a model and a starting point. Further, the reference to accountability and transparency in all components of SSR reflects a growing recognition that the security sector should be subject to the same basic management standards (for example finance) as any other public service.

Achieving this will require clarification of points of overlap and intersection between police, judicial and defence reform and DDR. This was recognised in March 2006, when the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping called on the Secretary-General to ensure SSR mandates are supported by "coherent operational strategies and early integrated mission planning together with other actors in the UN system". The Committee also called for "joint policy making on security sector reform best practices."

Underlying Problems

Today's missions provide lessons pointing to the imperative and challenge of commencing nationally-led SSR as early as possible. However the underlying difficulty is how to do this without placing unrealistic expectations on the capacity of national actors to reach political consensus and undertake reform.

- Peace operations face the reality that "security policies – both internal and external – are at the centre of power relations" as noted in the 2002 UNDP Human Development Report. The challenge of achieving and maintaining national consensus on a reform road map is acute. Failure to seek consensus on SSR goals runs the risk that actors will return to violent conflict.
- Such consensus must also be sought in a policy-setting and consultation environment dominated by local ownership. The Council and the General Assembly affirmed the primary responsibility of local authorities in setting peacebuilding strategies, and in "identifying their priorities and strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding, with a view to ensuring national ownership" when they established the PBC in December 2005.
- In the first phases of a peace operation, the good intentions of local ownership may be undone not only by the absence of consensus, but also the lack of national capacity and legitimate leadership to implement reforms. The very presence of UN peacekeepers usually signals previous breakdown of national institutions, trust, national capacity and good governance processes.

The lack of a UN framework for SSR has led to a diversity of explicit or implicit SSR mandates, ad hoc and inadequately-funded implementation and confusion about leadership and division of labour within the UN system. This must also be considered in the context of the explosive growth in UN complex peace keeping missions (see our

Special Research Report *Twenty Days in August* of 8 September 2006) which has occurred and which is straining the UN capacity to generate UN peace keeping resources, both civilian as well as military;

- There is a shortage of SSR capacity and expertise in and outside the UN. Within the UN, this problem is manifest at both headquarters and in missions. Implementing SSR mandates requires special expertise not commonly found amongst deployed UN staff. The Standing Police Capacity, endorsed by the World Summit in October 2005, will go some way to address the fact that demand for police personnel skilled in SSR “far outstrips current capacities”, according to a Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Partnerships in the UN family and with regional organisations and bilateral donors will be therefore essential to coordinate complementary skills and fill capacity gaps.
- Few international SSR efforts have access to long term funding. Donors have different approaches to funding security institutions and civilian oversight. Few have been willing or able to make the necessary long-term strategic investments. Likewise, peace operations are launched with shorter timeframes than required for security sector transformation, behavioural change and institutional reform.
- Locally and internationally there is a shortage of publicly available quality and specialist baseline analysis and needs assessment necessary to inform SSR policy-making. While different countries and missions may present common themes, they each have unique political, security, social and economic dimensions. The inherently political nature of SSR requires nuanced analyses, for example, of threats perceived by communities, potential national security strategies, and sustainable security architecture, civil control and oversight. Civil society and local communities need to be involved in such assessment.
- Successful SSR requires good coordination – a challenge given the multitude of national institutions involved. An SSR strategy in a post-conflict society by definition will have an extensive scale and scope. International and regional actors are numerous and each will have different expectations, capacities and methodologies. Some actors don’t wish to be coordinated. Experiences coordinating “integrated missions” within the UN-family underscore the complexity of achieving unity of Effort between national, regional and international actors. The PBC recognised this as central to peace consolidation in Burundi by posing in one of its conference room papers ([PBC/2/BUR/CRP.2](#)) the question about finding the most effective coordination mechanism for integrating SSR support.

There is an expectation the PBC will provide much needed practical level experience on how to coordinate implementation of key emerging issues like SSR. Matters of ‘general policy’ are expected to be discussed in the PBC’s Organisational Committee (see our Special Research Report on the PBC of 23 June 2006).

In its country-specific mode the PBC has already identified SSR as a critical priority issue and a key peacebuilding gap in both Sierra Leone and Burundi (see our January

2007 *Forecast*). The PBC discussions have not yet detailed specific SSR problems and remedies but most recently smaller working groups are being proposed under the PBC's country-specific mode, and work on SSR may be similarly organised, therefore providing focused attention and recommendations for action on SSR (see our *Update Report* of 25 January 2007).

Options

The most likely option is that the Council will issue a presidential statement that would reinforce its commitment to SSR as an integral component of peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies available to restore and secure sustainable peace. The statement may also recognise relevant experience in the UN system and the need to maximise and coordinate that expertise, and develop lessons learnt from it. Similar to the approach to rule of law and transitional justice between 2004 and 2006, the Secretary-General is likely to be asked for a report with recommendations for a coherent and comprehensive policy on SSR in the UN.

The debate may also indicate interest in and signal the intention of further work on:

- Defining SSR in conflict and post-conflict environments, including the actors involved, and what might and might not constitute SSR activities;
- Committing to establish a comprehensive UN policy framework for SSR;
- Including international standards, and subsequent guidelines to UN uniformed and civilian peacekeepers as well as UN Agency staff;
- Indicating this as a priority area that requires dedicated support structures and resources at both headquarters and in peace operations.

UN Documents

Security Council Resolutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S/RES/1739 (10 January 2007) gave UNOCI a prominent SSR role.• S/RES/1721 (1 November 2006) included SSR among areas of involvement by UNOCI.• S/RES/1719 (25 October 2006) created BINUB.• S/RES/1704 (25 August 2006) created UNMIT.• S/RES/1693 (30 June 2006) reaffirmed MONUC's mandate to support SSR.• S/RES/1645 (20 December 2005) established the Peace Building Commission.• S/RES/1620 (31 August 2005) created UNIOSIL.• S/RES/1590 (24 March 2005) created UNMIS.• S/RES/1565 (1 October 2004) made SSR part of MONUC's mandate.• S/RES/1542 (30 April 2004) created MINUSTAH.• S/RES/1509 (19 September 2003) created UNMIL.• S/RES/1244 (10 June 1999) created UNMIK.
Presidential Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S/PRST/2005/30 (12 July 2005) noted that SSR should be one of the priorities in the post-conflict environment.

Secretary-General's Reports and Letters

- S/2006/980 (14 December 2006) was the report *Uniting our strengths: Enhancing United Nations support for the rule of law*.
- A/60/640 (29 December 2005) was the report on *the Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, including reference to the role of the Standing Police Capacity in addressing the shortage of SSR capacity in police operations
- A/59/2005 (21 March 2005) was the *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All* report.
- A/59/608 (15 December 2004) was the report on *the Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, including recognition of the need for but lack of available capacity in SSR.
- A/59/565 (2 December 2004) was the Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change *A more secure world: our shared responsibility*.
- S/2004/616 (23 August 2004) was the report on *The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies*.
- A/55/305, S/2000/809 (21 August 2000) was the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, otherwise known as the Brahimi Report.

Other

- Slovakia's Presidency of the Security Council in February 2007: Maintenance of International Peace and Security – Role of the Security Council in Supporting Security Sector Reform (SSR) Concept paper prepared for the Security Council open debate.
- Report from the Roundtable co-organised by Slovakia and Canada, with the assistance of DCAF New York, 8 December 2006 *Multilateral and Regional Approaches to Security Sector Reform: Lessons for the Development of a UN SSR Concept*.
- Report from the Roundtable – New York, 3 November 2006
- Proceedings of the Expert Workshop *Developing a Security Sector Reform Concept for the United Nations* held in Bratislava, Slovakia on 7 July 2007.
- A/60/19 (22 March 2006) was the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group at the 2006 substantive session, and included reference to the need for DPKO to derive comprehensive peace building strategies and operational planning on SSR and engage in a process of joint policy-making on SSR best practices.
- A/Res/60/1 (24 October 2005) was the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document
- A/59/19 (1 March 2005) was the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group at the 2005 substantive session, noting the need for a wider interpretation of SSR activities.
- A/58/19 (26 April 2004) was the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group at the 2004 substantive session, noting the need for comprehensive SSR peace building strategies addressing deeper causes of conflict

Other Relevant Sources

- [Background Papers and Roundtable Reports](#) from the three Security Sector Reform workshops co-organised by Slovakia, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, and the Netherlands and Canada in June, November and December 2006
- Nicole Ball, Kayode Fayemi eds, [Security Sector Governance in Africa: A Handbook](#), (Lagos, Center for Democracy and Development, 2004)
- Department for International Development (2002a) [Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform](#), London
- Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), [Security System Reform and Governance](#) – Development Advisory Committee (DAC) Guidelines, 2005
- Edward Rees, External Study, '[Security Sector Reform and Peace Operations: "Improvisation and Confusion" from the Field,](#)' (New York, Peacekeeping and Best Practices Unit, Department of Peacekeeping, UN, March 2006)
- Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart eds, *Security sector reform and post-conflict peacebuilding*, (New York, United Nations University Press, 2005)
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) developed [SSR guidelines](#) in 2004. The [report](#) of the recent SSR workshop preceding the Council debate provides further information on AU, ECOWAS, EU, NATO and OSCE approaches to SSR.