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SSR:
Concepts and Linkages

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Aims of the session

- **Where do we do SSR?**
- **What is SSR?**
- **Key tasks**
- **Key challenges**

Broad SSR contexts

- Donors have adopted SSR as an instrument to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of development assistance. The UK is an international 'champion' in this field.
- SSR has strong practical relevance in the context of post-conflict reconstruction as a key issue in rebuilding 'failed' states.
- To date, though, SSR activities (including justice reforms) have taken place in around 20 African countries since 2000.
- However, around 60% of the total spend in this area between 2000-2005 went to Sierra Leone.

What do we mean by 'security'?

- Characterised by a widening and deepening of the idea of 'security' since the late 1990s, along with a shift from emphasis from national security to security of the individual, recognising also that individuals could need security from dysfunctional states.
- On the one hand, non-military security issues have become broadly accepted, including environmental, economic, societal and political factors. Note that these are not 'new' but have been 'securitised'.
- On the other, the nature of military security has changed, with terrorism, asymmetrical warfare, intra-state warfare, criminalisation and privatisation of conflict.

What is SSR?

- Security sector reform has emerged since the late 1990s as a key concept amongst security experts, development practitioners and democracy advocates.
- Given its current prominence (often overstated), it is perhaps slightly worrying that there isn't an overall acceptable definition.
- Loosely it has come to refer to the 'effective and efficient provision of state and human security within a framework of democratic governance' (Hanggi,2004)
- Obviously, there is much room for debate within these areas and SSR is a contested concept

How has SSR been defined?

- ‘...the transformation of security institutions so that they play an effective, legitimate and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens.’

Clingendael Institute, Netherlands

OECD/DAC Guidelines on Security System and Governance Reform

- (The security sector) ‘...includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework’

Link between poverty, justice and security

- 'security matters to the poor and other vulnerable groups, especially women and children, because bad policing, weak justice and penal systems and corrupt militaries mean that they suffer disproportionately from crime, insecurity and fear. They are consequently less likely to be able to access government services, invest in improving their own futures and escape from poverty.'
(OECD, 2005)

UK definition of SSR (2003)

‘In its simplest form, SSR addresses policy, legislative, structural and oversight issues set within recognised democratic norms and principles. The UK recognises security as a necessary and important function of the state and works from the premise that security should be provided in an appropriate, accountable and affordable way’

SSAJ

‘The objectives of safety, security and accessible justice strategies are:

- a) Make all people safe from violence and intimidation in their communities, homes, work and schools;**
- b) Make people’s property safe from theft and damage; and**
- c) Ensure that everyone has access to systems which dispense justice fairly, speedily and without discrimination.**

But the problem is...

- How do you put them both together?
- How do you identify the key actors?

- Who are we actually talking about in SSR?

Actors concerned with SSR/SSAJ

- **‘Bodies authorised to use force’;** intelligence and security services; civil management and oversight bodies; judicial and public security bodies (judiciary, prisons, legal systems, human rights commissions, traditional justice systems); non-state security bodies (private companies, political militias, liberation armies, civil defence forces, traditional militias); civil society organisations.

Perspectives	Definition A	Definition B	Definition C	Definition D	Focus
Narrow	Security forces	Groups with a mandate to wield instruments of violence	Core security actors	Organisations authorised to use force	State-centric
	Civilian management and oversight bodies	Institutions with a role in managing and monitoring	Security management and oversight bodies	Civil management and oversight bodies	
Broad		Judiciary, penal system, human rights ombudsmen	Justice and law enforcement institutions	Justice and law enforcement institutions	
			Non-statutory security forces	Non-state security forces	Human-centric
				Non-statutory civil society groups, media, etc.	

Key tasks of SSR 1

- Improving the capability and professionalism of security forces, including military and police
- Improving the capacity of judicial and penal systems
- Strengthening civilian management, review and evaluation of security services, including audit, review boards, etc.
- Promoting respect for human rights

Key tasks of SSR 2

- Strengthening the monitoring review of security services through civil society
- Strengthening transparency
- Demobilization and reintegration
- Reduction in the proliferation of small arms

Key challenges of SSR

- Local ownership required for sustainability
- Balance between external assistance and local ownership is difficult to manage – external donors are not always interested in long-term commitment, whereas local elites may not be interested in transparency, accountability and democracy
- Ownership by who? Who is legitimate and who decides?

Key challenges

- The lack of a clear, shared definition of SSR makes it difficult to give a clear overall statement of progress
- The ad hoc nature exacerbated by radically different contexts and abilities of recipient countries to carry out SSR
- Avoiding 'one size fits all' mentality

Key challenges

- Cross-border nature of much conflict mitigates against national strategies and may lead to problem displacement.
- Gender is under-represented in the security process.
- Capacity of all elements in the process, e.g. civil society may be underdeveloped.
- SSR programmes are long-term and messy.

Doing things 'holistically'

- 'Any SSR programme must be looked at holistically. No one actor or institution can conduct its activities independent of the other if a fully accountable and transparent security sector, under control of civil authorities, and adhering to the rule of law, is to be established'

UK SSR Policy Brief (2003)

Conclusion

- SSR involves a lot of politics. It has technical elements, but successful SSR must always exist within realistic political goals.
- Everyone wants co-ordination, but no-one wants to be co-ordinated.
- Local ownership is critical but difficult.
- If we have to include everything, does it become meaningless?