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SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONS

Factors for Success

KEVIN STEEVES, JAÏR VAN DER LIJN, ABEL GBALA, MARINA CAPARINI AND GRETCHEN BALDWIN

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Executive summary

In the light of the forthcoming transitions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as the sudden closure of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in December 2023, this study draws lessons from two past transition processes—in Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone—that can be applied to future multilateral peace operations that are at the start of their drawdown processes.

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI, 2004–2017) and the various iterations of UN operations in Sierra Leone (1999–2014) constitute two historical examples of UN missions involved in efforts at security sector reform (SSR). UNOCI and its related transitions are generally seen as a minimally successful SSR process, in which the mission's SSR activities were directly—and perhaps too quickly—transitioned to the government and the UN country team. In contrast, the Sierra Leone missions and related transitions are generally understood to have been more successful. SSR activities were transitioned initially to two successor UN special political missions and later to the Sierra Leonean government and the UN country team.

While there are significant differences between the Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire cases with regard to SSR and mission transitions, there are also many lessons to be drawn across contexts. This report analyses both cases on the basis of 11 factors for the success or failure of SSR transitions. While these factors should all be addressed at various points during the transition process, it is not realistic to expect that they will all be considered at the same level of importance or priority at all times. That said, if these factors are not considered in the early stages of SSR, it is unlikely that a transition will be fully successful. In addition, given limited resources and the political and other pressures exerted on UN operations, it is possible that a mission on its own will not be in a position to directly address certain factors during its mandate period. SSR is a long-term generational process that UN missions cannot be expected to complete. At best, they can put a sustainable process in motion. All 11 factors should therefore at least be considered and highlighted in evaluations and handovers.

Based on the 11 factors for success or failure, the study makes partly overlapping recommendations to be taken into consideration when supporting SSR in the context of planning and assisting the transition of UN peace operations.

1. *Context awareness of the UN in support of SSR*: Although contextual awareness is essential throughout the life of a mission, it should be harnessed during transitions in particular, with the aim of targeting activities that make national SSR policymaking and decision making more sustainable.

2. *Nature and timing of the UN transition mandate regarding the status of SSR*: The transition of SSR and other tasks should be based on an assessment of conditions on the ground, using consistent and objective benchmarks, and of the level of institutional integrity of the main security institutions, rather than political pressure to end the mandate as soon as possible.

3. *Inclusion of the principles of good governance in the SSR process*: To ensure the sustainability of SSR, the most salient principles of good governance should be identified for increased focus during the transition.

4. *Acknowledgement of multilevel governance and willingness to engage with non-state actors*: Non-state and hybrid actors need to be included,

supported and reformed in national SSR strategies. Transitions offer suitable contexts for reflecting and focusing on this.

5. *National and local political leadership and commitment to SSR*: 'National champions' are required to sustain SSR efforts after transition, and to ensure that initial commitment does not wane. It is important that missions help to develop local political leadership that understands the importance of the issue.
6. *Level of embeddedness of the SSR process in broader recovery frameworks*: Supporting the inclusion of SSR in a broader national recovery agenda strengthens transition activities as it supports an enabling environment and sustains long-term efforts on DDR/SSR and other activities.
7. *Civil society involvement in support of local ownership of SSR*: Civil society organizations are important partners in ensuring that SSR is sustained and that the security sector continues to be monitored after a mission is closed. They must be brought into the SSR process at its earliest stages. During transitions, efforts should be prioritized to institutionalize their role.
8. *Application of a gender-responsive SSR process*: For SSR to be sustainable, gender needs to be mainstreamed when transitioning SSR activities.
9. *Linkages and synergies between the SSR process and the DDR programme*: To sustain SSR gains after transition, DDR and reintegration in particular need to be prioritized during the transition and responses kept flexible within an overall SSR process that continues after the DDR programme and the mission mandate have ended.
10. *Involvement of external non-UN actors, donors and partners in the SSR process*: The continuing involvement of a lead SSR nation or other non-UN actor in support of national authorities can enhance the sustainability of the SSR activities of a UN peace operation following transition.
11. *Availability of sustainable funding for the SSR process*: Following transitions, international SSR support, for example, through a special political mission, helps to sustain the processes put in place by missions before their departure.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADDR	Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
AU	African Union
BBL	Brown Bag Lunch
CADHA	African Coordination for the Human Rights of the Armed Forces
CCI	Integrated Command Centre
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CISU	Central Intelligence and Security Unit
CNS	National Security Council
CSO	Civil society organization
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FN	Forces Nouvelles
FRCI	Les Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire
FSU	Family Support Unit
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
IDDRS	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards
IMATT	International Military Advice and Training Team
LPA	Lomé Peace Agreement
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPCI	Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	National Development Plan
NRC	National Recovery Committee
NRS	National Recovery Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONS	Office of National Security
OPF	One UN Programmatic Framework
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PER	Public expenditure review
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SFA	Security force assistance
SGBV	Sexual- and gender-based violence
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSPER	Security sector public expenditure review
SSR	Security sector reform

TST	Transition Support Team
UNAMID	United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
WPS	Women, peace and security

1. Introduction

JAÏR VAN DER LIJN AND GRETCHEN BALDWIN

Context

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI, 2004–2017) and the various iterations of UN operations in Sierra Leone (1999–2014) constitute two historical examples of UN missions involved in efforts at security sector reform (SSR). Best practices and areas for improvement can be extracted from both transition processes. UNOCI and its related transitions are generally seen as a minimally successful SSR process, in which the mission's SSR activities were directly—and perhaps too quickly—transitioned to the government and the UN country team. In contrast, the Sierra Leone missions and related transitions are generally understood to have been more successful. SSR activities were transitioned initially to two successor UN special political missions and later to the Sierra Leonean government and the UN country team.

In the light of the forthcoming transitions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as the sudden closure of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in December 2023, the study of past transition processes that involved SSR activities could be helpful for formulating future approaches.

Multilateral peace operations and security sector reform

Multilateral peace operations, both UN and non-UN, frequently undertake SSR-related activities. Although there is no universally accepted definition of SSR, the Security Council, in its second thematic resolution on the topic, acknowledged that, depending on the context, security sector reform will include 'defence, police, justice and corrections, disaster management and border, customs and immigration services, as well as, customary and traditional security providers as determined by each Member State'.[1] The resolution recognizes 'the centrality of security sector reform as a key element of peacekeeping and special political mission mandates . . . in support of political solutions'.[2] It views SSR as 'a key element of the political processes of States recovering from conflict and of the strengthening of the rule of law institutions'.[3] For this reason, it noted that 'the establishment of representative, effective and accountable security sector governance ensuring the security and justice needs of the entire population and development of sustainable capacities of national security institutions able to fulfil their responsibilities to protect all civilians is central to the transition . . . and to the gradual withdrawal and exit of peacekeeping operations and special political missions'.[4]

Fully successful SSR efforts are few and far between, however, and the number of cases considered successful has not increased in recent years. A general lack of improvement over time might, in other disciplines, indicate that the approach is 'unworkable in practice'.[5] Perhaps the most glaring recent example is the collapse of the Afghan security sector and the fall of the country to the Taliban after nearly two decades of international investment and reform efforts. This failure has raised questions about the

[1] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553, 3 Dec. 2020.
[2] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553 (note 1).
[3] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553 (note 1).
[4] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553 (note 1).
[5] Detzner, S., 'Modern post-conflict security sector reform in Africa: Patterns of success and failure', *African Security Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2017), p. 116.

way ahead. Even so, in pursuit of the 'critical ends' of SSR—'stable, self-governing states in which citizens enjoy basic security and justice services, do not export security problems (refugees, militants, drug-traffickers, etc.) and do not require continual aid and periodic intervention'—there is currently no viable alternative approach. SSR efforts will therefore continue.[6]

Exit strategies and transitions in multilateral peace operations

United Nations Security Council resolution 2553 indicates and existing research has found that factors such as local ownership and civil society involvement are critical to the success and sustainability of SSR efforts. The importance of transition strategies for peace operations involved in SSR has been emphasized by the failed exit strategy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led missions in Afghanistan.

The Netherlands put mission transitions on the agenda of the Security Council in 2000 when it organized a meeting on the topic, 'no exit without strategy'.[7] This was followed up by a report by the secretary-general.[8] The Security Council reiterated the importance of peacekeeping transitions in a resolution on the issue in 2021.[9]

Particularly from a cost-reduction perspective, multilateral peace operations have often been criticized for risking becoming 'missions without end'.[10] Some observers have stressed the importance of elite bargains. Others argue that deadlines are required.[11] In the early 1990s, elections served as an exit strategy for UN multidimensional peacekeeping operations, but these were later replaced by peacebuilding efforts.[12] Peacebuilding is much more complex and less deadline-oriented, however, which further complicates already challenging exit and transition processes.

A variety of studies have investigated transitioning processes and exit strategies in multilateral peace operations.[13] Case studies have focused on Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Darfur.[14] Thematic studies have examined the

[6] Detzner (note 5), p. 116.

[7] United Nations, Security Council, Fifty-fifth year, 4223rd meeting, S/PV.4223, 15 Nov. 2000.

[8] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'No exit without strategy: Security Council decision-making and the closure or transition of United Nations peacekeeping operations', S/2001/394, 20 Apr. 2001.

[9] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2594, 9 Sep. 2021.

[10] de Waal A., 'Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace', *International Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 1 (2009), pp. 99–113.

[11] de Waal (note 10); and Stambaugh, J., *Peacekeeping Exit Strategy: A Renaissance for the Deadline?* (Harvard University, 2001).

[12] Hirschmann, G., 'Peacebuilding in UN peacekeeping exit strategies: Organized hypocrisy and institutional reform', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2012), pp. 170–85.

[13] United States General Accounting Office (GAO), *UN Peacekeeping: Transition Strategies for Post-conflict Countries Lack Results-oriented Measures of Progress*, GAO-03-1071 (GAO: Washington, DC, 2003); Caplan, R., 'Devising exit strategies', *Survival*, vol. 54, no. 3 (2012), pp. 111–26; Caplan, R., *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012); Walton, O., Helpdesk Research Report, *UN Peace Support Mission Transitions* (Governance and Development Resource Centre: University of Birmingham, 2012); Forti, D. and Connolly, L., *Pivoting from Crisis to Development: Preparing for the Next Wave of UN Peace Operations Transitions* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2019); and UN Transitions Project, *UN Transitions: Sustaining Peace and Development Beyond Mission Withdrawal*, Thematic paper (UN Transitions Project: New York, 2020).

[14] Walton, O., Helpdesk Research Report, *UN Peace Support Mission Transition in Nepal* (Governance and Development Resource Centre: University of Birmingham, 2012); M'Cormack, F., Helpdesk Research Report, *UN Peace Support Mission Transition in Sierra Leone* (Governance and Development Resource Centre: University of Birmingham, 2012); Fraser, E., Helpdesk Research Report, *UN Peace Support Mission Transition in Haiti* (Governance and Development Resource Centre: University of Birmingham, 2012); Forti, D. and Connolly, L., *The Mission is Gone but the UN is Staying: Liberia's Peacekeeping Transition* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2018); Novosseloff, A., *Lessons Learned from the UN's Transition in Côte d'Ivoire* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2018); Di Razza, N., *Mission in Transition: Planning for the End of UN Peacekeeping in Haiti* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2018); Blyth, F., *Transitioning to National Forces in Somalia: More Than an Exit for AMISOM* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2019); Forti, D., *Navigating Crisis and Opportunity: The Peacekeeping Transition in Darfur* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2019); and Forti, D., *Walking a Tightrope: The Transition from UNAMID to UNITAMS in Sudan* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2021).

role of the Security Council, transitions and counterterrorism, human rights, the rule of law and the protection of civilians, the transitioning of political missions, collaboration with international financial institutions and organizational learning in exit strategies.[15]

Report structure and methodology

This report focuses specifically on the SSR aspects of exit strategies and transitions by multilateral peace operations. By examining two historical cases, it aims to draw lessons that can be applied to future multilateral peace operations that are at the start of their drawdown processes. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of relevant SSR theory and practice and develops a framework for analysis of the case studies based on 11 factors that contribute to the success or failure of the transition of SSR activities. In-depth case studies of Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire follow in chapters 3 and 4. Both case studies are based on the relevant literature and in-depth expert interviews. The Sierra Leone study is based on 16 semi-structured interviews conducted between June and November 2022 with former and current government officials, civil society representatives, national experts, and former and current UN officials (11 men, and five women). The Côte d'Ivoire study involved 27 semi-structured interviews conducted between September 2022 and January 2023 with a similar range of stakeholders (20 men and seven women), a written survey of seven male respondents and a focus group meeting with five parliamentarians in October 2022 (four men and one woman).

Both case study chapters provide background and context on the respective conflicts as relevant to SSR, identify the main considerations and the decisions taken during the transitions, and assess the way key factors in SSR were addressed by the different UN peace operations. Each ends with an assessment of the overall nature of the SSR and the UN transitions. The report ends with overarching conclusions on the transitioning of SSR activities in UN peace operations and makes a number of recommendations.

[15] Day, A., *UN Transitions: Improving Security Council Practice in Mission Settings* (UN University: New York, 2020); Boeke, S., *Combining Exit with Strategy: Transitioning from Short-term Military Interventions to a Long-term Counter-Terrorism Policy* (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism: The Hague, 2014); Foley, C. and Wani, I., *Evaluation of Transitions from Human Rights Components in UN Peace Operations to Other Types of Field Presences*, Final Report (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020); Cucinotta, G. and Jacquand, M., *Sustaining Peace Through Effective Transitions in Rule Of Law (RoL) Engagement: Overcoming Old Obstacles, Applying New Lenses* (UN System Staff College); Lilly, D., *Considering the Protection of Civilians During UN Peacekeeping Transitions* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2021); Sarfati, A., *Transitions From UN Special Political Missions to UN Country Teams* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2021); Arthur, P., *UN-IFI Cooperation during Peacekeeping Drawdowns: Opportunities for Mutual Support* (New York University: New York, 2021); and Hirschmann, G., 'Organizational learning in United Nations peacekeeping exit strategies', *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 47, no. 3 (2012), pp. 368–85.

2. Security sector reform and peace operation transitions: A literature and policy review

MARINA CAPARINI

I. Introduction

Peace operations have traditionally been deployed to countries that are emerging from armed conflict or, as seen more recently with peace operations with a stabilization mandate, are conflict-affected but not yet on a clear path to peace. Host states and societies must typically deal with high levels of insecurity and humanitarian need, weak state institutions that do not provide even basic services, traumatized populations and lingering tensions between political elites, communities and identity groups. In such contexts, multidimensional peace operations seek to support peacebuilding by a variety of means, such as supporting the peace process, advancing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, and strengthening the rule of law, state institutions and economic development.

Most peace operations eventually undergo a transition either to drawdown and eventual withdrawal, or to reconfiguration in the form of a follow-on mission. In the case of withdrawal, there is normally a handover of responsibilities to the host country and local partners, and the UN country team becomes the main UN presence in the country. In the best case scenarios, transition to mission exit occurs as a result of success in achieving a degree of sustained peace (e.g. the United Nations Mission in Liberia, UNMIL). Other transitions to an exit might be prompted by changing political and security conditions (the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur, UNAMID), however, while some exits are abrupt and reflect deteriorating conditions and worsening relations with the host state (e.g. the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, MINUSMA) or are a result of failure to achieve their objectives (the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, UNAMIR).

The transitions of UN missions to an exit or reconfiguration have attracted increased attention in recent years. A number of Security Council debates and secretary-general's reports on transitions have been accompanied by general guidance. The UN approach to transitions has not been highly systematized, however, due to contending views within the Security Council.[1] This chapter provides an overview of the evolution of UN thinking and guidance on peace operation transitions, as indicated primarily by Security Council discussions and reports issued by the secretary-general. It highlights the dominant themes and perceived challenges, as well as what should be done and how when peace operations are transitioning to an exit or reconfiguration. Wherever possible, this overview of the formal discourse on peace operation transitions flags and draws out the implications for security sector reform (SSR), as well as efforts to help to ensure that a country's security institutions serve its citizens, are accountable and are grounded in the rule of law.

To more fully explore how SSR relates to peace operation transitions, the chapter also provides a brief review of elements of successful SSR in conflict-affected or peacekeeping settings, drawing on UN documents and the wider academic and policy literature. It highlights 11 key themes with particular salience for the context of UN peace operation transitions. Together, the UN documentation on transitions and selected themes in the SSR literature suggest that the emphasis in SSR on institutional

[1] Day, A., *UN Transitions: Improving Security Council Practice in Mission Settings* (United Nations University: New York, 2020), p. 4.

development and the consolidation of state authority in a way that builds state legitimacy is central in contexts where peace operations have successfully achieved mandates and are consequently transitioning to an exit. They also suggest convergence on recognized good practice on SSR and peace operation transitions in areas such as integrated planning, stakeholder consultation and inclusive, gender-sensitive planning and implementation.

Section II traces the evolution of the UN approach to peace operation transitions. Section III discusses the United Nations and security sector reform. Section IV identifies 11 factors in the success or failure of SSR in transitions. Section V provides the conclusions.

II. Evolution of the UN approach to peace operation transitions

The end of the cold war and bipolar ideological rivalry led to shifts in armed conflict as proxy wars and regional conflicts were overtaken by an upsurge in internal armed conflicts and civil wars. The increased potential for multilateral cooperation through the Security Council led to a rapid growth in the number and scope of UN peace operations. Between 1989 and 1994, 20 new peace operations were established and the number of deployed peacekeepers rose from 11 000 to 75 000.[2] UN peace operations evolved from monitoring ceasefires to diverse missions undertaking complex peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks in formats that ranged from special political missions to transitional administrations with executive mandates and numerous large-footprint multidimensional missions. The latter's mandates encompassed a variety of tasks that included providing support for state institution building, human rights monitoring, the DDR of former combatants and, in several cases, holistic reform of the security sector.

Numerous complex missions have undergone a transition and exited to be replaced by new configurations of UN presence. The literature on transitions, however, has been sporadic. Objectives and achievements linked to SSR are sometimes flagged in UN documents on transitions. More frequently, SSR is indirectly referenced in discussions on the extension of state authority, institution building or strengthening the state's capacity to take full responsibility for security and consolidating the rule of law as military and police contingents drawdown in preparation for the withdrawal of peacekeeping missions.

An open debate on exit strategies for peacekeeping operations, 'no exit without strategy', was initiated in the Security Council in November 2000.[3] In 2001, at the request of the Security Council, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan published a report with the same title.[4] The report identified factors that the Security Council should consider when determining whether to launch, close or significantly adjust a UN peacekeeping operation. This document preceded the formal arrival of SSR on the UN policy agenda.[5] It referenced activities that UN entities had been involved in that foreshadowed the UN approach to SSR. For example, in cases of internal conflict, the report notes that the mandate of a peace operation is determined to have been completed when a sustainable peace has been achieved, when societal tensions and conflict are managed within an

[2] United Nations, United Nations peacekeeping, 'Our history', [n.d.].

[3] United Nations Security Council, 4223rd meeting, S/PV.4223, 15 Nov. 2000.

[4] United Nations Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, 'No exit without strategy: Security Council decision-making and the closure or transition of United Nations peacekeeping operations', S/2001/394, 20 Apr. 2001.

[5] SSR was institutionalized in the UN in 2007 through the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Alvarez, A., van Kempen, M. and Olafsdottir, H., 'The UN approach to SSR from a development perspective', eds A. Ebo and H. Haenggi, *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice* (Lit Verlag: Vienna, 2020), p. 50.

institutional framework and there is a peaceful settlement of disputes. In such settings, the mission's mandate should include peacebuilding elements such as institution-building and the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, which are flagged as critical for developing legitimate and broad-based institutions.[6] These inter-related elements were eventually included as core components of security sector reform.

Coordination was recognized as critical during peacekeeping handovers and exits, requiring close association between the peacekeeping operation and other UN system entities, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and with international financial institutions.[7] The report also drew attention to the risk of a 'funding gap' that could arise as the peacekeeping mission leaves, to be replaced by a follow-on presence.[8]

The next major exchange on transitions took place in 2010, when the Security Council met to discuss the transition and exit strategies of UN peacekeeping operations. At this point SSR, which was formally adopted by the UN in 2008 and underwent rapid institutionalization within the Secretariat and in certain UN missions (see Section III), featured prominently in a concept paper submitted by France, as playing a central role in the success of transition strategies. The paper noted obstacles to transitions, such as the difficulties faced by the mission in Timor-Leste in achieving the long-term objective of building the capacity of the security sector, lack of coordination among stakeholders in SSR in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the insufficient attention paid to the rule of law and security by national institutions that are critical to resolving disputes.

The paper urged that mandates should contain clear mentions of transition and exit strategies, involve better planning of objectives and key tasks, and provide for phased completion of the mission. It noted that a lack of adequate capacity and resources for SSR affects the ability to reduce or withdraw a peacekeeping mission, if there are insufficient police personnel to maintain order and train local police or insufficient capacity to support the rule of law or the judicial and prison sectors.[9]

Reflecting on the Security Council debate on exit strategies, however, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) Alan Doss argued that 'the problem was not so much exit as entry strategies'. Uncertainty about what the future might hold means that: '[I]f mandates were obliged to encompass an exit strategy upfront, we would probably never field another peacekeeping operation'.[10] Instead, the goals of a mission's security and political mandates should be achieved before drawdown is initiated, and benchmarks on the core goals of the mandate should be clearly distinguished from benchmarks tied to wider goals, such as poverty reduction, which might not be achievable during the course of the mission. Exit is not a linear process and transition strategies need to be flexible and opportunistic. Moreover, acknowledging the uncertainty of peacekeeping environments and that peace agreements do not always result in peace, Doss advised the Security Council that the planning of UN peacekeeping operations should start with an assessment of future risk and probability,

[6] United Nations Security Council, S/2001/394 (note 4), para. 10.

[7] United Nations Security Council, S/2001/394 (note 4), paras. 21 and 22.

[8] United Nations Security Council, S/2001/394 (note 4), para. 33.

[9] United Nations, Annex to the letter dated 3 Feb. 2010 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations to the Secretary-General, 'United Nations peacekeeping operations: Debate on transition and exit strategies', Concept Paper, S/2010/67.

[10] Doss, A., *A Peacekeeper in Africa: Learning from UN Interventions in Other People's Wars* (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, Colo., 2020), p. 301.

and of possible end-states: 'not the end of the State'.[11] Doss later elaborated that: '[t]o the extent that the success of a peacekeeping operation is intimately associated with the state of the state, it will always function in a zone of ambiguity. To manage that ambiguity, UN policymakers and mission managers need to look around corners, armed with flexibility and equipped with alternatives'.[12]

A 2013 UN policy document established key principles to govern all UN mission transition processes, but particularly multidimensional peace operations that are either drawing down to become smaller missions (peacekeeping or special political missions) or withdrawing to leave the exclusive presence of the UN country team. The key principles outlined for transition scenarios were: (*a*) early planning for transitions; (*b*) joint planning, coordination and management by all UN actors affected by a transition; (*c*) national ownership through high-level political engagement, as well as support from a broad range of national stakeholders; (*d*) national capacity development to enable sustainable handover of mission responsibilities to national partners; and (*e*) communications that carefully manage stakeholder expectations through clear and consistent messaging.[13]

Mission transitions were explicitly incorporated into the major UN initiative of sustaining peace, which emerged in 2016 as a core concept and shared task of the UN across all three pillars (peace and security, human rights and development) and at all stages of conflict.[14] The dual resolutions on sustaining peace and conflict prevention emphasize the importance of advice from the Peacebuilding Commission to informing mission mandates and transitions.[15] For example, a statement by the president of the Security Council underscored 'the importance of complementing efforts aimed at peacebuilding and sustaining peace undertaken by national and local authorities . . . as an important component of planning towards drawdown and exit, with a view to strengthening nationally led processes and capacities'.[16] He further acknowledged 'the importance of adequately resourcing the peacebuilding components of relevant United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions, including during mission transitions and drawdown, to support continuity and sustainability of peacebuilding activities', as well as the importance of the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission 'to assist with the longer-term perspective required for sustaining peace being reflected in the formation, review and drawdown of peacekeeping operations and special political missions mandates'.[17] He also noted that peacekeeping missions require 'an exit strategy that seeks to help lay the foundation for long term and sustainable peace; including through supporting national capacities, with the support, where appropriate, of bilateral, regional and international stakeholders, including international financial institutions'.[18]

Further development of the UN approach to mission transition and exit occurred at the practical level. In February 2019, the secretary-general issued a planning directive to guide consistent and coherent UN transition processes, which included instructions

[11] United Nations Security Council, 'Security Council commits itself to improving transition, exit strategies for United Nations peacekeeping operations', SC/9860, Press release, 12 Feb. 2010.

[12] Doss (note 10), p, 301.

[13] United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support Division for Evaluation, Policy and Training, Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal, p. 3. Policy endorsed by the Secretary-General on 4 Feb. 2013 following its endorsement by the Integration Steering Group.

[14] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282, 27 Apr. 2016; and United Nations General Assembly, 'Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture', A/RES/70/262, 12 May 2016.

[15] United Nations General Assembly (note 14), para. 9.

[16] United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2017/27, 21 Dec. 2017, p. 3.

[17] United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council (note 16), pp. 3–4.

[18] United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council (note 16), p. 5.

on 'early joint planning based on human rights and gender responsive analysis'.[19] The directive also included 'a description of the key operational, financing and staffing issues and mechanisms to resolve them' and a call to articulate jointly with government counterparts 'support requirements for sustaining peace'.[20] The directive still informs the current approach of the UN. It delineates between 'early transition planning', which takes place long before a mission starts preparing for drawdown and reconfiguration, and the 'active transition phase', which begins around 24 months before withdrawal or reconfiguration and involves detailed plans for disengagement by the peace operation, the completion of mandated tasks and mobilization of resources for peacebuilding activities.[21]

An opportunity to reflect on the challenges and experiences of mission transitions arose during the open debate on UN peacekeeping transitions held on 8 September 2021 under the Irish presidency of the Security Council.[22] UN Secretary-General António Guterres identified three overarching lessons on the transition process learned from past missions. First, political engagement must be sustained throughout the transition, and after the transition in collaboration with local and national governments to rebuild essential systems through the Peacebuilding Commission, UN country teams, regional offices and envoys. Second, the importance of national leadership and ownership of the transition, including not only the national government and institutions, but also civil society groups and partners. Third, the importance of sustainable transition financing, as the attention of donors and others shifts with the closure of a UN mission.[23]

The security sector was addressed by other participants in the debate. For example, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the former president of Liberia, where the UN had supported a relatively successful SSR process, noted that a key milestone in transition planning must be the 'institutional measure of reforms of national security and the rule of law', as the breakdown of such institutions can trigger new conflicts or reignite old ones. Consequently, transition planning should involve a measured drawdown of UN troops, but also ensure the ability of the government and the security sector to protect the entire population, especially civilians.[24]

The debate resulted in the adoption of the first stand-alone resolution on UN peacekeeping transitions, which set out a comprehensive definition of UN peace operation transitions as:

> a strategic process which builds towards a reconfiguration of the strategy, footprint, and capacity of the United Nations in a way that supports peacebuilding objectives and the development of a sustainable peace, in a manner that supports and reinforces national ownership, informed by the operational context and the national priorities and needs of the host State and its population, and that includes engagement with local community and civil society, and, where relevant, regional and sub-regional organisations, and other relevant stakeholders, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities.[25]

The resolution also recognized that reconfiguration of UN missions could result in increased risks for civilians, in particular women, youth, children and people with disabilities, and consequently underscored the need to enhance the state's capacity to protect its own citizens through SSR: '(I)n line with host State needs, strengthening

[19] See Ambassadorial-level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission, 'Effective support in UN Transition Contexts: 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture', 20 Feb. 2020.

[20] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Peacebuilding and sustaining peace', S/2020/773, 30 July 2020, para. 35.

[21] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Transitions in United Nations peace operations', S/2022/522, 29 June 2022, para. 6.

[22] United Nations Security Council, 8851st meeting, S/PV.8851, 8 Sep. 2021.

[23] United Nations Security Council, 8851st meeting, S/PV.8851, 8 Sep. 2021, pp. 2–3.

[24] United Nations Security Council, 8851st meeting, S/PV.8851, 8 Sep. 2021, p. 5.

[25] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2594, 9 Sep. 2021.

the capacity of the representative, responsive, accountable host State security sector and rule of law institutions, which are compliant with applicable international law, is critical for the development of a sustainable peace'. The resolution addressed the challenges the UN faces in delivering coherent support to peacebuilding and SSR in the host state linked to the involvement of multiple UN units and actors. The resolution called for strengthened 'coordination between UN police, justice and corrections activities, as well as between United Nations uniformed components and as appropriate, the relevant host State authorities, with a view to supporting States' ability to provide critical functions in these fields'. To this end, the resolution called for a review across peacekeeping missions of implementation of mandates to support the restoration and extension of legitimate state authority and SSR, to identify lessons for transition planning.[26]

In addition, joint strategies have been developed that contain measurable benchmarks agreed between the host government and the UN. For example, the 2020 DRC UN joint transition plan set out benchmarks, roles, responsibilities, risk assessments and mitigation strategies for transition. Mission tasks related to SSR that would help to 'create the conditions for a responsible exit' from one region, Ituri, included strengthening the rule of law, creating an environment conducive for the UN country team, NGOs and partners to engage in community-based reintegration efforts and institution-building, professionalizing the security services while strengthening public trust in them, supporting the civilian criminal justice system and land dispute resolution capacities, supporting local efforts to resolve intercommunity conflict and supporting a DDR process focused on community-based reintegration and violence reduction.[27]

A 2022 secretary-general's report on transitions in UN peace operations identifies various mechanisms that have provided support to transition processes, such as the United Nations Transitions Project, which brings together the Development Coordination Office, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations and the United Nations Development Programme, and makes several important points about SSR in transition processes. The report reiterates that national ownership must be built into planning processes for transition to withdrawal, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians, for which the host government has primary responsibility. The UN must engage with the host government to assist with the development, implementation and monitoring of national strategies and plans post-transition on the protection of civilians, child protection, the prevention of and responses to conflict-related sexual violence, human rights, the rule of law, access to justice, DDR and SSR.[28] The report again flags the importance of ensuring sufficient resources during transitions, and taking particular care to avoid a 'funding cliff'—the often drastic decrease in funding for peacebuilding activities in the wake of the departure of a peacekeeping operation. The report highlights the experience of the Haitian National Police, which received just 2.4 per cent of its planned $1.2 billion budget for 2017–21. The report emphasized that 'Increased funding towards the development of human rights and gender-responsive rule of law and security sector institutions, as well as civil society organizations, which take on a greater role in ensuring stability after mission departure, is a critical component of transitions'.[29] The World Bank in Liberia worked with the UN during the transition there to develop a public expenditure review

[26] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2594, 9 Sep. 2021, para. 7.

[27] United Nations Security Council, Letter dated 26 Oct. 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2020/1041, 27 Oct. 2020, Annex, para. 38.

[28] United Nations, S/2022/522 (note 21), para. 24.

[29] United Nations, S/2022/522 (note 21), para. 30.

of the security sector as a successful tool for helping to avoid funding cliffs. A similar tool is being developed in the DRC.[30]

The secretary-general's report on transitions in UN peace operations also comments on staffing challenges in the context of transitions. It notes that SSR faces particular challenges as it is a task that becomes more important later in the lifecycle of the mission, when there is little political will to allocate adequate resources to it.[31]

Finally, sustaining peace is a critical concept for transition and is closely related to achieving effective and sustainable SSR. The secretary-general's report acknowledges the central role of achieving 'progress in the development of inclusive, representative, responsive and accountable security sector governance at all levels' in enhancing the rule of law and the protection of civilians. The report warns that recent transitions have raised concerns about the capacity of national security institutions to carry out their responsibilities in a way that respects human rights and is gender-responsive. Furthermore, the indicators used to measure security sector capacity 'focus on quantity rather than quality', while the indicators for measuring the extension of state authority 'are often not representative of actual security governance arrangements on the ground or potential risks to civilians'.[32] Since the UN will be unable to provide physical protection to civilians once military and police contingents are withdrawn, it is essential that sustainable SSR which enables security institutions to protect civilians is already under way before the departure of the uniformed components, and that 'the timing of transitions be informed by objective assessments of [the] presence, capability, internal management and civilian oversight capacities of security sector institutions'.[33]

This section has highlighted consistent themes in successive UN documents pertaining to peacekeeping mission transitions, notably the political nature of peacebuilding and peace operations, which require consistent political engagement; the need for national ownership of transition, where 'national' encompasses not only political leadership but also civil society; and the need for adequate and sustained financing throughout the transition process. Coordination challenges, particularly among UN actors, are also a running concern in the transitions policy literature. The specific importance of SSR is also recognized, and that failure to achieve effective and accountable security institutions with the capacity to fulfil their core public safety and national security mandates impairs mission drawdown and the handover of responsibilities to host states, fundamentally undermining the prospects for a sustainable peace.

III. The United Nations and security sector reform

In view of the relevance of SSR to successful peacebuilding and the departure of multidimensional peace operations from a host state, this section outlines the evolution of the UN's approach to SSR and discusses the challenges it has encountered. While the concept of SSR was first articulated in the development sphere in 1999, UN policy on and its approach to SSR have evolved through a variety of UN reports, resolutions and guidance documents since 2007. SSR emerged as a core area of support to the host state for UN multidimensional peace operations, beginning with brief statements by the president of the Security Council in 2007, 2008 and 2011.[34] More substantial discussion

[30] United Nations, S/2022/522 (note 21), para. 31.
[31] United Nations, S/2022/522 (note 21), para. 39.
[32] United Nations, S/2022/522 (note 21), para. 45.
[33] United Nations, S/2022/522 (note 21), para. 45.
[34] United Nations Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2007/3, 21 Feb. 2007; United Nations Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2008/14, 12 May 2008; and United Nations Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2011/19, 12 Oct. 2011.

of SSR is found in three reports by the secretary-general that have been published to date, reflecting the growing institutionalization of SSR within the UN and refining of its understanding of the requirements and constraints of SSR programming. A 2008 report noted that while the UN had been involved in assisting national actors to enhance or re-establish security for many years, it had until that point largely pursued SSR as an ad hoc undertaking and been hampered by weak capacity and insufficient resources to deliver effective support to national authorities. The report identified priorities for the development of a holistic and coherent UN approach to SSR: the development of relevant policies and guidelines, strengthening strategic advisory and specialist capacities, strengthening field capacity, assessing gaps and resource requirements, designating lead entities, enhancing the coordination and delivery of support, building partnerships and establishing an inter-agency SSR support unit.[35]

A second report, published in 2013, reviewed UN support to SSR and made recommendations on how to strengthen its 'comprehensive' approach of coordinating support to the political and developmental dimensions. It identified the importance of linking SSR to broader political reforms, such as national dialogues, and of reconciliation or transitional justice initiatives. National ownership and a context-specific approach were dominant themes. This involved the need for an inclusive national dialogue to derive a broad-based national definition of or vision for SSR, the allocation of adequate national resources to ensure the sustainability and viability of reforms, ensuring that the mandates of peace operations and special political missions are better tailored to specific national contexts and challenges, and work to address people's immediate security needs. A further recommendation was to work with regional and subregional organizations to support the development of SSR frameworks that build on regional perspectives and take transnational security issues into account. Finally, several recommendations focused on how to enhance the role of mechanisms such as the Peacebuilding Commission, the Group of Friends of SSR, the SSR roster and the SSR Task Force in supporting SSR.[36]

The first Security Council resolution on SSR recognized it as 'critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict'.[37] The Security Council instructed the secretary-general to strengthen the UN's comprehensive approach to SSR, develop further guidance on SSR for UN officials and senior leadership, encourage SRSGs and envoys to take the strategic value of SSR into account in their work, report regularly on the progress of SSR, develop integrated technical guidance notes, training modules and other tools to promote coherent and coordinated support to SSR and ensure that assistance to SSR takes account of arms embargoes and exemptions to embargoes.[38]

The most recent Security Council resolution on SSR refines the points made in the 2014 resolution by suggesting the drafting of additional guidance on gender mainstreaming and encouraging the secretary-general's special representatives, special envoys and resident coordinators to advance 'operational and structural prevention initiatives'. It also suggests country-specific benchmarks for assessing the effectiveness of UN assistance.[39] In a context where several large-footprint missions were drawing down towards eventual closure, the 2020 resolution requested the secretary-general

[35] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Security peace and development: The role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform', A/62/659-S/2008/39, 23 Jan. 2008.

[36] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Security states and societies: Strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform', A/67/970-S/2013/480, 13 Aug. 2013, para. 61 (a–o).

[37] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2151, 28 Apr. 2014.

[38] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2151, 28 Apr. 2014, para. 16 (a–f).

[39] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553, 3 Dec. 2020, para. 20 (b), (c), (e).

to provide 'timely and coordinated support to the transition of SSR-related activities' to the UN country team and other partners, to incorporate SSR and security sector governance into strategic partnerships with the African Union and others, and to strengthen the capacity of the senior leadership in UN country teams to absorb SSR activities following drawdown and the departure of UN missions.[40]

The third secretary-general's report on SSR, published in early 2022, highlights lessons learned from UN and international support for SSR and makes 18 specific recommendations on improving SSR support. With regard to SSR in transitions from peace operations and special political missions to UN country teams, the report emphasizes sound national and international funding of SSR aligned with the principles of transparency and accountability.[41] The 2022 report also discusses meaningful participation by women in the security sector and encourages the UN to continue to strengthen its role in gender-responsive SSR.[42]

IV. Factors in the success or failure of SSR and its impact on mission transitions

Picking up on the themes in the UN literature, this section offers insights from the wider scholarly and policy literature on 11 overlapping requirements for successful SSR:

1. Context awareness of the UN in support of SSR
2. Nature and timing of the UN transition mandate regarding the status of SSR
3. Inclusion of the principles of good governance in the SSR process
4. Acknowledgement of multilevel governance and willingness to engage with non-state actors
5. National and local political leadership and commitment to SSR
6. Level of embeddedness of the SSR process in broader recovery frameworks
7. Civil society involvement in support of local ownership of SSR
8. Application of a gender-responsive SSR process
9. Linkages and synergies between the SSR process and the DDR programme
10. Involvement of external non-UN actors, donors and partners in the SSR process
11. Availability of sustainable funding for the SSR process.

1. Context awareness of the UN in support of SSR

A key precept of SSR programming is that it must be contextually rooted, that is, based on a thorough understanding of the political, economic and social environment in which security and justice institutions and services exist, including the factors that might facilitate or impede efforts to make them more accountable, inclusive and effective.[43] The UN has acknowledged that SSR should be 'tailored to specific country and

[40] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553, 3 Dec. 2020, para. 20 (g), (h), (i), (j).

[41] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Strengthening security sector reform', S/2022/280, 15 Mar. 2022, 'Summary'.

[42] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41).

[43] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Security System Reform: What Have We Learned? Results and Trends from the Publication and Dissemination of the OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform* (OECD: Paris, 2009), p. 4.

regional contexts'.[44] For external actors seeking to assist SSR, developing a 'granular understanding' of the political dynamics of local security actors and institutions is essential in order to identify how influence on reform is exerted and with what effects.[45]

Early discussions on the development of a UN approach to SSR distinguished between types of reform contexts, from countries undergoing long-term democratization and development to countries in transition, countries in conflict or emerging from conflict and post-conflict countries.[46] Similarly, the UN's Integrated Guidance Notes on SSR delineate different, although possibly overlapping, contexts that affect the rationale for UN support to democratic governance of the security sector. For example, in the context of peace processes, the guidance suggests that a peace process is a potential entry point for achieving national commitments to SSR based on a broad national vision of what the future security sector should look like. In contrast, in peacekeeping contexts and during peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, the UN should support initiatives to improve the delivery of basic safety and security to the population and build national capacity in democratic governance of the security sector.[47]

On peacekeeping transitions, UN guidance sets out the context of 'longer-term peace building' where 'UN support should enhance the institutional and human capacity of national counterparts to govern the security sector in line with international norms, standards and best practices', ensuring that perpetrators of human rights violations do not remain in the security sector, and ensuring opportunities for effective participation in the security sector by women and underrepresented groups.[48] Finally, in a 'development context', the UN guidance note identifies the importance of adherence to norms and practices of democratic governance to ensuring that the security sector is linked to developmental priorities. Specifically, effective and transparent management, and civilian oversight of the security sector are beneficial for human security, as well as the business environment and investment in the country.[49]

Despite widespread agreement on the need for contextual understanding in SSR programming, the field has been repeatedly criticized for its highly technocratic approaches that lack context specificity, particularly the local political context.[50] The rapid institutionalization of the SSR model in bilateral and multilateral peacebuilding assistance, including UN peace operations, has failed to overcome the 'conceptual–contextual divide', which has resulted in few outright success stories in conflict-affected contexts.[51]

[44] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and DCAF, Summary of workshop proceedings, *Developing a Security Sector Reform (SSR) Concept for the United Nations* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and DCAF: Bratislava and Geneva, 2006), p. 5.

[45] Denney, L. and Valters, C., *Evidence Synthesis: Security Sector Reform and Organisational Capacity Building* (UK Department for International Development: London, 2015), p. 47.

[46] DCAF, 'United Nations approaches to security sector reform', Background paper, *Developing a Security Sector Reform (SSR) Concept for the United Nations* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and DCAF: Bratislava and Geneva, 2006), p. 66.

[47] United Nations SSR Task Force, *Security Sector Reform: Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (United Nations: New York, 2012), p. 7.

[48] United Nations SSR Task Force (note 47), p. 93.

[49] United Nations SSR Task Force (note 47), p. 93.

[50] Peake, G., Scheye, E. and Hills, A. (eds), *Managing Insecurity: Field Experiences of Security Sector Reform* (Routledge: London and New York, 2007), pp. 251–52; Jackson, P. and Bakrania, S., 'Is the future of SSR non-linear?', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2018), pp. 11–30; Jackson, P., 'Peacebuilding initiatives in Africa', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2019); and Ortiz-Ayala, A., 'From liberal peace to positive peace: Security sector reform in deeply divided societies', eds K. Standish et al., *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace* (Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore, 2022), pp. 999–1029.

[51] Sedra, M., *Security Sector Reform in Conflict-affected Countries: The Evolution of a Model* (Routledge: Abingdon and New York, 2017), p. 1.

2. Nature and timing of the UN transition mandate regarding the status of SSR

A number of peacekeeping operations have drawn down and exited or been reconfigured in the past decade, sparking various UN studies and initiatives to identify lessons learned and best practice in transitions. A 2019 study notes that while missions have tended to focus mainly on drawing down uniformed components and handing over security-related tasks to the host state authorities, the civilian transition has been relatively neglected. This neglect is due in part to host governments' perceptions of 'opportunities to consolidate their own security services while potentially minimizing scrutiny over their progress on peacebuilding (or lack thereof)'.[52] Mandates have not sufficiently prepared for the civilian transition, while emphasizing transferring mission tasks to the UN country team, host state or other stakeholders as the end of the mission approaches. This undermines long-term planning and places considerable strain on missions and country teams.[53] The lesson learned is the importance of planning for transition from an early date and in an integrated manner.

Reflecting this lesson, a 2021 Security Council resolution on peacekeeping transitions instructs peace operations to engage in integrated planning and coordination on transitions at the earliest possible stage, and requested the secretary-general to plan for peace operation transitions and elaborate mission transition strategies.[54] The resolution pays particular attention to security- and justice-related activities, requesting the secretary-general to strengthen coordination between UN Police and justice and corrections activities, and between UN uniformed components and relevant state authorities to enhance the capacity of states to perform critical functions in such areas.[55] The resolution also requests 'a review across relevant peacekeeping missions of the implementation of mandates to support the restoration and extension of legitimate state authority and security sector reform with a view to identifying lessons learned for transition planning', as well as regular inclusion in reports on peacekeeping operations of 'information on the challenges, best practices, and lessons learned in implementing mandates to support the restoration and extension of legitimate state authority and security sector reform with a view to facilitating transition planning'.[56]

3. Inclusion of the principles of good governance in the SSR process

Successful SSR is closely associated with application of the principles of good governance to a state's security sector, including the idea that 'the security sector should be held to the same high standards of public service delivery as other public sector providers'.[57] Commonly accepted principles of good governance of the security sector include respect for human rights, gender equality and the rule of law, as well as the objective of achieving accountable, effective, inclusive and responsive security institutions.[58] SSR, including in peacekeeping contexts, is underscored by the 'idea of good governance of the security sector, which means effective and accountable security provision, management and oversight set within a framework of democratic civilian control'.[59]

[52] Forti, D. and Connolly, L., *Pivoting from Crisis to Development: Preparing for the Next Wave of UN Peace Operations Transitions* (International Peace Institute: New York, July 2019), p. 3.

[53] Forti and Connolly (note 52), p. 3.

[54] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2594, 9 Sep. 2021, paras 1–2.

[55] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2594, 9 Sep. 2021, para. 7.

[56] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2594, 9 Sep. 2021, para. 7.

[57] Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), *Security Sector Governance*, SSR Backgrounder Series (DCAF: Geneva, 2015).

[58] See e.g., OSCE, *Security Sector Governance and Reform: Guidelines for OSCE Staff* (OSCE: Vienna, 2022).

[59] Chappuis, F. and Gorur, A., 'Reconciling security sector reform and the protection of civilians in peacekeeping contexts', *Civilians in Conflict Issue Brief no. 3* (Jan. 2015), p. 8.

Good governance as reflected in the UN approach to SSR, however, is in some ways a limited approach. For example, corruption is a particularly pernicious problem afflicting many armed forces and security sectors. It has been a key driver of war economies, undermining SSR efforts in conflict-affected contexts such as Afghanistan.[60] Corruption in the armed forces is common in regions such as the Sahel, from paying bribes to succeed in application processes, to inflation of the number of soldiers through the use of 'ghost' solders or the skimming off of soldiers' salaries and allowances, the illicit diversion of resources in procurement and embezzlement of defence budgets, to predatory and non-predatory survival strategies among military personnel, especially the rank and file.[61] Peacekeeping policy has long lacked guidance and training on identifying corruption risks or concretely addressing corruption.[62] In the Sahel, one observer noted that while international partners have propounded good governance, transparency and effective oversight mechanisms in the security sector, these have been unsuccessful largely because of a failure to understand the way that access to security sector resources underpins informal power relations and social dynamics within the military and security institutions and more broadly in governance.[63]

Peacekeeping missions endorse and promote the principles of good governance and have flagged the risk of corruption in the security sector.[64] In practice, however, mediation, peacebuilding initiatives and SSR tend to focus on capacity-building in state institutions while avoiding the issue of state corruption.[65] UN peace operations are reliant on host state consent, which places them in a delicate position when it comes to addressing host state corruption. According to Transparency International, 'where the UN's role is designed to consolidate state authority, it can have the unintended consequences of sustaining kleptocratic government and entrenching the abuse of state power'.[66] Nonetheless, improving governance in such a way that benefits the wider population has been found to noticeably reduce the risk of a relapse into conflict.[67] Without good governance, accountability and peace are less likely and SSR achievements may unravel.

4. Acknowledgement of multilevel governance and willingness to engage with non-state actors

It has become increasingly evident that the original concept of SSR, based on a Weberian formal-legal state, is not a good fit with the reality of many fragile and conflict-affected settings. The concept in SSR that the state is the primary actor in security and justice in fragile and post-conflict states has been identified as a flawed assumption.[68] A consensus has gradually emerged among scholars that fragile or conflict-affected developing states are often hybrid, involving a complex mixture of formal state institutional structures and informal actors and dynamics that compete, collaborate or coexist,

[60] Sopko, J. F., *Corruption in Conflict: Lessons from the US Experience in Afghanistan* (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction: Arlington, VA: Sep. 2016).

[61] Bagayoko, N., 'Explaining the failure of internationally supported defence and security reforms in Sahelian states', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2022), pp. 243–69.

[62] Pyman, M. et al., *Corruption and Peacekeeping: Strengthening Peacekeeping in the United Nations* (Transparency International: London, 2013), p. 4.

[63] Bagayoko (note 61), pp. 243–69.

[64] See e.g., United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41), para. 44.

[65] Hopp-Nishanka, U., Rogers, J. and Humphreys, C., 'Breaking the vicious cycle: Entry points for anti-corruption in inclusive peace processes', Chr. Michelsen Institute and Berghof Foundation, 16 May 2022.

[66] Robinson, J. et al., *Corruption Risks and UN Peace Operations: Strengthening Accountability to Improve Effectiveness* (Transparency International, July 2019), p. 6.

[67] Hegre, H. and Mokleiv Nygard, H., 'Governance and conflict relapse', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 59, no 6 (2014).

[68] Baker, B. and Scheye, E., 'Multi-layered justice and security delivery in post-conflict and fragile states', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2007), p. 507.

which undermines efforts to implement reforms based on a formal-legal notion of the state.[69] The fragmentation of power in such contexts means that order and governance are a product of 'hybrid assemblages of state, private and grassroots institutions, with different degrees of coordination and friction'.[70]

Despite evidence of the poor fit between the normatively driven liberal peacebuilding agenda and the orthodox conception of SSR, on the one hand, and the reality of many post-conflict societies in which state and non-state actors provide security, justice and governance, on the other, UN peace operations and other external actors and donors largely continue to focus on the state.[71] There is little in the UN peace operation transitions literature to suggest awareness of or engagement with non-state actors or hybrid governance in the context of mission withdrawal or reconfiguration of the UN presence. The emphasis is on ensuring capacity among state institutions in preparation for eventual handover of responsibilities by the mission.

5. National and local political leadership and commitment to SSR

SSR interventions to achieve democratic security governance are 'highly political and deeply contested processes'.[72] The political nature of SSR has been described as resulting from its focus on the 'nerve centre of state power and national sovereignty, the security sector, and the foundation of its ability to exercise coercion', its potential to change how the security sector functions and whose interests it serves, and its potential to transform power relations within the polity—who wields control over the state and who benefits from its protection.[73] This potential to alter relations and power balances between 'civilian authorities and security forces, executive and legislative authorities, and civilian authorities and civil society' is unique to SSR and positions it at the centre of contemporary state-building efforts.[74]

This complexity and scale, and the length of time required to achieve transformation of security governance mean that implementation of an SSR process requires sustained political engagement and political will. The political commitment of government leaders who can build an inclusive process and forge a national consensus on the need for and parameters of SSR is of critical importance for the sustainability and legitimacy of the reform process.

However, 'security sector reformers have typically been reluctant to engage [with] local political dynamics—particularly when those dynamics are volatile or fractured—to develop this critical consensus, almost assuming it will develop spontaneously'.[75] SSR's transformative potential, and its political implications, will be more limited if it is

[69] Bagayoko, N., 'Introduction: Hybrid security governance in Africa', *IDS bulletin*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2012); Schroder, U., Chappuis, F. and Kocak, D., 'Security sector reform and the emergence of hybrid security governance', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2014); Donais, T., 'Engaging non-state security providers: Whither the rule of law?', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2017); Chappuis, F., 'Hybrid security: Challenges and opportunities for security sector reform', DCAF, 10 July 2023; and Bjarnesen, M., 'Hybrid security governance in Liberia in the aftermath of intervention', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2023).

[70] Rolandsen, O. H., Dwyer, M. and Reno, W., 'Security force assistance to fragile states: A framework of analysis', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 15, no. 5 (2021), pp. 563–79.

[71] Ansorg, N. and Gordon, E., 'Co-operation, contestation and complexity in post-conflict security sector reform', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2019), pp. 2–24.

[72] Schroeder, U. C. and Chappuis, F., 'New perspectives on security sector reform: The role of local agency and domestic politics', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2014); and Ball, N., *Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: The Security Sector Reform Strategy*, DFID Evaluation Report EV 647, Mar. 2004, p. 8.

[73] Hutchful, E., 'The UN and SSR: Between the primacy of politics and the echoes of context', eds A. Ebo and H. Haenggi, *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice* (Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2020), pp. 26–27.

[74] England, M., 'Security sector governance and oversight: A note on current practice', eds M. England and A. Boucher, *Security Sector Reform: Thematic Literature Review on Best Practices and Lessons Learned* (Stimson Center: Washington, DC, 2009), p. 69.

[75] Sedra (note 51), p. 63.

approached only as a technical activity of capacity-building (developing the skills and expertise of security actors), with little attention paid to its political dimensions. This aversion to the political has extended into scholarship on SSR, as there are relatively few detailed descriptions of how political factors, such as the nature of power relations and dynamics among actors, have influenced the development of security sector reform and processes once they have been initiated.[76]

The inherently political nature of SSR has an echo in the peacekeeping mantra of the 'primacy of politics'—the idea advanced by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) that finding political solutions and lasting settlements through peace negotiations and other efforts should be put at the centre of UN peacekeeping and other conflict resolution initiatives.[77] Both the primacy of politics in peacekeeping and the inherently political nature of SSR acknowledge the need to understand the political dynamics and incentives of core actors in creating viable solutions to conflict and to dysfunctional, abusive or mismanaged security institutions.

UN documents on peacekeeping transitions emphasize national ownership and acceptance by national actors that the state has primary responsibility for the protection of civilians. Preparations by a peacekeeping mission to withdraw or reconfigure should ensure that the state's security and justice institutions have sufficient capacity and orientation to take over these responsibilities for protecting the population in a way that is inclusive, respects human rights and operates in a gender-responsive way. If political will is absent before the transition, there will be little interest in continuing SSR processes post-mission, and any efforts made will peter out.

6. Level of embeddedness of the SSR process in broader recovery frameworks

In countries emerging from armed conflict, SSR aims to rebuild security and justice sectors in order to help to consolidate peace. Initially conceived as part of 'post-conflict reconstruction', SSR is today embedded in broader frameworks that have reconceptualized international assistance to conflict-affected states with the overarching aim of preventing violent conflict or the recurrence of violent conflict.[78] Twin resolutions passed by the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly in 2016 emphasize that the goal of conflict prevention must inform efforts at all stages of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.[79] The objectives and processes of SSR should therefore contribute to conflict prevention by seeking to achieve an accountable, effective, responsive and inclusive security sector based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. Inclusive, consensus-building processes among national stakeholders help to mitigate the politicization or instrumentalization of the security sector in the service of special groups or interests, and thereby reduce the risk of associated grievances and divisions in society.[80]

[76] Denney, L. and Valters, C., *Evidence Synthesis: Security Sector Reform and Organisational Capacity Building* (Department for International Development: London, 2015), p. 47. Examples of studies that focus closely on political dynamics in SSR contexts include Brumberg, D. and Sallam, H., *The Politics of Security Sector Reform in Egypt*, Special Report (United States Institute of Peace: Washington, DC, 2012); and Berg, L-A., 'All judicial politics are local: The political trajectory of judicial reform in Haiti', *Inter-American Law Review*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 1–32.

[77] United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Security Council, Report of the Independent High-Level Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: Politics, partnership and people, A/70/95 and S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, pp. 26–27.

[78] United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2018).

[79] United Nations, General Assembly, A/Res/70/262, 27 Apr. 2016; and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282, 27 Apr. 2016.

[80] See 'Security Sector Reform and Sustaining Peace', Proceedings of the High-Level Roundtable co-hosted by Slovakia and South Africa on behalf of the UN Group of Friends of SSR on the eve of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on 'Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace', DCAF, Geneva, 2018.

A 2022 Secretary-General's Report on Strengthening Security Sector Reform identifies what a successful transition process entails with regard to SSR. It specifies that in such cases 'national authorities had in place whole-of-government strategies that were affordable and were implemented as part of overall public administration reform and national development frameworks'.[81] Early collaboration between the peace operation and the national authorities, the country team and relevant partners should help to ensure that reforms are continued, with sustained national and international funding.[82] Ensuring that SSR is sustainable after the drawdown and exit of the peace operation, which often entails a reduction in international financial assistance, means ensuring that the SSR programme is affordable. The report therefore recommends a national security sector public expenditure review be undertaken in cooperation with the national authorities.[83]

7. Civil society involvement in support of local ownership of SSR

Central to the model of security sector reform is that it should be locally driven and the product of consensus-building and inclusive dialogue, so that it reflects societal norms and expectations and has buy-in from key stakeholders. This local ownership is closely linked to the participation of civil society groups in peacebuilding and SSR processes.[84] The involvement of the public in SSR through civil society organizations and other non-state actors is a vital dimension of democratic governance. To ensure sufficient local ownership by and engagement of civil society, SSR programmes should be broadly consultative. Guidance on SSR produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes the importance of assessing 'the needs of local people' and the utility of household surveys for gauging people's perceptions of security and justice to provide a baseline against future progress. Engagement, however, is largely framed in terms of key national actors and stakeholders.[85]

Civil society contributes to SSR and governance in diverse ways, from raising awareness of rights and issues of relevance to groups and communities linked to security institutions and policy, to facilitating dialogue and debate on related policy issues, providing information to stakeholders about special issues of concern, representing the interests and concerns of groups and communities, and monitoring implementation of SSR.[86] Civil society actors can support security reforms and governance initiatives, and help to adapt them to the local level.[87] The involvement of civil society actors is considered essential to ensure local ownership, legitimacy and ultimately the effectiveness of security sector governance reform. Civil society can function as a transmission belt, conveying the interests and demands of groups and the communities they represent, and raising the security- and justice-related concerns of identity groups that are frequently overlooked or ignored in certain contexts, such as women and girls, ethnic,

[81] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41), para. 32.

[82] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41), para. 32.

[83] See Recommendation 10, United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41).

[84] Civil society refers to the sphere of voluntary associations formed by citizens to pursue common interests, exchange information and influence opinion and the conditions of civic life. Civil society organizations exist at the local, national, regional and international levels. Schirch, L. with Mancini-Griffoli, D., 'Local ownership in the security sector', *Local Ownership in Security: Case Studies of Peacebuilding Approaches* (Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC and Kroc Institute: The Hague, 2015).

[85] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (OECD Publishing: Paris, 2008), p. 44.

[86] Caparini, M. and Cole, E., 'The case for public oversight of the security sector', eds E. Cole, K. Eppert and K. Kinzelback, *Public Oversight of the Security Sector: A Handbook for Civil Society Organizations* (United Nations Development Programme: Bratislava, 2008), p. 21.

[87] Mendelson Forman, J., 'Security sector reform: What role for civil society?', eds M. Caparini, P. Fluri and F. Molnar, *Civil Society and the Security Sector: Concepts and Practices in New Democracies* (LIT Verlag: Munster, 2006), pp. 26–42.

religious or linguistic group members, members of particular social classes or economic strata, or sexual/gender minorities.

Some scholars, in seeking to explain the failure of peacebuilding to achieve peace, have criticized peace operations and other international actors for focusing almost exclusively on the macro level of national and regional tensions, while ignoring local conflicts and dynamics.[88] Local or 'everyday' peacebuilding has emerged as a strong theme in critical research and advocacy.[89] However, this has only been marginally reflected in mainstream security sector governance reform as implemented by the UN and other multilateral actors.

Donors and peacebuilders look to partnerships with select members of and groups in local civil society as a shortcut to acquiring deep contextual knowledge. However, critics maintain that they tend to choose civil society entities that reflect their own preferences rather than those that truly represent the views and interests of the local population.[90] Moreover, the above-mentioned aversion among donors and international actors to engaging with local political dynamics leads donors to substitute select, less representative civil society actors for the acquisition of knowledge of SSR. Civil society organizations are the actors that will play important roles in monitoring implementation and compliance after the transition. They must therefore be involved long before transition begins in order to contribute positively to SSR. Furthermore, the continuing unwillingness to engage with the customary, informal and non-state actors and practices that are often dominant in the societies where peace operations take place exacerbates one of the major flaws in approaches to SSR.[91]

8. Application of a gender-responsive SSR process

The importance of integrating a gender perspective into SSR has emerged only gradually in policy guidance and programming. Early criticism focused on the lack of attention paid to gender issues in mainstream SSR, including in measures aimed at enhancing oversight and integrity—even where efforts were being made to be explicitly 'gender-sensitive'—due to their adherence to what was labelled an 'add-women-and stir' approach to the recruitment of women in the security sector.[92] A suite of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security (WPS) from 2000 onwards emphasize women's participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding.[93] Others discuss preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence.[94] SSR activities have tended to emphasize greater participation by women in military and police institutions, and responding to and protecting women from sexual violence in conflict, as reflected

[88] Autesserre, S., *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010).

[89] Mac Ginty, R. and Richmond, O. P., 'The local turn in peace building: A critical agenda for peace', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 5 (2013), pp. 763–83.

[90] Sedra (note 51), p. 33.

[91] Sedra (note 51), p. 34.

[92] Salahub, J. and Nerland, K., 'Just add gender? Challenges to meaningful integration of SSR policy and practice', ed. M. Sedra, *The Future of SSR* (Centre for International Governance Innovation: Waterloo, 2010), pp. 263–80; Mobekk, E., 'Gender, women and security sector reform', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2010), pp. 278–91; and Ni Aolain, F., 'Women, security and the patriarchy of internationalized transitional justice', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 4 (Nov. 2009), pp. 1055–85.

[93] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 31 Oct. 2000; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1889, 5 Oct. 2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122, 18 Oct. 2013; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242, 13 Oct. 2015; and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2493, 29 Oct. 2019.

[94] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, 19 June 2008; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888, 30 Sep. 2009; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960, 16 Dec. 2010; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2106, 24 June 2013; and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2467, 23 Apr. 2019.

in the training and capacity development of host state police to respond to sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV).[95]

Over time, more holistic and nuanced guidance has emerged, emphasizing gendered analysis of people's security requirements (women, girls, men and boys) and a more transformational approach to security processes and institutions, at least at a declaratory level.[96] Gender-responsive SSR requires the mainstreaming of gender throughout SSR processes, decision making and institutions. 'Responsiveness' requires an action orientation, beyond just an awareness of gender dynamics. Notably, advocates see a 'gender transformative approach' as the ultimate goal, essential in order to alter gendered power relations, confront militarism and reform violent masculinities, and to achieve more equitable access to security and justice, as well as a fairer distribution of resources.[97] Gender mainstreaming in the security sector and SSR more broadly are inherently long-term undertakings because they aim to transform power relations within institutions and in society more generally.[98]

In 2019, the secretary-general drew specific attention to the need for transition planning 'to be informed by comprehensive and joint analysis that is human rights-based and gender-responsive'.[99] According to the secretary-general, this analysis is necessary if every transition process is to safeguard progress and identify WPS priorities for the new mission configuration and/or for the UN country team.[100] Furthermore, in mission transition settings, UN entities were instructed to ensure adequate gender capacity in the development of structures, expertise and coordination frameworks for the reconfiguration of the UN presence.[101]

In December 2020, the UN Security Council for the first time encouraged UN member states to 'develop context-specific security sector reform strategies and programmes that, inter alia, mainstream a gender perspective, remove legal, institutional and regulatory barriers to women's equal participation in the security sector and increase their representation at all levels within the security sector'.[102] The secretary-general's 2022 report on SSR flags this as a major step forward.[103] In addition to recommending the strengthening of its capacity to mainstream gender in all forms of UN support for SSR, the secretary-general made several other recommendations, such as on establishing vetting mechanisms to prevent perpetrators of sexual violence from joining security sector institutions, putting accountability mechanisms in place to end impunity for violence against women and underrepresented groups, and supporting the early inclusion of women in negotiations on the security provisions of peace agreements, national security policies, strategies and operations, as well as military expenditure.[104] While these recommendations show a willingness to aim beyond gender balance through equitable participation, uptake has been poor, in particular on the vetting of security sector personnel for sexual violence.[105] In addition, country-specific mandates are still

[95] Bastick, M., 'Gender, militaries and security sector reform', eds R. Woodward and C. Duncanson, *The Palgrave International Handbook of Gender and the Military* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2017), p. 390.

[96] Bastick (note 95), p. 390.

[97] Gordon, E., 'Gender and defence sector reform: Problematising the place of women in conflict-affected environments', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2019), pp. 75–94; and Kunz, R., 'Gender and security sector reform: Gendering differently?', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 21, no. 5 (2014), pp. 604–22.

[98] Bastick (note 95), p. 369.

[99] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'Women and peace and security', S/2019/800, 9 Oct. 2019, para. 30.

[100] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/800 (note 99), para. 30.

[101] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/800 (note 99), para. 31.

[102] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2553, 3 Dec. 2020, para. 5.

[103] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41), paras 52–53.

[104] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2022/280 (note 41), para. 59.

[105] Bastick (note 95), p. 365.

failing to fully reflect gender considerations. A 2000 review of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 noted that 'gender units in missions are generally understaffed and under resourced relative to the tasks they are expected to accomplish'.[106] This has been identified as the biggest operational challenge to achieving gender-responsive peacekeeping and peacebuilding.[107]

9. Linkages and synergies between the SSR process and the DDR programme

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants is often closely linked to SSR. DDR entails the voluntary laying down of arms by members of the armed forces and armed groups, their exit from military command and control structures, and their return to civilian life. Like SSR, DDR is recognized as an exercise with important political dimensions, due to its impact on the distribution of power.[108] DDR can result in former paramilitaries or members of non-state armed groups becoming part of the state's military, police or other security institutions. When it succeeds, DDR supports the objectives of SSR; for example, when DDR provides alternative livelihoods for former combatants, it can help to prevent them from rejoining armed groups or criminal gangs, and reduces challenges to law and order or the likelihood of a recurrence of conflict. Where former combatants are integrated into security institutions, DDR can contribute to the building of trust among former warring parties and the strengthening of state authority and control. DDR and SSR share the objective of consolidating the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and they most directly intersect when former combatants are integrated into security institutions.[109]

Unsuccessful DDR, however, can fail to secure a lasting peace and create obstacles to SSR. Selectively excluding certain groups of armed actors from a DDR process can lead to political tensions and a falling out, undermining political will and the prospects for SSR.[110] The process of vetting former members of armed groups before they are allowed to be integrated into existing security institutions, or the vetting of security institutions to ensure that their existing members do not include perpetrators of human rights violations or other serious crimes, is also linked to the broader objectives of SSR—enhancing the accountability, transparency and legitimacy of state security institutions. Despite rhetorical support for such vetting, however, it has not been widely adopted or has been implemented in various settings in ways that have violated human rights and undermined the rule of law.[111] Failure to embed DDR in a wider multidimensional peacebuilding framework for local communities can arouse resentment from local civilian populations.[112]

While the literature on DDR and SSR sees convergence and complementarity in their long-term objectives, they are also perceived as sharing certain deficiencies. DDR programmes have in the past excluded women former combatants, just as SSR has in practice struggled to achieve greater gender equality of participation in the security

[106] United Nations, Department of Field Support, 'Ten-year impact study on Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security in peacekeeping', Final Report to the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, New York, 2010, p. 37.

[107] Baldwin, G., 'Considering the future of gender and peace operations: Strategic debates and operational challenges', SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security 2022/09, Dec. 2022, p. 20.

[108] Ansorg and Gordon (note 71), pp. 2–24.

[109] McFate, S., 'The link between DDR and SSR in conflict-affected countries', *USIP Special Report*, May 2010.

[110] Bangura, I., Owusu, A. and Quaye, S., 'Rethinking the nexus: DDR and SSR in post- and evolving conflict contexts in Africa', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2023), p. 9.

[111] Mayer-Rieckh, A., 'Vetting: The way to prevent recurrence?', eds C. Stahn and J. Iverson, *Just Peace After Conflict: Jus Post Bellum and the Justice of Peace* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2020), pp. 284–97.

[112] Banholzer, L., *When do Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs Succeed?* (German Development Institute: Bonn, 2013).

sector or gender-responsive security institutions. Despite their interconnected nature, they have been treated as largely separate activities rather than integrated in their planning, timelines, implementation and evaluation.[113]

The original Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) were developed to help peace operations support national DDR efforts. They drew on the experiences of DDR processes that took place in the context of peace agreements in the 1990s. A second generation of DDR had emerged by 2010, influenced by the changing needs of peacekeepers, which included the need to deal with armed groups while conflict was still ongoing, and with hybrid forms of violence.[114] The IDDRS were reviewed and updated in 2017–2019. The current version aims to support DDR in both mission and non-mission settings.[115] This makes second generation DDR more ambitious than first because, more than just reintegrating former combatants, it has sought to help to create the conditions for sustainable peace by promoting reconciliation between former combatants and communities, rebuilding social institutions and promoting economic livelihoods.[116] Second-generation DDR is also more aligned with transitional perspectives and processes.

10. Involvement of external non-UN actors, donors and partners in the SSR process

The shift to security force assistance (SFA) programmes, which are referred to in various terms, such as 'defence institution building' by NATO and 'capacity-building' of host state police and military forces in UN stabilization operations, has also affected security sector/governance reform. These primarily involve training and equipping foreign militaries and, to a lesser extent, police and law enforcement agencies to strengthen operational capacity and professionalism. Train-and-equip programmes are perceived by donors to be less expensive than SSR or a large footprint deployment of their own forces for counterinsurgency or stabilization tasks.[117] However, SFA in fragile and conflict-affected states is misunderstood as merely technical or apolitical. In practice, SFA is often 'misaligned' with the interests of the recipient states, as certain actors or factions seek to instrumentalize the assistance in a way that serves their political interests. This has tended to exacerbate fragmentation in the recipient security forces. SFA to regimes that fear internal rivals more than insurgents or external threats is generally unlikely to result in the implementation of change that leads to a more professional military.[118] The evolution of SSR became closely related to donor exit strategies, particularly following the events of 11 September 2001 and the consequent securitization of assistance that favours train-and-equip approaches rather than governance reform. This arguably hollowed out the original concept of SSR.[119]

11. Availability of sustainable funding for the SSR process

A core objective of SSR is to achieve security institutions that, like other elements of the public sector, are affordable and sustainable in their policies and programming,

[113] McFate (note 109), p. 3.

[114] Munive, J. and Stepputat, F., 'Rethinking disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs', *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1–13.

[115] See the website of the UN DDR Resource Centre.

[116] Muggah, R. and O'donnell, C., 'Sequencing next generation disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in peace processes', eds A. Langer and G. K. Brown, *Building Sustainable Peace: Timing and Sequencing of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015), pp. 126–27.

[117] Biddle, S., Macdonald, J. and Baker, R., 'Small footprint, small payoff: The military effectiveness of security force assistance', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 41, nos 1–2, pp. 89–142.

[118] Rolandsen, Ø. H., Dwyer, M. and Reno, W., 'Security force assistance to fragile states: A framework of analysis', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 15, no. 5 (2021), pp. 563–79.

[119] Sedra, M., *Security Sector Reform in Conflict-affected Countries: The Evolution of a Model* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 2–3.

and accountable for their management and use of public resources.[120] Ultimately, the incorporation of the security sector into the state budgetary cycle means that it should undergo a regular cycle of strategic planning, budget preparation and resource allocation, implement planned activities, have its activities and expenditure monitored and performance evaluated, and report regularly to its executive and legislative overseers.[121]

Following the exit of a peacekeeping mission from a country, the sustainable financing of public security and justice services will rely more on domestic fiscal capacity. If provision is not made for sustainable financing, there is a risk that SSR facilitated by the peacekeeping mission and other international stakeholders might flounder. However, weak interactions or absent dialogue between national state security officials and their counterparts in charge of public finance, as well as insufficient knowledge among development agencies and other international stakeholders present significant obstacles in fragile, conflict-affected countries.[122] To help address these gaps, the World Bank and the United Nations developed the security sector public expenditure review (PER), which helps governments to engage in dialogue on security expenditure policy, analyse financial management, transparency and oversight of the security sector and better integrate expenditure analysis into SSR and governance reform processes.

The first security sector PER (SSPER) was produced in Liberia in 2012, as a joint undertaking by UNMIL, the UN Partnership Trust Fund and the World Bank, in wide consultation with stakeholders. The SSPER occurred at a time when UNMIL was entering a second phase of troop drawdown in its transition, and seeking to understand the impact on the maintenance of public order and security across the country. Specifically, the SSPER sought to assess the capacity in the Liberian budget to support the security sector, identify the minimum standard of security necessary to facilitate UNMIL's transition, and analyse Liberia's security expenditure and public financial management systems as applied to the security sector.[123]

Based on the SSPER's findings that 'the government will not be able to absorb the full anticipated cost of security operations expected to be transferred from UNMIL', the World Bank and UNMIL recommended that the government prioritize transferred security functions 'based on a national strategic policy that accounts for a limited resource envelope', that the National Security Council formulate strategic security policy and develop a complementary resource envelope in close coordination with the finance ministry and security agencies, and a concomitant deepening of reform of the coordination, financial accountability and oversight of the security sector.[124] Reflecting on UNMIL and Liberia's experience in the years following the SSPER, and the lack of specialized expertise on financing within missions, two SSR experts suggested ways for peacekeeping missions to strengthen cooperation between security institutions and the ministry of finance. These included teaming up with relevant organizations with expertise in public financial management, such as the World Bank, and engaging early in policy dialogue with them to ensure that SSR is prioritized in the country assistance

[120] Middlebrook, P. and Peake, G., 'Right-financing security sector reform', *Center on International Cooperation and Political Economy Research Institute*, Feb. 2008.

[121] Harborne, B., Dorotinsky, W. and Bisca, P. M., *Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector, A Guide to Public Expenditure Reviews in the Security and Criminal Justice Sectors* (World Bank: Washington, DC, 2017), p. 9.

[122] On PER approaches to the defence, policing and criminal justice sectors, see Harborne, Dorotinsky and Bisca (note 121), chapters 3–5.

[123] Keane, R. and Ommundsen, T., *Money Matters: Addressing the Financial Sustainability of Security Sector Reform*, SSR Paper no. 11 (DCAF: Geneva, 2015).

[124] World Bank and UN Mission in Liberia, Liberia Public Expenditure Review Note, 'Meeting the challenges of the UNMIL security transition', Report no. 71009-LR (Jan. 2013), pp. vii–viii.

strategy, and that right-sizing and 'right-financing' of the security sector are addressed by national and international stakeholders.[125]

While Liberia's SSPER specifically sought to assess the costs of the transfer of security functions from the UN mission to the Liberian state, SSPERs in Mali and Niger have been conducted in non-mission contexts. The SSPER has value as a 'partnership framework' for national and international stakeholders, including donors and multilateral organizations, to 'align their programmes and identify defence and security financing needs together'.[126] If there is no institutional framework in place as part of the transition process, then it is much more likely that racketeering and other corruption will run rampant in the aftermath of a transition, thereby corrupting SSR efforts.

V. Conclusions

This review of UN documents and selected academic literature underscores the divergence between theory and practice in SSR as it has been implemented for the past two decades. This period saw an apparent disjuncture between the stated objectives of international interventions to resolve armed conflict and achieve a stable peace by helping to create and strengthen a liberal democratic state, on the one hand, and the apparent failure of most peace operations to deliver these intended results, on the other. This led to the emergence of critical academic approaches to international peace operations.

The UN's role in conflict management expanded after the end of the cold war, notably through the growth of a new kind of multidimensional peacekeeping operation. Based on liberal peacebuilding assumptions, these peace operations reflected the view that building democratic institutions and liberal market economies was key to achieving peaceful domestic and international relations.[127] SSR, with its emphasis on accountability and good governance, has often been a core element of multidimensional peace operations, and rapidly advanced up the international policy agenda to become widely institutionalized in multilateral organizations such as the UN. However, in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent policy ascendance of counter-terrorism, the security assistance 'build and equip' approaches prioritized by many donors and SSR have been approached more as a short-term technocratic undertaking. SSR is too often seen as an exit strategy for donors that have launched military interventions or multilateral organizations involved in conflict resolution and state-building, rather than as the start of a long-term process involving a fundamental transformation of security governance arrangements and a consolidation of the democratic norms and culture of conflict-affected states.

This study considers how UN support to SSR in host states was managed through the transition of individual peacekeeping operations to drawdown and exit through the examination of two historical case studies. However peacekeeping missions themselves are now considered by some to be in a period of transition, for various overlapping and reinforcing reasons. Tensions between the permanent members of the Security Council make agreement on mandating new and existing peace operations far more difficult than in the post-cold war period. Severe cuts in funding are having a system-wide impact on UN programming, including peace operations. There are perceptions that missions have failed to achieve their most important objectives, such as the protection

[125] Keane and Ommundsen (note 123), pp. 22–23.

[126] Bisca, P. M., 'Can peace become affordable? Lessons from security sector expenditure reviews in West Africa', *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, Brief no. 2 (Mar. 2019), p. 1.

[127] Paris, R., 'The past, present, and uncertain future of collective conflict management: Peacekeeping and beyond', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2023), pp. 235–37.

of civilians and the resolution of armed conflict. There have been critical assessments of the liberal peacebuilding assumptions underlying multidimensional peace operations, and of operationally state-centric approaches to state-building at the expense of more local conflict management efforts. The shift to more robust 'stabilization' mandates has had the unintended consequence, in contexts where a ceasefire or peace agreement is lacking, of reducing the incentives for actors to find a political solution to address the root causes of conflict.[128]

While the era of complex, large-scale multidimensional UN peace operations may be drawing to a close, other forms of peace operation are likely to emerge or gain prominence that might involve different partners, scale, types of personnel and objectives.[129] Observers suggest that peace operations are moving towards more 'pragmatic' approaches in the current 'post-liberal' order.[130] In one scenario, peace operations could become less multidimensional, with less emphasis on activities grounded in the liberal ideological framework that are perceived as intruding on host state sovereignty, such as SSR.[131] Others maintain that it is precisely the civilian components and assistance that provide the added value by ultimately leading to a reduction in violence.[132] While observers debate the future direction of UN peace operations, survey data suggest continuing belief in liberal values such as democracy, freedom and human rights among people in the Global South, and a desire to see these values manifest in 'tangible improvements in their own lives'.[133]

[128] de Coning, C., 'How not to do UN peacekeeping: Avoid the stabilization dilemma with principled and adaptive mandating and leadership', *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, vol. 29, no. 2 (June 2023), pp. 152–67.

[129] Gowan, R. and Forti, D., 'What future for UN peacekeeping in Africa after Mali shutters its mission?', *International Crisis Group*, 10 July 2023.

[130] Wiuff Moe, L. and Stepputat, F., 'Introduction: Peacebuilding in an era of pragmatism', *International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 2 (Mar. 2018), pp. 293–99.

[131] Dunton, C., Laurence, M. and Vlavonou, G., 'Pragmatic peacekeeping in a multipolar era: Liberal norms, practices and the future of UN peace operations', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2023), pp. 215–34.

[132] Bara, C. and Schumann, M. P., 'Partnership peacekeeping works: What does this mean in a divided world?', *IPI Global Observatory*, 17 Oct. 2023.

[133] Malloch-Brown, M., 'Africa is the future of multilateralism', *Project Syndicate*, 29 Sep. 2023.

3. Security sector reform and the transition of UN peace operations in Sierra Leone

KEVIN STEEVES

I. Introduction

This case study focuses on the nature of the transition of mandated activities in the field of security sector reform (SSR) by the United Nations peace operations in Sierra Leone. UN Security Council Resolution 1436 on Sierra Leone was the first time that the Security Council explicitly recognized the need for reform of the security sector in a UN peace operation setting.[1] The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the first peacekeeping mission deployed to the country in 1999–2005, is regarded as one of the most successful UN peacekeeping operations that brought about 'significant and sustained improvement in day-to-day security conditions for the majority of the people within a state when compared to prior conditions'.[2] UNAMSIL is seen as a positive example of UN peacekeeping that took a comprehensive approach to improving security and justice for the benefit of long-term stability and reconciliation in the country.[3]

Sierra Leone is notable for the number of transitions to various UN presences, all of which included concrete support for SSR in their respective mandates. Three further UN presences followed UNAMSIL in support of SSR and other areas of peacebuilding and development: the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) in 2006–2008, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) in 2008–2014 and the UN country team since 2014.

Section II outlines the background and context to the civil war in Sierra Leone. Section III discusses the planning and implementation of the SSR transition. Section IV assesses the successes and failures of the SSR transition in the light of the 11 factors identified in chapter 2. Section V provides the conclusions.

II. Background and context

Post-conflict fragility and SSR challenges

The 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone (1991–2002) was brutal by any standards. Initially fought between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the conflict escalated in the late 1990s to levels of unrelenting violence against civilians by many belligerents. The RUF, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and other factions, including the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF), committed systemic rape of women and youth. Men were also targeted as victims of sexual violence.[4] Diamond and gold mines were plundered for illicit trafficking and children were abducted and conscripted as soldiers. Up to 70 000 Sierra Leonians were killed,

[1] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1436, 24 Sep. 2002, p. 2; and UN Peacekeeping, *Towards Better Security Governance: Learning from the Road Travelled*, An independent review of United Nations support to security sector reform in peace operations, 2014–2020, 15 Dec. 2021, p. 7.

[2] Detzner, S., 'Modern post-conflict security sector reform in Africa: Patterns of success and failure', *African Security Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2017), p. 123.

[3] Leib, J. and Ruppel, S., 'The dance of peace and justice: Local perceptions of international peacebuilding in West Africa', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 28, no. 5 (2021), p. 806.

[4] Human Rights Watch, 'We'll kill you if you cry: Sexual violence in the Sierra Leone conflict', 16 Jan. 2003.

thousands were mutilated or raped and much of the population was displaced and left in poverty.[5]

The societal costs of extreme violence against civilians and mass human rights abuses by armed groups and government security services were huge. There were widespread insecurity and mistrust linked to illegitimate and unprofessional military, police and security services, which had been politicized and were corrupt, and competed with armed groups as the principal providers of security. Civil society and the public in general were highly suspicious and fearful of the security sector, particularly the military.[6] Political and economic power were centralized and distributed among political, military and other elites based in the capital, Freetown.[7]

Deployment of UNAMSIL

UNAMSIL deployed at the end of 1999 on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1270.[8] The focus of the mission was to support implementation of the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement (LPA), which built on the 1996 Abidjan Accord to provide for a ceasefire between the government and various armed groups and a political settlement through power-sharing arrangements. Two articles in the LPA set the stage for an SSR process that would be developed and expanded further in the years to come. Article XVI prioritized a lead role for UNAMSIL in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. Article XVII established that the government would lead on restructuring and training Sierra Leone's armed forces.[9]

When UNAMSIL began operations on the ground, it was stretched thin and seriously underperformed. Its failure to enforce the peace accord meant that human rights abuses, ceasefire violations and attacks and threats to civilians—especially by the RUF—continued to be the norm. Significant disagreements arose among the UNAMSIL leadership in relation to interpretation of the mandate, notably on the use of force and the prioritization of peacebuilding activities.[10] Relations with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other members of the UN country team were almost hostile.[11] To address early operational deficiencies, the Security Council increased the size of UNAMSIL's military, police and other components in May 2000 and gave it a Chapter VII mandate authorizing the use of force.[12]

Bilateral intervention and support to SSR

In May 2000, to add to UNAMSIL's long list of early struggles, the RUF kidnapped hundreds of UN peacekeepers. In response, the United Kingdom launched Operation Palliser to combat the RUF and assist UNAMSIL. Eventual success in these objectives

[5] Kaldor, M. and Vincent, J., *Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict-affected Countries: Case Study, Sierra Leone* (United Nations Development Programme: New York, 2006), p. 4.

[6] Hanson-Alp, R., *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997–2007: Civil Society's Role in Sierra Leone's Security Sector Reform Process, Experiences from Conciliation Resource's West Africa Programme*, Working Paper no. 12, Oct. 2008, p. 5.

[7] Lucey, A. and Kumalo, L., 'Sustaining peace in practice: Liberia and Sierra Leone', *Institute for Security Studies*, Policy Brief no. 114, Feb. 2018, p. 7.

[8] UN Security Council Resolution 1270, 22 Oct. 1999. UNAMSIL took over from the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which deployed to Sierra Leone in 1997. At the same time, the UN Security Council terminated the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), which operated as an unarmed monitoring and verification mission from July 1998 until Oct. 1999.

[9] The Lomé Peace Agreement (Ratification) 1999, Government Printing Department, Sierra Leone, *Gazette* no. 34, 22 July 1999.

[10] Curran, D. and Woodhouse, T., 'Cosmopolitan peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: What can Africa contribute?', *International Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 6 (2007), pp. 1058–59.

[11] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.

[12] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1299, 19 May 2000.

led the President of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, to declare the conflict over in January 2002. The bilateral military intervention by the UK evolved into a number of significant efforts to partner with the government and push the SSR process. One of the more notable British initiatives was the deployment in 2000 of the International Military Advice and Training Team (IMATT), which contained military and other SSR expertise from Commonwealth states such as Canada and Nigeria, as well as the United States.[13]

Government engagement and initiative

As the British intervention improved security and UNAMSIL began to make strides with leading on DDR, training the police and other mandated tasks, the government undertook a series of efforts to frame and support the SSR process. Particularly notable was its strategic decision to treat SSR as a central component of a wider framework on reducing poverty. In addition, many important undertakings were led by the authorities at the local level, such as the Local Needs Policing Initiative to strengthen trust and confidence by setting up committees of police personnel and citizens in local communities.[14]

One specific government effort was the creation of the Office of National Security (ONS) in 2002, as the secretariat of the National Security Council to coordinate the country's security and intelligence architecture. The ONS completed a security sector review in 2005, which coincided with an announcement that UNAMSIL was drawing down and transitioning. The 2005 review was one of three SSR framing documents that the government developed in consultation with national and international stakeholders.[15] The ONS oversaw Provincial Security Committees, District Security Committees and Chiefdom Security Committees. These and other community structures supported a decentralized approach to SSR, which included early warning on security threats.[16]

III. Planning and implementing the SSR transition

UNAMSIL, 1999–2005

The first official proposal for UNAMSIL to transition in support of longer-term peacebuilding was presented to the UN Security Council in September 2002. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) still lacked the capacity and capability to ensure security on their own and were not expected to be able to do so for some time. The need for further improvements in the effectiveness of the army and police was established as one of the primary benchmarks for guiding future transition steps. The other SSR benchmarks were completing the DDR programme,

[13] Government of Canada, 'International Military Assistance and Training Team (IMATT)', Updated 11 Dec. 2018.

[14] The lower-level committees were the Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPBs), the Chiefdom Police Partnership Committees (CPPC) and the Area Police Partnership Committees (APPCS). See Bangura, I., *The Gradual Emergence of Second Generation Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone*, Centre for Security Governance Paper no. 15 (Jan. 2001), p. 7. For more recent information on the important role of LPPBs, see Albrecht, P., 'Fifteen years of police reform in Sierra Leone: Community policing and Local Policing Partnerships Boards', *DISS Policy Brief*, Jan. 2015.

[15] The other two were: the Protective Security Manual to protect key national assets and information apparatus; and the Standard Response Guidelines for National Security Architecture for Effective Civilian Democratic Governance, Coordination and Oversight. See Ebo, A., 'The challenges and lessons of security sector reform in post-conflict Sierra Leone', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Dec. 2006), p. 484.

[16] Ebo (note 15), p. 487.

specifically the reintegration phase, and strengthening the judiciary and court system in the context of consolidating state authority across the country.[17]

At the same time, the mission and the UN Secretariat were reporting positive developments in the security sector, which led to increased discussions in the Security Council about the need for a transition plan. The disarmament and demobilization phases of the DDR programme were completed by UNAMSIL in January 2002 and the more challenging reintegration phase was expected to be completed by the end of 2003. In fact, the entire DDR process was declared officially over in February 2004. The majority of the almost 73 000 combatants disarmed were men, but 6845 children (including 506 girls) and 4651 women also went through the programme.[18]

The government was also engaged in various SSR efforts that the UN deemed relevant in the context of the transition. In particular, the creation of a National Recovery Committee (NRC) and an associated strategy document were characterized by the UN secretary-general as having allowed for 'an integrated approach to planning the transition to peacebuilding…bringing together the relevant Government departments, [UN] development agencies, UNAMSIL and donors'.[19] The rationale for the UNAMSIL transition was to provide 'breathing space' for national actors to develop their own capacities and secure funding.[20]

In June 2003, the UN Secretariat asked the Security Council to consider three options for UNAMSIL's drawdown, transition and end of mandate—an accelerated option, a delayed option or a modified status quo option with end dates in June 2004, June 2005 and December 2004, respectively.[21] As recommended by the secretary-general, the Security Council endorsed the modified status quo option, pursuant to further reporting on success in meeting the benchmarks mentioned above.[22]

In February 2004, a UN assessment mission travelled to Sierra Leone to determine options further into 2005, following the planned end of UNAMSIL's mandate on 31 December 2004. The government would take full responsibility for ensuring security nationwide in September 2004. However, a continued presence was considered increasingly important by Security Council members and other UN member states, due to the still fragile nature of many of the gains. The continued difficulties in rightsizing and supporting the armed forces, for example, along with poor morale and other issues affecting performance, remained of concern.[23]

Following the UN assessment mission, the Security Council was presented with three further options: (*a*) total withdrawal of UNAMSIL followed by continued support by UN agencies and bilateral partners, specifically to support the security sector; (*b*) the extension of UNAMSIL, still with large military and police components; or (*c*) retention of UNAMSIL as a residual and reconfigured presence.[24] With the government's consent,

[17] United Nations Security Council, Fifteenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2002/987, 5 Sep. 2002, pp. 3–5.

[18] Doss, A., 'End of Mission Report and handover notes on completion of assignment in Sierra Leone', Freetown, June 2004, pp. 9–10.

[19] United Nations Security Council, S/2002/987 (note 17), p. 7.

[20] United Nations Security Council, S/2002/987 (note 17), p. 7.

[21] The UN asserted that the security sector (the army and police) would not be strong enough on its own by June 2004, while a transition and exit as late as 2005 would only need to be considered if security deteriorated to a still unforeseen degree. See United Nations Security Council, Eighteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2003/663, 23 June 2003, pp. 8–9.

[22] United Nations Security Council, S/2003/663 (note 21), pp. 16–17.

[23] Doss (note 18), p. 1.

[24] United Nations Security Council, Twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2004/228, 19 Mar. 2004, p.15.

the Security Council agreed to retain a residual and reconfigured UN peacekeeping operation.[25]

UN Security Council resolution 1562 focused on UNAMSIL supporting the SSR process until its final day of operation. It set out detailed tasks in support of SSR to be undertaken by UN personnel, as well as the remaining reintegration aspects of DDR.[26] It therefore set the UN's priorities and the path for an expected transition to national and local authorities, other UN entities and bilateral actors later in 2005. UNAMSIL launched a nationwide sensitization campaign on its future withdrawal and local events were organized across the country over the course of many months to explain the rationale. These events focused on building the confidence of Sierra Leoneans in national and local institutions, particularly the SLP and the RSLAF.[27]

Resolution 1562 also emphasized the importance of UN personnel in the residual operation co-deploying and functioning as integrated teams together with their UN country team counterparts.[28] This integration was further buttressed at the district level through the establishment of Transition Support Teams (TSTs) by the UN country team. TSTs assisted the national and local authorities to identify needs and develop community-based strategies in support of the transition to peacebuilding and development.[29] A transition matrix was developed between the UN Secretariat, UNAMSIL and the UN country team in consultation with the government and the UK. This covered 27 substantive areas that would form the basis for defining the roles and tasks of a follow-on UN integrated office post-2005.[30]

UNIOSIL, 2006–2008

The UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone was the first integrated UN office created specifically to support peacebuilding after the end of a UN peacekeeping operation. It was regarded by one analyst at the time as 'evidence for the consensus that Sierra Leone is on a potentially sustainable transition from war to peace'.[31] In authorizing UNIOSIL, the Security Council provided it with a mandate that addressed the main assessment on SSR provided by the UN secretary-general in the report that accompanied the resolution, that: 'the strengthening of the security sector needs special, long-term attention'.[32]

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was created in December 2005. Together with the associated Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the PBC began work with a narrow focus on Sierra Leone and Burundi. During UNIOSIL's first year of engagement, the PBC established SSR as one of four core long-term peacebuilding priorities. Given its timing and mandate, and the SSR and other expertise available, UNIOSIL was regarded as 'critical in facilitating and advancing the work of the [PBC] in Sierra Leone'.[33]

One year after it was established, the UN Security Council mandated UNIOSIL to develop a transition plan to exit the country based on an assessment following the

[25] United Nations Security Council, S/2004/228 (note 24), p.15.

[26] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1562, 17 Sep. 2004, p. 2.

[27] United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, 'Nationwide sensitization on UNAMSIL drawdown kicks off in Port Loko and Moyamba districts', UNAMSIL/PIO/PR/160/2004, Press release, 13 Aug. 2004. Accessed on 5 Oct. 2022.

[28] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1562 (note 26), p. 3.

[29] Doss (note 18), p. 13.

[30] Former DPKO official, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

[31] Ebo (note 15), p. 482.

[32] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1620, 31 Aug. 2005; and United Nations Security Council, Twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2005/273, 26 Apr. 2005, p. 16.

[33] United Nations Security Council, Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, S/2007/704, 4 Dec. 2007, p. 8.

national elections in 2007.[34] The main recommendation of the October 2007 assessment was to extend UNOISIL for nine months and then end the mandate. A key finding was that the army—and to a lesser extent the police—were still below a suitable level of institutional development and operational effectiveness. Given that the government was still unable to develop and finance the armed forces and police service on its own, 'there [was] a risk that the fragile peace could unravel if those issues are not addressed on a priority basis'.[35] The main recommendation was that a 'leaner integrated political office' led by the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) should replace UNIOSIL, with the backing of UNDP.[36]

The planning and coordination process to support the transition to a DPA-led office involved 'extensive consultation among various stakeholders including DPKO, DPA, the UN [country team], the Government of Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom . . . and other international partners; two [assessment missions], two Secretary-General Policy Committee meetings and several working group meetings aimed at determining . . . the [post-UNIOSIL] presence'.[37] A second assessment mission in April 2008 was undertaken by staff already working on the ground in UNIOSIL. It prioritized synergies with the UN country team and alignment of programmes with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).[38]

UNIPSIL, 2008–2014

UN Security Council Resolution 1829 authorized the creation of UNIPSIL to replace UNIOSIL on 1 October 2008. Despite some concerns, the Security Council made a point of noting progress with the development of the RSLAF, which was led by the government with lead support from the UK, and the SLP, to which UN police officers and others were providing training and advice. The overriding goal of the new office would be to engage politically to help 'safeguard' these and other positive developments by providing political support to the SSR process, including strengthening of the justice sector.[39]

In December 2008, UNIPSIL and the UN country team adopted a Joint Vision focused on ensuring UN synergies in support of a poverty reduction strategy (PRS). The PRS later became known as the national Agenda for Change and then the Agenda for Prosperity, which covered the period 2013–2017. The Joint Vision formed the basis of the UN's integrated work in four priority programme areas. SSR was covered under the priority 'consolidation of peace and stability' and included efforts to strengthen the judiciary and train the SLP in specialized areas related to combating international crime and illicit drug trafficking.[40] UNIPSIL would use its political role and expertise to support implementation of UN country team programmes.

In 2001, UNIPSIL and the UN country team developed specific plans for the eventual transition to the country team. A Criteria-based UN Transition Strategy for Sierra Leone was finalized in October 2011, and in March 2012 a Transitional Joint Vision was

[34] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1734, 22 Dec. 2006, p. 2.

[35] United Nations Security Council, Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, S/2007/04 (note 33), p. 14.

[36] United Nations Security Council, S/2007/04 (note 35), p. 12.

[37] United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Department of Field Support (DFS) and Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Evaluation of the transition from UNIOSIL to UNIPSIL, 28 Oct. 2008, p. 3.

[38] DPKO, DFS and DPA (note 37), p. 5.

[39] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1829, 4 Aug. 2008; and United Nations Security Council, Sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, S/2008/281, 29 Apr. 2008, p. 15.

[40] United Nations Peacebuilding Commission Sierra Leone, 'Supporting the Implementation of the United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone: The UN Family's joint vision for Sierra Leone, 2009–2012', 14 Feb. 2011, pp. 3–4.

produced to factor in the end of UNIPSIL's mandate by the end of 2014. The overriding goal was to 'maintain continuity of support in some selected substantive areas such as natural resource management, internal security, drug trafficking, or youth employment previously handled by [UNIPISIL]'.[41]

An assessment mission was deployed to Sierra Leone in January 2013 to review the performance of UNIPSIL against the backdrop of a planned transition to the UN country team. While some specific concerns continued to be raised regarding the performance and development of the security services, the wider finding was that Sierra Leone 'had made remarkable progress', not least through being assisted by a series of UN operations since 1998.[42] UNIPSIL was described as a 'well-identified brand' that was 'highly regarded and widely trusted for its impartiality'.[43] Following these findings, UNIPSIL developed an exit strategy during 2013 that set out the activities to be taken forward after its departure and in the coming 2–4 years in the three priority areas of constitutional review, SSR and conflict prevention.[44]

In close consultation with the government, UNDP and the UN country team launched a dedicated SSR programme immediately after the end of UNIPSIL's mandate, with PBF support. This programme followed on from a joint SSR project between UNIPSIL and UNDP launched after the 2013 assessment, also with the support of the PBF. The latter was designed to 'dovetail' with the 2015 UNDAF and address SSR gaps until 2020.[45]

IV. Assessment of the main factors in the success or failure of SSR transitions

1. Context awareness of the UN in support of SSR

Context awareness is important in the run-up to and during transitions. This is when a UN peace operation must gauge the political and other factors that affect the ending of activities and the handover of tasks and functions to the national authorities or to other UN and international actors.

The early failures of UNAMSIL were in large part related to a lack of understanding of the country. One interviewee noted that UNAMSIL 'was completely inept in comparison to the previous mission of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, which was better at understanding the local context'.[46] Another noted that while it was 'clear to all' how the security forces and state apparatus were politicized, the mission appeared oblivious to this fact; the main priority should have been to 'at least manage the politics if not depoliticize [the] security sector'.[47] Another view, however, was that while UNAMSIL should have had a more comprehensive understanding of the country in order to identify the opportunities for change as they presented themselves, the immediacy of the challenges also warranted its heavy security and technical focus and 'the UN did a good job in this regard'.[48]

[41] United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office and United Nations Country Team, *Transitional Joint Vision For Sierra Leone of the United Nations Family, 2013–2014*, Freetown, 23 Mar. 2012, p. 31.

[42] United Nations Security Council, Tenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, S/2013/118, 27 Feb. 2013, p. 11.

[43] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/118 (note 42), p. 11.

[44] United Nations, 'United Nations strategy for exiting Sierra Leone remains on course despite development-funding gap in excess of $2 billion, Security Council told', Press release, SC/11126, 18 Sep. 2013.

[45] United Nations, 'UNDP and mission transitions', Guidance note, Version 1.0, 23 Apr. 2014, p. 31. Plans were also made to consider use of DPKO rule of law and security sector reform experience in the subsequent non-mission setting, including leveraging the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections as well as deployments of the Standing Police Capacity.

[46] Civil society activist, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

[47] Political scientist, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[48] Governance consultant, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.

The ability of UNAMSIL to understand context and implement the mandate slowly improved. One reason for this was said to be the appointment of the first 'triple-hatted' Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who was given combined responsibility for leading and linking the security, developmental and humanitarian work of the mission. According to one interviewee, the post was borne out of an increasing realization that traditional peacekeeping was not enough. The mission needed to engage in a more integrated and multidimensional manner, which factored in the political environment and the overall political economy.[49]

Changes to and greater specificity in mandates also appear to have helped UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL engage better with regard to political and other developments in the country. Specifically, the activities of UNIPISIL were noted by one national SSR expert to have helped to achieve a more context-specific SSR process by trying to meet the needs of the security institutions rather than promoting international policy templates, as well as by coordinating better with UNDP.[50] With regard to the latter, the ability of UNIPSIL to undertake political engagement was seen to have been improved by its leveraging of the peacebuilding architecture, an approach that helped to create 'a stronger process, anchored in a unified vision of the transition with the host country'.[51]

Nonetheless, one overriding theme of the interviews was that none of the UN peace operations in Sierra Leone possessed adequate context awareness throughout their lifespans. The research and interviews could, for example, not identify any deliberate political economy analyses or exercises that took place, including in support of the transitions. One reason given was that UN leaders at the time neither agreed nor sufficiently appreciated that SSR is a political process with a political-economic underpinning.[52]

2. Nature and timing of the UN transition mandate regarding the status of SSR

The transitions to different UN presences in Sierra Leone are widely considered to be a model of good practices on transitions. One reason for this was the early establishment of benchmarks. As noted above, three of the five benchmarks established for UNAMSIL's withdrawal were SSR-based: the reform and restructuring of the army and police, completion of the reintegration phase of the DDR programme and the consolidation of state authority, which included strengthening the judiciary.

The transitions are also seen as well-executed. According to one interviewee, the three respective UN transitions can be seen together as, 'going from a billion-dollar mission to more modest office[s] that continued to do good work'. In addition, 'all transitions are political' and the political dynamics were well managed in Sierra Leone.[53] For example, the UK had originally called for the end of the UNAMSIL mandate in 2004, arguing that the benchmarks had been adequately met. [54] A consensus eventually emerged in the Security Council and with the government, however, that this was too early. The UK subsequently agreed to extend the mandate into 2005.[55]

This process of careful transition to UNIOSIL set the stage for the way in which the Security Council authorized later transitions. The UNIOSIL mandate focused on peacebuilding, with a strong liaison function with the police, the military and other

[49] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.

[50] Bangura, I., *Assessing the Impact of Orthodox Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone*, Centre for Security Governance Paper no. 11 (Sep. 2016), p. 32.

[51] Dagash, R., 'The political engagement of the United Nations during mission transitions: A look into UNMIL, UNOCI, UNIPSIL, BNUB, UNMIT, MINUSTAH', *Lessons Learned Study*, UNDP-DPO-DPPA Project on United Nations Transitions, Feb. 2019, pp. 2, 5.

[52] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.

[53] Former DPKO official, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

[54] Former DPKO official, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

[55] Former DPKO official, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

institutions, which offered 'lots of flexibility and room to implement the mandate and manoeuvre over the life of the office'.[56] The mandate for UNIPSIL cemented the focus on peacebuilding and development, although now from a new primary perspective of the UN providing political support and advice. In support of the transition to the UN country team, UNIPSIL continued the tradition of developing exit benchmarks. UNIPSIL benefited from 'a clear and focused mandate which made articulation of benchmarks, according to which exit can be planned, straightforward'.[57]

One view that emerged from most of the interviews was that the rationale and timing of the transition mandates aligned with the state of affairs on the ground, particularly with regard to the SSR process. For example, UNDP has noted that other rationales normally coexist or take priority in addition to actual conditions on the ground when deciding on transitions to other operations. These include financial considerations by the Security Council and requests by the host government, regardless of the conditions on the ground.[58] In the case of Sierra Leone, however, 'the primary explanation is/was that the conditions on the ground were ripe for a return to a development focused engagement on the part of the international community'.[59]

This view was partly challenged by some interviewees, however, in relation to the speed, depth and focus of the transition. According to one observer, 'some people were disappointed that UNAMSIL had withdrawn, given that the fundamentals of the conflict had not been addressed'.[60] Another stated that the transition from UNAMSIL to UNIOSIL was 'rushed' in the sense of not being able to achieve sustainable change at the level the mission was attempting.[61] Finally, there was a recurring critique in the interviews specifically regarding how police reform was addressed. For example, looking back, one former senior UNAMSIL official stated that 'the police have been the Achilles heel of the SSR effort in Sierra Leone'.[62] Another related opinion was that UNAMSIL—and thus also UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL by way of the transition—could have done more to strengthen the institutional integrity of the police and other security institutions.[63]

3. Inclusion of the principles of good governance in the SSR process

An overarching finding of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was that 'unsound governance provided a context conducive for the interplay of poverty, marginalization, greed and grievances that caused and sustained the conflict'.[64] The lack of good governance was a particular feature that UNAMSIL and the follow-on offices were forced to deal with in support of the SSR mandates.

UNAMSIL never had a specific mandate to support good governance. In this sense, its role could have been seen as additive compared to the highly specific work undertaken in this area by the UK and the World Bank, for example, in helping to create public expenditure processes and increase transparency in budgetary decision making. Nonetheless, some interviewees stated that UNAMSIL helped in a broader sense, for example by supporting the first-ever elections to local councils in 2004, which for-

[56] Former DPKO official, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

[57] Center on International Cooperation, *Review of Political Missions, 2011* (New York University: New York, 2011), p. 49.

[58] United Nations (note 45), pp. 13–14.

[59] United Nations (note 45), pp. 13–14.

[60] Former government official, Interview with the author, 30 June 2022.

[61] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.

[62] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.

[63] National governance consultant, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.

[64] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, vol. 2, 2004, p. 7.

mally established three new levels of government—the national, local and chiefdom.[65] UNAMSIL also advocated for and supported the Anti-Corruption Commission and provided logistics and small-scale funding so that magistrates and civil servants could work in the countryside.[66] Civil Affairs Officers supported paramount chiefs and NGOs to address the issue of occupied land and properties, the lack of public utilities and other local controversies.[67] UNAMSIL, and later UNIOSIL and UNSPIL, were seen as contributing greatly to improved governance through their human rights-based approach, which helped to promote accountability in the security services.[68]

Unlike UNAMSIL, UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL had clear mandates to support good governance. According to one interviewee, this proved helpful in supporting the transition from UNAMSIL based on the needs of the country at that time. As a result, UNIOSIL helped to move the overriding focus from operationalizing the security sector to one where the very nature and strength of state institutions also received attention.[69] UNIOSIL continued to advocate and support tackling corruption, and support to elections was a continuing focus.[70] UNIPSIL and UNDP played a crucial role in the advice and support they provided to help implement the government's various strategic plans for the justice sector.[71] Both also teamed up with the UK in 2013 to support the creation of the Independent Police Complaints Board to increase SLP accountability.[72]

In critiquing the role of UNAMSIL in promoting good governance, one interviewee stated that, along with other international actors, it should have assisted the government more with legislative reform. A comprehensive review of the main SSR and related legislation was not undertaken until after UNAMSIL's exit.[73] This was particularly problematic with regard to outdated legislation that continued to govern the SLP.[74]

Given the higher level of expectation compared to UNAMSIL, some observers stated that UNIOSIL, UNIPSIL, the UK and others failed to provide enough assistance to address notable gaps in good governance that had existed before and continued to exist for many years after the conflict. One problem was that good governance programming was mostly limited to priority institutions, such as the police, the military, the ONS and apparatuses such as the Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU), while much less was done to strengthen governance across the entire security sector. [75] For example, the UN and others did not focus enough attention and resources on parliament's oversight function, to the extent that the relevant parliamentary committee was 'always very weak and underfunded'.[76] These and other failures meant that the required 'structural change in the governance realm did not materialize and this fact can unfortunately be seen today'.[77]

[65] Civil society activist, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022. Previously, paramount chiefs represented the only level of local government in the country.
[66] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[67] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[68] National governance consultant, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.
[69] National peacebuilding consultant, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.
[70] National peacebuilding consultant, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.
[71] Former government official, Interview with the author, 11 Oct. 2022.
[72] Bangura (note 50), p. 18.
[73] Civil society representative, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.
[74] Civil society representative, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.
[75] Bangura (note 50), pp. 29–30.
[76] National peacebuilding consultant, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.
[77] Civil society activist, Interview with the author, 4 Oct. 2022.

4. Acknowledgement of multilevel governance and willingness to engage with non-state actors

In the case of Sierra Leone, former combatants, traditional hunters, paramount and local chiefs, and other non-state actors have traditionally provided security and justice at local levels in times of peace and conflict. During the interviews for this case study, the role played by paramount chiefs in this regard was particularly highlighted as a key component of support to SSR. UNAMSIL and the two follow-on UN offices supported SSR in a society based on 149 traditional chiefdoms across the country.[78]

These chieftains were specifically targeted during the war, which greatly weakened this traditional system. Due to their role in pre-war governance, the government decided to re-establish and support the paramount chiefs early on in the post-war period. This decision received significant backing from the UK, including through the development of a chiefdom governance reform programme.[79] President Kabbah in particular wanted the chiefs back, given their role in managing disputes over land, taxation and other issues surrounding the extractive economy.[80]

UNAMSIL was initially reluctant to support the chiefs, as many grievances had been raised by citizens about the bias, corruption or other deficiencies of some chiefs.[81] The nature of the system was also problematic: a small number of long-standing ruling families nominate representatives for a vote by a tribal authority, which means that not everyone in a chiefdom can vote as in most other elections.[82] However, since the government and the UK were 'so forceful' in supporting the chiefs, and in the light of their important role as providers of local services, UNAMSIL eventually decided to help facilitate their work as much as possible.[83]

UNAMSIL helped to fill chiefdom vacancies and used Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to provide offices and employ administrative personnel. The chiefs became key partners in maintaining security. Regular meetings were held between UN agencies and the chiefs to discuss local security and other developments. The main points were then reported directly to the relevant government office and to UNAMSIL Headquarters.[84] This practice fostered information exchange and ensured situational awareness, while the interaction in itself increased cooperation and trust in the mission.[85]

One criticism of UNAMSIL was that it 'did not strengthen the chiefs in terms of new ways of working or being better or doing things differently'.[86] Such an approach appears to have been considered by UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL, as well as by UNDP. UNIPSIL organized training workshops specifically for the paramount chiefs, covering themes and topics on which the chiefs lacked knowledge and understanding, such as combating sexual and gender-based violence. UNDP provided most of the funding for the Chiefdom Security Committees, which were designed to function in the overall decentralized system managed by the ONS.[87]

Nonetheless, a main theme of the interviews was that more could have been done to reform the chiefdoms. As local government became more present and active after 2004, following the first local elections and the end of UNAMSIL's mandate, one proposal for

[78] In 2017, 41 new chiefdoms were created, bringing the total to 190.

[79] Albrecht, P. and Jackson, P., *Securing Sierra Leone, 1997–2013: Defence, Development and Diplomacy in Action*, Whitehall Paper no. 82 (Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies: London, 2014), p. 64.

[80] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.

[81] Former international NGO representative, Interview with the author, 30 June 2022.

[82] Former civil society representative, Interview with the author, 11 Oct. 2022.

[83] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.

[84] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.

[85] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.

[86] National governance consultant, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.

[87] Albrecht and Jackson (note 79), p. 64.

reform was to better align the chiefdoms with the process of decentralization by creating a new type of relationship between the chiefs and local government authorities.[88]

5. National and local political leadership and commitment to SSR

President Kabbah is widely regarded as having 'embraced the concept' of SSR in the early years, actively seeking international support.[89] This commitment greatly assisted UNAMSIL to implement its mandate, as well as the planning stage of the transition to UNIOSIL.

For example, Kabbah appointed foreign nationals to lead the army and the police in 1999.[90] As noted above, another notable effort was the creation of the ONS and its decentralized approach to implementing SSR. President Kabbah also led on securing buy-in from across society to support decision making and reforms. In this regard, Sierra Leone is notable among post-conflict African states for the 'political consensus between the government and the general population that significant SSR must take place' and that there was 'a process for ensuring that reform priorities were broadly shared'.[91]

Despite the early successes, however, Kabbah and the government eventually lost interest in the SSR process as the transition from UNAMSIL to UNIOSIL approached. One view is that as the post-conflict recovery took hold, the overall management and competing priorities of the state became more demanding.[92] Another view is that the SSR process became 'over-advised'. According to one interviewee, the president 'became confused [by] too much advice and too many advisers on SSR'. The institutions were 'following the money' and the government concluded that it could 'let the process go to a certain extent'.[93] Others describe how most ministries were less interested in the SSR process and national security matters in general by 2005.[94] By this time, UNAMSIL's mandate had ended and UNIOSIL had taken over.

Many in the top echelons of the security sector were never fully on board or supportive. Some military and other officials 'felt that it was their domain, not for the country but for their own purposes, and that they would have no future if SSR was to be done the way Kabbah and internationals wanted it'.[95] Some resistance was overcome, for example, in employing well-regarded civil servants to lead directorates in the Ministry of Defence, which was considered another notable effort by the government to try to develop the ministry as the country's flagship agency.[96] The prevailing consensus found in a number of interviews, however, was that many below the president had always wanted to reduce the international role in SSR.

Some observers also noted the lack of *local* political ownership. Many local leaders came to believe that the international community's support for the SSR process was overbearing and did not adequately take account of local views.[97] The assessment that emerges is that UNAMSIL could have focused more on empowering local political leadership of SSR by giving 'higher visibility to local political actors in SSR so that a

[88] Jackson, P., 'Reshuffling an old deck of cards? The politics of local government reform in Sierra Leone', *African Affairs*, vol. 106, no. 422 (Jan. 2007), pp. 95–111.

[89] von Dyck, C., *DDR and SSR in War-to peace-Transition*, SSR Paper no. 14 (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces/Ubiquity Press: London, 2018), p. 59.

[90] Brigadier-General Maxwell Mitikishe Khobe of Nigeria was appointed Chief of Defence Staff. Assistant Inspector of the Constabulary Keith Biddle of the UK was appointed Inspector-General of the SLP.

[91] Detzner (note 2), p. 123.

[92] National consultant on peacebuilding, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[93] National consultant on conflict resolution, Interview with the author, 5 July 2022.

[94] Albrecht and Jackson (note 79), p. 49.

[95] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.

[96] Former government official, Interview with the author, 11 Oct. 2022.

[97] National governance consultant, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.

stronger sense of local ownership was crafted to undergird support for the process'.[98] In turn, that support could have been a central feature of the transition to UNIOSIL. It appears that this role became more relevant to UNIPSIL by way of its political mandate, given that it tried to focus in particular on 'political facilitation and outreach with local political stakeholders'.[99]

6. Level of embeddedness of the SSR process in broader recovery frameworks

As stated above, the government's early decision to relate SSR to reducing poverty was noteworthy at the time for recognizing the security–development nexus and promoting the sustainability of efforts. The decision also provided UNAMSIL, UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL, along with the UN country team, with a collaborative framework and wider reference point for providing SSR support based on their respective mandates.
The government collaborated closely on developing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) through the Development Partnership Committee established with UNAMSIL, UNDP, other UN entities, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and national partners. The Interim PRSP (IPRSP) set the stage for linking SSR to human rights, reconciliation, job creation, healthcare, education, agricultural development and other indicators of social and economic development.

UNAMSIL and UNDP coordinated closely to support the government with developing the National Recovery Strategy (NRS) in late 2002. The thinking regarding UNAMSIL was that its role should be seen more as 'pre-PRSP'.[100] The PRSP process was a long-term and complicated exercise with many layers that would deliver noticeable results only in the distant future. Thus, UNAMSIL in particular should focus on showing that the government was back functioning and delivering, in particular on the ground in the countryside.[101] UNAMSIL and UNDP subsequently led on setting up the NRC to develop the NRS with representation from a wide cross-section of society. The NRS was designed in particular to be aligned with the longer-term PRSP process in all respects.[102] The UN regarded this early support to the NRS and more broadly the nascent PRSP process as 'a deliberate, quick programme focused on showing that the government could deliver for the people'.[103] UNAMSIL also used QIPS to support NRS implementation, for example to refurbish military barracks.[104]

UNDP also supported a longer-term perspective and committed itself from the beginning to support the development and implementation of the PRSPs.[105] In 2003, for example, UNDP funded a local NGO to organize PRSP sensitization workshops on all aspects of poverty reduction in the 14 administrative districts of Sierra Leone, with the participation of government officials, civil society representatives, former combatants and paramount chiefs, among others.[106]

The PRSP process had been embedded and anchored by the end of UNAMSIL's mandate. UNIOSIL and UNISPIL continued this approach, seeing support to SSR through

[98] National governance consultant, Interview with the author, 28 July 2022.
[99] Dagash (note 51), p. 4.
[100] Former UNAMSIL staff member, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[101] Former UNAMSIL staff member, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[102] Government of Sierra Leone, *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: A National Programme for Food Security, Job Creation and Good Governance, 2005–2007*, Feb. 2005, p. 4.
[103] Former UNAMSIL staff member, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[104] Former UNAMSIL staff member, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[105] PRSPs were initially updated every three years and later every five years along with the Agenda for Change (2007–12) and the Agenda for Prosperity (2013–2018).
[106] Government of Sierra Leone (note 102), p. 15. A key outcome from this exercise was the emergence of voluntary regional and district civil society groups known as PRSP Task Teams. These teams were formally constituted, remained operational and worked closely with PASCO and partner organizations/institutions in the PRSP civic engagement process.

the prism of poverty reduction. The 2008 Joint Vision and the 2012 Transitional Joint Vision mentioned above, for example, written by UNIPSIL and the UN country team, put poverty analysis at the centre of developing SSR and other programming.

7. Civil society involvement in support of local ownership of SSR

One of the most prominent findings in the literature and from the interviews is that UNAMSIL and to a lesser extent UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL often found it difficult to help make civil society organizations (CSOs) key contributors to and stakeholders in the SSR process, above the level of promoting dialogue and communication with them. The government early on placed a strong focus on developing the RSLAF and the police, largely on its own. In this regard, some saw the government as taking a purely operational and technical approach to this task, and expecting 'softer issues like relationships and input from CSOs and others to come later'.[107]

A more embedded reason for the insufficient CSO involvement in SSR was that 'relations between civil society and the security sector were based on fear, suspicion and outright mistrust'.[108] In addition, CSOs and the public more generally had little information on the government's SSR-related decision making, including decisions made with international community input. According to one civil society representative, few knew that SSR was being pursued 'as a structured process that involved strong collaboration between the UK and Sierra Leone governments, with input from UNAMSIL'.[109] While this could be attributed to poor communications, successive governments were concerned about the credibility and political neutrality of some CSOs and therefore decided not to involve them at the strategic level.[110]

Over time, the decentralized approach of the ONS, as well as the increasing promotion of the role of CSOs by the UK and other international actors improved CSO involvement in the SSR process. The 2005 Security Sector Review included significant input from CSOs, specifically from three major consultative workshops that were held in the Northern, Southern and Eastern Provinces.[111]

Both UNAMSIL Special Representatives of the Secretary-General were described in interviews as particularly supportive of CSOs. The first instituted a weekly meeting with CSOs to exchange information and identify concerns, which were duly raised with the government.[112] The second directed the mission to support the Mano River Women's Peace Network, helping to establish and fund its headquarters in Freetown.[113] UNAMSIL spearheaded a more general effort to link international missions to the country with CSOs, which involved organizing and hosting meetings.[114]

UNIOSIL was regarded by some as extremely helpful in assisting CSOs to access the PBF and providing its own expertise on developing projects with the PBSO.[115] A former UNIPSIL staff member described UNIOSIL as being 'super active' in meeting and working with CSOs, with the goal of protecting the civic space and helping to develop projects.[116] One criticism was that the UNIPSIL leadership appeared to lose the more structured engagement with CSOs that might have existed with UNIOSIL and certainly

[107] Women's rights advocate, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[108] Hanson-Alp, R., *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997–2007: Civil Society's Role in Sierra Leone's Security Sector Reform Process, Experiences from Conciliation Resources*, GFN-SSR, West Africa Programme, Paper no. 12 (Oct. 2008), p. 5.

[109] Hanson-Alp (note 108), p. 6.

[110] Government official, Interview with the author, 25 Oct. 2022.

[111] Ebo (note 15), p. 488.

[112] Women's rights advocate, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[113] Women's rights advocate, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[114] Former government official and civil society representative, Interview with the author, 11 Oct. 2022.

[115] Women's rights advocate, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[116] Former UNIPSIL staff member, Interview with the author, 11 July 2022.

did with UNAMSIL.[117] The UN more broadly was also criticized for contributing to the creation of 'parallel CSOs' rather than strengthening existing ones.[118]

Overall, the civil society representatives interviewed stated that CSOs were not adequately involved in the SSR process in the time of UNAMSIL, UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL. They considered it a mistake for the government to have delayed early engagement with civil society for the sake of operationalizing the army and police. This could have provided an early entry point for important input and oversight in support of their longer-term development. While UN support was maintained, what appeared to be lacking as the transitions to UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL took place were efforts to better anchor the role of CSOs in the SSR process to maintain input at the top levels of national policymaking and decision making.

8. Application of a gender-responsive SSR process

Given the nature of the country and the conflict, all the UN presences in Sierra Leone needed to factor gender dimensions into the SSR process. More than 250 000 women and girls were raped during the conflict, thousands more were mutilated and sexual slavery was widespread.[119] In the immediate post-conflict recovery phase, women were still victims of sexual and gender-based violence and remained lower than men in most social and cultural hierarchies.[120]

The government acknowledged that gender inequality was a public policy issue and set out broad corrective efforts, including in the security sector.[121] The PRSPs also sought to mainstream gender issues in all their various programmes and projects. A more concrete effort was made in 2001 when the SLP created Family Support Units (FSUs).[122]

Even after the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Security Council never specifically tasked UNAMSIL with helping to address issues specific to women and girls. Even so, the mission did try to support certain aspects of a gender-responsive SSR process by way of its mandated security and other tasks. For example, UNAMSIL worked with the UK to create a fast-track programme to give women the educational requirements needed to join the SLP.[123] UNAMSIL also made a specific effort to mainstream gender in its work, including awareness-raising for its own staff. However, this was assessed as falling well short of any impactful and holistic effort, in part because the mission had only one gender adviser from 2003 until its closure.[124] Most notably, gender considerations were specifically identified as

[117] UNIPSIL hosted a major meeting with CSOs in the summer of 2011 to discuss institutionalizing engagement with CSOs. The effort was commended but deemed something that should have been launched much earlier. See United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, 'First ERSG-CSO engagement meeting', Press release, 16 Aug. 2011.

[118] United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (note 117).

[119] Ibrahim, A. F., *The Integration of a Gender Perspective in the Sierra Leone Police* (DCAF: Geneva, 2012), p. 12.

[120] Women had a lower status than men in society; with some exceptions, they did not contribute to political affairs and they did not own land, even though they constituted the majority of agricultural workers. Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone (note 64), vol. 3, p. 89.

[121] With the support of the UN International Children's Emergency Fund, the government published two policies to help improve the situation of women: the National Policy on the Advancement of Women, and the National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming. See Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone (note 64), vol. 3, p. 228.

[122] FSUs were established to 'respond to incidences of sexual, physical and emotional abuse of women and children within the family unit, investigate such cases of abuse and subsequently bring perpetrators to justice and facilitate healing and reintegration of survivors'. See Ibrahim (note 119), p. 18.

[123] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.

[124] Date-Bah, E., *Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming Work and Impact of United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL): Final Report prepared for DPKO*, 19 Apr. 2006, p. 6.

having been inadequately considered in the mission's exit strategy and transition plan to UNIOSIL.[125]

UNIOSIL's mandate called for 'initiatives for the protection and well-being of youth, women and children'.[126] Concerns were raised early on, however, that UNIOSIL was not focused on implementing this part of its mandate, that gender mainstreaming was not being prioritized and that no gender advisers were included in UNIOSIL staffing.[127] UNIOSIL was later perceived to be taking gender issues more seriously and a specific plan for implementing this aspect of the mandate was developed.[128] UNIOSIL also contributed to the development and promotion of three major gender laws, which were passed by parliament in 2007 with funding and other support from UNDP.[129]

Some interviewees stated that, looking back, the SSR process led by the government began as and mostly remained one of exclusion for women or inaction on gender-related commitments. Some women were supported in certain key roles and functions at the higher levels of state institutions, but this support was often seen as being only for appearances. At the local level, women were rarely involved substantively or for long enough, including in the respective local SSR-related committees mentioned above.[130] More targeted or substantive efforts could have been made throughout the three specific transitions from UNAMSIL to UNIOSIL, UNIPSIL and the UN country team to help to address the inherent conditions for gender exclusion in order to support mandate implementation by all the UN operations.

9. Linkages and synergies between the SSR process and the DDR programme

UNAMSIL led on running the dedicated DDR programme, which as stated above was completed two years before the end of the mission's mandate at the end of 2005. In coordination with the National Committee for DDR, and with financial and technical assistance from the World Bank, almost 73 000 former combatants were disarmed, almost 69 000 were demobilized and nearly 57 000 were registered and trained at the reintegration stage.[131] Another 2600 combatants from the RUF, the CDF and others were placed in the RSLAF as part of the British-designed Military Reintegration Programme.[132]

DDR in Sierra Leone has been described as the SSR 'forerunner' in the country, and the Military Reintegration Programme was one of the more direct links between the two processes.[133] The UN promoted the importance of the DDR programme to the SSR process, and the latter arose as a direct result of the success of the former.[134] Others argue that progress with SSR aided DDR and other related initiatives, such as small arms and lights weapons reduction.[135] Looking back, especially given that the UN's DDR activities were also acknowledged as haphazard, UN officials believe that UNAMSIL should have approached SSR and DDR as mutually reinforcing and beneficial, as is

[125] Date-Bah (note 124), p. 32.

[126] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1620 (note 32), p. 2.

[127] Date-Bah (note 124), p. 44.

[128] M'Cornmack, F., Helpdesk Research Report, 'UN peace support mission transition in Sierra Leone', *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, 30 Mar. 2012, p. 7.

[129] These were the Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Devolution of Estates Act.

[130] Women's rights advocate, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

[131] Knight, W. A., 'Linking DDR and SSR in post conflict peace-building in Africa: An overview', *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, vol. 4, no. 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 48.

[132] Knight (note 131), p. 48.

[133] Knight (note 131), p. 47.

[134] United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 'The SSR experience of Sierra Leone, a shining model in West Africa and beyond', News story, 18 Aug. 2017.

[135] See Bangura (note 14), p. 15.

now more common in UN operations.[136] At that time, however, the main question was simply how to do DDR.[137]

With regard to the reintegration phase of DDR, for example, UNAMSIL together with UNDP assisted with training and assistance projects. These efforts were 'stop-gap' and provided only a small element of opportunity.[138] It was openly expected that the training would not lead to jobs, which were expected only once the wider economic recovery took hold.[139] There was considerable criticism from some of the Sierra Leoneans interviewed that there was never enough funding even for the stop-gap approach, that 'it all dried up too early' and that the government did not step in to compensate.[140]

Another critical assessment of the DDR programme was the failure of UNAMSIL to be gender-sensitive, let alone gender-responsive. DDR criteria often excluded women. In one example, a gun or other weapon had to be surrendered to qualify for the programme, and many women had unarmed roles in the conflict. The mission did not foresee how difficult it would be for women fighters or those who provided care to combatants or served as slaves to come forward, given the stigma associated with their roles and status during the conflict.[141] Many therefore tried to 'disappear'.[142] None of the reintegration support was sufficiently gender-responsive in what was a DDR programme built on, launched and completed in a patriarchal society.[143]

The main thrust of the feedback received from the interviewees was that reintegration must be 'genuine' in terms of men and women moving on with their lives, starting with the need to ensure that they no longer pose a risk to communities or to national security. This was not the case at the end of UNAMSIL's mandate or the beginning of UNIOSIL's mandate.[144] The main objection was that UNAMSIL failed to understand the psychological element in successful DDR, including the confidence that former combatants and communities need to feel about their future and social cohesion. This would have required a more flexible, more adaptable and longer-term approach to DDR than that undertaken by UNAMSIL, and should possibly have been part of UNOSIL's SSR mandate as part of the transition.

10. Involvement of external non-UN actors, donors and partners in the SSR process

The UK maintained its notable lead role in reforming security institutions in Sierra Leone during the UN's SSR efforts across the mission transitions. With continuous UN input, the British led on helping the Sierra Leonean government to develop core SSR policies and plans, initiate large-scale justice, security and other programmes, and directly finance the security sector.

The UK launched its defining effort, the Sierra Leone SSR Programme (SILEP), in 1999. As noted above, IMATT was created to assist UNAMSIL in 2000 after the British intervention against the RUF. IMATT operated until 2013 and was succeeded by the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT). In close coordination with the different UN presences, IMATT/ISAT worked alongside many other significant British efforts to support the defence, police, judicial and other fields. They also supported police reform through the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force and the Community

[136] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.
[137] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[138] United Nations Department of Public Information, 'UNAMSIL: The story behind the success in Sierra Leone', *Today's Peacekeepers*, Press release, 29 May 2003.
[139] ReliefWeb, 'Reintegration: Buying time for peace in Sierra Leone', *OCHA Services*, 19 July 2001.
[140] National consultant on peacekeeping, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.
[141] Former government official, Interview with the author, 30 June 2022.
[142] Former government official, Interview with the author, 30 June 2022.
[143] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[144] National consultant on peacekeeping, Interview with the author, 26 July 2022.

Safety and Security Project. The UK helped strengthen the justice sector even further through the Justice Sector Development Programme, which succeeded SILEP and in 2012 became the Access to Security and Justice Programme.

The British entered into a 10-year SSR agreement with the government in 2002 at a cost of £40 million per year. This agreement at the time made Sierra Leone the UK's largest per capita assistance recipient in the world.[145] The £40 million covered SSR and associated activities, such as governance reform and decentralization. In order to leverage implementation, the UK linked financial and other support through memorandums of understanding in other recovery areas to fulfilment of the SSR agreement. The UK is believed to have used this practice a small number of times to help push the SSR process forward.[146] The agreement did not include IMATT funding, which at the time of the transition from UNAMSIL to UNIOSIL was estimated to be about £10 million per year.[147]

Overall, the UK-led SSR effort is regarded as SSR good practice: 'one organization or nation should be recognized as the lead in any given effort, tasked with the responsibility of coordinating all SSR-related efforts in the respective area'.[148] In most other situations, governments 'play multiple, uncoordinated bilateral partners against one another . . . '.[149] Regardless of the expressed disagreements and the mistakes made by the UK, and the sometimes dominant nature of the British involvement, the assessed consensus from the interviews was that British engagement was welcomed in the overall manner and terms that it was provided.

UNAMSIL's role and the roles of the follow-on offices were described as 'auxiliary' and 'supplementary' to that of the UK in directly supporting SSR. Some saw UNAMSIL's role more as supporting overall peacebuilding and reconciliation: working in communities to protect and foster trust in state institutions, local police boards and other mechanisms; promoting and ensuring access to justice; initiating QIPs to improve local living conditions; and creating and then handing over UN Radio to Sierra Leoneans.[150] Others saw UNAMSIL's role and those of the follow-on offices as more central to supporting and directly contributing to SSR, arguing that the UN 'midwifed' the SSR process and provided notable concrete support to the SLP and other institutions.[151] Regardless of the perspective, the UN overall was seen as implementing its SSR mandate within an overall framework set by the British that was decided with and agreed by the government.

One constant theme of the research and the interviews was how well the UK and the UN worked together based on a division of labour and, implicitly, how the dedicated, longer-term role played by the UK worked in favour of the transitions that took place to different types of UN office and presence. This partnership was notable for the Sierra Leoneans themselves and provided a view of the 'good side' of the international community.[152] One interviewee lamented that, 'unfortunately, we are not seeing this kind of model and more generally this kind of cooperation anymore today'.[153]

[145] Albrecht and Jackson (note 79), pp. 1–2.
[146] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.
[147] Albrecht and Jackson (note 79), p. 2.
[148] Detzner (note 2), p. 129.
[149] Detzner (note 2), p. 129.
[150] Government official, Interview with the author, 25 Oct. 2022.
[151] Former government official, Interview with the author, 30 June 2022.
[152] National consultant, Interview with the author, 5 July 2022.
[153] Former UNIPSIL official, Interview with the author, 11 July 2022.

11. Availability of sustainable funding for the SSR process

The consistently narrow national funding base made the generation of major external funding for the SSR process in Sierra Leone a constant requirement throughout the UN transitions. At the time of the transition from UNAMSIL to UNIOSIL, the budget for SSR for the period 2005–2007 was set out in PRSP II. Le852.8 billion (*c*. $18 billion) was required to promote security in the country overall during this three-year period. Within that total, which also included separate governance and other costs, the main costs of military and police reform were calculated at Le204 billion (*c*. $4.4 billion) and Le180 billion (*c*. $3.9 billion), respectively.[154] The government allocated national financing in the amount of Le126 billion (*c*. $2.7 billion) for the military and Le61 billion (*c*. $1.35 billion) for the police. An additional Le78 billion (*c*. $1.7billion) for the military and an additional Le120 billion (*c*. $2.5 billion) for the police were therefore required in this three-year period.

The UK led on directly financing SSR but after 2010 it consistently scaled-back and cut funding for mechanisms such as the CISU. The CISU was widely considered key to managing the security sector in the same way as the ONS was.[155] In addition to domestic priorities that rerouted funding to other sectors, 'the UK also just lost interest in SSR'.[156] Falls in donor funding exposed how donor dependency had continued for so many years and in turn how the government failed to put in place adequate funding arrangements for the security sector. The Sierra Leonean government was keenly aware that international funding and other SSR assistance would eventually decline but did not demonstrate adequate political will to prepare for this decline in advance.[157]

In the case of UNAMSIL, supporting sustainable funding of the SSR process was not specifically inherent in the security-focused mandate. Interviews suggest that the mission prioritized the need for sustainable funding mostly in the context of advocacy and advice. It 'tried extensively to tease out the implications' of decisions in relation to what the country could afford in order to maintain a secure state.[158] Advising the government on its objective of keeping the size of the army low was 'one factor key to achieving financial sustainability'.[159]

It was initially recommended that UNIOSIL assist in 'improving budgetary and expenditure processes, procurement and concessions practices and the Sierra Leone revenue base'.[160] In the final Security Council Resolution, this task was subsumed into supporting good governance to assist with 'improved fiscal management'. The research and interviews suggest that UNIOSIL undertook more of an advocacy and advisory role in this area, promoting the development of the PRSPs and calling for World Bank expenditure reviews, among other efforts. According to one interviewee, 'one of the most important things was to advocate that the government needed a security sector it could afford'.[161]

UNIPSIL took more of a lead coordination role on supporting the sustainable funding of SSR, for example by co-chairing a donor coordination committee with the World Bank. At this stage, however, the donor pool had become small and fatigued, and the

[154] Government of Sierra Leone (note 102), p. 111.
[155] Albrecht and Jackson (note 79), p. 106.
[156] National consultant, Interview with the author, 5 July 2022.
[157] Government official, Interview with the author, 25 Oct. 2022.
[158] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[159] Former senior UNAMSIL official, Interview with the author, 27 Sep. 2022.
[160] United Nations Security Council, Twenty-fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2005/273/Add.2, 28 July 2005, p. 2.
[161] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the author, 15 Sep. 2022.

Multi Donor Trust Fund, managed jointly by UNIPSIL and the UN country team, had a constant funding shortfall throughout the final transition to the UN country team.[162]

The final SSR programme developed by UNIPSIL and UNDP in 2013 gave prominence to the financial viability of the sector, although the specific role or contribution of UNIPSIL, UNDP or other UN entities was not set out. The document called for a new World Bank expenditure review, given that the last one had been undertaken in 2006. While the document identified a need 'to ensure the sector as a whole is integrated into the broader budgetary framework…so that it is financially enabled to meet the security needs of Sierra Leoneans', it contained no ideas or proposals on how the two UN entities could help to achieve this or how the UN country team could continue such work following the end of UNIPSIL's mandate.[163]

V. Conclusions

The transition from UNAMSIL to the UN country team took place over nine years between 2005 and 2014, with a view to ensuring the sustainability of the UN's efforts on SSR and in other areas. In between, two follow-on UN offices were mandated by the UN Security Council to support the government in Sierra Leone with SSR and other peacebuilding and development matters. UNIOSIL was created because it was recognized that the security sector needed continued long-term support in the wider context of peacebuilding. UNIPISL deployed for six years between 2008 and 2014 to try to 'politically safeguard' SSR and the other gains achieved by the government, with lead support from the UK and notable additional assistance from the UN country team and other international and bilateral partners.

The transitions from each UN entity were carefully planned to focus on various facets of SSR, as fragile and nascent gains were achieved. The five benchmarks that were established for UNAMSIL's transition were very broad and open to interpretation, but nonetheless critically assessed at the time to the extent that UNAMSIL's transition was characterized by a significant level of caution by the Security Council before it called for an end to the mandate. In turn, the follow-on peacebuilding and political offices were given mandates by the Security Council based on extensive and lengthy assessments, and consultative processes that reviewed the state of current SSR challenges and future needs in the specific context of post-peacekeeping.

In this regard, the various transitions to each follow-on entity can be considered a success. Mandates were adjusted to factor in the role of each UN entity based on the efforts of the government, the assistance being provided by the UK and more general relevant developments on the ground, which were typically limited and fragile. For example, UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL were mandated to focus much more on promoting good governance than UNAMSIL. Based on the experience and challenges of UNAMSIL and UNIOSIL, UNIPSIL received a mandate that contained determined language on assisting with the creation of a gender-responsive SSR process.

Research for this case study suggests that UNAMSIL, UNIOSIL and UNISIPIL could each have been more determined when implementing their respective SSR mandates in the context of their respective transitions. This could have more positively affected the still-challenging environments in which the next follow-on UN entity engaged. For example, UNAMSIL could have done more to assist CSOs to gain greater input into the SSR process at the strategic level. UNIOSIL could have focused more on strengthening

[162] Center on International Cooperation, *Review of Political Missions, 2011* (New York University: New York, 2011), p. 48.

[163] Joint UNIPSIL and UNDP Project on Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone, *Building Effective and Accountable Institutions for Increased Citizen Security*, Peacebuilding Support Office/Peacebuilding Fund, 13 Sep. 2013, p. 13.

the parliamentary oversight capacity of SSR and on fostering local political leadership of the SSR process. UNIPSIL could have advised more on sustainable SSR financing in an environment in which it was clear that national funding would remain inadequate and international donor support had already waned.

4. Security sector reform and the transition of the UN peace operation in Côte d'Ivoire

KEVIN STEEVES AND ABEL GBALA

I. Introduction

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was a large multidimensional peacekeeping operation that was deployed for a little over 13 years between 2004 and 2017. Following general elections in 2010, it was able to work more effectively in support of the new national authorities that came to power. UNOCI then operated on the basis of a broad mandate that involved the protection of civilians, security sector reform (SSR), humanitarian assistance and elections, among other issues.

While UNOCI's mandate covered numerous areas and activities, it was tasked in particular with giving 'added focus' to SSR and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants.[1] Based on UN Security Council Resolution 2062, UNOCI became the designated lead international actor helping the government and local actors to develop SSR policies, strategies and initiatives, while also coordinating international and other UN support to the SSR process.

UNOCI is notable for the decisions by and manner in which it transitioned and exited the country in mid-2017. No follow-on UN office or special political mission was deployed to continue SSR or other tasks before the final transition to the national authorities and the UN country team. At the time, this approach stood in contrast to Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, among others, where UN peacekeeping operations had previously deployed and also transitioned. In these cases, some mandated tasks were transitioned further to intermediary UN peacebuilding or political offices, before a final transition was made some years later to national authorities and the UN country team that normally operates in a country before, during and after a peacekeeping deployment.

Section II outlines the background and context to the deployment of UNOCI. Section III discusses the planning and implementation of the SSR transition. Section IV assesses the successes and failures of the SSR transition in the light of the 11 factors identified in chapter 2. Section V provides the conclusions.

II. Background and context

The 2002 crisis and ensuing peace agreements

The deployment of UNOCI came about as a consequence of an armed political crisis that erupted in September 2002, following a failed coup against the government of President Laurent Gbagbo. Generally speaking, army officers were unhappy with working conditions and their treatment by the government. More specifically, many feared demobilization at a time when, following general elections in 2000, Gbagbo had begun to concentrate his support among the police and gendarmerie, and relations with the army were deteriorating.[2]

The damaging political and security environment underpinning this and earlier coups took shape in the 1990s, following the death in 1993 of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who is widely acknowledged to have established stable civil-military relations

[1] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2062, 26 July 2012, p. 3.

[2] Martin, P. A., 'Briefing: Security sector reform and civil-military relations in postwar Côte d'Ivoire', *African Affairs*, vol. 117, no. 468 (July 2018), pp. 525–26.

and instilled professional norms in what were largely regarded as apolitical security forces.[3] He appointed Alassane Dramane Ouattara prime minister in 1990. Ouattara went on to lead his own party after 1993, eventually from exile, and became president in 2010, leading the country's overall post-crisis reunification and recovery effort until 2020.[4]

The succession crisis that erupted following the death of Houphouët-Boigny resulted in the election of President Konan Bédié. Bédié led for six years by creating an ideology that 'sowed the seeds of ethno-religious and socio-political discord' alongside a culture of impunity in the armed forces.[5] This led to a short-lived military government in 2000 following a coup d'état, after which Robert Guéï, who had been dismissed by Bédié as head of the army, was appointed president by the junta. There had been mass human rights abuses and other crimes by the military before the election of Gbagbo in October 2002.[6]

The failed 2002 coup cut the country in two, causing social division and a security crisis for the next decade. The south came under the control of President Gbagbo's government, while the north was controlled by the Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), which later became the Forces Nouvelles (FN). In fighting between the two sides, atrocities were committed against civilians and there was targeted violence against women. Eight peace agreements were signed between 2002 and 2007 to try to address the root causes of the conflict, which were related to the need for political reform and power-sharing, as well as issues around citizenship, land ownership and the territorial integrity of the state.[7]

SSR was never explicitly addressed in any of the eight agreements. Some, such as the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, contained DDR measures and notable mechanisms such as an Integrated Command Centre (CCI). In the case of the CCI, however, both sides maintained their own separate armies and recruited their own soldiers until the disarmament process was completed after 2010.[8] The 2007 Ouagadougou Agreement limited the primary focus of any reform of the security sector to merging the Ivoirian Defence and Security Forces with the FN to create Les Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI). This 'postpon[ed] the question of developing the country's new security-sector policy and architecture until after the elections when a strong, elected president would take office'.[9]

UNOCI interposes together with France

The UN Security Council authorized the deployment of UNOCI in April 2004.[10] In the early years of UNOCI's engagement in Côte d'Ivoire, it was mostly an 'interposition force' to support the so-called zone of confidence between the north and the south and later to monitor the 'Green Line'.[11] UNOCI undertook this work and more broadly helped to ensure security in close coordination with the France-led Operation Licorne.

[3] See Ehui, R., 'Côte d'Ivoire: Mutineer's paradise?', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1 (2019), p. 114.

[4] Novosseloff, A., *The Many Lives of a Peacekeeping Mission: The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2018), p. 3.

[5] See Ehui (note 3), pp. 114–15.

[6] See Ehui (note 3), p. 115.

[7] The agreements were the 2002 Accra I Agreement; the 2002 Lomé Agreement; the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Agreement; the 2003 Accra II Agreement; the 2004 Accra III Agreement; the 2005 Pretoria I Agreement; the 2005 Pretoria II Agreement; and the 2007 Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

[8] Boutellis, A., *The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace* (International Peace Institute: New York, 2011), p. 15.

[9] Boutellis (note 8), p. 8.

[10] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1528, 27 Feb. 2004.

[11] United Nations Security Council, 'Role of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire: Special Report of the Secretary-General', S/2018/958, 29 Oct. 2018, p. 1.

Operation Licorne was first deployed to the country to protect French citizens after the September 2002 coup. It was later mandated by the Security Council in 2004 to 'use all necessary means' to support UNOCI until the operation was ended in 2015.[12]

The roles of UNOCI and Operation Licorne have been described as mutually beneficial: 'UNOCI never would have succeeded without Licorne, and Licorne never would have succeeded without UNOCI'.[13] This enabling partnership was ultimately tested in early 2011 when the final result of the 2010 general election was contested. This crisis led to a renewal of the armed political conflict, forcing UNOCI and Operation Licorne to protect Ouattara in the capital and use robust force over the course of several months to ensure the democratic transfer of power while many in the security services remained loyal to Gbagbo. According to one observer: 'Ouattara may not have won the "battle of Abidjan" without this joint UN and French involvement'.[14] The crisis of 2010 resulted in approximately 3000 deaths and widespread sexual and gender-based violence, and displaced an additional 600 000 people from their homes.[15]

Prioritized SSR mandate to support stability and recovery

The election of President Ouattara ushered in a new phase for UNOCI to assist with addressing the causes and consequences of the 2002 and 2010 crises. The new president openly called on UNOCI and the UN as a whole to support the post-crisis recovery effort. In this context, UNOCI received its first SSR mandate in July 2011.[16] In July 2012, noting that the protection of civilians 'shall remain the priority for UNOCI', the Security Council decided that UNOCI should 'put added focus on supporting the Government on DDR and SSR'.[17]

From 2011 until the end of the mandate in 2017, UNOCI actively supported the government and worked closely with international and national partners to implement the SSR mandate prioritized by the Security Council. The mission's efforts proceeded along five avenues of support: the development of a national SSR strategy and a national policy on DDR; the creation of sensitization and national dialogues on SSR; efforts to decentralize security; the creation of democratic oversight and security legislation; and coordination of UN and international SSR efforts.[18]

National-led engagement and initiative on SSR

The election of President Ouattara led to a number of early decisions and actions on launching SSR and DDR in earnest for the first time. Ouattara expressed a personal desire to initiate and oversee the launch of an SSR process.[19] Before his official inauguration, in May 2011, Ouattara issued a decree to bring the DSF and the FN together as the FRCI. One reading of this decision is that Ouattara was aiming to end tensions and conflict between the DSF and the FN, while also signalling early on that DSF members would be welcome in the new armed forces if they ended their loyalty to former president Gbagbo.[20]

Other government efforts included the creation in April 2012 of a National Security Council (CNS) and a Working Group on SSR. UNOCI provided 'robust' support to

[12] United Nations Security Council S/2018/958 (note 11), p. 6.
[13] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 26.
[14] Boutellis (note 8), p. 14.
[15] Human Rights Watch, 'Côte d'Ivoire: What legacy for President Ouattara?' Press release, 8 Dec. 2015.
[16] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2000, 27 July 2011.
[17] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2062, 26 July 2012, p. 3.
[18] Dieng, E., Ebo, A. and Sedgwick, C., 'UN support to SSR in peacekeeping contexts: A case study of Côte d'Ivoire', eds A. Ebo and H. Hänggi, *United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice* (DCAF: Geneva, 2020), p. 100.
[19] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2062 (note 17), p. 4.
[20] Boutellis (note 8), p. 13.

the Working Group alongside the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), including in specific sub-working groups focused on issues related to government institutions, parliament and civil society.[21] In August 2012, Ouattara created the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (ADDR) 'as the sole national body tasked with steering the transition of ex-combatants from military to civilian life'.[22] The government also developed the first of its National Development Plans, covering 2012–15. SSR was framed in these plans as part of Ouattara's approach to post-war governance, which was based on the belief that economic recovery and growth would bring about the required peacebuilding and reconciliation.[23]

III. Planning and implementing the SSR transition

The first moves to consider a future transition from UNOCI came in July 2012, when Security Council Resolution 2026 called for the development of benchmarks to prepare for future transition planning. In March 2013, the secretary-general officially informed the Security Council of four initial benchmarks developed by UNOCI, the UN country team and the government: political/reconciliation; security/stability; extension of state authority/human rights; and humanitarian/socio-economic development.[24]

In June 2013, the Security Council was informed that the benchmarks had been revised to address three broader areas: security and stability; political dialogue and reconciliation; and justice and human rights.[25] The government argued that economic growth would be 'sufficient to address crucial employment and economic development challenges' and thus humanitarian/socio-economic development was dropped as a benchmark.[26] Economic growth would also support 'hard-won gains' in the three benchmarked areas, including security and stability.[27] Together with the government and the UN country team, UNOCI completed the benchmarking process in December 2013. The final benchmarks included a new fourth benchmark: consolidation and restoration of state authority.[28]

Numerous indicators of progress were developed for each of the four benchmarks, organized into three one-year periods until the end of 2016. The SSR-related benchmark on security and stability was articulated as 'sustained progress in the reduction of armed threats, the reintegration of 65 000 ex-combatants and the reform of national security institutions to address domestic and cross-border threats'.[29] A 2015–16 indicator of progress for security and stability, for example, was the expectation that 'the level of confidence between the security forces and the population has improved'.[30]

A comparative advantage exercise by UNOCI and the UN country team was completed to assess the feasibility of handover before or after the 2015 general elections. Tasks were aligned under three broad headings: political environment, access to rights and the security environment. The wider inherent tasks of SSR—building the

[21] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 101.

[22] See Ehui (note 3), p. 121.

[23] Piccolino, G., 'Peacebuilding and statebuilding in post-2011 Côte d'Ivoire: A victor's peace?', *African Affairs*, vol. 117, no. 468 (July 2018), p. 502.

[24] United Nations Security Council, Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2013/197, 28 Mar. 2013, p. 14.

[25] United Nations Security Council, Thirty-second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2013/377, 26 June 2013, p. 13.

[26] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/377 (note 25), p. 13.

[27] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/377 (note 25), p. 13.

[28] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/377 (note 25), p. 13.

[29] United Nations Security Council, Thirty-third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2013/761, 24 Dec. 2013, p. 17.

[30] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/761 (note 29), p. 19.

capacity of SSR governance and oversight functions, and strengthening the capacity of the defence and security forces— were assessed as transferable only after the 2015 elections.[31] The establishment of local SSR committees to support early warning was considered transferable to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees before the elections, as was the reintegration/reinsertion phase of the DDR programme to UNDP, the World Food Programme and other members of the UN country team.[32]

A notable finding of the comparative advantage exercise was how difficult it would be for the UN country team to cope with a transition from UNOCI. According to a report by the secretary-general, 'the process so far has revealed that [members of the UN country team] are scaling back their presence…owing to lack of voluntary funding to maintain current activities, much less assume additional responsibilities'.[33] These and other assessments led to the conclusion that 'there is a clear risk that, unless additional resources accompany the transfer of critical tasks to the country team, those tasks may no longer be performed at all, possibly undermining gains critical to the sustainability of peace and stability'.[34]

Regular assessments of the security sector continued in 2014 and 2015 to identify a time to move from planning to executing the transition. The reporting to the Security Council at this time makes regular note of the relevant progress made by the government in advancing the SSR process, including DDR. One example is government efforts to improve gender representation in the security services. Another is the conclusion of the disarmament and demobilization phases for former combatants, which allowed UNOCI to hand over these two activities to the government at the end of 2015.[35]

Significant SSR and DDR deficiencies and challenges were also flagged in these years. On the latter, a specific recurring theme was the lack of reintegration of many former combatants, which was consistently deemed a significant security threat to the population throughout UNOCI's entire post-2010 phase.[36] The lack of public trust in the FRCI and other security institutions was also constantly noted at this time, as were the operational challenges facing the police and gendarmerie.[37]

Nonetheless, in mid-2015 the Security Council, the UN Secretariat and UNOCI collectively agreed, for the first time, that the transition to end UNOCI's mandate should begin. Despite the noted SSR and DDR deficiencies, the Security Council remarked on the government's 'commendable' and 'ambitious' efforts to undertake SSR and complete DDR.[38] The transition was therefore agreed pursuant to ongoing assessments of security and other conditions on the ground. [39]

Determined efforts were made to pursue transition after the summer of 2015. UNOCI had developed an internal transition plan by the end of 2015 focused on how to align with the UN country team's plan.[40] An internal UN Transition Coordination Working

[31] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/761 (note 29), p. 26.

[32] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/761 (note 29), pp. 26–27.

[33] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/761 (note 29), p. 13.

[34] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/761 (note 29), p. 13.

[35] United Nations Security Council, Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2016/297, 31 Mar. 2016, p. 9.

[36] United Nations Peacekeeping, End-of-Assignment Report of Ms Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017, p. 12.

[37] United Nations Security Council, Thirty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2015/320, 7 May 2015, p. 17.

[38] United Nations Security Council, S/2015/320 (note 37), p. 17.

[39] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2226, 25 June 2015, p. 10.

[40] United Nations Peacekeeping, End-of-Assignment Report of Mr Babacar Cissé, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Coordination, Early Recovery, Reconstruction, United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), 18 Nov. 2013 to 30 June 2017, p. 26.

Group was also created to ensure linkages between the two plans.[41] A strategic review was conducted in February 2016, a full reading of which shows a determination to end UNOCI's mandate while at the same time denoting many remaining SSR and DDR challenges. For example, the final reintegration efforts affecting 10 000 former combatants were seen as being more political in nature.[42] Improvements were noted linked to legislation on increasing the oversight, enhancing the effectiveness and ensuring the affordability of the FRCI, even though indiscipline, command and control difficulties, brutality, extortion and other problems remained.[43] In the case of the police and law enforcement, increased complementarity between the police and gendarmerie was noted alongside an oversized governance structure, lack of budgeting autonomy and inadequate public trust in policing and law enforcement, among other problems.[44]

A 2016 strategic review therefore recommended that UNOCI's mandate be extended for one last time until 30 June 2017. However, this date is considered the formal end-of-mission date, given that many SSR and other staff left the mission much earlier for employment opportunities elsewhere, including in other UN peace operations.[45] The review also argued that there was no need for a political or peacebuilding operation or office to follow on from UNOCI, as had been the case for example in Sierra Leone. This assessment was considered the 'view' of the government. Instead, the approach would be for the UN country team to 'continue to accompany Côte d'Ivoire'.[46] With this post-UNOCI set-up in mind, the government was encouraged by the Security Council to lead reforms itself, in particular of the security sector, with a view to 'addressing worrying challenges that undermine trust and reconciliation'.[47]

A comprehensive final transition plan was developed in the summer of 2016 to identify the tasks to be taken over by the government and the UN country team. The plan covered six areas: social cohesion, human rights and transitional justice; SSR; DDR; weapons management and civilian disarmament; defence, security and law enforcement; and communication. Efforts involved the creation of six joint technical committees of government, UNOCI, UN country team and development partner representatives, which focused their work on UNOCI's main residual functions as set out in UN Security Council Resolution 2284.[48]

The plan therefore focused on transitional modalities in particular. As detailed below, one initiative prioritized in this regard was the handover of the 'Brown Bag Lunch' (BBL) on SSR to UNDP, among others. The same was done with the Interactive Military Sessions that UNOCI initiated and funded to bring together the miliary, police and gendarmerie to strengthen their communication and cohesion. These sessions were transferred to the FRCI at the end of UNOCI's mandate, with continuing support provided by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the private sector.[49]

Under the plan, the full cost of final transition and closure was estimated to be $500 million, including $50 million to be provided by the UN country team. However, the government, the UN and donors missed their respective targets and the transition and closure were subsequently under-resourced. Delays and lack of funding meant that the implementation period before UNOCI's end of mandate was extremely short,

[41] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 40), p. 27.
[42] United Nations Security Council, S/2016/297 (note 35), p. 11.
[43] United Nations Security Council, S/2016/297 (note 35), p. 8.
[44] United Nations Security Council, S/2016/297 (note 35), p. 8.
[45] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 36), p. 15.
[46] United Nations Security Council, S/2016/297 (note 35), p. 15.
[47] United Nations Security Council, S/2016/297 (note 35), p. 17.
[48] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2284, 28 Apr. 2016; and United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), 'The end of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: Consolidating Peacekeeping Gains', Abidjan, Oct. 2016.
[49] United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (note 48), p. 22.

which negated the intended 'catalytic and strategic' effects of these funds.[50] UNOCI's final Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) noted that this would 'not do justice to what the UNCT [UN country team] are capable of accomplishing, as they will be left with very little time to complete their projects. In the end, the UNCT were essentially pushed into completing their projects in four months rather than 12'.[51] Concerns about the resources available to the UN country team during and after the transition proved accurate at the end of UNOCI's mandate, including the negative effect this had on SSR when important efforts in areas such as justice, corrections and weapons proliferation could not be continued.[52]

IV. Assessment of the main factors in the success or failure of SSR transitions

1. Context awareness of the UN in support of SSR

If UN peace operations are to frame and implement their SSR and other support activities successfully, including during transitions, they require sufficient context awareness. As a highly active operation that supported a plethora of SSR and other initiatives after 2010, the interviews were clear that UNOCI was sensitive right to the end of its mandate to the political, economic and other developments taking place in the country at any given time and the relation they had to the SSR process and the DDR programme.

According to one former UNOCI official, UNDP was helpful in this regard, publishing numerous socio-economic and other studies to help UNOCI and others to maintain awareness when developing and implementing SSR projects and other activities.[53] The UNOCI-led process to develop the Consolidated Peacekeeping Gains transition plan in 2016 was regarded by some as an opportunity to consider context in order to achieve a successful transition and handover of SSR and other activities.[54]

Others, however, argued that any heightened awareness resulting from the Consolidated Peacekeeping Gains exercise could not be used to galvanize the transition of tasks to the government and the UN country team. First, the plan was finalized only six months before the end of UNOCI's mandate.[55] Second, civil society organizations (CSOs), regional organizations and international financial institutions had no input in terms of their political, economic or other assessments into the document.[56] Third, the document became primarily an internal UNOCI transition management document. Even though it was signed by the prime minister at an official event, 'the Ivorian government did not feel much ownership of it'.[57] The exercise was therefore not one that could inject new ideas and approaches into the SSR process during the transition period based on any new assessment of political and economic factors or challenges.

A wider assessment is that UNOCI faced challenges where it was prevented from linking its awareness of national politics and economics to its support for SSR. While some national leaders assumed that it would be able to 'partly identify the power games and the characteristics of the Ivorian political and security environment', in the end 'UNOCI's support remained technical and depended on our own political choices'.[58] According to one assessment, for example, UNOCI and others could do little to change

[50] United Nations Security Council S/2018/958 (note 11), p. 17.
[51] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 36), p. 15.
[52] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 40), p. 28.
[53] Former UNOCI official, Interview with the authors, 8 Dec. 2022.
[54] Written survey response, 2 Sep. 2022.
[55] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 12.
[56] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 12.
[57] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 12.
[58] Focus group with Ivorian parliamentarians, Abidjan, 7 Oct. 2022.

the dynamics of the army: 'the fragmentation of the [FRCI)] since 2011 stems primarily from domestic processes of political bargaining that external actors ultimately have limited ability to influence'.[59] FRCI commanders kept 'private control over considerable financial and human resources' and the lucrative illicit mining networks remained connected to military leaders.[60] A concluding view was that UNOCI never had 'the political appetite to address those problems because that would have been too sensitive for the host government'.[61] More expedient solutions were prioritized over deeper, more contextual fixes, such as UNOCI's push to increase the number of women in the police and gendarmerie without trying to address the root causes of discrimination and corruption in those institutions.

2. Nature and timing of the UN transition mandate regarding the status of SSR

UNOCI is notable for its process of developing transition benchmarks and extensive lists of indictors of progress to support mandate implementation and the handover of any tasks to the national authorities or other UN entities. In early 2014, UNOCI found itself in a good position to 'measure progress for the achievement of long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire and to prepare for transition planning', which were the two related goals of the benchmarks and progress indicators announced by the secretary-general.[62] The October 2015 general elections were successfully organized and held in line with the respective indicators in this regard. There were then early calls for the termination of UNOCI's mandate, in particular from France which at the time was seen as 'highly decisive in determining the transition and exit of the mission from the country'.[63]

Consequently, at the beginning of 2016, some benchmarks appear to have stopped playing a defining role in the assessment of mandate implementation. Many of the indicators were written in a way that required action or activity, while others could be interpreted subjectively based on related developments. With regard to the government's need to improve security in 2014–15, for example, the wording led to a positive assessment if activities and initiatives were ongoing: 'the [a]bility of the Government to address security challenges at the border and in areas of tension and to protect civilians is strengthened'. For this reason, the use of the benchmarks by this time was considered by some to be 'primarily a box-ticking exercise'.[64]

Many of the interviews reflected on how progress with the achievement of long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire came to be assessed using factors and perspectives other than the benchmarks. One was government efforts to seek SSR support from other international actors. The national authorities 'did a lot to show that they were ready to end UNOCI's mandate. For example, [they] agreed a bilateral EU project on the rule of law. With these and other actions, there was no longer a need for an extraordinary intervention like a peacekeeping operation'.[65] Similar logic was applied in relation to handing over to other UN entities: 'there was no need then to transition to a special political mission. The UNCT [country team] was always working, and so they would continue working as they were'.[66]

Any ambition that may have existed in UNOCI's SSR mandate was not used to significantly define the transition's intensity or pace of handover. Once all the political, economic, electoral and other factors were accounted for, the benchmarks were super-

[59] Martin (note 2), p. 524.
[60] Martin (note 2), 530–32.
[61] Academic, Interview with the authors, 6 Dec. 2022.
[62] United Nations Security Council, S/2013/761 (note 29), p. 12.
[63] Former UNOCI official, Interview with the authors, 2 Dec. 2022.
[64] UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) official, Interview with the authors, 18 Nov. 2022.
[65] DPO official, Interview with the authors, 3 Oct. 2022.
[66] DPO official, Interview with the authors, 3 Oct. 2022.

seded by these wider developments. At that stage, the groundwork for the transition to the UN country team was firmly laid and UNOCI proceeded to support SSR in the context of achieving the transition, as a process that required rapid implementation.

3. Inclusion of the principles of good governance in the SSR process

The post-2010 government led by Ouattara acknowledged the need to instil good governance in the security sector in order to buttress narrower technical activities. Notable efforts were made during the UNOCI transition period to adopt legislation to strengthen oversight and governance by providing clarity on institutional roles and responsibilities, as well as transparent financing of the security sector through the 2015 Defence Organization Law, the 2016–2020 Military Planning Law and the 2016–2020 Internal Security Planning Law. These three laws have been described as providing the national security legislation needed to provide an institutional framework for oversight and governance.[67]

UNOCI was not given specific language in its mandate from the Security Council on support for good governance. However, it interpreted its SSR mandate in this direction, including during the transition. For example, UNOCI saw its engagement as having a 'transformative impact on security sector governance'.[68] In one example, the mission undertook efforts to promote democratic control of the armed forces through UNOCI FM Radio. One survey respondent called this approach to communications 'a real asset' of the mission in terms of promoting the principles of good governance.[69]

UNOCI also created good governance mechanisms and initiatives that had been handed over to other actors by the end of the transition. A Joint Mechanism was established by UNOCI, the FRCI and the National Human Rights Commission to address human rights violations committed by the FRCI. As the transition took hold, UNOCI started training FRCI focal points in early 2016 on how to identify cases and report violations to the Joint Mechanism.[70] The Commission and the FRCI took over the Joint Mechanism following UNOCI's withdrawal. Efforts were also made to strengthen the oversight function of parliament. UNOCI and partners trained parliamentarians on the SSR process in order to support their role on the Defence and Security Commission in the National Assembly.[71] FES eventually took over this initiative with continuing support from the CNS secretariat (S-CNS) and UNDP.

The feedback from the interviews suggests that, in retrospect, UNOCI could have better prioritized its engagement in support of good governance by identifying which good governance principles needed the most attention during the transition. According to one interviewee, 'not all the principles are on an equal footing' and some will be more important based on context and the country's priorities at any given time.[72] The ongoing lack of accountability in the security services was notable during UNOCI's transition. This is one of the most salient findings in much of the literature, especially with regard to the army.[73] The last UN Police Commissioner noted at the end of the mission in 2017 that 'politicization, ethnic factors and corruption are still tangible realities' in the police and law enforcement agencies.[74]

[67] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 105.
[68] United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (note 48), pp. 20–21.
[69] Written survey response, 3 Sep. 2022.
[70] United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire, 'Joint Mechanism meeting reaffirms need to promote respect for human rights among security services', 10 Mar. 2016.
[71] Written survey response, 8 Aug. 2022.
[72] Regional SSR expert, Interview with the authors, 17 Nov. 2022.
[73] See Ehui (note 3), pp. 109–29; and Martin (note 2), pp. 522–33.
[74] Lafon, J. M., 'End of assignment report', United Nations Peace Operations, 29 Mar. 2017, p. 13.

Despite notable UNOCI and other international assistance efforts, another area assessed as deficient during UNOCI's transition was the oversight capacity of parliament. One interviewee stated that parliament remained 'a marginal player in its ability to legislate in the defence and security sector and to control the government and the armed forces'.[75] This point was confirmed in UNOCI's own transition plan, finalized six months before the end of its mandate: 'the ability of stakeholders to fully assume their oversight roles on the security sector remains limited'.[76]

4. Acknowledgement of multilevel governance and willingness to engage with non-state actors

UNOCI acknowledged the important role of traditional chiefs and kings in the SSR process as 'vectors of peace, social cohesion and diplomacy mainly through the peaceful settlement of conflicts', notably land dispute resolution.[77] UNOCI organized training and official meetings between the government and traditional chiefs and kings. As the transition was being implemented in earnest, for example, UNOCI co-hosted a conflict analysis seminar with the Ministry of the Interior for local chiefs together with government officials and other sectors of society in Gagnoa in April 2016 to address land disputes.[78]

However, engaging with traditional hunters or 'dozo' became a recurring security management challenge, due to issues around perceptions of political bias. On the one hand, the dozo were regarded as 'Ouattara's friends', and excluding them from the process might cause political or ethnic discontent.[79] On the other hand, dealing with them might be seen to be undermining UNOCI's neutrality, given their association with the president.[80]

In addition, supporting non-state actors to provide security services in Côte d'Ivoire was seen by some as granting special privileges to those who were not fit to handle such responsibilities.[81] In Côte d'Ivoire, SSR 'was controlled from the top' with little room for manoeuvre with regard to allowing local non-state actors to lead on providing security.[82] Thus, non-state engagement was structurally limited in terms of impact. Only a 'highly decentralized' approach would have been able to offer non-state security providers an opportunity to provide direct security services.[83]

It was noted in the interviews that while UNOCI was willing to work with non-state actors, the government and the mission did little to strengthen the roles of traditional kings and chiefs. One interviewee questioned the quality of engagement with non-state actors: the overall effort seemed more like a 'monologue' from UNOCI during the transition, with little consideration given to the input from the chiefs, and their presence in meetings was seen as more symbolic than substantive.[84]

At the end of the transition in 2017, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General concluded that UNOCI had succeeded in achieving 'better utilization of traditional

[75] Teacher-researcher, Interview with the authors, 9 Oct. 2022.

[76] United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (note 48), p. 21.

[77] Abidjan, 'La Représentante spéciale salue le leadership des Rois et Chefs traditionnels dans le cadre de la résolution des conflits et du processus de reconciliation' [Special Representative commends the leadership of traditional Kings and Chiefs in conflict resolution and reconciliation process], 13 Nov. 2023.

[78] United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 'Le SNU et le Ministère de l'Intérieur renforcent les connaissances du corps préfectoral et des acteurs sociaux sur la prévention des conflits' [The SNU and the Ministry of the Interior are strengthening the knowledge of the prefectoral corps and social actors of conflict prevention], 18 Apr. 2016.

[79] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 9 Dec. 2022.

[80] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 9 Dec. 2022.

[81] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 6 Dec. 2022.

[82] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 1 Dec. 2022.

[83] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 6 Dec. 2022.

[84] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 1 Dec. 2022.

conflict-resolution mechanisms including the local chiefs'.[85] While the Consolidating Peacekeeping Gains transition plan did not specify any post-UNOCI support for traditional chiefs, kings or dozo, the government nonetheless gave them new status as national institutions from November 2016 and provided them with training on conflict and dispute resolution. The thinking of the mission at the time may have been that the new standing of these non-state actors and the capacity-building should have helped to ensure that the chiefs and other non-state actors would remain sufficiently involved in the SSR process after UNOCI's exit.

5. National and local political leadership and commitment to SSR

Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates how national and local political involvement may or may not be conducive to implementation of an SSR mandate, including transition goals. Early SSR efforts were challenged by Gbagbo's hostility to the process. During this time, Gbagbo 'did all he could to avoid SSR', which severely fatigued mission personnel.[86]

In contrast, following the election of Ouattara, the post-2010 period was considered more conducive to implementing UNOCI's SSR mandate, due to the role that the president played in defining and leading the overall SSR process. The commitment of the Head of State has been acknowledged in many areas, leading in particular to the adoption of a National Development Plan in which the SSR process was embedded, the creation of the ADDR and significant national funding for DDR, among other initiatives supported by the president.

Nonetheless, the notion of 'genuine' versus 'political' SSR is apparent in the literature. Ouattara's attitude to SSR was based on 'asserting his control of the country, including the army, in reinforcing his legitimacy...and in building positive relations with the international community'.[87] Ouattara's leadership was also 'wary of the UN, especially in the area of SSR, while making it clear that Ivorians would take the destiny of the country in their hands under his leadership'.[88]

Thus, Ouattara engaged in so-called pay-offs and trade-offs on SSR. For example, he supported his allies inter alia by favouring former FN military leaders for positions in the new army, and allowed local commanders to influence the DDR programme and receive associated benefits.[89] At the same time, Ouattara was careful not to alienate the international community. He reduced the power of some local FN military commanders who were alleged to have committed human rights and other abuses.[90] In the case of the army, however, senior officers were allowed to develop 'a sense of entitlement, rather than a sense of service, duty and responsibility', which given the nature of some of the decisions made by the government in support of DDR, to some degree explains why so many mutinies took place in the country (see below).[91]

On local political leadership of SSR, interviewees noted that UNOCI was notably active at the local level. According to one assessment, UNOCI regularly undertook 'hands-on local peacebuilding activities with a view to empowering' what one author terms 'the local turn', that is, an emphasis on engaging local political, community and other actors in order to achieve 'peace from below'.[92] However, the so-called local turn did not prominently emerge in support of SSR during UNOCI's mandate: 'the top-down

[85] UNOCI (note 48), p. 9.
[86] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the authors, 15 Sep. 2022.
[87] Piccolino (note 23), p. 493.
[88] Former senior DPKO official, Interview with the authors, 15 Sep. 2022.
[89] Martin (note 2), p. 529.
[90] Piccolino (note 23), p. 494.
[91] See Ehui (note 3), p. 118.
[92] Gilder, A., 'The local turn and the framing of UNOCI's mandated activities by the UN', *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2020), p. 4.

nature of the Government's approach to SSR...at times made the National SSR Strategy a tool used to redistribute power rather than a platform for reconciliation and national dialogue'.[93] Accordingly, the SSR process became 'more presidential than national'.[94]

6. Level of embeddedness of the SSR process in broader recovery frameworks

The SSR process was embedded by the government in its National Development Plan (NDP), which served as Côte d'Ivoire's broader post-2010 recovery framework. The NDP was regarded by some as 'Ouattara's bible', in reference to the president's World Bank background and his more general belief that economic recovery would support development.[95] The first NDP covered 2012–15. The second NDP was developed towards the end of UNOCI's transition for the period 2016–2020, primarily with the assistance of the UN country team.[96]

Underpinning the first NDP was the strategic objective that 'people live in harmony in a secure society in which good governance is ensured'.[97] The NDP had six pillars that aimed to address the political, social, economic, humanitarian and security dimensions of recovery. SSR was addressed under the pillar 'the quality of institutions and governance', by which the police and the gendarmerie were to be restructured and modernized with UN and bilateral support. The budget for this reform was CFA 323.4 billion, which was 2.94 per cent of the NDP budget.[98]

Feedback from the interviews notes that UNOCI undertook general advocacy in support of the NDP, including in support of SSR, but did not take a direct role or launch any specific SSR initiatives in the context of the NDP. Instead, its role in providing security and supporting SSR, including through judicial advice and expertise, was more generally seen as one that helped create the overall environment in which the NDP could be implemented.[99]

In contrast, the UN country team specifically supported SSR, DDR and overall recovery through the NDP. In support of the transition, the country team developed the One UN Programmatic Framework (OPF) for 2017–20, which was closely aligned with the 2016–20 NDP.[100] In this way, UNDP aimed to support SSR, DDR and other UNOCI activities as the transition neared completion, and to ensure a continuing effort based on the Priority Plan on Peace Consolidation. The Priority Plan was financed in 2014 by the Peacebuilding Support Office to provide a coordinated and integrated response by the UN country team and UNOCI to peacebuilding and peace consolidation challenges.[101] The Priority Plan was subsequently aligned with the NDP and the OPF so that, for example, the reintegration of former combatants could continue to be supported from the perspective of long-term socio-economic reintegration after UNOCI's mandate had ended.[102]

7. Civil society involvement in support of local ownership of SSR

CSOs were consistently acknowledged to be a key stakeholder in the SSR process, including during the transition, due to the work undertaken by UNOCI to support civil society in the processes of fostering national dialogue on SSR and decentralizing the

[93] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 107.
[94] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 107.
[95] Piccolino (note 23), p. 503.
[96] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 40), p. 30.
[97] Government of Côte d'Ivoire, 'Revue Du Plannational de Developpement, PND 2012–2015' [Review of the national development plan, 2012–2015], Feb. 2015, p. 13.
[98] Government of Côte d'Ivoire (note 97), p. 13.
[99] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 10 Dec. 2022.
[100] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 40), p. 30.
[101] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 40), p. 33.
[102] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 40), p. 12.

SSR process. The National SSR Strategy emphasized the importance of 'strengthen[ing] the skills and capacities of member associations of civil society in terms of democratic oversight of the security sector'.[103]

During implementation of the National SSR Strategy, there were examples of both inclusion and exclusion of CSOs. CSOs such as the Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits de l'Homme and Coalition de la Société Civile pour la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire were involved in outreach and reporting activities. The African Coordination for the Human Rights of the Armed Forces (CADHA) held numerous seminars on human rights, international humanitarian law, military ethics and sexual violence in times of conflict for the benefit of the armed forces. CADHA also played an important role in advocating with the UN for Côte d'Ivoire to be taken off the so-called list of shame—the list of countries where armed forces commit sexual violence during conflicts.[104] Finally, the Ivorian Preacher League of Côte d'Ivoire carried out an awareness-raising campaign with imams as part of the fight against violent extremism among Muslim communities in support of the SSR process.[105]

UNOCI launched the monthly BBL initiative on SSR in January 2013 to allow CSOs and others to discuss and provide input into the SSR process. As one interviewee noted, 'during the BBL, government officials were invited to deliver presentations. CSOs shared their feedback…and this feedback was conveyed to the S-CNS'.[106] When UNOCI left in 2017, the BBL was handed over to UNDP and FES. According to close observers, 'given longstanding alienation and dysfunction in the relationship between security institutions and the public in Côte d'Ivoire, the BBLs were an important advance towards wider consultation and civil society input on new security-related legislation and proposed policies'.[107]

A misunderstanding of the tasking of roles and the level of contributions led to perceptions of the exclusion of CSOs from the SSR process. Most of the CSOs involved in defining the National SSR Strategy were not the ones carrying out its implementation, and vice-versa. Those who took part in defining the strategy reported that few CSOs were involved in its implementation, while the CSOs implementing the strategy said that no CSO had been involved in drafting it.[108]

According to one CSO leader, CSOs should have conducted the monitoring of the SSR process and used the opportunity of UNOCI's transition to highlight SSR challenges and deficiencies.[109] This did not happen because, despite initiatives like the BBL, the government was resistant to allowing CSOs a lead monitoring role.[110] In addition, CSOs were not active enough in taking the initiative regarding the state of the SSR process, including during UNOCI's transition when its support could have been harnessed to strengthen civil society's monitoring and other roles after the transition.[111]

8. Application of a gender-responsive SSR process

In Côte d'Ivoire, there was early action on gender responsiveness in SSR when UNOCI helped the government draft its national SSR strategy in 2012. The strategy aspired to 'develop a vigorous gender promotion policy based on the effective participation and

[103] Government of Côte d'Ivoire, National Security Sector Reform Strategy, 2012, p. 27.

[104] Member of the S-CNS, Interview with the authors, 22 Dec. 2022. This list is hosted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to tackle conflict-related sexual violence as a peace and security issue.

[105] Member of the S-CNS, Interview with the authors, 22 Dec. 2022.

[106] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 17 Dec. 2022.

[107] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 103.

[108] CSO leader, Interview with the authors, 5 Jan. 2023.

[109] CSO leader, Interview with the authors, 5 Jan. 2023.

[110] CSO leader, Interview with the authors, 5 Jan. 2023.

[111] CSO leader, Interview with the authors, 5 Jan. 2023.

accountability of female personnel within security and defence institutions'.[112] It also aimed to 'integrate gender perspectives into all activities related to the transformation and management of security sector institutions'.[113]

Women were victimized and targeted for rape, sexual abuse and discrimination during the 2002 and 2010 crises in Côte d'Ivoire.[114] During the 2010 crisis, women suffered significant conflict-related casualties and displacement, and high levels of sexual and other forms of violence and discrimination against women persisted thereafter.[115] After 2010, as UNOCI took on its enhanced mandate: 'women became even more vulnerable and SSR needed a concrete response'.[116]

Based on the detailed language in its mandate, UNOCI strove to assist the post-2010 government to develop a gender-responsive SSR process. Responses to the survey state how UNOCI was active in supporting workshops and other initiatives on implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 for the military, police and gendarmerie, as well as corrections officers and others. Through the UN Action network, UNOCI helped to establish the National Committee for Combatting Conflict-related Sexual Violence in 2014, led by the FRCI leadership, to help provide redress and eradicate this problem within the military.[117]

UNOCI also focused its support for a gender-based SSR process during the transition on ensuring continuation of such activities after the end of its mandate. In 2015, for example, it assisted with the establishment of permanent FRCI 'gender and SSR focal points'.[118] The mission helped to establish 'gender desks' in police and gendarmerie stations, to be operationalized by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women.[119] The first intake of women cadets to the Gendarmerie School in 2015 was supported by the mission and it was agreed in the transition plan that UN Women would provide future support for gender mainstreaming in the gendarmerie.[120] Efforts to support ongoing implementation of the National Strategy for Combating Gender-Based Violence was to be led by UN Women, the UNFPA and UNDP.[121] A National Implementation Programme for the National Strategy was developed by the government in 2016 with the support of UNOCI and other UN entities.[122]

A central comment from the research, however, is that the government, UNOCI and other international partners found it challenging to instil the important gender dimensions that security and other institutions need to respond to the needs of men and women. For example, the results of field research conducted after the end of UNOCI's mandate showed that 'the inability of women who have experienced sexual assault in Côte d'Ivoire to go to the security forces and to go to the police . . . to file complaints and have those complaints followed up in a timely fashion . . . remains a big problem'.[123]

Another issue was lack of support for women who joined the security services, which remained a challenge at the end of UNOCI's mandate. This deficiency was noted during

[112] République de Côte d'Ivoire, 'Les 108 réformes du secteur de la sécurité' [The 108 reforms of the security sector], [n.d.], point 20.
[113] République de Côte d'Ivoire (note 112), point 101.
[114] See e.g., Amnesty International, 'Côte d'Ivoire: Voices of women and girls, forgotten victims of the conflict', 15 Mar. 2007.
[115] See NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, 'Côte d'Ivoire', 2020; and Amnesty International (note 114).
[116] FRCI officer, Interview with the authors, 3 Oct. 2022.
[117] UNOCI (note 48), p. 16.
[118] UNOCI (note 48), p. 21.
[119] UNOCI (note 48), p. 32.
[120] UNOCI (note 48), p. 32.
[121] UNOCI (note 48), p. 19.
[122] UNOCI (note 48), p. 16.
[123] Academic, Interview with the authors, 6 Dec. 2022.

the parliamentary focus group conducted for this case study in October 2022. According to one parliamentarian, 'beyond [the] statistical dimension, we are now making sure to accompany this evolution to make equal opportunities possible, adapt our infrastructure and careers to this new dimension'.[124]

9. Linkages and synergies between the SSR process and the DDR programme

The official completion of the DDR programme in 2015 played a role in the government's decision to eventually call for the transition and an end to UNOCI's mandate. The Security Council first called for the termination of UNOCI's mandate in June 2015, which was when the DDR programme was officially announced as completed.

The post-2011 DDR programme was led by the ADDR with technical and other support in particular from UNOCI and UNDP. Officially speaking, the programme lasted two years from 2013 to 2015. Almost 70 000 (95 per cent) of the 74 000 former combatants, including 6105 women, went through the programme.[125] Of these, approximately 8500 were integrated into the new national army. The government financed 62 per cent of the $130 million DDR budget.[126]

Concerns were raised about the DDR programme during and after the transition. There was a discrepancy in the number of weapons and armaments collected: 43 000 (only 14 000 serviceable) weapons were collected from the nearly 70 000 demobilized personnel.[127] Former FN military leaders were allowed to determine who would be supported in the DDR process to the detriment of pro-Gbagbo former combatants.[128] Many thousands of former combatants from both sides are thought not to have gone through the DDR process.[129] In addition, even though the ADDR included the need for DDR to be 'enriched by the consideration of gender issues' in its terms of reference, many women 'self-demobilized' to the extent that they became 'hidden' or 'invisible'.[130]

Some observers argue that UNOCI and other international actors failed to voice their concerns about DDR, preferring instead to stress that DDR had been led by the government, nationally owned and successfully implemented.[131] Political pressure was applied by the government, which 'produced an overall atmosphere of restraint at coordination meetings and even informal exchanges', leading to 'an overemphasis on Côte d'Ivoire's DDR success' that 'precluded a balanced assessment of the programme'.[132] That said, during the transition UNOCI did advise the government to undertake an assessment of the DDR programme to determine its impact.[133] In UNOCI's transition plan, developed with the government, UNDP was tasked post-transition with taking over efforts to help address the reintegration and other DDR challenges that were clearly noted as of concern.[134]

The reintegration aspect of DDR was also still ongoing at the end of UNOCI's mandate, which put pressure on the SSR process. One interviewee argued that DDR in Côte d'Ivoire should be deemed a success for the former combatants who were successfully

[124] Focus group with Ivorian parliamentarians, Abidjan, 7 Oct. 2022.

[125] United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 'Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire', [n.d.].

[126] United Nations Security Council S/2018/958 (note 11), p. 9.

[127] See Ehui (note 3), p. 122.

[128] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 31.

[129] See Ehui (note 3), p. 122.

[130] Diallo, K., 'The desecuritization of women in the DDR process: The case of Côte d'Ivoire', *International Peace Institute*, 25 Oct. 2022; and former UNOCI official, Interview with the authors, 8 Dec. 2022.

[131] Ehlert, F., 'Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in Côte d'Ivoire: Lessons identified for security sector reform', Blog, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 4 Oct. 2017.

[132] Ehlert (note 131).

[133] United Nations Peacekeeping (note 36), p. 12.

[134] United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (note 48), pp. 25–27.

integrated into the armed services.[135] Many of those who received a stipend, career training and associated kit could still not be fully integrated, however, and this was called 'the sin of all DDR in the world' because such support eventually 'unravels'.[136] The UN recognized this fact, reporting nearly two years after the end of UNOCI's mandate that 'the incomplete transformation of some former combatants into a constructive force for economic development continued to challenge peacebuilding gains'.[137]

The difficulty for UNOCI in supporting DDR alongside SSR was exposed at the end of its engagement in 2017. When the already rushed transition was essentially over, a series of countrywide mutinies related to pay and benefits took place involving active soldiers and former combatants. According to one observer, this was when 'we realized that what had been presented as an SSR success was not necessarily the case, because the DDR process had not been completed'.[138] The mutinies and the subsequent decisions by the government to address them by demobilizing and paying some mutineers showed that 'there is complementarity because a poorly implemented DDR process means a more difficult and incomplete reform of the security sector'.[139]

10. Involvement of external non-UN actors, donors and partners in the SSR process

UN Security Council Resolution 2000 mandated UNOCI to coordinate all UN and other international support to the government-led SSR process. This was to ensure the overall coherence of the combined international effort and to direct support to the areas it was needed most and added most value. Such a mandate can be regarded as useful during a transition in order to effectively delegate and transfer any functions and roles that a UN peace operation assesses as being needed post-mandate.

UNOCI's coordination of non-UN international efforts, including during the transition, took place in the context of the Consultative Group on SSR and the P5-EU framework. The former, created in 2012, comprised various national and international partners that provided strategic advice to the S-CNS to support implementation of the National SSR Strategy.[140] In these areas, and in addition to avoiding duplication of effort, UNOCI appears to have taken on a light coordination role, with a focus on advising, exchanging information and, in the case of P5-EU framework, developing 'political messaging'.[141]

Strong views were noted during the research on the mission's ability and its efficacy in coordinating external non-UN actors, donors and partners. The Ouattara regime's concern, which was shared by its international partners, including UNOCI, about 'upsetting economic recovery' hampered SSR-related coordination efforts.[142] From another perspective, however, UNOCI's effect on undertaking and coordinating SSR was 'not that significant' compared to the influence that France had on SSR and other post-crisis reconstruction matters.[143] According to one survey respondent, France was seen as having a leading role in SSR by embedding a number of senior advisers in the defence ministry and the S-CNS. Recognizing how these high-ranking French advisers contributed to SSR policymaking and decision making, UNOCI eventually engaged, although with only one senior adviser and at a much later date as the transition was being

[135] National researcher, Interview with the authors, 17 Dec. 2022.
[136] National researcher, Interview with the authors, 17 Dec. 2022.
[137] United Nations Security Council S/2018/958 (note 11), p. 9.
[138] Regional SSR expert, Interview with the authors, 17 Nov. 2022.
[139] Regional SSR expert, Interview with the authors, 17 Nov. 2022.
[140] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 106.
[141] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 106.
[142] Martin (note 2), p. 531.
[143] DPO Official, Interview with the authors, 18 Nov. 2022.

planned.[144] Overall, as one analyst noted, in the area of SSR and other fields, France was seen as significantly 'shaping the agenda' for the international community.[145]

The role of France was also notable during the discussions on the transition of UNOCI and the end of the mission's mandate. France came out strongly in favour of an end to the mission by 2015, particularly by endorsing and promoting the government's rationale that 9 per cent annual economic growth meant that security and stability could be provided by a solely government-led SSR process.[146] This advocacy was successful, but at the expense of some SSR, DDR and related tasks which were assessed as incomplete when the mission's mandate ended in the summer of 2017.

In addition to France, the USA in particular, but also Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland provided significant direct support to the SSR process. The SSR-related work of national development agencies such as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zummanenarbeit, the US Agency for International Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, as well as other agencies and foundations, was also notable. The EU Delegation also supported SSR during and after UNOCI's mandate. In March 2017, for example, as UNOCI was preparing to leave the country, the EU together with a French implementing partner launched a 'Support Programme for National Security, the Prevention of Radicalization and Peacebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire' for a period of 24 months with a budget to €2.5 million.[147]

The number of other actors directly supporting SSR, as opposed to the status of the SSR process resulting from any assessment of UNOCI's coordination role, appears to have played more of a role in the government's assessment of the need for further UNOCI assistance. From this perspective, the government was easily able to rationalize the end of UNOCI's mandate. In this environment, it was 'considered sufficient to justify the closure of the mission and leave it to other actors to continue'.[148] Despite UNOCI's successful efforts to structure SSR coordination with non-UN actors, donors and partners, many governance, operational and other SSR deficiencies continued after the end of the mandate in 2017.

11. Availability of sustainable funding for the SSR process.

Funding for the SSR process throughout UNOCI's existence was achieved through the aggregation of diverse sources from the state budget and international partners. Post-2010, it was the expressed will of the government to fund SSR itself and have UNOCI focus on technical support, in particular during the transition.

Before the election of President Ouattara in 2010, the government's main approach to funding SSR was to rely on the international community. As stated above, the Gbagbo administration 'did all it could to avoid SSR' and felt that it could 'ignore' the need to plan and raise adequate financing for SSR and other facets of the security sector.[149]

Post-2010, as the government under Ouattara's leadership became deeply involved in the SSR process, the financing of SSR became a key focus of the national authorities, for example as seen early on with the creation and full national funding of the ADDR, as well as the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In contrast to the previous government, the thinking was that the major involvement of the state would mean not only more financial support, but also an intensification and

[144] DPO official, Interview with the authors, 3 Oct. 2022.
[145] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 28.
[146] Novosseloff (note 4), p. 28.
[147] CIVIPOL, Missions and Projects, 'Support Programme for National Security, the Prevention of Radicalisation and Peacebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire', [n.d.].
[148] Focus group with Ivorian parliamentarians, Abidjan, 7 Oct. 2022.
[149] Researcher, Interview with the authors, 17 Nov. 2022.

acceleration of reform. This, as stated above, was considered inherent in the president's objective to take 'the destiny of the country in their hands under his leadership'. Thus, the government expressed its determination to finance the SSR process largely by itself, with only minor international assistance. Towards the end of UNOCI's mandate, in order to fund the FRCI, parliament passed a Military Planning Law for the period 2016–20 with a budget of CFA 2253.6 billion, with 64.5 per cent for operations and 35.5 per cent for institutional investment.[150] This law was significant to the extent that it also 'aimed to correct the great budget imbalance between fixed costs and professionalization costs by bringing them from a ratio of 97 per cent to 3 per cent, to a ratio of 55 per cent to 45 per cent'.[151]

To support the government's efforts to achieve sustainable SSR funding, some interviewees noted that one constant role for UNOCI, UNDP and other UN entities was to advise and provide feedback on the costs of the respective army, police and other reform and restructuring efforts in the short to longer term.[152] Another broader effort was to assist in mobilizing international funds from the perspective of supporting specific budget lines while the government strove mainly by national means to meet its overall goal of funding the security sector as quickly as possible.[153]

Nonetheless, as noted above, UNOCI faced challenges in this area during the transition, as donor fatigue hit the country and focus shifted to supporting socio-economic development. The creation of a modest $50 million UN transitional fund to support SSR and other areas after UNOCI's end of mandate was noted as a welcome effort to help promote sustainable funding of the SSR and other sectors, but only $25 million was eventually secured.[154]

At the end of UNOCI's mandate, the government had still not succeeded in achieving a sufficient degree of sustainable funding, despite UNOCI's and other international help. After the end of 2017, the government revamped its approach to funding by integrating SSR into the security and defence section of the state budget for the period 2016–20, as specified in the 2016 legislation passed on the security sector.[155] The main action by the government post-UNOCI to achieve sustainable funding by 2025 was thus to implement the respective medium-term measures contained in the legislation, including downsizing the security services.[156]

V. Conclusions

The transition of UNOCI to the UN country team began in the second half of 2015, following successful national elections in June that year. The mission's mandate officially ended in June 2017. The final months of UNOCI's life were devoted solely to the liquidation process, and some SSR and other civilian staff started to leave much earlier.

In the end, the shift from planning the transition to executing it in concrete terms happened fairly rapidly, leading to the 'Consolidating Peacekeeping Gains' transition plan which was finalized at the end of 2016—just six months before the end of mandate.

From the perspective of assessing the transition as a process to support SSR, some of UNOCI's transition efforts were notable. Perhaps the most important was the development of transitional modalities for effective handover of SSR-related mechanisms,

[150] Law on Military Planning, Law no. 2016-10, Jan. 2016, p. 1.
[151] Dieng, Ebo and Sedgwick (note 18), p. 105.
[152] Written survey response, 20 Aug. 2022.
[153] Policy analyst, Interview with the authors, 7 July 2022.
[154] United Nations Security Council S/2018/958 (note 11), p. 17.
[155] Law on Military Planning, Law no. 2016-10, Jan. 2016, p. 1.
[156] Law on Military Planning, Law no. 2016-10, Jan. 2016, p. 2.

bodies and initiatives to national and other international actors to ensure continuity and the sustainability of efforts after UNOCI left the country. These included the BBL initiative, the Inter-Active Military Sessions and the 'gender desks' in the police and gendarmerie.

However, from the perspective of transferring SSR and other mandated tasks to the UN country team without first deploying a UN political or peacebuilding office, this vital aspect of the transition was incomplete. In the end, the transition plan could not be properly organized or fully funded, including from UNOCI's assessed budget, to support the UN country team in ensuring the sustainability of SSR-related tasks in areas such as judicial affairs and corrections, among others. When UNOCI finally exited the country, the UN country team found itself for all intents and purposes operating after a flawed transition.

Research for this case study shows that UNOCI was highly active in supporting the government to undertake SSR through many notable activities and efforts related to the 11 factors in the success or failure of SSR transitions used for this analysis. However, UNOCI can be seen as having adopted an overriding positive and technical focus on implementing its SSR mandate, despite the underlying political and economic considerations at play and the inherent challenges that existed in supporting SSR and DDR once a termination of mandate had been called for and was being rapidly implemented. In its final months, the mission focused mostly on consolidating, transferring and ending its work, as opposed to using the transition to change its working practices and make a new and bold effort to address perennial issues such as the lack of good governance, the failed reintegration of former combatants and inadequate financing of the security sector.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

GRETCHEN BALDWIN AND JAÏR VAN DER LIJN

There are significant differences between the Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire cases with regard to security sector reform (SSR) and mission transitions. Both missions show that SSR transitions are much like most other transitions—they are a process that the UN must organize in order to exit a country context gracefully within a set period of time. While the 11 factors for the success or failure of SSR transitions analysed in this report should all be addressed at various points during the transition process, it is not realistic to expect that they will all be considered at the same level of importance or priority at all times. That said, all must be addressed long before the transition begins. If these factors are not considered in the early stages of SSR, it is unlikely that a transition will be fully successful. Given the limited resources and the political and other pressures exerted on UN missions, it is possible that a UN mission on its own will not be in a position to directly address certain factors during its mandate period. SSR is a long-term generational process that UN missions cannot be expected to complete. At best, they can put a sustainable process in motion. All 11 factors should therefore at least be considered and highlighted in evaluations and handovers.

Both studies serve as useful guiding examples for other large, multidimensional mission transitions. In Sierra Leone, which was the first case of a UN peace operation pursuing SSR, albeit in the context of lead British support, SSR was largely successful. This was a steady transition involving patience, genuine buy-in from the Sierra Leonean government and complementary follow-on peacebuilding and political offices. The UN country team was eventually able to dovetail the ongoing SSR project without becoming overwhelmed, which resulted in a fairly sustainable outcome by the time the country team finally took over.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the transition was faster—even rushed—without the benefit of a follow-on office to assist with the significant workload created when transferring UN mission responsibilities to a UN country team and national government. The SSR transition therefore lacked the required focus and ownership. The comparison with a relatively more successful process such as that in Sierra Leone is helpful when considering future mission transitions in contexts that also require SSR, such as the ongoing mission drawdowns in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

These conclusions make recommendations that stem from the analysis of how the transitions were executed and the manner in which the main SSR-related factors were addressed. They represent considerations when supporting SSR in the context of planning and assisting the transition of UN peace operations.

1. Context awareness of the UN in support of SSR

Lack of contextual awareness contributed to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone's (UNAMSIL) early mistakes and shortcomings in its support to SSR and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). This led inter alia to negative perceptions of the mission's role vis-à-vis the local population. The context awareness of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) improved during the transitions, including as a result of Security Council mandates that focused them politically and also of the greater depth in support for SSR as a component of peacebuilding. In Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) became a highly active mission, and this level of engagement normally allowed it to

be aware of and appreciate developments in the country at any given time. However, having undertaken a transition exercise that identified various SSR challenges for the government and the UN country team after the end of mandate, the mission did not use this raised awareness to positively inject new ideas and approaches into the SSR process during the transition period. The mission's support remained more technical and less political. In each case study, missed opportunities occurred in part because some UN leaders did not guide the transition in a way that could fully leverage the dynamics of the political economy of SSR.

Recommendation. Although context awareness is essential throughout the life of a mission, it should be harnessed during transitions in particular, with the aim of targeting activities that make national SSR policymaking and decision making more sustainable. At the point of transition, *missions should carry out reassessments of their context. Their findings can then strengthen the mission's political work in support of SSR while also supporting any handover of tasks and functions that are deemed politically sensitive or challenging.*

2. Nature and timing of the UN transition mandate regarding the status of SSR

Both the Sierra Leone and the Côte d'Ivoire SSR transition processes were designed to be guided by benchmarks and indicators of progress. Although broad and open to interpretation, UNAMSIL's SSR benchmarks were robustly assessed—often with regard to determining the institutional integrity of the army and the police—and closely monitored and timed to support an effective transition to UNIOSIL. Political pressure to end the mandate early was effectively mitigated, while the deployment of a follow-on integrated peacebuilding office was carefully planned and executed. The same approach was applied to the transition to United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). In the case of UNOCI, many of the benchmarks and indicators designed for the transition process lost their vitality or were interpreted through the identification of regular developments, including the mission's own activities. The end result was a 'box-ticking exercise'. Political and economic developments superseded the benchmarks, laying the groundwork for a transition directly to the UN country team as opposed to a political or peacebuilding office. Once pressure to end the mandate had built up, some of the early expectations of the mandate lost their underlying substance and meaning.

Recommendation. The timing and nature of the transition of SSR and other tasks should be based on an assessment of conditions on the ground, using consistent and objective benchmarks, and of the level of institutional integrity of the main security institutions, rather than political pressure to end the mandate as soon as possible. *Amid political and other pressures to end the mandate, missions should advocate the use and successful achievement of objectively robust and measurable benchmarks and indicators of progress, and of the level of development and the strength of the main security institutions and providers. Many of these are likely to take significant time to reach consensus on.*

3. Inclusion of the principles of good governance in the SSR process

Despite its security-focused mandate, UNAMSIL played a role in achieving good governance through its broad-based work on supporting the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), supporting elections, increasing access to justice, instilling a human rights-based approach and similar efforts. The specific good governance mandates that UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL were given allowed more direct involvement in these and other areas, which supported a shift from operationalizing the security sector to providing specific governance features and tools for the security sector. The promotion of transparency,

accountability, inclusiveness and other principles of good governance was also prevalent in Côte d'Ivoire in the post-2010 period. UNOCI effectively interpreted its mandate as assisting and supporting the authorities in this regard, including eventually handing over important good governance initiatives that it created to other international and national actors by the end of the mandate. In both countries, however, early efforts on overall legislative reform to underpin the security sector, such as strengthening the oversight function of parliament in Sierra Leone or the National Assembly in Côte d'Ivoire, have been deemed inadequate.

Recommendation. To ensure the sustainability of SSR, the most salient principles of good governance should be identified for increased focus during the transition. *Missions should identify which principles warrant increased attention and action, such as transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and efficiency, and apply increased focus on and resources to these while also helping to ensure the continuing efforts of others after the end of the mandate.*

4. Acknowledgement of multilevel governance and willingness to engage with non-state actors

In both Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, the UN missions recognized local and non-state actors and supported them in providing security and justice services, including during their respective transitions. This, among other things, allowed for broader societal reach in each country than government institutions were capable of. In Sierra Leone, there was only minimal support for reform of the paramount chiefdoms, for example by raising awareness of contemporary human rights issues or instilling new ways of working with duly elected local government officials. In Côte d'Ivoire, many saw SSR collaboration between the government, traditional leaders, kings and dozos as more rhetorical than action aimed at achieving a decentralized and locally owned SSR process below and beyond the state-centric level.

Recommendation. Non-state and hybrid actors need to be included, supported and reformed in national SSR strategies. Transitions offer suitable contexts for reflecting and focusing on this. *Missions should take stock of the degree to which non-state and hybrid security actors play a role in the SSR process, and the level and type of support required from the UN family and others, and make adjustments or launch new efforts as required.*

5. National and local political leadership and commitment to SSR

National leadership on SSR was initially decisive in both Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. In Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom, UNAMSIL and others capitalized on this to provide support in line with the government's core needs and challenges. In Côte d'Ivoire, the support of the international community was also strong post-2010. In both cases, however, the SSR process seemed to have a preordained lifespan, after which positive change and impact diminished. In Sierra Leone, many in the top echelons of the security sector and local political leadership were wary of SSR efforts, in the most extreme cases viewing them as threatening. Similarly, in Côte d'Ivoire, fatigue set in with regard to SSR and local ownership could not take hold in the face of top-down leadership. While in both cases the UN tried to support stakeholders at every level, interest waned.

Recommendation. 'National champions' are required to sustain SSR efforts after transition. To ensure that initial commitment does not wane, it is important that missions help to develop local political leadership that understands the importance of the issue. After transition, a special political mission or other form of continued

presence can further nurture and support this political leadership. *Missions should identify national champions, including below the level of head of state and government, and support national and local ownership, mindful that such leadership can be disrupted by the requirements of government and the threats associated with change in the security sector, among other factors.*

6. Level of embeddedness of the SSR process in broader recovery frameworks

The government's decision to embed SSR in the overall poverty reduction strategy in Sierra Leone was widely regarded as pioneering in recognizing the security–development nexus and promoting sustainability of effort. This link allowed the UK, the UN and others to support the strategy alongside national partners. UNDP also assisted in that regard and provided longer-term support at the same time. UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL were thus able to apply their mandates in a well-established and long-term national recovery framework that was the result of relevant national and international stakeholders supporting SSR and other recovery areas. In Côte d'Ivoire, the government integrated SSR into a comprehensive reconstruction framework, the National Development Plan (NDP), with the support of UNOCI and the UN country team. UNOCI played a more indirect role in supporting SSR through the NDP by creating a favourable environment for its implementation through its SSR mandate. Nonetheless, there was alignment between the government's NDP and UNOCI's One UN Programmatic Framework in terms of providing long-term support for the reintegration of former combatants following the transition.

Recommendation. Supporting the inclusion of SSR in a broader national recovery agenda strengthens transition activities as it supports an enabling environment and sustains long-term efforts on SSR/DDR and other activities. *Missions should cross-reference mission initiatives and other efforts to ensure that support to SSR is inherently linked to the respective broader national recovery agenda(s). This will better guide and support transfer and handover to the national authorities or other UN entities.*

7. Civil society involvement in support of local ownership of SSR

In Sierra Leone, civil society organizations (CSOs) were not initially included in determining SSR processes, as this was regarded by the government as a technical and operational matter. Over time, the decentralized process led by the Office of National Security sought input from and participation by CSOs, local committees were created and collaboration and trust grew. In Côte d'Ivoire, the UN recognized the crucial role that civil society and NGOs could play in the SSR process and actively sought their participation by giving them opportunities to provide input into and be involved in implementation. In both cases, however, CSOs lacked influence at the strategic level of SSR decision making linked to UN presences and transitions. While the overall UN effort was hailed for helping to protect the civic space, more could have been done to assist CSOs to more directly affect SSR, including by institutionalizing the collaboration in a structured and sustainable way and strengthening existing NGO capacity.

Recommendation. CSOs are important partners in ensuring that SSR is sustained and that the security sector continues to be monitored after a mission is closed. They must be brought into the SSR process at its earliest stages. During transitions, efforts should be prioritized to institutionalize their role. *Missions should strive to insert CSOs as much as possible into the heart of the SSR process, including by working with the government to institutionalize their role at the strategic and other levels.*

8. Application of a gender-responsive SSR process

Many relevant mechanisms, laws, policies and other requirements were created and adopted by the national authorities in Sierra Leone, but the security sector did not become as gender-responsive as many had expected. UNAMSIL's work included strong advocacy with the government and specific support to the SLP. However, the gender focus of the mission's exit and transition plan was inadequate, and adequate follow-on gender interventions were not identified for the mission iterations that followed. UNOCI had a clear mandate to promote gender and this focus was maintained during the transition, for example in ensuring that gender focal points and desks in the security services received further support from UN Women and other UN entities. While UNOCI helped to increase the number of women in the police and gendarmerie, for example, by the end of mandate the main security institutions were still not providing enough support to women or adequately integrating gender perspectives into their regular work. In both case studies, gender mainstreaming was often sidelined or under-resourced, and gender responsiveness tended to be equated with increasing the number of women active in security institutions rather than actively pushing for broader institutional and societal change.

Recommendation. For SSR to be sustainable, gender needs to be mainstreamed when transitioning SSR activities. *Missions should ensure that the gender-responsiveness approach is pursued in a comprehensive manner that goes beyond numbers and equating gender predominantly with women.*

9. Linkages and synergies between the SSR process and the DDR programme

The reintegration phase of DDR is widely understood as the most problematic, due to the need for adequate funding, the time needed to deliver impactful training and concerns over ongoing insecurity and the lack of social cohesion. This perception has arisen largely based on the challenges first experienced in Sierra Leone. DDR was approached in Sierra Leone as a rapid and rigid process, even though there were indications that the UN would have been better off supporting a more flexible, adaptable and longer-term approach during the transitions, amid ongoing insecurity, lack of economic opportunity and a failure to include women. In Côte d'Ivoire, the post-2010 DDR programme provided by UNOCI lasted from 2013 until 2015, helping to set the stage for the end of its mandate. Nonetheless, there were several deficiencies in the programme during and after the transition. UNOCI and other international actors had concerns about some elements of the DDR programme but did not openly express these due to political pressure from the government. During the transition, UNOCI advised the government to assess the impact of the DDR programme, but this was not done. In both cases, weaknesses in the reintegration aspect of the DDR programme created continuing pressure on the overall SSR process after the mission had left the country.

Recommendation. To sustain SSR gains after transition, DDR and reintegration in particular need to be prioritized during the transition and responses kept flexible within an overall SSR process that continues after the DDR programme and the mission mandate have ended. *Missions should increase their efforts to implement the reintegration phase of DDR so that successes in SSR are not threatened or diluted by remaining reintegration challenges following the end of the mandate.*

10. Involvement of external non-UN actors, donors and partners in the SSR process

The lead support role played by the UK on SSR helped UNAMSIL and the two follow-on offices to eventually add value in SSR and other fields. The UK was active on the ground before UNAMSIL deployed in 1999 and remained engaged in a leading way

after the end of UNIPSIL's mandate in 2014. UNAMSIL was therefore able to have its police officers provide or contribute to security on the ground, UNIOSIL could assist the government with the shift to overall peacebuilding and UNIPSIL applied itself as a political platform to back the focused SSR programme developed with UNDP to support the final transition to the UN country team. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI had a mandate to coordinate SSR assistance on behalf of the international community, although France is regarded as the country that often led in setting the government's agenda on and approach to SSR, not least by advocating for an end to UNOCI's mandate on the basis of the country's economic development, among other things. Many other countries, the European Union and international foundations were active in providing direct support to SSR through agreements with the government. In the light of this plethora of bilateral and other actors providing direct support to SSR, and the lack of a strong, objective assessment of the security sector, the government with strong support from France was able to support the rationale underpinning UNOCI's transition and end of mandate.

Recommendation. The continuing involvement of a lead SSR nation or other non-UN actor in support of national authorities can enhance the sustainability of the SSR activities of a UN peace operation following transition. In the absence of such involvement, when a UN peacekeeping operation is mandated to coordinate international assistance on SSR, that role should be used to strategically influence the government on behalf of the international community. After transition, such a role can be continued by a follow-on special political mission or other UN presence. *Missions should encourage a relevant country or organization to take on the role of lead SSR entity. When mandated to coordinate international SSR assistance, missions should take a robust approach to ensuring strategic international influence on the government during the transition, including to obtaining a continuing commitment to mandate implementation, and a similar approach to any possible discussion and consideration of a follow-on UN office.*

11. Availability of sustainable funding for the SSR process

Given constrained economic growth and the absence of sufficient national funding, major external funding was a constant requirement for the SSR process in Sierra Leone. When the UK reduced its support, the lack of national, sustainable funding was clearly exposed. UNAMSIL, UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL advocated for and advised on approaches to sustainable funding and helped mobilize external donor funding but were unable to use the transitions to push the national government to create a budgetary approach and framework that could over time rely predominantly on predictable and transparent sources of national funding. In Côte d'Ivoire, the post-2010 government felt confident about setting a goal to fully fund SSR nationally, in the belief that this would be made possible by consistent positive economic growth. However, this goal had not been achieved at the time of the transition to the UN country team. Despite support from the UN and the World Bank, the government's efforts to sustainably fund the SSR process through implementation of a five-year military law (LPM) in 2016–2020 were ultimately unsuccessful. This led the government to plan a downsizing in the medium term as it was unable to fully fund SSR.

Recommendation. Following transitions, international SSR support, for example, through a special political mission, helps to sustain the processes put in place by missions before their departure. This can provide new impetus to the process, assist with the national anchoring of the process and support the development of relevant national plans. *Missions should focus on the overriding goal of helping national authorities to shift from external donor-funded SSR to predominantly nationally funded SSR by advising on current and future threat assessments, national plans and budgeting processes, as well as revenue sources and other factors.*

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