

IFP GENDER CLUSTER

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SECURITY SECTOR

How the EU can support gender-sensitive security sector reform in conflict-affected contexts

Karen Barnes

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BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SECURITY SECTOR

AUTHOR PROFILE

Karen Barnes

Karen Barnes is Senior Programme Officer on gender issues within the Peacebuilding Issues Programme at International Alert. She has lead responsibility for Alert's thematic work on gender and peacebuilding, involving a multi-year, cross-regional programme around the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. Her expertise is at both policy and field level with a particular focus on West Africa, and her recent publications include papers on gender-based violence and gender and security sector reform. She is currently completing her PhD in International Relations at the London School of Economics, focusing on gender issues and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. Prior to Alert, she was a consultant for UNHCR and UNICEF, and held various academic and policy research positions.

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CONTENTS

Acronyms	6
Executive summary	7
Introduction	9
Changing approaches to security	10
Case study 1: Linking security sector reform to community security in Nepal	11
The role of the EU in supporting gender-sensitive security processes and structures	14
Plans for the implementation of SCR 1325	16
Gender and security sector reform	17
Case study 2: Women's perceptions of security and police reform in Burundi	19
Addressing GBV through Justice and Security Sector Reform	21
Case study 3: Responding to GBV in Liberia	22
Gender and civil society oversight of the security sector	26
Case study 4: Monitoring Peacebuilding Fund projects from a gender perspective in Burundi	28
Conclusion and recommendations	31

ACRONYMS

AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based violence
GBV-POA	The National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender-Based Violence in Liberia
IFS	Instrument for Stability
INGOs	International non-governmental organisations
JSSR	Justice and security sector reform
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
SCR 1325	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
SCR 1820	UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence in Conflict
SSR	Security sector reform
UN-INSTRAW	UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Security sector reform (SSR) is a key aspect of the European Union's (EU) support for post-conflict countries. The objective of SSR is to build more effective and inclusive security structures and processes through various forms of training, capacity-building support, infrastructure rehabilitation and sensitisation. The way insecurity is experienced is influenced by gender and a range of diverse factors such as age, ethnicity or geographical location, and therefore it is important that any efforts to reform security sector institutions are informed by a context-specific gender analysis so that men and women of all backgrounds benefit equally from these processes. This paper will explore three different dimensions of inclusive security in conflict-affected contexts, and will make recommendations for the EU on how its policy commitments can be translated into more effective programming on the ground.

This research underlines the importance of understanding the insecurities experienced by both men and women from different groups at the local level, which are too often ignored by security sector policy-makers who tend to concentrate on national security concerns. Marginalised groups often find it difficult to access security services or the justice sector, articulate their security concerns, or to feel represented by the reform processes that are being administered by the government or international community. The seeds of violent conflict are sown at the community level, and understanding and addressing the various forms of violence and insecurity being experienced by men and women at this level is crucial to the rebuilding of sustainable peace.

GENDER AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR)

Gender is a factor that plays a significant role in influencing an individual's sense of security, and can also be a useful lens for understanding the different needs and interests of the members of any given community. For example, women are often particularly vulnerable to physical violence due to their limited access to power, resources and the means to guarantee their security. Men, on the other hand, may be more at risk of gun violence or abduction into fighting forces during or in the aftermath of conflict.

Understanding the insecurities men and women face in post-conflict contexts and the way they respond to these differences is important for designing an SSR process that can improve the security of all, regardless of their gender. Gender-sensitive SSR also requires that those on the front-line of service provision, such as police officers, are committed and equipped to protecting the rights of all citizens and responding to gender-specific security needs. A variety of tools can be used to ensure that SSR is gender-sensitive. These include the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex; the design and implementation of interventions to address gender-specific security threats; collaboration with women's organisations; increased recruitment and retention of women in the security sector; gender training for security sector personnel; and integrating gender analysis into security-related policies.

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most persistent security issues faced by women during armed conflict, and is being increasingly recognised as a critical issue by the international community. However, to date, the broader political, economic and social costs of GBV have been largely under-estimated and it is surrounded by a culture of silence and impunity. This paper recommends a broader approach to GBV that recognises the vital links between this form of violence and women's potential to participate politically, achieve a sustainable livelihood, and feel secure in their communities in the aftermath of conflict. To this end, preventing and responding to GBV should be integrated as a key goal within SSR processes, given the extent to which it affects the insecurity of women, and some men, throughout conflict-affected countries, and the important role that the security sector, especially the police, play.

A major challenge in responding to GBV is that many of the support services that are provided to victims of GBV are carried out informally by local organisations, and so may not be included in or reached by SSR processes. Police stations and justice providers are often based in district or regional capitals, and may be more than a day's journey away from communities where incidents of GBV take place. It is important to emphasise that while justice reforms are an essential component of any SSR process, in the case of GBV they are even more so. Without the associated reforms in the legal and judicial systems, efforts to report crimes of sexual violence or to arrest and prosecute perpetrators are likely to be ineffective.

INTEGRATING GENDER INTO CIVIL SOCIETY OVERSIGHT OF THE SECURITY SECTOR

An effective oversight mechanism is a key precondition for a security sector that responds adequately to the needs of the population, upholds human rights and the rule of law, and contributes to good governance. Parliaments, government bodies and CSOs all have an important role to play in monitoring, advocating for and supporting the effective implementation of SSR policies, particularly at the community level.

It is important that the involvement of both women and men is ensured and that a gender perspective is actively integrated into the work of oversight mechanisms. Incorporating a gender perspective into civil society oversight of the security sector means engaging with all members of the population to identify and build on their roles, responsibilities, capacities, needs and interests as they relate to the provision of security. Women's organisations face particular challenges in their attempts to hold security sector actors accountable, as few women's organisations have traditionally engaged with the security sector, and may lack sufficient technical expertise, capacity and connections to exercise meaningful oversight over the sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper highlights some of the entry points for ensuring that SSR processes support a more inclusive approach to security not just at the national level, but also for the men and women in communities throughout conflict-affected countries. Key recommendations for the EU are as follows:

- The EC should devote increased financial and human resources to its work on gender and security issues.
- Gender and conflict analysis should inform the work of the EC and its delegations, and should be seen as a process that actively engages, involves and empowers women and men in conflict-affected contexts.
- Indicators on gender-based insecurities should be included in all SSR programming and staff members in delegations in conflict-affected countries should have the tools and knowledge on how to collect information on these indicators.
- The EC should support local dialogue and consultation processes on security issues, with specific attention on involving the most marginalised groups in order to improve local ownership and ensure that SSR processes are responsive to the needs of marginalised groups, including women.
- The EC should also seek out expert advice and technical assistance to ensure that any SSR process it supports fully integrates a holistic response to GBV.
- Specific measures should be developed to build capacity and support women's organisations, including organisations outside capital cities.

Key words: Gender, peacebuilding, gender-based violence, security sector reform, European Union

INTRODUCTION

An effective security sector protects and upholds women's rights, particularly in the face of public or private violence towards women. However, it is often the security forces themselves who are amongst the biggest perpetrators of violence against women. Without basic security, women cannot undertake tasks essential to their livelihoods and physical wellbeing or engage in activities such as education, which offer possibilities for longer-term empowerment.¹

Equitable and accessible security provision is one of the main preconditions for a peaceful and prosperous society, and this need is particularly urgent in countries prone to or emerging from armed conflict. However, while it has been widely recognised that women and men are differently affected by conflict, the ways in which their security needs and access to security provision vary are not adequately understood or incorporated into security programming. In countries emerging from conflict, physical and human security can be particularly difficult to ensure, and the state institutions that are tasked with safeguarding and providing security to citizens are frequently weak, corrupt and under-resourced. Reforming these institutions and actors in line with more accountable and democratic principles is therefore a priority in these contexts.

Over the past two decades, multilateral and bilateral agencies have developed and implemented various programmes designed to support the reform of security institutions, provide a clear framework for the provision of security, and contribute to the establishment of effective and professional security forces. These programmes are often collectively referred to as security sector reforms (SSR). However, these programmatic approaches often focus on national, rather than human, security and fail to take into account the diversity of security threats experienced by civilians. Furthermore, the emphasis tends to be on state actors at the risk of overlooking the valuable role that non-state actors play in security provision. In addition to poorly designed programmes that fail to respond to the realities on the ground, the failure to consult adequately with local populations, including marginalised communities, around their needs leads to limited buy-in and ownership at all levels of society.

This paper will draw on lessons from a range of conflict-affected contexts to recommend practical strategies for the EU and other donors to support the integration of gender into their justice and SSR programmes. Three specific aspects or strategies for inclusive security have been selected as being particularly salient: integrating a gender perspective into the design and delivery of SSR processes; using SSR as a mechanism to prevent and respond to GBV; and integrating gender into civil society oversight mechanisms for the security sector.

¹ A. Sherriff with K. Barnes (2008). *Enhancing the EU response to women and armed conflict, with particular reference to development policy*. Study for the Slovenian EU Presidency. Brussels: ECDPM, p.18. Available at www.ecdpm.org/dp84.

CHANGING APPROACHES TO SECURITY

Over the past two decades, the international community has moved away from a narrow focus on national security towards recognising the need for human security approaches in designing peacebuilding programmes for the security sector. These approaches lead to security being viewed in a more people-centred way, with a focus on the individual and consideration of what is needed to establish “freedom from want” as well as “freedom from fear”. This presents a potential opening to identify and meet the needs of vulnerable groups, and is a positive development in how the international community approaches security issues. Although following the onset of the “War on Terror”, state security concerns again took primacy over all other approaches, there has more recently been a shift in the donor community back towards addressing the root causes of violence rather than merely protecting state interests and responding to conflict.²

These shifts can also be seen at the EU level. In December 2003 the EU adopted the European Security Strategy which attempted to include elements of both human security and the more traditional state security concept. The Barcelona Report on European Security Capabilities suggested that the EU should adopt human security and place it at the centre of its security strategy.³ More recently, the Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group, “A European Way of Security”, argues that human security should be the operating framework for the EU’s external action,⁴ and sets out six principles of a human security approach:

Box 1: Principles of Human Security (2007)

1. *Primacy of human rights*: Ensure respect for human rights to secure the safety, dignity and welfare of individuals and the communities in which they live. This includes physical protection as well as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.
2. *Legitimate political authority*: Any outside intervention must strive to create a legitimate political authority, and provide the conditions for a political process through which such an authority can be built and it must assist in the promotion of law and justice as well as the authority’s ability to guarantee material wellbeing.
3. *A bottom-up approach*: Intensive consultation with local people is required, not only to ‘win hearts and minds’ and in order to gain better understanding, although they are important, but to enable vulnerable communities to create the conditions for peace and stability themselves. This means involving civil society, women and young people, and not only political leaders or those who wield guns. Outsiders cannot deliver human security, they can only help.
4. *Effective multilateralism*: This means a better division of tasks and greater coherence, solving problems through rules and cooperation, and creating common policies and norms.
5. *An integrated regional approach*: Insecurity spills over borders through refugees, transnational criminal networks and so on. Regional dialogues and action in neighbouring countries should be systematically integrated into policies for crisis.
6. *Clear and transparent strategic direction*: When the EU intervenes externally, it must do so with clear legal authorisation, transparent mandates, and a coherent overall strategy. Where European security units are deployed there should be close linkage between policy-makers and those on the ground, with the former having ultimate control over operations.⁵

2 IFP Human security concept note, p.2. on Europe’s Security Capabilities.

3 Study Group on Europe’s Security Capabilities (2004). ‘A human security doctrine for Europe’. The Barcelona Report of the Study Group

4 Human Security Study Group (2007). *A European way of security – the Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group comprising a proposal and a background report*, Madrid, November 2007.

5 Human Security Study Group (2007). *A European way of security: The Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group comprising a proposal and a background report*, Madrid, November 2007, p.9-10.

Despite the shift toward a human security approach, SSR efforts have tended to be discussed, defined and designed at the national level with the result that insecurities experienced at the local level are either ignored or become invisible. However, it is at the community level where the seeds of violent conflict are sown, and understanding and addressing the various forms of violence and insecurity that affect people's lives is crucial to the rebuilding of a sustainable peace. In particular, marginalised groups may find it difficult to access security services or the justice sector, articulate their security concerns, or feel represented by the reform processes that are being administered by the government or international community. Security means different things to different people, and is influenced by a range of factors such as age, ethnicity or geographical location. Understanding the multiple insecurities experienced by individuals in different groups is therefore a complex task, and one that cannot be achieved by focusing on security as provided solely by the state. Focusing on the community level can offer insight into people's security needs, and it is also the level at which important services are provided.

In addition to the immediate effect of potentially compromising or failing to protect the security of different communities, reforms that are not designed in a responsive way risk undermining local ownership and having little local legitimacy. To foster a sense of ownership and legitimacy it is important that individuals throughout a community or country perceive that their day-to-day lives are becoming more secure, and that the security and justice systems offer them the protection and services that they need. Locally-based understandings of security needs help foster a more inclusive, effective and sustainable SSR process. For example, supporting a process of local dialogue to defuse tensions at the community level would also provide a forum for citizens to come into contact with security and justice providers to discuss their needs and concerns, thereby providing important insight and knowledge around how to provide more responsive services.

Even with a human security approach that focuses on individual and community-based security needs there is still an imperative to ensure that gender issues are being addressed. Gender is a factor that plays a significant role in influencing an individual's sense of security, and can also be useful as a lens for understanding the different needs and interests of the members of any given community. For example, women are often particularly vulnerable to certain types of physical violence due to their limited access to power, resources and the means to guarantee their security. Men, on the other hand, may be more at risk of gun violence or abduction into fighting forces during or in the aftermath of conflict.

A gender approach to SSR should include a variety of methods:

- **Protecting** women against violence, with a special focus on GBV;
- **Empowering** women by having women's organisations giving input and gender expertise to the SSR process and through recruitment of women to all levels in the security sector; and
- **Capacity building** through ensuring that all security sector staff are trained on gender issues with adequate tools and resources to support gender mainstreaming throughout their work.

A full application of the human security approach would also validate the security provided by a plethora of actors, many of them women who secure their families and communities without receiving recognition from the formal security sector. Ensuring that women can fully engage in local dialogues and other participatory process would also give them voice in an area where they tend to be excluded and their needs are rarely recognised or highlighted.

CASE STUDY 1: LINKING SECURITY SECTOR REFORM TO PUBLIC SECURITY IN NEPAL

The signing of a peace agreement in 2006 and peaceful Constituent Assembly elections in 2008 marked the formal end of conflict in Nepal. However, large parts of the country are still subject to ongoing insecurity and there has been an increase in the activity of armed groups who seek to negotiate their position through violence rather than the newly established political process. There is an urgent need to address issues related to security provision as part of the ongoing peace process. As research conducted by the security cluster of the Initiative for Peacebuilding found, 'success in security sector reform (SSR) is vital in ensuring the improvements to governance, without which further violent conflict in Nepal is likely'.⁶

6 C. Watson and R. Crozier (2009). *Security for whom? Security sector reform and public security in Nepal*. Brussels: IfP, p.7.

International Alert has worked in Nepal to promote public security since 2006. Its work aims to inform the national SSR process with an understanding of diverse security needs at the community level and to advocate for addressing these needs as a conflict prevention measure that will contribute to the building of a sustainable and inclusive peace. Focus at the community level is important for SSR because marginalised groups are often less able to access justice and security services and are less likely to feel represented by reform processes administered by Kathmandu-based government agencies.

Nepali society is characterised by stark social, cultural and economic inequalities along the lines of caste, gender, ethnicity and geographic location. Research conducted by International Alert over the past three years has shown that those with few economic means also have very limited access to security and justice. 'Across Nepal, the feeling is that security has improved "only for the strong"; with women and young people feeling especially marginalised in this regard'.⁷ Respondents claim that the police and judiciary discriminate against the poor as the rich are able to "buy" better services. In the eastern Terai region, many respondents felt that inequitable access to educational and economic opportunities is 'a fundamental obstacle to peace and security in the region, and the line between ideologically motivated political groups and armed gangs out for economic gain in this region is blurred'.⁸

In community-level consultations, it is important to be mindful of the unequal power relations that exist within communities, and even within families, that can easily silence the voices of some community members, such as women. Gender relations influence the types of insecurities men and women face and their capacities to respond, and armed conflict has led to a change in existing gender relations. Alert's research in Jumla, for example, has found that as the Maoist governance and justice structures that were set up during the conflict have been abolished, there has been an apparent rise in domestic violence.

The SSR process in the country will be a critical element to ensuring sustainable peace, and therefore it is important that it reflects public security concerns and the needs of the diverse communities at the local level. In particular, the cleavages along caste, ethnic and gender lines have tended to exacerbate unequal access to services and these inequalities must be addressed by any SSR process. To date, however, 'there has been little discussion about how SSR processes can relate to, and be informed by, local-level realities and public security needs'.⁹ Instead, public discussion around SSR has been diverted by political tensions over difficult questions relating to the size and structure of the Nepal Army, the integration of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the army, and how to engage with the increasing number of militant youth groups.¹⁰

At the local level, contact between security actors and the population is limited and many are not aware of reforms that have been initiated in the capital. For example, although police are returning to the district posts, their roles and responsibilities are not being communicated to the local communities they are supposed to serve, therefore trust in the police is only slowly increasing and interaction between police and communities is still minimal.

The Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) study on community security in Nepal summarises many of these challenges by concluding:

'If SSR in Nepal is designed and implemented at the exclusion of local-level considerations, particularly in relation to access to services according to gender, ethnicity and caste, it is unlikely to have any impact upon public insecurity. If individuals and communities do not see an improvement in their day-to-day security then they are unlikely to back any national, Kathmandu-led initiatives. Furthermore, without adequate structures and mechanisms in place, small-scale disputes and conflicts may turn violent and escalate, particularly given the current volatile environment and high levels of frustration with the political process'.¹¹

Ensuring that SSR does not become a top-down, externally-driven and centrally-administered process is a key peacebuilding challenge. Involving communities in discussions about their own security contributes to the legitimacy and sustainability of these reforms. Women and men, due to their different roles and responsibilities in the home and

7 Ibid. p.12.

8 Ibid. p.12.

9 Ibid. p.20.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid. p.20.

their communities, can face gender-specific insecurities that may not be addressed by more general assumptions about the security of a given district or region in a conflict-affected country. Several tools exist to enable policy-makers and security actors to better assess the needs of both men and women, and these should be drawn on and coupled with community-based approaches to security to ensure that SSR processes are responsive to the needs of all.

THE ROLE OF THE EU IN SUPPORTING GENDER-SENSITIVE SECURITY STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

A number of relevant policy instruments and frameworks exist that provide a mandate to the institutions of the EU and its Member States for engaging in security sector reform (SSR). SSR is a key aspect of the EU's support for post-conflict countries, and it is engaged in various forms of training, capacity-building support, infrastructure rehabilitation and sensitisation that are intended to lead to more effective security structures and processes.

Integrating gender is a key step towards ensuring inclusive SSR programming, and as one of the most influential actors in peacebuilding and development across the globe, the EU could play an important leadership role in this regard. This paper will explore three different dimensions of inclusive security in conflict-affected contexts, and will make recommendations for the EU on how its policy commitments can be translated into more effective programming on the ground.

The three key documents that form the basis of the EU's strategy on SSR are:

- *EU Concept for ESDP Support to Security Sector Reform*; Council of the European Union, Brussels (2005).
- *A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform*; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Brussels (2006).
- *Council Conclusions on a Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform*; 2736th General Affairs Council meeting, Luxembourg (2006).

The 'EU Concept for ESDP Support to SSR' (2005) names SSR as one of the core areas for EU action. While it emphasises the need for a holistic approach that takes into consideration the security needs of people, gender does not feature strongly. However, gender issues are mentioned together with human rights and international law as topics to be addressed in the training of armed forces, education of the police sector and training of border guards and customs officers. UNSCR 1325 is listed together with other international conventions and resolutions as examples of human rights principles that should be respected in the reform of the security sector.¹²

In 2006 the European Commission issued their communication 'A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform' which together with the aforementioned concept note constitutes a policy framework for EU action in the field of SSR. While gender is again largely absent from the concept note, it is stated that the EC approach to SSR should be guided by a gender-sensitive multi-sector approach, taking into account the role of civil society, although there is no mention of SCR 1325.¹³ A more in-depth elaboration on gender issues in the field of SSR can be found in the 2007 Commission Communication 'Towards an EU response to situations of fragility – engaging in difficult environments for sustainable development, stability and peace':

'The initial response strategies should address the immediate needs of the population, even if strategic responses need to focus on the long term. For this, it is crucial to understand how fragility affects the

¹² The Council of the European Union (2005). *EU Concept for ESDP Support to Security Sector Reform (SSR)*, Note from the Secretariat to the Political and Security Committee, Doc 12566/4/05.

¹³ European Commission (2006). *A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform*: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, SEC (2006) 658.

different groups in a society, in particular women and vulnerable groups such as children, youth, disabled and minorities, in order to address their needs effectively.

These groups can also act as 'drivers of change'. Women, in particular, must not be considered only as passive victims; even if especially in situations of conflict they are particularly vulnerable to sexual crimes and exploitation. Women and minorities have an important role in promoting sustainable peace and fostering security, but they usually do not have access to mechanisms, power and resources, and face discriminatory legal frameworks. Transition periods offer windows of opportunity to address gender issues and minorities rights, through constitutional or legal reviews, reform of the judiciary, and involvement in setting priorities in the reconstruction agenda'.¹⁴

Finally, the 'Council Conclusions on a Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform' recommend that the EU's approach to SSR be based on five key principles, drawn from the OECD-DAC definition of SSR:

- Support nationally and regionally owned participatory reform processes;
- Support the development of the core requirements for an effective and well-functioning security structure;
- Recognise the diversity of security challenges and adopt a "gender-sensitive multi-sector approach" to SSR and justice reform. Responses should be holistic and incorporate non-state actors and structures, including civil society;
- Apply accountability and transparency standards to the security sector, and use civil society and parliamentary oversight to enhance governance; and
- Harmonise political dialogue on security issues with partner countries with work being done through other instruments.¹⁵

Gender issues are clearly relevant to all of these principles and should be integrated throughout. However to date, this has not really been the case with regards to actual implementation.

More recently, on 8th December 2008, the Council adopted the 'Comprehensive approach to EU Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security'.¹⁶ This document outlines common definitions and principles based on international and EU-specific lessons learned and aims to result in greater coherence and impact among the EU's crisis management initiatives and reconstruction and development work. The Comprehensive Approach outlines the three-pronged approach that the EU will adopt: integrating women, peace and security issues in its policy and political dialogue with partner governments; mainstreaming a gender approach in its policies and activities; and supporting strategic actions targeting the protection and empowerment of women.¹⁷ Specifically in reference to SSR, the Comprehensive Approach states:

'In its support to Security Sector Reform (SSR), the EU will ensure that the reform processes account for the specific security needs of both women and men, boys and girls, and promote women's inclusion in the staff of the institutions concerned (such as the police). Specific attention will be paid to investments in the required infrastructure (e.g. forensic laboratories) and human resources needed for reception of victims of Sexual and Gender-based Violence and investigation of these crimes. In its support to the strengthening and reform of the justice sector the EU will seek to enhance the involvement of women and their access to justice, including transitional justice mechanisms'.¹⁸

This document therefore acts as an important policy commitment in the area of integrating gender into SSR. Several EU Member States have also developed their own National Action Plans on the implementation of SCR 1325, some of which contain specific references to SSR and associated justice sector reforms (see Box 2).

¹⁴ European Commission (2007). *Towards an EU response to situations of fragility – engaging in difficult environments for sustainable development, stability and peace*. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, SEC(2007)1417.

¹⁵ European Council (2006). *Council conclusions on a policy framework for Security Sector Reform*, 2736th General Affairs Council Meeting, pp.2-3. *Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security*. Brussels: The Council of the European Union.

¹⁶ European Council (2008) *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.11, para 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.17, para 35.

Box 2: Examples of references to gender and SSR in EU Member States' National Action Plans for the implementation of SCR 1325

- **Sweden:** 'In the development of action and strategies for security sector reform in post-conflict countries, attention will be given to the active participation of women and their security, roles and enjoyment of their human rights. Areas of interest include education, training and recruitment as well as broader issues of reform of the judicial system'.¹⁹
- **UK:** 'HMG [Her Majesty's Government aims] to promote justice for women and tackle gender-based violence in post-conflict situations: to advocate for gender-based violence to be included in the mandates of transitional justice mechanisms, including tribunals, reparations, vetting and truth commissions; [...] to continue to include tackling gender-based violence and access to justice for women as a priority in DFID-supported Security, Safety and Access to Justice programmes in conflict-related countries'.²⁰
- **Austria:** 'Austria takes an active part in combating violence against women and girls by supporting structures based on the rule of law. Legislative reforms and training of the involved public authorities (courts, police) are to ensure appropriate responses of the legal system to cases of gender-based violence'.²¹
- **Belgium:** 'Belgium will [...] highlight the gender dimension in the planning, the training and the development of SSR and DDR programmes'.²²
- **Netherlands:** 'BZ [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], BZK [Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations] and the Ministry of Defence will work to include and train more women in all the security institutions of the states concerned; BZ will facilitate contacts in the SSR field among its own staff and with BZK, the Ministry of Defence and civil society so that women's voices are heard in all activities; women's organisations will make their experience, expertise and knowledge of sociocultural processes available to people who have to apply a gender perspective to SSR activities'.²³

However, whilst all of these policy commitments represent important progress, it must be noted that unless implementation is prioritised, resourced and monitored, they are unlikely to result in any concrete change. The EU, and particularly the EC, can use the wide array of tools at its disposal to support the integration of gender into SSR programming. The remainder of this paper will highlight recommendations for the EC in this regard, drawing on case studies and lessons learned in Burundi, Nepal and Liberia.

19 Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden (2006). *Resolution 1325: The Swedish Government's action plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security*. Stockholm: Swedish Government, p.16.

20 UK Government (2006). *UK national action plan to implement UNSCR 1325*. London: UK Government, p.10.

21 Austrian Government (2007). *Austrian action plan on implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*. Vienna: Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, p.12.

22 Belgian Government (2008). *Women, Peace and Security: Belgian National Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325*. Brussels: Belgian Government, p.14. Available at <http://www.diplomatie.be/en/pdf/vrouwenenvrede2009en.pdf>.

23 Dutch Government (2007). *Dutch National Action Plan on Resolution 1325: Taking a stand for women, peace and security*. The Hague: Dutch Government, p.34. Available at http://www.epl.org/documents/1325_Holland.pdf.

GENDER AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

'A gender-sensitive SSR approach needs to address the patterns of vulnerabilities of women, men, girls and boys as well as the resources available to them and the strategies that they employ for their own security. SSR programmes based on such an understanding will be more targeted and responsive, and thus more effective and sustainable. Moreover, security institutions that are seen to listen and respond to the needs of all parts of the community will be perceived as more legitimate and accountable'.²⁴

The concept of SSR began to emerge in the 1990s, and since then donors have become increasingly engaged in financing and influencing these processes in countries emerging from conflict. According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC), SSR entails:

'... the transformation of the "security system" – which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well functioning security framework'.²⁵

The main actors in the security sector are the armed forces, police, intelligence services and other security agencies, justice and rule-of-law institutions, oversight bodies such as national security advisory councils or financial management committees, and non-statutory security forces such as guerrilla armies or private security companies. SSR can be seen to have four key dimensions, all of which clearly have a gender perspective:

- Political: based on the principle of civilian control over military and security bodies.
- Institutional: the physical and technical transformation of security entities (e.g. structure of security establishment, number of troops, equipment, etc.).
- Economic: the financing and budgets of forces.
- Societal: the role of security providers in society and the role of civil society in monitoring security policies and programmes.²⁶

WHAT DOES INTEGRATING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO SSR REALLY MEAN?

Gender refers to the socially and culturally constructed identity, roles and responsibilities that are assigned to men and women, and which influence access and control over resources, opportunities and decision-making. Gender therefore is a powerful factor influencing the degree to which men, women, boys and girls feel secure and have access to security services, and the types of insecurities that they may experience in their daily lives. However, while these differences may be recognised in theory, ensuring that a gender perspective is adequately integrated into all dimensions and stages of an SSR process in practice can be more difficult. Some examples of ways that a gender perspective could be integrated include the following:

- Collecting sex-disaggregated data on the main types of security threats being experienced within a given community, for example through local surveys;

²⁴ M. Bastick (2008). *Integrating gender in post-conflict security sector reform*. Policy Paper Number 29. Geneva: DCAF, p.5.

²⁵ OECD-DAC (2005). *Security system reform and governance*. DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. Paris: OECD. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/39/31785288.pdf>.

²⁶ S. N. Anderlini & C. P. Conaway (2004). *Inclusive security, sustainable peace: A toolkit for advocacy and action*. London: International Alert.

- Acknowledging and addressing gender-specific security threats such as sexual violence in the design and delivery of SSR processes;
- Collaborating with women's organisations in raising awareness about reforms in the security sector and in ensuring that the provision of security is responsive to the needs of women and girls;
- Ensuring diversity within the security sector through the active recruitment of women and any other under-represented groups;
- Providing gender training to police and army officers as well as individuals in the penal, immigration and border control sectors; and
- Integrating a gender analysis into the development of security-related policies such as defense policies, national security strategies, or other similar frameworks.

According to a toolkit on gender and SSR recently published by DCAF in conjunction with UN-INSTRAW and the OSCE, there are several key benefits of integrating gender into SSR processes: enhancing local ownership, effective service delivery, and increased oversight and accountability.²⁷ These areas are elaborated on below:

1. **Local ownership:** The integration of gender can bring more legitimacy to SSR as well as make the reforms more responsive, inclusive and participatory. Women's groups are often a source of knowledge and expertise in relation to gender-specific security priorities that otherwise may not be accessible to policy-makers. Involving these organisations and other marginalised groups in society increases the likelihood of sustainability of reforms, by providing them with a stake in the process.
2. **Effective service delivery:** To be effective, SSR needs to reach the whole population and should be representative of the needs and interests of all citizens in both design and delivery. Increasing the number of women in the security sector has the benefit of accessing their specific skills and recognises the fact that they may carry out some tasks better. Furthermore, identifying and addressing gender-specific issues is essential to overall efficiency. For example, GBV is a critical security issue that is too often overlooked, but gender-sensitive SSR can build in mechanisms and strategies to address it such as the establishment of police units dedicated to dealing with VAW or sensitisation campaigns within the police and military. Reaching out to women's organisations also recognises that they are often an additional service provider, particularly in rural communities. Building on their activities and services can strengthen the response of the security sector and make SSR more effective, as well as more accessible to a wider group of people.
3. **Increased accountability:** A democratically accountable security sector is necessary to uphold the rule of law, limit abuses of power, and effectively protect the population. Involving a more representative cross-section of women and men in the design and provision of security services and in oversight mechanisms can help ensure that the security sector responds adequately to human rights abuses including violence against women.²⁸

Integrating gender into SSR encompasses a variety of different approaches, activities and outcomes. Although there are now several policy commitments to integrate gender into SSR processes around the world, the reality of doing this in practice remains largely elusive. There are many obstacles to the effective integration of gender issues into SSR processes, and these obstacles can vary between contexts. Key challenges include:

- Lack of transparency and marginalisation of gender issues within the security sector;
- Lack of resources within SSR programmes targeted specifically at promoting women's rights or gender equality;
- Lack of acknowledgement of sexual and GBV and gendered violence and gendered insecurities as security issues that can impact on broader peacebuilding efforts;
- Low numbers of women employed within the security sector, particularly at the higher levels, who may find it difficult to influence decision-making or to bring different points of view to bear on the design and delivery of SSR; and
- Failure to integrate provision and access to justice within SSR programming.

²⁷ K. Valasek (2008). 'Security sector reform and gender' in M. Bastick & K. Valasek (Eds.). *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, p.6.

²⁸ This text has been adapted from: K. Valasek (2008). 'Security sector reform and gender' in M. Bastick & K. Valasek (Eds.). *Gender and security sector reform toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, p.6-11.

CASE STUDY 2: WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY AND POLICE REFORM IN BURUNDI

Over the past decades, Burundians have experienced a high level of insecurity throughout much of the country. Since the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000, Burundi has undergone a process of recovery and reconstruction, however the situation can still be described as one of “fragile security”. There is a disconnect in Burundi between the police and the population, particularly in rural areas, as they have historically worked out of the district capitals rather than working or living in the communities that they are supposed to be policing. The breakdown of traditional justice systems during the conflict in combination with the state-centred model of policing has resulted in a security gap at the individual and community level, particularly in Burundi’s rural areas. The introduction of community-based policing is seen as an important strategy designed to fill this gap. Community-based policing implies a police force that is integrated into society, serving the general public, and working with communities, organisations, institutions and associations to find solutions that focus on addressing the local causes of insecurity.²⁹ One of the projects supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) focuses on supporting the operationalisation of a community-based policing force in Burundi, addressing issues ranging from the uniforms and equipment used by the police to training in human rights. The project is intended to make the police more professional, operational and confident on the ground. Additional projects financed by bilateral donors such as Belgium and France support training and the provision of equipment for the police in line with the community-based policing model.

During the civil war, women were often targeted by combatants from all sides. This violence tended to be localised in areas where the fighting occurred and was both brutal and anonymous. In addition to the threat of violence, key causes of women’s insecurity are a mix of poverty and impunity. Furthermore, the availability of small arms and light weapons (SALW), changing gender roles and increased unemployment of men can lead to domestic violence and further insecurity for women. In order to better understand the security needs of women, and to determine if these had changed over time and were adequately addressed by the new security reforms, in 2008 International Alert supported research surveying the perceptions of security of 598 women with diverse backgrounds from throughout Burundi.³⁰

Women in the study characterised security as an understanding between people, a peaceful life without war, where people are able to go about their daily business without experiencing any threats. For many women in Burundi, security also means freedom from killings, from theft, from GBV and rape in particular, from poverty and from unemployment.³¹ The extensive study conducted by Dushirehamwe, International Alert’s partner organisation, demonstrates the extent and variety of insecurities experienced by women throughout Burundi, and illustrates well the complexities inherent in understanding the different security needs of individuals within any given community.

The survey produced a mixed response with regard to the extent that women felt their security was improving and the level of confidence they had in the security sector. Importantly, this research concludes that most women interviewed placed more weight on their personal and household security rather than public security, and unless these issues are incorporated into police reforms it is unlikely that they will begin to feel more safe. During 2008, in meetings with those responsible for administering the PBF project on developing a community-based policing approach in Burundi, representatives from 30 women’s organisations made several specific recommendations including the following:

- Integrate SCR 1325, specifically the need to protect women and girls, in the French and Kirundi versions of the police manuals;
- Ensure that police training modules incorporate gender issues;
- Ensure that there are periodic meetings between the police and local communities where women are able to participate effectively and air their security concerns;
- Provide sex-disaggregated data on the number of participants in trainings and sensitisation meetings that are planned under this and other PBF projects;

²⁹ See C. Nibigira and T. Nisabwe (2008). *Les perceptions des femmes sur la sécurité et la réforme du secteur de police. Burundi: Dushirehamwe.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* p.29.

- Women's organisations are involved in the implementation of this project, particularly with regards to sensitising the population on the functions of the new police force and the advantages of their new functions and uniforms; and
- All the police reform projects funded by donors (e.g. Dutch, French and Belgian) should take the specific needs of women into account.

WHAT THE EU CAN DO TO SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER INTO SSR

The EU should ensure that **gender training is incorporated within the context of ESDP missions** focused on SSR, such as EUSEC DR Congo.

The EC should ensure that its staff, in particular those in delegations in conflict countries, have the tools and knowledge on how to **collect sex-aggregated data and information on gender-based insecurities**. Even where the capacity to collect this information does not exist within the EC, links and networks with women's groups and other CSOs working at the community level in these countries should be cultivated as they can then act as a source for this information, which should then be fed into the design and delivery of SSR.

The EU should support the **targeting of resources and personnel** to address gender issues within the context of SSR. One of the major obstacles to the integration of a gender perspective in SSR is the lack of knowledge, resources and capacity to carry out the analysis, consultations, and technical exercises necessary to ensure that both women's and men's needs are being met by SSR processes. If the EU is to follow through on its policy commitments in this area then these types of investment are absolutely crucial.

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH JUSTICE AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most persistent violations that women face during and in the aftermath of armed conflict, and is being increasingly recognised as a critical issue by the international community. However to date, the broader political, economic and social costs of GBV have been largely under-estimated and ignored and it is surrounded by a culture of silence and impunity. The range and complexity of the underlying causes and the many consequences it has on all spheres of women's (and men's) lives make it a difficult issue to address. GBV not only manifests itself as physical violence such as sexual abuse of women and children, but also includes forms of structural violence such as discriminatory laws and practices, and can affect women and men, girls and boys. It tends to be mediated by factors such as age, religion, class and disability, and violent conflict in particular exacerbates GBV.

Current approaches to GBV by the international community tend to focus on protection and health issues, which are often the most immediately visible aspects of the issue. A broader, more holistic approach to GBV that recognises the vital links between these forms of violence and women's potential to participate politically, achieve a sustainable livelihood, and feel secure in their communities in the aftermath of conflict is needed. Women should not be merely seen as victims in need of protection, but GBV should rather be treated as a significant peacebuilding issue with broader implications for both men and women, and efforts to address it should recognise the role of women and men as powerful agents for positive change. To this end, preventing and responding to GBV should be integrated as a key goal within SSR processes, given the extent to which it affects the insecurity of women and some men throughout conflict-affected countries. The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in conflict in June 2008 was a key step towards a more concerted effort by the international community to recognise and address these types of crimes. This resolution specifically mandates the UN and its agencies to provide protection to women and girls in the context of SSR processes, but the extent to which this will be carried out in practice remains to be seen.³²

There are several key challenges that can prevent or inhibit efforts to address GBV in SSR processes:

- Existence of discriminatory legislation that fails to acknowledge rape, domestic violence or other forms of sexual violence as a criminal act;
- The culture of impunity that exists during conflict is often carried over into the post-conflict phase due to institutional failure and lack of capacity, ongoing instability and violence, and changed norms around acceptable behaviour;
- Prevalence of informal justice systems and customary law, particularly in rural areas, that prevents or makes it difficult for victims from seeking recourse under the law;
- Widespread poverty and lack of access to the resources necessary to access justice, such as money to pay the costs of travelling to courts or to the police station;
- Lack of training and/or capacity of security services and justice providers to recognise and appropriately deal with incidents of GBV;
- Stigmatisation of victims of GBV, which prevents them from reporting cases to the authorities, or can have a major negative impact on the daily lives of those who do report; and

³² UN Security Council (2008). *Resolution 1820*. United Nations, para 10.

- Lack of collaboration and coordination across different sectors to ensure the necessary multi-pronged approach to the issue of GBV, incorporating medical, psychosocial, legal and criminal responses.

Overall, one of the major challenges is that many of the support services that are provided to victims of GBV are carried out informally by local organisations, and so may not be included in or reached by SSR processes. Police stations and justice providers are often focused on district or regional capitals, which may be more than a day's journey away from communities where incidents of GBV are being experienced. Therefore, even if these structures are being reformed, they may not reach the populations and communities where the services are most required. It is important to emphasise that while justice reforms are an essential component of any SSR process, in the case of GBV they are even more so. Without the associated reforms in the legal system, efforts to report crimes of sexual violence or arrest perpetrators are likely to be ineffective. Another important consideration is that gaps in, or lack of access to, the formal justice sector can lead survivors of GBV to seek recourse through informal, customary or community-based mechanisms, which may not offer adequate protection and support.

Research done by International Alert in Sierra Leone found that the support being provided to GBV victims is often "invisible", as the organisations or individuals providing the services do not have links to main cities and are frequently ad hoc initiatives run with few resources.³³ In many cases, these community-based initiatives are the main source of assistance for those who live in rural areas. As such, this level of activity could be a key potential entry point for engaging with GBV issues in a more innovative and sustainable way that promotes local ownership within the context of SSR. However, it can be difficult for donor agencies such as the EC to partner with community-based groups without going through more established organisations that have the infrastructure and capacity to divert funds to the local level. Ways of overcoming this are necessary, and more effort could be made by international agencies and non-governmental organisations to act as intermediaries, thereby linking up these informal support mechanisms with more formalised GBV programme interventions in the context of broader SSR.

CASE STUDY 3: RESPONDING TO GBV IN LIBERIA

Women in Liberia have been subject to extensive sexual violence at the hands of all parties to armed conflict, and various forms of GBV are endemic throughout much of the country. Discriminatory laws, traditional practices and the culture of impunity around violations of women's rights exacerbates the vulnerable position of women and girls who are the main victims of GBV. Importantly, in addition to being widespread, GBV has historically often been left unchallenged at all levels of society. GBV is therefore one of the paramount concerns of Liberian women and girls, as well as men and boys, and failing to address this form of violence will have serious consequences for long-term peacebuilding in Liberia.

Recent research and consultations carried out by International Alert across five counties in rural Liberia confirm that GBV is an entrenched and often accepted norm across society in post-conflict Liberia.³⁴ Sexual violence continues to plague women five years after the end of the conflict. A recent study found that more than half of the female population had been affected by GBV during the previous 18 months.³⁵ More than 40 percent of respondents and 72 percent of married women had experienced sexual violence. 'This can be traced to the culture of impunity and acquiescence in a society which views rape of women as "no big deal" and in which it is considered normal for intimate partner relations to be characterised by violence'.³⁶ The vast majority of perpetrators of GBV against women are known by survivors; they are in particular husbands and other intimate partners.

33 K. Barnes with P. Albrecht and M. Olson (2007). *Addressing gender-based violence in Sierra Leone: Mapping challenges, responses and future entry points*. London: International Alert, p.29-30.

34 During 2008, Alert undertook a research mission to assess the causes and consequences of GBV in Liberia, and held local dialogues throughout the south east of the country where GBV was repeatedly raised as a serious concern.

35 A. Warner (2007). Incidence of violence against women and girls in Liberia: A quantitative study using the 'neighbourhood method'. A Joint Research Initiative by the International Rescue Committee and the Program on Forced Migration and Health, Mailman School of Public Health. New York: Columbia University.

36 J. Munala (2007). 'Challenging Liberian perspectives towards violence against women' in *Forced Migration Review*, Issue 27. Oxford: University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, p.36.

A study carried out by the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) in 2007 identifies three factors that affect the prosecution of rape cases in Liberia.³⁷ First, survivors of GBV and their families are often unaware of existing laws and procedures related to bringing cases forward. Second, there are far-reaching societal and cultural factors that affect the reporting of GBV cases, such as the stigmatisation of victims of GBV and a widespread belief that GBV is a matter to be settled privately. As a result, most cases never reach the police or courts and are often dealt with through facilitated compromises between the victims and the perpetrators. A Crisis Group report found that only a handful of rape cases are filed with city magistrates every year; in some towns, 'residents and chiefs asserted rape simply did not occur'.³⁸ Finally, when rapes are reported to the police and courts, institutional factors within courts pose an obstacle to successful prosecution. These include resource constraints within the judicial system, as well as technical challenges related to the fact that GBV is a relatively new legal phenomenon in Liberia.³⁹ The fact that GBV offences are rarely 'publicly adjudicated strengthens the belief they are not real crimes'.⁴⁰ Regardless of great efforts in past years to improve the response of courts to GBV, 'the court system is not making anticipated impact, the courts are weak in capacity, overwhelmed by the tasks before them, and making very slow progress'.⁴¹

In Liberia, security sector institutions have historically been tools of oppression for ruling regimes, feared by the population, and have had little democratic accountability. The fragmented post-war security sector comprises various different agencies, often acting in competition with each other. Following a large-scale process of DDR, government and donor policy has lately been moving towards SSR, which involves resizing and training of the army and the police among other activities. There are also simultaneous efforts to reform the justice system, as restructuring and retraining of the police and army are unlikely to produce real results in the absence of a corresponding justice sector reform. This, however, is a major challenge: conflicts in Liberia over the past decades have destroyed much of the country's judicial system, but even before the wars, many of the counties did not have accessible judicial services and in most cases courts were ineffective. 'Given the role of impunity and injustice in the decay that led to the civil war, the importance of judicial reform can hardly be over-emphasised'.⁴² The new Supreme Court was inaugurated in January 2004, which kicked off the process of judicial reform. The United States and the UN have provided training for administrators and judges and have donated reference materials and data processing equipment to the courts. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission started in early 2008, and the rehabilitation of the Ministry of Justice and the rolling out of judicial structures to county level is under way. Justice and security sector reform, and the extent to which gender issues are incorporated into the reform process, will have a fundamental impact on GBV in Liberia.

Although new legislation on rape was passed in 2006, survivors of GBV still face major barriers in accessing justice. Overall, the capacity of the judicial system is extremely weak: courts are not functioning to full capacity and only operate up to 42 days a year. The problem is particularly severe in rural areas as qualified lawyers are reluctant to take assignments away from major towns.⁴³ In some parts of the country, courts have ceased functioning completely. Trials are delayed and prisoners remain in pre-trial detention because the courts lack personnel, bookkeeping, and case-management skills. Low salaries and bad working conditions encourage widespread corruption.⁴⁴ Justice reform processes tend to focus on statutory justice actors, but customary law is the primary area in which the majority of Liberians appeal for justice. Reforms of the statutory system, though important, are most likely to benefit urban elites who have the most access to that system. Customary justice providers are often the only recourse that many women affected by GBV have, and the failure to either incorporate these systems into SSR processes or to ensure that gender-based crimes are reported and dealt with in the formal justice sector is a major gap.

37 Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) (2007). *Factors affecting the prosecution of SGBV offenses in Liberia*, Monrovia: AFELL.

38 Crisis Group (2006), *Liberia: Resurrecting the justice system*. Dakar/Brussels: Crisis Group, p.15.

39 AFELL (2007). Op. cit.

40 International Crisis Group (2006). Op. cit. p.15.

41 AFELL (2007). Op. cit. p.5.

42 A. Ebo (2005). *The challenges and opportunities of security sector reform in post-conflict Liberia*, DCAF Occasional Paper No 9. Geneva: DCAF, p.22.

43 L. Bruthus (2007). 'Zero tolerance for Liberian rapists', *Forced Migration Review*, Issue 27, University of Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre.

44 Crisis Group (2006). Op. cit.

The National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence in Liberia (GBV-POA) is the key policy document guiding efforts to address GBV by governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as donors.⁴⁵ The Plan of Action was formulated in 2006 by the GBV Task Force – a coordination group of government agencies, donors and NGOs involved in tackling GBV led by the Ministry of Gender and Development. The GBV-POA is the result of multi-level workshops and consultations among key actors. It is an important attempt to coordinate action and prioritise efforts across sectors and different organisations. The GBV-POA is built around five objectives:

1. To provide *psychosocial support* and facilitate GBV programmes, including *economic empowerment* for women and girls.
2. To strengthen the capacity of *health care providers* to effectively prevent and respond to GBV survivors.
3. To strengthen the *criminal justice system* to effectively respond to cases of GBV.
4. To develop an integrated national *protection system* with the capacity to prevent and respond to GBV.
5. To *coordinate the implementation* of the National GBV Plan of Action.

The GBV-POA acknowledges the weaknesses of the legal and judicial system and particularly the slow pace of courts in dealing with GBV cases. It claims that 'efforts will be made to merge both conventional and "traditional" legal systems to ensure the rights of GBV survivors are respected at all times'.⁴⁶ However, the plan does not spell out what this will mean in practice, and Alert's research found that the linkages between GBV and the reform of the security sector being made in the GBV-POA were much weaker than in the areas of health and psychosocial support.

Alert's research shows that there is momentum for tackling GBV in Liberia, and the government is taking actions to plan and coordinate work to prevent and respond to GBV in collaboration with national and international NGOs as well as donors. Nevertheless, there are clearly major gaps in several aspects of GBV-related work in Liberia. As this case study demonstrates, a challenge all too frequently identified in the Liberian context is GBV survivors' difficulty in accessing justice, hindered by weaknesses in the police and the judicial sector. There is clearly an overall institutional lack of financial capacity and human resources within both sectors, which is compounded by attitudes among the police and the courts that consider GBV against women as a family issue to be settled privately and their lack of knowledge about recent legislation on GBV. As gaps in the judicial and police response to GBV reflect overall lack of capacity in these institutions, they cannot be addressed by GBV-related policy and programming alone. This is where the link to broader SSR and justice sector reform processes is critical, as it provides another key avenue where gender-based insecurities can be addressed.

Box 3: Good practice guidelines for addressing GBV in the context of SSR

- There is a need for more community-based consultation about security and justice needs and priorities.
- Partnerships with CSOs, especially those working at the community level, are critical.
- Responses to GBV should be holistic and coordinated.
- Gender does not mean women alone: engaging with men, chiefs and community leaders is essential.
- A culture of impunity prevents access to justice and services.
- Strong leadership is necessary to counter the culture of impunity.
- The links between GBV and economic security should be recognised.
- Legal reforms should be coupled with widespread sensitisation.
- Resources for GBV programming should be increased.
- Access to services for GBV victims should be improved.
- Information and data collection on the nature and extent of GBV should be enhanced.
- There should be more monitoring and evaluation of the impact of interventions to address GBV.
- Responses to GBV should be incorporated into broader peacebuilding and development goals.
- Multi-layered advocacy, particularly focusing on the justice and security dimensions, is essential.

⁴⁵ Government of Liberia (2006). *National Plan of Action for the prevention and management of gender based violence in Liberia (GBV-POA)*. Monrovia: Gender-Based Violence Inter-Agency Taskforce.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.14.

WHAT THE EU CAN DO TO ENSURE GBV IS ADDRESSED BY JUSTICE AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS

The EU should adopt a more **holistic approach to GBV**, combining health and protection with reform of the justice and security sector. Recognising the complex ways in which economic insecurity is a driver as well as a consequence of GBV would also lead to more effective prevention and response.

The EC and EU Member States acting as bilateral donors should ensure that any policies on SSR and transitional justice developed as part of the peacebuilding process incorporate measures to address GBV. They should also support measures to ensure that security and justice providers receive **training in GBV** and how to protect victims and provide them with the necessary assistance, and that cases are pursued through the police and court system.

The EC should seek out **expert advice and technical assistance** to ensure that any SSR processes it is funding or otherwise supporting fully integrate a holistic response to GBV. This is in line with the EC's commitments to addressing GBV contained in the Comprehensive Approach framework.

The EC should **increase the funding available for GBV prevention and response** mechanisms in countries where SSR processes are underway to ensure that security and protection from all forms of violence become an integral element to these reforms.

The EC should ensure that **gender training** is a key component for all staff deployed on ESDP missions, and should advocate for the inclusion of similar training in any SSR projects supported in conflict contexts. In particular, specific attention should be given to training police officers to recognise and appropriately deal with crimes linked to sexual or domestic violence.

The EC and EU Member States should provide **support and resources for CSOs**, in particular through microcredit and economic empowerment projects that benefit women and their communities, giving them access to a sustainable livelihood, which can decrease their vulnerability to violence.

Programmes that **target men and involve them in sensitisation and awareness-raising around GBV** are also critical to transforming attitudes and harmful practices that increase the incidence of this form of violence. Men at senior levels at the EU, both in Brussels and in EU Delegations, should publicly support the fight against GBV wherever possible to demonstrate its relevance to both men and women and to contribute political and diplomatic weight to these efforts.

GENDER AND CIVIL SOCIETY OVERSIGHT OF THE SECURITY SECTOR

A transparent, accountable and effectively governed security sector is an integral part of any democratic society. One mechanism to ensure that the security sector is responding to the needs of the population, upholding human rights and the rule of law, and contributing to the good governance of a state is through oversight mechanisms. Although many governments and multilateral organisations such as the EU have developed and signed up to various policy frameworks and commitments related to SSR, what is lacking is implementation and follow-through on the ground. Therefore, parliaments and other government bodies and civil society all have an important role to play in monitoring, advocating for and supporting the effective implementation of SSR policies, particularly at the community level, to improve the security of populations in conflict-affected areas.

Civil society organisations can be involved in oversight of the security sector in a variety of ways:

- As a source of policy advice and technical expertise which can inform policy-makers and provide insight into community needs and interests related to security issues;
- By enhancing local ownership and inclusion through the involvement of diverse groups in discussions around security-related issues;
- As a watchdog to hold authorities accountable for their actions through lobbying, public awareness campaigns, or direct pressure from the population;
- Through advocacy campaigns that raise awareness of key security concerns and issues, human rights abuses, misappropriation of funds, or other such violations; and
- Through service delivery and the provision of alternate sources of security and justice in cases where the state is unable and/or unwilling to take on these roles, or where civil society is better placed to provide such services.⁴⁷

Within all of these roles, there is a need to ensure that both women and men are involved, and that a gender perspective is actively integrated into these different functions. Incorporating a gender perspective into civil society oversight of the security sector means engaging with all members of the population to identify and build on their roles, responsibilities, capacities, needs and interests as they relate to the provision of security. Inherently this implies protecting, targeting and involving all members of society, not just the most privileged and visible. Gender perspectives can therefore contribute to a culture of participation and transparency, in addition to generating and consolidating local ownership, which are all important elements of oversight. It is important to note, however, that “doing gender” should not be seen as a separate element of oversight, rather it is one tool or dimension of the process as a whole and should therefore be integrated throughout the entire process.

Gender issues have traditionally been excluded from the security sector for a variety of reasons, including stereotypes and assumptions about appropriate roles for women and the lack of political will to broaden responses to security needs and provision. However, there are a number of other factors which can act as obstacles to the involvement of CSOs, particularly concerning women's groups, and the integration of gender into SSR oversight mechanisms:

- Lack of expertise, capacity and “security literacy” of women's organisations;

⁴⁷ Taken from K. Barnes and P. Albrecht. *Civil society oversight of the security sector and gender* in M. Bastick & K. Valasek (Eds.) (2008). *Gender and security sector reform toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRRAW, p.2.

- Lack of gender training and skills among security sector actors;
- Failure to mainstream gender in monitoring, evaluation and analysis of security sector structures and actors;
- Too little partnership with and involvement of women's organisations in the security sector;
- Perception that gender issues are not integral to security; and
- Little history of engagement between CSOs and the security sector.

Despite these obstacles, it is possible to identify a number of entry points that civil society organisations could and should use to support the integration of gender into overall oversight efforts:

1. **Knowledge and experience of local contexts:** Much knowledge often exists at the community level, where NGOs are actively engaging on issues such as supporting survivors of GBV, sensitising community members about women's rights, or providing ad hoc neighbourhood watch services. Local NGOs are often acutely aware of the key issues and constraints facing a given community in relation to their security needs, and therefore where resources and capacity should be focused. An example of such an activity would be for locally-based NGOs to provide training to police or magistrates in how to deal with gender-based violations.
2. **Link between local and national levels:** Engaging a broader range of stakeholders who might not normally work together is a way of ensuring a more representative approach to security. Linking up local populations with decision-makers at the national level through initiating dialogue at district or community levels can be a way of bridging state and non-state security and justice providers. Women are often particularly marginalised within national and community decision-making structures, and forums or dialogues on security issues that specifically target them could be a way of drawing them into decision-making processes. Furthermore, such dialogues would also increase the general awareness around gender-based insecurities and the needs of different members of a population.
3. **Establishing networks of CSOs working on SSR issues:** Networks can be a good mechanism for ongoing dialogue with key actors by enabling CSOs to pool resources, build on their comparative advantage, increase credibility and share responsibility. An example would be to set up an SSR working group that acts as a liaison point as well as watchdog for a government-led SSR process. Given the absence of a tradition of open public debate on SSR issues, networks can sponsor these kinds of activities and further contribute to local and community engagement in security-related decision-making. Our research in West Africa has found that while women's organisations have extensive knowledge about gendered security needs, they can still find it difficult to reach decision-makers in the security sector or make their needs heard. Working as a member of a broader network of CSOs can maximise the voice of women's groups and may increase the likelihood of their perspective being included at the decision-making level.
4. **Using the media to support advocacy efforts:** CSOs need to be creative in devising strategies to reach hard-to-access groups in the population, as well as trying to influence popular opinion around subjects like security and gender. Activities such as radio programmes that act as discussion forums for issues of concern, such as banditry within a community, can be a useful way of engaging public debate on security issues. The media can also be used as a mechanism to change public perceptions of gender issues, in particular around crimes such as rape, as well as increase sensitisation and demand for specific actions to be taken by the government.

CASE STUDY 4: MONITORING PEACEBUILDING FUND PROJECTS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN BURUNDI

In 2006, Burundi was chosen as one of two countries to receive strategic assistance from the newly established United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Since then, Burundi has also benefited from access to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), established at the same time as the PBC to act as a bridge between conflict and recovery at a time when other funding mechanisms may not be available. The role of civil society, particularly women, is mentioned explicitly in the UN resolutions establishing the PBC, but in the case of Burundi, the PBC process was initially characterised by CSOs being sidelined from the government-UN process against a backdrop of widespread political tension.⁴⁸

As the process advanced and the political context in the country changed, however, civil society actors were increasingly able to engage with the government on the development of the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework as well as the design and implementation of projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.⁴⁹ Although the civil society members of the National Steering Committee only have observer status, their participation has been considered influential; for example, they have been able to change the content of some PBF projects.⁵⁰ Women's CSOs, in particular, have been relatively successful in incorporating gender equality concerns in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and in building opportunities to monitor the implementation of Peacebuilding Fund projects. To do this, Burundian civil society actors have used a variety of means and entry points to influence the PBC agenda at the national level as well as to monitor the implementation of security and justice projects.

Establishing networks of CSOs

In order to influence the PBC process in Burundi, International Alert's partner organisation Dushirehamwe, in collaboration with UNIFEM, mobilised Burundian CSOs to form a network of over 20 organisations that works to promote more gender-sensitive peacebuilding: the *Cadre de Coordination et Concertation pour la consolidation de la Paix et la mise en oeuvre de la Resolution 1325* (hereinafter, the *Cadre de Coordination*). Dushirehamwe was then mandated by the network to represent Burundian women's organisations on the National Steering Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. In this role, Dushirehamwe, with the support of other organisations in the network, has been able to review strategic documents and make recommendations to ensure the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the PBC and the PBF.⁵¹

Providing a link between local and national levels

As this paper demonstrates, as SSR processes are led by government agencies and donor officials based in capital cities, they don't automatically take community needs and experiences sufficiently into account. At the same time, people in rural or otherwise marginalised areas do not necessarily have the required awareness and information about ongoing reform processes. As part of its strategy to promote gender-sensitive security and justice reform, the *Cadre de Coordination* has raised awareness at the local level about relevant PBF projects and the peacebuilding process in general, and has attempted to bring the priorities and experiences of women from across the country to inform national-level policy processes.

For example, in September and October 2007, two large regional consultations were held to explain and raise awareness of SCR 1325 and the work of the PBC amongst representatives of women's associations and community leaders. At these consultations, women were asked to take part in the monitoring of PBF-funded projects in their communities. PBF project focal points were designated among the members of the *Cadre de Coordination* living and working in rural areas. Following these consultations, there were periodic follow-up meetings with the local monitoring groups to share information on the progress of the PBC and the PBF projects, as well as to share information about the work of the network of CSOs in Bujumbura on the development of gender indicators for the projects.

48 Action Aid, CAFOD and CARE International (2007). *Consolidating the peace? Views from Sierra Leone and Burundi on the UN Peacebuilding Commission*. Johannesburg and London: Action Aid, CAFOD and CARE International.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid. p.26

51 See also: International Alert (2008). *Integrating women's priorities into peacebuilding processes: Experiences of monitoring and advocacy in Burundi and Sierra Leone*. London: International Alert.

Subsequently, a national workshop was held to identify the progress of the different projects and to develop a common approach to monitoring the gender dimension of these projects. The focal points agreed on establishing links with local authorities so their role in monitoring would be understood.

Providing a source of knowledge and experience of local contexts

Civil society organisations such as Dushirehamwe, with a network of local women's groups across the country, are in a good position to provide policy-makers and project staff with expertise on the realities facing men and women at the grassroots level. A context-specific understanding of insecurity experienced by women is crucial for gender-sensitive reform of the security sector and can be provided by CSOs with sufficient links with women and men from various backgrounds.

Members of the *Cadre de Coordination* participated in meetings and consultations in the design of Burundi's Strategic Peacebuilding Framework as well as the projects financed through the Peacebuilding Fund. They also facilitated a session on how and why to integrate gender in the PBF projects for the benefit of all project directors, project teams and managers, which was also an opportunity for the network to suggest concrete gender indicators for a number of projects. This was followed by four workshops with members of the *Cadre de Coordination* and the project directors and managers of PBF projects on police reform; resolution of land disputes; creation of a National Human Rights Commission and support to the judiciary in the execution of judgments. These workshops gave women's groups the opportunity to share recommendations on how gender could be integrated into each of these projects.

Dushirehamwe has also worked to become more informed on some of the specific needs of women employed in the security sector and to better understand their contribution. This was done through workshops with women in the security sector and research on the integration of gender into the SSR process in Burundi, beginning with the police. A survey also was undertaken with a national sampling of women to obtain their perceptions of security, with a focus on identifying their needs, particularly vis-à-vis the police. Using the PBF-funded project on police reform as a starting point, the research will generate recommendations on how the community-based police force being developed in Burundi could be designed to ensure that it is responsive to the security needs of women, in particular protection against sexual violence. The research will also help inform modules or supplements to modules for integration of gender where they are needed in the different training curricula.

Impact of civil society monitoring and lessons learned

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from the relative success that CSOs have had in their engagement with the government and UN-led peacebuilding process. In addition to successful advocacy to develop peacebuilding policy and programming that is more responsive to the needs of Burundians, civil society engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission process has also resulted in increased trust and improved collaboration between government agencies and CSOs.⁵² Much of the progress made in integrating gender issues into the PBF-funded projects in Burundi is a result of the coalition-building amongst women's groups and other CSOs, alliances with partners at the international level, and extensive outreach with women in local communities throughout the country. The multi-pronged and consultative approach to monitoring that Dushirehamwe and the other members of the *Cadre de Coordination* have instigated has already had considerable impact.

WHAT THE EU CAN DO TO SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER INTO CIVIL SOCIETY OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

The EU should **support the creation of participatory security sector monitoring bodies**, in particular providing the necessary financial support and funding technical capacity building for women's organisations to enable them to engage in these bodies.

52 Action Aid et al. (2007).

The EU should fund **training and capacity building on gender and security issues for CSOs**, addressing the fact that many women's organisations are not "security literate", and many mainstream CSOs are not "gender literate". Training is also needed in areas such as media skills, monitoring and indicators and how to target advocacy effectively at the security sector to enable for CSOs to have an impact on SSR-related decision-making.

Local consultation is an essential aspect of representative and legitimate SSR processes. EC delegations in conflict countries should have **regular meetings with women's organisations** and provide space for them to input into the design and delivery of SSR mechanisms, and to report on the needs of local communities. They are a valuable source of expertise and insight for the international community to draw on, and can also provide access to communities which otherwise might fall beneath the radar of the donor community.

The EU should **support and raise the profile of campaigns to end violence against women**, including those that highlight gender-specific violations that occur in conflict-affected contexts. By using its good offices and diplomatic engagements, the EU could be a powerful advocate for ensuring that gender issues are being adequately addressed by SSR and justice sector reform processes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A gender perspective, encompassing both women and men, should inform EU external actions in order to achieve a comprehensive response to the threats faced by the civilian population in times of conflict and in its aftermath. This is the premise for effective stabilisation, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and institution building. Moreover, a strengthened commitment to gender issues in the EU activities, with regard to conflict prevention, crisis management, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and institution building, can enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore women's peace initiatives and conflict resolution efforts are a valuable resource for the development of sustainable and inclusive approaches to peace and security.⁵³

Using the SSR process as a focus, this paper has outlined some key ways in which gender can be integrated into the design, delivery and oversight of security services. The European Union should consider the following recommendations in order to improve the gender sensitivity of its security sector programming in countries affected by conflict.

1. The EC should devote **increased financial and human resources to their work on gender and security issues**, as well as ensure that all personnel have a better understanding of gender-based insecurities in the contexts that they work in through the provision of staff training and capacity-building. If the EU is to follow through on its policy commitments in this area, these types of investments are absolutely critical.
2. The lack of **conflict and gender analysis skills and capacity among EC officials** has been identified as an important obstacle to effective responses to women and armed conflict issues.⁵⁴ Gender and conflict analysis should inform the work of the EC and its delegations, and should be seen as a process that actively engages, involves and empowers women and men in conflict-affected contexts. Furthermore, gender and conflict analyses should in particular consider how SSR and other post-conflict reconstruction assistance can impact on security at the community level, and measures to mitigate any negative consequences should be put in place.
3. There is a need for the EC and its delegations to have access to **clearer, more reliable and more detailed information and understanding about gender-specific security threats**, particularly sexual violence, at the community level. The EU should ensure that indicators on gender-based insecurities are included in all SSR programming. It should ensure that staff members in delegations in conflict-affected countries have the tools and knowledge to enable them to collect information on these indicators. In addition to improving its own data collection and monitoring mechanisms, the EU should support work by CSOs and research institutes to study and document security experiences of men and women and understand how security sector actors can respond to gender-based insecurities, and improve the provision of and access to security for both men and women.
4. The EC, in collaboration with other donors and recipient governments, should **support local dialogue and consultation processes on security issues**, with specific attention on involving the most marginalised groups. Creative approaches may be needed to reach some groups, such as women, and in these cases the international community should draw on the expertise and resources of local CSOs and networks that may have better access to these groups. In addition to informing the design and delivery of SSR, these consultations can help to

⁵³ European Council (2008). *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security*. Brussels: The Council of the European Union. p.4, para 4.

⁵⁴ A. Sheriff with K. Barnes (2008). Op. cit.

ensure local buy-in and ownership. It is important that EU funding and technical assistance helps support SSR processes that truly respond to the needs of marginalised groups.

5. The EC should also seek out expert advice and technical assistance to ensure that any SSR process it supports fully integrates a **holistic response to gender-based violence**. Security sector actors themselves have often perpetrated violence and SSR processes should develop strategies to combat abuses committed by security personnel. At the same time, the EC should increase its support for GBV prevention and response, particularly to those organisations that work at the community level response and in front-line service provision.

6. Specific measures should be developed to **build capacity and support women's organisations**. This could include funding for staff capacity, training on gender and SSR, or networking among CSOs and those working in the security sector. It is important that any support for civil society involves significant outreach for CSOs beyond capital cities to those working in rural areas.

INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

c/o International Alert

205 Rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels Tel: +32 (0) 2 239 2111 Fax: +32 (0) 2 230 3705

lmontanaro@international-alert.org www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu



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