

CSG PAPERS

The Gradual Emergence of Second Generation Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ibrahim Bangura has worked extensively in the fields of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, security sector reform, sustainable livelihoods, gender and conflict resolution. He attained a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and History and a Master's degree in Gender Studies from the University of Sierra Leone; a Master's degree in International Development Studies from the University of Amsterdam; and a PhD in Economics from the Leipzig Graduate School of Management in Germany. He currently works as a consultant and also lectures for the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme at the University of Sierra Leone.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sierra Leone's initial approach to Security Sector Reform (SSR) was state-centric, ad-hoc and shaped by immediate events, as the country was mired in a civil war. However, the post-war period opened space for the adoption of a human security lens to SSR. In 2001, a community security approach called Local Needs Policing (LNP) was initiated. It was predicated on the need to address the security gap that existed at the time and restore public trust and confidence in the police. Through LNP, the Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPBs), the Chiefdom Police Partnership Committees (CPPC) and the Area Police Partnership Committees (APPC) were subsequently formed. While the CPPC and the APPC have been less active, the LPPBs became instrumental in changing the face of the police in local communities.

After its establishment in 2004, the Office of National Security (ONS) developed similar decentralized structures known as the District Security Committees (DISEC), Provincial Security Committees (PROSEC) and Chiefdom Security Committees (CHISEC). Together, the PROSEC, DISEC and CHISEC have been working with the LPPBs on justice and security-related issues in all the districts of Sierra Leone. Alongside this, the UK Government, through the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) and the Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP), actively promoted the involvement of non-state actors in security and justice related issues. These approaches have to a large extent changed people's perceptions of, and participation in, justice and security related issues in Sierra Leone. Alongside these various developments, the country's adoption of a new National Security Policy and Strategy (NSPS) in 2015, seemed to crystalize a shift in Sierra Leone to a second generation SSR model.

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

APPC	Area Policing Partnership Committees
ASJP	Access to Security and Justice Programme
CISU	Central Intelligence and Security Unit
CHISEC	Chiefdom Security Committee
CPPC	Chiefdom Policing Partnership Committee
CSO	civil society organization
DFID	Department for International Development
DISEC	District Security Committee
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IPCB	Independent Police Complaints Board
ISAT	International Security Advisory Team
JSDP	Justice Sector Development Programme
KA IPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
LNP	Local Needs Policing
LPPB	Local Police Partnership Board
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NSPS	National Security Plan and Strategy
ONS	Office of National Security
PROSEC	Provincial Security Committees
SLCS	Sierra Leone Correctional Service
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SSR	security sector reform
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

The initial security sector reform (SSR) process in Sierra has been conceptualized and implemented mostly in the context of an orthodox, first generation model. The first paper for this project, *Assessing Orthodox Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone*, concluded that there were different stages of the SSR process in Sierra Leone and the inception phase was characterized by ad hoc arrangements (in terms of designing and implementing projects and programs) that were meant to stabilize the security sector in the midst of an ongoing conflict (Bangura, 2016). The inception stage was exclusively based on the orthodox approach, targeting state actors within the sector. Given the context, the prospect for a holistic or all-inclusive approach was limited.

However, the end of the conflict in 2002 witnessed the emergence of a more comprehensive approach in the security and justice field supported by several actors, dominant among them the British government. Using a first generation SSR approach, the principal targets of the process were the military, the police, the Office of National Security (ONS) and the Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU). The oversight component of the process was, however, provided with limited support. Institutions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Parliamentary Oversight Committees for Internal Security and Justice felt less engaged in the process.

The first paper (Bangura, 2016) concluded that orthodox SSR was faced with a plethora of challenges due to its predominant focus on state institutions such as the military and the police. While this may have been necessary at the inception stage, the wider democratization process necessitated a wider focus encompassing oversight institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs). Nonetheless, Sierra Leone has not relapsed into violence since 2002, which is an indication that some gains were made in the inception phase. However, Alpha Kamara, a civil society activist, attributed the state of peace and security in Sierra Leone to the more people-centred changes and reforms that have been implemented as part of the broader SSR project.¹ Such reforms included the creation of decentralized security and intelligence structures through the ONS (Provincial, District and Chiefdom Security Committees) as well as the creation of the Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPB), Chiefdom Policing Partnership Committees (CPPC) and Area Policing Partnership Committees (APPC) by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). The formation of these bodies generated crucial public trust and confidence in the security sector that had hitherto been lacking. It marked a discernible transition from a first to second generation SSR approach, which the Security Sector Review documents and the newly developed National Security Plan and Strategy (NSPS)² are seeking to formalize and institutionalize. This paper explores this emergent and still evolving transition from orthodox to second generation SSR and the prospects and challenges it has faced.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO SSR IN SIERRA LEONE

This section is divided into two parts. The first part examines the emergence and evolution of second generation SSR in Sierra Leone and provides details on the security sector transformation process and how, with the support of donors, the country has moved toward a second generation SSR approach. The second part considers the specific alternative approaches to traditional SSR and provides information on key components of the second generation SSR model.

The Evolution of Second Generation SSR in Sierra Leone

In a bid to understand the challenges faced by the security sector and to chart a new path for the sector in postwar Sierra Leone, a Security Sector Review process was conducted in 2003, with the report launched in 2005. The review process was geared in part to empower the SSR project and its stakeholders to broaden the scope from a regime-centred to a people-centred approach (Government of Sierra Leone [GoSL] 2005). The establishment of institutions such as the ONS and the CISU (through the National Security and Central Intelligence Act of 2002) provided the foundation for this shift. These two institutions, primarily civilian led, have a broader strategic focus that is human security centred rather than national security focused.

Security sector expert Paul Nyulaku indicated that “for decades the security sector was seen as exclusive state machinery that responds only to the needs and instructions of the government. The establishment of the ONS and CISU created a transformational shift that widened the scope to a more human security based approach. Reasonably too, the context had changed from one ridden by conflict and violence to one seeking to build on an established peace.”³

Inasmuch as the establishment of the ONS and CISU was instrumental to the shift to a human-security-based approach, it should be noted that in 2001 a community security approach called Local Needs Policing (LNP) was initiated. This approach was predicated on the need to address the security gap that existed at the time and restore public trust and confidence in the police. Through LNP, the LPPB, CPPC and APPC were formed in the different districts of Sierra Leone. While the CPPC and the APPC were less active, the LPPBs became instrumental in changing the face of the police in local communities. This is due to the fact that the LPPBs consist of elected members – both police and civilian community members – who worked jointly to promote peace and security in their local communities.

After its establishment, the ONS developed a similar approach to that of the police, embracing decentralized security structures known as the District Security Committees

(DISEC), Provincial Security Committees (PROSEC) and Chiefdom Security Committees (CHISEC). Together, the PROSEC, DISEC and CHISEC have been working with the LPPBs on justice- and security-related issues in all the districts of Sierra Leone.

In July 2011, the National Security Council (chaired by the president) endorsed the conduct of the Second Security Sector Review process to examine emerging threats in Sierra Leone. The review undertook a “critical examination of the vulnerabilities, current and required capabilities, gaps, institutional capacity...with a view to strengthening their capacities to adequately respond to existing, emerging and future threats to the security of Sierra Leone” (GoSL, 2012: 21). Unique in its approach, the second review was heavily centred on establishing systems, structures and mechanisms necessary for the effective and efficient functioning of the sector.

Given its human security focus, the Second Security Sector Review Report was able to contribute to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper that was prepared by the government to inform its development policies and secure much-needed international debt relief. According to Francis Langumba Keili (2012: 3), “Sierra Leone became the first country in the world in which the central function of security as a facilitator for economic development was explicitly recognised. Effective transformation of the security sector was seen as inherently linked to poverty eradication and state building.”

Sierra Leone’s development of its first NSPS was part of the shift away from the ad hoc SSR process, which Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht (2009: 225) heavily critiqued as being “a clear set of activities and principles within SSR that do not amount to a plan per se. These principles and activities are more like a series of guidelines or a direction of travel.” According to President Ernest Bai Koroma, the strategy is the “first ever security policy of its kind in Sierra Leone. It adopts an integrated approach to security. It employs a model that can adapt to changing circumstances over time. It has been crafted to balance the needs for national security with the protection of core Sierra Leonean values of openness, diversity and respect for civil liberties.” (GoSL, 2015: 1)

To further understand and embrace the relevance of the notion of second generation SSR, a National Security Sector Conference was organized by the ONS in Freetown in May 2015 to consult different stakeholders on the transition to second generation SSR, and the effectiveness of the sector and its ability to balance the demand and supply of security and justice in Sierra Leone. Participation and political buy-in across all sectors of society showed the high level of support for a transition to a more people-centred and human security driven approach to SSR. Addressing the conference delegates, Henry Mbawa stated that a “paradigmatic shift from conventional security governance to a more holistic approach in security sector governance has been the main source of the successes that have produced increased political stability and social cohesion in Sierra Leone. Improved information sharing, collaboration and coordination underpinned the new architecture.”²⁴

Even though the sector is faced with financial challenges, there is a willingness to strengthen systems and structures that ensure the democratic control of the security sector. Coupled with this, there is the growing realization that with a broader mandate, the sector has a crucial role to play in the stability and development of the country.

Breaking Down Second Generation SSR Programming in Sierra Leone

The SSR process has, over the years, gradually shifted from a first to a second generation approach. The key factors that have facilitated this shift are as follows:

(i) The development of an LNP approach that is mostly civilian based has fostered the public trust and confidence in the security sector that was missing during and after the conflict in Sierra Leone. Through the LNP, structures such as the LPPBs, CPPCs and APPCs were formed that serve to help strengthen peace and security in their communities. Whilst this arrangement has been lauded, there is a need to further strengthen these structures.

(ii) The formation and strengthening of civilian oversight systems and structures such as the MIA, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Parliamentary Committees on Internal Security and Justice, the Police Council, Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) and the Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department. These structures are civilian led and democratically controlled and are intended to ensure that the sector complies with its core mandate. For over three decades, the security sector of Sierra Leone posed a significant threat to peace and security with coups, counter coups and abusive and unprofessional conduct. Accordingly, past restructuring and reform processes, prior to 1999, were fixated on weakening the security sector in order to discourage coup attempts and insulate political elites.⁵ Thus, one of the driving forces behind the reform process was the “desire to move away from the root causes of the conflict and opening the space required by the sector to ensure that it supports the drive to peace and prosperity and not relegated to a strictly state-centric sector.”⁶

(iii) The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other donor agencies helped to shape the role and build the capacity of civil society to provide oversight of the sector and demand effectiveness from it. One of the methods used was the provision of support through grants and training. For instance, DFID’s Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP) from 2012 to 2015 provided grants to over 30 CSOs. With the grants provided, CSOs implemented projects and programs on a variety of key topics from early warning mechanisms and structures to conflict and crime prevention. They also monitored the activities and performance of security and justice sector actors. This relationship between the state and civil society – weak and underdeveloped in the past – has been consciously knitted together since the early 2000s by DFID through the Justice Sector Development

Programme (JSDP) and ASJP. From 2005 to 2011, the JSDP worked on “establishing safety, security and access to justice for the people of Sierra Leone, especially for the poor, vulnerable and marginalised. It used a multi-sector approach, working with government and civil society to deliver even-handed justice (Fakondo, 2009: 171). This process of strengthening civil society and its relationship with the state was supported by a number of organizations including: the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Timap for Justice, the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law and Prison Watch.

(iv) The development and rolling out of the SSR review documents and the NSPS boosted the shift from first to second generation SSR. The NSPS is the document that positions the sector to move away from the old set-up. It is also focused on dealing with economic and other threats, which the sector was not well positioned to address in the past. Alongside this, the NSPS is also preparing the sector to face and deal with emerging threats such as terrorism and piracy.

(v) The development of transformational acts such as the Sierra Leone Correctional Act (2013), which transformed the prison system to a correctional system. This act included provisions for the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of inmates and also for their rehabilitation and reintegration after they leave the correctional facilities.

(vi) The development of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, implemented by community structures and CSOs, has helped to reduce the burden on the police, especially in remote and isolated communities. All districts in Sierra Leone have monitors and paralegals that have become influential and credible cogs in the security chain. This model also supports the LNP model as the two structures work closely together; in some cases, monitors and paralegals also serve in the LPPBs, APPCs and CPPCs.

(vii) The enactment of the three gender acts (Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Act, Domestic Violence Act and the Devolution of Estates Act) in 2007, the adoption of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan for the Full Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 have been instrumental in the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of women and girls in Sierra Leone.

The approaches, initiatives and programs mentioned above have led to a significant change in perceptions of the security sector, away from a traditional regime-centric and hard-security understanding toward a broader vision of the sector that is people-centred, encompasses a wider range of structures and actors, and is geared to tackling existing and emerging threats. As Francis Langumba Keili indicated, “we have come a long way and we are satisfied that we have shifted the sector from its traditional roles to a more people-centred and modern sector that demonstrates the need for growth and development in Sierra Leone.”⁷

The relative stability that Sierra Leone continues to enjoy over a decade after the civil war is seen as a contributing factor to the emergence of a second generation security sector. A security expert indicated that “the state, in addressing the root causes of the conflict, realized that the traditional security actors – the military, paramilitaries and the police – were used by politicians as instruments of mayhem and chaos. This soured the relationship between them and the general populace.”⁸ Former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who distrusted the military,⁹ was set on changing the face of the sector with the aim of installing more democratic civilian control mechanisms.

Sierra Leone’s process of transformation was led by the state and the British government, which was the principal donor stakeholder in the SSR process. Since the end of the war, the British have been very interested and active in the creation and strengthening of Sierra Leonean security and justice institutions, systems and structures. For instance, from 2002 to 2015, the British government, through DFID, provided direct technical and financial support to the ONS and CISU. It has also provided, through the JSDP and ASJP, technical and financial support to several institutions, including the ONS, MIA, SLP, Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS) and IPCB. The UNDP and the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT)¹⁰ have also provided important support to the SSR process in Sierra Leone. Given the limited resources of the GoSL, donors have played an indispensable role in sustaining the SSR process. However, the dependence on donor support has long-term sustainability-related implications, which both the donors and the GoSL need to beware of.

Since 2003, the relationship between the general public and the security sector in terms of trust and confidence has improved markedly; this is mostly due to three factors: activities related to LNP that directly involve the general public on security-related issues; the decentralized security structures (DISEC, PROSEC and CHISEC) that work closely with the general public; and the involvement of CSOs in accountability structures. This does not necessarily mean that the relationship between the security sector and citizenry is always smooth. There are intermittent clashes between the police and the public. Some of these clashes have to do with police brutality, especially in the context of government efforts to quell demonstrations around mining sites. The IPCB was formed in part to address such occurrences.

It is worth noting that the SLP – as indicated by the Afro Barometer (2014) and Transparency International (2014) – is regarded as a very corrupt institution that harasses the public for bribes. However, a senior police officer offered the view that “it is not all the divisions of the SLP that are corrupt. We are aware that there are some bad cops in the Traffic Division who harass drivers for money and we are working on identifying and getting rid of them. The generalization of corruption within the SLP is a shame as most of the divisions behave in a very professional and responsible manner.”¹¹ To counter corruption and promote democratic civilian control of the security sector, the MIA

provides direct oversight of the SLP, SLCS and Sierra Leone Fire Force. The MoD plays the same role for the military, while the ONS and CISU are under the authority of the office of the president.

The SSR process has helped sustain peace and stability in Sierra Leone. Instances such as the 2007 and 2012 elections as well as the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in 2014 tested the strength and professionalism of the sector. The invocation of the Military Aid to Civil Power on all these occasions showed the improvements that have been achieved in the relationship between the military and the police and how the two can work closely with the general public to mitigate potential insecurity and violence.

In May 2015, the British government conducted a holistic assessment of the SSR process with a view of either continuing or concentrating its funds in other priority areas such as the justice sector. It is expected that a new security and justice program will succeed the ASJP while ISAT will continue functioning much longer than 2016. ISAT's main focus will be the SLP, which it is supporting with investment to strengthen its systems and structures. Based on interviews conducted with staff of the UNDP it is expected that the organization will continue providing small- and medium-scale support to the SSR process, geared primarily towards identifying and addressing challenges in the sector. The GoSL continues to increase budgetary allocations to different security sector actors and programs as international support dwindles in order to enable the sector to meet the growing demand for security and justice in the country.

It is clear that more external support is required to consolidate the gains made in the sector and to ensure continuity and sustainability. The economy is still partly donor driven and too many reforms compete for the meagre resources available to government. In 2015, DFID stopped providing direct financial support to both the CISU and ONS, leaving the two institutions struggling to survive.

The SSR process in Sierra Leone has helped to prevent a relapse into violence and, at the same time, has provided model structures and initiatives such as the LPPB, CPPC, APPC, DISEC, CHISEC and PROSEC, which could be replicated in other countries.

CRAFTING A SECOND GENERATION SSR MODEL

As indicated earlier, the transition from first to second generation SSR in Sierra Leone is rooted to a paradigmatic shift from a regime-centred to a people-centred approach that embraces the need for inclusion and participation by both traditional security players, such as the military, and the police and civilian actors.

A UNDP official explained that “the Sierra Leone model has helped to shape the Community Safety and Security Programme in the Republic of Sudan. For instance, the

Local Needs Policing model of Sierra Leone came in very handy when we (UNDP) started implementing community safety and security projects in the Republic of Sudan.”¹² The use of community structures to promote civilian participation in community security is working and could be replicated in other countries. Similar sentiments were expressed by Paul Turay, a justice and security sector expert working in the Republic of South Sudan: “South Sudan is a country that could hugely benefit from the SSR models implemented in Sierra Leone. It presents a golden opportunity for SSR to begin from scratch with greater emphasis placed on a second generation model that is non-state-centric. When the violence comes to an end, the SSR process should focus on the development of civilian oversight mechanisms alongside initiatives that are people-centred with a focus on promoting human security rather than the narrow sense of security. If done, South Sudan will be saved from any potential relapse into violence.”¹³

The decentralized security structures that are mostly civilian led have created trust and confidence between civilians and security actors, something that is missing in several countries in Africa such as Guinea and Guinea Bissau. Kalie Sillah, an expert on security systems and structures in Guinea, indicated that “any attempt to resort to traditional SSR in Guinea will create more mistrust on the part of the general populace against the sector. Sierra Leone’s model will save the face of the sector and restore peace and security in a country on the brink of collapse.”¹⁴

The shift from first to second generation SSR in Sierra Leone holds significant lessons for the SSR field. The democratic control of armed forces could be much more effective within a second generation SSR framework that is characterized by civilian oversight mechanisms and structures. When properly implemented, second generation SSR strengthens peace and security as it stimulates and embraces the involvement of civilians in its day-to-day activities. In Sierra Leone, people in local communities either serve as LPPB, CPPC and APPC members, monitors or paralegals, or are aware of referral mechanisms and structures when crimes are committed. This involvement generates a sense of inclusion and responsibility that was lacking when the focus was on first generation SSR in the immediate postwar period. Second generation SSR places more responsibility on security actors to act responsibly, professionally and in tune with community needs. First generation SSR creates a sense of the general populace being the “other” and it becomes easy for politicians to promote clientelism and use security actors as instruments to advance their narrow interests.

This is not to say that there is no political interference in the functioning of the security sector or abuses of power by security actors in contemporary Sierra Leone; however, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of such reported cases. Also, since 1997 there have only been a few reports of alleged coup plots and the military and police have subjected themselves to democratic civilian control. Nevertheless, this process could be

further strengthened through, as Gbla (2007: 22) indicated, “more focus on strengthening the oversight capacities of Parliament, the judiciary and civil societies.”

Second generation SSR has also created the space for early warning mechanisms and structures that have been crucial for conflict prevention and management in local communities and also in combatting transnational organized crime, such as smuggling of contraband materials, small arms and light weapons, drugs and human trafficking.

The gains of the second generation model lay bare the weaknesses of the first generation SSR approach. While conventional SSR initiatives have value in their ability to advance technical capacity building of security institutions, they struggle to stimulate the societal engagement and ownership needed to achieve a broad-based transformation in the sector. The second generation approach provides the vital space for civilians and traditional security actors to cooperate and collaborate on security-related issues and reinvigorate the social compact in the security sphere.

CONCLUSION

Since the end of the civil conflict in 2002, Sierra Leone, with the help of its development partners, has made immense strides in building a security sector that has so far prevented a relapse into violence. However, the initial reform process specifically targeted state actors – the reason for this was the unprofessional manner in which the military and the police conducted themselves during the conflict. Thus, the process was driven by the need to eliminate the actual and perceived threat posed by both the military and the police. With time the SSR process took a people-centred approach, which opened the space for public participation and enabled the emergence of leadership in the process from civilians and non-state actors.

While the adoption of this second generation approach seemed almost impossible in the past, the new direction and opportunities it has presented leaves little doubt that orthodox interpretations of security sector reform are ill-suited to achieve systemic change in contexts like Sierra Leone. The second generation SSR model can refocus transition countries towards prioritizing the needs and aspirations of their people within a wider security context, rather than limiting reforms to serving the exclusive needs of the traditional political elites.

Going forward, the second generation SSR model practised in Sierra Leone should be further developed and advanced through the provision of donor financial and technical support. It could help to refine a model that has worked, one that could influence reforms in other conflict-affected countries in Africa and further afield. However, the potential threat of a shift in funding priorities to post-Ebola recovery and other areas by the British government in 2016 and beyond risks reversing the significant gains made in the security sector. This would represent a missed opportunity, not only for SSR in Sierra Leone, but for the wider evolution of the SSR model globally.

NOTES

1. Author interview with Alpha Kamara, a civil society activist working on police accountability in Sierra Leone, Freetown, July 20, 2015.
2. The NSPS has been finalized and is awaiting the endorsement of the Cabinet.
3. Author interview with Paul Nyulaku conducted at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Ghana, June 25, 2015.
4. Henry Mbawa is the national coordinator of the Justice Sector Coordination Office. The speech was delivered at the Youyi Building in Freetown, May 23, 2015.
5. In 1967, Siaka Stevens was overthrown during his inauguration ceremony as prime minister of Sierra Leone. On his return to power in 1968, he downsized the military from approximately 12,000 to about 3,000 soldiers and established the Internal Security Unit, which consisted of his tribesmen and those loyal to the All People's Congress. See Keen (2005).
6. Author interview with Dominic Wadegu, the monitoring and evaluation specialist of ASJP, Freetown, July 6, 2015.
7. Author interview conducted in Freetown, July 2, 2015.
8. Author interview conducted with a security sector expert in Freetown, June 28, 2015.
9. Following his ascendance to power, Kabbah distrusted the military and the military confirmed his fears as they staged coup d'états against him, with one of those coups sending him into exile in Guinea from May 1997 to April 1998.
10. ISAT is the unit set up at the end of the conflict in Sierra Leone by the United Kingdom's MoD to provide support to the SSR process in the country. It was initially known as the International Military Advisory Training Team.
11. Author interview with a senior police officer, Freetown, July 4, 2015.
12. Author interview with a UNDP official working in the Republic of Sudan, interview conducted in Freetown, July 3, 2015.
13. Author telephone interview conducted July 2, 2015. Until May 2015, Paul Turay was the ASJP's justice sector adviser.
14. Author interview conducted in Freetown, July 1, 2015.

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