GFN-SSR REGIONAL GUIDE: Security Sector Reform in West Africa

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Introduction

This regional guide provides an introduction to literature on security sector reform (SSR) in West Africa. It highlights key regional texts and resources that cut across a number of different security issues and countries. Whilst not exhaustive, this guide provides an indication of the growing literature available on SSR in the region. Texts are selected for their relevance, usefulness and/or recommendations they provide to policymakers involved in improving the region’s security sectors. The guide will be updated periodically to take into account newly published material.

Clicking on the link in the document title will take the reader to a more extensive summary in the GFN-SSR Document Library, which includes a link to the original document.

Where applicable, this guide also provides links to relevant justice, conflict and fragile states related resources on the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre website (GSDRC).

All country sections appear in alphabetical order – not in order of donor priority.
Regional Political Context

It is no coincidence that the West African sub-region is both one of the poorest and the least stable regions in the world. Conflicts, coups, dictatorships, transnational organised crime and weak central governments have characterised its recent past. These concerns continue to pose a considerable challenge to national and regional stability as well as to human security.

While most West African countries share an unstable and frequently violent past, their histories and recent experiences are all unique. For instance, the region is composed of Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone countries, but their political and economic development cannot be neatly categorised in this way. Size, ethnic composition, natural resource endowment and colonial history are but a few of the factors that have differentiated the history of countries within the region.

West African states have frequently failed to provide security for their people. Furthermore, they are often the actual cause of insecurity. The concepts of the social contract between a state and the population, and the Weberian concept of the state monopoly on the use of force, have not been dominant in West Africa. Ghana, often viewed as an African success story, was the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence. However, nine years later in 1966 a coup initiated many years of military rule. The first successive democratic handover of power in free and fair elections occurred only relatively recently in Ghana. Post-colonial experiences of authoritarian and military rule have been commonplace, for example in Nigeria and Togo, while full-scale conflict has afflicted Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire, among others. The otherwise relatively stable and reforming countries of Senegal and Mali have had to contend with rebellions in parts of their territory. Instability and insecurity clearly extends across the region.

While these difficulties have had a major impact on economic and political progress, recent years have witnessed a slow but nonetheless real shift towards democratisation, development and stability. Regional and UN peacekeeping forces have been deployed in a number of countries to try to end conflict; at the same time, international assistance has grown and aid agencies have poured resources, notably into the post-conflict environments of Sierra Leone and Liberia. This is not solely a result of selfless development assistance, but also a recognition that instability in the region is having a direct impact on Europe and the West, for example through asylum and immigration, as well as drug trafficking.

Current Security Challenges

While the risk of conflict is not as prevalent as it once was, there are a number of traditional and non-traditional threats to human, national and regional security. Moreover, it is impossible to escape the regional effects of instability in the region. Current security challenges include problems such as criminal violence that fuel insecurity for individuals and communities at the local level;
internal threats that frequently cause regional problems; and region-wide challenges. Furthermore, the recent trend for ‘internal coups’, whereby incumbent leaders attempt to extend their terms or install a family member presents a challenge to governance and democratisation in the region (Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Guinea are recent examples).

Local causes of insecurity encompass a broad range of human security issues. These include access to education and health services; poverty; environmental challenges such as pollution from energy and mining companies; and criminal activity and violence. It is crucial to remember the impact that conflicts, instability, and dictatorships have on the civilian population, particularly women and children, who are frequently the main victims of any fighting.

National security threats vary across the region: several countries including Senegal, Mali, Nigeria and Niger must contend with ongoing insurgencies within their borders; Guinea and Guinea-Bissau are politically volatile; conflict in Cote d’Ivoire recently ended but tension remains and conflict could still break out once more; Sierra Leone and Liberia are in post-conflict phases and the international community is working hard to prevent a recurrence of fighting; Mauritania underwent a military coup in 2008; and Benin and Ghana are now working towards entrenching democracy, although the latter experienced violence in the run-up to 2008 elections as well as tribal tensions in the north.

The legacy of instability and violent conflict includes: a proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW); mercenaries both from within and outside the region that cross national borders with ease; refugee flows; and illegal trafficking in goods and people.

One of the most serious emerging security threats in West Africa is the explosive growth of trafficking in cocaine. International successes in tackling the traditional smuggling routes into Europe through the Caribbean, combined with a growing European market, have shifted some of the attention of drug traffickers to the infinitely less secure and less well-patrolled region of West Africa, with its notoriously porous borders. Guinea-Bissau, often described as a ‘narco-state’, is the worst affected but there are reports of cocaine seizures from Cape Verde in the west to Nigeria in the east. Furthermore, underlying conflict risk factors including a large pool of unemployed youth, corruption, poverty and competition for valuable natural resources continue to pose a challenge to governments throughout the region.

**SSR in West Africa**

The security-development nexus has become a key influence of donor policy in conflict-affected countries in recent years. In few places is this more evident than West Africa. SSR in West Africa, however, is particularly challenging as frequently the security forces have been or continue to be instruments of state oppression rather than citizen protection. In many cases, security institutions were destroyed during conflict, are extremely corrupt, or played a role in government and were/are not subordinate to civilian control. In addition,
governments have rarely come close to having a monopoly on the use of force, which has had to be shared with militias, informal groups, and private security companies among others.

Experience of SSR across the region has been mixed. The UK government is a pioneering donor country in the support and implementation of security sector reform programmes. Its involvement in Sierra Leone is one of the earliest examples from which many lessons can be learned (see the country section below for more details). Its neighbour Liberia has attracted significant international interest and funding, mainly from the US and the UN, but the approach in Liberia has involved greater and at times highly controversial private sector involvement. The more progressive reformers of the region such as Ghana have seen some reform of their security sectors but SSR has to compete with many other social and economic priorities and has not been afforded the attention that it needs. SSR in Francophone Africa has been limited compared with Anglophone countries; it has been suggested this is due to the particular nature of its relationship with its colonial masters as well as a legacy that had less emphasis on effective security governance than in Anglophone states. Lusophone Guinea-Bissau, for a long time neglected by the international community, is attracting greater attention from the EU and others concerned about its inability to combat cocaine trafficking.

The regional grouping The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has acknowledged the regional effects of national conflict and instability, and in the 1990s expanded its focus from economic cooperation to encompass security and stability. ECOWAS’s engagement with SSR has developed as part of a broader agenda to improve the state of conflict prevention and governance efforts in the region. For example, in 1999 ECOWAS adopted the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (commonly referred to as the Mechanism) which now forms the core of security cooperation within West Africa (a defining feature of the Mechanism is the principle of supra-nationality, given the knock-on effects that conflict in one country has on its neighbours). In 2001, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which supplemented the Mechanism. The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was enacted in 2008 and includes a Security Sector Governance component.

One of West Africa’s strengths is the vibrancy of its civil society. The media and civil society organisations (CSOs) are slowly taking on board a greater role in monitoring, calling to account and advising those involved in SSR. Civil society organisations have been actively engaged in ECOWAS initiatives and activities including the development and implementation of the Mechanism and the ECPF. Furthermore, the achievement of the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) with regards to an ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms is evidence that they can and are beginning to play a greater role in security issues that have traditionally been closely guarded by the state.
Key Recommendations

While the challenges are immense, the potential for reform, particularly in recent post-conflict countries, is very high. Certainly reform must be inclusive, nationally owned, responsive, and sustainable, though many countries will continue to rely on international support at least for the near future. Recommendations for reforms are outlined in more detail in the documents that follow and vary from country to country. They include:

- coordinating donor efforts at a regional level and supporting the efforts of ECOWAS to implement the security governance component of the ECPF;
- a commitment to effective security sector governance and not solely technical reforms, as has been the case in some countries;
- a greater understanding of non-state, informal and customary security providers and their incorporation (where appropriate) into government and donor strategies and frameworks;
- making SSR a key pillar of poverty reduction strategies.

This guide points to some of the main research from academia, civil society organisations and governments that analyses the security sectors and SSR programmes in West Africa. The documents contain key recommendations specific to countries and sectors, for policymakers and other actors involved in security sector reform/security sector transformation.

GFN-SSR West Africa Resources

This publication details the security sector reform (SSR) process and activities in Sierra Leone over the period 1997-2007. It is the culmination of a wide consultation of many of the primary actors engaged in the process from both Sierra Leone and the UK (February 2009).

This working paper series, a precursor to the publication above, presents perspectives from both Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom regarding the implementation of activities broadly defined as security sector reform (SSR) in the period towards the end of and following the Sierra Leone war (October 2008).

Changing intelligence dynamics in Africa
The book discusses the intelligence capacities of both larger, more established states and those of smaller and weaker states. It includes a chapter on Ghana (June 2009).

No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform
This publication aims to contribute to operationalising donor countries’ policy commitments to local ownership of SSR. It discusses the content and political
A Good Place to Start

SSR: General


West Africa presents a unique combination of some of the poorest states on the continent, with the widespread security challenges of recurring violent conflict and long-standing authoritarian regimes. Is it possible to assess the state of the security sector across the region? What are the obstacles to security sector reform (SSR)? This book, published by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), maps SSR across West Africa, examines the broad range and diversity of challenges in sixteen country case studies, and provides entry points for SSR processes.


What challenges do West African parliaments face in carrying out effective oversight of the security sector? This publication from the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces examines challenges and opportunities for parliamentary oversight of the security sector in West Africa. It argues that, despite some progress, West African states have a long way to go to establish adequate parliamentary oversight of the security sector.


How can the countries of West Africa improve their security environment? This paper from the International Peace Institute looks at West Africa's daunting security challenges. It argues that with the region's weak internal capacities and
its peripheral status in the global market, the prognosis appears grim. However, through properly coordinated and calibrated measures aimed at incrementally strengthening democratic institutions, expanding infrastructure and creatively transforming other negative indicators, the security environment could significantly improve in the coming years.


What are the challenges facing the development of a security sector reform (SSR) policy agenda for West Africa? This Workshop Report from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre argues that while Africa happens to be the largest recipient of SSR programmes, it lacks its own SSR concept. The paper explores options and strategies for the design of a comprehensive SSR concept for West Africa. West African security sector reform must address security issues pertinent to the sub-region.


What are the challenges of security sector (SSR) reform in West Africa? This Institute of Security Studies paper argues that challenges range from the concept of security to the freedom from dependency on the West in terms of strategic thinking and funding. The SSR agenda must concentrate on public safety, especially in urban areas. This will form a solid foundation for the internal stability that is needed for political, social and economic development.

**ECOWAS as an entry point for SSR**


How ready and able is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to implement the Security Sector Governance (SSG) component of its Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)? Problems with implementing the ECPF have arisen from a lack of coherence and coordination within ECOWAS, between ECOWAS and the member states, and with donor partners. ECOWAS can still lead the implementation of the ECPF’s SSG component, however. The ECOWAS Commission should develop a coherent SSG framework to help address the problems of poor coherence and coordination. Further, the ECOWAS parliament can play a more direct role in regional peacekeeping and developing civilian oversight of SSR in member states.

Why and how has West Africa's approach to security become less focused on the state and more focused on human security? This article explains the transformation in this sub-region's security agenda and examines the evolving relationship between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and civil society movements. It finds that civil society engages effectively with ECOWAS and has an active role in West Africa's security decision-making processes. There are challenges ahead for this relationship, however, and civil society's capacity for high-level advocacy needs to be enhanced. Clarity of vision within ECOWAS and a dynamic civil society are required to prevent external agencies from hijacking the sub-region's security agenda.

**Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration**

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2006, **Child Soldiers and Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration in West Africa**, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Dakar

What is the current situation regarding the use of child soldiers in West Africa? How can Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes reach all children who need them? This report by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (the Coalition) surveys DDR projects carried out in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons**

Agnekethom C.P., 2008, **Political and institutional dynamics of the control of small arms and light weapons in West Africa**, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), Disarmament Forum - The complex dynamics of small arms in West Africa, Number 4, pp. 13 - 20

What lessons can be learnt from West African initiatives to control small arms? How can these lessons be applied to the current international debate on an arms trade treaty? This United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) paper argues that the West African experience shows that an international arms trade treaty should address arms imports as well as exports and prohibit arms transfers to non-state actors.


The people of West Africa have suffered greatly from a succession of lengthy and brutal civil wars. This Small Arms Survey report examines armed groups and small arms in the region, and finds that they are an increasing and persistent threat to security. Current efforts to control armed groups need to be stepped
up. Today’s armed and aimless youth could well be the spark that ignites tomorrow’s conflagration.


What is the scale of small arms proliferation in West Africa? How do small arms and light weapons (SALW) arrive and circulate and what impact do they have on the sub-region? This article from Disarmament Forum looks at the transfer of SALW in West Africa. It argues that the uncontrolled movement of SALW in West Africa has exacerbated conflict, created a climate of insecurity and undermined development.

**Non-state actors**


This article from the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development questions the disproportionate focus in security sector reform programmes on the role of the commercial security sector in West Africa. It argues that the contributions (negative and positive) of other non-state actors need to be considered to facilitate sustainable peacebuilding. The author calls for a comprehensive security agenda to integrate the wide variety of actors operating from different perspectives, and to bridge the gap between the democratic principles of security governance and the practicalities of diverse interests.


What factors promote or hamper Security Sector Reform (SSR) planning and implementation in West Africa? Why has the donor-led focus on formal organisations proven ineffective? This study analyses the interaction between formal organisations and informal networks in the Mano River Basin (MRB). It finds that all socio-economic and social-political action in the MRB is carried out through informal networks. A comprehensive approach to security in the region needs to include a wide range of partners and actors, including 'Big Men' who have unofficial authority.
Anglophone West Africa

Ghana

Since becoming the first African country to achieve independence, in 1957, and the overthrow of independence leader Kwame Nkrumah in 1966, Ghanaian political history has been marked by military rule. Despite this militaristic past, the country has not suffered from the type of all-out conflict that has afflicted its neighbours. However, it has not been immune to violence, and a number of lives have been lost in clashes related to chieftaincy, land and election disputes. Nonetheless, Ghana is more politically and economically stable than most if not all other countries in the sub-region and its recent history has been characterised by improvements in political rights, civil liberties and press freedoms. Furthermore, the discovery of major offshore oil reserves was announced in June 2007 with consequent expectations of an economic boost.

However, because Ghana is held up as one of Africa’s success stories, there is consequently complacency from the donor community in addressing underlying security and justice challenges. Despite economic and democratic gains, Ghana’s good governance record is blemished by a number of issues, including: an inability to solve the long-running ethnic conflict in the North-east; a lack of effective parliamentary oversight and the lack of a national security policy framework; and little regulation of the burgeoning private and informal security sector.

In addition, its Human Development Index places it 152th out of 182 countries and corruption, as recognised by donors and the general public, is a serious problem. It also suffers from region-wide threats such as SALW proliferation, cocaine trafficking, and political instability of its neighbours.

The relative stability and democratic development of Ghana should in theory provide a good environment for SSR. Though those pressing for reform must contend with a lack of political will amidst the general belief that there are more pressing demands such as health and education. Deficiencies include: a police service which is severely under-resourced, under-equipped and lacking accountability and transparency; the judicial system is characterised by insufficient court numbers and is choked with cases, although there is general confidence in the court system; and the penal system suffers from harsh conditions, inadequate medical care, overcrowding and excessive numbers in pre-trial detention. A more positive mention can be made of Ghana’s armed forces; they are respected nationally and throughout the world, and the country plays a key role in regional mechanisms such as ECOWAS and internationally through UN peacekeeping missions.
SSR: General


What are the strengths and weaknesses of Security Sector Governance (SSG) in Ghana? To what degree is the sector subject to democratic control? This paper, for the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, analyses the evolution of Ghana’s institutions and legal frameworks underpinning the security sector.


Does Ghana’s Parliament have the necessary powers, capacity and political will to provide effective oversight of the security sector? What role can civil society organisations and regional cooperation and security architecture play in relation to parliamentary oversight of the security sector? This paper from the Centre on International Cooperation examines the functionality and effectiveness of parliamentary oversight of the security sector in Ghana. It finds that while security sector oversight has improved since the return to democratic rule in 1992, the legacy of military control still remains.

Defence Reform


How are burgeoning and fragile democracies in Africa addressing civil-military relations, and military budgeting in particular? This book chapter, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, describes the national budget process in Ghana, focussing on the military sector, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. Recent years have witnessed modest improvements on the issues of budgetary process and budget size. The return of parliamentary rule has resulted in somewhat more transparency about military expenditures and made some politicians and military leaders more accountable.

Policing


To what extent is the Ghana Police Service (GPS) able to fulfil its mandate to protect life and property and maintain law and order? This article from the Journal of Security Sector Management provides an overview of the GPS. It argues that there is a lack of administrative and political will to transform the GPS to enable it to meet the needs of society. To be successful, reforms must take into account the political, economic and social environment in which the
GPS functions. Most importantly, reforms should transform the public perception of the GPS from that of a corrupt and ineffective service.


What needs to be done to create a modern police service in Ghana? This study, from the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, shows that the police service in Ghana has not kept up with the country’s evolution from a British colonial outpost to a modern, independent African democracy. During the years of political instability and military rule, police officers found themselves involved in politics in matters of policing. The government and civil society should now work together to create a democratic and transparent police service.


Who governs Africa’s police? This article published in the Journal of Modern African Studies uses the role of Africa’s chief police officers to explore the relationship between presidents and their police, and the location of influence within the police. It identifies the significant variables shaping police governance in four countries with comparable institutional structures – Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe – and confirms the negligible role played by public accountability.

**Private Military Companies/Private Security Companies**


How do mercenaries contribute to instability in West Africa? Do they pose a specific threat to Ghana’s democratic consolidation? This paper for the Kofi Annan International Peace Training Centre (KAIPTC) analyses the security threat to Ghana posed by possible mercenary action in the context of a period of pre-election tension. The recycling of combatants from one civil war to another poses security threats in West Africa in terms of outbreak or recurrence of civil war. These threats ‘spill over’ to countries like Ghana which are relatively peaceful and are consolidating democracy and good governance. Early and appropriate response to these threats by Ghana or within the ECOWAS sub-regional framework would enhance both state and human security.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons**


What is the extent of craft small-arms production in Ghana? Why have existing legislation and government policies largely failed to contain the problem? This chapter of a book on armed groups and small arms in ECOWAS states
documents the extent, nature, and effects of Ghanaian craft small-arms production and discusses existing and potential responses.

**Intelligence**


How were the challenges of intelligence reform managed in Ghana's broader security sector reform process? This chapter finds that Ghana's intelligence reform was the result of an incremental, deliberate process of institution-building, personnel development and appropriate legislation. Ghana's security transformation was driven by political, economic and security conditions between 1981 and 2000, when a combination of donor pressure and local democracy advocacy groups created an enabling environment for reform. While a lack of clear policy guidelines for the security services has hindered the implementation of oversight, demand for parliamentary and civil society oversight of intelligence agencies has become part of public debate in Ghana.

**Related Texts**


What are the costs and benefits of engagement in regional peacekeeping? Has Ghana been consistent in implementing its foreign policy objectives and the principles of ECOWAS security policies? This paper, for the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana, analyses the factors which contribute to Ghana’s engagement in regional peacekeeping. Ghana’s participation in maintaining sub-regional peace and security has increased since the 1990s, but the country has been inconsistent in its promotion of regional security. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive security document and institutional reform that will incorporate defence, national security, and foreign policies.

**Other GFN-SSR Resources**

More documents covering security sector reform in Ghana can be found online in the [GFN-SSR Document Library](#).

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) also has a number of related resources for Ghana in the thematic areas of justice and conflict.

Documents:
- [Justice related documents on Ghana](#)
- [Conflict related documents on Ghana](#)
**Liberia**

Liberia’s record for political and economic development in the second half of the twentieth century has been amongst the worst in the world. From 1989, and after years of dictatorship, Liberia experienced a 14-year civil war. The conflict was marked by human rights abuses on all sides and destroyed the Liberian state, economy and society, while spreading to neighbouring countries – in particular Sierra Leone and Guinea. ECOWAS-supported peace talks helped bring an end to the conflict in August 2003. Charles Taylor, leader of the rebel group that fought in 1989 and later president in 1997, was extradited to The Hague in 2006 to face war crimes charges. Nonetheless, his legacy continues to have a major impact on current peacebuilding efforts.

After an initial transition period, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected as president in 2006, becoming Africa’s first female elected head of state. Since then, reconstruction has taken place and security sector transformation has been a priority. Liberia’s post-conflict environment, however, poses one of the most challenging environments for SSR to date as a wholesale rebuilding of the security sectors is required. Current security threats include: the continued presence of rebel militias stemming, in part, from an unsuccessful reintegration process; the potential for uprising stemming from high unemployment; the availability and affordability of staple foods; the threat of violent crime, robberies and vigilantism; and disputes over land.

The US and the UN (through UNMIL) have taken a leading role, beginning in 2004, but SSR has so far focused on technical reforms, such as the recruitment and training of the armed forces and police, rather than on ensuring democratic governance and a holistic system-wide approach. This is partly a result of the extensive, and at times controversial, use of private military companies (PMCs). Recent assessments suggest that progress has been made in the reform of the armed forces, particularly in the areas of recruitment and vetting, and training. However, since the bulk of international donor funding (particularly from the US) has been directed to armed forces, reform of the police and other security reforms have fallen short; the police in particular are considered to be corrupt, ineffective and incapable of assuming responsibility for internal security from UNMIL.

Other SSR-related concerns include: a lack of national ownership of the process; problems with resources and achievements for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; endemic corruption linked to an abundance of valuable natural resources; and a reliance on donor-support for Liberia’s continued security and development.
**SSR: General**

Crane, K. et al., 2007, *Making Liberia Safe - Transformation of the National Security Sector*, Monograph, RAND, Santa Monica,

Liberia’s national security sector operates under old structures that are unworkable, wasteful and do not engender the support of the people. This paper recommends the organisation of a new sector architecture of both force structure and security institutions. Liberia must create a new security structure capable of meeting the country’s internal and external challenges.


What is the status of security sector reform in Liberia five years after the end of the conflict? This report from the International Crisis Group assesses current progress and finds programmes long on ambition but short on results. While army reform has made significant strides since the end of the war, police reform and efforts in other areas have proved far less successful. The report warns that unless Liberia is quickly made more secure and stable, the efforts and investment made so far may prove to be in vain.


How can Liberians, following an extended period of civil war, regain effective oversight of their elected representatives and avoid further violent conflict? This Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) report argues that such an outcome can only derive from the rule of law. It is essential that legislators and other stakeholders are aware of the legal framework for security provision and governance in Liberia. This compendium provides a comprehensive list of the existing security legislation.


To what extent does Liberia’s legislature have the necessary authority, ability and attitude to provide effective security sector oversight? What effect has international involvement had on security sector reform in Liberia? This paper from the Centre on International Cooperation examines internationalised SSR and legislative oversight of the security sector in Liberia. It finds that while international support has helped to deliver critical reforms, it has also led to a top-down decision-making process lacking local consultation. The legislature and civil society are therefore important avenues for Liberians to shape the direction of security discourse.

How much progress has been made with security sector reform (SSR) in Liberia? This Strategic Studies Institute paper examines SSR in Liberia and argues that while the United Nations (UN) and the United States (US) have made a start with police and military reform, they have not done nearly enough. The UN, US, as well as other significant donor partners, need to stay the course with Liberia. SSR is a long-term process, not an ephemeral happening.

**Policing**


What role does community-based policing have in post-conflict states? In his article, Bruce Baker demonstrates that community-based (non-state) policing in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Rwanda has survived conflict, but that its variable form and function is in part the product of conflict. In a context of limited state police resources, community-based policing is not to be dismissed lightly as a significant security provider for post-war democracies.

D.C., Davis R.C., Lawson B.S., 2009, *Oversight of the Liberian National Police*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica

How should police oversight be established in Liberia? This study analyses the range of potential oversight mechanisms, examples from other African countries, and Liberia's situation. It recommends a government-chaired, mixed-membership, multi-tiered system with a broad mandate for enhancing police professionalism and assuring the public. This system should be clear, relatively simple, manageable, and comprehensible to the Liberian people. First, a high-level policy body and a subordinate investigative body should be established, followed in the longer-term by local police forums.

**Private Security Companies/Private Military Companies**


A major problem in security sector reform (SSR) has been a lack of local input to and ownership of the emerging reform agenda. Consequently, many donor governments and organisations have made commitments to the principle of local ownership. Yet this has become more a rhetorical device than a guide to donor practice. This case study considers the critical issue of local ownership in reforming the security sector in Liberia. It describes the main developments over the past three years, identifies lessons and makes recommendations to donors.
Non-state actors


How should Security Sector Reform in Liberia take account of the role of non-state actors? This study finds that community-based actors and mechanisms have been filling the security gap as the state-centred reform of the security sector has been underway. However, non-state actors may become spoilers unless they are better integrated into the SSR process. The success of SSR in Liberia may thus depend on the effective management and inclusion of non-state actors and community-based approaches. In particular, ex-combatants, unemployed youth and women need to be permitted to contribute to local ownership of SSR.

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration


What led people in Liberia to join militias and become involved in conflict during the country’s terrible civil war? How can an understanding of the factors that got people 'into' violence help policymakers design more effective disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) programmes to get them 'out'? This study, conducted with 491 ex-combatants using respondent-driven sampling, finds that assumptions of combatants' marginalisation before joining militias were inaccurate. Rather, it was mainly security concerns that caused the Liberian youth to fight. DDRR approaches are in need of re-thinking to link them more directly to social cohesion and societal security.


How is post-conflict reintegration in Liberia affected by gender bias? How can such bias be overcome? This article argues that underlying the Liberian DDR process are gendered assumptions, such as that the idleness of male ex-combatants is a security threat, and that men's reintegration is more important than that of women. Reintegration programming has privileged male access to the formal economy, overlooking the high percentage of female ex-combatants, the shortage of formal employment, and the importance of the informal economy (particularly to women). Contested perceptions of women's roles and capabilities in war and peace must not be perpetuated.
Other GFN-SSR Liberia resources
More documents covering security sector reform in Liberia can be found online in the GFN-SSR Document Library.

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) also has a number of related resources for Ghana in the thematic areas of justice, fragile states and conflict.

Documents:
- Justice related documents on Liberia
- Fragile states related documents on Liberia
- Conflict related documents on Liberia

Nigeria

Nigeria has been under military rule for most of its history since gaining independence from Britain in 1960. Elections in 1999 led to the first civilian government in 15 years, but Nigeria continues to have serious governance problems. In 2007, the first transition between elected civilian leaders was marred by vote-rigging in what international observers condemned as a heavily rigged election.

Nigeria is the largest country in the region. Its territory incorporates over 250 ethnic groups as well as a Muslim-dominated North and a broadly Christian South. The increasing politicisation of ethnicity and religion throughout the post-colonial period was a factor in the three year Biafran civil war of 1967 that led to more than a million deaths. There has been no conflict of that scale since then but a myriad of smaller ethnic and religious conflicts have broken out across the country. In addition, there is an ongoing insurgency in the Niger Delta area. Late 2008 saw some of the Delta’s bloodiest fighting between government forces and Delta militants, with instability spreading across Nigeria’s borders.

In addition, Nigeria faces a long list of security challenges, including: the proliferation of political, criminal, religious, communal and resource conflicts; poor detection of early warning signals and poor conflict management; the lack of effective and accountable policing; and limited parliamentary oversight.

Nigeria is the region’s main power economically and militarily and it views itself as such. For example, Nigerian forces have composed the largest part of recent regional interventions in the conflicts of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Yet despite its strength, its security sectors require substantial attention. A key task of security sector reform in Nigeria has been to ensure that the military observe the supremacy of civilian institutions. However, difficulties with the political system
and the legacy of military rule mean that civilian oversight is still embryonic. Further crucial challenges include dealing with endemic police corruption, incompetence and the crisis of public security.

Gaps in the provision of public security have led to formation and consolidation of non-state actors such as neighbourhood watch/vigilante movements, private security companies and armed militias. Many of these non-state actors have become increasingly popular, politicised and co-opted by federal state structures.

The judicial system is complicated by Nigeria’s federal structure. Individual states have their own governments and legal structures – Sharia law is in effect in 12 northern states, for example. Reports from NGOs claim that police torture of detainees is routine and justice and penal systems are significantly under-resourced.

**SSR: General**


The issue of security sector management since Nigeria's independence has been tied to the politics of governance and to the activities of civil society. It encompasses both military and human security and involves questions of development and conflict management. What constitutes security sector reform and how should it be approached? This paper, from the Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College London, focuses on the military side of the equation, examining the issue in its development until the present day.


How can the security situation in Nigeria be improved? This study, by the Centre for Democracy and Development, analyses public security decision-making in Nigeria. It argues that the failure of public security decision-making to provide for the needs of the public demonstrates the limits of state-centred security decision-making. A more cooperative security, in which both public and non-public actors have clearly defined legal roles, would strengthen security institutions and provide a democratic framework for better security in Nigeria.

**Defence Reform**

Violent conflict has increased in Nigeria since the end of military rule in 1999. Despite commitment to military reform, militarism remains a major problem. This chapter from 'Governing Insecurity' (Zed Books) argues that security sector reform (SSR) in Nigeria must be part of a broader national restructuring. A consensus-based security sector review is needed. This can contribute to the political process of recapturing the culture of compromise and dialogue that was lost during three decades of authoritarian military rule and social exclusion.


How are young and fragile democracies in Africa addressing civil-military relations, and military budgeting in particular? This book chapter, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, describes the national budgetary process in Nigeria, particularly of the Nigerian Armed Forces, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. After civilian rule resumed in 1999, the new government pledged military reform and anti-corruption measures, but progress on some issues has been slow. Individual corruption remains an endemic problem for all financial management initiatives. Due process in military budgeting remains a remote prospect given poor oversight, unclear policies and the absence of many key stakeholders.

**Policing**


How can the Nigerian police force become more effective and accountable? What has motivated previous police reform efforts in Nigeria? This article, from the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR), examines Nigerian police reforms, past and present, and recommends structural changes to make the Nigerian police more effective.


Nigeria’s police are brutal and corrupt despite recent reform plans. Does this mean that reforms don’t raise policing standards and practices, even in a relatively democratic environment like Nigeria? This research from the University of Leeds analyses developments in the Nigerian Police since 2005. It argues that reform can change organisational structures and regulations but, without socio-political change, its effects tend to be superficial, localised and temporary. Rather than being incremental, police reforms follow a dialectical process where reform and resistance interact.
Small Arms and Light Weapons


How can Nigeria stop the violence and proliferation of small arms in the Niger Delta? This paper, by the Small Arms Survey, looks at the causes of armed violence in Nigeria, surveying the different armed groups and types of weapons involved. It argues that a key element of addressing insecurity and armed violence is comprehensive security sector reform. A political solution is the only way to resolve the rising armed violence.

Other GFN-SSR Nigeria resources
More documents covering security sector reform in Nigeria can be found online in the GFN-SSR Document Library.

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) also has a number of related resources for Nigeria in the thematic areas of justice, fragile states and conflict.

Documents:
- Justice related documents on Nigeria
- Fragile states related documents on Nigeria
- Conflict related documents on Nigeria

Helpdesk reports
- Please identify any recent research or cost-benefit analysis on the use of development interventions to prevent conflict with a particular focus on Nigeria.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone gained independence from Britain in 1961, but this was followed by thirty years of one-party and military rule during which the emphasis of the security forces was on regime, rather than state or human security. Economic and political development stalled and this - combined with competition for control of Sierra Leone’s lucrative mineral resources, the manipulation of ethnic groups, and the support of Charles Taylor in neighbouring Liberia - resulted in an uprising led by Foday Sankoh’s Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in 1991. Civil war, characterised by widespread human rights’ abuses and collusion between ostensibly opposing military sides, continued for 11 years. A peace accord signed
in Lomé in 1999 quickly collapsed and the RUF took several hundred UN peacekeepers as hostages. British troops intervened and the security situation improved to the extent that an end to conflict was proclaimed in January 2002. President Ahmad Kabbah was re-elected in the same year, and succeeded in 2007 by Ernest Bai Koroma.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) took a leading role in security sector reform in Sierra Leone from the outset when the concept of SSR was in its infancy. As one of the earliest and most high-profile security sector reform processes to be implemented, Sierra Leone provides invaluable knowledge on how SSR programmes can – and should not – be implemented in post-conflict contexts. SSR has led to a significant improvement in public security and notable achievements include: the extent of national ownership; the incorporation of paramount chiefs and community groups into the security framework through the establishment of District and Provincial Security Committees; and the inclusion of SSR as a core part of the country’s poverty reduction strategy.

Whilst there has been a discernable improvement in the overall security situation, factors that could serve to undermine this include corruption in the security sector, organised crime, state-corporate crimes, money laundering, smuggling, human trafficking, and weak regulatory and government policies. In addition, further work is required to improve oversight and ensure the sustainability of the SSR process when donor funding declines. Meanwhile, Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world with high youth unemployment and exclusion and as such serious economic and social challenges pose a threat to the creation of an enduring peace.

**SSR: General**


What lessons does the experience of transforming the security system in Sierra Leone have for security sector reform (SSR)? This report from the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform and International Alert documents Sierra Leone’s security system transformation from 1997 to 2007. It chronicles the UK Government’s intervention, including its transition from direct implementer to adviser, and analyses key security issues that arose during the period. Sierra Leone’s experience shows how dedicated, capable people, given the space to reform their security institutions, can achieve a great deal under challenging circumstances.

A major problem in security sector reform (SSR) has been a lack of local input to and ownership of the emerging reform agenda. Consequently, many donor governments and organisations have made commitments to the principle of local ownership. Yet this has become more a rhetorical device than a guide to donor practice. This case study focuses on the comprehensive security sector review and transformation process conducted in Sierra Leone after the end of the civil war that ravaged the nation in the 1990s. The key features of the review were its broad consultation with government bodies and the public, its developmental approach and its close links to the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.


How successful has Sierra Leone been in reforming its security sector? This paper, by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, assesses the main elements of security sector reform (SSR) in Sierra Leone. It suggests that SSR has increased public safety and enhanced the country’s poverty reduction strategy. However, the security sector has not been adequately embedded in a democratic governance framework. SSR can be successful only as part of an overarching democratic post conflict reconstruction framework.


What policies make for successes and for failures in security sector reform (SSR) in post-war reconstruction situations? This book chapter, published by the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, critically examines the case of Sierra Leone, which undertook to rebuild state security with extensive international assistance. One of the principal arguments is that the process of SSR reform must be spearheaded and owned by Sierra Leoneans themselves in order to be sustainable.


The British government’s political, financial, logistical and security support to Sierra Leone has been critical in restoring peace. But will it lead to wider economic, political and social improvement? This article assesses security sector reform (SSR) in Sierra Leone. It suggests that the costs of SSR have been huge and, although successful, Sierra Leone is still near the bottom of the human development index and the peace remains fragile.
**Defence Reform**


How are young and fragile democracies in Africa addressing civil-military relations, and military budgeting in particular? This book chapter, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, describes the national budgetary process in Sierra Leone, particularly of the military sector, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. Since multiparty democracy was reintroduced in 1996, the situation has significantly improved, especially with the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for budget formulation. Overall, ongoing reforms have made the budgeting process more open, more consultative and, most crucially, driven by clear goals.

**Policing**


This report finds that the service improvements arising from SSR processes in Sierra Leone are threatened by questionable long-term affordability. Further, rebuilding the SLP with a mandate to provide internal security was an explicit state-building exercise; the case of Sierra Leone highlights the focus of international SSR interventions on state agencies, even in the absence of a state’s monopoly over the means of violence. Sierra Leone exemplifies the difficulty - and importance - of engaging traditional security providers in broader justice reform, and of balancing reforms that are necessary with what is sustainable.


This article examines policing in Sierra Leone four years after the civil war. It evaluates the achievements in the area of policing against the major policing challenges in African post-conflict societies. Sierra Leone still does not exert effective control over, nor is it able to deliver state policing services to, significant parts of its own territory. It may be that some community-led policing groups can be harnessed and if necessary reformed to assist the police in establishing the rule of law.


What policing agencies are available in Sierra Leone, and how do citizens perceive them? This study, based on field research in 2005, notes that while SSR in Sierra Leone has focused on state agencies, many other policing agencies
offer citizens protection and crime investigation. It is largely these alternative agencies that provide policing services, particularly to society's marginalised. In fact, youth (often considered a security risk as the 'idle unemployed') are providing local security in areas where the state police are rarely seen. The demand for better security is being satisfied by non-state providers.

*Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration*


What determines the ability of ex-combatants to reintegrate into society? What impact do international disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) efforts have on reintegration? This article from the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* uses data on ex-combatants in Sierra Leone to analyse individual-level determinants of demobilisation and reintegration. It finds little evidence at the micro level to suggest that internationally funded DDR programmes facilitate demobilisation and reintegration.


Why have international disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes ignored the role of women as soldiers in war? This article finds that the ideal of the female war victim has limited the ways in which the needs of female combatants are addressed by DDR programmes in Sierra Leone. This error has sacrificed both gender equality and programme effectiveness. Men and masculinity are securitised post-conflict while women - even women soldiers - are desecuritised and, in effect, de-emphasised. Programme design must consider the breadth of female combatants' active participation in conflict in order to understand their needs, and must avoid entrenching gender inequality by emphasising a return to 'normal'.

*Non-state actors*


What role did the 2007 general elections in Sierra Leone play in the country's post-war recovery? This research from the Nordic Africa Institute and Copenhagen University shows how political parties strategically remobilised ex-combatants into security squads, both to protect themselves and to gather votes. It looks at the tactical motives behind ex-combatants' choice to join political campaigning. The 2007 elections strengthened the democratic process in Sierra Leone. However, democracy is still extremely fragile.
Private Military Companies/Private Security Companies


Security sector reform tends to deal exclusively with the public security sector. This is a mistake, according to research from the University of Wales. Focusing on Sierra Leone and Kenya, the paper argues that any attempt to ensure better security for all must take account of private actors. Private security companies and their integration into SSR is important not simply for the maintenance of law and order but also for the legitimacy of social and political regimes.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

Lawson, A., 2006, The call for tough arms controls: Voices from Sierra Leone, Control Arms Campaign, Amnesty International, the International Action Network on Small Arms, and Oxfam International.

What impact have irresponsible arms sales had on people’s lives in Sierra Leone? How have groups that commit human rights violations been able to obtain weapons? This report from the Control Arms campaign examines the supply of arms to Sierra Leone and its effect on individuals and communities. It argues that arms transfers have fuelled atrocities in Sierra Leone and many other countries. Governments must take responsibility for the supply of arms by agreeing a new international arms trade treaty.

Other GFN-SSR Sierra Leone resources

More documents covering security sector reform in Sierra Leone can be found online in the GFN-SSR Document Library.

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) also has a number of related resources for Sierra Leone in the thematic areas of justice, fragile states and conflict.

Documents:
- Justice related documents on Sierra Leone
- Fragile states related documents on Sierra Leone
- Conflict related documents on Sierra Leone
Francophone West Africa

English language literature on SSR related issues for Francophone West Africa is scarce. However, information on Mali and, to a lesser extent, Benin is relatively abundant when compared to other Francophone West African countries.

Benin

Benin arguably has the most troubled civil-military relations in all of West Africa. Created out of a group of discrete, ethnically distinct and autonomous kingdoms, it attained independence from France in 1960. There were a total of six coups d’état during the period 1963 to 1972, the final one spearheaded by Mathieu Kérékou, who ruled as a Marxist-Leninist dictator for 17 years. The Conférence Nationale in 1990 brought about a smooth transition to democracy; Kérékou subsequently lost the 1991 election to Nicéphore Soglo but then returned to power in 1995 and was re-elected for a second consecutive term in 2001 under controversial circumstances. The incumbent President is Thomas Boni Yayi, a former head of the West African Development Bank.

The advent of democracy provided the opportunities to undertake institutional reforms. Checks and balances were set up within some organs of government and the administration was decentralised to bring the public service closer to the population. However, the scope of reforms have been considerably limited due to a lack of financial resources.

Benin is recognised as one of Africa’s most stable democracies but the security sector remains politicised and corrupt. The principle of parliamentary oversight is enshrined in Benin’s constitution but it remains a work in progress. Whilst the relevant bodies do exist, the most important being the foreign relations committee of the national assembly, they have not been functioning effectively. There is a need for greater parliamentary control over the security sector as a whole, particularly the armed forces and the numerous intelligence services, of which very little is known.

General: SSR


What are the challenges of security sector governance in Benin? This chapter examines Benin’s security sector, finding it poorly organised and resourced, with unsatisfactory democratic oversight and slow reforms. To be meaningful, SSR must take place within a broader framework of good governance. This requires a greater focus on democratic oversight and accountability by the executive, legislature and by civil society as a whole.

Why has the principle of parliamentary oversight of the security sector, asserted since Benin's independence, been poorly implemented? This study highlights logistical, human resource and institutional weaknesses, particularly repeated military incursions into the political arena. While the situation has improved since the 1990 Conférence Nationale, the national assembly must earn citizens' trust by improving its performance and visibility and by providing public access to information. It is also important to train parliamentarians on security issues and to strengthen links with civil society organisations.

Other GFN-SSR Benin resources
More documents covering security sector reform in Benin can be found online in the GFN-SSR Document Library.

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire was once a model of stability but has since experienced two coups d'état and a civil war, which divided the country between the rebel-held North and the government controlled South. Today, what little is left of the security and defence forces defends the incumbent regime rather than the country. Furthermore, parliamentary oversight is almost non-existent and primacy is given to the President.

Information on SSR and related matters in Côte D'Ivoire is not abundant, but this topic guide will be updated as new information becomes available.


What are the challenges for security sector governance in Côte d'Ivoire? This paper finds that the military is far too involved in politics and is outside the law. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes following recent upheavals have stalled and the prospect for reform remains bleak. There is a pressing need to restructure the form and content of the country's security system. However, these reforms are dependent on a desire for democratic change within the country and the creation of peace in the country and the wider sub-region.
Other GFN-SSR Côte D'Ivoire resources
More documents covering security sector reform in Côte D'Ivoire can be found online in the GFN-SSR Document Library.

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) also has a number of related resources for Côte D'Ivoire in the thematic areas of justice, fragile states and conflict.

Documents:
- Justice related documents on Côte D'Ivoire
- Fragile states related documents on Côte D'Ivoire
- Conflict related documents on Côte D'Ivoire

Mali

Like many countries in West Africa, Mali’s political history in the second half of the twentieth century, following independence in 1960, was dominated by military and authoritarian rule. Broadly free and fair democratic elections took place in 1992 and since this point Mali has been on the path towards increasing democratisation. The country has taken significant steps towards economic and political reforms but it remains one of the world’s poorest countries with the fifth lowest Human Development Index score in the world according to the UN Development Program. While broadly peaceful, Mali has had to contend with an insurgency in its northern Sahara region by Tuareg rebels, first in 1963 and then in 1990. Recognising that a military response would be ineffective, Mali embarked upon a conflict reconciliation process that included the integration of Tuareg forces with the Malian army. While helping to ensure peace at the time, in 2006-7 a splinter group of Tuareg rebels renewed the insurgency and continue to clash with Malian security forces.

Mali is one of the main political and economic reformers in the West African region and it has also made progress in reforming its security forces. The integration of Tuareg rebels into the Malian army is particularly noteworthy. However, given its significant levels of poverty and competing domestic concerns, Mali has been unable to focus on security sector reform. Weak state authority, corruption, and limited democratic oversight characterise security sector governance. Informal justice plays a major role in rural areas and the state judicial system, though not wholly independent, has at times made decisions that do not favour the government. While sharing the experiences of Mali would be useful for other countries in the region, particularly the Northern Francophone states, academic, civil society and others forms of research are in short supply.
**General: SSR**


How accurate is the perception of Mali as one of the most advanced African countries with regard to democratic oversight of the security sector? This chapter argues that although Mali has come a long way (and in some respects presents examples of civil-military relations that other countries could learn from), weaknesses in parliamentary oversight remain. Old habits of secrecy and corruption, an unwillingness to assert the role of parliament in relation to the executive, a lack of resources, and parliamentarians' lack of expertise need to be addressed. It is important to promote a new culture of parliamentary oversight, linking this to broader regional and sub-regional security regimes and best practices.


This chapter examines the attempts of Mali's security sector to respond to citizens' needs and increase transparency and participation. It suggests that the reforms are costly for such an indebted government. Furthermore, the population and security agents are reluctant to adopt reforms due to administrative inertia and low confidence in administrative changes. However, once this reluctance has been dispelled, it will be easier to set overall performance indicators.

**Defence Reform**


How are burgeoning and fragile democracies in Africa addressing civil-military relations, and military budgeting in particular? This book chapter, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, describes the national budget process in Mali, particularly of the military sector, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. Until 1991, the politics of Mali largely revolved around the relationship of the armed forces to other state institutions. Transition to civilian rule has brought military budgeting under the same guidelines as the overall national budgeting process. Yet there is still official toleration of breaches in how the military organises and implements its budget.

Mali’s resolution of its severe ethnic conflict involving the Tuareg nomads in the 1990s may provide useful insights into conflict resolution in Africa as a whole. This Strategic Studies Institute study describes the nature of the Malian solution and indicates the reasons for its success to date. A key reason for success being that instead of using military repression the Malian government pursued a process of reconciliation, which involved integrating Tuareg rebels into the Malian army.

**Small Arms and Light Weapons**


How can local communities be better integrated into weapon collection and weapons for development (WFD) programmes? This report from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) presents the lessons learned from participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) of weapon collection programmes in Mali. It finds that use of participatory procedures, processes and policies give confidence to communities and can lead to greater ease in retrieving illegally held weapons.

**Other GFN-SSR Mali resources**

More documents covering security sector reform in Mali can be found online in the *GFN-SSR Document Library.*

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**Senegal**

Senegal is considered a model African democracy but is affected by widespread poverty – a fact confirmed its lowly Human Development Index ranking of 166 out of a total of 182 countries. Since 1982, Senegal has experienced a separatist rebellion in the Zinguinchor region. Although a peace agreement was ratified in 2004, it has been overshadowed by dissention amongst rebel factions. Attempted reforms of the security sector have not had any bearing on concentration of power that the President and the executive wields.

Information on SSR and related matters in Senegal is not abundant, but this topic guide will be updated as new information becomes available.
General: SSR


This chapter argues that Senegal's security forces must become more effective and better resourced within a framework of democratic security sector governance. In addition, regional solutions are needed to security challenges such as small arms availability, trafficking and peacekeeping. A participatory approach to security, which involves civil society and considers the security of individuals as well as of the state, is essential. There is also an urgent need to establish neighbourhood police services.

Other GFN-SSR Senegal resources
More documents covering security sector reform in Senegal can be found online in the GFN-SSR Document Library.

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) also has a number of related resources for Senegal in the thematic area of conflict.

Lusophone West Africa

English language literature on SSR related issues for Lusophone West Africa is scarce.

Cape Verde

Cape Verde is one West African country without a legacy of military rule or widespread human rights abuse. Furthermore, despite few economic advantages (notably a poor natural resource base), Cape Verde has some of best social development indicators in West Africa (it has an African rank of 8 on the Human Development Index).

Cape Verde became independent in 1975, a year after its sister colony Guinea Bissau attained freedom from Portugal. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which was at the forefront of the independence movement established a one-party system and ruled until 1990, when an emergency congress paved the way for the first multi-party elections in 1991.

Cape Verde is used as a transit point, which provides supplies of hard drugs and alcohol to global markets. The consumption of hard drugs and alcohol, drug trafficking and associated violent crimes constitute major security challenges.
Increased crime has led the authorities to pursue a strategy for security sector management with civil society involvement. This is predicated on the realisation that the functions of crime prevention, surveillance and reinsertion of prisoners must be shared amongst all stakeholders including the state, society and private enterprise.

While oversight of the security sector is not completely satisfactory, many efforts have been made to improve it. However, there are still many weaknesses in parliamentary performance with regards to oversight of security and defence issues.

**General: SSR**


What is the current status and functioning of the Cape Verde parliament and its oversight of the security sector? This chapter examines the specialised committees responsible for scrutiny of the security sector. It finds that Cape Verde is consciously building a framework for democratic control of the security sector, and that parliament has played an important role in securing stability in the country and in oversight of the security sector. However, the performance of the specialised committees responsible for security and defence issues need to be improved and sub-committees are required in order to enhance the performance of the national assembly.


To what extent does Cape Verde's security sector require reform? This chapter assesses reform efforts in the country to date. It argues that despite political stability and good economic performance, there are reasons to fear an upsurge of violence, banditry and organised crime. The country's island status has been both protective and a source of vulnerability. While its security sector governance could be improved – particularly through increased involvement by civil society and other stakeholders – Cape Verde's major security challenge is transnational criminality. International alliances are therefore important.

**Other GFN-SSR Cape Verde resources**

More documents covering security sector reform in Cape Verde can be found online in the [GFN-SSR Document Library](#).
Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau is in desperate need of change in order to overcome its vulnerable and unstable status at all levels: social, economic, and political. Its problems are embedded both in the legacy of the Portuguese and also of its post-independence leaders, whose interests did not lie with the people or the state but with their own individual concerns. Given the dominance of the military in politics and its involvement in recent instability, security sector reform is one area where change is vital. A recent threat is that posed by the cocaine trade, as Guinea-Bissau has become a key staging post on the trafficking route from South America into Europe. Its security forces are unable to deal with this challenge and are often themselves complicit in the trade. The international community, and the EU in particular, has recently recognised the importance of reforming the security sector and improving the economic and political situation within the country.

SSR: General


What is needed for Guinea-Bissau to achieve its goals of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR)? This briefing report, published by Observatoire de l’Afrique, highlights promising circumstances for SSR in the country, as well as difficult challenges. As Guinea-Bissau’s most powerful actor, the armed forces must in effect reform themselves and take ownership of certain SSR efforts. In addition, the recent spurt of activity by international donors, and the plans to send foreign experts, must be followed up and effectively coordinated.

UN Peacebuilding Commission, 2008, Background Paper on Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau, Peacebuilding Commission Country-Specific Configuration on Guinea-Bissau - Thematic Discussion on Security Sector Reform and the Rule of Law, 18 June 2008

How has security sector reform (SSR) proceeded in Guinea-Bissau, and what lessons can be done to move these efforts forward? This background paper, presented by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Country-Specific Configuration on Guinea-Bissau, describes and analyses the current state of the defence, security, and justice sectors. Reform efforts have affected the armed forces, the police and state security intelligence services, paramilitary forces, justice institutions, security management and oversight bodies, and non-statutory security forces.

What is the status of security sector governance in Guinea-Bissau and what reforms are most urgently necessary? This article, published by the Conflict Research Unit at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’, analyses the full spectrum of security sector institutions and actors in Guinea-Bissau. A flagrant disregard for the rule of law on the part of the executive and the security sector continues to lead to abuses. A pressing need for funding has meant that oversight capabilities, unable to leverage prestige, are consistently marginalised.

**Civil Society**


Civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly non-governmental organisations (NGOs), play a prominent role in conflict-affected and fragile states. Yet there is poor understanding about CSOs and how to engage them more effectively. This World Bank working paper explores this issue using pilot assessment tools in Angola, Guinea Bissau and Togo. It argues that donors should move towards more sustained engagement with CSOs, focusing on institution building among CSO networks.

**Related Texts**


Why was democracy never successfully established in Guinea-Bissau’s post-colonial era? What obstacles has it encountered? This International Crisis Group report offers a brief but detailed outline of the history and development of Guinea-Bissau. Ethnic tensions and individual motives have played a crucial role in the struggle of Guinea-Bissau to become a functioning democratic country. The report reflects on what should be done in order to establish an efficient democratic state after four decades of failure. Problems lie both in the inexistence of a functioning institutional system, as well as the more explicit issues of drug trafficking and political instability. An effective institutional system needs to be established in order for Guinea-Bissau to progress from liberation to an efficient democracy.


Why is cocaine trafficking through West Africa dramatically on the rise, and what can be done to counter its destabilising effects? This report, published by the UN
Office on Drugs and Crime, describes the causes of the recent spike and examines its impact on developing countries in West Africa. The case of Guinea-Bissau is highlighted as the country has become one of the major transhipment routes between South America and Europe. Drug trafficking is beginning to undermine the burgeoning democratisation of West African nations, feeding organised crime and threatening the rule of law.

**Other GFN-SSR Guinea-Bissau resources**
More documents covering security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau can be found online in the [GFN-SSR Document Library](#).