

THE MISSING ELEMENT:

**Addressing Corruption through
Security Sector Reform in West Africa**

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With thanks for feedback and assistance to: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Cercle de Réflexion et d'Information pour la Consolidation de la Démocratie au Mali (CRI 2002), Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Initiative pour la Justice Sociale, la Transparence et la Bonne Gouvernance en Côte d'Ivoire (Social Justice), Transparency International Niger (TI-Niger), Andrew Tchie.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades, stability in West Africa has been severely disrupted by internal conflicts, commonly financed by the illegal sale of arms or the illicit extraction of natural resources. From Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire, to Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, corruption has often underpinned these conflicts and is the basis for grievances against political leaders and violent political change. By eroding public trust and undermining the efficiency of defence and security institutions, corruption has undermined the rule of law and contributed to sustained instability. In practice, this has resulted in weaker access to basic services for many and has contributed to the creation of environments conducive to human rights violations.

Meanwhile, the region has seen a great number of stabilisation and peacebuilding interventions take place, some of which have been under the protection of international, continental or regional organisations such as the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), or with the assistance of sovereign partners such as the European Union (EU), France, the UK or Germany. While these institutions’ mandates differ considerably, they have each espoused security sector reform/governance (SSR/G) as a key pillar in ending conflict, building peace and laying the foundations for future development. As a result, SSR/G programmes have been implemented in a wide range of West African countries, with the goal of transforming the security sector into one which is efficient, accountable to the population and which upholds the principles of democratic governance. However, despite the varied contexts in which SSR has been attempted in West Africa, these reform processes have often fallen short of their ambitious objectives.

The present work is grounded in new research by TI’s Defence & Security Programme, which sheds light on persistently high levels of corruption risk in the defence sectors of West African states. The results show that in the focus countries – Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria – these risks arise due to weak governance and a lack of institutional safeguards against corruption, at the political, financial, operational, human resource and procurement levels. These risks suggest the lack of progress made in reforming West African defence sectors, including as part of SSR/G processes, have too often focused on strengthening security forces’ tactical readiness, and not enough on their accountability.

This report argues that, given the significant threat that corruption presents to peace and stability in West Africa, a greater focus should be placed on anti-corruption work within SSR/G. It analyses the nexus between corruption and conflict in West Africa against the prevalence of anti-corruption efforts in normative SSR frameworks, commonly used in West Africa, and in a sample of countries undertaking SSR/G. Through this framework, our research reveals the neglect of anti-corruption efforts, to the benefit of more technical “train-and-equip” approaches. As a result, this leaves underlying structures untouched and corrupt networks undisturbed, and represents a missed opportunity to harness the capacities of SSR/G to lead to transformative change.

Ultimately, to ensure successful and sustainable SSR/G programmes, equal emphasis must be placed on the technical and political dimensions of reform. This report recommends ways to assess how corruption is fuelling conflict and how consequently to implement anti-corruption measures in any SSR-related planned actions, including legislation, policies, and programmes. This will enable SSR/G efforts to address corruption strategically as a root cause of conflict and insecurity, and therefore to reinforce human security.

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GLOSSARY

Corruption

The abuse of entrusted power for private gain.
(Transparency International)

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

A process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to reintegrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods. Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of weapons from combatants and often from the civilian population. Demobilisation is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces and groups, including a phase of “reinsertion” which provides short-term assistance to ex-combatants. Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income.
(Secretary-General, Note to the General Assembly, (A/C.5/59/31))

Fragility

Fragility is defined as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies.

(OECD, States of Fragility report, 2016:22)

Human security

The UN Commission on Human Security (CHS), in its final report Human Security Now, defines human security as: “...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.” (CHS: 2003: 4) Overall, the definition proposed by the CHS reconceptualises security in a fundamental way by: moving away from traditional, state-centric conceptions of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression, to one that concentrates on the security of the individuals, their protection and empowerment.

Peacebuilding

Within the United Nations, peacebuilding refers to efforts to assist countries and regions in their transitions from war to peace and to reduce a country’s risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities for conflict management, and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Peace process

Peace agreements are formal agreements aimed at ending violent conflict and creating the conditions for durable peace. They include ceasefire agreements, interim or preliminary agreements, comprehensive and framework agreements, and implementation agreements. The way in which the conflict ends, whether by compromise or a one-sided victory, typically has implications for the nature of the peace.

(Topic Guide on Conflict, 2012, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre)

Rule of law

The rule of law refers to a principle of governance which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency.

(Report of the Secretary-General on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies, 23 August 2004, (S/2004/616))

Security governance refers to the process of steering the state and society, ideally but not always under effective democratic control, towards the realisation of individual and collective freedom from fear.

Security governance

(Ebo, Adedeji. “Non-State Actors, Peacebuilding and Security Governance in West Africa: Beyond Commercialisation.” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 3, no. 2, pp 53–69 (2007))

Security sector

Security sector is a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. It is generally accepted that the security sector includes defence, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services and institutions responsible for border management, customs and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, in many instances, also included. Furthermore, the security sector includes actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as ministries, legislative bodies and civil society groups. Other non-state actors that could be considered part of the security sector include customary or informal authorities and private security services.

Security sector reform

Security sector reform (SSR) describes a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the state and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.

(UN Secretary-General report: “Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting SSR”, 23 January 2008, (A/62/659–S/2008/39))

ACRONYMS

AU: African Union

BBL: Brown Bag Lunch initiative (Côte d’Ivoire)

CDSPC: Defence, Security and Civil Protection Committee (Comité de Défense, Sécurité et Protection Civile) in Mali

CISLAC: Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (Nigeria)

CNRSS: National Commission for Security Sector Reform (Mali)

CPI: Corruption Perceptions Index

CSD: Security and Defence Commission (Commission de la Sécurité et de la Défense) in Côte d’Ivoire

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

DCAF: Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

ECPF: ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework

EU: European Union

EUCAP: European Union Capacity Building Mission

EUTM: European Union Training Mission

FAMa: Malian Armed Forces (Forces Armées Maliennes)

GAFCSC: Ghanaian Armed Forces Command and Staff College

GDI: Government Defence Integrity Index

IACG: Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance

ITGN: Integrated Technical Guidance Note

JNIM: Group to Support Islam and Muslims (Jama’at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin)

PER: Public Expenditure Reviews

PSCDI: Parliament Select Committee on Defence and Interior (Ghana)

P/CVE: Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism

RDR: Rally of the Republicans (Rassemblement des Républicains) in Côte d’Ivoire

SSR/G: Security Sector Reform Governance

UN: United Nations

UNCAC: United Nations Convention Against Corruption

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UK: United Kingdom

UNOCI: United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire

USA: United States of America

US\$: United States Dollars

XOF: West Africa Francs CFA

INTRODUCTION

Corruption, conflict and instability are profoundly intertwined. Quantitative studies have indicated that corruption is positively correlated with state instability¹. Moreover, existing literature reflects a broad agreement that corruption and conflict tend to occur together; corruption and political instability, for instance, are correlated, and states dominated by narrow patronage systems are more susceptible to instability.² Six out of the 10 lowest-scoring countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2019 were also among the 10 least peaceful countries in the Global Peace Index 2020.³ Corruption not only follows conflict but is also frequently one of the root causes of armed violence with high levels of corruption shown to exacerbate conflict dynamics⁴. Broadly speaking, corruption fuels conflict in two ways: by generating popular grievances, and by diminishing the effectiveness and legitimacy of national institutions. The dynamics of corruption are often complex, but as conflicts can be underpinned by corruption, peacebuilding efforts should be appropriately underpinned with anti-corruption measures.

In the late 1990s, security sector reform (SSR) quickly became a pillar of multilateral strategies for crisis prevention, peacebuilding and development. With the aim of applying the principles of good governance to the security sector to ensure that security forces are accountable, effective and operate in a framework of respect for the rule of law and human rights, SSR's avowed focus on human security and governance lends itself ideally to a sustained focus on addressing corruption risks in the security sector. However, corrupt practices and mitigation strategies often fail to receive sufficient attention when it comes to designing and implementing SSR programmes. Even in international and regional policy frameworks, corruption is too often mentioned superficially and largely marginalised by the centrality and financial importance of train-and-equip approaches in programmes dedicated to reforming the security sector. For instance, despite the acknowledgment in UN Resolution 2151 (2014) on SSR, of interlinkages between SSR

and “other important factors of stabilisation and reconstruction” that include anti-corruption measures among other things, the UN SSR Integrated Technical Guidance Note “does not elaborate on post-conflict or development issues, such as corruption.”⁵ ⁶ Similarly, neither the AU nor ECOWAS policy framework on SSR recognises addressing corruption as a core principle for SSR, a key element of SSR programming or an essential feature.⁷ ⁸

For decades, stability in West Africa has been severely disrupted by internal conflicts, commonly financed by the illegal sale of arms or the illicit extraction of natural resources.⁹ Despite numerous initiatives, the results of past SSR processes in the region since the early 1990s have been mixed. It has rarely resulted in transformational change – whether in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, or in Côte d'Ivoire in the context of the recovery from civil war, or whether in Nigeria, Benin, Mali or Ghana in the context of democratic transitions.¹⁰ Although it is important to contextualise each case and consider other factors, such as political systems, peace agreements or the existence of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes, this report argues that putting a greater emphasis on anti-corruption efforts in SSR processes in West Africa can have a positive impact on their effectiveness.

According to TI's Defence & Security programme's Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI), West African defence and security sectors remain prone to high levels of corruption risk at the political, financial, operational, personnel and procurement levels.¹¹ Left unaddressed, these risks undermine accountability, transparency and civilian democratic oversight, and pose a threat not just to the key objectives of SSR that are accountability and effectiveness, but to peace and security in countries across the region.¹²

The present report intends to raise the awareness of SSR practitioners and policymakers in West Africa to the ways in

¹ P. Le Billion, “Buying Peace or Fuelling War: The Role of Corruption in Armed Conflict”, *Journal of International Development*, No. 15, p. 417, 17 April 2003.

² P. Mauro, “The Effects of Corruption on Growth, Investment, and Government Expenditure”, Working Paper No. 96/98, *International Monetary Fund*, September 1996; Stimson Center, *Mapping and Fighting Corruption in War-Torn States*, Report No. 61, March 2007; Christian Michelsen Institute, *Risks of Corruption to State Legitimacy and Stability in Fragile Situations*, 2012. See also “Why Corruption Matters: Understanding Causes, Effects and How to Address Them”, *Department for International Development*, pp. 51-52, 25 February 2015; “Literature Review on Corruption in Fragile States”, *Anti-Corruption Resource Centre*, U4 Expert Answer, 24 January 2013.

³ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2019*, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/results/table>; Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index 2020*, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2020/06/GPI_2020_web.pdf.

⁴ Department for International Development, *Why corruption matters: understanding causes, effects and how to address them*, 2015; Institute for Economics and Peace, *Peace and Corruption: Lowering Corruption – A Transformative Factor for Peace*.

⁵ UNSC, *UNSC Resolution 2151* (New York: UN, 2014).

⁶ UN SSR Task Force, *Security Sector Reform: Integrated Technical Guidance Notes*, p. 92, 2012.

⁷ AU, *AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform*, 2008.

⁸ ECOWAS, *ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance*, 2018.

⁹ S. M. Atuobi, “Corruption and State Instability in West Africa: An Examination of Policy Options”, *Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre*, Occasional Paper, 3 December 2007.

¹⁰ A. Bryden and F. Chappuis, “Introduction: Understanding Security Sector Governance Dynamics in West Africa”, in A. Bryden and F. Chappuis (eds.), *Learning from West African Experiences in Security Sector Governance* (London: Ubiquity Press, 2015), pp. 1-18, (p. 7).

¹¹ TI's Defence & Security Programme, *Government Defence Integrity Index*, ti-defence.org/gdi/.

¹² “Corruption and State Instability in West Africa: An Examination of Policy Options”.

which systemic corruption in the security sector can undermine peace and stability. By reflecting on the place that is generally given to anti-corruption efforts in SSR normative frameworks, it will also suggest avenues for a better integration of anti-corruption efforts in SSR, to harness the opportunities provided by SSR to build accountability and effectiveness. To this end, the last section will propose a comprehensive approach on how best to manage corruption risks in SSR by mainstreaming anti-corruption into the design, the planning, the implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of SSR policies and programmes. The aim is to make anti-corruption an integral dimension of SSR and for the mitigation of corruption risks to be at the forefront of policies related to the oversight, management and provision of security services.

Based on evidence provided by the GDI 2020 of a sample of West African countries, a literature review of publications on SSR, lessons learnt from SSR experiences in West Africa, and interviews with academics, policymakers and practitioners, this report explores some of the main enablers of defence and security corruption observed in West Africa. The list of corruption enablers discussed in this report predominantly focuses on the defence sector and is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, it aims to illustrate how corruption can thrive in these environments through a range of factors. The report focuses on key risks areas within the defence sector, which are also relevant to the overall effectiveness of broader SSR initiatives.

Box 1. Corruption: What's in a name?¹³

Transparency International defines corruption as the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. This definition includes an element of subversion or illegitimate use of resources meant for a particular purpose to further another goal. It involves a benefit that should not have been obtained, as well as harm to someone who was entitled to a benefit they did not receive. When applied to the public sector, it entails expectations and norms being flouted due to misuse of a public (often state) system for a private (individual or group) benefit, rather than public good. If repeated regularly, it leads to the degradation of a system meant to benefit the public into one that benefits certain groups to the detriment of others.

Corrupt practices include:

- bribery, most readily identified as a form of corruption
- nepotism and favouritism in hiring and promotions
- embezzlement of (state) funds
- extortion and sextortion
- electoral fraud.

The scale of corruption

- petty: low-level bribery and influence peddling
- grand: affecting institutional processes such as procurement
- kleptocracy/state capture: the repurposing of entire state apparatus for personal or group enrichment.

¹³ Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *The Fifth Column: Understanding The Relationship between Corruption And Conflict*, (London: TI Defence & Security Programme, 2017).

ANTI-CORRUPTION IN WEST AFRICAN SSR

Security sector corruption hollows out defence and security forces, wastes public funds, enables armed groups and jeopardises human security.¹⁴ It takes root in contexts where institutional control mechanisms are weak, where over-classification and secrecy encourage misappropriation and where civilian democratic oversight is restricted. Fundamentally, the absence of a framework of effective governance provides the ideal breeding ground for corruption to flourish. Left unchecked, it poses a critical threat to national security.

With the onus on oversight, governance and the rule of law, SSR represents an ideal framework through which to tackle corruption in the security sector. The implementation of robust democratic oversight and control mechanisms is one of the key features of SSR along with protecting human rights. The success of SSR requires certain crucial steps such as establishing and resourcing of independent oversight bodies, carrying out of regular audits leading to trials and sanctions, systematizing human and financial resource management, as well as promoting integrity. However, when measured against its lofty objectives, SSR has had only limited results in West Africa.¹⁵ Generally, a persistent focus on improving the effectiveness of security forces has come at the expense of measures promoting anti-corruption, accountability and civilian democratic oversight of the defence sector. As the following section highlights, this lack of emphasis on corruption as a key issue in the design and implementation of SSR processes can be seen both in institutional frameworks and in the policies, which derive from them.

Box 2. Security Sector Reform (SSR)

The concept of SSR is used to refer to the process through which a country enhances the effectiveness and accountability of its security sector. While the concept is heavily context-dependent, it is broadly accepted that countries engaging in SSR seek to “increase their ability to meet the range of security needs within their societies in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, transparency and the rule of law.” SSR is centred on an approach that emphasises the importance of local ownership of reform processes to strengthen both the accountability and effectiveness of the sector, by working at both the technical and political level. Effectiveness refers to improving the provision of security services to guarantee both state and human security, while accountability implies the strengthening of checks and balances to ensure that security actors are accountable

before the law and the public. Despite these two core objectives being prioritised equally in SSR frameworks, in practice, they rarely receive the same attention. SSR processes are highly political as they aim to transform a sector that is often at the heart of state power. The key to SSR then is not just to improve the security forces’ tactical and operational effectiveness, but to transform the structures and institutions that regulate and manage these services. These structures and institutions must therefore be subjected to strong and effective norms and oversight.

Note: The abbreviation “SSR” is used throughout this report to refer to the process of improving the provision, management and oversight of security services. While many terms have been developed to refer to this process, such as SSG (security sector governance) or SST (security sector transformation), in this report these are understood to be synonymous with SSR as defined above.

Corruption at the margin of international norms on SSR

In the 2000s, international organisations began adopting strategic documents dedicated to SSR processes, with most frameworks drawing heavily from the UN’s work on this matter. Despite the diversity of organisations that have adopted SSR frameworks, each upholds the basic principle that SSR should be aimed at strengthening both the effectiveness and the accountability of the security sector.¹⁶

Year	Organisation	Milestone
2018	ECOWAS	ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security and Governance
2016	EU	EU Commission and High Representative, “Joint Communication – Elements for an EU-wide Strategic Framework to Support Security Sector Reform”
2016	EU	Council Conclusions on EU-wide Strategic Framework to Support Security Sector Reform
2014	UN	Security Council Resolution 2151 on Security Sector Reform
2013	UN	Second Report of the UN Secretary-General on “Securing States and Societies: Strengthening the United Nations Comprehensive Support to Security Sector Reform”

¹⁴ Transparency International Defence and Security, *The Fifth Column*, 2017.

¹⁵ Bryden & Chappuis, 2015.

¹⁶ V. Scherrer and A. B. Pou, *Enhancing Multilateral Support for Security Sector Reform*. (Geneva: DCAF, 2018).

Year	Organisation	Milestone
2013	AU	African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform
2012	UN	UN Integrated Technical Guidance Notice on Security Sector Reform
2008	UN	First Report of the UN Secretary-General on “Securing Peace and Development: the Role of the United Nations in Support of Security Sector Reform”
2007	UN	Security Council Presidential Statement on “The Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Role of the Security Council in Supporting Security Sector Reform”
2006	EU	EU Policy Framework for SSR

Overview of sector-wide SSR policy frameworks

Across these frameworks, corruption is noticeably marginalised. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2151 on SSR only mentions corruption once, with a superficial recognition that “anti-corruption measures” are an “important factor of stabilisation and reconstruction.”¹⁷ Similarly, both the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) frameworks on SSR merely refer to “anti-corruption bodies” as oversight and control mechanisms,¹⁸ despite the fact that the ECOWAS framework recalls the protocol on democracy and good governance of 2001, which asks AU Member States “to fight corruption and manage their national resources in a transparent manner” and “to establish appropriate mechanisms to address issues of corruption within the member states and at the community level.”¹⁹ It is the EU that insists most on the importance of tackling corruption, which is one of the three conditions required for a security sector to be legitimate (the two others being human rights and good governance) emphasising that “trust between the population and security actors is crucial for the effectiveness of the security sector. It is undermined by any instance of bribery, extortion, embezzlement of funds, cronyism and nepotism.”²⁰

The fact that corruption is only superficially mentioned in the UN, AU and ECOWAS policy frameworks on SSR is at odds with SSR’s avowed focus on promoting good governance, transparency and accountability in the security sector, given that these are critically undermined in contexts where corruption is deeply entrenched.

¹⁷ “Resolution 2151”.

¹⁸ ECOWAS Policy Framework, p.7; African Union Policy Framework, p. 5.

¹⁹ ECOWAS, *Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism For Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security*, (Dakar: ECOWAS, 2001).

²⁰ “European Commission, *Joint communication*”, p. 6.

²¹ “ECOWAS, *Protocol A/SP1/12/01*”.

²² ECOWAS, *The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*, Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08, (Abuja, ECOWAS, 2008).

²³ “ECOWAS, 8.

²⁴ DCAF-ISSAT, *The Contribution and Role of SSR in the Prevention of Violent Conflict*, (DCAF, 2017).

²⁵ N. Ansong, “Security Sector Reform in Africa: Donor Approaches versus Local Needs”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol.38, no.1, 2017, pp. 129-144.

Box 3. The approach of ECOWAS: SSR as a tool to prevent conflicts

One particularity of the ECOWAS framework is its emphasis on conflict prevention. The regional body adopted two policy documents that put democratic governance at the core of its conflict prevention strategy and development agenda: the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001 and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) of 2008.²¹ ²² Both documents underscore principles of democratic governance which should be respected by member states’ security institutions. Article 72 of the ECPF highlights “Security Governance” as one of the central components of conflict prevention with the objective of ensuring the emergence of accountable, transparent and participatory security systems.²³ In other words, SSR is not only a means of recovery from civil war or as a tool of democratic transition. It is a process that also involves stable countries, and is a way to increase the efficiency of the sector and to adapt it to an evolving security environment.

SSR in practice: The primacy of capacity building and sidelining of anti-corruption

The marginalisation of anti-corruption in institutional SSR policy frameworks appears to be replicated at the national programme level. Aside from the fact that national policies depend heavily on these frameworks, the absence of anti-corruption measures in many reform processes is also due to the centrality and financial importance of train-and-equip programmes in international aid to security sectors. Various studies have illustrated that in most countries, donors typically spend 80 to 90 per cent of their resources on these train-and-equip reforms in SSR programmes.²⁴ This leaves little funding for costly governance reforms, which demand investment and political commitment over a much longer timeframe than train-and-equip packages. Since the 1990s, SSR in West Africa has been heavily influenced by donor support, particularly in post-conflict and fragile contexts, such as Mali, Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire.²⁵ As such, this report focusses primarily on donor-driven SSR as this has been the predominant paradigm in West Africa. Such support overwhelmingly targets tactical

and operational reforms, designed for instance to train security forces or provide them with new weapons and equipment, at the expense of structural reforms which would focus on bolstering accountability and reducing corruption. This has led to SSR being driven by external priorities and 'generalised blueprints' that are ill-suited to deal with the complexities and specificities of national security sector governance structures, as opposed to more easily replicable capacity-building packages.²⁶ Moreover, the focus on capacity building has resulted in a reliance on train-and-equip approaches, which tend to treat security sector issues as purely technical ones of a capacity deficit, neglecting the fact that dysfunction is often inherently political.²⁷ In these cases, an emphasis on building capacity while leaving security oversight and management structures untouched leads to incomplete and ineffective SSR. This has been recognised by the EU. In the 2016 review of its strategic SSR support framework, it underlined the insufficient level of application of good governance principles, including "fighting corruption [...] in the defence sector" in current donor support to SSR.²⁸ In other words, there is a persistent gap between the emphasis on governance and the reality of SSR programmes.

Box 4. A balanced approach to SSR: Lessons from Burundi

Holistic SSR processes that go beyond train-and-equip and emphasise the political component of reforms are better placed to achieve long-term transformation. The innovative eight-year programme implemented in Burundi by the Government of the Netherlands in April 2009 is an example that reveals interesting lessons about how to best address the political component of SSR.²⁹ The programme had no results framework, but used a flexible iterative approach with multiple programming phases. This allowed it to adapt to changing dynamics, while directly addressing the political component of reform through dialogue at all levels of government. Though there are still challenges, such as political will at the highest levels of government, evidence shows that the programme strengthened a breakdown of security-sector secrecy, opened up space for public dialogue, and increased inclusivity. Three main lessons can be learnt from this programme:

1. There can be no effective SSR unless political challenges to processes of change are squarely addressed
2. Results need to be built progressively with seemingly small steps leading to additional progress
3. Because attitudinal and behavioural change is essential and because the issue of governance raises inherently sensitive issues, it is unrealistic to assume that results will be achieved quickly.³⁰

The reasons behind this over-emphasis on train-and-equip and lack of appetite for accountability lie in donor priorities. In West Africa, these priorities have mainly been counter-terrorism and reducing migration flows.³¹ This alignment of SSR with geopolitics has meant that states have been reluctant to address structural concerns for fear of diverting from short-term objectives or paving the way for other countries, less concerned by corruption to gain the upper hand in a context of the struggle for influence.³² In addition, military organisations focus mainly on tactical and operational considerations, leaving the work with civilian institutions and oversight mechanisms to other actors, and not addressing the problem of military corruption head-on.³³

In some instances, SSR initiatives have failed to strengthen accountability primarily because they have focused on technical wins rather than longer-term approaches that address entrenched governance and anti-corruption failures. The technical focus of SSR programmes has meant that matters of governance and anti-corruption were overlooked in favour of single-focus interventions. Mali is a good illustration of this tension between SSR's normative underpinning and its reality. SSR programming aims to improve the internal controls and governance of the security sector, by computerising human resource management and improving the ministry of defence's financial management processes. Control bodies and civil society organisations (CSOs) have also benefitted from several programmes aimed at capacity-building and improving relations with the security institutions.³⁴ While these initiatives provide good examples of SSR policies which are governance-centred, they are counterbalanced by external evaluations which underscore how the European Union Training Mission (EUTM)

²⁶ "Security Sector Reform in Africa".

²⁷ Department for International Development, *Evidence Synthesis: Security Sector Reform and Organisational Capacity Building* (London: DFID, 2015); E. Knowles and J. Matisek, "Western Security Force Assistance in Weak States", *The RUSI Journal*, 164:3, p. 10-21, 2019.

²⁸ European Commission, "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Elements for an EU-wide Strategic Framework for supporting Security Sector Reform (SSR)", Roadmap from December 2015, p. 3.

²⁹ The Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development (SSD) programme was established with the signing of an eight-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two governments. Its objective was to support reforms in the security sector consistent with the provisions of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi signed in 2000 by the government of Burundi and 13 of the 19 opposition and rebel groups.

³⁰ Clingendael Institute, *Putting Governance at the heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Programme*, (The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 2014).

³¹ ASSN-DCAF, *Security Sector Governance and Reform in Africa. Background Paper developed for the Learning Lab on Security Sector Governance and Reform in Africa*, April 2016, p. 9.

³² Interview, SSR expert, 18 August 2019.

³³ Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *Security assistance, corruption and fragile environments*, (London: TI's Defence & Security Programme, 2016).

³⁴ Defence Institute of International Legal Studies, *Annual Report Fiscal Year 2016* (Newport: DILLS, 2017).

Mali and the European Union Capacity Building Mission across the Sahel in Mali have created a situation where “strengthening the effectiveness of the security forces has been prioritised over bolstering their accountability”.³⁵ Another report also concluded that attempts to build a “new army” had failed, pointing to high levels of impunity, which had turned army recruitment into a vehicle of economic commoditisation.³⁶ In Nigeria too, the disconnect between normative SSR and the reality is palpable. Ever since the push for SSR gained momentum under the Obasanjo regime in 1999, reform efforts have overly reflected the preference of military leaders for technical enhancements over substantive governance reforms.³⁷ Partly as a result of vested interests among the military leadership and their desire to maintain control over many elements of defence policy and governance, reforms have largely failed to address dysfunctional aspects of Nigeria’s defence governance structures. With top officials benefitting from corruption, particularly in relation to procurement, specific reforms to deal with corruption were completely excluded from the reforms, leading one observer to describe Nigerian SSR efforts as having “snatched defeat from the jaws of victory”.³⁸

Similar assessments have been made about the AU’s Joint Assessment Mission whose reports routinely highlight the need to strengthen oversight mechanisms and rule of law institutions.³⁹ However, this position is rarely adhered to by donors, whose programmes prioritise enhancing the tactical and operational capacity of security institutions.⁴⁰

Box 5. Roots of an imbalance: Donor-oriented approaches to SSR

The imbalance between the over-emphasis on train-and-equip and the lack of appetite for accountability is partly due to the tension between SSR as a process of political change on the one hand, and the reality of many international organisations’ bureaucracies on the other. It revolves around three themes:

Political sensitivity to corruption: Although this argument has been challenged in other parts of the public sector, donors can be reluctant to engage on corruption issues in the security sector to focus on other issues instead, such as counter-terrorism and reducing migration flows. This alignment of SSR with ‘geopolitical and geostrategic concerns’ has meant that states have been reluctant to address structural concerns for fear of diverting the focus

from short term objectives.

Lack of coordination between stakeholders:

The proliferation of SSR programmes has been undermined by poor communication between stakeholders. In Guinea-Bissau, this lack of coordination between donors led to a “reform carousel” developing, characterised by donor competition and project duplication. This issue is replicated at a sub-organisational level where implementation is often split between different rival agencies. In the USA for instance, there are 46 different offices with an SSR-related mandate, feeding competition, haphazard funding and incoherent epistemic approaches.

Lack of context-specific expertise:

SSR practitioners often lack context-specific expertise in administration reform, oversight and governance. Similarly, security experts often have more technical knowledge than change management skills. Aside from a lack of human capacity, this also underlines the lack of synergies between governance, corruption, and SSR, as corruption reforms are implemented by the political affairs division. SSR programming would therefore benefit from a stronger link with the anti-corruption community. While close coordination between the two areas can avoid duplication of effort, technical expertise from both communities can be combined to increase efficiency and create synergies between stakeholders. For instance, the OECD principles for donor action on anti-corruption can inform SSR assessments by providing unique perspectives in terms of “local political, economic, social and historical contexts and challenges”. Meanwhile, an integrated approach to anti-corruption in SSR programming can anchor the former in the context of wider governance reforms and concerns. In that regard, UNODC and UNDP recommend that the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) be used as a tool for coordination: “As stated in UNCAC20 and CoSP resolution 3/4 on technical assistance, donors have committed to coordinate their actions in support of UNCAC implementation.”

³⁵ U. Schröder and B. Süßenbach, “The EU as SSR actor – Strategy on track, operational challenges remain”, in Konstantin Bärwaldt (ed.), 2018, pp. 59-60.

³⁶ M. Boás et al., “Working paper on implementation of EU crisis response in Mali”, *EUNPACK*, 31 January 2018, p. 18.

³⁷ E. Remi Aiyede, “Democratic Security Sector Governance and Military reform in Nigeria”, in A. Bryden & F. Chappuis (eds.), *Learning from West African Experiences in Security Sector Governance* (London: Ubiquity Press, 2015), pp. 97-116, (p. 114).

³⁸ O. Oyegbile, “Why the Fight Against Boko Haram is Stunted”, *The Nation on Sunday*, 31 August 2014, p. 9, A. Bryden and F. Chappuis, *Learning from West African Experiences*, (London: Ubiquity Press, 2015).

³⁹ E. Hutchful, “The African Union and SSR: high aspirations, modest performances”, in K. Bärwaldt (ed.), 2018., p. 67.

⁴⁰ Hutchful, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

CORRUPTION RISKS AND SUSTAINABLE SSR: A CRITICAL CHALLENGE

The sidelining of corruption in both institutional frameworks and national SSR programmes is all the more concerning in the face of its impact on human security. Against this backdrop, TI's Defence & Security programme has developed the GDI and a sample of five West African countries was analysed: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. These results were cross-referenced with a literature review and stakeholder interviews to consolidate an analysis of main corruption risks that remain in West Africa despite ongoing SSR efforts.

Box 6. The Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI)

Developed by TI's Defence & Security Programme, the GDI is designed to measure corruption risk in national defence sectors around the world. It assesses the full range of institutions and departments that work on issues of defence, in addition to oversight bodies for these institutions. As such, the GDI focuses on a range of government bodies, such as supreme audit institutions and parliamentary committees with defence-related mandates, as well as the sector's engagement with civil society and the media more broadly.

The GDI assesses the existence, effectiveness, and enforcement of institutional safeguards to corruption across five key risk areas: financial, operational, personnel, political, and procurement. The assessment looks at 77 questions, composed of 212 risk indicators, spread across those five risk areas. Each indicator looks at a specific case of corruption risk and measures it on a five-point scale, from the standard for best practice (as determined by TI's Defence & Security Programme) to the worst practice i.e. critical risk level. These indicators allow the GDI to drill down in fine detail on a variety of issues across the broad field of corruption risk. In order to provide a broad and comprehensive reflection of these risk areas, the index assesses both legal frameworks and implementation, as well as resources and outcomes in some areas. This is intended to capture the implementation gap between law and practice, and possible areas for reform to narrow that gap. By providing a framework of good practice that promotes accountable, transparent, and responsible governance in the defence establishment, the GDI is well-placed to guide SSR policy formulation and to target reforms at the areas where they are most needed. Its emphasis on institutional mechanisms and on transparency and accountability would also be an asset to practitioners interested in addressing this crucial component of SSR.

While the GDI is focused on the defence sector, its methodology is replicable across the whole security sector and many of the trends identified, including related to parliamentary oversight, control bodies and access to information vary little between different security sector components. Here, the focus is on defence as a sub-component of the security sector and one which is critical to SSR. The analysis is intended to provide a snapshot of key corruption risk areas that pose serious threats to the sustainability of SSR and jeopardise its objectives across the implementation span.

Source: *Government Defence Integrity Index*, TI's Defence & Security Programme; <https://ti-defence.org/gdi/>.

Risk 1: Transparency and access to information

Transparency relates to the extent to which information is available to oversight bodies and the wider public. A lack of transparency and access to information impairs the democratic control of the security sector as it hampers the ability of oversight bodies to undertake their duties. This lack of scrutiny results in an increased corruption risk at all levels of the sector, from operations to personnel financial and procurement management. In the case of the security sector, information on security operations, policies, strategy and budgets, should be communicated and debated by the executive, the legislature and the public. The public should be able to easily access regularly updated documents and information on all aspects of security policies and operations.

The GDI underlines a persistent lack of transparency and poor access to information in the defence sector.⁴¹ For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, the public has very limited access to information about the process for acquisition planning, while access is even more limited in the other sampled countries. Nigeria's defence budget lacks transparency and comprehensiveness, with many slush funds and secretive defence accounts held off-budget. While Mali, Niger and Ghana exhibit better practices, budgetary information remains far from comprehensive with most figures highly aggregated and devoid of justifications. Across the sample of countries, the percentage of expenditure in the budget year dedicated to spending on secret items is either not available to the public, or the information that is published is considered unreliable.

Opacity in defence procurement is another area of concern. Our analysis highlights how the procurement cycle is disclosed only

⁴¹ Data collected by the evaluators the GDI 2020 for Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria (questions 11B, 12A, 26, 58B, and 61A).

in an abbreviated way. In countries like Ghana, Mali and Niger, the defence sector is largely exempted from disclosure rules which regulate other institutions' procurement cycles, resulting in the cycle being shrouded in secrecy.⁴² Equally, except for Ghana, defence purchases are rarely made public, with almost no information on tenders or contract awards disclosed.

The recent history of Nigeria provides a concrete example of how a lack of transparency can fuel public-sector corruption. The bulk of military hardware procurement is not included in the annual budget and is paid for using obscure funding mechanisms, including security votes – budgeted funds provided to certain government officials to spend at their discretion on, in theory, anything security-related – and extra-budgetary defence spending from non-transparent sources like the Federal Government Independent Revenue account.⁴³ In April 2017, more than US\$43 million in cash was recovered in a raid on an apartment, reportedly owned by the wife of the then Director-General of the National Intelligence Agency, Ayodele Oke, who claimed the money was being stored for “covert purposes”.⁴⁴ The size of the funds that were diverted in this case were only made possible by the opacity of these funding mechanisms and the ability of officials to use these resources at their discretion, with barely any oversight. Higher levels of transparency in the management of military funds would help mitigate the risk of diversion, by making such activity easier to detect and identify those responsible.

Public access to defence information is also restricted in West Africa. Legal frameworks enshrining this right are incomplete and their effectiveness uncertain. Over-classification is common throughout the region and there is little consistency in replies to access to information requests.⁴⁵ Given the sensitivity of defence information, some percentage of the core budget might legitimately be dedicated to secret activities, such as specific intelligence activities or sensitive weapons procurements.⁴⁶ However, the need for secrecy does not mean that the sector should be free of any oversight and accountability. Both are critical for ensuring that the defence and security apparatus serves the national interest, that public funds are used efficiently and, ultimately, that institutions fulfil their responsibilities.

Necessary confidentiality in certain areas should not exempt the entire sector from transparency and due process.

Box 7. Transparency and access to information – Focus on Guinea-Bissau

Despite various attempts, SSR has been largely unsuccessful in Guinea-Bissau. While numerous factors have played a part, a common thread throughout has been the lack of relevant information and poor communication resulting in low inclusivity and weak national ownership.⁴⁷ Despite how critical it is to SSR, civil society inclusion in the Guinean-Bissau process has been notably lacking, with only cursory selective consultations occurring at the start, with little follow-up.^{48 49} This has led to popular disengagement from the process, narrowing the scope of reforms to focus almost exclusively on bolstering security forces' effectiveness, while neglecting to challenge the dominant paradigm of regime-centred security.⁵⁰ This lack of openness has also directly affected security personnel, with the top-down nature of many programmes frequently leading to their exclusion from the very reforms that depend on them.⁵¹ This selective involvement limited ownership and contributed to officials quickly feeling demotivated and withdrawing their support.

Risk 2: Defence sector oversight

Where oversight is weak, due to a lack of political will, resources, institutional mechanisms and/or capacity, the security sector is exposed to a greater risk of mismanagement and/or corruption, with a potential detrimental impact on human and state security alike. This was clearly explained in the first EU policy framework on SSR:⁵²

The military is only one instrument for providing security for the population. The police and gendarmerie, the courts and the prison system provide security by upholding law and order within the state. By guarding against abuse of powers

⁴² Data collected by the evaluators the GDI 2020 for Ghana, Mali, and Niger (question 58).

⁴³ Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *Camouflaged Cash. How 'Security Votes' Fuel Corruption in Nigeria* (London: TI's Defence & Security Programme, 2018).

⁴⁴ Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *Weaponising Transparency. Defence Procurement Reform as a Counterterrorism Strategy in Nigeria* (London: TI's Defence & Security Programme, 2017). In March 2019, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) declared that Ayodele Oke and his wife were wanted after they failed to answer for fraud charges filed against them, without giving details on the origin of the sum founded.

⁴⁵ Data collected by the evaluators for Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q30).

⁴⁶ The South African Defence Review lists a number of reasons for confidentiality in defence procurement, including the protection of third-party commercial information, national security, prevention of harm to South Africa's ability to conduct international relations, and the protection of South Africa's economic interests and the commercial activities of government bodies (South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee, “White Paper on the South African Defence Related Industries,” Pretoria, December 1999, quoted in B. Harborn, W. L. Dorotinsky, and P. M. Bisca (eds.), 2018., p. 41).

⁴⁷ Kohl, 2014.

⁴⁸ DCAF, *Tool 6: Civil Society Involvement in Security Sector Reform and Governance* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

⁴⁹ S. Detzner, “Modern Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform in Africa: Patterns of Success and Failure”, *African Security Review* 26:2, pp. 116-152 p. 119, 2017.

⁵⁰ Kohl, pp. 13-14.

⁵¹ Kohl, p. 23.

⁵² EC, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform*, 24 May 2006, p.5.

and ensuring that policies are implemented according to mandates granted, democratic oversight bodies (parliaments, ombudsmen, etc.) and the judicial system also contribute to security. Oversight may also be provided by civil society institutions (civilian review boards, public complaints commissions), as well as informally through NGO lobbying, investigative media, etc).

Oversight mechanisms are essential to security sector effectiveness and have been a key pillar of SSR since its inception because of their intrinsic link with accountability enforcement. In the first report of the secretary-general on SSR in 2008, “mechanisms for the direction and oversight of security” are recognised as critical to sustainable reforms.⁵³ The 2012 Integrated Technical Guidance Note (ITGN) identifies three main forms of oversight: parliamentary, judiciary and independent, through which oversight can be exercised, alongside wider civil society-led scrutiny.⁵⁴

Parliamentary oversight

Parliaments and legislatures play a critical role in holding the defence sector to account, through passing specific laws, scrutinising the government's attempts to enforce legislation, and approving the budget. Although it plays a predominant role in both AU and ECOWAS normative frameworks on SSR, parliamentary oversight remains, in practice, poor in West Africa, with a clear gap between legislative provisions and the practical reality.⁵⁵

Across the region, parliaments' control of the sector is enshrined in constitutions, however, their actual powers are severely limited by several factors, ranging from the lack of technical expertise among parliamentarians and limited access to information to the undue influence exercised by the executive. In Ghana, only a handful of the 18 members of the Parliament Select Committee on Defence and Interior have the relevant technical expertise to perform their responsibilities.⁵⁶ Moreover, the continuing turnover of members undermines the Committee's capability to influence decisions, along with a lack of permanent support staff for research and administrative duties. Niger faces similar difficulties, while in Mali only one committee member had any kind of experience in the sector in 2018.⁵⁷ In Nigeria too, the

National Assembly Defence Committee is hamstrung in carrying out its functions because of a lack of technical expertise.⁵⁸ Even when the constitutional authority and the resources and expertise for oversight exist, oversight can still be an issue if parliamentarians lack the will to fully and effectively use the tools at their disposal.⁵⁹

A further issue relates to the influence of the executive over the legislative branch of power. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Security and Defense Commission (Commission de la Sécurité et de la Défense – CSD) has formal powers to scrutinise policies related to national defence, police, and civil protection. However, article 68 of the Constitution states that the President of the Republic presides over it, and the CSD's chair is a key member of the Rally of the Republicans (RDR) which is the majority party.⁶⁰ Mali is another case in point. The Defence, Security and Civil Protection Commission (Commission Défense, Sécurité et Protection Civile – CDSPC) is the main organ within the National Assembly responsible for scrutinising the sector. It helps to formulate defence policy, but its capacity to hold the government to account is compromised as the CDSPC was chaired by the president's son until mid-2020.⁶¹ Executive influence and ruling majority control of parliaments in West Africa make independent legislative scrutiny complicated. When the region's history of highly centralised and closely guarded management of the security sector is factored into the equation, it is little wonder that legislative bodies have been so easily bypassed. The way that the Malian National Assembly was completely sidelined in the acquisition of a presidential jet and military vehicles in 2014 is highly illustrative of this.⁶² Meanwhile, parliaments in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Niger all have low-levels of empowerment which has entrenched their deference to executive authority.⁶³

Financial audit and planning bodies

Parliaments are not the only institutions involved in security sector oversight. The AU and ECOWAS also recognise the importance of “anti-corruption bodies”, such as audit institutions.⁶⁴ These institutions are responsible for overseeing the government's use and management of public resources. Through their evaluations, they play a key role in identifying corruption risks and informing reform efforts, even if their reports

⁵³ UNSC, *Securing peace and development*, 2008.

⁵⁴ UN SSR Unit, *Security Sector Reform Integrated Technical Guidance Notes*, 2012.

⁵⁵ AU, *Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform*, 2013, art. 42; ECOWAS, *Policy Framework for Security and Governance*, adopted in 2018, art. 41 and 42.

⁵⁶ Data collected by the evaluators of Ghana for the 2020 GDI (Q2b).

⁵⁷ Data collected by the evaluators of Niger and Mali for the 2020 GDI (Q2b).

⁵⁸ Data collected by the evaluators of Ghana and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q2); Interview, Nigerian CSO, 22 August 2019.

⁵⁹ DCAF, *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Addressing Democratic Governance Deficits*, in *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges* (Geneva: DCAF, 2008).

⁶⁰ Defense and Security Committee, Standing committees, November 2018, <http://www.assnat.ci/assembleenationale/?les-commissions-permanentes-186>.

⁶¹ The son of the president of the republic, who was at the head of the commission, also lacks military and political experience. Extensive coverage in Malian media has focused on his many business interests and expensive tastes.

⁶² Data collected by the evaluator of Mali for the 2020 GDI (Q1b).

⁶³ Data collected by the evaluators for Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q1b).

⁶⁴ ECOWAS, op. cit., p.7.; AU, *Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (SSR)*, January 2013, p. 5.; Interview, Nigerian CSO and international expert, 22 August 2019.

remain confidential. In Senegal, highly sensitive audits of state-owned enterprises have remained confidential, but have still contributed considerably to curbing abuses.⁶⁵

While in many West African countries control bodies exist, they are faced with significant challenges.⁶⁶ Deficiencies in auditing practices of the defence sector are commonplace. In Niger, external auditing falls to the National Audit Office whose effectiveness is highly questionable; for example, it was only in 2017 that it presented its general report for 2014. Equally, the Niger State Inspectorate General carried out an audit of the security sector in 2016 but, due to insufficient funds, could not lead missions in field units, thereby greatly restricting its reach.⁶⁷ Recently, a presidentially mandated audit of military accounts from 2017 to 2019 has revealed alarming financial inconsistencies. Fake invoices and delivery notes, numerous cases of embezzlement and over-invoicing, including two helicopters worth US\$30 million being bought for US\$47 million, have cost the government close to XOF100 billion (US\$170 million).⁶⁸ In Mali, auditing mechanisms are formalised, however, auditors' levels of activity are heavily compromised by external influences.⁶⁹ Inspections within the army respond to the military chain of command, and the General Inspectorate of Armed Forces and Services is attached to the Ministry of Defence, denying it any independence from the Minister.⁷⁰ In Côte d'Ivoire, an Inspector General for the armed forces was finally appointed in July 2016, after 10 years without anyone in this post.⁷¹ Moreover, the Ivorian Court of Audit (*Cour des Comptes*) is considered ineffective as an external auditor and rarely publishes an annual report, with its focus on defence issues superficial at best.⁷²

This irregular and superficial focus of audit bodies focused on defence institutions is a common theme in West Africa. Nigeria fits a similar pattern, with the ill-equipped and outdated Office of the Auditor-General struggling to impose mandatory submissions of audits and showing high levels of deference to the defence sector.⁷³ In Ghana, the Auditor General is appointed by and reports to the executive rather than parliament, raising concerns over its independence and assessment quality, as it is granted only limited access to relevant information.⁷⁴ Failings in the quality and regularity of audits pertaining to security

institutions can be partly explained by the strong executive control of the sector which shields it from scrutiny. This has led to heightened defence exceptionalism, with these institutions regularly exempt from controls and able to act with impunity.

Civil Society

Civil society also plays a key role in the oversight of the security sector, either by independent analysis and lobbying or by complementing the activity of institutional oversight bodies. However, often CSOs' interaction with institutions are neither institutionalised nor regular, which significantly hinders their capacity. For civil society to be effective in promoting anti-corruption and good governance measures, transparency is a key prerequisite; it allows access the documents and information needed to design evidence-based campaigns. CSOs must also enjoy a range of protections (e.g. rights to freedom of expression or freedom of association), and be able to operate openly without fear of repercussions. When cooperation between institutions and civil society is enhanced, results can be achieved; a case in point is the work of the Abuja-based Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC, who is the Transparency International Chapter in Nigeria), on the non-payment of combat allowances to Nigerian soldiers in 2020. Through targeted advocacy aimed at the defence ministry, along with training and awareness-raising sessions with parliamentarians and media collaboration, CISLAC succeeded in placing this issue on the policy agenda. As a result of pressure from a coordinated campaign among a diverse set of actors, the army complied with demands to make the payments and went so far as to praise civil society efforts to raise awareness of this issue.⁷⁵

Parliamentary oversight – focus on Liberia

Liberia's SSR process is a key example of how beneficial even a moderate emphasis on strengthening parliamentary oversight can be. The security sector's collapse during the civil war was caused by deeply entrenched networks of corruption that ran throughout the sector as a result of a total lack of oversight and tight executive control.⁷⁶ While the SSR process has not

⁶⁵ S. Michail, *Africanistan*, (Paris: Fayard, 2015).

⁶⁶ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q16 and Q17).

⁶⁷ Data collected by the evaluator of Niger for the 2020 GDI (Q17).

⁶⁸ RFI, 'Niger: un audit révèle des détournements de fonds dans le secteur de la défense', www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20200228-niger-audit-r%C3%A9v%C3%A8le-d%C3%A9tournements-fonds-le-secteur-la-d%C3%A9fense [accessed 28 February 2020].

⁶⁹ Data collected by the evaluator of Mali for the 2020 GDI (Q16).

⁷⁰ N. Bagayoko, *The security sector reform process in Mali (Le processus de réforme du secteur de la sécurité au Mali)* (Québec: Centre FrancoPaix, 2018).

⁷¹ Agence ivoirienne de Presse, "Côte d'Ivoire. Le Général Detoh Lehto prend officiellement la tête de l'Inspection Générale des armées", 26 July 2016.

⁷² Bertelsman Stiftung, *BTI 2018 Country Report, Côte d'Ivoire*, (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018), p. 27.

⁷³ Data collected by the evaluator of Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q17b).

⁷⁴ Data collected by the evaluator of Ghana for the 2020 GDI (Q17b).

⁷⁵ Global Nigerian Sentinel, Insecurity: Nigerian 'soldiers' send SOS to Buhari on poor treatment corruption in the military, 2020 <https://globalsentinelng.com/2020/02/10/insecurity-nigerian-soldiers-send-sos-to-buhari-on-poor-treatment-corruption-in-the-military/> [accessed: 20 February 2020].

⁷⁶ D. Saydee, T. "Developments in Legislative Oversight in Liberia", in Bryden, A and Chappuis, F (eds.) *Learning from West African Experiences in Security Sector Governance*, pp. 61-78, [London: Ubiquity Press, 2015].

fully addressed the legacy of armed conflict or fully furthered a framework of democratic governance in the security sector, it has recorded some notable achievements in terms of external oversight. The process included regular capacity building for members of parliament in security sector oversight, gender and police reform. Ensuing efforts by parliamentarians to exercise their powers of scrutiny in the face of a dominant executive helped to create a new precedent in executive-legislative relations on security matters.⁷⁷

“This shift was marked by many small firsts [...] for the first time security officials were summoned to account before the responsible legislative committees; for the first time the bill for a major new piece of the national security architecture was put to public hearing before being signed into law; for the first time civil society input on the legislative draft was sought; for the first time legislators sought access to and input on the executive’s plans for defence reform.”⁷⁸

The strengthening of parliamentary oversight in Liberia was just a small component of a wider process. Questions have been raised as to the sustainability of the progress made, especially with international support tailing off as memories of the armed conflict fade. Liberian SSR was indeed by no means perfect with the armed forces and internal security forces reforming at disparate rates, strong political influence remaining, and insufficient attention paid to underlying security structures. Yet, SSR in Liberia does provide an example of how an emphasis on strengthening parliamentary oversight can benefit security sector dynamics and enhance accountability.

Risk 3: Financial management processes

Fit for purpose, adequately overseen and transparent budget management systems significantly reduce the risk of corruption. For instance, evidence suggests that monitoring of expenditure tracking can have a preventive effect in and of itself.⁷⁹ Although it is likely to be more effective in combination with other policy reforms, it increases the likelihood of detection for corrupt activities. In the meantime, further evidence suggests that reducing incentives and opportunities for corruption has a stronger effect than increasing sanctions.⁸⁰

Despite the importance of strengthening public finance management in the security sector as part of SSR, these reforms have often been neglected, even though poor budget management has commonly contributed to ineffective SSR in West Africa.⁸¹ The financial processes currently in place in West African defence sectors exhibit clear weaknesses. In Nigeria, soldiers do not always receive the correct pay on time, increasing the risk of corrupt activity on behalf of security personnel who are deprived of their dues.⁸² Moreover, the sector is exempted from automated financial management control mechanisms, with defence expenditures not part of the usual fiscal management system operated by the Ministry of Finance.⁸³ Equally, in Ghana and Nigeria, the chain of command and the salary chain appear not to be separated, increasing the risk of diversion of soldier’s salaries by commanders.

High levels of corruption risk are also present in security sector procurement procedures, with formal processes and controls lacking. Across the sample, there appears to be no formal process for defining procurement requirements either because there is no clear defence strategy, such as in Ghana, or because the strategy is so shrouded in secrecy that assessing requirements derived from it is impossible, such as in Niger or Nigeria.⁸⁴ As a result, there is extensive evidence of unplanned and opportunistic purchases in Mali, Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire where a lack of formalised procedures means there are few ways to control expenditure.⁸⁵ While Ghana and Mali have formal mechanisms for scrutinising procurement, their effectiveness is compromised by government influence.⁸⁶ This trend is noticeable in Côte d’Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria too and highlights how tight executive control over the sector hinders the establishment of transparent financial management processes.⁸⁷

The weakness of formal financial management processes is also apparent in the proliferation of off-budget expenditures. Apart from in Niger, off-budget military expenditures are either permitted by law or the exceptions to the law are extremely broad, raising concerns over the discreet use of public funds.⁸⁸ Recording mechanisms for these funds are also only in place in Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria and even then, they are by no

⁷⁷ Sayndee, 2015.

⁷⁸ Bryden and Chappuis, 2015.

⁷⁹ A. R. Menocal et al. “Anti-corruption measures. Why corruption matters: understanding causes, effects, and how to address them”, DFID, 2015.

⁸⁰ B. French. “The impact of Public Financial Management interventions on corruption”, *DFID-Pakistan*, 2013.

⁸¹ DCAF-ISSAT, *Linking SSR and Public Finance Management in Post-Conflict Settings*, (Geneva: DCAF-ISSAT, 2017).

⁸² Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q40A & 40B).

⁸³ Data collected by the evaluators of Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q58b).

⁸⁴ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q63).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Data collected by the evaluators of Ghana and Mali for the 2020 GDI (Q59a).

⁸⁷ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria for 2020 GDI (Q59).

⁸⁸ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q29a).

means extensive.⁸⁹ In Mali and Ghana, there is no evidence of any cataloguing of these expenditures.⁹⁰ Overall, off-budget expenditures are common, especially in Mali, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, highlighting the weakness of financial management processes and how public funds can be used at discretion.⁹¹

Moreover, implementing reforms dedicated to strengthening financial and human resources processes can generate resistance. In Mali, for instance, a system to separate the payment system from the chain of command was proposed by EUTM. However, the project stalled with foreign officials citing this being due to the fact that Malian Armed Forces officials greatly benefit from the status quo, permitting them to seize parts of the salaries of military staff or even the salaries of fictitious personnel.⁹² Ten years prior, in Sierra Leone, British advisers also encountered difficulties in pushing for more transparency in resource management, with vested interests of certain officials forcing them to abandon the initiative.⁹³ This underlines how the technical and political aspects of SSR cannot be separated. Successful public finance management reforms tend to be successful only when there is enough political support and sustained engagement for them to be pushed through.

Financial management – focus on Mali

A potentially useful entry point for reforms into SSR programmes are Public Expenditure Reviews (PERs). This tool examines resource allocations and identifies suitable reforms in budget processes and administration to improve the efficiency of public spending.⁹⁴ It is an instrument with an intrinsic value to SSR, as it pinpoints key areas where financial processes need to be strengthened.

A PER, conducted in Mali in 2013, raised severe security sector financial management issues.⁹⁵ The assessment provided the government with a diagnostic of key areas of weakness and could have formed the basis for the ensuing SSR process, which began that same year. However, it would appear that the learnings from the PER have not been mainstreamed into Mali's SSR programme. The PER was conducted in the aftermath of the coup d'état in 2012 where national security concerns and immediate operational manoeuvres were of the

utmost priority. As a result, the recommendations appear to have been overlooked and their inclusion in the laboured SSR process is far from certain. The slow pace of reforms in Mali has not helped, with the National Commission for Security Sector Reform (CNRSS) taking three years to be set up and a swathe of different bodies with overlapping mandates contributing to tying it up in bureaucratic knots.⁹⁶ Moreover, the Carter Center's latest report on progress related to the 2015 Algiers Agreement of which SSR is a key pillar is highly critical, with 64 per cent of defence and security provisions still unachieved.⁹⁷ Mali is a strong example of an emphasis being placed on improving the financial management of the security sector but this failing to be translated into SSR in practice. Better coordination between the PER and SSR, along with clearer top-down directives could have facilitated this and ensured that financial process reforms were properly integrated into Malian SSR. Instead, the process' scope has gradually narrowed with the emphasis now overwhelmingly on DDR and capacity building and neglecting key institutional reforms.

Risk 4: Personnel management

In terms of personnel management, non-meritocratic rationales in recruitment and a lack of transparency around personnel numbers are recurring issues across the region.⁹⁸ Nepotistic hiring practices persist in some instances and circumvent formal processes with political or ethnic allegiances playing a big role in recruitment.⁹⁹ This can be further facilitated by a lack of scrutiny over hiring processes for middle and senior level positions, as is the case in Mali, Niger and Ghana.¹⁰⁰ Public information on the number of civilian and military personnel is lacking across the sample, thereby increasing the opportunities for corruption.¹⁰¹

Management systems

Human resource management, encompassing recruitment, career progression, salary payment through to whistleblowing protection and termination and dismissal of personnel requires a rigorous and transparent framework. One of the most obvious effect of mismanagement in this area is the phenomenon of ghost soldiers, with well documented impact on human and

⁸⁹ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q29b).

⁹⁰ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q29).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Tull, 2019; Interviews, international experts, 13 August and 6 September 2019.

⁹³ A. Leboeuf, "La Réforme du Secteur de Sécurité à l'Ivoirienne", IFRI, March 2016, p. 7.

⁹⁴ B. Harborne, W. Dorotinsky and P. M. Bisca (eds.), *Securing Development: Public Finance and the Security Sector: A Guide to Public Expenditure Reviews in the Security and Criminal Justice Sectors* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2017).

⁹⁵ Harborne et al : 2017, 36-37.

⁹⁶ A. Dakouo, "Where are we with security sector reform in Mali? (Ou en sommes-nous avec la réforme du secteur de la sécurité au Mali?)", *ARGA-Mali Policy Brief, No. 2*, April 2017.

⁹⁷ The Carter Center, *Report of the Independent Observer On the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Emanating from the Algiers Process: Evaluation of Implementation in 2019*, (Atlanta: The Carter Center, 2020).

⁹⁸ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q42 and Q43).

⁹⁹ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q41 and Q42).

¹⁰⁰ Data collected by the evaluators of Mali, Niger and Ghana for the 2020 GDI (Q41b).

¹⁰¹ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q38a & 38c).

state security. As shown in TI's Defence & Security Programme's policy paper 'The Lowest Common Denominator'¹⁰² West African countries also experienced the phenomenon:

In 2012, the Malian government thought it could count on a reserve force of 7,500 soldiers, but in reality, the force existed only on paper as a way for officials to siphon off salaries.¹⁰³ This phenomenon of ghost soldiers was also seen in garrisons at Ménaka and Aguelhoc in 2012, and again in Mopti in 2013, with devastating results.¹⁰⁴ Mali is not an exception. Nigeria has historically struggled with this issue, which has led to huge gains in terms of territory and equipment for Boko Haram.¹⁰⁵ Côte d'Ivoire has also recognised the threat and has pledged to eliminate thousands of fictional troops from the army's payroll.¹⁰⁶ In Guinea too, ghost soldiers have hampered combat readiness. A 2011-12 census and biometric registration of all personnel reduced the assumed number of soldiers by a staggering 40 per cent.¹⁰⁷ In such contexts, a reformed security sector that had strong anti-corruption provisions, may have been better placed to tackle the issue ghost soldiers.

Training and anti-corruption awareness

None of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger or Nigeria recognises corruption as a strategic issue in their military doctrines, although there is some evidence that corruption is taken into account in various decrees and codes of conduct. For instance, Côte d'Ivoire's military code of conduct does mention corruption, albeit superficially.¹⁰⁸ In Nigeria, the National Defence Policy identifies endemic corruption as a strategic issue which affects national security and Decree 105 spells out corruption-related crimes and penalties, while Niger's military penal code also provides guidance regarding corruption.¹⁰⁹ However, this approach is by no means systematic and corruption is not considered a strategic issue by defence institutions across the sample.¹¹⁰ There is no evidence of corruption being included

in the planning or execution of military operations in any of the countries assessed.¹¹¹ Partly as a result of this, there is no centrally-delivered and systematic training for commanders on corruption either before or during deployments.^{112 113} In Nigeria, when such training does happen, it tends to be exceptional and isolated actions. In Mali and Niger, training is delivered almost entirely by international partners, raising doubts as to their impact in the long term. In Ghana, the Armed Forces Command and Staff College does not include anti-corruption courses in its programmes, although personnel can take part in anti-corruption courses at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.

Enforcement of anti-corruption legislation and sanctions

Sanctions play a critical role in enforcing anti-corruption legislation. While legal and constitutional provisions, oversight and civil society inclusion are fundamental for civilian democratic control of the security sector, they are not sufficient to guarantee it. There is a need for clearer definition for corrupt activities and consequences so that individuals found to be involved in corrupt activities are sanctioned in a proportionate and systematic manner. In Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger or Nigeria, the implementation of such sanctions in the defence sector remains highly uneven and political.¹¹⁴ Ghana is the only country which attempts to systematically enforce sanctions in bribery cases. In all other countries, sanctions enforcement has been even more challenging. A report on follow-up work by the Malian Auditor General is emblematic of this. It outlines how between 2005 and 2017, total asset recoveries linked to sanctions represented a mere 6.5 per cent of the total amount of irregularities. The same is true for legal proceedings reserved for whistleblowing. According to the information available, of the 388 whistle-blower cases filed, only 6.4 per cent were processed.¹¹⁵ These negligible rates highlight how impunity has entrenched itself and illustrates how sanctions which exist only on paper have little effect. When the probability of being penalised is so low and the financial benefits are so high, corruption becomes all the more attractive.

¹⁰² TI's Defence & Security Programme, *The Lowest Common Denominator: how corruption in the security sector threatens regional peace and security in West Africa*, 2020.

¹⁰³ D. Tull, "Rebuilding Mali's army: The Dissonant Relationship between Mali and its International Partners", *International Affairs*, Volume 95, Issue 2, pp. 405-422, March 2019

¹⁰⁴ Tull, 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, international expert, 6 February 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015: Côte d'Ivoire. Events of 2014*, [accessed: 29 September 2019].

¹⁰⁷ Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *Regional Results Africa. Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index*, (London: TI's Defence & Security Programme, 2016).

¹⁰⁸ Law No. 2016-1109, *Military Function Code* (Portant Code de la Fonction Militaire), 16 February 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Law No. 2003-010 of 11 March 2003, wearing Code of Military Justice, published in the *Journal Officiel de la République du Niger* on 5 May 2003, p. 357-384. Corruption is mentioned in article 228.

¹¹⁰ Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Security Strategy*, December 2019, p. iv. Decree 105 provides neither guidance nor support for soldiers and other military personnel on how to prevent corruption, nor a strategic appreciation of how corruption may impact operations. Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q53).

¹¹¹ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q34A, Q34B and Q34C).

¹¹² Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q52).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q35A, Q35B, Q66A, Q66B and Q66C).

¹¹⁵ Government of the Netherlands, *Review of actions historically taken by the Malian authorities to follow up on reports by the Office of the Auditor General of Mali covering the period 2005-2017*, November 2018; Abdrahmane Sissoko, "Lutte contre la corruption: 11,6% des plaintes traitées par le ministère public", *L'Aube*, 18 July 2019.

Box 8. Corruption and the limits of sanctions¹¹⁶

A narrow focus on sanctions can be counter-productive in cases where corruption is justified as a survival mechanism. In Gabon, field research has shown that corruption among troops is motivated by desperate socio-professional conditions. In this context, addressing corruption cannot be done through a national policy based solely on sanctions.¹¹⁷ Another example is the 2017 demonstration by the Malian National Union of Workers. The union demanded the government repeal law 014-015 of 2014 on the fight against corruption and all the provisions attached to it because it prevented government officials from “living decently”.¹¹⁸ This claim underscores two points. First, corruption can be socially accepted and seen as a legitimate response to socio-economic difficulties, particularly as a response to low wages. Second, tackling corruption cannot be achieved without taking into account expectations from citizens and improving living standards. In other words, while sanctions are an integral part of any anti-corruption strategy, they must be partnered with efforts to remedy the structural drivers of corruption which push people to engage in such acts. It must address both the causes and manifestations of corruption.

Personnel management – focus on Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's SSR process is often held up as a model of success in West Africa. While this assessment must be nuanced, especially given recent reports of security force abuses and voter intimidation, Sierra Leone does provide an example of a [somewhat] successful attempt at building integrity within the security forces.¹¹⁹ Heavily supported by the UK, it was based on key principles including national ownership and a strong commitment to implementing an anti-corruption strategy.¹²⁰ The approach taken to building integrity in the armed forces was forceful and high-risk. British officers directly supplanted reticent national officers and national officers were required to attend training in the UK. The UK military also promoted promising young officers, who bought into the process, and who they identified as capable of carrying the reforms forward in the future.¹²¹ This was only possible with the direct support of the president and

was effective, at least in the short term, even though it raises a longer-term risk of creating tensions within the military hierarchy between the young promoted officers and older figures.¹²² A similar approach in the police also led to some concrete long-term improvements. A British police chief was put in charge and helped advocate for the necessity of these reforms throughout the country, while also identifying promising officers who would form the basis of the revamped Sierra Leonean police force, after additional training in the UK.¹²³ While there were limits to SSR's success in Sierra Leone, clear progress was made in terms of professionalising both the police and armed forces and efforts were made to ensure such progress was sustainable and translated into the institutions' makeup.

Risk 5: Civil society engagement

All the SSR frameworks presented at the beginning of this report, recognise the centrality of civil society engagement in SSR processes and on the oversight and shaping of the security sector. Civil society provides a space to ensure citizens participate in security sector governance and oversees the provision of public security services. Through its engagement with security institutions, CSOs play a role in generating constructive debate on public policies by investigating subjects of national interest, including security.¹²⁴ Moreover, CSOs can oversee the work of security institutions to hold them to account through peaceful and democratic means.¹²⁵

The ECOWAS framework on SSR stresses the need for the “effective involvement of CSOs [civil society organisations] and the media” in SSR processes in West Africa.¹²⁶ In practice, there exists a considerable gap between this aspiration and the reality on the ground. Defence institutions broadly do not have a policy of openness towards CSOs, especially when dealing with issues of corruption. In Ghana, some have shown relative openness, but have engaged infrequently on issues of corruption. In Mali, there are some discussions, but rarely on corruption and this interaction is usually conducted on the defence officials' terms. In Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria, there is very little openness on behalf of defence institutions, creating a disconnect between the security apparatus and CSOs. The threat here is that the disconnect breeds mistrust and suspicion between the citizens and the rulers and that, at a national level in times of armed

¹¹⁶ The issue of corruption as a survival mechanism and its relations with social norms is acknowledged by the authors, however, it is not analysed within the scope of the report.

¹¹⁷ A. Augé, “The Military Engineering Unit and Armed Intimidation in Gabon: The Professional Motivations of the Racketeering of ‘Gunmen’”, *International Review of Comparative Politics*, Vol. 22, N°1, p. 33-58, 2015.

¹¹⁸ Centre FrancoPaix, 2018 :57.

¹¹⁹ J. Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny, “Fear of Political Violence Soars in Sierra Leone”, *Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 345*, 24 February 2020.

¹²⁰ A. J. Boucher, “Defence Sector Reform: A Note on Current Practice”, *The Stimson Center*, 12 December 2009.

¹²¹ French Institute of International Relations, *What is good security sector reform? (Qu'est-ce qu'une bonne RSS?)*, (France: IFRI, 2017).

¹²² IFRI, 2017: 11.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ DCAF *Tool 6 Civil Society Involvement*, 2015: 18.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*: 29-30.

¹²⁶ ECOWAS, *ECOWAS Policy Framework*, p. 16-17. On the role of civil society see, E. Cole, K. Eppert, and K. Kinzelbach (eds.), *Public Oversight of the Security Sector A Handbook for Civil Society Organizations*, (New York: UNDP, 2008); S. Eckhard, *The Challenges and Lessons Learned in Supporting Security Sector Reform*, (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2016).

violence, exacerbates tensions with non-state armed groups.¹²⁷ The less information the population receives on the functioning of the sector and the less they are engaged in conversations about it, the more they will begin to question its efforts and motives. This is particularly the case when these institutions struggle to provide protection to civil society/citizens, as in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

This situation is particularly concerning as civil society-led anti-corruption efforts are more effective when they are organised and integrated within institutional frameworks. To maximise CSO effectiveness, they need to have the capacity to influence service providers and have access to independent media and avenues to professionalise and engage with other actors.¹²⁸ Civic engagement tends to have the most impact when there is a wide range of community organisations able to generate broad-based citizen mobilisation and a few professionalised CSOs taking the lead in putting pressure on accountability institutions.¹²⁹

Civil society's role is shaped by the nature of frameworks with institutions, which possess reasonable authority and autonomy to enhance the quality of government.¹³⁰ In other words, the mobilisation and involvement of CSOs help constrain corruption, but their impact is not always direct and is highly dependent on the context within which they operate, and especially on the political will providing them with the space to act in and to articulate demand-led reform (i.e. civil society-led) and supply-side (i.e. public institutions).¹³¹

Civil society engagement – focus on Côte d'Ivoire

The Ivorian example is often upheld as a model for civil society inclusion in SSR. In the short term at least, this assessment holds true. From the outset in 2012, the government showed a genuine desire for the process to be inclusive and, with support from the in-country UN mission (United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire – UNOCI), organised the “Brown Bag Lunch” initiative. This was an informal dialogue platform which brought together key stakeholders from political parties, the security sector and civil society and was designed to help overcome mistrust between the different groups.¹³² As the government heavily promoted the human security objectives of SSR, it was also intended to facilitate civil society's input on new security

legislation, policies and strategy.¹³³ The government and UNOCI also emphasised the decentralisation of the process by focusing on local security governance. This centred on the amplification of local concerns represented by civil society groups and local community leaders and channelled through local security committees, which were responsible for implementing the strategy and communicating with the capital Abidjan.¹³⁴

This strong focus on inclusivity and civil society helped to strengthen the bottom-up approach. However, its final impact on the success and sustainability of SSR is debatable. The speed and urgency with which the strategy was formulated curtailed the consultation process and the top-down bureaucratic nature of SSR did not lend itself particularly well to civil society inclusion.¹³⁵ Most of the communication around the process and the mechanisms to include CSOs left little room for an actual democratic debate on security issues and imposed rigid channels for participation.¹³⁶ This restriction on the space for debate has limited civil society involvement and its capacity to influence the process, confining their participation instead within a pre-established framework for reform. As such, while SSR in Côte d'Ivoire was decentralised to an extent and local voices were consulted and included in the process, SSR became more “a tool to redistribute power than a platform for reconciliation and dialogue.”¹³⁷ This represents an important missed opportunity as the process could have been an entry point for redefining relations between the state, security institutions and the people.

This analysis stemming from our research in West Africa underscores several obstacles to achieve accountability and effectiveness, and ultimately ensure the success of SSR. Low levels of transparency hamper external scrutiny of the sector with weak parliamentary oversight, facilitated by ineffective control bodies and insufficient engagement with CSOs. Equally, lacklustre efforts to strengthen personnel management, coupled with a lack of financial management processes have led to weak institutional integrity. As such, the neglect of anti-corruption in approaches to SSR in West Africa is at odds with the risks identified here. Left unaddressed, these inherent corruption risks will continue to hinder the sustainability of SSR programmes and dilute the effectiveness of reform process. A new approach to

¹²⁷ Data collected by the evaluators of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria for the 2020 GDI (Q4A and Q4C).

¹²⁸ R. Keane and M. Downes, “Security-Sector Reform Applied: Nine Ways to Move from Policy to Implementation”, *International Peace Institute*, 16 February 2012.

¹²⁹ R. Menocal and N. Taxell *Why Corruption Matters*, p. 74.

¹³⁰ M. Grimes, *The Conditions of Successful Civil Society Involvement in Combating Corruption: A Survey of Case Study Evidence* (Gothenburg: The Quality of Government Institute, 2008).

¹³¹ B. Bukenya, S. Hickey and S. King, *Understanding the Role of Context in Shaping Social Accountability Interventions: Towards an Evidence-Based Approach* (Manchester: Institute for Development Policy and Management, 2012).

¹³² E. Dieng, A. Ebo and C. Sedgwick, “UN Support to SSR in Peacekeeping Context: A Case Study of Côte d'Ivoire”, in A. Ebo & H. Hanggi (eds.), *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice*, (Geneva: LIT Verlag, 2020), pp. 97-112, (p. 103).

¹³³ Alassane Ouattara, “A Word from the President of the Republic”, Presidency of the Republic, National Security Council, (Le Mot du Président de la République', Présidence de la République, Conseil National de Sécurité), *Security Sector Reform, National Strategy (Reforme de Secteur de la Sécurité, Stratégie Nationale)*, p. 3.

¹³⁴ Dieng et al., 2020: 104.

¹³⁵ Leboeuf, 2016, p. 7.

¹³⁶ Leboeuf, 2016, pp. 16-17.

¹³⁷ Dieng et al., 2020: 107.

SSR is needed, one that integrates anti-corruption at each stage of, and across every level of SSR from assessment and design, through to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Grounding an SSR approach in an analysis of corruption risks in the security sector and mainstreaming anti-corruption into programmes, could help reduce the risk of these processes

being threatened by underlying governance weaknesses. This could then lead to more effective, sustainable and holistic reform efforts. The following section will propose such a new approach and suggest a model for mainstreaming anti-corruption into SSR.

MAINSTREAMING ANTI-CORRUPTION INTO SSR

In fragile contexts, tackling corruption through stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts can significantly contribute to addressing underlying causes of instability. Given that SSR is considered to be an essential element of any stabilisation, reconstruction or peacebuilding process in post-conflict environments, it must comprehensively address the root causes of insecurity. Understanding the conflict-corruption nexus is therefore essential when developing comprehensive responses to state and human insecurity. Drawing on the West African experience that illustrates how corruption, despite being a contributing factor to instability, has often been neglected in SSR, this section will aim at providing suggestions on how anti-corruption provision could be incorporated in SSR beyond West Africa.

“SSR is not palliative or short term; it is a core element of multidimensional peacekeeping and peacebuilding, essential for addressing the roots of conflict and building the foundations of long-term peace and development”.¹³⁸

Former UN Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon

Although anti-corruption is beginning to be acknowledged as a critical thematic area of work in security assistance and SSR, it is too often solely addressed as a standalone component.¹³⁹ Arguing that corruption needs to be addressed as a cross-cutting issue, this section will explore ways of integrating anti-corruption measures at all levels of SSR. Drawing upon TI's Defence & Security research and lessons learnt from working

in post-conflict countries, this section proposes initial guidance for designing corruption-responsive SSR assessments and subsequently integrating anti-corruption efforts into the design and the implementation of SSR strategies and action plans with the aim of supporting efforts to mainstream anti-corruption in SSR. While the governance of the security sector is an organic system of interdependencies of actors and functions, for analytical purposes we will here use the subdivision into management, oversight and provision, as suggested by DCAF to analyse how anti-corruption could be streamlined in SSR.¹⁴⁰ Finally, as SSR predominantly takes place in post-conflict environments, this section will also pay attention to key related features of such contexts and identify how anti-corruption provisions can help further their effectiveness.

Within the scope of this report, we define **mainstreaming anti-corruption in SSR** as:

*The process of assessing how corruption fuels conflict and consequently implementing anti-corruption measures in any SSR-related planned action, including **legislation, policies and programmes**. It is a strategy for making anti-corruption efforts an integral dimension of the **design, the implementation and the monitoring and evaluation** of policies and programmes in SSR. The ultimate goal is to address corruption strategically as a root cause of conflict and insecurity, and to enhance human security.*

DESIGNING A CORRUPTION-RESPONSIVE SSR ASSESSMENT

The first step to ensuring that SSR processes contribute to addressing corruption-conflict systems, is to undertake corruption-responsive SSR assessments. These assessments are intended to “lay the foundation for enhanced coordination and effectiveness by identifying needs, existing capacities, and priorities before policies and programmes are designed,

implemented and evaluated.”¹⁴¹ Such a framework enables assessment teams to consider both the broader political context and the linkages between different sectors.

SSR assessments seek to identify factors that affect stability, analyse how different groups of citizens experience security, assess security needs, and underline challenges and

¹³⁸ UN SSR Unit, 2012.

¹³⁹ J. Cohen, “The Impact of Corruption on Security Sector Effectiveness and What to do About it”, ISSA-DCAF Blog, 4 December 2014.

¹⁴⁰ DCAF-ISSAT, “The Security Sector”, *SSR Backgrounder Series* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

¹⁴¹ Council of the European Union, *Guiding Framework for EU SSR Assessment*, 2009.

opportunities for SSR. Ultimately, these assessments are designed both to inform the development of comprehensive strategies, but also to assess their potential impact on conflict dynamics. When corruption is among the contributing factors of conflict, as is the case in the Sahel, the nexus between corruption and conflict need to be understood in order to be addressed through SSR strategies.¹⁴² Integrating corruption analysis into SSR assessments ensures that the necessary information is collected to inform corruption-responsive SSR legislation, policy and programming. In addition, corruption-sensitive SSR assessments can provide baseline data to develop indicators for monitoring, evaluation and learning. To be effective, such an assessment requires relevant quantitative and qualitative data. This can be achieved through:

- terms of reference that make specific reference to corruption-conflict dynamics in the objectives, products, methodology, etc.;
- interviews with anti-corruption specialists as well as representatives from anti-corruption and oversight bodies;
- engagement with anti-corruption CSOs and governance experts;

- drawing on local concerns to integrate better local specificities and social norms that can affect corruption-conflict systems;
- specific corruption assessments or audits can be conducted (e.g. using tools such as the GDI); and
- assessing the corruption-responsiveness of existing defence and security policies and laws at the political, institutional and operational levels to identify gaps.

Although each SSR assessment is unique, according to their specific objectives, timing and resources, they generally draw on pre-established assessment frameworks that are designed to guide policymakers in their analysis through three main dimensions: (1) context, (2) actors and institutions, (3) governance and accountability.¹⁴³ Designing such corruption-responsive assessments requires studying corruption-conflict systems and understanding the drivers and enablers of corruption in the security sector, as well as a deep knowledge of the linkages of corruption and insecurity in the specific context. This can be achieved through collaboration with national actors and enhanced national ownership, and guided by anti-corruption specialists. The table below illustrates how such an assessment can be carried out:

Table 1: Designing a corruption-responsive SSR assessment. Based on a benchmark of SSR assessment frameworks, we can identify key components in order to propose how to integrate a corruption lens to them.

<p>Context: security/conflict analysis, including factors of instability, usually against domestic governance framework and national/regional/global dynamics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the impact of corruption on conflict systems. • Analyse the effect of corruption on the operational effectiveness of defence and security forces. • Analyse how corruption affects the capacities of armed non-state actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does corruption erode public trust in legitimate defence and security institutions? • How does corruption benefit armed non-state actors (including radical groups)? • How does corruption enable transnational organised crime? • How does corruption undermine the effectiveness of defence and security forces?
<p>Oversight and accountability: analysis of governance mechanisms, including relationships both within the state apparatus and between the state and its citizens, and linkages with the security system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the national and local perceptions of the impact of corruption on defence and justice services. • Identification of corruption risks: mapping safeguard mechanisms and gaps in the security sector. • Identification of corruption risks: assess the effectiveness of safeguarding mechanisms in the security sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the security sector subjected to anti-corruption legislation and policies? • Is the security sector subject to both internal and external scrutiny? • Is defence and security procurement subject to any specific procurement policies?
<p>Actors and institutions: national strategy, stakeholder mapping, power analysis and identification of factors for change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of corruption risks: assessing the integrity of defence and security institutions (policies, codes of conduct, whistleblowing, human resources management). • Identification of corruption risks: identification of corrupt networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are security institutions provided with a code of conduct ensuring the integrity and ethical behaviour of security personnel? • Are security institutions provided with whistleblowing policies and mechanisms? • Are promotion and recruitment processes subject to objective and clear criteria? • Are security institutions/senior security officials engaged in private economic activities? • Are personnel subjected to appropriate training on anti-corruption issues?

¹⁴² A. Thurston, "For Corruption, Few Places Worse Than the Sahel", *IPI Global Observatory*, 24 September 2012.

¹⁴³ Council of the European Union, Guiding Framework, 2009; The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, (Paris: OECD 2008); UN SSR Unit, 2012; "SSR Assessment Framework", *Folke Bernadotte Academy*, 2017.

INTEGRATING ANTI-CORRUPTION INTO SECURITY SECTOR OVERSIGHT

Once a corruption-responsive SSR assessment has been carried out, anti-corruption needs to be integrated into the three pillars of the security sector: oversight, provision and management. Despite the UN, AU and ECOWAS SSR frameworks all emphasising the importance of transforming power relationships along with the necessary technical reforms, the development of capable organs of security governance has typically been a low priority for donors.¹⁴⁴ As this report has shown, SSR often falls short of its transformational objectives, through a narrow focus on training and equipping security forces. For SSR to bring about structural change, a more sustained focus on security sector oversight is essential. While oversight alone is not sufficient to guarantee efficiency, it is a crucial component which lays the foundations for accountable security services, through its three key building blocks: transparency, oversight actors and sanctions.

Transparency

As set out above, transparency is essential for the democratic control of the security sector; oversight bodies, civil society organisations and the general public necessitate access to updated information to exercise scrutiny on the sector's operations, policies, strategy and budgets. The security sector's activities and objectives can be communicated through a national defence and security policy, which acts as the cornerstone document and articulates the threats that the country is facing and the related decisions on defence and security spending, procurement, personnel, and operations. The policy is a roadmap that illustrates and justifies security institutions' actions, without which democratic control of the security sector is hampered. Given the sensitivity of certain aspects of the sector and need for certain information to remain confidential, governments need to establish: (1) appropriate and effective systems of security clearance, (2) procedures for ensuring competent and effective legislative and audit oversight, and (3) means to provide the public with enough information to ensure accountability.¹⁴⁵ The need for secrecy does not preclude the entire sector from oversight and accountability. Both are critical for ensuring that the defence and security apparatus serves the national interest that public funds are used efficiently and, ultimately, that security institutions fulfil their mandates.

Oversight actors

The oversight function is exercised by different bodies, whose activities should complement each other, and in some cases, requires some form of coordination across functions. Parliamentary oversight is one of the main means of democratic governance. Parliament's twofold function of both legislating and scrutinising make it a key player in anti-corruption. While parliamentary oversight is grounded in legal provisions, its mere existence does not guarantee that such oversight is carried out to the appropriate requirements. In many states, there are legal provisions for parliamentary oversight but these can be impaired by a lack of complementary legislation enabling oversight (e.g. clear classification laws and systems for accessing information), a lack of expertise or undue political influence. For parliamentary oversight to be effective, it requires the existence of dedicated, well-resourced and experienced committees, capable of holding the security sector to account, while maintaining their independence. In a federal state, a great degree of coordination between the federal parliament and local oversight institutions is required for effective control of the security sector.

Another major actor in the system of independent oversight is the judiciary. It supports the security sector by scrutinising the "use of special measures by law enforcement and/or intelligence agencies, or through retrospective reviews of security operations."¹⁴⁶ An independent judiciary is a precondition for democracy and is recognised in SSR frameworks as essential to reforms, which should be underpinned by the establishment of effective and independent judiciary systems.¹⁴⁷ The judiciary complements other forms of oversight and provides control in two ways: it ensures accountability before the law; and, it provides checks on the use of power by both security actors and other branches of government. The judiciary is particularly central in anti-corruption as it represents the main tool for investigation and prosecution and enables law enforcement to fulfil their mission.

The UN, AU and ECOWAS SSR frameworks all recognise the importance of "anti-corruption bodies."¹⁴⁸ According to the UN:

"Independent bodies with specialized mandates perform vital roles in the governance of the security sector. These bodies may include national human rights institutions, national ethics committees, anti-corruption agencies,

¹⁴⁴ E. Hutchful, "The UN and SSR: Between the Primacy of Politics and the Echoes of Context", in A. Ebo & H. Hänggi (eds.), *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform* (Geneva: DCAF, 2020), pp. 23-45, (p. 27-28).

¹⁴⁵ Harborne et al. (eds.), 2017, p. 191; Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *Classified Information: A Review of Current Legislation across 15 countries & the EU* (London: TI's Defence & Security Programme, 2016).

¹⁴⁶ UN SSR Unit, 2012.

¹⁴⁷ ECOWAS, *SSR Policy Framework*, p.13

¹⁴⁸ ECOWAS, *SSR Framework*, p.7. AU, *Policy Framework on SSR*, 2013, p. 5; Interview, Nigerian CSO and international expert, 22 August 2019.

auditors general and other specialised expert oversight bodies. Depending on their mandate, such bodies may independently undertake investigations, including abuses and human rights violations; receive complaints against security agencies; report on incidents; and issue binding and/or non-binding recommendations on accountability issues, policies and practices.¹⁴⁹

Independent bodies interplay with the legislative and the judiciary, and are essential to mitigating corruption risks as well as in prosecuting corruption cases. Their reports inform the legislature and facilitate their control function, as well as helping to spur the adoption of new legislation and initiating parliamentary investigations when necessary.

Significantly, all major SSR frameworks emphasise the role of civil society in providing oversight. However, this engagement is often sporadic and on an ad hoc basis, which is not sufficient to enable the civil society to fulfil its oversight mandate. The openness towards CSOs needs to be institutionalised and accompanied by appropriate technical knowledge.

Understanding the security sector requires sophisticated budget and policy analysis skills as well as the ability to monitor planning and operations (through national security policy and operations audits, for example). The focus of many SSR programmes on train-and-equip often overlook the important fact that capacity-building for CSOs on security issues has a key role to play in reform processes, especially in the long term.

Implementing effective and public sanctions

The existence and implementation of sanctions is an essential part of the fight against corruption. Not only is a constitutional framework needed, but it should also be translated into legal provisions and applied accordingly. Applying the principles of good governance to the security sector means, among other things, reaffirming the rule of law, whereby all individuals and institutions are equal before an impartial judiciary. Essentially, good governance in the security sector ensures that the same rules apply and that corrupt practices are adequately prosecuted and sanctioned.

INTEGRATING ANTI-CORRUPTION INTO SECURITY SECTOR PROVISION

Security sector provision is ensured by a number of different actors.¹⁵⁰ Broadly, security providers can be divided into four categories: state security providers (armed forces, border controls, police, etc.), non-state security providers (non-state armed groups, women's groups etc.), state justice providers (judges, courts etc.) and non-state justice provided (lawyers, bar associations etc.).¹⁵¹ For the purpose of this analysis, we will focus on state security providers and how anti-corruption can be integrated into their operations, both at home and abroad.

Current guidance on promoting integrity in security forces during SSR reforms is sparse. However, growing evidence suggests that the absence of anti-corruption measures can undermine international operations, including peace operations.¹⁵² Given the shared need to address corruption as a strategic issue both in international and domestic operations, much can be learnt from international experiences. In its analysis of corruption risk in UN peace operations, TI's Defence & Security Programme identifies corruption as a challenge to both mission legitimacy and effectiveness.¹⁵³ This analysis can also be extended to all military interventions. Partly as a result of the international experiences, a wealth of measures and mechanisms are at

planners' disposal to mitigate such risks. Fundamentally, a sound anti-corruption framework in operations should consider corruption as a strategic issue: a) at the planning stage, b) during the mission, c) when contracting and d) when deploying private contractors.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, armed forces could adopt anti-corruption doctrines that treat corruption as a strategic issue in operations, ensuring that such policies are made publicly available and that commanders are trained in their specificities before and during deployments. As outlined in TI's Defence & Security Programme's Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance, planners need to be aware of the main corruption pathways in operations.¹⁵⁵ For each pathway there are a number of measures, either preventive or responsive, that can be taken to mitigate the risk.

Box 9. The Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance (IACG)

TI's Defence & Security Programme's IACG provides resources and support for analysts, planners and implementers that are tasked with recognising and mitigating corruption risks in international military

¹⁴⁹ UN SSR Unit, 2012.

¹⁵⁰ "Security Sector Governance", *SSR Background Series*, DCAF, 2015.

¹⁵¹ DCAF, "Security Sector Governance".

¹⁵² Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *Corruption Risks and UN Peace Operations*, (London: TI's Defence & Security Programme, 2019).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme, *The Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance*. <https://iacg.ti-defence.org/>

¹⁵⁵ Transparency International, "Afghanistan".

operations. The guidance is a suite of analytical materials, tools, and resources that educate military personnel, civilian and military planners, and key defence decision-makers on the significance of corruption for military operations. The guidance offers insight into the key corruption risk pathways and areas; guides planners toward applying corruption mitigation strategies; lays out likely areas of responsibility for military personnel, and offers suggestions for incorporating corruption issues into military exercises. Within the IACG, the user is guided through learning to recognise and mitigate corruption risks within the operational environment and offered tools that can assist planners in developing anti-corruption strategies tailored to needs. The guidance also contains in-depth case studies illuminating the significance of corruption in operational environments, tailored to those wishing to develop deeper expertise on the subject.

The IACG could provide useful direction to SSR practitioners and policymakers. It could be adapted to national contexts to ensure that security sector transformation includes building the integrity of national security providers and that corruption is treated as a strategic issue in operations.

Source: TI's Defence & Security Programme, *Interventions Anti-Corruption Guidance*: <https://iacg.ti-defence.org/>

While there are some concrete differences between international and domestic missions, such as the risks associated with partnering with host nations, the majority of risk pathways identified at the international level apply to domestic operations. For example, there are tangible risks within missions, in sustainment and contracting and in assistance to civilian powers, as well as in international and national operations. It is essential that corruption risk assessments are undertaken ahead of time and that corruption is monitored during missions by trained professionals, whose reports are made public. In terms

of contracting, specific guidelines for operations should exist, in the form of standard operating procedures, for instance, to address the following risks: asset disposals, local power brokers, contract delivery monitoring or security of equipment and personnel. Furthermore, specific training for personnel on corruption risks in contracting while on deployed operations or peacekeeping missions is critical. The use of private contractors is particularly sensitive in the context of military interventions, where adequate control must be maintained over contracts to ensure that they are subject to an adequate level of scrutiny. From an international perspective, the issue of control over non-state armed forces is not limited to the use of private contractors but extends to modern remote warfare, where some states are moving away from large footprint interventions in favour of partnerships with local armed groups.¹⁵⁶ In such contexts accountability can become blurred, opening the way to corruption. Partnerships with non-state armed groups often mirror these risks and require similar mitigation measures.

Although it is essential in the provision of security services, anti-corruption also needs to focus on both the oversight and the management of security services to be effective. Therefore, anti-corruption cannot solely focus on security sector provision. While anti-corruption in operations is essential, it cannot be implemented in isolation and is highly dependent on the oversight and management of the wider sector. Security sector providers must be subject to democratic control, such as civilian scrutiny and to the rule of law. To fulfil their mission, security providers rely on transparent and effective security oversight and management, which ensure that different security providers have clear, non-overlapping mandates supported by robust planning and are equipped accordingly. SSR is a holistic process of transformation that needs to be implemented in a coordinated fashion to be successful. There are many cases where international military interventions' efficacy has been hindered by corruption; domestic security providers could draw important lessons from this and undertake processes of reform that consider corruption as a strategic issue.

INTEGRATING ANTI-CORRUPTION INTO SECURITY SECTOR MANAGEMENT

Security sector management refers to the process through which security services are organised and directed. The main actors involved in management include government ministries, such as Ministry of the Interior, Defence, Justice and Finance; police and judicial councils and judicial services and law commissions.¹⁵⁷ According to the UN's ITGN, Security sector management can be divided into human resource management,

financial resource management, management capacity for effective policy implementation and information management.¹⁵⁸ Building on the ITGN's approach to security sector management, this section looks at good practices to strengthen human resources management, financial management and procurement and reduce opportunities for corruption.

¹⁵⁶ In the context of this report, remote warfare is conceptualised as that which has taken place since the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions.

¹⁵⁷ DCAF, "SSR Background".

¹⁵⁸ UN SSR Unit, 2012.

Human resource management

While the UN guidance offers an overview of best practice in the management of the security sector, the anti-corruption lens is rather limited or indeed absent, if done does not consider the good governance approach as sufficient. In human resource management, the development of an anti-corruption culture is essential to minimise corruption risks and measures can be taken to foster a culture of integrity, such as: the existence of published code of conduct with a clear anti-corruption stance; management's public commitments to the fight against corruption; and, a transparent and standardised process for sanctions and whistleblowers' protection. Furthermore, sensitive positions, such as those in procurement, contracting and financial management, should be subject to special attention and monitored closely (from recruitment, to oversight, promotion through dismissal); there should be a code of conduct for military and civilian personnel that includes, but is not limited to, guidance with respect to bribery, gifts and hospitality, conflicts of interest, facilitation payments and post-separation activities. Finally, there should be controls in place (such as monitors' reports) so that these measures are implemented and monitored. Training is also an important means to ensure that an anti-corruption culture is developed, and regular anti-corruption training should take place among civilian and non-civilian personnel.

In terms of technical resource management, there are several measures that could contribute to reducing corruption risks if implemented:

- full disclosure of the number of civilian and non-civilian staff to combat phenomena such as ghost soldiers;
- pay rates and allowances should be fully published and payments received regularly and on time through well-established means ;
- recruitment should be based on objective and transparent criteria and the selection process should be equally transparent and systematic;
- similarly, promotion and dismissal should be based on standardised and published mechanisms;
- chain of commands and salary should be separated.

Financial management

The secrecy often surrounding the security sector, combined with the size of its expenditure, exposes the sector's financial management to significant corruption risks. SSR should not overlook the financial management side of security sector transformation as it is one of the elements most subject to corruption risks. Many measures can be taken to mitigate corruption risk in this area. For example, asset disposals should be transparent and subject to scrutiny, meaning that there should be a regulatory process for such activity including monitoring and publication of profits and audit reports. Secret budgets within the security sector are often

justified by the need of secrecy to protect national security, which constitutes the so-called "security exceptionalism"; however, financial secrecy should not be unregulated and should be managed through a clear system of classification clearance and oversight. While it is generally accepted that a percentage of the defence and security budget can legitimately be dedicated to secret items relating to national security and the intelligence services, higher percentages of secret spending may signal irregularities. Furthermore, secrecy does not equate to the absence of scrutiny and there should be relevant legislative bodies with enhanced clearance tasked with the scrutiny of secret spending. Non-secret security spending can, and should, be subjected to normal scrutiny and independent audits should be undertaken annually and debated in parliament. There should be no legal provision for off-budget expenditure and such practices should be harshly contested as they can easily become fertile ground for corruption. Access to information and information management is particularly relevant in the context of financial management; a clear legal framework outlining which information is accessible to whom that works in harmony with a classification clearance framework is/can be an effective tool to contrast corruption risk.

Procurement

Procurement defines the modalities in which the government contracts services. Procurement legislation regulates all aspects of the public sector and it should apply to the security sector with no exemption. Given the corruption risk inherent in the defence and security sector due to its high levels of expenditure, procurement legislation should include specific clauses on corruption risks, for example making it explicit that there are no items that are exempt from procurement legislation. In terms of government policies, the first principle is that defence and security purchases should not be opportunistic but carefully assessed, planned and carried out in accordance to a published defence and security policy. The whole procurement cycle, from planning to contracting and implementation, should also be available to the public and overseen by an appropriate parliamentary committee. In terms of suppliers' requirements, companies should adhere to international best-practice standards as well as internal codes of conduct and compliance programmes to be allowed to bid for government's contracts. Tendering should be carried out transparently and as openly as possible whereas single-sourcing should be limited. Contract delivery should also be adequately monitored and there should be institutional channels to report malpractice. These activities should be audited by independent bodies and there should be sanctioning of collusion between bidders and contractors. There should be a regulatory legal framework for offsets, granting oversight powers to adequate bodies. Financial packages surrounding major arms deals should be made available prior to contracting and monitored during delivery. Selling nations should not exercise undue political influence

and the receiving governments should always be in the position to justify military needs for purchases from any given supplier. Similarly, the country should have a robust framework for

regulating lobbying activity and such legislation should apply to the security sector.

PARTICULAR FEATURES OF SSR IN POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS

In post-conflict environments, SSR is essential in preventing the recurrence of violence and ensuring the transition to peace. SSR constitutes an opportunity to restore the social contract between the people and the state, and to strengthen the rule of law through corruption-responsive programming. For SSR to be truly effective, anti-corruption needs to be mainstreamed into all of SSR's associated activities. While these differ from one context to another, many features are commonly present in post-conflict environments and can be connected to SSR from an anti-corruption perspective.

Peace processes

By ensuring that security forces are anchored within a framework of good governance and rule of law, SSR aims to contribute to stabilisation and peacebuilding. As a result, SSR and peace processes are closely intertwined.¹⁵⁹ Although the evidence is inconclusive as to the real impact of the inclusion of SSR provisions on the durability of peace agreements, it is clear that failing to integrate them from the outset, or doing so only partially, can lead to peace being jeopardised.¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ However, integrating security-focused considerations into peace negotiations and agreements is not in itself a sufficient condition to ensure lasting peace. Indeed, peace processes that also provide ways to improve governance and which contain anti-corruption mechanisms, seem to last longer.¹⁶² It must be noted that integrating anti-corruption provisions in peace agreements can be challenging in practice as it involves transforming networks which thrive in wartime, to peacetime conditions.

In some cases, accommodating corrupt actors may be perceived as a necessary evil to end conflicts.¹⁶³ While mediators are focused on short-term violence reduction and tend to remain open to compromise, SSR practitioners must play the long game and focus on promoting principles of democratic governance of the security sector.¹⁶⁴ As evidence suggests that reaching longer-term agreements is necessary for SSR, coordinating the two

communities from the outset of peace processes is essential.¹⁶⁵ While peace processes can guide SSR, addressing corruption-conflict systems at an early stage can also mitigate the influence of armed groups and influence negotiation power dynamics.

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)

SSR and DDR are oftentimes at the forefront of war-to-peace transitions. While DDR aims to reintegrate former combatants into the civilian economy or new security architecture, SSR seeks to shape this very same new security infrastructure. Although the extent to which the two processes can be linked in fragile settings remains a matter of discussion, they are very much related; both processes establish the government's monopoly over the legitimate use of force.¹⁶⁶ In post-conflict-environments where both processes are undertaken, the defence and security forces represent an attractive form of employment to former combatants.¹⁶⁷ Once integrated, these combatants are meant to adhere to certain principles and values, and retain enough incentive to remain committed to the process. In contexts where corruption undermines the social contract between the public and state, and feeds into the narratives of armed groups, building integrity and accountability is ever more essential. In this regard, integrating anti-corruption provisions in DDR processes can improve trust in security forces while facilitating the integration of new combatants. Good governance both in human resources and financial management is critical to DDR. Developing codes of conduct and safeguard mechanisms can help reduce the risk of government forces from perpetrating human rights violations. Equally, ensuring a clear separation between chains of command and payment can prevent the diversion of salaries. Developing objective and transparent criteria for human resources management such as recruitment, appointment and promotion can also provide a solid basis for career path perspectives for new staff, so facilitating their integration and commitment.

¹⁵⁹ "What Role for Security Sector Reform in Peace Processes?", *Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development*, 2019; UK Department for International Development, *Security Sector Reform Provisions in Peace Agreements* (London: DFID, 2009).

¹⁶⁰ Detzner, "Modern Post-Conflict SSR in Africa".

¹⁶¹ DFID, 2009: 10-12.

¹⁶² B. I. Spector, "Negotiating Peace Agreements with Anticorruption Provisions: The Role of International Development Assistance", *International Negotiation*, vol.15, no.3, pp. 413-438, 2010.

¹⁶³ TI's Defence & Security Programme, *The Fifth Column*.

¹⁶⁴ DFID, 2009: 34.

¹⁶⁵ Clingendael Institute, *Living Apart Together? On the Difficult Linkage between DDR and SSR in Post-Conflict Environments*, (The Hague: Clingendael Institute, 2010).

¹⁶⁶ M. A. Civic and M. Miklaucic eds., *Monopoly of Force The Nexus of DDR and SSR* (Washington D.C: Institute for National Strategic Studies National Defense University Press, 2011).

¹⁶⁷ United States Institute of Peace, *The Link Between DDR and SSR in Conflict-Affected Countries: Special Report*, (Washington D.C: USIP, 2010).

Peace operations

Peace operations often play a leading role in stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts. While SSR is generally a significant component of peace operation mandates in post-conflict settings, corruption is too often overlooked, even though it undermines the ability of [an entity] to implement their mandates.¹⁶⁸ Corruption and poor governance influence conditions in the mission environment and exacerbate existing challenges, undermining mission effectiveness.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, further evidence suggests peace operation troop-contribution preparations and SSR are increasingly intertwined, and at times perceived as complementary by both external and internal actors.¹⁷⁰ The failure to understand and address corruption issues tends to diminish trust in peace operations, posing additional challenges to their ability to operate. Anti-corruption provisions are therefore critical components of peace operation mandates as they set the standard for operating in a given environment. Identifying ways to address, and not reinforce, corruption in host countries could improve the effectiveness of programming, while tackling corruption within the missions themselves will allow the best use of available resources, in addition to facilitating mission acceptance by host populations. Adequate safeguarding mechanisms, alongside measures to identify and tackle corruption, can also help prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel.¹⁷¹ This could include conducting mission wide corruption risk assessments to identify challenges, and consequently developing training, codes of conduct, whistleblowing mechanisms and investigation and disciplinary measures. In addition, clear guidance needs to be

developed and robust stances against corruption need to be taken by regional and international organisations tasked with deploying such operations.

Transitional justice

Transitional justice encompasses a range of measures designed to avoid a resurgence of human rights violations, strengthen accountability mechanisms and enhance reconciliation in post-conflict settings. These can include criminal prosecutions, as well as truth and reconciliation mechanisms, reparations and other processes. Although the link between transitional justice and SSR needs to be further explored, SSR and transitional justice share three key common objectives, including improving accountability, strengthening the rule of law, and preventing the recurrence of human rights violations.¹⁷² While evidence suggests that they mutually affect each other, security sector corruption can undermine transitional justice mechanisms due to the role it often plays in driving conflict and fuelling human rights abuses.¹⁷³ A 2014 report by Transparency International points out that “If trust between different groups is low, as is common in conflict-affected environments and in those with weak institutions, protecting the interest of an ethnic group, tribe or family through bribery or nepotism is clearly a rational response to the constraints faced.”¹⁷⁴ As a result, high levels of corruption make it less likely for the security sector to meaningfully engage with transitional justice mechanisms. Mainstreaming anti-corruption through both transitional justice and SSR is essential to transitioning from an abusive corrupt security sector to one which is accountable, transparent and legitimate.¹⁷⁵

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Corruption in West Africa is not just a consequence of conflict, but also frequently a root cause of armed violence.¹⁷⁶ When it takes root in defence and security institutions, its effects on peace and security can be catastrophic and can lead to the degradation of human security, the breakdown of the rule of law and a loss of trust in institutions. Understanding the nexus between corruption and conflict is essential when developing comprehensive responses to state and human insecurity. Just as corruption is often pervasive in West African conflict, anti-

corruption must pervade stabilisation and peacebuilding efforts, including SSR.

By failing to take corruption into account, SSR can only partially achieve its objective of transforming West African security sectors into an accountable, efficient and affordable security apparatus. **A sometimes-narrow focus on strengthening the effectiveness of security forces, notably through train-and-equip programmes, has led to the sidelining of the longer-term and more complex approach of enhancing**

¹⁶⁸ TI's Defence & Security Programme, *Corruption Risks in UN Peace Operations*, 2019.

¹⁶⁹ TI's Defence & Security Programme, *Corruption Risks in UN Peace Operations*, 2019.

¹⁷⁰ N. Wilén, “Examining the Links between Security Sector Reform and Peacekeeping Troop Contribution in Post-conflict States”, *Journal Of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol.12, no.1, pp. 64-79, 2018.

¹⁷¹ TI's Defence & Security Programme, *Corruption Risks in UN Peace Operations*, 2019.

¹⁷² E. Mobekk, “Transitional Justice and Security Sector Reform: Enabling Sustainable Peace”, *Democratic Control of Armed Forces*, Occasional Paper 13, November 2006.

¹⁷³ J. Cohen, “Addressing Corruption Through Justice-Sensitive Security Sector Reform”, International Center for Transitional Justice, December 2017.

¹⁷⁴ Transparency International Germany, *Corruption as a Threat to Stability and Peace*, (Berlin: TI Germany, 2014).

¹⁷⁵ Cohen, 2017.

¹⁷⁶ TI's Defence & Security Programme, *The Lowest Common Denominator: how corruption in the security sector threatens regional peace and security in West Africa*, 2020.

accountability. A lack of focus on strengthening governance mechanisms and institutional safeguards to mitigate corruption risks undermines the ability of SSR to produce sustainable and meaningful transformative change.

Mainstreaming anti-corruption into normative frameworks, as well as into national processes is crucial to the sustainable success of SSR in West Africa. While strengthening accountability and effectiveness in the security sector, anti-corruption provisions in SSR can also contribute to addressing some of the drivers and enablers of conflicts in the region. Moreover, by upholding high standards of accountability, probity and integrity within the defence and security forces, anti-corruption fosters the protection against human rights abuses. Ultimately, mainstreaming anti-corruption into SSR can harness its capacity to create political, social, economic and military systems conducive to the respect for human rights and dignity, thus contributing to human security.

Mainstreaming anti-corruption into SSR:

*The process of assessing how corruption fuels conflict and consequently implementing anti-corruption measures in any SSR-related planned action, including **legislation, policies** and programmes. It is a strategy for making anti-corruption efforts an integral dimension of the **design, the implementation** and the **monitoring** and **evaluation** of policies and programmes in SSR. The ultimate goal is to address corruption strategically as a root cause of conflict and insecurity, and to reinforce human security.*

In light of this report, TI's Defence & Security programme urges SSR policymakers and practitioners in West Africa to consider the following:

Recommendations for AU & ECOWAS Commissions

Formally acknowledge the threat that corruption poses to the success of SSR and integrate anti-corruption provisions into SSR support to AU and ECOWAS Member States:

- The AU has adopted several normative instruments to facilitate the structural prevention of conflicts, including some related to the fight against corruption. Specifically recognising the threat that corruption poses to security and stability in the AU Policy Framework on SSR would lay the foundations for ensuring that corruption is included in AU SSR support to member states and regional economic communities and mechanisms. In addition, developing operational guidance notes on anti-corruption in SSR/G would provide member states with practical tools to translate anti-corruption policies into effective strategies and action plans.
- The 2008 ECPF serves as a reference for the ECOWAS system and member states in their efforts to strengthen human security in West Africa. As part of Article 72-e of the ECPF, ECOWAS could ensure that specific anti-corruption components are integrated into its commitment to “develop and promote the implementation and monitoring of a set of practical guidelines to govern the activities of all actors implementing or supporting SSR initiatives in the region”. In particular, acknowledging anti-corruption as an “essential feature” of the ECOWAS Policy Framework for SSR/G would raise awareness about the threat that corruption poses, while developing guidance on how to mainstream anti-corruption in SSR/G would improve the capacities of ECOWAS to provide support to member states.

Recommendations for West African SSR policymakers and practitioners

Mainstream anti-corruption into SSR strategies and action plans:

- Respectively through the Peace and Security Architecture, the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, and the Conflict Prevention Framework, the UN, AU, and ECOWAS have each adopted normative instruments to facilitate the structural prevention of conflicts that contain specific components related to good governance. By ensuring that these principles are extended to SSR frameworks and upheld in national SSR strategies and action plans, West African governments would contribute to addressing the root causes of instability in the region.
- SSR assessments aim to identify factors that affect stability, analyse how different groups of citizens experience security, assess security needs, and underline challenges and opportunities for SSR. By developing corruption-responsive SSR assessments, SSR coordination bodies could better identify the root causes of insecurity and inform SSR strategies to address them. Moreover, including anti-corruption bodies and CSOs during such assessments would help foster local ownership and accountability.
- Mainstreaming anti-corruption in SSR would contribute to increasing the efficiency and the effectiveness of security sector provision, management and oversight. The process of transformation that has anti-corruption and good governance principles at its core should: increase the transparency of the sector; firmly position the security sector under the civilian democratic control of the parliament, independent bodies and the civil society, through institutionalised and transparent mechanisms; promote anti-corruption norms within the sectors, both among civilians and military personnel; have strong and transparent financial and management systems in place and that are subject to external scrutiny.

Recommendations for UN SSR policymakers

Acknowledge the nexus between corruption and conflict to develop anti-corruption guidance in SSR. Exploring this nexus can support policymakers and practitioners to better understand conflict dynamics, identify key conflict drivers and enablers, and inform SSR strategies.

- Although the ITGN on SSR acknowledges the importance of anti-corruption initiatives to strengthen democratic governance of the security sector, it does not elaborate on the nexus between corruption and conflict. Exploring this nexus could allow the UN to identify alternative approaches to enhance its support to member states and to regional organisations. Conducting a study on the impact of corruption on conflict dynamics writ large, with inputs from anti-corruption specialists, including from the UN system, academia and civil society, would UN Inter Agency SSR Task Force to identify key conflict drivers and enablers to take in consideration for SSR-related purpose.
- Integrating specific components on addressing corruption through SSR into the UN ITGN on SSR would provide SSR practitioners with practical tools to develop corruption-responsive strategies and action plans. In particular, identifying entry points to integrate anti-corruption comprehensively into the provision, the management and the oversight of security services, within the ITGN would provide policy makers and practitioners with valuable tools to address the nexus between corruption and conflict through SSR. Such endeavour could be led in concertation between the UN Inter-Agency SSR Task Force, the AU and ECOWAS, and civil society, to draw on lessons learned in West Africa.

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