SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN SIERRA LEONE, AIMING FOR RESILIENCE, BUT STUCK BETWEEN STRUCTURAL AND LOCAL NEEDS

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Abstract: Security interventions in Sierra Leone have yielded significant results, following the end of civil war in 2002. The transition from community aid to post-conflict development, which involved robust peace-securing efforts by the UK, EU, AU, the Sierra Leonean government, and the UN, have emphasized the major impact of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and its capacity to prevent conflict spill-overs, thus facilitating the creation of conducive conditions to cooperation with neighboring countries. Our aim is to explain the dynamics of Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone as a successful model of intervention, providing arguments on the efficiency of the reform carried out with the support of donor states and International organisations, but accompanied by a strong allingment of the local entrepreneurs around the main pillars for democractic reform: defence, justice and rule of law. The positive outcomes resulting from the recent security governance framework in Sierra Leone are currently consolidating state`s authority and also managed to address the root causes that led to the conflict in the first place, mainly the competition over resources and political exclusion.

Key words: Security Sector Reform (SSR), resilience, Sierra Leone, democratic governance.

Anchoring SSR in Sierra Leone. Five suitable theoretical perspectives

In order to understand current achievements in SSR in Sierra Leone there are at least five theoretical models that can be applied in synergy: *Liberal Peacebuilding Model, Hybrid Peace Governance, Security Development Nexus and Donor-Driven SSR Model.* Each of these models has a long standing tradition in providing both an accurate theoretic design, as well as insights derived from the practice-based approaches used for in the transformation of the Sierra Leone.

The liberal peacebuilding model advocates for the transformation of post-conflict societies into liberal democracies with market economies. It emphasizes the importance of establishing democratic governance, rule of law, and a market-oriented economic framework as key to sustainable peace. Some major authors associated with the liberal peacebuilding model include: Michael Doyle, John Ruggie, Bruce Russett, and Richard Caplan. Security interventions in Sierra Leone, either we advocate for the design of a security mandate or of a particular security mission, have been evaluated within the boundaries of this model. By applying the Liberal Peacebuilding model to Sierra Leone the following areas gain special attention: reconstructing the state institutions, fostering democratic governance, promoting human rights, and facilitating free market reforms. In the context of Sierra Leone, particularly in security governance the main priority was place on reforming security institutions. This includes building a professional, accountable, and rights-respecting military and police force. Training and capacity-building efforts would ensure that

security personnel can effectively maintain order and uphold the law while respecting human rights. Establishing rule of law coupled with promoting democratic governance lays at the very foundation of every stable construction. Strengthening the judiciary and legal frameworks to ensure that they are capable of upholding laws impartially is equivalent with an involvement into legal reform, training of judges and lawyers, and ensuring access to justice for all citizens. Conducting free and fair elections, enabling political pluralism, and ensuring that there is civilian control over military and security forces provides government institutions and civil society with a form of checks and balances, vital to fostering social cohesion.

Applying the Liberal Peacebuilding model to Sierra Leone one must consider the country's unique challenges, such as the legacy of civil war, existing social divisions, and capacity constraints within state institutions. Such an application must be sensitive to the local context and avoid a "one size fits all" approach, focusing instead on building state institutions that are responsive and accountable to the needs of all Sierra Leoneans. Critics of the liberal peace model also caution that it may not adequately address the underlying structural issues leading to conflict or may overlook local traditions and governance structures, underscoring the need for a tailored approach.

The dynamics of security-development binomial in Sierra Leone is also in line with Hybrid Peace Governance, when analyzing the tension between a peace community and the sovereignity and judicial apparatus of the state. Some relevant authors who have contributed to the understanding of hybrid peace governance models include Jelena Subotic, who explores the role of international actors in post-conflict societies, and Oliver Richmond, who examines the effectiveness of hybrid political orders in promoting peace and stability. His work on "A Post-liberal Peace: The Infrapolitics of Peacebuilding" provides valuable insights into the concept of hybridity and its implications for peacebuilding practices. Tobias Debiel's research on peacebuilding and governance has explored the importance of incorporating hybrid forms of governance in conflict-affected contexts. Hybrid peace governance model acknowledges the coexistence and interaction of liberal and illiberal structures, actors, and norms. It suggests that SSR in Sierra Leone must accommodate a variety of traditional and non-state security arrangements alongside formal state-led initiatives.

The essence of the Security-Development Nexus model, particularly in the context of Sierra Leone, is based on the understanding that security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Sierra Leone, which has experienced civil conflict, typically illustrates how lack of development can contribute to insecurity, and how insecurity can hinder development. In Sierra Leone, the security-development nexus would involve strategies that address both securing the country from threats, such as small arms proliferation, and fostering development to alleviate poverty and build infrastructure, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict and instability. The model emphasizes the importance of integrating security measures with development programs. Programs designed using this model would be collaborative, involving various sectors of the society including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners, to build a stable environment where economic growth and social welfare can be pursued without the setbacks linked to insecurity and violence.

In practice, this means taking steps to ensure that policy initiatives and practical interventions in the country are aimed at enhancing both security (like combating the illicit trade of light weapons) and development (tackling issues such as food insecurity or enhancing cybersecurity capabilities) simultaneously. The ultimate objective is to create a virtuous cycle where improved security leads to increased development opportunities, and vice versa, thereby promoting sustainable peace and progress.

The impact of a Donor-driven SSR model in Sierra Leone is relevant for both its positive and negative impact. The positive effects can stem from financial resources, technical support and expertise. Donor support often includes training and capacity-building programs that can help improve the professional competencies of security forces and justice sector personnel. Donor entities have also been involved in reform implementation while providing also the best standards

and practices into the SSR process, potentially leading to improvements in human rights observance and professionalism within all corresponding sectors.

There are also downsides for applying this model, one of the most debated aspect in literature being the the lack of local ownership. A donor-driven SSR might not sufficiently take into account the local context, needs, and capacities, which can result in reforms that are not sustainable or accepted by local stakeholders. Reliance on donor funding can also create dependencies that may jeopardize the sustainability of SSR efforts once donor engagement is reduced or withdrawn. Given Sierra Leone`s rich cultural background and traditions, donor priorities may not always align with the nation's most pressing needs, potentially diverting focus from more critical areas of the SSR process, which can lead to limited impact on governance. Although the Donor-driven SSR model has been criticized for sometimes overlooking local contexts and ownership, it represents the practices where external actors (like donor states or international organizations) lead and support SSR.

In Sierra Leone the Donor-driven approach was complimented by the Local Ownership Model. This fifth model emphasizes the need for local actors to drive SSR processes to ensure relevance, legitimacy, and sustainability. The involvement of local institutions, civil society, and community members is crucial for SSR that reflects the unique context of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone`s path to stabilization. Two decades of coordinated transformation

The democratization process of Sierra Leone was encourgaged by the political commitment of major national stakeholders in establishing a clear basis for the rule of law, respect for human rights, as well as applying new procedures to enhance civilian control.

European Union, toghether with African Union(AU) and United Nations(UN) have had a long partnership in the Sub-Saharan Region, in developing active measures in order to adopt regional mechanisms for the maintanance of international peace and security, ensuring that these measures are consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN. In this regard, Members of the UN entering into regional arrangements dealing with peaceful settelement of local disputes should ensure that the roles of the Security Council and General Assembly remain unaffected.

In an attempt to enhance the available instruments, the AU aproved a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in 1993 (The Cairo declaration). However, this Mechanism consisting of two main bodies, The Central Organ and the Conflict Management Division (later the Conflict Management Centre) failed to prevent various crisis in Africa, sush as the Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Sierra Leone. Therefore, one of the most difficult situation in the region was represented by the civil war in Sierra Leone. Since March 1991, Sierra Leone has experienced continuous civil strife ending in an extended civil war. These lead to large scale destructions of infrastructures and property, and the death of thousands of people, many more injured and over half of the population displaced. Three peace accords were signed in 1996, 1997 and 1999 in Abidjan, Conakry and Lomé respectively. However, these agreements did not bring peace until both government and rebel leaders declared in January 2002 the end of the conflict, Sierra Leone organised parliamentary and presidential election in May 2002.

The Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union was adopted by the 1st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, in Durban, South Africa, on 9th July 2002, being stated to replace the Cairo Declaration of 1993. The Republic of Sierra Leone on November 13, 2002 became the 29th Member State to sign the Protocol. The country's Permanent Representative to the Commission of the African Union, underlined the importance of the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, having into consideration "all the complicated conflicts emerging everyday in Africa, and the importance his Government attached to their resolution, it was necessary to establish the Peace and Security Council as soon as possible" In the same time, this legal instrument was aimed to anticipate and prevent conflicts before they could degenerate into widespread wars. The protocol establishing the Peace and

Security Council of the African Union (AUPSC Protocol) came into force in 2004 and served as the continent's first collective security system. The protocol also includes an assistance provision that require the UN to provide "the necessary financial, logistical and military support for the African Unions' activities". Besides the AU there are numerous other regional organisations in Africa that played an increased role in conflict resolution. In this sense, the constituent instrument of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was revised in 1993 giving this institution the resposibility to prevent and settle regional conflicts. Within the framework of ECOWAS a regional intervention force was established – ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG has participated in the stabilization of Sierra Leone, starting with 1997 for 2 years mandate.

Intervention of the ECOWAS related to the massive breakdowns in the rule of law were allowed by Article 7 of the AUPSC Protocol, which empowers the AUPSC to "decide on any other issue implications for the maintenance of peace, security and stability on the Continent," AU exercised its ability to assist the people of Sierra Leone to restore constitutional order to the country by reversing the *coup d'etat* of the Kabbah regime.

The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security was established in 1998. The Authority consists of the heads of State or Governement of Member States and is the Mechanism's Highest decision-making body with powers to act on all matters concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution, peacekeeping, security, humanitarian support, peace-building, control of cross-border crime and proliferation of small arms.

The retroactive authorizations of ECOWAS to restore peace in Sierra Leone were also included within Security Council 1132 Resolution (1997) and 1233 Resolution (1999).

The adoption of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) have enabled the region to make progress in the area of conflict prevention. The framework created by these legal instruments progressively consolidated democratic control around the principles of constitutional convergence based on: inter alia separation of powers, political participation of citizens in the democratic process, zero tolerance for unconstitutional seizure of power, freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Democratic processes are still delicate, that it why a constant international cooperation is needed, in order to avoid serious political and institutional crises creating instability.

In this sense, Africa represents a geopolitical priority for the European Union, it is Europe's closest neighbour continent. The cooperation with the EU provides medium- to long-term support to national, regional and local and stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa for the development of effective security institutions.

The EU and its Member States are together the most important development partner in the world, the security through cooperation being promoted by: Africa-EU partnership (Joint Vision for 2030), joint European action (Team Europe Initiatives with EU Members States, Implementation Agencies, Development Finance Institutions, Civils Society and Private Sector) and impact (Global Gateway).

The main areas of security work in this region include: support to the development and implementation of regional norms, strategic and operational advice to governments to ensure well-coordinated and holistic reforms, strengthening of internal accountability and control mechanisms in security institutions and support to external oversight actors, including parliaments, independent bodies and civil society. The high-level Political Dialogue held in November 2022, showed a strong commitment of the EU and Sierra Leone to their partnership, and allowed for an intense and constructive dialogue on the priority areas of Team Europe's development partnership with Sierra Leone (including the EU Multiannual Indicative Program's areas of green economy, human

development and governance), as well as on preparations for the 2023 general elections, an enabling business investment climate, and multilateral cooperation.

The effective cooperation between EU and Sierra Leone means financing Programmes, such as:

Support to democracy, peace and social cohesion (2022-2025)

In this regard, the EU promotes peaceful, credible and inclusive elections by supporting Electoral Management Bodies through the UNDP Multi-Donor Electoral Assistance Basket Fund.

With EU funding the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) enhanced the integrity and effectiveness of future elections and public confidence in the electoral process, concretely: capacity building for Electoral Management Bodies, voter and civic education campaigns, support for domestic observations, support inclusive election and conflict prevention.

Governance Progamme (2017-2023)

Election component: Through UNDP's "Support National Electoral Commission (SNEC)", the EU supports legislative reforms and implementation of Electoral Observation Mission recommendations;

Parliament component: Technical and financial assistance is provided to strengthen Parliamentary institutional capacity, notably in the remits of its legislative and scrutiny functions and its public outreach and accountability.

This European Union -funded project in Sierra Leone was launched in the aftermath of presidential, parliamentary, and local elections of March 2018—the ideal timeframe to consolidate past reforms in Parliament's work and electoral cycles. The project builds upon the commitment already undertaken by the Government of Sierra Leone, as supported through partners including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the EU, and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

EU, ECOWAS, UN and AU are following closely this process of democratic consolidation and adopted, for instance, Joint Statement towards Sierra Leone's presidential, parliamentary and local council elections scheduled to take place on 7 March 2018. The four organizations welcome the efforts made by the National Electoral Commission for the preparation of the polls and also welcome the deployment of short- and long-term national and international observer missions, expression their confidence in the capacity of national actors to successfully conclude the electoral process, as a milestone towards deepening democratic and participatory governance and maintain this successful trend in the region.

As for the election process in June 2023 the EU's External Action Service deployed an electoral Misision to Sierra Leone. Even if the Mission highligthed the peaceful atmosphere on election day, on 19 July, EU published its interim report into the conduct of the election, while noting Sierra Leone's commitment to a democratic process, found this was challenged by some isolated cases of violence and lack of transparency.

The timely and inclusive electoral reform of 2022 laid a sound basis for democratic elections and overall, the 2023 general elections underscored a clear commitment among Sierra Leoneans to the democratic processes, while also proving an urgent need for further reforms focusing on transparency, trust-building and inclusion.

At present, Sierra Leone's global relevance is increasingly being recognized. The objective of the Ministry of the Government is to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national stability in interaction with other sovereign states and non-state actors, within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

It is a member of the Human Rights Council with diplomatic representation in Geneva. Sierra Leone's President is Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government to canvass the African Common Position in the reform of the United Nations Security

Council. The ambassadorial and representative offices in the multilateral stations – AU, ECOWAS, EU, and UN, have particularly demonstrated maturity and effectiveness in contributing to the achievements of the institutions' stated goals and objectives. In the 21st century, the foreign policy and international relations trajectory of Sierra Leone points toward a genuine ambition of the country to visibly and productively align itself with the aspirations of the nation and the complex realities of the global diplomatic environment.

Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone, design and application

The design for a SSR framework in Sierra Leone undergoes at least two transformational phases. The first generation of security sector reform, the ortodox generation, is articulated around the need for confidence building measures, inclusiveness, and restraint in post-conflict settings.

SSR is a critical component of peacebuilding interventions, often undertaken by states in collaboration with national and international partners. There is a debate between mainstream analysts and postcolonial critics regarding the emergence of second-generation SSR (2GSSR) and the dominance of Western-driven, securitized practices in the literature on SSR. The goal of SSR is to create effective and efficient state security forces under democratic civilian control, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The term 'security sector reform (SSR)' was first coined by the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, at the end of the 20th century. SSR involves the reform of judicial systems, intelligence services, police, correctional systems, and the military, particularly in post-conflict settings.

The characteristics of the first generation of SSR also include the need for effective legislation, the creation and strengthening of governmental institutions, and addressing socio-economic inequalities to reduce aggressive behaviors and enhance security. In countries where domestic security forces have been involved in perpetrating violence, SSR is essential for achieving sustainable peace.

The first generation of security sector reform (SSR) in Sierra Leone encompassed several key elements. The reform process in Sierra Leone was characterized by a consultative approach to framing the reform program, reflecting the distribution of power among forces on the ground. Additionally, the reform emphasized the use of standard operating procedures and psychosocial counseling as essential components. Furthermore, the reform process in Sierra Leone was marked by a focus on local ownership and democratic governance, which was more extensive compared to neighboring Liberia. The SSR in Sierra Leone also involved international tutelage, indicating the involvement of external actors in the reform process. Moreover, the reform efforts in Sierra Leone were intertwined with the country's natural resource sector, particularly the diamond industry, with a focus on merging security and development agendas. The reform process also aimed to address the exploitation of diamonds and gold, with revenue generated intended for the development of the country and the well-being of its people.

These elements collectively illustrate the multifaceted nature of the first generation of SSR in Sierra Leone, encompassing local ownership, consultative approaches, international involvement, and a focus on natural resource management.

The first generation security sector reform in Sierra Leone had a significant impact on the country's socio-political landscape and economic development. It played a crucial role in transforming the security forces from corrupt and abusive entities into professional and accountable institutions. The first stage of SSR in Sierra Leone began with the signing of Lome Agreement in 1999, which was considered a major stepping stone in ending the civil war. The agreement formally ended the civil war and provided a foundation for subsequent security sector reform efforts. The second stage of the security sector reform in Sierra Leone was the re-establishment of local councils in 2004. This securitizing move was aimed at giving local communities a greater say in the governance and reversing years of marginaliztation of rural districts. The third stage of SSR was the restoration of local governments and local councils, led by Sierra Leone People`s Party and Ahmed

Tejan Kabbah. In the forth stage efforts were made to embrace a democratic dispensation. This included the passing of Access Information Act in 2003, which guranteed access to government information and imposed penalties for failure to provide information.

`Second Generation` of Security Sector Reform (2GSSR), what is it about?

The characteristics of second generation SSR in Sierra Leone include addressing root causes of conflict and violence, promoting civilian oversight and democratic control, engaging communities in the reform processes, prioritizing gender equality and women's inclusion, and taking a holistic approach that integrates security, justice, and development initiatives.

The main features of second-generation security sector reform (SSR) encompass a shift from the traditional focus on building state security forces towards a more comprehensive approach that includes democratic civilian control, rule of law, and respect for human rights. Second-generation SSR emphasizes inclusiveness and restraint as criteria for assessing the effectiveness of security sector reforms in restoring confidence in post-conflict security sectors. Additionally, second-generation SSR involves gender balancing reforms, aiming to ensure the equal participation of women in the security sector, which has gained increased global attention over the past two decades.

Furthermore, second-generation SSR is critical in post-conflict settings, particularly in the reform of judicial systems, intelligence services, police, correctional systems, and the military. It also emphasizes the professionalization of the public sector bureaucracy, aligning with 'second generation' reform principles. The thorough reform of the security sector is recognized as necessary for guaranteeing long-term democratic stability in post-conflict countries. Second-generation SSR is characterized by the involvement of the international community in peacebuilding and addresses issues around technocracy and the complex division of labor between different multilateral institutions.

United Nations role in SSR in Sierra Leone

The United Nations has played a crucial role in the security sector reform process in Sierra Leone. Through its peacekeeping mission, the UN supported the disarmament and reintegration of former combatants, helped to rebuild the national police force, and provided technical assistance and training to enhance the effectiveness of Sierra Leone's security institutions. The UN's involvement in Sierra Leone's security sector reform has been instrumental in establishing a stable and secure environment for the country. Furthermore, the UN's engagement has also focused on promoting principles of accountability, human rights, and good governance within Sierra Leone's security sector. This comprehensive approach has contributed to strengthening the capacity of local security forces and promoting a culture of respect for the rule of law. Additionally, the United Nations has supported efforts to address the underlying causes of insecurity, including poverty and inequality, through development initiatives and promoting inclusive governance. By leveraging its expertise and resources, the United Nations has played a vital role in assisting Sierra Leone in achieving lasting peace and stability. The United Nations' involvement in Sierra Leone's security sector reform has been multi-faceted and comprehensive. In addition to supporting disarmament and reintegration efforts, the UN has also focused on rebuilding and strengthening the national police force. This entails not only providing technical assistance and training but also advocating for a culture of accountability, human rights, and good governance within the security sector.

One of the key successes has been the improvement in public perceptions of the military and security sector, reducing the perception of them as a threat. Security sector reform in Sierra Leone has been under international tutelage, with initiatives aimed at demobilization and peacekeeping efforts. The reform efforts have extended to training programs for chiefdom police, providing a more context-based approach to security sector reform in the country. Additionally, the country has

been involved in regional collaborations to enhance disease surveillance systems and preparedness, such as the REDISSE project.

The United Nations Security Council has been instrumental in promoting gender-balanced security sector reforms through various resolutions, emphasizing the importance of women's participation in the security sector. Furthermore, UN peace operations have consistently integrated security sector reform and the protection of civilians as core components of their mandates. Challenges remain in achieving meaningful local ownership of security sector reform initiatives in Sierra Leone. National Action Plans, although intended to increase local ownership, have been criticized for their bureaucratic approach, hindering the creation of genuine local ownership. This highlights the complexity and contestation involved in post-conflict security sector reform efforts.

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) between October 1999 and December 2005 has proven to be efficient in restoring peace to the country, its mandates targeting several components of state building such as: security assistence, maintain stability, and support the disarmament and demobilization process. UNAMSIL implemented a robust disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program to help former combatants reintegrate into society. In supporting the reformation of national security forces and the training provided for the police and military, this mission set the course to peaceful transformation. The components of SSR in UNAMSIL`s mandate also managed to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid leading to succesful conduct of elections and the transition to democratic governance. The Ebola epidemic in 2014 and 2015, followed by COVID-19 pandemic and Russia`s invasion of Ukraine have been major set-backs for the Sierra leonean socio-economic landscape, given the fact that poverty and food insecurity are still common phenomena in the country. Although the political transformation of the country shows steady improvement in the last decade, with an overallscore of 5.85 ranking 54 out of 137 measured countries, the governance index and the economic transformation barely sits at 4.67 (ranking at #70) and respectively at 4.25 (ranking at #100), on a 1-10 scale.

What was the pace of EU`s involvement into Sierra Leone`s SSR?

The European Union has been involved in security sector reform in Sierra Leone, with implications for both the country and the region. The EU's engagement in Sierra Leone's security sector reform aligns with its broader security-first agenda, which has been critiqued for its impact on democratization and peacebuilding efforts. The EU's involvement in Sierra Leone's SSR is part of its external policies, which are designed to reinforce and condition membership in candidate and potential candidate countries, particularly in the Western Balkans. This approach reflects the EU's strategy of reinforcement by reward, emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between EU membership conditionality and security sector reform in candidate countries.

Sierra Leone's security sector reform has been a complex process, involving various stakeholders, including traditional leaders, community policing chiefs, and international partners. The reform efforts have aimed to address the aftermath of the civil war, including challenges related to human security, such as wartime sexual violence and the social inclusion of marginalized groups. Additionally, the reform process has intersected with economic and social issues, such as the management of malaria and the impact of the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak on nutrition and healthcare access. Furthermore, the reform efforts have sought to bridge healthcare gaps through informal mobile phone use and improve access to safe health services for pregnant women in rural areas.

The implications of the EU's involvement in Sierra Leone's security sector reform extend beyond the country's borders. The EU's security-first agenda has been critiqued for its impact on neighboring countries, such as Albania and Montenegro, raising questions about the effectiveness of security sector reforms in promoting democratization and peacebuilding in the region. Moreover, the EU's engagement in SSR intersects with broader international efforts to address conflict

minerals and resource wars, particularly related to diamonds, which have had significant social, environmental, and political implications in Sierra Leone.

Europe's involvement in security sector reform in Sierra Leone has been a significant aspect of the country's post-conflict reconstruction. After the devastating civil war, Sierra Leone became the focus of extensive international efforts to rebuild and reform its security sector. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) engaged with the chieftaincy system in Sierra Leone through its SSR program, which presented important political challenges. The UK and Sierra Leone signed a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding committing Sierra Leone to specific reforms, including in the security and justice sectors, in exchange for a commitment by the UK to provide security and financing reaching up to 60 percent of the government's budget. The US State Department and Britain's DFID and Ministry of Defense invested significant effort and resources in reforming the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone, demonstrating the international involvement in the security sector reform.

The UK's multidisciplinary response to the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone also underscores its involvement in addressing security and health challenges in the country. Additionally, the UK military deployed to Sierra Leone in response to the Ebola virus disease epidemic, highlighting its commitment to providing assistance during crises. The UK's military medical teams were prepared to establish an Ebola Treatment Centre in Sierra Leone, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to addressing health security issues in the country. The UK's security sector reform (SSR) mission in Sierra Leone resulted in substantial support for the country's security forces, including training, logistical assistance, and engagement with traditional governance structures. The Comprehensive Security Sector Reform Programme (CCSSP) led to the training of approximately 9000 police officers, cadet courses at the Bramshill Police Training College in England, and the provision of various vehicles and equipment. This tangible support enhanced the capacity and capabilities of Sierra Leone's security forces.

The UK's support, including financial assistance and advocacy for decentralization, has been instrumental in promoting post-conflict reconstruction and institutional development in Sierra Leone.

However, it is important to note that the outcomes of the UK's SSR mission in Sierra Leone have been subject to critical analysis. Some scholars have highlighted the challenges and limitations of security sector reform efforts, emphasizing the need for context-based approaches and the potential gaps in formal security sector training. Additionally, the complexities of post-conflict war economies continue to pose challenges to reconstruction activities, including disarmament, demobilization, and security sector reform.

The international community's involvement in Sierra Leone's security sector reform has been a subject of scholarly inquiry, with studies examining the ideological and political drivers of justice sector development and rule-of-law programs supported by the UK and the US in Sierra Leone and Liberia.. Additionally, the merging of security and development agendas in primary commodity sectors, particularly in peace-building reforms in Sierra Leone's diamond sector, has been a focus of academic research. The process of reforming Sierra Leone's security sector after the civil war officially ended in 2002 has been extensively analyzed, highlighting the complexities and challenges involved in this endeavor.

Furthermore, the principle of local ownership in Sierra Leone's security sector reform has been a topic of discussion, with some scholars considering the reform to have demonstrated local ownership, In comparaison with Liberia where scholars have raised concerns about the lack of ownership in military reform and international security. The role of the informal gold mining sector in Sierra Leone has also been examined in the context of security and development agendas, emphasizing the need to integrate local realities in policy formulation.

Europe's involvement in Sierra Leone's SSR is encompassing international tutelage, the integration of security and development agendas, the principle of local ownership, and the emphasis

on responsible reconstruction. These stages reflect the complex and evolving dynamics of European Union's engagement in shaping the security sector reform in Sierra Leone.

EU involvement in Sierra Leone's security can be understood through various lenses. Firstly, the successful United Nations peace process in Sierra Leone serves as a valuable lesson in conflict resolution, highlighting the potential for external actors like the EU to contribute positively to security dynamics in the region. Additionally, the post-conflict recovery process in Sierra Leone aimed to address the drivers of conflict, indicating the potential for external interventions, such as those by the EU, to stabilize fragile states. Furthermore, the securitization of migration in the EU has led to an increased demand for services provided by the private security sector, indicating the EU's evolving approach to security challenges, which could have implications for its involvement in Sierra Leone.

The EU's involvement in various parts of the African continent can also be contextualized within the broader framework of the its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), as well as in the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). These policies have been integral in shaping the EU's role in international security, and understanding their application can provide insights into the EU's potential contributions to security in Sierra Leone. Moreover, the securitization of migration in the EU and its impact on national security and defense strategies of member states is a crucial aspect to consider when examining the EU's involvement in security dynamics beyond its borders.

The European Union's (EU) involvement in Sierra Leone's security can be analyzed through the transition from community aid to development in post-conflict Sierra Leone, as discussed by W.M. Miller. This transition reflects the shift in international organizations' roles and priorities in the country. Additionally, Çiftçi provides insights into the critical discussion on conflict resolution and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, shedding light on the specific challenges and successes in addressing conflict dynamics. Furthermore, Gbla discusses SSR under international tutelage in Sierra Leone, which is crucial in understanding the broader context of security interventions in the country. Adamo compares the roles of Executive Outcomes and ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, offering valuable perspectives on the diverse actors involved in security missions. Moreover, Cubitt explores responsible reconstruction after war, emphasizing the importance of meeting local needs for building peace, which is pertinent to understanding the holistic approach to security missions in Sierra Leone. This aligns with the findings of Charley & M'Cormack, who have extensively discussed the police reform in post-conflict Sierra Leone, shedding light on the priorities in the security sector reform after the civil war.

Furthermore, Sheriff et al. have delved into the enablers for achieving sustainable development in Sierra Leone, which is closely linked to the broader goals of SSR, emphasizing the need for better planning, research, and innovation to achieve sustainable development in the country. Additionally, Jackson has provided an empirical discourse on the adoption of inflation targeting in Sierra Leone, highlighting the macroeconomic priorities that are integral to the SSR process.

Challenges ahead for Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone

The security sector reform in Sierra Leone faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness. One of the critical issues is the lack of coordination between neo-patrimonialism, security challenges, and the processes of securitization, which creates a gap in understanding the security dynamics in Sierra Leone. Additionally, the country grapples with failed institutional governance policies, unproductive real sector, high lending rates, and disincentives to private sector investments, which contribute to the twin deficits hypothesis and indicate government failure. Moreover, the traditional healthcare sector in Sierra Leone receives minimal provision from current policy interventions, exacerbating healthcare gaps. The internationalization of legal norms and

justice sector development in Sierra Leone is influenced by underlying ideological and political drivers, which may impact the promotion of the rule of law.

The economic challenges in Sierra Leone, particularly in the forest and mining sectors, are exacerbated by colonial hegemonic acts, rebel wars, and exploitation, leading to a patchy state of natural resources and vulnerable conditions for miners. Additionally, the adoption of inflation targeting in Sierra Leone is undermined by weak real sector operations and a somewhat dollarized domestic market, which complicates monetary policy management.

Second Generation of Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone - current approaches

The concept of "second-generation" SSR typically refers to an evolved approach to SSR that emerged in response to the limitations and challenges of the initial SSR efforts. Second generation SSR involves additional stakeholders ranging from emergent civil society groups, new forms of public-private partnerships, as well as previously igniored local actors. This means greater inclusion of civil society and non-governmental actors, so recognizing the importance of involving a wider array of stakeholders within SSR processes.

Emphasizing democratic governance using all means available is of pivotal importance. Successful SSR needs to be embedded in a democratic governance framework, ensuring functional oversight mechanisms and involving diverse political entities. Given the current socio-political situation of Sierra Leone incremental and context-specific reforms are much more suitable to consolidate state`s authority and governing capacity. Considering the resilience of existing regimes and challenges to reform, second-generation SSR may advocate for gradual reforms tailored to the specific political and cultural contexts of the country. To effectively promote SSR, there is a need to address governance agendas at both sub-regional and national levels, creating space for meaningful Security Sector Governance.

Critics have noted that SSR initially did not adequately address specific realities in Africa, suggesting that a second generation would have to be more responsive to these. The reform of security sectors is most effective when integrated into a larger struggle for democratic change, indicating that SSR should be part of the broader political and social reforms. These elements suggest a more holistic, inclusive, and contextually aware approach to SSR, beyond the more technical and militaristic focus that may have characterized earlier efforts.

The case of SSR in Sierra Leone is a proven recipe of rapid stabilization, taking into consideration that in the late 1990s the country was considered to be a failed state. UK-led support thus become pivotal in creating the governmental legitimacy the country lost a few years back. The UK`s role becomes instrumental also because of several key actors like on the ground: General Sir David Richards, the commander of British operations, Keith Biddle a former British police officer who served as Inspector General of Police between Nov. 1999 to Jun. 2003. Furthermore, at the level of the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), the UK provided the vast majority of the personnel which have supported the transformation of Sierra Leone`s armed forces, some of its leaders serving as primary advisers to the president.

Although the focus on justice reform didn`t gained much traction in the beginning of the stabilization years, it is increasingly pushed to the forefront of Sierra Leone`s politics by the UN, ECOWAS, AU, as well as by faith based-organisations or victims and human rights` groups.

The General elections in 2007 provided the opportunity window for the SSR approch, although the consensus over who would implement the reform will not be fully achieved. The decision to implement SSR in the two DfID funded programs, respectively Justice Sector Development Programme and the Access to Security and Justice Programme, has only resulted in a politicised batlle to which donor states have not intervened. Due to the numerous local centres of power, embedded in the informal chieftaincy systems, security and justice programs have been limited in terms of results. This led to the exclusion of traditional leaders, especially in the early stages of the reform, because their integration would have further fragmented the capacity of central

government to safeguard the reform plans created around a nucleus of international advisors and regional stateholders.

The general elections held in june 2023, supported by an inclusive electoral reform one year earlier, have emphasized that SSR can only be addressed by the two dominant political forces in the country: the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC), which count for 97,33% of the votes expressed on the 24th of june, in correlation with other national authorities, electoral stakeholders, and civil society groups. The most important documents for electoral reform in Sierra Leone, the Public Elections Act (PEA) and the Political Parties Act (PPA) have been revised in order to include new provisions such as: the introduction of a gender quota for party lists, a increasing financial authonomy for the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone, as well as an expanded mandate for the Political Parties Regulation Commision, which calls upon the ability of this body to apply sanctions for prohibited conduct or even deregister parties that fail to comply with the norms. The country`s main two political parties show consistency in implementing the recommendations addressed by the EU EOM final report in 2018, their effects spanning from changes to the electoral legal framework, improvements to the electoral administration, voter registration, voter education, media access, and measures to enhance the inclusivity and fairness of the election process.

Conclusions

The success of SSR in Sierra Leone is mostly determined by the security governance efforts of sucessive donors, which enabled the central government to look for support outside the capital city, thus forming a network of intelligence under the coordination over the Office of National Security. This body serves as an early warning system and was able to provide a faithfull screening to the country`s local sources of instability. The projection of SSR in Sierra Leone, at least following a donor`s perspective is still far behind its initial results, due to the assymetric nature of the support currently privided to rulling parties, mainly because we are witnessing an empowering collective stance similar with a transfer of responsability. This in turn can only be consistent if the planning cycles and their results on the ground are systematically reviewed and enforced.

If prior stabilization efforts of Sierra Leone focused mainly on supporting military stakeholders, now the accent resides on the lawenforcement component, thus signalling a move towards human security agenda. That does not imply that military efforts have been set aside, by contrary, they were positively addressed by new initiatives such as Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA), which enables the consolidation of national security architecture under the guidance of The National Security Council.

UNSC Resolution 1270 has contributed greatly at directing attention and shifty priorities by introducing within UNAMSIL a first of its kind civil protection mandate. Future initiatives for SSR would also need to integrate a restorative justice mechanism or framework in order to galvanize and reconcile the Sierra Leonean society.

Recent elections demonstrated the consolidation of traditional parties, while leaving limited role for the establishment of a pluralist conception of democratic governance, as advocated by all major external donors. SSR in Sierra Leone besides initially being a model of intervention, has evolved from an ad-hoc and reactive approach towards a transformational and proactive platform to support country`s consolidation endeavours and development goals.

Moreover, SSR success is not just about achieving end-goals, it's about significant and sustained improvements in day-to-day security conditions for the majority of the population compared to prior conditions. In this line of thought a more nuanced approach is required, that takes into account the specific goals of the SSR, the unique context of the country within the regional security complex is part of, and the interplay between the security sector and broader political, social, and economic dynamics.

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