

# Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender

Karen Barnes and Peter Albrecht



Geneva Centre for the  
Democratic Control of  
Armed Forces (DCAF)



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### **About the Authors**

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International Alert is a London-based NGO that has worked for over 20 years to lay the foundations for lasting peace and security in communities affected by violent conflict. International Alert's multi-faceted approach focuses both in and across various regions; aiming to shape policies and practices that affect peacebuilding; and helping build skills and capacity through training.

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### **The Gender and SSR Toolkit**

This Tool on Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender is part of a *Gender and SSR Toolkit*. Designed to provide a practical introduction to gender issues for security sector reform practitioners and policy-makers, the Toolkit includes the following 12 Tools and corresponding Practice Notes:

1. Security Sector Reform and Gender
  2. Police Reform and Gender
  3. Defence Reform and Gender
  4. Justice Reform and Gender
  5. Penal Reform and Gender
  6. Border Management and Gender
  7. Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
  8. National Security Policy-Making and Gender
  9. Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
  10. Private Military and Security Companies and Gender
  11. SSR Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender
  12. Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel
- Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments

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### **DCAF**

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) promotes good governance and reform of the security sector. The Centre conducts research on good practices, encourages the development of appropriate norms at the national and international levels, makes policy recommendations and provides in-country advice and assistance programmes. DCAF's partners include governments, parliaments, civil society, international organisations and security sector actors such as police, judiciary, intelligence agencies, border security services and the military.

### **OSCE/ODIHR**

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is the main institution for the OSCE's human dimension of security: a broad concept that includes the protection of human rights; the development of democratic societies, with emphasis on elections, institution-building, and governance; strengthening the rule of law; and promoting genuine respect and mutual understanding among individuals, as well as nations. The ODIHR contributed to the development of the Toolkit.

### **UN-INSTRAW**

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) is the only UN entity mandated to develop research programmes that contribute to the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality worldwide. Through alliance-building with UN Member States, international organisations, academia, civil society, and other actors, UN-INSTRAW:

- Undertakes action-oriented research from a gender perspective that has a concrete impact on policies, programmes and projects;
- Creates synergies for knowledge management and information exchange;
- Strengthens the capacities of key stakeholders to integrate gender perspectives in policies, programmes and projects.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>APG</b>	Associate Parliamentary Group (UK)
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GAPS</b>	Gender Action for Peace and Security
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>SEA</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>STIs</b>	Sexually Transmitted Infections
<b>WIPNET</b>	Women in Peacebuilding Network
<b>WOZA</b>	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
<b>WRC</b>	White Ribbon Campaign
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN SCR 1325</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security

# Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender

## 1 Introduction

This tool provides an introduction to the importance and benefits of integrating gender issues into civil society oversight of the security sector, including practical examples and recommendations. Civil society can contribute to the process of security sector oversight in a number of different ways, including through both formal and informal mechanisms. Ensuring that gender issues are addressed, and that women and women's organisations are fully included, can make these mechanisms more participatory and comprehensive. Gender-responsive civil society oversight mechanisms can more effectively ensure that the needs and interests of both women and men are visible and included, and therefore that the security sector is held accountable for protecting all members of the population.

A transparent, accountable and effectively governed security sector is a linchpin of the democratic process. Oversight by civil society is an important mechanism to support the realisation of these values, through articulating and communicating the security needs and interests of the population to policymakers, and through the provision of expertise and monitoring of state security services. Poorly regulated or unaccountable security forces can lead to increased insecurity and the misallocation of resources, and can undermine good governance efforts. Furthermore, a non-democratically governed security sector can easily be used for partisan ends, or can cause the state's monopoly on the use of force to unravel.<sup>1</sup> Oversight of the policies, structures, programmes, actions and reform processes of the security sector is one way of ensuring that human rights standards and the rule of law are upheld by the security sector.

This tool is designed to be a resource for civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged in oversight of the security sector, as well as those CSOs that seek to play a more active role in this regard. The tool is also relevant for policymakers and officials in national governments, international and regional organisations, and donor countries around the world that are engaged in designing and implementing security sector reforms and that could play an active role in strengthening and supporting civil society engagement.

This tool includes:

- A description of the role of civil society in oversight mechanisms
- The rationale behind the inclusion of gender issues and ways in which this can strengthen and enhance oversight
- Entry points for incorporating gender into different aspects of civil society oversight, including practical tips and examples
- An overview of integrating gender into civil society oversight in post-conflict, transitional, developing and developed countries.
- Key recommendations
- Additional resources

## 2 What is the role of civil society in security sector oversight?

### 2.1 What is civil society?

Civil society can be understood as the political space that exists between the individual and the government:

**Civil society** is a domain parallel to, but separate from the state and the market, in which citizens freely group together according to their own interests. It encompasses a self-initiated and voluntary sector of formally associated individuals who pursue non-profit purposes in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, religious bodies, professional associations, trade unions, student groups, cultural societies, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Civil society fulfils a range of functions in any given society

- Representing diverse constituents within a population.
- Providing technical expertise to policymakers and government institutions.
- Capacity-building of NGOs and other bodies.
- Delivering and providing services in lieu of the state.
- Providing a space for social interaction and networking.<sup>3</sup>

The media is also included in this tool, given its vital role in both communicating to civil society the roles and responsibilities of the state, and in acting as a conduit of interests and demands of civil society to policymakers.

## 2.2 How is civil society involved in security sector oversight?

Oversight of the security sector can be both internal and external, and it occurs at many different levels and through a range of bodies. External oversight of the sector can be exerted in two main ways: first, by the security sector being directly answerable to the population, and second, by politicians and bureaucrats within any country's government being held accountable for the actions of the security sector. Some of the most typical external oversight bodies are parliaments, constitutional courts, anti-corruption and public accountability bodies, and ombudspersons.

**Civil society oversight of the security sector**, including oversight of security sector reform (SSR), involves the active participation of CSOs in defining security policies and overseeing the structures and practices of security sector actors.<sup>4</sup> The objective is to ensure the incorporation of community-level and grassroots interests and perspectives in the provision of internal and external security, and to support local ownership and sustainability. In addition, civil society oversight ideally supports internationally accepted democratic norms on transparency and accountability. Civil society oversight can occur at local, national, regional and international levels, and can include CSO participation in both formal and informal oversight mechanisms.

The security sector encompasses:

- **Core security actors** including: armed forces, police, *gendarmeries*, paramilitary forces, intelligence and security services, border guards, and customs authorities.
- **Security management and oversight bodies** including: parliament and its relevant legislative committees; government/the executive, including ministries of defence, internal affairs and foreign affairs; national security advisory bodies; customary and traditional authorities; and financial management bodies.
- **Justice and rule of law institutions** including: justice ministries, prisons, criminal investigation and prosecution services, the judiciary, other customary and traditional justice systems, human rights commissions and ombudspersons.
- **Non-statutory security forces** including: liberation armies, guerrilla armies, private bodyguard units, private security companies, private military companies and political party militias.<sup>5</sup>

A culture of participation and transparency is key to a functioning and democratic security sector, and this can be facilitated through engagement with civil

society. The expertise and autonomous interests of civil society provide an important checks-and-balances function in regard to the power of the state to determine security and defence matters. Most importantly, the incorporation of civil society actors into oversight provides policymakers with a wider range of perspectives, interests, information and alternatives. However, it is important to recognise that CSOs are not always democratic or representative of the population's needs or interests, and so their inclusion will not automatically lead to effective oversight.

The main ways in which civil society participates in security sector oversight are:

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

## 2.3 What are the challenges to civil society involvement in security sector oversight?

A number of key challenges can constrain the ability of civil society to engage in effective oversight:

- **Tradition of secrecy** surrounding the security sector makes attempts to regulate or inform the public about its policies and activities difficult.
- **Prioritisation of national security concerns** over civil liberties and human rights means that there is less scope for demanding accountability from the security sector.
- **Lack of expertise and capacity** amongst CSOs to engage with issues related to the security sector.



- **Lack of trust and/or transparency** between CSOs and the security sector can make it difficult for CSOs to access key decision-makers and influence security and justice policies and programming. Lack of trust or cooperation amongst CSOs themselves can also be limiting.
- **Lack of independence of CSOs** because they are either funded or co-opted by elements of the security sector, which compromises their independence.
- **Too little donor support** for transparency and democratic accountability of the security sector, in favour of technical assistance and efficiency within the sector, which excludes an emphasis on strengthening civil society oversight.<sup>6</sup>
- **Fragmented civil society** with organisations failing to collaborate or collectively advocate on issues related to security sector oversight. CSOs can be dominated by specific groups and certain organisations which can lead to women's groups or rural organisations, for example, being marginalised and finding it difficult to engage in oversight mechanisms.

Civil society organisations are not homogenous, and their nature, capacity and structure can vary widely between and within given contexts. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities. The diversity of CSOs is one of civil society's most important strengths, since their wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as their different perspectives and priorities, enable them to make important contributions in many different spheres and across a range of issues. Furthermore, CSOs can be well placed to oversee the security sector, given that their independent position can enable them to be more critical of state security actors and structures.

This is a challenge for donor organisations that, for a variety of reasons, may end up collaborating with the most accessible and established CSOs, even though they may not be representative of the interests of the majority of local actors. If CSOs are not perceived as legitimate by the broader population, or by the government and other key stakeholders, then this can compromise their effectiveness, as well as their ability to contribute constructively to oversight mechanisms. It is particularly important that CSOs engaged in oversight have networks that extend beyond capital cities and the elite groups that can often dominate formal structures.

Harnessing the diversity of perspectives to ensure broad representation and legitimacy, while recognising that some CSOs have more experience, capacity and access to oversight mechanisms than others, is a challenge facing both CSOs themselves as well as external actors that seek to support their engagement in the security sector.

## 3 Why is gender important to civil society oversight?

**Gender** refers to the particular roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours and values that society ascribes to men and women. 'Gender' therefore refers to *learned* differences between men and women, while 'sex' refers to the *biological* differences between males and females. Gender roles vary widely within and across cultures, and can change over time. Gender refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.

**Gender mainstreaming** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.<sup>7</sup>

For more information  
see Tool on SSR  
and Gender

Overall, the role of any oversight process is to strengthen the structures, policies and mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the security sector can be held to account, both financially and in its actions. There are many different ways in which the integration of gender perspectives and the full involvement of women's organisations strengthen civil society oversight of the security sector, including fostering local ownership, effectiveness and accountability.

### Compliance with obligations under international laws and instruments

Integrating gender into civil society oversight of the security sector is necessary to comply with international and regional laws, instruments and norms concerning security and gender. Key instruments include:

- *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979)
- *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995)
- *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* (2000)

For more information, please see the Toolkit's Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments.

### 3.1 Strengthening local ownership

*'The involvement of civil society in SSR programmes is a precondition for wider and more inclusive local ownership and, ultimately, sustainability. Civil society organisations have an important role to play owing to their potential for giving voice to the interests and concerns of the wider population and encouraging reforms that respond to popular security and justice needs.'*

OECD-DAC Handbook on Security System Reform<sup>8</sup>

While it can take time, extensive dialogue, cooperation and compromise amongst a range of actors, local ownership is critical to the development of a democratic, transparent and accountable security sector. However, donors and other external actors still sometimes impose models, policies and programmes on local stakeholders, even where they do not reflect their priorities or interests.<sup>9</sup> The consequences of top-down approaches are stark: 'The imperative of local ownership is both a matter of respect and a pragmatic necessity. The bottom line is that reforms that are not shaped and driven by local actors are unlikely to be implemented properly and sustained. In the absence of local ownership, SSR is bound to fail.'

Integrating gender issues can generate and consolidate local ownership by ensuring that both men and women are engaged and have a stake in the development or reform of the security sector as it affects their communities and countries. It also highlights the importance of involving women's organisations as key local stakeholders (see 3.3). Furthermore, without local ownership and, in particular, the engagement of local perspectives and actors in the process of reforming or strengthening the security sector, integrating a gender approach will be nearly impossible. A necessary step in the integration of a gender perspective into the security sector involves engagement with all members of the population to identify their roles, responsibilities, capacities, needs and interests as they relate to the provision of security. The process of generating this understanding can only come about if local actors are involved and actively engaged in security-related issues.

Donors, such as the UK Department for International Development and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), have recognised that without local ownership, security sector reform is unlikely to succeed.<sup>10</sup> While the extent of local ownership of SSR does depend in large part on the capacity of civil society to participate and the government's political will for an inclusive approach, external actors can also play a role in supporting broader engagement and participation in programmes and projects initiated by local actors.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 Effective and comprehensive oversight mechanisms through the integration of gender issues

Gender perspectives are important to civil society oversight for several reasons, not least because they help to recognise that any given population is not a homogenous group, and constitutes many different security needs and interests. The roles and responsibilities that men and women assume in relation to the security sector can also differ widely, and are frequently the result of socially constructed ideas about gender. For example, men are often expected to be the security providers within their families and communities and generally risk far higher

exposure to gun-related violence. Women, on the other hand, often have specific security needs, such as protection from domestic violence, that may not be properly addressed by law enforcement or the justice system. Given that the security sector is mandated with the provision of security and justice to both men and women, it is critical that processes of civil society oversight incorporate gender issues into their oversight function to ensure that the systems and structures in place protect the needs of everyone, not just those of the most visible or privileged sectors within society.

Through their analysis, monitoring and oversight functions, civil society can reveal those who are being excluded from security sector decision-making and which segments of the population have less access to, or ownership over, the mechanisms and protection of the security sector. Ensuring that marginalised voices are part of the process is an important role of any oversight mechanism. This in turn may lead to increased involvement of women's organisations in security processes.<sup>12</sup>

Institutions and individuals mandated with the provision of security can at times also be a source of insecurity for the general population, in particular for women and marginalised groups that may face violence at the hands of security forces. This violence, including gender-based violence (GBV), may be perpetrated by security sector personnel or it may derive from the legislation, policies and structures that make up the rule of law. Where civil society oversight mechanisms fail to take gender issues into account, the security sector's structures, policies and culture may continue to condone GBV against women, men, boys and girls; gender inequality; and exclusionary practices. This in itself is a powerful justification for ensuring that civil society oversight includes the perspectives of all groups within a given population.

It is important to note that oversight is not just concerned with formal structures and procedures, but also involves looking at less quantifiable factors such as tradition, political culture and other informal rules of behaviour that play a role in determining the accountability of the security sector.<sup>13</sup> Gender dynamics are a powerful mediating force in shaping all these factors, and thus understanding how they influence the security sector can shed light on entry points and mechanisms to bring about more accountable and transparent practices.

### 3.3 Enhanced oversight through the involvement of women's organisations

Women's civil society organisations are too often an untapped resource when it comes to ensuring effective oversight of the security sector. In cases where the state falls short of providing security and justice for all the population, women's groups can step in to set up safe houses for victims of GBV; advocate for gender-responsive legal reform; raise awareness

among men and women of their human rights and the obligations of the state to protect them; and provide many other services and forms of capacity-building in their communities. Their expertise and insight into the security and justice needs of diverse groups of people cannot be overlooked. Women's organisations can enhance gender-responsive security sector oversight through:

- Providing gender-responsive policy advice on improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness.
- Monitoring the implementation of international and regional agreements, as well as national and institutional policies on gender equality as related to security sector institutions.
- Providing capacity-building for governance and oversight bodies on gender and security issues.
- Helping ensure that oversight is comprehensive and responsive to communities' needs through identifying security threats and issues facing individuals and communities, especially 'marginalised groups'.
- Facilitating dialogue and negotiation between local communities and security sector oversight bodies.
- Raising public awareness of how to hold security sector institutions accountable, for instance through reporting police abuse.
- Promoting women in decision-making and leadership within security sector institutions and oversight bodies.

Another benefit of involving women's organisations in security sector oversight is their ability to access populations that are difficult to reach. Given that they are often seen as less threatening, women can sometimes more easily move about in conflict contexts, and therefore have more accurate information and insight into the security needs of the most affected members of the population. However, while ensuring the full and equal participation of women and women's organisations is one step towards CSOs being truly representative, it will not alone lead to the achievement of gender equality. It is also critical that a gender perspective be mainstreamed throughout all aspects of civil society oversight to ensure that both men and women's concerns, needs, interests and perspectives are taken into account (for more information on this, see Section 5).

The reality is that it can be difficult to ensure that gender perspectives are fully integrated into civil society oversight due to lack of expertise, resources, political will, time and other factors. However, developing strategies to integrate gender issues, and more actively involving women's organisations in these processes, can have a positive impact on the overall effectiveness of civil society oversight. Some potential consequences include:

- More complete understanding of security structures and processes through the involvement of all key stakeholders within any population, including women and marginalised groups. They bring different perspectives, knowledge and experiences

to security sector oversight that provide alternative understanding and strategies for improving overall security in a given context. The inclusion of women may also make men think differently about themselves as security providers as well as their own insecurities.

- Makes key security issues such as violence against women more 'visible'. This enables oversight mechanisms to more effectively identify, monitor and advocate around these issues.
- Enhances legitimacy of oversight mechanisms through increased participation and representation of the needs and interests of the entire population, rather than just those of the dominant groups.

## 4 How can gender be integrated into civil society oversight of the security sector?

There are several key entry points for effectively integrating gender issues into civil society oversight processes of the security sector and SSR. It must be remembered that this will not happen automatically, but that a certain degree of political will, resources and capacity are necessary for effective gender mainstreaming to occur. In addition, just as adequate funding is critical to effective oversight, funding specifically directed to the incorporation of gender issues is also essential.

Opportunities and entry points for integrating gender into civil society oversight processes will vary depending upon the specific context, including the capacities of the CSOs, security and justice needs, and the specific security sector institution involved. Integrating gender into oversight may entail, but is not limited to, the following measures:

- Ensuring transparent and equitable disciplinary procedures.
- Setting minimum standards of behaviour and codes of ethics for security service personnel.
- Ensuring that gender-specific needs are identified and incorporated into security sector structures and practices.
- Advocating for more women in the security services, particularly at senior decision-making levels.
- Raising awareness of key security issues among the general population, particularly as they relate to women and vulnerable groups.
- Channelling complaints from the public to the appropriate individual or organisation within the security sector.

The recommendations contained in this section are general. For more detailed recommendations and information on civil society engagement in security sector oversight in post-conflict, transitional, developing and developed contexts, see Section 5.

#### 4.1 Security sector monitoring bodies

Civil society can participate in a range of official security sector oversight bodies, such as civilian review boards, public complaints commissions, expert technical teams and independent monitoring groups, as well as state-commissioned evaluations of aspects of the security sector such as prisons, police behaviour, etc. These bodies are tasked with assessing, monitoring or evaluating security sector institutions and are therefore a crucial entry point for ensuring that gender issues are addressed and that women, as well as women's organisations, are participating. Civil society could feed into parliamentary oversight mechanisms by working with parliamentarians to frame parliamentary questions on security-related issues or initiate debates around the issues.

See Tool on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender

Women's organisations, given their specific knowledge and expertise on security provision and women's needs within communities, can bring important added value if included in a participatory or consultative role within monitoring bodies:

- In **Fiji**, women's NGOs collaborating with the Ministry of Women's Affairs met with the Fiji Government's National Security and Defence Review Committee as part of its review process in 2003. The women's organisations were in a position to raise critical issues such as:
  - The way in which the review process was being conducted.
  - Who was being consulted.

- The issues being identified as security threats.
- How international standards and norms, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325, were being incorporated into the process.

As a result, two submissions were made to the Committee, including recommendations for the permanent appointment of the Minister of Women's Affairs on the National Security Council, and representation of women on provincial and district-level security committees.<sup>14</sup>

- In **Cambodia**, women's organisations and human rights groups such as the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights are cooperating with government oversight agencies to investigate allegations of abuse and to monitor compliance with Cambodia's recently adopted Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims. This law gives police greater powers to intervene in domestic violence cases and strengthens the legal recourse available to victims. In addition to monitoring, the CSOs provide legal aid and safe houses for victims.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to including women's organisations, there should ideally be an equal representation of men and women in oversight bodies. The current lack of women's participation could be due to barriers such as:

- Lack of time or opportunity for women to contribute, owing to their domestic responsibilities.
- Socio-cultural attitudes that prevent women from engaging with security sector institutions in the public sphere.
- Lack of skills to provide constructive input.

Many of these obstacles can be overcome through training, awareness-raising and proactive policies on the part of CSOs who participate in monitoring and oversight bodies. Doing so will benefit overall monitoring mechanisms by ensuring that a broader range of expertise, knowledge and resources is being accessed.

It is critical that gender is mainstreamed throughout all activities of monitoring bodies, and that there are adequate structures and processes in place to make

#### Box 1

#### Sample gender checklist for security sector monitoring bodies in post-conflict contexts <sup>16</sup>

- ✓ Does the security situation affect women, men, girls and boys differently?
- ✓ Are women's and men's security issues known and concerns being met?
- ✓ Are women peacekeepers deployed? If so, at what levels?
- ✓ Do peacekeepers receive gender training before deployment and during the mission?
- ✓ What role do women play in the military, armed groups, police or any other security institutions such as intelligence services, border police, customs, immigration and other law enforcement services (percent of forces/groups, by grade and category)?
- ✓ Are actions supported to ensure that women can be part of military, police or any other security institutions?
- ✓ What are the training needs of women and men in the military and armed groups?
- ✓ Is gender training provided to the army and other security services?

## Box 2 Sex-disaggregated data <sup>18</sup>

Sex-disaggregated data (i.e. statistical information that differentiates between men and women), is an essential contribution to gender-responsive security sector research and data collection. It can make visible the different security and justice threats, needs, perceptions and resources that men and women have, which in turn is a highly valuable tool to drive gender-responsive reforms.

Sex-disaggregated data can be used to:

- Identify the different threats to security and justice that women, men, boys and girls face, including how these threats change over time.
- Evaluate whether security and justice services are being provided equally to men and boys, women and girls.
- Generally, identify and define problems, develop options and choose the option which will be most effective and beneficial for both women and men.
- Allocate resources in a more equitable fashion.
- Monitor and evaluate security policies and programmes by their specific impact upon men, women, girls and boys.

sure this happens. However, there can be a tendency to overlook gender issues in monitoring of the security sector or not to perceive them as relevant to security issues. One way to address this is to provide gender training to participants in security sector monitoring bodies to enable them to identify opportunities for integrating gender and provide them with practical skills such as how to monitor human rights violations against women and girls. Checklists or guidelines on integrating gender can be useful (see Box 1).

CSOs that have capacity for research and analysis, such as academic centres, think tanks and policy institutes can be particularly well placed to provide input for security sector monitoring bodies. It can be especially important for CSOs with technical expertise, for example in reform of discriminatory legislation, to be consulted on gender-related issues that come before oversight bodies.

### ! Tips for CSOs engaging with security sector monitoring bodies to integrate gender

- Provide gender training to security sector monitoring bodies, including CSO participants, to enhance their capacity to integrate gender issues.
- Develop gender checklists for different monitoring and evaluation activities to ensure that gender issues are being systematically integrated.
- Ensure that women's organisations are included and/or consulted.
- Advocate for the equal participation of men and women in the monitoring body.

## 4.2 Research and data collection

Accurate and effective oversight depends to a large extent on the existence of clear, representative and comprehensive research and data about the activities and conduct of the security sector. CSOs can play a key role in the independent monitoring and gathering of information that ultimately can be used to either

expose abuses, hold the security sector to account for its responsibilities, or identify suggestions on how the sector could be strengthened. However, research and data collection on the security sector frequently fails to take gender issues account.

As demonstrated at the beginning of this tool, the experience and perception of security and justice varies significantly between men and women. For research and data, either collected by or used by oversight bodies, to accurately reflect all perspectives it is critical that it be sex-disaggregated, and that it pays specific attention to gender issues. It is also important to include gender-responsive indicators and measurements of change to enable monitoring and evaluation of progress.<sup>17</sup>

Data and research on the security sector can act as an accurate baseline to determine the effects of security policies and programmes. Given that civil society actors typically have more access to local communities than state security forces, they are in a much better position to collect this type of information, ideally through consultative and participatory processes that involve all members of the community. Specific initiatives should be taken to ensure the full participation of women and girls as well as marginalised men and boys. It may be, for example, that in **Afghanistan** it is difficult for women to participate in consultations without being accompanied by male chaperones. In such cases, it is important to ensure that CSOs set aside adequate resources to enable women to participate (i.e. also provide accommodation and food to any travelling companions). In addition to generating sex-disaggregated data, it is important that the collection methods are transparent and the results are made widely available. Involving women's organisations in the collection and analysis of data can be one way of increasing access to women within the community and increasing understanding of specific security needs and concerns.

In addition to ensuring that the data collected is sex-disaggregated and that research involves women and girls, research and data collection can also be focused

### Box 3 Guides on documenting human rights abuses

'Documenting women's rights violations by non-state actors: Activist strategies from Muslim communities', Jan Bauer and Anissa Hélie, Rights & Democracy and Women living under Muslim laws, 2006.

'Monitoring and Reporting Human Rights Abuses in Africa: A Handbook for Community Activists', Amnesty International, 2002.

Elizabeth Shrader, 'Methodologies to Measure the Gender Dimensions of Crime and Violence', World Bank, 2001.

'Researching Violence against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists', Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise, WHO and PATH, 2005.

on documenting the violations of women and girl's human rights (see Box 3). Women's organisations with experience in supporting survivors of GBV can be better equipped to conduct in-depth studies on the topic. However, it is also important that general surveys and documentation of human rights abuses also include women, girls and boys and ask specific questions about GBV. Research should be done both on the prevalence and prevention of human rights abuses within society in general, as well as on human rights abuses committed by security sector personnel.

Once gender-sensitive information and data have been collected, it is critical that it is effectively distributed to ensure an impact, both downwards to local communities and upwards to key decision-makers within the security sector and the rest of government. Often, in cases where such data is collected, it may not actually be included in policies, reports or assessments of the security sector. It is therefore important for civil society to advocate for the data and research to be used effectively. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example through:

- Direct communication or contact with specific policymakers working in different areas of the security sector.
- Public campaigns around key issues, based on research and data collected.
- Compilation of research and data into evaluations/analyses/briefs of key aspects of the security sector that can be shared widely and used as an advocacy tool in engagement with government officials and other stakeholders.
- Use of innovative methods to disseminate information, such as through community-based radio stations, online networks or mobile information centres.
- Adaptation of research and data into non-written formats (i.e. posters, comics, plays, songs, etc.) to make it accessible to non-literate populations.

### Tips for CSOs to improve use of gender-sensitive research and data collection

- Train CSO staff in gender-sensitive data and research methods.
- Ensure that sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive research is incorporated into analyses of the security sector.
- Use gender-sensitive research to develop public campaigns on security issues largely specific to women (e.g. domestic violence) and men (e.g. small arms misuse).
- Develop multiple innovative strategies to distribute gender-sensitive research, in particular to illiterate rural and female populations.

## 4.3 Gender audits

Gender audits are a specific tool for analysing a particular process, structure, policy or organisation from a gender perspective. These audits provide an evaluation of what has already been done and can also identify entry points or gaps for future action. Applied to the security sector, gender assessments could be useful in determining the degree to which security sector institutions are meeting the needs of women, men, boys and girls; if the workplace is non-discriminatory; the obstacles to increased female participation; and the general level of gender-responsiveness in policy and practice. CSOs, either as participants in monitoring bodies or independently, are well placed to conduct gender audits if they possess the requisite expertise and resources, and are given the necessary access to security sector officials.

See Tool on SSR Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender

### Tips for CSOs seeking to carry out gender audits

- Include gender audits as part of SSR assessments or evaluations.
- Integrate gender questions into regular security sector assessment or evaluation mechanisms.
- Continue to engage with key stakeholders around the findings of the audit to ensure they impact on reform.

## 4.4 Gender budget analysis

Another tool for security sector oversight is the analysis of defence and security-related budgets from a gender perspective. As defence budgets often represent a significant portion of a country's expenditure, strengthening fiscal transparency and oversight is a key role of oversight bodies, and one

that CSOs can support. Money that is being spent on defence is being channelled away from other needs such as social service provision or development. Allocation of government budgets can therefore have different impacts on men, women, girls and boys who may stand to benefit more or less from certain types of spending. Gender budget analysis has emerged as a tool for analysing the gender-differentiated impact of government spending, which could be usefully applied to the security sector. Such an analysis could then lead to more equitable, accountable and transparent allocation of funds, as well as overall effective growth and development, since more groups within the population will benefit positively from government spending.<sup>20</sup>

Given that the security sector is often closed to scrutiny, obtaining accurate data and information about the amount of defence spending and resource allocations can be difficult, and obtaining sex-disaggregated information even more so. Whilst governments or parliaments can undertake a gender budget analysis of their own spending, CSOs can also monitor and evaluate resource allocations and advocate with policymakers to change government spending patterns. In particular, CSOs, research institutes and oversight bodies working on the security sector could establish coalitions to strengthen analysis of different aspects of government spending, and develop creative platforms to advocate for more gender-sensitive budget allocations.

Gender budget analysis is a very technical exercise, and CSOs may therefore have to reach out to external actors who can provide the necessary expertise and support. International CSOs could be particularly useful in this respect, and could provide support to local organisations that are seeking to analyse the impact of security sector spending on the population.

### ! Tips for CSOs in gender-sensitive budgeting

- Develop skills in gender budget analysis to better understand the impact of security sector spending on men and women, and use these findings as an oversight and advocacy tool.

## 4.5 Advocacy and awareness-raising

Civil society organisations play a key oversight function through raising public awareness of the role, responsibilities and obligations of the security sector, as well as direct advocacy with security sector institutions and governance bodies. Gender-sensitive research and data collection, including gender assessments and gender budget analysis, can be used as tools for awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives.

CSOs can advocate for reforms to strengthen the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the security sector. Given the generally limited participation of CSOs in the activities of the security sector, existing channels of advocacy can be important entry points for advocacy around the security sector. Some of the areas of advocacy that are particularly relevant to the integration of a gender perspective into oversight relate to legal reform, increased representation of women within the security sector, respect for human rights and the need for gender skills training. Advocacy related to civil society oversight of the security sector can, and should be, targeted at many different levels. Advocacy campaigns can combine direct lobbying of high-level security sector personnel, parliamentarians, government ministers or donor agencies with other advocacy activities such as:

### Box 4 Stages of an SSR gender audit <sup>19</sup>

**1. Review:** A background review constitutes an important starting point for a gender audit. In the event that the SSR process is taking place, a gender expert from the country in question should conduct the review. The review provides an overview of relevant gender issues relating, not only to gender relations in the audit country, but also to the particular focus of the audit. This background review includes 'in-depth' information which can then usually be referenced in the shorter audit.

**2. Briefing and focus groups:** The substance of a gender audit is developed from a wide range of interviews and focus group discussions. In-depth interviews with relevant actors within the specific part of the security sector being reviewed are an important element of information gathering.

**3. Documentation review:** The documentation review complements interviews and focus group discussions and can provide an important, detailed source of empirical information as well as the basis for triangulation with other data sources.

Challenges in this regard can be: access to the necessary documents; incomplete files; staff turnover and changes in the names of projects/programmes during implementation or redesign, especially for donor-driven SSR programmes, which makes locating relevant documents difficult.

**4. Distribution of results:** Once a gender audit has been finalised, it is important to distribute the results with key stakeholders, particularly those involved in the sector being audited.

## Box 5

## Involving men in combating violence against women

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) was launched in Canada in 1991 by a group of men who advocated for the end of violence against women and sought to educate other men about the issue. Through awareness-raising campaigns, public statements, and their growing network, members of the WRC provide an alternative vision of men as non-violent and offer positive role models for men and boys in communities around the world. While they do not deal directly with the security sector, actions such as those undertaken by the WRC contribute to the changing of attitudes and the culture of violence that perpetuates violence against women, including within the police and military. The WRC offers an innovative approach to addressing the roots of aggression and violence within households and communities, and is a powerful way of drawing public attention, awareness and recognition to the issue while tackling unequal gender roles and relationships.<sup>21</sup>

**Other resources for involving men in addressing violence against women:**

- 'Elimination of Violence against Women in Partnership with Men', Women in Development Section, ESCAP, 2006.
- 'Men as partners: South African men respond to violence against women and HIV/AIDS', Dean Peacock, EngenderHealth, 2002.
- 'Ending Violence Against Women in Eastern Congo: Preparing Men to Advocate for Women's Rights', Women for Women International, 2007.

- Submissions during consultations or security sector review processes
- Media initiatives
- Demonstrations
- Policy debates
- Drafting policy briefings

The general population in most countries tends to be largely unaware of their own right to security and justice or of the specific policies and processes within the security sector designed to uphold these rights. By raising public awareness of issues, ranging from accessing the justice system and filing a complaint against the police, to how to influence SSR policies through contacting members of parliament, the public can also be involved in holding the security sector accountable for meeting their needs in an effective and respectful manner. Examples of actions that CSOs can take to raise public awareness of gender and security sector issues include:

- Holding roundtable discussions or seminars on issues of gender and security policy.
- Producing materials, such as leaflets, on how to report human rights abuses – including GBV – by security sector personnel.

It is critical to remember that it is not only women's organisations that have a role to play in awareness raising and advocacy around gender and security issues. The role of men and men's organisations in oversight of security sector organisations and advocacy around gender-related issues, GBV in particular, is extremely important and sends a powerful message to security sector actors who are predominantly male. Changing the attitudes, mindsets and practices of key stakeholders is one of the most important objectives of gender-related awareness-raising and advocacy, and this can be done very effectively by men.

In order to ensure that advocacy campaigns are gender responsive, CSOs can make sure that the content and language is gender-sensitive; that the campaign aims to increase security and justice for

women and girls as well as men and boys; collaborate with women's organisations; and ensure the high-level involvement of women. CSOs can also advocate for specific gender-related changes to the security sector including:

- Creation and implementation of gender policies and plans, including codes of conduct, for security sector institutions.
- Standardised gender training for police, armed forces and other security sector personnel.
- Reform of discriminatory legislation to adequately prevent, address and sanction GBV.
- Recruitment, retention and advancement of more women into security sector institutions and governance bodies.
- Adequate allocation of financial, human and material resources to address specific insecurities facing women and girls.
- Increased accountability of security sector personnel for human rights violations, including GBV.

#### **Tips for CSOs planning advocacy and awareness-raising activities**

- Awareness-raising campaigns which target the general public can be a crucial part of an advocacy campaign that aims to influence security sector policies and programming.
- Plan your advocacy campaigns carefully. Identify key stakeholders and targets for your messages, including key policymakers that have influence within the security sector, and ensure that your advocacy is grounded in reliable, comprehensive, gender-sensitive research.
- Take advantage of opportunities such as security sector or defence policy reviews to incorporate gender issues into civil society advocacy.
- Involve men in advocacy campaigns, particularly those dealing with violence against women.



**Table 1** Questions to ask when planning an advocacy campaign

What is the issue and what are its causes?	Use research of policies, budgets and so forth to identify the problem, and obtain concrete data.
What are your aims and objectives?	The <b>aim</b> refers to the long-term goal of the campaign, which will be realised through a combination of advocacy and practical activities. An <b>objective</b> is a more immediate goal, and should be concrete and measurable as an outcome (not a proposed activity). Example: 'The Government is to establish by the end of 2010 a consultative mechanism for CSOs on gender-sensitive defence budgeting.'
What are the concrete changes that you are trying to attain (e.g. awareness, knowledge, attitude or behavioural changes of policymakers or security sector actors)?	In other words, what will be different as a result of the advocacy?
What indicators will be used to track progress towards results?	Think about the different sorts of progress you want to keep track of throughout the life of the advocacy strategy, e.g. of the process, of the impact and outcomes, and of a change in the context that you are working.
Who are your primary stakeholders? How have they been involved in designing the goals, objectives, results and indicators of your strategy? Who are your secondary stakeholders and significant others?	<b>Key stakeholders</b> include those who have the power to effect change, but who may need to be persuaded to act; <b>secondary stakeholders</b> include groups whose support can be rallied; <b>primary stakeholders</b> are those who will benefit from the changes being made, and <b>significant others</b> include target groups among security actors that might oppose the strategy. Taking the time to think through how you will work with and influence each stakeholder increases chances of success.
What research do you need to carry out to test assumptions about knowledge, attitudes, etc.?	How will you reach a representative sample of you target audience, and what techniques will you use to find out their views about the issues? How do they access information on this topic?
What are the key messages that you need to communicate to each group of stakeholders to bring about the desired change (e.g. increase their knowledge, change their practices)?	Use focus groups with media practitioners and other kinds of media research to understand the context and target your messages accordingly.
What types of communication (e.g. popular versions of research findings, fact sheets), channels (face-to-face communication, seminars, the media) and activities are most appropriate for your key stakeholders?	Be explicit about whom you are targeting to do what; do background research on groups and target them with appropriate messages. Think also about who is communicating, involve those who have credibility/influence with key stakeholders.
What is the timing/work plan for your advocacy strategy? What are the key dates/occasions for release of messages and materials?	Do a timeline when planning your strategy so that deadlines are met and tasks distributed in an effective way. Time the dates on which materials are released and distributed.
How much will you need to budget for your advocacy strategy and what skills, materials and expertise are necessary?	Resources include funds, materials, people and their expertise as well as your organisation's reputation (i.e. social capital) regarding the particular topic that you are advocating on.
How will you assess and distribute the impact of your strategy and lessons learned from your experiences?	Think about how future advocacy campaigns and other organisations can benefit from your experiences.
How will you ensure sustainability of your advocacy strategy?	If you have successfully brought about change, you need to think about how to ensure sustainability of the changes. If the advocacy campaign has been focusing on the level of policy, the need for looking at policy implementation will be critical. Who will sustain the intervention? What programmatic approaches will be most effective?

## 4.6 Working with the media

The media plays a particularly important role in promoting public scrutiny of the security sector and in sharing information about defence and security reform. CSOs can collaborate with the media in order to strengthen their awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns.

Journalists and others working within the media are not necessarily familiar with the gender aspects of security issues, or with speaking to and getting information from women. There are also few gender guidelines or policies within media institutions themselves.<sup>23</sup> CSOs can therefore work with media to train them on how to collect information and report on security issues in a gender-sensitive manner. It can also be difficult for the media to access female

**Box 6****Tips for working with the media for a multiplier effect <sup>22</sup>****Key messages**

- Identify and follow through on 2-3 points that you want to get across.
- Always bring an interview/discussion back to these points.

**Speak with one voice**

- If working in a coalition, ensure that all members understand the messages that are being communicated to the press.
- It is advisable to nominate a spokesperson.

**Contacting the press directly**

- Be proactive – do not only respond to issues that are already in the news, but provide stories and press releases.
- Write letters to the editor to spark debate – they must be brief and to the point.

**Make it easy for them**

- Provide concise and clear written information – e.g. a press information kit or briefing. This can include contact information, information about the issue that is being advocated for, background to the issue, information about opposite views, facts and statistics.

**Press briefings/releases**

- Know the deadlines and the best time to contact the press.
- Have press kits at all events.
- Provide background briefings so that journalists can conduct their own investigations.

**Be a credible source**

- Become a reliable source so the press comes to you and your organisation for authoritative information about different aspects of the security sector. Credibility when dealing with security sector actors is closely affiliated with a level of technical expertise.
- Only invite the media when you have something important to say.
- If you use statistics make sure they are reliable.

**Appearing on TV and radio**

- Stick to the key messages.
- Invest in training in interviewing techniques.

**Evaluate your campaign**

- Document and evaluate press coverage and learn from previous campaigns.

witnesses or victims of specific human rights abuses such as rape at the hands of security forces, so CSOs can also play a role in facilitating this process and in providing the necessary care and assistance to victims who are willing to share their stories in public.

**Tips for CSOs in using the media more effectively**

- Use the media to disseminate your advocacy messages to a wide audience. Work with small newspapers, community radio stations and local television stations, as well as state-run media outlets.
- Sensitise and train journalists and others working in the media about the gender aspects of the security sector and the use of gender-sensitive language (see Box 7).

**4.7 Gender training of security sector personnel**

Gender training is a key strategy to build the capacity of security sector personnel to execute their daily tasks in a gender-responsive manner. Gender capacity is a skill like any other, and therefore must be learned. Training can be an extremely effective way of changing attitudes and behaviours of security sector staff, and is an important element in enhancing oversight of the security sector. Gender training can also be used as a process for enhancing mutual understanding and facilitating future collaboration between CSOs and security sector personnel. Gender training is not always included as a part of standard military, police or private security training regimes, or in the security sector oversight training targeted at other actors such as parliamentarians, ministry of defence staff or NGOs. Where such training exists, it is generally not uniform, mandatory or comprehensive.

## Box 7 Gender-responsive media reporting <sup>24</sup>

Communicating gender requires journalists to observe the ways that people may be marginalised because of their gender.

It requires us to ask questions such as:

- Who gets coverage?
- From what perspective?
- Through which lens?
- Reflecting which stereotypes about people?
- Are stories helping to advance gender equality and equity in society or are they angled in a way that upholds traditional attitudes and values?
- Are women's or men's concerns being separated from the concerns of society in general?

See Tool on Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel

Women's organisations may have specific expertise on gender issues and experience giving gender training and can therefore be well placed to either provide or offer input into the existing training modules of security sector personnel, or in developing stand-alone training on gender and security issues, in particular on sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition to collaborating on conducting gender training, CSO's with expertise in gender issues can:

- Develop standard gender training curricula for different security sector institutions, such as training for police officers on domestic violence, that can be adapted and used by trainers.
- Lobby for policies that mandate comprehensive gender training for security sector personnel.
- Advocate for, and participate in, the creation of gender guidelines, manuals and handbooks to serve as practical resources for security sector personnel.

- Lobby for the creation of a gender position within security sector institutions to coordinate, implement and monitor gender training.<sup>26</sup>

In a recent online discussion involving more than 140 policymakers and practitioners, 10 key recommendations in the area of gender training for security sector personnel emerged:

1. Address traditional male roles and norms
2. Engage men as gender trainers
3. Prioritise training for senior managers and officials
4. Integrate gender into regular security sector training
5. Implement training as part of a broader gender mainstreaming strategy
6. Write an action plan or an institutional policy that includes gender training
7. Organise pre-deployment training for peace-keeping personnel
8. Benefit from collaboration between CSOs and security sector institutions
9. Ensure the use of gender-aware language
10. Carry out a long-term evaluation and identify indicators<sup>29</sup>

## Box 8 Mongolia – inclusion of sexual health education in the military training curriculum <sup>25</sup>

Mongol Vision, an NGO established in 1998, works to implement activities on reproductive health, including prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Mongol Vision focuses its activities on men, including officers and soldiers of Mongolia's armed forces. The work was led by the Mongol Vision public health policy steering committee, which included the Deputy Commander of the Mongolian Armed Forces.

**The issue:** *New recruits to the Mongolian Armed Forces, especially those from the countryside, have little or no knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STIs. Consequently, the rate of STIs has been relatively high among officers and soldiers.*

**The aim:** *To gain support from the Ministry of Defence and the Mongolian Armed Forces to increase HIV/AIDS, STI and reproductive health awareness among officers and soldiers.*

**Key stakeholders:** *Ministry of Defence and headquarters of the Mongolian Armed Forces.*

**Primary stakeholders:** *Soldiers/officers and their sex partners.*

**Approaches and communication:** *Letters were sent to the Ministry of Defence and headquarters of the armed forces; official and unofficial meetings were held with high-level officials; a project was developed in collaboration with high-level officials; a workshop was held with high-level officials; commanding officers and military unit doctors presented report on the current STI situation among armed forces personnel.*

**Indicators of success and sustainability:** *Sexual health was included in the official education curriculum for military staff; increased awareness of high-level officers; increased support from the Ministry of Defence; broadened base of activities of Mongol Vision.*

## Box 9

Gender training resources <sup>27</sup>

Inspiration for relevant training may be found in the following gender training toolkits:

- **Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action** – includes tools targeting women on security issues, justice, governance and civil society, protection of vulnerable groups, etc.  
[http://www.international-alert.org/our\\_work/themes/gender\\_training.php](http://www.international-alert.org/our_work/themes/gender_training.php)
- **Toolkit for Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-Based Violence** – includes readings, case studies, handouts and exercises.  
<http://toolkit.endabuse.org>
- **Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons** - includes tools on international laws, assessment, protection, public education, monitoring and evaluation, etc.  
[http://www.unodc.org/pdf/Trafficking\\_toolkit\\_Oct06.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/Trafficking_toolkit_Oct06.pdf)
- **Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations** – includes background information, highlights key gender issues, and practical tools.  
<http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbpu/genderpack.aspx>

### Tips for CSOs involved in training security sector personnel

- Conduct a training needs assessment to identify gaps in current training and areas for improvement.
- Initiate or contribute to the development of standardised gender training modules for new recruits and existing officers in the police and the army.
- Create a roster of qualified civil society trainers in-country who could provide gender training to security sector personnel.
- Use training opportunities as a basis for enhanced linkages and partnerships with government officials, the army and the police.
- Don't reinvent the wheel: use and build on gender training modules that have already been developed.

## 4.8 Women's organisations

For oversight to be inclusive and adequately representative of the population, it is important that women's organisations are involved in civil society oversight efforts. Security issues are often perceived as a 'male domain'. Nevertheless, as discussed in Section 3.3, women's organisations often play vital roles that oversight bodies could capitalise on more effectively. By virtue of their different membership and priorities, women's organisations can make many important contributions to oversight processes:

- CSOs working on gender issues are an expert resource on the different types of insecurity that men and women experience.
- Women's organisations are often able to access different groups, in particular other women or marginalised groups, and may therefore be able to collect information that would otherwise be overlooked.

## Box 10

## UK National Action Plan on UN SCR 1325 and gender training for the armed forces

In March 2006, the UK Government released its national action plan on the implementation of UN SCR 1325. In developing the plan, the Cross-Whitehall Group on 1325 (made up of representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development), consulted with Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), a UK-based network of civil society actors focusing on women, peace and security issues.

GAPS began as the UK Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and was initiated in mid-2004 by International Alert to raise awareness around gender and security issues and to support and monitor the UK Government's implementation of UN SCR 1325. Formally established in June 2006, GAPS now has fourteen member organisations and individuals.<sup>28</sup> GAPS was given the opportunity to input into the priorities of the national action plan, and ongoing consultation with civil society was singled out as one of the objectives of the plan itself.

Gender training was identified as a key need, and following the release of the plan steps were made to map the provision of gender training to UK troops and identify ways to improve it. In addition, GAPS along with key parliamentarians and the Cross-Whitehall Group on 1325, established an Associate Parliamentary Group (APG) on SCR 1325, one of few in the UK that permit civil society and civil servants to work alongside parliamentarians. GAPS pushed for a sub-group on gender training to be established, and this group is now supporting the Ministry of Defence in efforts to enhance the provision of gender training and to collect information and research on the impact of this gender training. While no data is yet available, it will be a potentially valuable model for gender training of the military in other countries.

## Box 11 Women's organisations lobbying for democratic reform of the security sector in Iraq, Russia and West Africa

The Union of the Committees of Soldier's Mothers of **Russia** was established with the objective of drawing attention to human rights abuses within the Russian military, and to advocate for improved protection mechanisms and the welfare of soldiers, particularly around the Chechen war. Members of the Union also launched public campaigns against involuntary conscription and for amnesty for soldiers. The organisation has been successful in some of its efforts to influence military policy in Russia and on securing freedom and protection for many conscripts.<sup>30</sup>

In post-conflict contexts, women's organisations often come together at the national level to identify their key priorities in the security, political, economic and social spheres. For example, in 2003 at a conference held in Washington DC, women from **Iraq**, including representatives from civil society organisations, government ministers and security sector personnel, identified a number of key areas such as increased border security, increased numbers of police throughout the country, improved street lighting, and training in gender and human rights issues for police and army officers as essential for their security and the success of the SSR process in the country.<sup>31</sup> Such information is a valuable resource for security policymakers and oversight bodies and efforts should be made to ensure the recommendations of women's organisations are included in formal security review and policy-making.

In partnership with the West Africa Network for Security and Democratic Governance and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) in **West Africa** designed a specialised methodology for mainstreaming gender and in particular women's issues in security sector reform. As a follow-up activity, WIPNET is expected to train experts and women's groups on 'Gender and Security Sector Reform'.<sup>32</sup>

- Women's organisations may bring specific gender perspectives to bear on the security sector's policies and practices.
- Women's organisations may be specifically concerned with standards of behaviour and conduct that address serious violations against women such as rape or harassment by security sector personnel.

However, it is important also to acknowledge that all women's organisations do not necessarily effectively represent the needs of diverse groups of women and might not always have specific expertise on gender issues.

Without fully engaging women's organisations in oversight processes, civil society will not be benefiting from the full range of expertise available, or capitalising on all the entry points for effective monitoring and analysis. However, the ability of women's organisations to effectively participate in security sector oversight is also linked to their capacity. There is an urgent need to increase and improve the 'security literacy' of civil society, including women's organisations. Capacity building to increase 'security literacy' could take the form of specific training for women's organisations in areas such as:

- Security sector oversight terminology and basic theory
- Security sector policies
- International policy frameworks and standards related to gender and security issues and how they may be used as advocacy instruments
- Security sector institutions, their mandates and decision-making procedures
- Gender issues and SSR/oversight
- Gender-sensitive budgeting for the security sector
- Gender impact assessments<sup>33</sup>

It is essential for women's organisations, or other CSOs, to establish themselves as 'experts' in order to

strengthen informed engagement with security sector actors. If CSOs working on gender-related issues have the capacity to provide technical assistance, they become valuable partners for security sector oversight bodies as well as for state institutions that aim to undertake security and justice reforms. Similarly, there is also a need to enhance the 'gender literacy' of CSOs in general. The lack of attention to gender issues means that they will be unlikely to consider the gender dimensions of SSR or have the capacity and expertise to integrate gender into civil society involvement into existing oversight mechanisms (see Section 4.9 on gender-responsive CSOs). Similarly, this may limit the extent to which they acknowledge the important contribution that women's organisations can make to their work.

Creating forums or building coalitions that link CSOs with relevant government departments to develop strategies to enhance accountability and effectiveness of the security sector in relation to gender issues can be one way of doing this. In the **UK**, members of the Gender Action for Peace and Security have provided training and expert advice to the UK Ministry of Defence, defence/army training academies and regional organisations. In **Sierra Leone**, local and international CSOs in several districts have effectively partnered with district medical officers, police Family Support Units and the justice sector to ensure that victims of domestic violence receive adequate medical and psychosocial care and that the crimes are followed-up on, reported and prosecuted.<sup>34</sup> This can also help to build transparency and trust between CSOs and security sector institutions.

### ! Tips for involving women's organisations in security sector oversight

- Research the informal activities of women's organisations related to security provision and/or advocacy with the security sector and include them in formal oversight mechanisms.

## Box 12

Partnering with security institutions in Bougainville to prevent violence <sup>35</sup>

Women's groups in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, played an important role in bringing the conflict to an end, both directly by negotiating with fighting forces and through supporting the reintegration of ex-combatants and peace education within their communities. In particular, they have engaged specifically with the security sector on a number of initiatives:

- Women have provided training and sensitisation on women's rights to male ex-combatants. This had the direct result of reducing the extent of domestic violence committed by these men.
- Women's groups recruited and trained men to educate ex-combatants on women's rights, HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution in schools and villages.
- Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency provides gender training for new police recruits in collaboration with the police, and also conducts awareness-raising workshops to highlight the negative impact of violence against women and children in various communities.

- Provide 'security literacy' training to women's organisations to enable them to more effectively engage on security issues with civil society, government and other stakeholders.
- Create mechanisms to link women's organisations with relevant government departments to strengthen their access and influence over security-related policy debates.

#### 4.9 Civil society networks

In general, CSOs are more powerful when speaking with one voice. Networks provide strength in numbers and can help protect individual CSOs from being targets for abuse or political pressure. One of their key functions is to demonstrate the support for reform from a range of diverse groups in society.

This became apparent as the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security formed in May 2000 by 11 organisations to advocate for the adoption of a UN SCR 1325 on women, international peace and security. UNSCR 1325 was unanimously adopted on 31 October 2000. Since then, the focus of the NGO Working Group has shifted to supporting implementation of UNSCR 1325, promoting a gender perspective and respect for human rights in all peace and security, conflict prevention and management, and peacebuilding initiatives of the UN and member states.

In many countries it may be difficult for CSOs to engage directly in security and justice issues and the development of security policies at the national level because of a closed or even hostile political environment. Participation in security-related discussions and mechanisms at the regional level can prove to be a good means of exerting pressure on policymakers at the national level. Individual CSOs are normally seen to have more credibility if they are members of regional or international networks or have international partners. This support can be used as a lever for national engagement with governments on the development of security policies.

Building such networks can take place through dialogue, both at national, regional and international levels. Through the participation of a wide range of

stakeholders in a series of workshops, greater understanding of issues relating to a specific security policy may be developed. Also, a network of those interested in supporting progressive change can be established. Because a national security policy seeks to encompass the needs of society as a whole, and particularly when dealing with gender, the network's legitimacy will rise proportionally with:

- The diversity of groups/organisations represented in the network. Such groups should be consciously sought out and approached.
- Creating a common set of principles for the network to avoid impinging on the individual areas of work of each member.
- Specialised knowledge on how the security sector operates, policy-making processes and gender are represented in the network for strategic guidance.
- Availability within the network of specialised knowledge that otherwise is not immediately accessible to policymakers.
- Representation of experts and individuals that are highly regarded among policymakers.

#### 4.10 Gender-responsive CSOs

CSOs that are involved in security sector oversight also have an obligation to revise internal policies and practices so that they are reflective of the ideals of gender equality. This is necessary to ensure that they are fully representative and participatory, and also to contribute to the CSO's overall effectiveness.

Most civil society organisations, however, fall short of having gender balance and staff members may not have the requisite skills and capacity to effectively integrate gender issues into their work. To improve this situation, efforts should be made to adopt gender-responsive recruitment, promotion and human resource policies, and specific mechanisms should be adopted to prevent discrimination or sexual harassment in the workplace. Internal codes of conduct, policies and guidelines are one way to ensure that these standards are being met (see Box 13). Linking gender-related criteria to performance evaluations can also contribute to increasing accountability for individual staff members

to address gender issues in their work. CSOs working on security sector oversight could increase their efforts to attract, hire and retain female staff through improved recruitment and work-life balance policies.

It is also important that gender is mainstreamed into all institutional policies and programmes of CSOs working on security issues. To do this, adequate financing for gender-related work and in-house expertise and capacity are critical. It is also the case that specific training should be provided to all staff members to ensure that they have the technical capacity and expertise to undertake gender-specific work. Conducting internal gender audits and identifying areas for improvement are also an important step in identifying how gender mainstreaming can be strengthened.<sup>36</sup>

### ! Tips for CSOs to be more gender-responsive

- Develop comprehensive gender and equal opportunities policies that cover human resources issues, job performance requirements and sexual harassment and discrimination, including a code of conduct.
- Evaluate job descriptions and requirements to ensure that they do not discriminate against women or men.
- Provide gender training to all staff members and volunteers.
- Conduct an internal gender audit to assess organisational capacity.
- Donors who are supporting CSO involvement in security sector oversight can hold CSOs accountable for being gender-responsive.

## 5 Integrating gender into civil society oversight in specific contexts

There is no one model for oversight of the security sector, as it is a process that must occur at different levels, and varies between regions and contexts.

### 5.1 Post-conflict countries

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to increased levels of insecurity during conflict as a result of sexual and GBV. This vulnerability can, and often does, continue in the aftermath of conflict. Security sector personnel may have committed egregious human rights abuses, and may continue to perpetrate abuses in peacetime. In addition to this, state-sanctioned security and justice delivery may have collapsed in certain areas or lost legitimacy due to the roles that they played during conflict.

Evidence shows that gender roles and relationships also often shift during and after conflict, which can open up an important space for negotiating change. For example, following the end of the conflict and the election of Africa's first female president, **Liberia** passed tough new legislation in the form of a 'rape bill' that came into force in February 2006. Women's organisations such as the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia played a key role in drafting the new bill and raising awareness of it within communities throughout Liberia.<sup>38</sup> However, conversely, these shifts in roles and relations can also result in new threats, decreased capacity to address already existing insecurities, or retrenchment of traditional roles following the end of conflict.<sup>39</sup>

### Box 13 Oxfam's gender policy <sup>37</sup>

Oxfam has made significant strides in developing its approach to gender mainstreaming within the organisation's work, as well as in its internal practices. In addition to an Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy, Oxfam has developed a gender policy that lays out certain commitments of the organisation and its staff members. This policy can then be used to ensure accountability, transparency and equal representation and serves as a benchmark against which to monitor the extent to which the organisation is successful in mainstreaming gender in its work. Although Oxfam does not work specifically on security issues, it is a useful example that could be adopted by CSOs working on security sector oversight. Some of the provisions of the gender policy are:

- Managers will encourage groups and forums across the organisation to share learning and best practice on gender equality. Gender training will also be made available to staff and volunteers.
- In all our work we will demonstrate commitment to gender equality through setting appropriate team and individual objectives, and through allocating adequate staff and resources to enable us to fulfil the gender equality policy.
- Managers of all divisions will devise and report on measurable objectives and actions relating to the gender equality policy; and our management, finance and human resource systems will facilitate and contribute to our gender work.
- Gender awareness and understanding will be used as a criterion for recruitment and development of staff and volunteers.
- Within the organisation we will pursue family friendly work practices that enable both men and women to participate fully in work and family life.

## Box 14 NGO liaison offices – a possible gender entry point <sup>41</sup>

Many governments in Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic States have established NGO liaison offices, according to different models:

- Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia: Functions of the office are carried out by a bureaucratic unit and a broadly representative advisory body, which work in partnership as stipulated in laws, decrees or charters.
- Hungary, Romania: Government bodies oversee NGO-government cooperation without an advisory body.
- Estonia, Latvia: Existing departments handle NGO-government liaison functions in addition to their other responsibilities, including local government and regional administration.
- Lithuania: Various government departments are responsible for coordinating with NGOs within their area of authority.

The overarching rationale of NGO liaison offices in the above listed countries has been to enhance linkages between civil society and government. NGO liaison offices are not specifically set up for the purpose of dealing with the security sector, or with gender issues. They can nevertheless constitute important entry points for CSOs to have a voice in these matters, and could be used to advocate with key government officials to address gender issues within security sector policy and practice. Building on existing mechanisms, such as these liaison offices, is an important aspect of developing capacity for integrating gender into civil society oversight of the security sector, since creating new bodies can be time-consuming and resource-intensive.

Furthermore, the laws, structures and mechanisms to protect women and girls from various security threats are rarely in place or properly functioning, reducing the recourse available to ensure their own protection. The capacity of state institutions is often weak to the degree that even if there is political will, the means to deliver security and justice services are not available in technical, financial or human resource terms. At the same time as being a challenge, it is important to remember that SSR that occurs after conflict can also be an opportunity to foster increased levels of gender equality and inclusiveness within that sector's structures and processes.

CSOs may have become fragmented or weakened during conflict and as a result do not have the reach, legitimacy or capacity to effectively perform their oversight duties. In other cases, CSO collaboration may increase in the post-conflict period as ongoing insecurity and army and police reform are key concerns of many of the organisations, providing them with opportunities to work together.

### ! Opportunities and tips for the integration of gender issues

- GBV is known to be used as a strategy during conflict, and the number of cases is likely to rise in its aftermath. Oversight of how security sector actors deal with GBV in their daily work will be vital, as will monitoring of police and army personnel to ensure that they are not involved as perpetrators.
- Where applicable, incorporate gender-related recommendations made at local or national-level consultations into broader advocacy around security issues.
- Promote public national and community-level debate to ensure that as the security sector actors are being reformed or rebuilt, gender issues are at the centre of the process from its outset, and not add-ons when reforms are in a process of consolidation.

- Identify any informal and traditional structures that enable women to assert influence over policymakers and/or community members. If appropriate, seek to strengthen them.
- Work with extra-legal structures that may ensure a degree of oversight of justice delivery in contexts where state institutions are unable to deliver such services, in particular in support of cases of violence against women.
- Conduct a gender assessment of the SSR process and disseminate findings and recommendations widely through the media and among targeted government and donor officials.

## 5.2 Transitional and developing countries

Transitional and developing countries straddle a wide range of contexts that differ significantly in terms of socio-economic, technical and human resource capacity. Transition to democracy is a long-term process and one that does not necessarily equally benefit all members of the population. Whilst overall economic growth tends to increase, inequalities in the short-term can become more pronounced and women in particular can face increased insecurity in the form of GBV, trafficking or exploitation in the sex industry.<sup>40</sup>

In both developing and transitional countries, private security companies – fundamentally non-state, even if regulated by legislation passed by parliament – are increasingly becoming important actors in delivery of security services. Consequently, they should be subjected to CSO oversight.

Some transitional countries may very well have a large pool of well-educated candidates for the armed forces, the police, and state institutions. At the same time, these institutions may be lacking democratic accountability and transparent governance structures and procedures. Politically, the challenges to civil society oversight of the security sector include the



legacy from an authoritarian regime, strong bureaucratic opposition to change, and often strained relationships between state institutions and CSOs. These conditions impact directly on the ability of CSOs to oversee security sector actors, and the possibility of dialogue between civil society and state institutions on common security concerns.

Particularly in developing countries, as well as in many transitional and post-conflict contexts, CSO capacity-building remains a major challenge. As is evident after several decades of development assistance in Africa, the lack of locally owned and sustained expertise remains a concern, and is one of the reasons why development goals are not met. Donor-driven SSR interventions might be resisted in favour of nationally led processes. Transitional countries are equally likely to resist external pressure for reforms, although the possibility of EU and NATO membership will be a significant incentive to reform for some. In both country types, armed forces may be excessive in size, having taken on wide-ranging internal security roles. This may have a variety of security-related consequences for men and women, as well as for the likelihood of sustainable socio-economic development.

As in post-conflict contexts, non-state actors in many developing countries can be significant providers of security and justice and intersect with formal state systems. These may include traditional courts, extra-legal services and local defence units. CSOs that operate at the local level can have a significant role in overseeing their actions and in advocating for ways of including them in national SSR processes, as well as in international assistance programmes. In particular, there should be an emphasis on how authority is managed, how services are delivered and what legitimacy they have in the eyes of men and women alike as non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms. This becomes all the more relevant as many

developing countries are unable to financially support expensive legal personnel such as professionally educated lawyers. Additionally, the police may have limited presence in some areas because of limited resources or because of high levels of insecurity.

### Opportunities and tips for the integration of gender issues

- If not already in place, advocate for a space to engage with state institutions to voice popular insecurities – such as an NGO liaison office (see Box 14). Ensure that gender issues are highlighted and that women's organisations are also involved in the work of the NGO liaison office.
- External actors should support CSO capacity-building, including women's organisations, rather than only security sector institution-building.
- CSOs should assess the extent to which non-state actors such as chiefs and private security companies provide security and justice, their legitimacy in doing so, and the quality of services being delivered. Information should be gathered using gender-sensitive methods.
- If appropriate and needed, advocate for downsizing of the armed forces, and introduce key points around gender that could widen the debate on security in the process.

## 5.3 Developed countries

In developed states that are democratically governed there is also significant scope for CSOs to play an oversight role, especially in relation to gender issues. This can be done by engaging in debates on what should be included under the banner of national security; how security and justice are provided to men

### Box 15 SSR in South Africa – mainstreaming gender in the transition from apartheid to democracy <sup>42</sup>

The case of South Africa's transition to democracy provides an example of how a conducive political environment and networking/organisation among women across the political spectrum and within the security forces themselves led to a broadened and inclusive process of defence transformation. Key lessons learned from this process, which all impacted directly on policymaking have included:

1. South Africa went beyond mere reform to transform the security sector by taking steps to consult the public about the role of the security sector and placing human security and development at the centre of its national security framework.
2. Women with differing views and values and of all races were central to articulating a vision and shaping the process by which the security of the people became a priority for the state.
3. Women from across the political spectrum were mobilised to attain 50% representation in negotiations leading up to the 1994 election and 28% of seats in parliament. They continue to encourage public participation in policy-shaping and remain the strongest proponents of human security.
4. Within the security establishment, it is increasingly acknowledged that women:
  - a. Bring a critical perspective to the planning and implementation of programmes.
  - b. Have a positive influence as members of security forces.
  - c. Are critical to building peace and security.
5. Security sector transformation will remain incomplete if the institutional culture is not changed. Overcoming gender-based discrimination, as with racial discrimination, is a key indicator of transformation.

and women; and enhancing parity between men and women within security sector institutions. In some cases, it may even be appropriate to emphasise what the implications of excessive military spending are for other sectors such as health and education which are essential to human security.

Insisting on incorporating gender into strategies to restructure security forces or institutional reform does not only have the potential to ensure parity between men and women in developing and implementing policies. It can fundamentally broaden the debate on what national security is, and thus include voices outside government and/or the National Security Council. The case of developing South Africa's Defence White Paper and other security-related policies provides an example to follow in this regard, where CSO representatives participated as important interlocutors, both as defence and gender experts.

See Tool on National Security Policy-Making and Gender

Depending on who they are mandated to speak on behalf of, CSOs are particularly well-positioned to infuse national security debates with the realities of people's daily lives, and consequently constitute important channels to decision-makers. They can also act as channels for the voices of women who are too frequently marginalised from formal security sector policy debates. Finally, it is worth pointing out that developed countries' donor agencies are at the forefront of offering and delivering advice and technical expertise to countries undergoing SSR processes. They have a key role and responsibility in ensuring that gender-related aspects of civil society oversight are included in their programming. International NGOs can also have a role in providing assistance to the building of security sector oversight, and input into donor agendas related to SSR.

### Opportunities and tips for the integration of gender issues

- Advocate for a broadened debate on what 'national security' is, in particular incorporating GBV.
- Be aware and ready to act in the event that policies – including national security policies – are being redefined and publicly debated.
- Monitor and liaise with donor agencies to ensure that their support for SSR is gender-responsive and includes an emphasis on civil society oversight.
- Provide capacity building and other support for CSOs, including women's organisations, in other country contexts that wish to build their ability to oversee the security sector.
- Make use of existing mechanisms to request information from the security sector to aid effective oversight.

## 6 Key recommendations

### *For donors, international and regional organisations:*

1. **Support the creation of participatory security sector monitoring bodies:** When supporting SSR, it is important to ensure the inclusion of civil society organisations, such as women's organisations, in security sector oversight bodies. Ensure that local ownership and participatory mechanisms underpin policy and practice related to SSR.
2. **Support training on gender and security sector issues to CSOs:** Training in both gender and security sector issues is an important way of developing the necessary skill base within CSOs, enabling them to engage more effectively in oversight of the security sector and enhance the inclusiveness and legitimacy of these activities. Also ensure that donor staff and other decision-makers working on security-related policies receive gender training.
7. **Raise public awareness on gender and security sector issues:** Public awareness campaigns, including working with the media, can focus on topics such as combating gender stereotypes and encouraging the recruitment of female security sector personnel; access to justice; or reporting GBV police reporting mechanisms.
8. **Conduct a gender audit of a security sector organisation or SSR process:** CSOs can hold security sector institutions responsible for integrating gender issues by conducting audits or assessments.

### *For civil society organisations:*

3. **Be a security sector expert:** Make sure that you understand the local, national and regional security needs and priorities of diverse groups of men, women, girls and boys. Develop your expertise in national security sector policies, structures and programming, including the language that is spoken among security actors.
4. **Join or collaborate with local, national or regional security sector monitoring bodies:** CSOs, including women's organisations, can advocate for inclusion in security sector monitoring bodies, and can help place gender issues on the agenda.
5. **Collaborate with women's organisations:** CSOs can strengthen gender-responsive oversight of the security sector through partnering with local, national and international women's organisations.
6. **Advocate for gender-responsive security policies and programming:** CSOs can take an active role – through advocacy campaigns or lobbying – in demanding policies and practices that increase women's participation in all ranks and positions; strengthen gender mainstreaming and reduce gender-based violence.
9. **Document violence against women, men, boys and girls:** CSOs can play a crucial role in security sector oversight through research on gender-based violence and documenting GBV by security sector personnel, which can then be used for awareness-raising and advocacy activities.
10. **Monitor security and defence budgets:** Implementing gender budget analysis of security and defence reform budgets, expenditures and procurement at the national or institutional level can strengthen transparency and accountability.
11. **Create CSO networks:** Formal collaboration with other CSOs, including women's organisations, can create a shared platform on security sector oversight issues and strengthen awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives.
12. **Build and strengthen collaboration between CSOs and security sector institutions:** Convene women and men who show an interest in working on gender issues from the armed forces, police and other security sector institutions as well as CSOs. Create a common agenda and strategies to ensure a more robust approach to integrating gender issues. Provide gender training for security sector personnel.
13. **Integrate gender issues:** CSOs can increase their capacity for gender-responsive oversight and create a non-discriminatory workplace by implementing internal gender training, adopting sexual harassment policies or codes of conduct, and taking measures to ensure a gender balance of staff.

# 7 Additional resources

## Useful websites

International Alert – <http://www.international-alert.org>

*Topic Guide: Civil Society and Security*, Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform - [http://www.ssrnetwork.net/topic\\_guides/civil\\_soci.php](http://www.ssrnetwork.net/topic_guides/civil_soci.php)

UNIFEM Portal on Women, Peace and Security - <http://www.womenwarpeace.org>

WILPF PeaceWomen - <http://www.peacewomen.org>

## Practical guides and handbooks

Amnesty International, *Monitoring and Reporting Human Rights Abuses in Africa: A Handbook for Community Activists* (Amnesty International, Amsterdam), 2002.

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# Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender

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Why is gender important to civil society oversight?

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There is strong recognition that security sector reform (SSR) should meet the different security needs of men, women, boys and girls. The integration of gender issues is also key to the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, and to local ownership and legitimacy of SSR processes.

This Practice Note provides a short introduction to the benefits of integrating gender issues into civil society oversight of the security sector, as well as practical information on doing so.

This Practice Note is based on a longer Tool, and both are part of the **Gender and SSR Toolkit**. Designed to provide an introduction to gender issues for SSR practitioners and policymakers, the Toolkit includes 12 Tools with corresponding Practice Notes – see *More information*.

## Why is gender important to civil society oversight?

**Civil society oversight of the security sector**, including SSR, involves the active participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in defining security policies and overseeing the structures and practices of security sector actors.<sup>1</sup> The objective is to ensure the incorporation of community-level and grassroots interests and perspectives in the provision of internal and external security, and to support local ownership and sustainability. CSOs participate in oversight of the security sector in many different ways, including through policy advice and technical expertise, monitoring, awareness-raising, and research and analysis.

**Gender** refers to the roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours and values that society ascribes to men and women. 'Gender' therefore refers to *learned* differences between men and women, while 'sex' refers to the *biological* differences between males and females. Gender roles vary widely within and across cultures, and can change over time. Gender refers not simply to women or men but also to the relationship between them.

### Strengthening local ownership

- Integrating gender issues and including women's organisations can generate local ownership of SSR processes by ensuring that both men and women are engaged and have the opportunity to express their distinct needs, views and priorities. This makes security institutions more representative, responsive and legitimate in the eyes of the population.

### Comprehensive oversight through the integration of gender issues

- Security sector oversight that monitors how security and justice policies and institutions address gender-based violence (GBV) *can strengthen the provision of security and justice*.
- Security sector oversight that holds security sector institutions accountable for having a non-discriminatory workplace and preventing sexual harassment and other forms of GBV *can increase productivity and operational effectiveness*.
- Security sector oversight that holds security sector institutions accountable for increasing the recruitment, retention and advancement of women and other under-represented groups *can strengthen public trust and effectiveness*.

### Effective oversight through the involvement of women's organisations

- Women's organisations are often an untapped resource for security sector oversight. They can strengthen oversight through:
  - Providing policy advice on improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness.



Geneva Centre for the  
Democratic Control of  
Armed Forces (DCAF)

In Malaysia, CSOs such as the Women's AID Organisation have monitored the enforcement and efficacy of Malaysia's Domestic Violence Act, as well as the delivery of its services to victims. Findings were used to advocate for improvements in the substance and implementation of the legislation.

In Cambodia, women's organisations and human rights groups such as LICADHO are cooperating with government oversight agencies to investigate allegations of abuse and to monitor compliance with Cambodia's recently adopted Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims. This law gives police greater powers to intervene in domestic violence cases and strengthens the legal recourse available to victims. In addition to monitoring, the CSOs provide legal aid and safe houses for victims.

- Monitoring the implementation of international and regional agreements, as well as national and institutional policies.
- Providing capacity building for oversight bodies on gender issues.
- Identifying security threats and issues facing individuals and communities.
- Facilitating dialogue between local communities and security sector oversight bodies.
- Raising public awareness of how to hold security sector institutions accountable.
- Conduct a gender analysis of the SSR process and disseminate findings and recommendations through the media and to government officials and donors.
- Perform a gender budget analysis of government spending on security and defence or of individual security sector institution budgets, in order to better understand the distinct impact of budget allocation on men and women. Use these findings as a tool for advocacy.
- Ensure that women and women's organisations are included in all audit, assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes undertaken by CSOs.

#### Compliance with obligations under international laws and instruments

Taking the initiative to integrate gender issues into civil society oversight is not only a matter of operational effectiveness; it is necessary to comply with international and regional laws, instruments and norms concerning security and gender. Key instruments include:

- *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)*
- *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)*

For more information, please see the Toolkit's Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments.

## How can gender be integrated into civil society oversight?

### Security sector monitoring bodies

- Strengthen the participation of women's organisations in formal security sector oversight bodies, such as civilian review boards, public complaints commissions, expert technical teams and independent monitoring groups (see Box 1).
- Place gender issues, such as the prevention of GBV or increased female recruitment, on the agenda of security sector monitoring bodies.

### Research and data collection

- Ensure that gender issues are integrated into internal and external assessments or reviews of security sector institutions and policies.
- Ensure that all data is disaggregated by sex. Sex-disaggregated data highlights the different circumstances of men and women, and is a necessary basis for equitable security services.
- Carry out a gender audit of a security sector institution or policy.

### Advocacy and awareness-raising

Use gender-sensitive research and the results of assessment and data-collection processes to develop public information and advocacy campaigns on security issues related to gender – such as raising awareness on how to report GBV to the police or lobbying for government funding for gun violence prevention programmes.

- Identify ways to convey this information to marginalised populations (such as rural populations, illiterate women, or ethnic communities) who may not speak the dominant language.
- Target advocacy at different levels – local, provincial and national – reaching key policymakers who can influence security sector programming.
- Engage local media by distributing information through small newspapers, community radio and local television stations, as well as state-run media outlets.
- Work with the media to sensitise journalists and others to the gender dimensions of security and justice issues.
- Involve men in advocacy campaigns, particularly those dealing with violence against women (see Box 2).

### Gender training

Women's organisations and CSOs with gender expertise can support the development and delivery of gender training for security sector personnel (see Box 3), including by:

- Conducting a training needs assessment.
- Developing gender training materials and delivering training.

- Developing a standard gender training curriculum that can be adapted and used by trainers.
- Lobbying for policies that mandate comprehensive gender training.
- Creating a roster of civil society gender trainers.

### Participatory and effective CSOs

CSOs that are involved in security sector oversight also have an obligation to revise internal policies and practices so that they promote gender equality, and to ensure in-house capacity on gender issues:

- Develop gender and equal opportunities policies and procedures that address human resources issues, recruitment practices, job performance requirements and sexual harassment and discrimination.
- Provide gender training for all staff – including training on gender-sensitive data collection and research methodologies.
- Mainstream gender issues into security sector oversight work.
- Conduct an internal gender audit to assess organisational capacity.

#### Also available in Tool 9...

- Stages of an SSR Gender Audit
- Questions to ask when planning an advocacy campaign
- Tips for working with the media
- Training topics to build the oversight capacity of women's NGOs
- How to strengthen the legitimacy of civil society networks
- Examples from Eastern Europe, Fiji, Iraq, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and West Africa

## Post-conflict challenges and opportunities

CSOs may have become fragmented or weakened during conflict and, as a result, may not have the reach, legitimacy or capacity to effectively perform oversight of the security sector. In other cases, collaboration between CSOs may increase in the

### Box 2

#### Involving men in combating violence against women

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) was launched in Canada in 1991 by a group of men to advocate for an end to violence against women and to educate other men about the issue. Through awareness-raising campaigns, public statements and their growing network, members of the WRC provide an alternative vision of non-violent masculinity and offer positive role models for men and boys in communities around the world.<sup>3</sup>

post-conflict period, as army and police reform, as well as ongoing insecurity, are key concerns of many organisations, providing them with opportunities to work together.

#### Challenges for the integration of gender issues

- The capacity of state institutions is often weak, to the degree that even if there is political will, the means to deliver security and justice services is not available in technical, financial or human resource terms.
- Laws, structures and mechanisms to prevent and respond to GBV are rarely in place, or properly functioning.
- Security sector personnel may have committed human rights abuses, and may continue to perpetrate abuses in peacetime.

#### Opportunities for the integration of gender issues

- SSR processes can open up the political space for CSO input into security and justice decision-making, which is an opportunity to raise gender issues.
- Evidence shows that gender roles and relationships often shift during and after conflict, which can open up an important space for negotiating the integration of gender issues and increased recruitment of women.
- Donors may be willing to provide support to CSOs in order to build their gender-responsive oversight capacity.

### Box 3

#### Sexual health education for the armed forces in Mongolia<sup>4</sup>

The NGO Mongol Vision works on reproductive health issues with soldiers and officers of Mongolia's armed forces:

**The issue:** *New recruits to the Mongolian armed forces, especially those from the countryside, have little or no knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STIs. Consequently, the rate of STIs has been relatively high among officers and soldiers.*

**The aim:** *To gain support from the Ministry of Defence and the Mongolian armed forces to increase HIV/AIDS, STI and reproductive health awareness among officers and soldiers.*

**Key stakeholders:** *Ministry of Defence and headquarters of the Mongolian armed forces.*

**Primary stakeholders:** *Soldiers/officers and their sex partners.*

**Approaches and communication:** *Letters were sent to the Ministry of Defence and headquarters of the armed forces; official and unofficial meetings were held with high-level officials; a project was developed in collaboration with high-level officials; a workshop was held with high-level officials; and commanding officers and military unit doctors presented a report on the current STI situation among armed forces personnel.*

**Indicators of success and sustainability:** *Sexual health was included in the official education curriculum for military staff; increased awareness of high-level officers; and increased support from the Ministry of Defence.*

- ✓ How is civil society, including women, being included in oversight processes?
- ✓ How are women's and men's particular security needs being identified and met?
- ✓ How many men and women work within the military, police, intelligence services, border police, customs, immigration and other law enforcement services, and in what capacities (percentage of women/men, by grade and category)?
- ✓ Are measures in place to ensure that women have equal opportunities to be part of every security institution?
- ✓ Is gender training provided to the police, military and other security services?
- ✓ What measures are in place to prevent, investigate and punish GBV by security sector personnel?
- ✓ Is there adequate funding for gender-related programming?

## ? Questions for CSOs to ask

One of the best ways to identify entry points to integrate gender issues into SSR processes is for civil society organisations to conduct an assessment. Below are sample questions on gender that CSOs might include in SSR assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

- What are the particular security and justice needs, perceptions and priorities of men, women, girls and boys?
- Do security sector personnel have the capacity to respond to all of these needs? If not, why not?
- Are women, men, boys and girls equally able to access security and justice services?
- Are security legislation, policies and protocols gender-responsive? Is there adequate legislation against GBV?
- Do women have full and equal access to employment within security sector institutions?
- What is the work environment like within security sector institutions? Are there problems of sexual harassment and other barriers to women's advancement?
- Do security sector oversight bodies include women and consult with women's organisations?
- Do security sector oversight bodies monitor issues related to GBV and equal opportunities for men and women?

## More information

### Resources

Amnesty International – *Monitoring and Reporting Human Rights Abuses in Africa: A Handbook for Community Activists*, 2002.

Amnesty International – *Understanding Policing: A Resource for Human Rights Activists*, 2006.

DCAF – *Public Oversight of the Security Sector: A Handbook for CSOs on Democratic Security Governance*, forthcoming 2008.

Family Violence Prevention Fund – *Toolkit for Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-Based Violence*, 2003.

International Alert and Women Waging Peace – *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, 2004.

OECD DAC – *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, 2007.

### Organisations

DCAF – [www.dcaf.ch](http://www.dcaf.ch)

International Alert – [www.international-alert.org](http://www.international-alert.org)

UNIFEM Portal on Women, Peace and Security – [www.womenwarpeace.org](http://www.womenwarpeace.org)

UN-INSTRRAW – [www.un-instraw.org](http://www.un-instraw.org)

WILPF Peacemakers – [www.peacemakers.org](http://www.peacemakers.org)

### Gender and SSR Toolkit

1. Security Sector Reform and Gender
  2. Police Reform and Gender
  3. Defence Reform and Gender
  4. Justice Reform and Gender
  5. Penal Reform and Gender
  6. Border Management and Gender
  7. Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
  8. National Security Policy-Making and Gender
  9. Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
  10. Private Military and Security Companies and Gender
  11. SSR Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender
  12. Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel
- Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments

Each of these Tools and Practice Notes are available from: [www.dcaf.ch](http://www.dcaf.ch), [www.un-instraw.org](http://www.un-instraw.org) and [www.osce.org/odihr](http://www.osce.org/odihr).

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<sup>1</sup> Caparini, Cole and Kinzelbach, *Public Oversight of the Security Sector: A Handbook for CSOs on Democratic Security Governance* (Renesans: Bratislava), forthcoming July 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: OECD DAC. *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (OECD DAC: Paris), 2007, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from: 'The White Ribbon Campaign'. [http://www.whiteribbon.ca/about\\_us/](http://www.whiteribbon.ca/about_us/)

<sup>4</sup> Cited from: Albrecht, P., 'Advocacy', *Public Oversight of the Security Sector: A Handbook for CSOs on Democratic Security Governance*, eds. Caparini, Cole and Kinzelbach (Renesans: Bratislava), forthcoming July 2008.