

Security Sector Reconstruction in Post-Conflict: The Lessons from Timor-Leste

Deniz Kocak

As history makes clear, illicit power arises wherever there is a vacuum of security, justice, and accountable governance. In response, over the past 15 years, the international community has increasingly begun to apply security sector reform (SSR) activities in postconflict countries. Usually done under UN auspices, SSR is an effort to reestablish the rule of law and mitigate the instability and lawlessness caused by dysfunction in the security sector following political transition or conflict. SSR has been recognized as a crucial element of peacebuilding operations worldwide.¹ Timor-Leste was long regarded as an ideal setting for UN-led peacebuilding. After managing to establish a local police force and security governance institutions, it was held up as an example of successful externally led security sector transformation.

But in 2006, violent clashes between security forces cast doubt on the stability of the newly established security system, thus drawing into question one of the mainstream policies of international approaches to security governance in postconflict settings. In an effort to address the emerging problems, the UN mission's mandate was amended to help rebuild the dysfunctional security sector. But by that time, five years into the intervention, the mission's ability to further influence development was openly challenged by growing local resistance to external interference in the sensitive domain of security. Simultaneously, the mission faced assertive local approaches to security governance, and Timorese demands for local ownership.

This chapter looks at these questions: What approach to SSR was applied in Timor-Leste before and after the 2006 security crisis? Which aspects were successfully implemented? Which ones failed, and why? Using the Timor-Leste experience as an example, this analysis will argue that standardized "tool kit" SSR implementations, insufficient attention to the local context, and inherent local dynamics that did not mesh with external donors' policy agendas did not lead to a stable security situation or to a legitimate, civilian-controlled security sector as the Western security governance paradigm advocates. Rather, externally imposed, misaligned policies led to unintended negative consequences when local actors selectively adopted parts of the external SSR agenda while neglecting other parts. This outcome of partial resistance and adaptation by local actors is a critical point for further research on the possibilities and limits of SSR in postconflict countries.

An earlier version of this chapter was prepared for the annual meeting of the International Studies Association in Montreal, March 2011, and published as a working paper. Deniz Kocak, "Security Sector Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Country: Lessons from Timor-Leste," SFB-Governance Working Paper Series no. 61, Oct. 2013. Deepest thanks to Fairlie Chappuis for her valuable comments on the manuscript.

¹ Irene Bernabéu, "Laying the Foundations of Democracy? Reconsidering Security Sector Reform under UN Auspices in Kosovo," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 1 (2007): 71-92; Ursula C. Schroeder and Fairlie Chappuis, "New Perspectives on Security Sector Reform: The Role of Local Agency and Domestic Politics," *International Peacekeeping* 21, no. 2 (2014): 133-48; Fairlie Chappuis and Heiner Hänggi, "Statebuilding through Security Sector Reform," in *Handbook of international statebuilding*, ed. David Chandler and Timothy D. Sisk (London: Routledge, 2013), 168.

The Historical Backdrop

The history of Timor-Leste is characterized by foreign rule and domination. The island of Timor, in the Lesser Sunda Islands, attracted Portuguese and Dutch merchants and missionaries in the sixteenth century. In the following centuries, both colonial powers gradually consolidated their rule on Timor, ultimately formalizing their territorial claims in the Treaty of Lisbon (1859), which designated the western part of Timor as Dutch, and the eastern part as Portuguese.² Whereas the Dutch left Timor during the decolonization process and the formation of the Indonesian Republic in 1949, Portugal clung to its colonial possession in Southeast Asia until the Carnation Revolution of 1974. The breakdown of the Salazar/Caetano regime in Portugal eventually led to the disintegration of the Portuguese colonial empire. Soon, newly formed local political parties in Timor-Leste struggled for political control. A coup by the pro-Portuguese party União Democrática Timorense against the left-leaning, socialist party Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente (FRETILIN) failed, and FRETILIN emerged victorious.³ But only a few days after the declaration of independence by FRETILIN in November 1975, pro-Indonesian militias and Indonesian armed forces invaded Timor-Leste, killing several thousand Timorese civilians.

Although the official incorporation of Timor-Leste as the 27th province Timor Timur (East Timor) into the Indonesian Republic was carried out in early 1976, the actual pacification of the new Indonesian province lasted several years. Particularly the armed wing of FRETILIN, the FALINTIL (Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste), resisted Indonesian rule through guerrilla tactics and clandestine networks.⁴ Despite international protests, Indonesia maintained its occupation. But over time, several factors led to a change of Indonesia's attitude toward Timor Timur. Changed international political developments at the end of the Cold War, the internationally condemned massacre of several hundred Timorese civilians by Indonesian soldiers in the Santa Cruz cemetery in 1991, and, finally, the financial crisis of 1997 in Southeast Asia led to the fall of the Suharto regime, which led to political reforms (Reformasi) in Indonesia and altered its policy toward Timor Timur as well.

The political turning point came in 1999, when Indonesian President B. J. Habibie granted the people of Timor Timur a referendum on the future political status of the eastern part of Timor within the Indonesian state. After some delays and with the help of the UN Mission in East Timor, the referendum was finally held in August 1999. Although most East Timorese supported autonomy, pro-Indonesian militias incited unrest, wreaking such devastation that the UN Security Council mandated a multinational force to intervene and stabilize the security situation (S/RES/1264). The UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) thus assumed administrative control accord-

² Andrea Katalin Molnar, *Timor Leste; Politics, History, and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2010), 32; Hans Hägerdal, *Lords of the Land, Lords of the Sea: Conflict and Adaptation in Early Colonial Timor, 1600-1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012).

³ Sara Niner, "Martyrs, Heroes and Warriors: The Leadership of East Timor," in *East Timor: Beyond Independence*, ed. Damien Kingsbury and Michael Leach (Clayton, Australia: Monash Univ. Press, 2007).

⁴ John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War; The Hidden History of East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1991); Peter Carey, "East Timor under Indonesian Occupation, 1975-99," in *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Andrew T. H. Tan (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2007), 376.

ing to S/RES/1272. Several UN missions continued the stabilization work, though none before 2006 were explicitly mandated to conduct SSR in Timor-Leste.

The East Timor Police Service (PNTL)

According to the UNTAET regulation 2001/22, which was based on S/RES/1272, the East Timor Police Service (later *Policía Nacional de Timor-Leste* [PNTL]) came into being in August 2001. Training and selection processes for police recruits, conducted by the UN Police (UNPOL), had already begun in early 2000, however. The building up of the local police was to be completed as soon as possible, and for this reason, UNPOL resorted to recruiting Timorese who had served in the *Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia* (POLRI), the national police force during the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste.

Despite the Timorese population's concerns about having former POLRI members on the force (because of their history of repressive tactics and collaboration with the former occupiers), the United Nations relied on them and placed them in high positions in the new police corps.⁵ Also, these former POLRI members, numbering about 400, underwent fast-track training of only one month before being admitted to the new police service, whereas the vetting and training processes for the other recruits were quite different. Selection of non-POLRI recruits relied exclusively on a Western questionnaire, favoring English-speaking candidates over recruits with knowledge of several local dialects.

Political allegiances played a role in the selection or rejection of recruits as local politicians influenced the selection process.⁶ Training for the non-POLRI recruits took three months at the police academy, followed by three to six months of on-the-job training, mentored and accompanied by UNPOL officers. From the beginning, the recruitment procedures conducted by UNPOL departed from recruitment guidelines. Although the special treatment of former Indonesian police officers during the recruitment and training can be explained by the need for experienced officers, the necessary vetting processes were not applied.

Beyond recruitment and training, the logistics and maintenance capacities of the new Timorese police force were poor, even after the UN Mission in East Timor (UNMISET) took control over the PNTL in 2002. UNPOL was overwhelmed with the task of providing security, leaving little time or capacity for simultaneously developing and training the PNTL.⁷ Because of the double burden, UNPOL did not manage to strengthen institutional capacity and development or create the necessary self-concept for a constitutionally based police force acting in accordance with the rule of law. Instead, according to Ludovic Hood, the mission was characterized by "inadequate planning and deficient

⁵ Gordon Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction in Timor-Leste: A Difficult Do-over," in *Policing Developing Democracies*, ed. Mercedes S. Hinton and Tim Newburn (New York: Routledge, 2009), 150.

⁶ Henri Myrtilinen, "Poster Boys No More: Gender and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste," DCAF Policy Paper no. 31, 2009, 24, www.iansa-women.org/sites/default/files/newsviews/DCAF_PP31_PosterBoys_2.pdf.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

mission design; unimaginative and weak leadership; and negligible Timorese ownership of the process.”⁸

In 2005, UNMISSET handed control of the PNTL over to the Timorese administration and downsized UNPOL’s presence in Timor-Leste. But the inclusion of former POLRI officers had a detrimental effect on the fragile PNTL, and conflicts erupted between former POLRI officers and recruits who had been affiliated with the resistance movement or had suffered from the repression of Indonesian military and police forces during the occupation.

Moreover, the minister of the interior, Rogério Lobato, who had full authority over the Timorese police, took also a leading position in the veterans association AC75. With the help of AC75, Lobato pressured Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri for political concessions in favor of Lobato and his allies.⁹ Lobato also exploited his informal links to PNTL officers and used PNTL personnel for his own political and financial purposes.¹⁰

The rampant politicization of the security sector in Timor-Leste since its reconstruction in 2000-2001 was alarming. While the new Timorese defense forces, the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste (F-FDTL) were filled mainly with former FALINTIL resistance combatants in the first recruitment phase, the PNTL, by contrast, had a high proportion of former POLRI officers in its ranks. Hence, political orientations and affiliations hardened within the two security organizations until there was an insurmountable division between them. Also, conflicts emerged between regional identity and political network affiliations: while the PNTL consisted of “Kaladis,” people from the western provinces of Timor-Leste, most of the F-FDTL recruited in the first round consisted of “Firakus,” people from the eastern provinces of Timor-Leste.¹¹ Later recruitment phases, from 2003 to 2005, complicated the conflict patterns as new recruits for the F-FDTL came from the western provinces, while new Firaku recruits joined the ranks of the PNTL. Thus, beyond the overarching institutional rivalry between the PNTL and the F-FDTL, new identity-based rifts also emerged within both organizations.

The situation led to open conflict as inadequate mission definitions for the two rival security organizations triggered several armed clashes between PNTL and F-FDTL members since 2002.¹² Ultimately, the pressure on UNPOL to establish a functioning local police force resulted in an approach based on train-and-equip rather than on developing an effective and democratically controlled police institution. This contributed to the politicization of the PNTL. By disregarding regional and political conflict lines

⁸ Ludovic Hood, “Missed Opportunities: The United Nations, Police Service and Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste, 1999-2004,” in *Managing Insecurity: Field Experiences of Security Sector Reform*, ed. Gordon Peake, Alice Hills, and Eric Scheye (New York: Routledge, 2008), 65.

⁹ Edward Rees, “Under Pressure FALINTIL Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste: Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004,” DCAF Working Paper no. 139, 2004, 50.

¹⁰ Carolyn Bull, *No Entry Without Strategy. Building the Rule of Law under UN Transitional Administration* (Tokyo: UN Univ. Press, 2008), 186; Sven Gunnar Simonsen, “The Role of East Timor’s Security Institutions in National Integration and Disintegration,” *Pacific Review* 22, no. 5 (2009): 575-96.

¹¹ Sven Gunnar Simonsen, “The Authoritarian Temptation in East Timor: Nationbuilding and the Need for Inclusive Governance,” *Asian Survey* 46, no. 4 (2006): 575-96.

¹² International Crisis Group (ICG), “Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back,” ICG, Asia Briefing no. 116, 2010, 9; Andrew Goldsmith and Sinclair Dinnen, “Transnational Police Building: Critical Lessons from Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 6 (2007): 1091-1109.

in conducting recruitment and vetting, the United Nations recreated existing cleavages and aggravated tensions within the security organizations.

F-FDTL: The New Timorese Defense Force

The United Nations' unwillingness to train the former guerrilla forces and integrate them into the security sector of the new Timorese nation was reflected by FALINTIL's lack of mention in Security Council Resolution 1272. Rather, FALINTIL was perceived as a problematic residue of the 24-year struggle for independence—a view that neglected the popular support and legitimacy that FALINTIL enjoyed, at least in the eastern provinces of Timor-Leste.

FALINTIL members were gathered in cantonment sites in preparation for a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process that had not been properly thought out. The forces held out in the cantonment sites for more than a year until, in 2000, a plan proposed by King's College was adopted to establish a defense force in Timor-Leste. Without a clear perception of the role this new Timorese defense force would play, the recruitment process nevertheless began in early 2001. UNTAET delegated the process completely to the former commander of FALINTIL, Taur Matan Ruak, and his staff. The recruitment process drew heavy criticism from political observers for disregarding important steps of DDR, such as a thorough screening of recruits for past crimes and for their reliability and loyalty to the constitution. Eventually, the recruitment process was biased toward men from the eastern provinces of Timor-Leste, who were loyal to Ruak and the former rebel leader, Xanana Gusmão. About 650 former FALINTIL members entered the new Timorese defense force in February 2001.¹³

The remaining ex-FALINTIL combatants, who were not considered for service in the F-FDTL or who voluntarily waived military service (about 1,308), were disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated under the auspices of the FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program (FRAP) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The process ended in December 2001 because DDR was not part of UNTAET's mandate.¹⁴ The FRAP was considered successful because most of the participants got training in soft skills, received payments, and returned to civilian life.

But several veterans who, because of their political alignment, were not chosen to be part of the new F-FDTL became disgruntled and formed various illicit, largely clandestine groups and veterans' associations. These groups, including Colimau 2000, Isolados, and AC75, among others, opposed the government and the politicized army command and reportedly had strong links to organized crime.¹⁵ Also, because of the severe eco-

¹³ Edward Rees, "UN's Failure to Integrate Falintil Veterans May Cause East Timor to Fail," *On Line Opinion*, Sept. 2, 2003, www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=666; Henri Myrntinen, "Guerrillas, Gangsters and Contractors: Integrating Former Combatants and Its Impact on SSR and Development in Post-conflict Societies," in *Back to the Roots: Security Sector Reform and Development*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Vanessa Farr (Münster, Germany: LIT, 2012), 230.

¹⁴ Myrntinen, "Guerrillas, Gangsters and Contractors," 230.

¹⁵ Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment, "Groups, Gangs, and Armed Violence in Timor-Leste," TLAVA Issue Brief no. 2, Apr. 2009, www.timor-leste-violence.org/pdfs/Timor-Leste-Violence-IB2-ENGLISH.pdf; John McCarthy, "FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program (FRAP): Final Evaluation Report," USAID, IOM, June 2002, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLICUS/Resources/388758-1187275938350/4101054-1187277377932/TimorLesteFRAP.pdf>.

conomic situation in Timor-Leste, unemployed Timorese youth joined gangs and linked with the clandestine groups. All major political parties, as well as several members of the police and the armed forces, were tied to clandestine groups or youth gangs through patronage networks or family bonds.¹⁶ While the FRETILIN party had ties to the martial arts gang KORKA, the Partido Democrático held strong links to the rival PSHT. The group Colimau 2000 initially cooperated with FRETILIN but eventually allied with Gusmão's CNRT party.¹⁷

Despite FRAP's officially proclaimed success, its DDR measures were limited because it did not include all actual members or veterans of the FALINTIL. Neglect of the sociopolitical context, as well as a lack of local knowledge about guerrilla structures, led to misinterpretation of the term "veterano." In particular, women who served in the FALINTIL or in supportive equivalent groups were excluded from the DDR process despite their crucial role during the independence struggle.¹⁸

Training for the newly established F-FDTL was provided mainly by external donors on a bilateral basis. Australia and Portugal, among others, led the F-FDTL training from 2001. The 12 donor nations were grouped in the Office for Defence Force Development, which was nominally subordinate to the special representative of the UN secretary-general but operated with relative autonomy from other UN departments in Timor-Leste.¹⁹ Training consisted of a three-month fast-track program. There was no attempt to establish viable democratic and civilian oversight over the F-FDTL or improve institutional capacity.²⁰ Therefore, the decisionmaking authority concerning new recruits, the strategic administrative planning, and the task of defining the F-FDTL's actual role lay in the hands of the Timorese military command and its affiliated political network.

The United Nations did not play a meaningful role in DDR of the FALINTIL, nor did it significantly support the establishment and training of the F-FDTL. With DDR delegated to the IOM, the United Nations failed to monitor and lead the vetting and recruitment processes for the F-FDTL. Moreover, both the United Nations and bilateral donors neglected the formation of robust and effective institutions, such as a democratically controlled planning staff, which led to the inexorable politicization of the Timor-Leste armed forces. As a result, new recruits from the western provinces of Timor-Leste, who were linked to another political network, clashed with senior officers and members of the rank and file from the first recruitment phase.²¹

Development of the Timorese armed forces was fully relinquished to local actors. Although there was indeed local ownership from the start, the emergence of the F-FDTL in domestic security matters indicated a development outside the Western paradigm of

¹⁶ Matthew B. Arnold, "'Who Is My Friend, Who Is My Enemy?' Youth and Statebuilding in Timor-Leste," *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 3 (2009): 386; ICG, "Timor-Leste: Stability at What Cost?" ICG, Asia Report no. 246, May 18, 2013, 20, www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/media-releases/2013/asia/timor-leste-stability-at-what-cost.aspx.

¹⁷ James Scambary, "Anatomy of a Conflict: The 2006-2007 Communal Violence in East Timor," *Conflict, Security and Development* 9, no. 2 (2009): 271, 286; Henri Myrtilinen, "Up in Smoke; Impoverishment and Instability in Post-Independence Timor-Leste," KEPA Working Paper no. 11, 2007, 9.

¹⁸ Myrtilinen, "Poster Boys No More," 10; Myrtilinen, "Guerrillas, Gangsters and Contractors," 231, 238.

¹⁹ Ludovic Hood, "Security Sector Reform in East Timor, 1999-2004," *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 1 (2006): 71.

²⁰ Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction," 151.

²¹ Myrtilinen, "Poster Boys No More," 22.

security governance. And the absence of a clearly defined role for the F-FDTL, as well as its rivalry with the UN-subsidized PNLT, made it an unpredictable force within a fragile new nation.

Assessment of the UNTAET Effort

Main points of SSR are the establishment of viable security governance institutions that can guarantee democratic civilian oversight over national security actors, improvement of security provision by security actors, development of strong local ownership of the SSR process, and sustained reforms of the security and justice sector.²² But UNTAET focused its SSR efforts on training and equipping the local police, meanwhile neglecting the work of building effective institutions. Therefore, democratic civilian control over the security sector in Timor-Leste never happened.

Rees rightly emphasizes the United Nations' indifference and to, and denial of, the problems within the F-FDTL as main reasons for the rampant politicization of the Timorese military. Leaving the task of overseeing the buildup and formation of the F-FDTL completely to the former resistance fighters' high command and to politicized Timorese officials made problems of democratic oversight inevitable.²³ The screening-and-recruitment process of former guerrilla fighters into the Timorese military was conducted improperly, and former conflict parties were allowed to establish partisan power bases within the Timorese armed forces. This laid a fragile foundation for the security sector.

An obvious weakness of the UN mission in Timor-Leste was the lack of strategic planning before and during the reformation and rebuilding of the security sector. Because UNTAET and UNMISSET had no SSR policy or strategy, they failed to implement democratic oversight over the security organizations, thus missing the opportunity to incorporate trusted and competent Timorese politicians into the SSR process.²⁴ Therefore, the necessary local "ownership" for a sustainable, accountable, and effective security sector was of limited suitability from the beginning. Also, according to a UN security adviser, cooperative planning for SSR-DDR, as well as the division of labor between the United Nations and the bilateral donors, was undertaken without a concept and lacked substance.²⁵ Differing practices in programming and funding were the result.²⁶

Analysts explain the United Nations' SSR failure in Timor-Leste as a consequence of overburdening the mission's capabilities. Because there was no local police service in place after the Australian-led intervention of 1999-2000, the United Nations was responsible for training new local recruits and providing police services at the same time.²⁷

²² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD-DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (Paris: OECD, 2007), 21.

²³ Rees, "UN's Failure to Integrate."

²⁴ Hood, "Missed Opportunities," 63.

²⁵ Author interview with UN security adviser, July 2012, Dili.

²⁶ Beth K. Greener, *The New International Policing* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 48.

²⁷ The International Force for East Timor was a multinational non-UN peacekeeping task force, organized and led by Australia in accordance with UN resolutions to address the humanitarian and security crisis in East Timor from 1999 until the arrival of UN peacekeepers.

A further problem was UNPOL's own heterogeneous composition. Most of the deployed international police officers had no experience instructing police recruits and also lacked the language skills to be effective. As a result, UNPOL officers relied on their individual policing experience in their home countries and tried to communicate them to the PNTL recruits. Since this ad hoc approach lacked any form of standardization, UNPOL's police training created confusion, rather than a coherent understanding of professional police practice, among the local recruits.²⁸

Also, neglecting the informal structures in Timor-Leste—including the FALINTIL resistance movement—and hesitating to incorporate them into the UN-led reconstruction of the security sector produced a serious rift between FALINTIL veterans and the United Nations.²⁹ While the United Nations excluded Timorese officials from the official reform process of the security sector, infighting between political camps went on behind the scenes. The security actors' informal allegiances to various groups politicized and destabilized the already fragile security sector.³⁰

The Collapse of 2006, and Its Aftermath

In 2005, the United Nations, perceiving overall stability, reduced its presence in Timor-Leste. Thus, the UN office there focused mainly on advisory and training tasks for the Timorese administration and the PNTL.

But Timor-Leste faced a collapse of its security sector in April 2006, when clashes began between PNTL and F-FDTL members, as well as associated youth gangs and organized groups of armed civilians. The incumbent administration could not establish order, and at the end of May 2006, the Australian-led Operation ASTUTE, of the International Stabilization Force, intervened to end the violence. In August 2006, the UN Security Council mandated the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), according to S/RES/1704, to rebuild and reform the institutions of the security sector, conduct and supervise rehabilitation of the PNTL, and provide security with UNPOL. UNMIT's tasks were specified and amended by a supplemental agreement, which focused on consolidation and reform of the security sector, especially the PNTL.

Again UNPOL deployed about 1,600 police officers from more than 40 countries to maintain security and train the local police force. The core of the PNTL training was the Reform, Restructuring and Rebuilding (RRR) program, which encompassed the registration of officers, vetting, additional training and mentoring, and the concluding certification.³¹ The vetting process aimed first and foremost at identifying and rejecting police officers who had committed crimes or other unlawful acts during the clashes in 2006. But various suspected officers were freed without charge because of unsubstantiated claims and missing evidence. This resulted, on the one hand, from the UNPOL officers' inexperience in criminal investigation and their lack of communication skills and, on the other hand, from benevolent acquittals of the suspected officers (since Timorese govern-

²⁸ Author interview with international security adviser, July 2012, Dili.

²⁹ Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction," 148.

³⁰ Author interview with international policy adviser, June 2011, Dili.

³¹ Bu V. E. Wilson, "To 2012 and Beyond: International Assistance to Police and Security Sector Development in Timor-Leste," *Asian Politics and Policy* 4, no. 1 (2012): 79.

ment officials, for political reasons, were not interested in prosecuting PNTL officers).³² The start of the registration and the vetting procedure itself was slow because of insufficient UNPOL resources. Once again, UNPOL had a mixed mandate of policing Timor-Leste while also training and supervising the PNTL. Moreover, the mentoring phase of six months was reduced to eight weeks. Ultimately, about 3,110 officers were screened and certified in December 2007.³³

Unlike in previous missions, this time Timorese officials were involved in the vetting process and included in the certification of PNTL officers. Therefore, the success of the RRR program depended heavily on good cooperation between UNMIT and the Timorese administration. But cooperation may not have been as great as UNMIT believed. The RRR program eventually failed, and one Timorese state official, in a 2011 interview with the author, blamed Timorese officials who, he said, did not like the program and therefore obstructed the process.³⁴ In fact, relations were troubled by miscommunication and contradictory perceptions concerning the handling of police officers suspected of misconduct.

The mission's chances for success were also weakened by high turnover rates, lack of professional expertise, a heterogeneous police body, and insufficient cultural and contextual knowledge within UNPOL. In this regard, UNMIT was repeating the mistakes that UNTAET and UNMISSET had made during the earlier UN missions in Timor-Leste.³⁵ So while the vetting process after the security crisis in 2006 should have constituted a new beginning for the Timorese police, it did not. The ineffectiveness of the vetting itself, as well as the unwillingness of local officials to charge suspect officers with misconduct or dereliction, undermined this important measure to reform the security sector in Timor-Leste.³⁶

Strategically, UNMIT should have been on far more solid ground than the previous UNTAET mission had been. This initial phase of UNMIT's activities was accompanied by the deployment of the UN Standing Police Capacity (SPC) and the Security Sector Support Unit (SSSU).³⁷ The SSSU had the task of monitoring and reviewing the security sector reform process and, if applicable, proposing modifications for further programs. The SPC served as a tool to strengthen relations between UN organizations and the Timorese administration, as well as maintain supervision of the PNTL's reform process.³⁸ But despite the United Nations' positive self-assessments of the first-ever deployment of an SSSU,³⁹ the evidence suggests that the unit had only very limited impact in the first

³² Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, "UNPOL and Police Reform in Timor-Leste: Accomplishments and Setbacks," *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 3 (2009): 397-400.

³³ ICG, "Timor-Leste: Security Sector Reform," ICG Asia Report no. 143, 2008, 5-8.

³⁴ Author interview with Timorese state official, July 2011, Dili.

³⁵ Lemay-Hébert, "UNPOL and Police Reform in Timor-Leste: Accomplishments and Setbacks," 399; Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction," 154-57.

³⁶ Ursula C. Schroeder, Fairlie Chappuis, and Deniz Kocak, "Security Sector Reform from a Policy Transfer Perspective: A Comparative Study of International Interventions in the Palestinian Territories, Liberia and Timor-Leste," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 3 (2013): 393.

³⁷ Elisabeth Lothe and Gordon Peake, "Addressing Symptoms but Not Causes: Stabilisation and Humanitarian Action in Timor-Leste," *Disasters* 34, no. S3 (2010): 436.

³⁸ UNMIT, "Security Sector Review in Timor-Leste," June 2008, <http://unmit.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIT/SSR/Project%20document%20for%20SSR%20signed%2013June2008.pdf>.

³⁹ Wilson, "To 2012 and Beyond," 82.

years because most of its staff lacked the necessary contextual knowledge and language skills to be accepted by the Timorese as a serious partner.⁴⁰

Despite the still fragile nature of the PNTL as an institution, repeated reports about unprofessional performance, and PNTL officers' links to politicians as well as to criminal organizations, UNMIT began handing authority back to the PNTL, district by district, starting in 2009.⁴¹ UNPOL assessed its progress using a catalogue of requirements, including that the district police be able to provide adequate security, that 80 percent of officers within the district pass the certification process, and that the district police force be sufficiently equipped and able to operate. ICG, however, criticizes the lack of standardized indicators to determine whether a district fulfilled these requirements.⁴² And Della-Giacoma notes that the handover process was merely an exercise in "ticking boxes" by the assessment teams, rather than a thorough evaluation.⁴³ The final handover of executive control of the PNTL, for the whole of Timor-Leste, eventually took place in March 2011.⁴⁴

Impunity as Political Strategy?

Even after the United Nations' renewed attempts since 2007 to reform the Timorese police, the institution remained fragile. Because of dysfunctional internal oversight, Timorese police officers' involvement in criminal activities such as human trafficking, prostitution, and gambling was not adequately prosecuted.⁴⁵ And when criminal investigations were made against members of the Timorese police, they eventually came to naught because of corruption and bribery of the investigators. According to a UN official, the involvement of middle-ranking and even senior police in criminal activities posed a serious impediment to meaningful and thorough police reforms by the United Nations.⁴⁶

The withdrawal of the Indonesian military and administration from Timor-Leste in 1999 also meant a serious "brain drain" since most of the public servants during the occupation were Indonesians. As a consequence, the Timorese justice sector lacked qualified personnel to fill the vacancies.⁴⁷ Moreover, the Timorese judges and attorneys, quickly appointed by the UN Transitional Administration, had only limited practical knowledge or experience to apply to their tasks. A lack of resources and financial means, combined with the ambiguous legal framework of the transitional period, severely limited the Timorese justice sector's effectiveness.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Author interview with Timorese state official, July 2011, Dili.

⁴¹ Greener, *The New International Policing*, 52.

⁴² ICG, "Handing Back Responsibility to Timor-Leste's Police," ICG Asia Report no. 180, 2009, 11.

⁴³ Jim Della-Giacoma, "Police Building in Timor-Leste: Mission Impossible?" GRIPS Discussion Paper 10-04, 2010, 9, www3.grips.ac.jp/~pinc/data/10-04.pdf.

⁴⁴ ICG, "Timor-Leste: Stability at What Cost?" 20.

⁴⁵ Bu V. E. Wilson and Nélon de Sousa C. Belo, "The UNPOL to PNTL 'Handover' 2009: What Exactly Is Being Handed Over?" SSRIC Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, 2009, 13, https://fundasaunmahein.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/cppf_briefing_paper_-_unpol_to_pntl_handover_2009_final-1.pdf.

⁴⁶ Author interview with UN official, Aug. 2012, Dili.

⁴⁷ Bull, *No Entry without Strategy*, 190.

⁴⁸ Tanja Hohe, "Justice without Judiciary in East Timor," *Conflict, Security and Development* 3, no. 3 (2003): 335-38.

Since independence, the courts' effectiveness has been hampered not only by limited funds and inexperienced staff but also by the reconciliation strategy carried out by the Timorese political leadership. This proclaimed "national reconciliation campaign" by the former president and later acting prime minister, Xanana Gusmão, has been used to exempt prominent former independence fighters, and their affiliates, who were involved in arson, assault, and other criminal activities during the violent clashes in April-May 2006, from legal punishment.⁴⁹

The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) has dubbed the judicial-political developments in Timor-Leste a "culture of impunity."⁵⁰ And indeed, the courts have exonerated several high-ranking politicians whom the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste suspected of instigating and forwarding the outburst of violence between members of the police, the military, and affiliated armed civilian groups in 2006.⁵¹ Despite having been proven guilty, then-Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, then-military commander Taur Matan Ruak, then-Minister of the Interior Rogério Lobato, and then-Minister of Defense Roque Rodrigues, among others, never faced prison time.⁵² Lobato, one of the few who were sentenced to imprisonment, could leave the country with his family before serving the custodial sentence.⁵³ And only four members of the Timorese armed forces were sentenced to 10 years in jail and ordered to financially compensate the families of murdered police officers.

Despite the conviction, all four F-FDTL members received their regular pay and were not dismissed from the military. And the stipulated financial compensations were never paid to the victims' families.⁵⁴ Likewise, thanks to the flawed reconciliation policy, several members of the group who planned and conducted assassination attempts against the Timorese president and prime minister in 2008 faced minor jail terms and were later pardoned by presidential decree.⁵⁵ While prominent and well-networked persons benefited from the reconciliation scheme, ordinary Timorese citizens have suffered from draconian application of the law for even minor criminal offenses. It is this application of double standards, as one senior UN official points out, that leads to the Timorese's strong discontent and mistrust toward their government.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Gusmão left office in the fall of 2014. See Laura Grenfell, "Promoting the Rule of Law in Timor-Leste," *Conflict, Security and Development* 9, no. 2 (2009): 220; Eva Ottendörfer, "Contesting International Norms of Transitional Justice: The Case of Timor Leste," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 7, no. 1 (2013): 23-35.

⁵⁰ CIGI, "Security Sector Reform Monitor: Timor-Leste no. 2," May 2010, 17, www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/ssrm_timor_lesste_v2.pdf.

⁵¹ United Nations, "Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste," Oct. 2006, www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/COITimorLeste.pdf.

⁵² Geoffrey C. Gunn, "Re-enter the United Nations: A Role for the Peacebuilding Commission in East Timor?" *Lusotopie* 15, no. 2 (2008): 211; Selver B. Sahin, "Building the State in Timor-Leste," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (2007): 263.

⁵³ Gordon Peake, "Rogerio Lobato: From Inmate to President?" Interpreter, Feb. 15, 2012, www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2012/02/15/Rogerio-Lobato-From-inmate-to-president.aspx.

⁵⁴ United Nations, "Facing the Future: Periodic Report on Human Rights Developments in Timor-Leste: 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010," UN OHCHR, 2010, 11, www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PeriodicReportHRDevelopmentsJuly09-June10.pdf.

⁵⁵ Bu V. E. Wilson, "The Exception Becomes the Norm in Timor-Leste: The Draft National Security Laws and the Continuing Role of the Joint Command," CIGJ Issues Paper no. 11, 2009, 6; CIGI, "Security Sector Reform Monitor," 17.

⁵⁶ Author interview with senior UN official, June 2011, Dili.

Timorese Self-Determination in Local Security Governance

Although the F-FDTL was one of the main initiators of the violent clashes in 2006, the United Nations failed once again to subject the F-FDTL to a robust vetting process. Thus, even after 2006, the F-FDTL was trained and equipped on a bilateral basis by Australia, Portugal, and other external donors, without a meaningful disciplinary review. The Timorese administration announced new recruitment rounds for 2006 and 2009, in accordance with the 2007 national strategy paper "Force 2020."⁵⁷ According to the chief commander of F-FDTL, the "Force 2020" paper was intended to put forward alternatives to imported Western concepts of security planning and to assert Timor-Leste's self-determination in matters of national security.⁵⁸

This increasing tendency toward proclaiming Timorese self-determination was connected to mounting Timorese criticism of the United Nations' handling of the security sector review and, indeed, to growing criticism of the Western concept of SSR in Timor-Leste since 2007. The points of criticism were the insufficient police training given by UNPOL, the questionable professionalism and lack of expertise of its personnel, the ad hoc nature of the SSR programs themselves, and, finally, the United Nations' continual refusal to provide training for the F-FDTL.⁵⁹ Further indicators of the Timorese administration's increasing rejection of external SSR practices were its reluctance to prosecute suspect PNTL officers and its open objection to the vetting procedures. (Instead of prosecuting, Timorese officials argued that judicial prosecution would only fan resentment and conflict within society.)⁶⁰

At the same time, the Timorese administration and security organizations were feeling a rise in self-confidence vis-à-vis the United Nations.⁶¹ In two articles published online, Secretary of State for Defense Pinto came out openly against persistent UN paternalism concerning the application of security models in Timor-Leste. Pinto asserted that Timor-Leste maintains international sovereignty as a state and therefore wanted to pursue its own strategy of security management. On the establishment of the Joint Command in 2008 and its proven effectiveness, Pinto argued that Timor-Leste could respond adequately to security issues by pursuing a "Timorese way."⁶² As a senior PNTL officer pointed out, the police still need to improve and, therefore, must rely on external support, but they do not wish to be patronized or controlled, and insist on self-determination in the overall process of transforming the police as an institution.⁶³

A chance for the Timorese to convincingly assert their autonomy in security matters occurred in 2008. Responding to assassination attempts by rebels against the president and the prime minister in February, the Council of Ministers declared a state of emer-

⁵⁷ Myrntinen, "Poster Boys No More," 30; ICG, "Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back," 10.

⁵⁸ Simonsen, "The Role of East Timor's Security Institutions," 590.

⁵⁹ Júlio Tomás Pinto, "Reforming the Security Sector: Facing Challenges, Achieving Progress in Timor-Leste," *Tempo Semanal*, Aug. 18, 2009, <http://temposemanaltimor.blogspot.com/2009/08/ssr-in-timor-leste.html>; ICG, "Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back," 26.

⁶⁰ Lemay-Hébert, "UNPOL and Police Reform in Timor-Leste," 400.

⁶¹ Myrntinen, "Poster Boys No More," 29.

⁶² Pinto, "Reforming the Security Sector"; Júlio Tomás Pinto, "UNMIT Mission: Development or Destruction?" *Tempo Semanal*, June 7, 2011, <http://temposemanaltimor.blogspot.com/2011/06/unmit-mission-development-or.html>.

⁶³ Author interview with senior PNTL officer, July 2011, Dili.

gency and the formation of a Joint F-FDTL and PNTL Command. Although the PNTL was still ostensibly operating under UNPOL authority, the Joint Command brought it under the F-FDTL. This meant a loss of legitimacy for UNPOL, and the relationship between local security forces and UNPOL worsened.⁶⁴ Despite the relative success of the Joint Command and the surrender of the remaining rebels, the state of emergency was retained until May 2008 to enable additional Joint Command operations against alleged illegal weapons arsenals.⁶⁵ Following a return to normality, the administration announced the establishment of a new Centre for Integrated Management of Crisis, which would be incorporated into the structures of the Ministry of Defense and would become active in cases of internal security crisis or natural catastrophe.⁶⁶

The roles and responsibilities of the PNTL and the F-FDTL within the Timorese security system remain unclear, and it should be pointed out that the Joint Command's inauguration only added to this vagueness. On several occasions in 2009 and 2011, PNTL and F-FDTL forces were combined in "ninja operations" against organized crime and clandestine gangs.⁶⁷ While the joint missions could ease friction and rivalry between the security organizations, command structures and the division of labor for further Joint Command operations are still unclear and could add to tensions between the PNTL and F-FDTL.⁶⁸

According to Wilson, the merger of the security organizations was not only a declaration of Timorese sovereignty but could also be interpreted as a blow against the Western model of security governance.⁶⁹ Moreover, it seems that the Timorese had begun to learn from the United Nations' negative example: from 2006 onward, various actors from the administration and the security institutions tried to evade and mitigate the impact of UN-driven SSR programs. Notably, the merger of the PNTL and the F-FDTL during 2008 and during other joint missions blurred the boundaries between external and internal security organizations even more.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration are the main international focus for the security sector in postconflict countries. Recognizing that a dysfunctional security sector poses a threat to the population, SSR aims at removing or transforming dysfunctional elements, and it advocates for effective and legitimate, democratic civilian control of security sector organizations. DDR, on the other hand, is an important step in pacifying former combatants and reintegrating them into civilian life.

⁶⁴ Yoshino Funaki, "The UN and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste: A Widening Credibility Gap," Center on International Cooperation, May 2009, <https://fundasaunmahein.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/funaki-timor-ssr-final.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Wilson, "The Exception Becomes the Norm in Timor-Leste," 37; CIGI, "Security Sector Reform Monitor."

⁶⁶ Wilson, "The Exception Becomes the Norm in Timor-Leste," 7.

⁶⁷ CIGI, "Security Sector Reform Monitor."

⁶⁸ ICG, "Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back," 10.

⁶⁹ Wilson, "The Exception Becomes the Norm in Timor-Leste," 12.

The case of Timor-Leste demonstrates the difficulties that attend selection of local partners by international donors. Integrating key local actors into the DDR and SSR processes is crucial. Since the country's future security sector depends on institutionalization and on ownership by local actors, an integrated approach in both the planning and the implementation stages of DDR and SSR is vital.⁷⁰

Neglecting the local sociopolitical and historical context can lead to an irrelevant SSR program that does not fit the realities of the country and, at worst, alienates local security actors. It is important to recognize that key local actors will likely play to their strategic strengths and can influence the SSR process massively. Moreover, particular local actors may have divergent interests concerning SSR and, therefore, may manipulate the SSR implementation process to serve their interests, by placing their political followers in the new security forces or security-related political organs.⁷¹

Missing the short time frame of transitional peace to conduct DDR and SSR in a tense environment may lead former combatants to pick up arms again and reignite conflict.⁷² At precisely this stage, it is important for international donors to prevent the emergence of disgruntled former combatants who may turn into "spoilers," and of actors outside the state security institution who could sabotage further SSR processes and pose a threat to the monopoly on the use of force in the fragile postconflict state.⁷³ Forms of opposition may range from covert resistance to open defiance. "Inside spoilers" use a strategy of stealth: officially cooperating with external powers, they eventually undermine programs from behind the scenes.⁷⁴ Noncooperation, noncompliance, and selective cooperation are other ways that local actors can impede policy implementation or discriminate between externally imposed programs.⁷⁵

An intervention by external actors always has a massive impact on the social structure of a country and turns the external actor into just another power broker among others.⁷⁶ That is, the external actor is by no means nonpartisan, because he makes a clear statement by choosing a certain group of local actors to cooperate with.⁷⁷ But by choos-

⁷⁰ Mark Sedra, "Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform," in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, ed. Mark Sedra (Waterloo, Ont., Canada: CIGI, 2010), 105; Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi, "Reforming and Reconstructing the Security Sector," in *Security Governance in Post-conflict Peacebuilding*, ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (Münster, Germany: LIT, 2005), 37.

⁷¹ Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer, "The DDR-SSR Nexus: Concepts and Policies," in *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform*, ed. Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer (Münster, Germany: LIT, 2012), 12.

⁷² Hugo de Vries and Erwin van Veen, "Living Apart Together? On the Difficult Linkage between DDR and SSR in Post-conflict Environments," *Clingendael*, Oct. 1, 2010; Sean McFate, "The Link between DDR and SSR in Conflict-Affected Countries," Washington, DC: USIP Special Report no. 238, 2010, 2.

⁷³ Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (1997): 6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁵ Roger Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace," *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 4 (2010): 403.

⁷⁶ Robert Egnell, "The Organised Hypocrisy of International State-building," *Conflict, Security and Development* 10, no. 4 (2010): 480.

⁷⁷ McFate, "The Link between DDR and SSR," 6; Madeline England, "Security Sector Reform in Stabilization Environments: A Note on Current Practice," in *Security Sector Reform: Thematic Literature Review on Best Practices and Lessons Learned*, ed. Madeline England and Alix Boucher (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2009), 17.

ing some local stakeholders over others, international actors may create potential local adversaries who could obstruct the future peacebuilding process.⁷⁸

Ultimately, the United Nations and associated international donors failed to appreciate these realities. Rather, UN security sector management, combined with the additional bilateral involvement in security affairs, led to unintended consequences – a recurring topic in the area of external security governance.⁷⁹ And as Schroeder points out, these unintended consequences often conflict with a policy's original intent.⁸⁰ In the Timorese case, the recruitment of partisan former guerrilla fighters into the newly founded Timorese military, as well as UNPOL's unobservant recruitment of former POLRI officers into the Timorese civilian police, laid the foundation of a politicized and troubled Timorese security sector. Organizing and training the PNTL as quickly as possible led to blatant flaws in the recruitment and vetting process. As former POLRI officers received special treatment in training and promotion, the foundation was laid for future friction and resentment within the police force. Added to this, the excessive demands of a mixed mandate that required internationals to be both security providers and security development specialists, combined with the desire for quick results, led to a hollow and vulnerable police institution.

Implementing sustainable security sector reform and security governance in a post-conflict setting requires personnel who have training expertise and can serve as role models for new recruits. But the UN police contingent comprised individuals from more than 40 nations, which meant great heterogeneity concerning the level of professionalism and perception of policing.

Standardization of police contingents' professional skills in a postconflict scenario is crucial, and development missions require consistent behavior patterns among their personnel if they are to train, advise, and assist nascent security forces effectively. UNPOL failed to attain the necessary level of cohesion.⁸¹ And as Greener points out,⁸² after a week-long preparation course for Timor-Leste, most of the UNPOL officers were still not sufficiently trained or skilled in instructing recruits or developing the police sector of a war-torn country.

Moreover, UNPOL's ability to deal with Timorese customs, conventions, and languages was inadequate to the task. Also, high turnover rates of UNPOL officers, and lack of knowledge transfer within the officer corps prevented UNPOL from gaining experience and achieving its goals.⁸³

The reconstruction of the PNTL, and the United Nations' neglect of the FALINTIL were not based on careful consideration at the strategic level but instead rested on ad hoc decisions. According to Rees, the UN decision not to monitor and manage the FALINT-

⁷⁸ Marie-Joelle Zahar, "SRSG Mediation in Civil Wars: Revisiting the 'Spoiler' Debate," *Global Governance* 16, no. 2 (2010): 226-69.

⁷⁹ Christopher Daase and Cornelius Friesendorf, "Introduction: Security Governance and the Problem of Unintended Consequences," in *Rethinking Security Governance: The Problem of Unintended Consequences*, ed. Christopher Daase and Cornelius Friesendorf (London: Routledge, 2010), 8.

⁸⁰ Ursula C. Schroeder, "Unintended Consequences of International Security Assistance: Doing More Harm than Good?" in Daase and Friesendorf, eds., *Rethinking Security Governance*, 88.

⁸¹ Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction," 148; Myrntinnen, "Poster Boys No More."

⁸² Greener, *The New International Policing*, 49.

⁸³ Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction," 150.

IL's transformation into a national defense force was a fundamental mistake, which impeded further development of the Timorese security sector for the coming years.⁸⁴ Giving the FALINTIL high command too much leeway in forming a defense force out of former rebels, without monitoring the recruitment process and without demanding the development of legitimate, effective control-and-oversight institutions behind the politicized high command, was a grave mistake.

The UN mission after 2006 did not differ much from the pre-2006 missions. Problems concerning UNPOL's composition and capabilities remained essentially the same. Once again local political and cultural contexts were not considered.⁸⁵ UNPOL struggled again with the mixed mandate of providing security while training and supervising the PNTL. As a result, the institutions of the PNTL and the F-FDTL are still fragile, and a clear-cut role allocation for the security organizations has yet to materialize. Local ownership by the Timorese administration has changed since 2006. The formation of the Joint Command and the exclusion of UNPOL during these operations indicated Timor-Leste's clear shift from client to self-determined actor. But the "strong government ownership for reform," as Funaki puts it, led security sector governance to develop in ways contrary to the donors' expectations.⁸⁶

It is striking that the United Nations did not learn from the lessons of either its previous missions or the experiences of UNTAET and UNMISSET after 2006. Rather, it maintained a flawed PNTL training program that had failed to produce professionalism or operational effectiveness, it repeatedly conducted ineffective vetting that enabled rather than prevented factionalism and politicization of the force, and it neglected PNTL institutional development in favor of a short-term, train-and-equip mentality. Moreover, it continued to ignore political developments within the F-FDTL that later hampered coherence and accountability across the whole of the security sector.⁸⁷ As Peake notes, UNMIT was the second chance for the United Nations to implement – or at least lay the foundations for – comprehensive SSR in Timor-Leste.⁸⁸ The rebuilding of security forces after 1999 enabled the United Nations to develop and implement second-generation SSR, and the violent clashes of 2006 allowed for a further review of the security sector. And yet, the United Nations did not succeed in either case.

Recommendations

It must be stressed that SSR does not treat *only* national security agencies in its reform attempts. SSR is, first and foremost, a political task, designed to transform all the formal and informal institutions, and their dependent elements, that affect national development and political stability.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Rees, "UN's Failure to Integrate."

⁸⁵ Greener, *The New International Policing*, 51.

⁸⁶ Funaki, "The UN and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste," 13.

⁸⁷ Myrntinen, "Poster Boys No More," 33; Wilson, "To 2012 and Beyond," 74.

⁸⁸ Peake, "Police Reform and Reconstruction," 142.

⁸⁹ See Peter Albrecht, Finn Stepputat, and Louise Andersen, "Security Sector Reform, the European Way," in Sedra, ed., *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, 84; Albrecht Schnabel, "The Security-Development Discourse and the Role of SSR as a Development Instrument," in Schnabel and Farr, eds., *Back to the Roots*, 30.

- Training-based reform of the local security actors by external donors is an important step in preparing the security agencies to maintain the state's monopoly on the use of force. But training and equipping the local security actors does not, by itself, guarantee an effective and accountable security sector. The security sector encompasses the transformation of all relevant institutions, such as the ministries of interior, defense, and finance, but also the national parliament and parliamentary committees that deal with matters of local security. Thus, a holistic approach to SSR is necessary to ensure reliable, nonpartisan, democratically controlled security forces.⁹⁰
- The case of Timor-Leste highlights the problem of external donors neglecting the political institutions. As a consequence, dysfunctional ministries and bypassed formal hierarchies gave way to patterns of corruption, abuse of office, and the establishment of illicit practices within the local police and military. To prevent misuse of this important sector by illicit local interests, a thorough reform of local political institutions, with clear benchmarks, is essential.
- Because SSR is, above all else, a political endeavor, an in-depth knowledge of the local context is crucial to being able to evaluate local political developments and react accordingly. Understanding the local historical and sociopolitical context will help external actors choose local partners to cooperate with in the long view. In Timor-Leste, however, the United Nations' uncritical inclusion of former police officers who served in the Indonesian police led to the Timorese population's massive loss of trust in the newly founded Timorese police from the start.
- Contemporary analysts increasingly advocate for a closer interaction, or synergy, between SSR and DDR because successful SSR depends heavily on an effective and timely DDR process. Best-practice models for the sequencing and scope of application in combining SSR and DDR have not been established in the policy discourse yet, which may be explained by the widely divergent individual contexts of the countries in question.⁹¹ But evidence suggests that in the case of Timor-Leste, necessary coordination between the external donors in executing SSR and DDR was insufficient. Moreover, the United Nations neglected important steps of DDR, such as obligatory screening and vetting procedures for former Indonesian policemen.
- To avoid producing a highly politicized and partisan local security actor, external actors must apply *all* the standard operational steps of DDR in any given mission. And the external actors must resist excessive politically motivated pressure from local actors on the recruitment process. A short temporal horizon, which generally weighs on every operation in a foreign territory, can also put an ill-advised premium on hasty execution of SSR- and DDR-relevant processes. Although a

⁹⁰ See Heiner Hänggi, "Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction," in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hänggi (Münster, Germany: LIT, 2004).

⁹¹ See Bryden and Scherrer, "The DDR-SSR Nexus," 10, 22.

fast-track processing of SSR and DDR may be easier for the executing external agencies, these shortcuts will undermine the local security sector in the long run. Therefore, SSR and DDR processes should be planned and thoroughly carried out according to elaborated and custom-tailored guidelines, for these measures are the foundation for the future security sector.

It is clear that today, Timor-Leste has taken control of its own reform agenda, but whether it can manage its complex political and security environment remains to be seen. For the UN missions, the lessons from the SSR efforts of a decade may be summed up in the cliché “haste makes waste.” For the Timorese, the international missions offered an opportunity to lay a foundation for accountable security sector performance, overseen by a security sector governance structure that was adaptive and responsive to the needs of the state and its population. But in the rush to get military and policing boots on the ground, opportunities to create a culture of public service, accountability to the law, and professionalism may have been lost. Fortunately for the Timorese, the story of SSR in Timor-Leste is still being written, but for the international community, the lessons should be painfully clear.

