Challenging Security Sector Reform as a Mean to Peace

PEACE THROUGH SECURITY OR SECURITY THROUGH PEACE?

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INTRODUCTION

Several concepts are combined under the umbrella of Security Sector Reform. It has become a toolbox full of instruments for the United Nations (UN), the African Union, the European Union and several states to establish or re-establish security in a specific region with the long-term goal of sustainable peace. Many scholars and practitioners claim, that without security, peace and justice cannot be achieved (Chuter, 2008). In order to bring about security and therefore avoid or stop violence, several concepts of the Security Sector Reform toolset, such as disarmament, demobilisation, strengthening of police, military peacekeeping missions or other military interventions, are applied. The natural order seems to be: (1) security, (2) negotiation of peace agreements, (3) justice through trials and judicial prosecution and (4) development, with the final goal of sustainable peace (Schnabel & Farr, 2012). The Secretary General of the UN is supporting this kind of approach in his following statement and clearly represents the focus on security in the methodology of peace within the UN.

"The lessons of the past 60 years have illustrated that these goals are fundamentally intertwined; security, development and human rights are preconditions for sustainable peace. Member States are the primary providers of security, which contributes to the protection of human rights and sustainable development. The task of the United Nations is to support national actors in achieving their security, peace and development goals. To that end, the development of effective and accountable security institutions on the basis of non-discrimination, full respect for human rights and the rule of law is essential" (Secretary General United Nations, 2008).

This paper is questioning this security centred approach in the current international system and tries to rethink the above order. But not only the order, also the interconnectedness and links between various means and concepts, such as DDR and Transitional Justice need to be challenged and reconsidered. The strong focus on security carries the risk of violence, crimes and atrocities and can come along with the justification of violence, which is not useful in a peacebuilding process. Different approaches lead to different results, and the final goal of SSR is to be examined and can at this point only be assumed to sustainable and long-lasting peace without leaving a chance of relapsing into violence and conflict. The question therefore arises: are those security-centred approaches including the SSR concept the appropriate mean for preparing the path to long lasting peace? Or is peace as a mean the actual and more sustainable tool of reaching security? Mahatma Ghandi said: "There is no way to peace – peace is the way" (Amah, 2015).

SECURITY-CENTRED APPROACHES AND SSR

Security Sector Reform (SSR) integrates all activities related to restoring or establishing security within a state, though not only from the state perspective as the only actor but it also includes actions of other stakeholders, like NGOs, international organizations or the civil society. SSR becomes a strategy in conflict areas with the objective of transforming a society from conflict to peace (Schnabel & Farr, 2012). Complementing activities would be Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), controlling small arms and light weapons (SALW), clearance of anti-personnel landmines, re-establishing or and strengthening the rule of law, sending UN peacekeeping operations or more general building strong institutions in the security sector. But there is also the SSR approach in the context of development and SSR, where the approaches are more on reformation of existing institutions.

The United Nations described SSR in a report of the Secretary General, 2008:

> "...a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law" (Secretary General United Nations, 2008).

The purpose of Security Sector Reform is hence applicable to National Security as well as Human Security. Human Security is a human-centred framework with the focus on the individual's safety in seven categories[1] (Trobbiani, 2013). National Security is the ability of a country to defend itself to external and internal threats and as Morgenthau (1960) explains the necessity of "integrity of the national territory and its institutions". In a neo-realist approach this was the way of defining security during cold war times and is still conform with the highest principle of sovereignty within the United Nations. As the Secretary General points out, the current order of priorities is the state first and then its citizens. However, since the accumulation of intra-state conflicts and governments themselves became perpetrators to their own population, this approach needed to be further developed. The problem is though, that the state is still the only accountable actor in providing security to its population. If the state cannot provide this task anymore, the international community mainly the UN will then take over the responsibility of protecting people – presupposed that the security council approves. To explain the need of filling in the gap of missing protection by respective states, the concept of Human Security occurred. The General Assembly (GA) of the UN demanded a shift in this state-centred paradigm 1993 for the first time, while intra-state conflicts and even genocides in Rwanda, Yugoslavia or Timor Leste were going on and thousands of people were killed. In 2012 the GA implemented the paradigm shift from territorial to personal security (United Nations Development Programme). Still up until now, Human Security or its demands are not integrated in International Law yet and only serve as guiding principles. Even though the concept puts humans first, it is yet to be examined critically, because as mentioned above, it has been used by several actors to justify interventions and human rights violations, for example the intervention of the United States in Iraq in 2003. With those interventions counter violence is used to establish security in the name of protection, which could turn out in an increase in violence. Concluding out of these facts, security doesn't seem to be achieved easily by interventions.

In summary, both the National Security and Human Security concepts fail to comprehensively address the safety needs of contemporary conflict areas – how then are security methods and tools supposed to bring about peace and security, if it is not even possible to conceptualize a security approach with all its requirements. National Security fails to take the state's population into account and Human Security bears the high risk of being abused for the justification of any kind of interventions?

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[1] Categories of Human Security: economic security, food security, health security, environment security, personal security, community security and political security.

Johan Galtung explains that those political or social concepts come and go, while the human condition stays the same. Whatever name or framing it has been given, by changing concepts or finding new concept names, the human conditions for example misery and conflict doesn't necessarily change (Galtung, 2004). Galtung explains two reasons of those changing concepts and why it is regularly happening in our political, social and scientific spheres. The epistemological explanation is that the respective concept is exhausted, all sub-concepts have been explained and still no or very little change in the underlying condition has occurred. Hence, a conceptual revolution is to be found and with that new problems and most importantly new answers. With those new problems and answers the second and more sociological and political explanation can be given. New scientific findings can be the entrance to higher positions and a change in power, because with new explanations, concepts, questions and answers the advantage of more knowledge increases. This could be instrumentalized to oust the "old" people in power and take over with the new scientific discovery (Galtung, 2004).

Human Security, National Security, Humanitarian Interventions, Peacekeeping Missions, Responsibility to Protect, DDR, SALW and Security Sector Reform are ever changing concepts, all appeared in times where actors needed to expand their limited radius of operations or needed justifications for their actions such as interventions, despite the highest principal of sovereignty. Looking into those concepts, they all combine one phenomenon: the indispensable link between military and security. Using military and therefore counter violence as a mean of forcing cease fire means more human sacrifices and improves chances of revenge and actions of retaliation, which makes sustainable peace hardly possible.

UNITED NATIONS' FOCUS ON SECURITY

"The most fundamental lesson for the United Nations is that security is a precondition for sustainable peace, development and human rights" (Secretary General United Nations, 2008).

The United Nations, which was originally founded as a peace based league after the second world war, created the Security Council as the most powerful organ in charge of peace. Only the name of this organ is implying the security-centred working principle. The mandates of peacekeeping missions or SSR strategies are mainly about restoring or implementing security in conflict zones. As mentioned earlier, for the United Nations to act requires the Security Council to approve the plan. This is already a challenge since the power relations are unequal, with five countries, namely the United States, Great Britain, Russia, France and China, having a right to veto for any decisions to be taken. In the end of the day, members of that council represent their own national interests and therefore it is questionable, where the priorities of the member states really lie?

In the case of the Syrian conflict, China and Russia vetoed on the Security Council Resolution to protect Syrian citizens and the UN could therefore not follow their self-given responsibility and didn't act while thousands of people were killed (Harris, 2012). A more recent example is the case of Rohingya refugees in Myanmar, where the UN didn't act to protect the people, while they were hunted and declared stateless and therefore lost all rights for protection. The reason why the UN couldn't act, was again because China blocked the decision of the security council (Deutsche Welle, 2017). In those cases, who is there to protect civilians from violence and provide security? If the Security Council fails to provide security in respective countries because of one or two countries use their veto power, does this mean that there is no interest in achieving sustainable peace? How can we be seeking for a reform of the security sector, without starting right where a reform is needed the most?

Even if the Security Council issues a mandate for action, the applied means to provide security are usually peacekeeping missions composed of mainly military forces, some police and a small contribution of civilian peacekeepers (United Nations Peacekeeping). Although peacekeepers can be a shield of violence, they can also become the source of violence. There have been several cases of sexual abuse

by peacekeepers in cases such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia and Cambodia. Sexual abuse being bad enough, this has additionally supported the spread of HIV/AIDs in respective countries (Anderli, 2017). Not only sexual violence has been the accusation against UN peacekeepers but also several human rights violations, such as torture. Hence, the question arises on how successful those security strategies really are - if agreed upon in the security council? The latter question will be the objective of the following chapter.

SSR IN SIERRA LEONE – FAILURE OR SUCCESS

How are SSR implementations measured to be a failure or a success? According to the World Bank, the SSR and moreover the DDR programs in Sierra Leone are known to be successful role models (World Bank, 2002). On top of that other reports support that opinion:

"At the macro-level, and with some justification, Sierra Leone's DDR process is widely regarded as a success story, and elements of the Sierra Leone 'model' are being replicated in neighbouring Liberia, in Burundi, and now as far away as Haiti. A total of 72,490 combatants were disarmed and 71,043 demobilised, and 63,545 former combatants participated in the reintegration segment, including 6,845 child soldiers. Participation rates in the DDR programme were high and peace has been maintained in the six years since the war came to an end" (Solomon & Ginifer, 2008).

However, the country counts to one of the poorest ones in the world. In order to understand the SSR actions, one has to look into the defined criteria of success and in specific cases. The SSR evaluation process deals with two challenges, one is the theoretical part including confusions about the concept as mentioned in the above chapter and the other one is the practical challenge including all complexities on the ground (Chuter, 2008). Starting with the evaluation, a goal has to be set first. Schnabel and Farr (2012) set the goal of SSR by demanding it to provide "justice and security to all persons living within a country's borders according to good governance principles […]" (Schnabel & Farr, 2012). The overall goal of peace is not even mentioned as a goal of this SSR here, which shows that there are different demands to the concept. This paper will use this requirements as the criteria to see, if SSR has worked successfully and therefore is able to lay out at least the basis of sustainable peace – as said by the UN. On top of that, the approach only considers the protection of people inside one country's borders and therefore doesn't include displaced people.

Sierra Leone has gone through a long process of Security Sector Reform during the time of the civil war. Ending the reoccurring violence and settling the conflict has been a great challenge. The SSR in Sierra Leone started with the DDR process, which was included in the first UN observer mission in 1998, after signing the Abidjan peace agreement in 1996. Observation, disarmament and demobilisation were the aims of the first UN mission. Violence relapsed shortly after and only 7% of the contents of the peace agreement could be implemented (Peace Accords Matrix). As a reaction on that, the security council released another mandate, this time including armed forces to assist the Sierra Leonean government and implementing the second peace agreement called Lomé in 1999. The UN peacekeeping missions in the end reached 17.500 military personnel, which was the biggest number of soldiers engaged in a mission up until that point (BBC, 2017). However, this mission wasn't sufficient in military power and eventually the United Kingdom send troops to support the UN peacekeepers and thereby forced the rebel group RUF into DDR. To provide security in terms of imposing a cease fire was achieved with counter violence and stronger military forces than the rebels themselves. The war was declared over only in 2002. Questionable is, why the violence couldn't be stopped after signing two peace agreements within three years?

The DDR process and its claimed improvement in Human Security is according to Solomon and Ginifer (2008) not successful. First of all, it was a foreign imposed programme and not - as claimed - from the

Sierra Leonean people and therefore ignored important needs of the local people. Furthermore, the programmes were mainly short-termed with the result of a lack in efficiency of the reintegration process. This then resulted in widespread unemployment and poverty among former soldiers (Solomon & Ginifer, 2008). Another example is the high youth unemployment rate of currently 60%, which is an effect of not properly integrated former child soldiers. DDR and SSR programs in Sierra Leone lacked the coordination of each other and also the Transitional Justice program later acted mainly independently of the other SSR strategies. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as the Special Court for Sierra Leone tried perpetrators, but both institutions were restricted in their prosecution of RUF members, since the peace agreements involved the amnesty of RUF members and even allowed them positions in the government.

Coming back to the set criteria of the evaluation of SSR, which were justice and security to all people within the state of Sierra Leone, it is to conclude that the SSR program wasn't very successful. First of all, justice couldn't be achieved through granting amnesty to perpetrators, failures of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in connection with the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the underfinancing of the reparation program, which left many people without proper health care. The SSR program of the UN didn't manage to end the violence and needed help by the former colonial power United Kingdom. This is already a proof of the failing reforms of the UN lead SSR program.

The assumption, that development comes with security is to examine critically. In this case the economic and social development is very slow and wasn't supported enough by long-term strategies of SSR. With a life expectancy of 58,6 years and a total literacy rate of 48,1 % of the entire population, Sierra Leone is located on rank 209 out of 224 of the world's life expenditure comparison published by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). Besides that, the country ranks 180 of 187 countries of the UN Human Development Index and therefore security still remains an issue due to high poverty and unemployment. Still the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone completed its Security Council Mandate in 2014.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SECURITY-CENTRED APPROACHES

The preceding chapters have outlined the insufficiencies of the focus on security as the centre of all actions taken. This doesn't mean, that disarmament and demobilisation should be abolished, but that the entire approach is lacking tools to achieve long-lasting positive peace.

Positive Peace defined by Johan Galtung, requires not only the absence of direct and structural violence but moreover demands structural integration, equality and most important the resolution of the underlying conflict (Galtung, 2012). The tools and instruments of SSR are not reaching to achieve this level of peace, but can – if at all – provide the maximum of negative peace. Negative peace can be seen as a cease fire or the absence of direct violence. The higher goal of all the actions taken in conflict areas or war-torn societies should idealistically aim for positive peace and not stop half way on the run. Yes, security and the prevention as well as the termination of violence are important within the process of reaching peace, but it shouldn't be the final stop. If so, there is a strong need of implementing peacebuilding, reconciliation, mediation and integration methods to continue what has been started by intervening in other countries in the name of peace – either from a UN perspective or a state perspective.

In the case of Sierra Leone, the violence started because of a one-party leadership government and the problem of not finding a state structure, which was able to represent all people in the country. After the independence of the United Kingdom, what was left was a split society and a high risk of conflict. The problem of insecurity can be tracked back to colonialism, where the interests of the British were

natural resources and trading opportunities and not in the end building up sustainable structures for the country to administer itself. Colonialism left behind unequal distribution over the resources and power in Sierra Leone, which later escalated. How can a country so rich of diamonds end up being one of the poorest countries in the world?

In a conflict like this, there is more to recover than the security sector and to send military troops in order to reach a cease fire. What is needed is a proper analysis of the conflict resulting in a suitable mediation process including a conflict transformation with all involved parties. This is how the relapse of violence is not up to military power anymore but to a satisfaction of all parties including the former colonial power. The UN could take an active part in being a mediator to justify the name of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions – which should at the moment rather be called security-enforcement missions. Conflict transformation is therefore the peaceful mean and the peaceful path to long-lasting and sustainable security. Hence, a DDR program, a respective process of installing security institutions and a suitable justice and truth-telling institution according to the people's needs has to be integrated in the conflict resolution process for collective reconciliation and healing of past traumas and violence.

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