

*Conceptualizing Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction*

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“Since the late 1990s, security sector reform (SSR) has emerged as a key concept, which has become widely accepted by development practitioners, security experts and, to a lesser extent, democracy advocates”. As a concept it is still evolving, and is in line with the overall trend of widening and deepening approaches and concepts of security. Human security has been the framework underlying this trend, by covering “a wide range of threats to the security of individuals and social groups such as anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons, child soldiers, trafficking in women as well as, in its wider notion, all aspects of human development such as economic, food, health and environmental insecurity”.

From this perspective, the security sector and the notion of security sector reform has been broadened and deepened, as it no longer covers the military dimension alone. Human security has thus allowed for more actors, dynamics and challenges to be taken into account in SSR, combining state-centric and human-centric approaches. Furthermore, SSR, as a concept, emerged at first in the development community, which has “increasingly acknowledged the importance of linking development with security, emphasizing the crucial role a well governed, efficient security sector plays in the provision of security and as a precondition of sustainable economic development”.

SSR is thus a key concept and crucial enterprise, and although it requires rigorous strategic planning, attention to state and society contexts, it represents a holistic approach to security challenges in tune with new and revised approaches, notably human security.