

Statement of Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon at Security Council open debate on Security Sector Reform

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(Unofficial Transcript)

I thank Nigeria for convening this important debate.

The purpose of security sector reform, simply put, is to make people's lives safer.

Security institutions are at the core of the compact between the State and its citizens. The legitimate authority to use force comes with a corresponding responsibility to protect and respect human rights. A professional and accountable security sector under the framework of the rule of law can strengthen public confidence in the State and provide the stability necessary for peacebuilding and development.

However, security institutions that lack the right training or adequate governance and oversight mechanisms may fail to provide basic security or even violate the rights of the very people they are entrusted to protect. We have also seen institutions misused in support of narrow political and sectarian interests, with destabilizing effects.

Earlier this month, I visited the Central African Republic and saw the terrible consequences of disintegrating security institutions. I also observed the pressing need to extend State authority and ensure public safety and the rule of law.

Today's discussion is especially timely, for the future of the C.A.R. and for many other situations as well.

Security sector reform is a core element of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development.

The United Nations has strengthened the assistance we provide to national authorities to undertake critical and complex security sector reform processes. Our support has included assisting in the development and implementation of national security strategies in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali; contributing to public financial management of the security sectors in Liberia and Somalia, and supporting defence sector reform in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A majority of Security Council resolutions on post-conflict contexts contain requests to address security sector reform.

We have also enhanced our ability to deliver support through the dedicated Security Sector Reform Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, which brings together fourteen United Nations partners.

The United Nations has developed standards and guidance to strengthen the impact of our efforts. And we have fostered strategic partnerships, including with the African Union and the World Bank. We stand ready to work with other interested partners on this strategic track.

As we make progress, we also know that much remains to be done.

In our support to national authorities, we need to ensure that security services have the adequate capacity to perform their duties. Nowhere else is this as evident today as in the Central African Republic, Mali, and Somalia. This requires improved mapping of needs and gaps, and facilitating a coordinated response from partners.

Strengthening operational effectiveness must be combined with efforts to build a strong governance framework, robust accountability and oversight mechanisms, and a culture of integrity and respect for human rights. National ownership is imperative.

There is an increasing gap between the growing expectations of what the United Nations could and should do, and our resources to meet them. Contexts and mandates are complex, requiring the United Nations to engage in delicate political processes such as national security dialogues, vetting, public expenditure reviews or defence sector reform.

Looking ahead, I have identified four priorities:

- First, we must recognize the links between security sector reform and broader reform processes, including legal and institutional reform, national reconciliation and political dialogue. Security Sector reform is not just a matter of technical support. I intend to instruct my Special Representatives to leverage their good offices functions in support of this work.
- Second, since security sector reform takes time, host nations must do more to meet immediate security needs. In accordance with the United Nations Due Diligence Policy, the Organization is obligated to withdraw support to security actors that commit human rights violations or fail to address them.
- Third, all actors involved in this work should place more emphasis on sector-wide approaches that address the strategic and governance framework underpinning all security institutions.
- Fourth, we must reflect on the institutional capacities within our Organization, on links to other key areas of work such as rule of law and human rights, and on how to ensure the flexible resources needed to meet the needs on the ground.

I am very encouraged that the Council will adopt the first thematic resolution on security sector reform. This will boost political momentum for these efforts.

The sight of an officer in uniform should evoke feelings of order, discipline and security.

Our collective goal is to help States build professional security institutions solidly anchored in a culture of service, rather than an unchecked and unaccountable exercise of power and force.

Together we can make this a reality.

Thank you.