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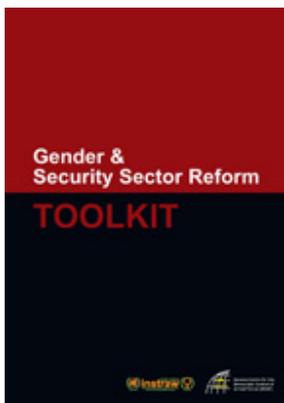
JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Working with the security sector for inclusive security, justice and gender equality

DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN-INSTRAW, launch the “Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit”, a comprehensive tool to strengthen the security sector’s response to violence against women and other gender-based crimes

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[Geneva, Switzerland] The **security sector** - including the armed forces, police, border guards, penal and justice systems, ministries of defence and justice, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, private military and security companies and other key actors – can play an active and vital role in protecting and promoting sustainable peace and human security. Ineffective and discriminatory security sector institutions are unable to adequately respond to criminality, armed conflict, corruption, violence and harassment of civilians, which undermines democratic governance and sustainable development. **Security Sector Reform (SSR)** thus aims to build an accountable, equitable, effective and democratically controlled security sector that ensures the security and well-being of women, men, girls and boys.



Women and men experience and respond to peace, conflict and post-conflict situations in different ways, and the security sector needs to be able to understand and react to these differential security needs and priorities. In this context, security sector reform that fully integrates gender issues, including increasing the recruitment of female staff and preventing human rights violations to collaborating with women’s civil society organizations, is a crucial element in building a responsive and effective security sector.

With the aim of providing concrete examples, checklists and other practical information for integrating gender issues into SSR processes, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces ([DCAF](#)), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe ([OSCE/ODIHR](#)) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women ([UN-INSTRAW](#)), developed a **Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit**. The Toolkit includes 12 Tools and easy-to-follow

Practice Notes on different areas of security sector reform, including: SSR, police reform, defence reform, justice reform, penal reform, border management, civil society and parliamentary oversight, private military and security companies, national security policy-making, gender training, and SSR assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

“Women are underrepresented in all institutions of the security sector, therefore an important first step is to increase the **recruitment and retention of women**,” said Kristin Valasek of DCAF. “Along the same lines, holding senior management accountable for preventing and addressing gender-based discrimination and violence within security sector institutions is another key priority,” she continued.

In **Nicaragua**, a broad range of gender reforms were initiated in the 1990s, following pressure from the Nicaraguan women’s movement. Today, 26% of Nicaraguan police officers are women, the highest proportion of female police officers in the world. **Women’s Police Stations**, or specific units established to respond to gender-based-violence (GBV), including domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual assault, have encouraged more victims to file complaints and have helped to improve police response to gender-based crimes.

These and other specific measures should be combined with legislation, policies and national action plans on the elimination of violence. In **Sierra Leone**, for example, data indicates that 70% of the women interviewed during the conflict (1998-2000) reported having been beaten by their male partner, with 50% having been forced to have sexual intercourse. Police attitudes to survivors of sexual violence were not supportive, resulting in many women not wanting to report the crimes to the police. In response, the Government established the first **Family Support Unit** in 2001 to deal with physical assault, sexual assault and cruelty to children.

"Since armed forces, police, border guards and personnel of private military and security companies can be perpetrators of gender-based violence against civilians and colleagues, **effective gender training**, combined with other initiatives, can help to address these serious issues," stated Hilary Anderson of UN-INSTRAW. In **Haiti**, training-of-trainers programmes for the police have been conducted by the UN Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH) in order to build up a pool of police officers with a thorough understanding of gender and the capacity to provide gender training. Female national police officers have also been provided with gender training by MINUSTAH, and Gender Focal Points have been established throughout the country.

"Women face obstacles in **accessing justice services** as a result of lack of knowledge about legal rights, corruption, fear of testifying, lack of financial resources, and other realities," declared Kristin Valasek of DCAF. "Post-conflict situations can present a unique opportunity to re-establish the rule of law and rebuild confidence in the justice sector by recruiting more women and formulating justice reform policies and programmes from a gender perspective." In **Sierra Leone**, where it is estimated that over 250,000 women were raped during the decade-long civil war, as part of the ongoing justice reform process, rape is now defined as a crime against humanity; plans are in place for the prosecution of sexual violence; and female personnel are being recruited to investigate and report such crimes and teach people how to access the justice system.

Furthermore, the Toolkit provides recommendations on the reform of **border management**. "Serious human rights violations can occur at border controls, including physical and sexual assault, intimidation and corruption. It is crucial to develop gender-responsive policies, protocols and procedures for identification, interviewing, searching, investigation and detention that take into account the different needs of women and men," stated Kirsten Mlačak of OSCE/ODIHR. "Within this framework, for example, female officers should conduct body and property searches of female migrants and interview female victims of human trafficking and smuggling," she continued.

Among the other concrete recommendations provided in the Toolkit, consultation and collaboration with **civil society organizations**, including women's organizations can yield many benefits for security sector institutions. Women's organizations can provide critical local intelligence on criminal activity and community security and justice needs, gender training and policy expertise, facilitate local ownership through dialogue between communities and policymakers, raise public awareness on SSR processes, and lobby for increased female participation and gender mainstreaming.

Aimed at SSR policymakers, programme officers and consultants in national governments, security sector institutions, international and regional organisations, donor governments, and civil society organisations, including women's organisations, the Toolkit is now available in printed format, on CD-ROM and on the websites of DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN-INSTRAW.

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[About 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, makes policy recommendations and provides in-country advice and assistance programmes.

[About OSCE/ODIHR](#)

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is active throughout the OSCE area in the fields of election observation, democratic development, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, and rule of law.

[About UN-INSTRAW](#)

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is devoted to applied research, training and knowledge management in partnership with governments, the United Nations Agencies, civil society and academia to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.