CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN LEBANON
AN ASYMMETRIC PARTNERSHIP DESPITE A GROWING WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH SECURITY SERVICES

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SUMMARY

This paper seeks to provide a context analysis of the complex and evolving interaction between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the security services in Lebanon, which have shown some constructive aspects in the past decade. It also attempts to outline the main types of interventions by Lebanese civil society organisations (CSOs) in the area of security sector reform (SSR).

INTRODUCTION

Good governance, transparency and civic engagement are prerequisites for effective security services, which manage to constructively involve citizens and ensure an inclusive provision of security. CSOs are increasingly playing a role in relaying efficiency and oversight demands and supporting security sector institutions in specific areas. Their involvement is also key in raising awareness of the need for local ownership of SSR through inclusion of local needs in national-level policy discussions. In addition, CSOs act as a watchdog to hold authorities accountable for their actions through lobbying, public awareness campaigns or direct 'people pressure'.

In Lebanon, civil society is still far from an inclusive form of partnership, although more and more NGOs are engaging in specific aspects of SSR, such as protection missions, prison reform, rights of marginalised groups, gender-based violence (GBV) and training services.

For the purpose of this paper, SSR is defined according to the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre's security sector reform guide:

> "*Security is a core aspect of the vulnerability of the poor. Unprofessional, inefficient and unaccountable security institutions threaten human rights, democratic politics and the achievement of poverty reduction goals. SSR aims to develop a secure environment based on development, rule of law, good governance and local ownership of security actors. In countries at risk of conflict or in post-conflict contexts, SSR can be of central importance for stability or conflict prevention.*"[2]

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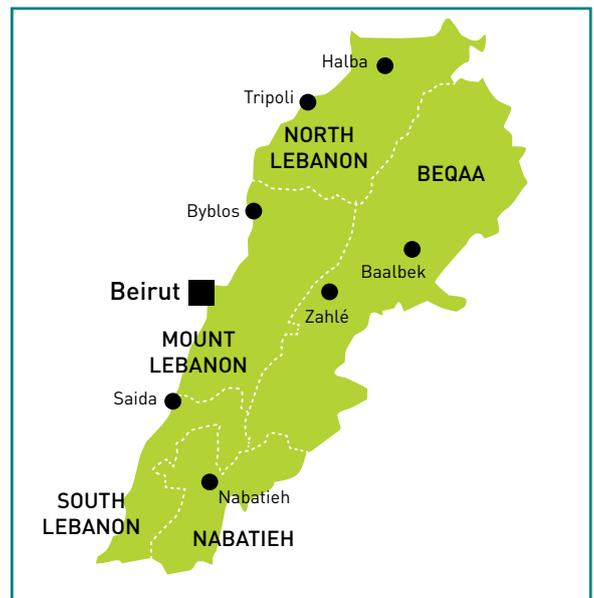
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2   Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (2013). *Topic guide on security sector reform.* International Development Department, University of Birmingham. p.4.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development Assistance Committee's (OECD DAC) guidelines on SSR and governance define the security system as including:

> "…core security actors (e.g. armed forces, police, gendarmerie, border guards, customs and immigration, and intelligence and security services); security management and oversight bodies (e.g. ministries of defence and internal affairs, financial management bodies and public complaints commissions); justice and law enforcement institutions (e.g. the judiciary, prisons, prosecution services, traditional justice systems); and non-statutory security forces (e.g. private security companies, guerrilla armies and private militia).[3] This definition has become established internationally and so in the handbook, 'security system', 'security system reform' and 'SSR' all refer to that broad range of security and justice institutions."[4]

EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

The Lebanese context – from a tumultuous to a more constructive relationship between security institutions and CSOs

According to Lebanese legislation, an *association* is defined by Article 1 of the 1909 Ottoman Law on Associations as "a group of several persons permanently unifying their knowledge or efforts for non-profit objectives". Traditionally, the country has witnessed a vibrant civil society composed of multiple layers of action, priorities and interests for public issues. According to the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (*Centre Libanais des Droits de l'Homme*, CLDH), there are:

> "1.3 associations per 1,000 inhabitants in Lebanon compared to 0.2 in Jordan and Egypt, 2.4 in Morocco and 6 in Europe. No exhaustive list of associations exists in Lebanon today, but it is estimated that around 5,000–6,000 associations have registered since 1900. The number of associations that are still active and operating is not officially known. As a reference, Lebanon Support has 1,156 national associations mostly working in the social sector registered in its directory, and at least 3,360 operating associations were reached by the Council for Development and Reconstruction for its 2005 NGO survey. Both numbers exclude political parties and unions."[5]

Lebanese civil society includes associations as diverse as: NGOs; ethnic, family, alumni or neighbourhood associations; clubs (sports, cultural, artistic, etc.); federations; scouts, youth and student groups; local branches of foreign associations; scientific or research centres; religious organisations; political parties; chambers of commerce; trade unions; professional associations; and cooperatives.[6] This paper will mostly focus on CSOs empirically designated under the term 'advocacy associations or NGOs' which are keener on being involved in SSR. Advocacy NGOs focus their actions towards achieving concrete changes in the social and policy landscape. This type of NGO is relevant to this overview in terms of the role of CSOs in the field of SSR in Lebanon.

The relationship between the state authorities and CSOs in the 1990s was tense and confrontational.

During the Syrian military presence in Lebanon, freedom of association and the scope of action of CSOs were maintained. However, there was little room for civil society to interact with stakeholders to shape the security policy or needed reform. Hence, the relationship between the state authorities and CSOs in the 1990s was tense and confrontational. For instance, in 1992, the government dissolved 138 NGOs, claiming that "some political, social and charity associations exercise their activities secretly contrary to the licence given to it".[7]

In the context of the Syrian tutelage, many CSOs developed a motivation to take action in favour of political change, electoral reform, respect of human rights and socio-economic development. There was little momentum for CSOs to collaborate with the security sector to achieve reforms that could yield efficient results. On the contrary, clashes between police and activists occurred periodically throughout these years. Countless militants were arbitrarily jailed, tortured and abused for stating their opinions and attending demonstrations. In 2003, Muhamad Mugraby, a prominent human rights attorney who launched a campaign for 'judicial integrity' was disbarred by a pressurised Beirut Bar Association. He was later arrested on charges of "impersonating a lawyer"

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3   This third category of SSR will not be the focus of this paper. The paper will instead focus on the formal security sector in Lebanon.
4   OECD (2007). *OECD DAC Handbook on security system reform: Supporting security and justice*. Paris: OECD. p.5. Available at http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-oecd-dac-handbook-on-security-system-reform_9789264027862-en
5   C. Joseph (2010). *The state of the freedom of association in Lebanon – What prospects for the future?* Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH). p.10.
6   Ibid.
7   Decree 2231/1992.

and detained for three weeks. According to a 2004 report by Lebanon's Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights, "there were more than 1,500 people in prison who have never been convicted of a crime".[8]

Since the end of the civil war, the promotion of non-violence had remained "central to the culture, activities and relations of civil society in Lebanon", according to Khaldoun Abou Assi.[9] Abou Assi continues:

> *"This was so during the civil war, with attempts to reconstruct the divided Lebanese society. It continues in the post-war period as a strategy to avoid violent conflicts and to internalise values of tolerance, of recognition of differences and of respect of freedoms."*[10]

As examples, we can mention Offre Joie (founded in 1985), the Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace (founded in 1987) and the Permanent Peace Movement (PPM) (founded in 1986), all of which continue to be dedicated to peacebuilding missions and consolidating conflict resolution mechanisms.

In addition, the priorities of the CSOs were oriented towards ensuring: proper political representation (e.g. LADE was founded in 1996 to promote electoral reform); protection from torture and arbitrary detention (e.g. Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture and SOLIDA were both founded in 1996); and the preservation of peaceful coexistence and the promotion of citizenship values (e.g. Amel Association has been active since 1979). As a result, relations with authorities were tense and tumultuous as CSOs had to establish their right to act and react on sensitive issues.

Furthermore, freedom of association under the Syrian tutelage in Lebanon witnessed many restrictions, despite the fact that the country continued to enjoy significant freedoms compared with the rest of the autocratic regimes in the region. In theory, Lebanon is one of the few countries in the Arab world to hold a notification system for most associations[11] and not an authorisation system *per se* or other more restrictive processes. This means that associations can be formed freely without prior authorisation from the state, which just needs to be notified of the establishment by NGO founders.[12]

However, the Lebanese authorities have adopted on several occasions *ad hoc* restrictions. For instance, the 1909 Ottoman Law on Associations does not specify any fixed delay for the authorities to acknowledge notification of an NGO's creation, and this important gap has been used repeatedly by Interior Ministers to withhold the notification for several months, if not years. Misapplying the Law on Associations, the Lebanese government would use this means to censure and restrict the establishment of particular NGOs working on sensitive issues. Without this receipt, associations could not take full advantage of the rights and privileges as legal entities.

In 1996, the Ministry of Interior adopted a circular, stipulating additional restrictions (e.g. related to getting prior approval for holding elections)[13] to the 1983 framework, which had already phased out the notification system, replacing it with an authorisation one.

The departure of Syrian military forces in April 2005 from Lebanon restored local political elites to the centre of decision-making and, at the same time, offered a more welcoming landscape for CSOs to play a role in the country. Hence, the 1996 policy started to be reversed from August 2005, when Interior Minister Hassan Sabeh discarded the idea that NGOs should be licensed prior to establishment. However, it was not until long-time activist Ziad Baroud became Interior Minister[14] that many of NGOs waiting for their notification confirmation could actually be officially established, as he started "signing off on scores of registration applications from NGOs that had been piling up for years".[15] According to a researcher from the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), Jamil Mouawad, Minister Baroud "signed about 260 registration applications since taking office, though some estimate that the number may be much higher".[16]

8   Freedom House (2005). *Freedom in the world 2004 – Lebanon*. New York and Washington DC.
9   K. Abou Assi (2006). *An assessment of Lebanese civil society – CIVICUS civil society index report for the Republic of Lebanon*. Beirut: International Management and Training Institute. p.96.
10   Ibid.
11   For example, foreign NGOs, youth and sports associations, unions and cooperatives must seek special permissions from the relevant authorities to be granted the legal right to operate in Lebanon.
12   علم وخبر in Arabic.
13   Circular 17/4/S, 16 January 1996.
14   From 2008 to 2011, under governments of Prime Ministers Fouad Siniora and then Saad Hariri.
15   'The activist minister', *Now Lebanon*, 23 October 2008.
16   Ibid.

In addition, the Baroud circular of September 2008 confirmed the reversal of the previously adopted policy and consolidated the implementation of the 2003 State Council decision that censured the 1996 Interior Minister circular[17] but without it being enforced. The State Council decision had determined that the "association exists as of the date of submitting its papers to the Ministry of Interior informing of its establishment". It further stated that the "notification does not mean that the Ministry of Interior has established the association, for the latter is established by the will of its founders and not by the virtue of a permit".[18] This was the position held by Minister Baroud.

Despite the Baroud circular, a legal issue remained regarding the role of the General Security Directorate whether to authorise the notification process. The circular had, on one hand, acknowledged the General Security Directorate's power to suggest halting a notification process if it determined that the founders' mission and objectives were contrary to Lebanese legislation and would harm public order. On the other hand, the final decision remained in the hands of the Interior Minister,[19] which was deemed by many rights' defenders as discretionary. Still, Minister Baroud kept signing dozens of NGO notification forms, with some procedures dating back to 2003.

The nomination of a CSO connoisseur to one of the most important positions regarding security reform had a very positive impact on many levels.

On 26 May 2011, Baroud resigned as minister after his authority was challenged by the Internal Security Forces (ISF) Director General, Ashraf Rifi (today Minister of Justice), in the midst of a political conflict with the Minister of Telecommunications. When Minister Baroud left office, the next ministers after him were left to interpret their version of the 1909 Ottoman Law on Associations and the different enforcement circulars, as "the implementation mechanisms of the Law of Associations in Lebanon has always been dependent on the Minister in office, so if the current minister leaves, the system could change depending on who takes his place".[20]

Despite this risk, the nomination of a CSO connoisseur to one of the most important positions regarding security reform had a very positive impact on many levels. First, as explained by Dr Khalil Gebara, Co-Executive Director of the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA):

> "*The culture regarding civil society has evolved. Traditionally, people saw civil society as advocates primarily for social issues, such as human rights, welfare, women's rights and social development. But because Baroud comes from civil society and is an articulate advocate of governance and policy reforms, people have started looking at these organisations in a new light.*"[21]

Secondly, as Interior Minister, Baroud opened the door for civil society in a field where there was historically, as we have pointed out, very little collaborative interaction. Rather, what exists is a turbulent relationship as watch groups' *raison d'être* is to fight security services to limit any abuse of power and discretionary anti-rights measures. This stand contributed greatly to promoting a more inclusive approach to CSOs in Lebanon on some issues of interest to civil society. The most notable of these was the work done on electoral reform, which led to groups being hosted within the premises of the Ministry of Interior and giving lengthy counselling and implementation support on the matter. However, on the core matter of SSR, CSOs have mostly remained at the margin of the policy-making process.

Marginal role of CSOs in shaping SSR policies

When looking at the mapping done by the CLDH in the course of 2010,[22] the breakdown of the CSOs' respective fields showed a clear absence of security sector interest: 29% of NGOs work on delivering social services, 15% on local development and only 1% on human rights, which in many aspects relate to SSR.

Many factors determine the low interest of CSOs in core security and military affairs. Firstly, the civil society sector "lacks expertise on security issues, namely among NGO activists", as specified by a ranking ISF officer.[23] Secondly, the CSOs already face a staggering number of political, humanitarian, social and economic issues to

17   Decision 135/2003–2004 of State Council, 18 November 2003.
18   Ibid.
19   See, for example: 'The Baroud circular – Authorisation a priori or a posteriori?, *Al Akhbar*, 26 September 2008 [in Arabic].
20   Bassem Chit, quoted by C. Joseph (2010). Op. cit. p.22.
21   'The activist minister', *Now Lebanon*, 23 October 2008.
22   Recently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Beyond Reform and Development conducted an updated survey on CSOs in Lebanon – the results were due to be published in the coming weeks at the time of writing.
23   Interview with ISF ranking officer who wished to remain anonymous, Beirut, 7 October 2014.

which the Lebanese authorities fail to respond, not to mention having to deal with a political regime that shows little regard towards transparency and accountability.

Moreover, "the Lebanese security apparatus is a complex set-up of organisations subject to multiple and potentially conflicting authorities".[24] Weak public management in this area is hugely challenging for CSOs in terms of processing and monitoring issues from a security policy perspective – for example, regarding civil oversight of security institutions, sectarian interests and the impact on the formal security sector structure and action, the strength of non-statutory forces and informal security entrepreneurs, recurrent terrorist attacks, the porosity of borders, the ongoing conflict with Israel and now in Syria, foreign influences, and the presence of Palestinian and now Syrian refugees. We can highlight three different challenges as follows.

National defence strategy

Despite some experts feeding the public arena with documentation and calling to "de-politicise the debate" over the Lebanese national defence strategy,[25] there was little interest and mobilisation from local CSOs in Lebanon when top politicians debated the issue in several rounds during the period 2010–2012. Overall, the Lebanese NGOs were utterly disengaged in what was perceived as a strictly political negotiation. No consensus was achieved and the roundtable meetings stopped as the Syrian crisis took a dramatic turn in the subsequent years, creating new additional security challenges for the country.

'War on terror'

Ever since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, Lebanon and its Syrian patron were increasingly involved in the US action against terrorism in the region. With the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, the terrorism threat and priority remained high given the volatile security context at that time. For instance, the prerogatives of the Information Branch within the ISF were revisited; the Army started to receive more military equipment from donor countries, as most Lebanese security agencies were supported to face terrorism threats and trained for anti-terror actions; and channels of cooperation with Interpol were upped. However, there was hardly any thought given to the confusion of prerogatives and responsibilities between the different agencies, which also constitutes a cause for concern regarding the authority and efficiency of the security institutions. Furthermore, there was no debate with civil society over anti-terror legal amendments and policies, and the CSOs would mostly intervene after the occurrence of anti-human rights conduct.

More recently, the issuing of a Saudi-French grant to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) of US$3 billion was again a missed opportunity to offer a transparent approach regarding how these funds would be spent. As a result, heads of different interests have started to take advantage of the incoming resources: for instance, a recent news article reported a statement by Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil that "part of the Saudi grant will go in support to the Lebanese Customs".[26] Therefore, those in power do not seem to be interested in consulting with the relevant expertise to optimise this grant opportunity in order to foster an efficiency-oriented security policy.

Civil oversight of armed forces and security services

Among the many challenges facing CSOs in Lebanon is the limited access to public information generally needed to draw up sensible and realistic reformist plans and ideas. In the security and military sector, access to information is drastically restricted by law. Even the parliament cannot get past the *raison d'état* for secrecy over military affairs (for instance, parliamentarians cannot summon the Commander of the Army). When the

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main political pillar of the Lebanese regime is struggling with the opacity of the defence and security apparatus, under such circumstances CSOs are left with practically no space and margin to interfere and push for civil oversight of the security sector's actions.

Furthermore, local CSOs are not as active or present as international organisations regarding complex security reform issues. Aside from official state cooperation between police and military, those who are closely and primarily involved in SSR are international donors and implementing agencies. For instance, the Swiss Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) started to work in Lebanon in 2007 in close partnership with the *Centre d'Études Stratégiques pour le Moyen-Orient* (Centre for Middle-Eastern Strategic Studies, CESMO), a

24   M. Adib (2012). 'Perspectives for a reform of the security sector in Lebanon', *Arab Reform Initiative*. p.2.
25   See, for instance: F. Assaf (2012). 'Lebanese defense strategy: Depoliticizing and optimizing the debate', *Middle East Strategic Perspectives*, 22 July.
26   See article on *An Nahar*, 7 November 2014, available in Arabic at http://www.annahar.com/article/187438

Lebanese think tank, organising a few activities before suspending further advocacy actions. Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas (NI-CO) was commissioned to support the internal security forces' institutional capacity building in planning, technological preparedness, training and outreach. Furthermore, the Security and Rule of Law (SAROL) programme funded by the European Union has been providing special training and equipment to the ISF since 2009. In addition, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) supported the recruitment of female agents to the ISF and the new *Ras Beirut* police station, which re-opened in 2014. Also, part of a larger community policing restructuring was restored with financial support from the UK and US embassies, with the goal of engaging the local community in policing efforts and improving the image of the ISF. As the former ISF Inspector-General Pierre Nassar indicated in a video on the Policing Pilot Project: "Traditionally, civilians were viewed as potential opponents, whereas the new approach favours interaction with civilians as partners and collaborators with the ISF."[27] This bilateral and sometimes multilateral cooperation has consolidated a top-down approach in the SSR field in Lebanon, with little space for local expertise.

That said, Lebanese civil society did not wait for community policing platforms to find entry points to work with the different security services on a number of issues related to human security through different collaboration strategies.

Designing and implementing collaborative strategies despite lack of national framework for a cooperative mechanism

According to the OECD Handbook on SSR:

> "*The involvement of civil society in SSR programmes is a precondition for wider and more inclusive local ownership and, ultimately, sustainability* [...] *CSOs have an important role to play owing to their potential for giving voice to the interests and concerns of the wider population and encouraging reforms that respond to popular security and justice needs.*"[28]

In Lebanon, human security and the prevention of any abuse of force constitute a consolidated sector of action among local advocacy NGOs working to denounce the "many violations of human rights [that] originate from a poorly managed and unaccountable security sector".[29] At the same time, the security institutions have opened, at different paces, channels of communication and collaboration with CSOs. In a 2006 interview in the *Army Journal*, the Head of the ISF at the time, General Ashraf Rifi, welcomed the cooperation of his services with civil society. For instance, he mentioned the topic of traffic safety, as the "ISF plays a big role in the work of YASA",[30] and of prisons, with the ISF working "closely with Offre Joie".[31]

The working relationship did not start with the end of the Syrian tutelage, but after April 2005, the platform for interaction between CSOs and security services grew in size and scope. Independent of the time period, we can identify four different types of strategies that CSOs have used to constructively interact with security institutions in the country. Each strategy refers to a specific type of avenue that NGOs have utilised to advance some form of human security agenda.

The religious avenue

The religious avenue has proved extremely helpful when channels of cooperation have been limited for CSOs on sensitive issues related to security, such as the prevention of torture and the conditions in Lebanese detention centres and prisons. Representatives of religious communities who are constitutionally recognised in Lebanon constitute historic partners for the security services by means of the religious and moral values they both swear to protect. This is how the *Association Justice et Miséricorde* (Association of Justice and Mercy, AJEM) managed, for instance, to find the proper route to help detainees in Lebanese prisons as of 1998, in a context where the ISF would not respond favourably to such requests from regular CSOs. The Head of AJEM, Father Hady Aya, being a priest was able to argue for a legitimate presence of his organisation in the prisons as the law guarantees prisoners access to religious and spiritual assistance: "We used our religious capacity to enter the prisons and create a working relationship with the security services and help those inside",[32] remarked Father Hady Aya during a recent conference in Byblos. Therefore, the association managed to overcome the scepticism of the ISF authorities, who would usually only authorise official religious institutions such as Islamic Dar El Fatwa or the Chaplaincy Prisons Office, linked to church institutions.

27   'ISF launches project to improve force's image in Ras Beirut', *The Daily Star*, 17 January 2014.
28   OECD (2007). Op. cit. p.224.
29   See CESMO overview on 'Security sector management and reform', available at http://cesmo.org/SecuritySectorManagementReform.html
30   Interview with General Ashraf Rifi, *Army Journal*, Issue 252, June 2006, available [in Arabic] at http://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/ar/news/?11232
31   Ibid.
32   Father Hady El Aya, 'Historic Relationship between Power and Justice', Communication during Byblos Autumn School on the theme of 'Justice, Power and Democracy', CISH–UNESCO, Byblos, 15 September 2014.

The same strategy has also served Caritas, a Christian organisation which, for instance back in 2000, managed to get access to the General Security detention centres through the Prisons Chaplaincy to support detained foreigners at social, spiritual and legal levels.[33]

The legislative avenue

Through this avenue, CSOs have successfully launched or joined lobbying initiatives to reform legislative frameworks within the country in order to secure a particular involvement at the implementation level, which requires working closely with security institutions.

For instance, the Afif Osseiran Foundation, specialised in providing legal assistance to juvenile delinquents, has actively worked on implementing the Juvenile Law, enacted in 2002 by the Lebanese Parliament.[34] Since then, the Foundation has been providing legal counselling to these young people and has "effectively trained judges

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and security officers on the implementation mechanisms of this legislation. Posters were printed and distributed to be posted in all police stations to inform the officers on minors' rights".[35] With three working lawyers, the Afif Foundation handles more than 300 cases a year and continues its training activities, mainly with the ISF, on the technicalities of the 2002 Juvenile Law.[36]

For its part, the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC) has developed its relationship with the ISF and the General Security Directorate to ensure the implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Protocol[37] ratified by Lebanon's parliament in October 2005. This protocol seeks to protect migrant domestic workers from trafficking and abuse and violence, since Lebanon, as a State Party, needs to fulfil its obligations. On this basis, the CLMC has supported the implementing agencies in the security field to properly enforce the protocol's provisions. The General Security Directorate has finally agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the CLMC (which was being negotiated since 2003), establishing a hand-over policy to Caritas' safe house for persons deemed victims of trafficking.[38] Since 2011, the CLMC has also been delivering training to ISF officers and General Security, informing security personnel of the different stages and provisions of this agreement. This has allowed Caritas to protect thousands of persons exposed to the dangers of human trafficking each year.

As Lebanese lawmakers adopted the Domestic Violence Bill[39] in April 2014, the gender-based NGOs that spearheaded the efforts to pass the new legislation took their involvement with different security services further to optimise the required protective and preventive measures against gender-based violence (GBV). For instance, the law's implementation required the establishment of temporary shelters for victims of abuse and the formation of specialised family violence units within the ISF to process complaints. Based on these priorities, the KAFA NGO has closely worked with the ISF to deliver training sessions to uphold the new law and to raise awareness in police stations. The NGO has also established campaigns targeting public opinion using the character of an ISF agent to help change the image of the security services. An extensive campaign was launched too by both institutions following the law's adoption to promote an end to violence against women. This campaign included the use of billboards and TV spots to project the image of a police force that is supportive and protective of female victims of violence.

A final illustration of this type of strategy is the preparation process for a new Traffic Law for the country, which has yet to be adopted. This avenue has established many entry points for specialised NGOs such as YASA and KunHadi to collaborate with the Lebanese police forces. These groups have been working closely with the ISF to promote traffic safety and to push for better law enforcement on this issue by reinforcing a traffic police unit. The ISF has also been responsive to the general public's traffic concerns through the creation of a Traffic Management Centre, which communicates through various online social networks, run by the ISF's public relations unit.

33   Interview with Najla Chahda, former Director of the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre, 7 November 2014.
34   Law 422 on the Protection of Juveniles in Conflict with the Law or Exposed to Danger, 6 June 2002
35   Interview with Aline El Osta, Lawyer at Afif Osseiran Foundation, 7 November 2014.
36   Ibid.
37   Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 15 November 2000.
38   Interview with Najla Chahda, former Director of the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre, 7 November 2014.
39   Law for the Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence, adopted 1 April 2014.

Direct service provision avenue

This avenue encompasses direct involvement of some NGOs in technical aspects of security, namely those related to gender. Based on agreement by the security services to integrate local expertise on these matters, KAFA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ISF in 2013. This memorandum prepares the ground for collaboration on the installation of special areas for women within police stations and the coordination of training for police officers on the protection of women from abuse and violence.

As part of efforts to end GBV, the ABAAD NGO has developed a working relationship with the ISF to support three different women shelters (in Beqaa, and northern and southern Mount Lebanon) since August 2013. ISF officials agreed to collaborate by sending victims of abuse to these establishments for the sake of their protection (women, girls and children),[40] thereby upholding the anti-human trafficking regulations.

Expertise-building avenue

This avenue was adopted by NGOs seeking to integrate aspects of SSR into their mission and activities by building an area of expertise before engaging policy-makers on SSR-related policies. This strategy does not necessarily involve direct cooperation with security institutions to carry out the NGOs' protection and prevention goals as seen earlier. Rather, it seeks to build internal expertise and credibility on specific areas related to SSR in order to successfully lobby regulative authorities.

In this field, the CESMO think tank is among the few institutions in Lebanon to have developed SSR reflections and policy-oriented debates and papers. Working in close cooperation with DCAF during the period 2006–2010,[41] and as a member of the Professional Association of SSR Training Institutions established by the (now closed) Global Facilitation Network on SSR at the University of Birmingham, CESMO helped to establish the Observatory on Defence and Security in 2006. This observatory sought to study constitutional and legal solutions to reinforce parliamentary oversight, especially as far as defence budgeting and procurement are concerned.[42]

According to CESMO expertise, coordinated by its Director Dr Mustapha Adib, "no SSR can be implemented unless it is the unique result of a confrontation between existing experiences and the complexity of a national situation".[43] In this respect, CESMO has called for many SSR-related measures to be adopted by policy-makers. Such measures include launching a disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation (DDR) programme, creating a National Security Council, centralising intelligence in one single agency, creating a specialised anti-terrorist unit, and reorganising the defence and security apparatus to avoid the overlapping of domains of jurisdiction.[44] Despite the expertise gathered, the different SSR projects led by CESMO are no longer active today.

Another example worth mentioning concerns PPM, which emerged as a leading Arab expert NGO on the issue of arms control. Intensive campaigning, spearheaded by its president Fadi Abi Allam through regional and international coalitions, has led Lebanon to become the 122nd state to sign in October 2014 the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) of 2013, which regulates different aspects of the international trade of conventional weapons. The next step for the PPM was to start "preparing implementation steps to work them out with the Lebanese government"[45] when the ATT entered into force on 24 December 2014. After Lebanon's positive response to the ATT, Fadi Abi Allam praised the "amazing step that has been taken by the Lebanese government. In such a situation, where terrorism is hitting Lebanon by arms that are clearly out of any control, signing such a treaty is an action of peacebuilding".[46] The PPM has also been working on the issue of small arms in Lebanon and developing expertise to devise solutions for population disarmament and anti-hunting policies.

Another group, established in the past few years, is Beyond Reform and Development (BRD), which was initiated by long-time activists in Lebanese civil society. BRD has decided to engage on the complex issue of SSR from the standpoint of peacebuilding. Involved in the Bab el-Tabbaneh/Jabal Mohsen security crisis, BRD is currently "searching for innovative and alternative policies to the security situation there".[47]

40   Interview with Ghida Anani, Director of ABAAD, 6 November 2014.
41   The last activity jointly organised by both organisations was on 16 July 2010 in Beirut in the form of a workshop entitled 'What role for civil society in strengthening good governance of the security sector?', details available at http://www.dcaf.ch/Event/DCAF-CESMO-Workshop-What-Role-for-Civil-Society-in-Strengthening-Good-Governance-of-the-Security-Sector
42   See CESMO overview on 'Rationale behind the SSR Lebanon project', available at http://www.ssr-lebanon.org/index.php
43   See CESMO overview on 'Security sector management and reform', available at http://cesmo.org/SecuritySectorManagementReform.html
44   M. Adib (2012). Op. cit. pp.9–10.
45   Interview with Fadi Abi Allam, President of PPM, 15 September 2014.
46   Quoted in 'Lebanon and Guinea latest to take action on ATT', *Control Arms Campaign*, 30 October 2014, available at http://controlarms.org/en/news/lebanon-and-guinea-latest-to-take-action-on-att/
47   Interview with Gilbert Doumit, Director of BRD, 27 October 2014.

After months of fieldwork in the area to study the security-related challenges of the neighbourhood around 'Syria Street', which serves today as a demarcation line between the Bab el-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen districts, BRD has broadened its scope of interest to look into the security impact of Syrian refugees in northern Lebanon. According to its preliminary findings, the "Lebanese municipalities in these areas have been taking security matters into their own hands by recently recruiting between 150 and 200 policemen who are employed and armed in order to terrorise Syrian refugees. Such a situation can prove very explosive in the short term".[48] Seeking to build additional expertise on the topic, BRD is presently working to develop more "holistic approaches on the security level and work on alternatives to militarisation responses brought forward by the local municipalities without any control or accountability"[49] before engaging local authorities and national policy-makers on this issue.

CONCLUSIONS

The incredible richness of interaction by CSOs with SSR and the security institutions in Lebanon is contributing to a growing role for civil society in voicing concerns and implementing initiatives in partnership with the different security services and policy-makers. However, civil society continues to be challenged by the security officials on its expertise credibility, leading to a fragmented landscape.

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This is reflected in the different strategies used by CSOs to actively engage on such issues. Thus far, Lebanon still lacks a consistent national framework that would consolidate such cooperative mechanisms for CSOs on SSR.

Moreover, CSOs continue to face an asymmetrical partnership with different authorities. According to activist and Director of ABAAD Ghida Anani:

> "*Civil society is actually doing the state a favour by taking over services which should be the authorities' job. We are doing all the work, but they keep all the power.*"[50]

In this case, Lebanon offers a model close to an auxiliary-based pattern, whereby CSOs are encouraged and invited to be auxiliary agents of state authorities as the latter lack the resources or will to deal with many aspects of human security.

Ultimately, CSOs are not closely associated with the design and adoption process of security policies as policy-makers and security stakeholders drastically limit public debate over SSR. As pointed out by an ISF ranking officer:

> "*A decree from the Interior Ministry approved a strategic planning for the ISF, prepared in collaboration with the UK, to raise human rights standards and good relations with citizens.*"[51]

This took place outside of any participative approach with CSOs:

> "*So far, in the majority of cases, it's the CSOs who take initiatives and approach the ISF officials, who in turn study the project and decide on whether to allow for such collaboration.*"[52]

Another illustration of this is the fact that the Council for Central Security, which enjoys considerable policy prerogatives, is usually off-limits in terms of any interaction with civil society.

As a result of these limitations, CSOs are prevented from focusing on behavioural change and impacting positively on the mentality and behaviour of policy-makers and security officials regarding their priorities. This would require a more advanced level of collaboration with the security services and additional efforts from the latter in conceptualising their security mission in a complex context such as Lebanon. CSOs have a lot to offer on this matter and could contribute to a positive dynamic by slowly modifying the behaviours of security officers in the country and giving them a better understanding of the substance and responsibility of their tasks.

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48   Ibid.
49   Ibid.
50   Interview with Ghida Anani, Director of ABAAD, 6 November 2014.
51   Interview with ranking officer at ISF who wished to remain anonymous, Beirut, 7 October 2014
52   Ibid.

In this sense, the advocacy NGOs continue to face a sustainability challenge, despite their ability to engage and cooperate with different security sector institutions, and the great potential of opening up such channels for those who need it.

Against this background, a number of recommendations can be offered to create a more balanced and constructive partnership between CSOs and security institutions on SSR. These recommendations include:

- strengthening the legal and regulatory framework within which civil society operates;
- increasing the capacity of civil society to monitor government policy and practice on security and justice issues;
- building partnerships between the government, security forces and civil society on security and justice issues;
- developing CSOs' technical capacity to provide policy advice on security and justice services;
- empowering the role and functioning of parliamentary committees in security policy formulation; and
- building wider audiences in favour of SSR by increasing media coverage and raising public awareness.

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