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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**A MODEL FOR COLOMBIA'S POST-CONFLICT  
SECURITY SECTOR**

by

Kelsey Picciuto

December 2019

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Cristiana Matei  
Tristan J. Mabry

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**A MODEL FOR COLOMBIA'S POST-CONFLICT SECURITY SECTOR**

Kelsey Picciuto  
Captain, United States Air Force  
BA, Tufts University, 2012

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(WESTERN HEMISPHERE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
December 2019**

Approved by: Cristiana Matei  
Advisor

Tristan J. Mabry  
Second Reader

Afshon P. Ostovar  
Associate Chair for Research  
Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines key characteristics of successful security sector reform. It builds on current theories regarding the critical elements of reform, analyzing how those principles could be applied to the Colombian case. Furthermore, this thesis uses the case studies of El Salvador and Sri Lanka to examine which aspects of their post-conflict security sector reform plans were successful and which could be modified to increase the chance of long-term stability in Colombia. While Colombia shifts its focus from civil conflict and internal criminal investigations to a more strategic outlook with long-term goals of addressing human rights violations, providing oversight of the security sector, and maintaining peace, the intelligence, military, and police sectors all need to undergo reform. As the FARC disarms and right-wing paramilitary organizations disband, the Colombian security sector can develop ways to re-integrate the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), into society, rebuild trust with the population that suffered various human rights violations throughout the civil conflict, and modify the security sector's mission set to address new regional concerns. Using the comparative analysis from the case studies, this thesis develops a model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector transformation.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>1. Pre-established Elements for Successful Security Sector Reforms.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>2. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Local Ownership.....</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>3. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Inclusion of Women .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>4. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Long-Term Planning .....</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>5. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Security Provision and Human Rights.....</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>6. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Balancing External Intervention .....</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>7. Steps in Security Sector Reform.....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>8. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>THESIS OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: COLOMBIA .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>BACKGROUND – FARC AND CIVIL CONFLICT .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND PLAN COLOMBIA .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>POST-CONFLICT CHALLENGES.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>COLOMBIA’S SECURITY SECTOR .....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>2. Intelligence.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>3. Democratic Reforms of Intelligence.....</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>4. Police .....</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>5. Democratic Reforms of the Police .....</b>	<b>35</b>
	<b>6. Military .....</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>7. Democratic Reforms of the Armed Forces .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: EL SALVADOR .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>CIVIL WAR AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.....</b>	<b>41</b>

B.	<b>PEACE AGREEMENTS AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION .....</b>	<b>43</b>
C.	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>50</b>
IV.	<b>CASE STUDY: SRI LANKA.....</b>	<b>53</b>
A.	<b>BACKGROUND ON THE CONFLICT.....</b>	<b>53</b>
B.	<b>THE PEACE PROCESS AND EARLY SECURITY SECTOR REFORM.....</b>	<b>54</b>
C.	<b>AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE: FURTHER SECURITY SECTOR REFORM EFFORTS .....</b>	<b>58</b>
D.	<b>ONGOING CHALLENGES TO THE REFORM PROCESS.....</b>	<b>62</b>
E.	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>63</b>
V.	<b>CONCLUSION: ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>67</b>
A.	<b>COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>67</b>
1.	<b>External Involvement vs. Local Ownership .....</b>	<b>67</b>
2.	<b>Oversight.....</b>	<b>69</b>
3.	<b>Reintegration of Combatants.....</b>	<b>70</b>
4.	<b>Force Reduction and Human Rights Training.....</b>	<b>72</b>
B.	<b>HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>73</b>
C.	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS TO COLOMBIAN POLICY-MAKERS, INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND MEDIA.....</b>	<b>74</b>
1.	<b>Develop a clear institutional framework for providing security that includes all relevant actors and focuses on the vulnerable .....</b>	<b>75</b>
2.	<b>Strengthen governance and oversight of security institutions .....</b>	<b>76</b>
3.	<b>Build capable, professional, and accountable security forces open to dialogue with civil society organizations .....</b>	<b>77</b>
4.	<b>Promote the sustainable delivery of justice and security .....</b>	<b>78</b>
D.	<b>SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>79</b>
	<b>LIST OF REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>81</b>
	<b>INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....</b>	<b>91</b>

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defenders of Colombia)
BACRIM	Bandas Criminales (criminal groups)
DAS	Administrative Department of Security
DCAF	Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DNI	Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia (National Directorate of Intelligence)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional
JIC	Joint Intelligence Council
JRG	Revolutionary Government Junta
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NRP	National Reconstruction Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
PDC	Partido Demócrata Cristiano
PNC	Policía Nacional Civil (National Civilian Police)
SIC	Colombian Intelligence Service
SINAI	National Intelligence System
SSR	Security Sector Reformation
UN	United Nations

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Colombia has spent the past few years transitioning from a country dominated by civil conflict between leftist revolutionary groups like the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or FARC, violent right-wing paramilitary organizations, and the state to a united nation working to re-integrate former guerrillas into society and implement peace agreements. Colombia's security sector—comprised of the military, police, and intelligence organizations—has been negatively affected by the decades of internal conflict, often due to a lack of external oversight as the nation focused on eradicating left-wing groups and resolving the country's civil conflict, allowing their ends to justify the means. Since its establishment in 1953—the same year a military coup d'état resulted in a four-year military dictatorship in the country—Colombia's intelligence service's mission, for example, has fluctuated from police missions and crime investigations, to monitoring political opponents of the President, to collection on left-wing organizations and drug cartels.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the armed forces previously focused their training and missions on jungle operations and counterinsurgency, and will now need to shift their focus to operations against criminal groups integrated into the general population, and will also need to develop training for urban conflicts.<sup>2</sup> In the same vein, the police were often given high levels of autonomy to coordinate with the military and combat guerrilla groups, and now need reforms to shift their role from tactical military operations to ensuring peace and stability at local levels.<sup>3</sup> The first reform to the Police Code in fifty years was just approved in 2017, and aims to “increase enforcement for low-

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<sup>1</sup> Spyridon Plakoudas, “Intelligence, Counter-Insurgency, and Democratization in Colombia,” *Journal of Mediterranean and Balkan Intelligence* 7 no. 1 (Jun 2016), 159–162, ISSN 2241–4991.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. R. Evan Ellis, “Strategic Insights: The Post-Conflict and the Transformation of Colombia's Armed Forces,” Strategic Studies Institute, last modified Aug 17, 2016, <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/index.cfm/articles/Colombias-Armed-Forces/2016/08/17>

<sup>3</sup> “Colombia SSR Background,” Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), September 14, 2018, <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library2/Country-Profiles/Colombia-SSR-Background-Note#Anchor7>.

level offenses, aiming to support a peaceful co-existence for Colombian citizens.”<sup>4</sup> Colombia’s security sector is looking for ways to incorporate former FARC combatants into society and potentially into the military to keep former FARC members from joining dissident groups and continuing to battle the state.<sup>5</sup> Finally, corruption within the security sector has resulted in a lack of civilian trust, which must be addressed through the reform process with increased oversight mechanisms.<sup>6</sup> While democratic civilian control and oversight mechanisms of the security institutions were established throughout the civil conflict, they were typically ignored in favor of rapid response.<sup>7</sup> Orders typically flowed only from the executive branch to the security sector, bypassing the legislative branch and any other oversight bodies, and members of the security sector were not held accountable for their actions aimed at eradicating left-wing guerrillas.<sup>8,9</sup> For example, the police forces and military forces forged complicated agreements and alignments with right-wing paramilitary groups in attempts to weed out left-wing opposition, leading to rampant human rights violations as the conflict waged on.

While Colombia shifts its focus from civil conflict and internal criminal investigations to a more strategic outlook with long-term goals of addressing human rights violations, providing oversight of the security sector, and maintaining peace, the intelligence, military, and police sectors all need to undergo reform. As the FARC disarms and the right-wing paramilitary organizations disband, the Colombian security sector can develop ways to re-integrate the FARC into society, rebuild trust with the population that suffered various human rights violations throughout the civil conflict, and address new

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<sup>4</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), “Colombia SSR Background.”

<sup>5</sup> “Colombia – Defense,” Export.gov, Aug 17, 2018, <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Colombia-Defense>

<sup>6</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), “Colombia SSR Background.”

<sup>7</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), “Colombia SSR Background.”

<sup>8</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), “Colombia SSR Background.”

<sup>9</sup> Plakoudas, “Intelligence, Counter-Insurgency, and Democratization in Colombia,” 160–162.

regional concerns, such as the unrest in neighboring Venezuela and the resulting humanitarian situation that is resulting from the Maduro regime.

Under these circumstances, this thesis seeks to answer the following research question: What is an effective model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector transformation? Specifically, using existing theoretical framework and empirical research on how different countries have re-designed their security sectors (police, military, and intelligence) after civil conflict, this thesis aspires to develop a model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector's roles and missions.

#### **A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

This thesis is relevant to the United States government for a variety of reasons. To begin with, United States policy-makers have had a vested interest in Colombia's stability for decades, ultimately pushing a multi-billion-dollar aid plan known as Plan Colombia in 2000. Plan Colombia involved economic, financial, military, human rights protection, social participation, counternarcotic, development, and peace strategies for Colombia, with a large portion of the money from the United States dedicated to the military and counternarcotic strategy piece of the plan.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, Plan Colombia helped Colombia to invest over one billion dollars annually into the military component, demonstrating the United States' sustained commitment to peace, stability, and economic development in Colombia.<sup>11</sup> As Colombia begins down the road of long-term post-conflict stabilization and security sector reform (SSR), the existence of transnational criminal groups, drug traffickers, and a lack of governance in certain rural areas all could work to unravel the progress made by Plan Colombia.<sup>12</sup> United States policy-makers have an especially keen eye on Colombia as Venezuela's political upheaval has driven a wave of migrants to flee Venezuela to Colombia. A reformed security sector able to guide Colombia's own post-

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<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Rosen, *The Losing War: Plan Colombia and Beyond* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2014), 23–41.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Mejia, *Plan Colombia: An Analysis of Effectiveness and Costs* (Brookings, 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Mejia-Colombia-final-2.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> June S. Beittel, *Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations*, CRS Report No. R43813 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2019), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43813.pdf>.



conflict restructuring as well as address any vulnerabilities added by unrest on the continent is critical for long-term national and regional stability—which this thesis aspires to provide.

This research is equally relevant to policy-makers from countries around the world—including Latin America. This thesis may provide insights on the lessons learned and best/worst practices from Colombia’s security sector reform. For countries like Venezuela that are in the midst of a conflict between the Western-backed Congressional leader and the authoritarian President Maduro, lessons may be learned and applied from Colombia’s transition. Similarly, as Peru reforms and democratizes after its own decades fighting the Shining Path insurgents under more authoritarian leaders, Peruvian leaders can learn from Colombia’s reform process and reintegration of ex-combatants. Bordering countries in South America can monitor the reform planning and implementation process to ensure Colombia maintains stability and is accountable for the short- and long-term goals set in the process, adding to regional stability.

Finally, examining the case of Colombia can provide new insights to scholars as a new case study on post-conflict security sector reform. While Colombia does have some similarities with many of the cases commonly examined for security sector reform (i.e. Timor-Leste, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan), its prior infrastructure varies from that within many of the common cases. Moreover, the re-structuring it undergoes may take a different path and provide further examples for research. Overall, advocates of security sector reform see security and development to be significant concerns, necessitating collaboration in planning and execution across the military, police, and intelligence sectors and incorporating civilians across the population in order to maintain national security and stability.<sup>13</sup>

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review provides an examination of the scholarly works related to security sector reform, and outlines the factors deemed most necessary for successful and

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei, “Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations,” *Democratization* 15, no. 5 (Dec 2008): 913, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340802362505>

sustained reform. The main themes academics focus on are ownership of the reform process, inclusion of women in the reform process, long-term planning, short-term security solutions, human rights training, and balancing external intervention.

### **1. Pre-established Elements for Successful Security Sector Reforms**

There is a body of literature that argues a few basic elements need to be pre-established in a country prior to beginning the security sector reform process, and further built upon throughout the reform. According to Westerman, for instance, these elements include low to no levels of violence, the availability of basic infrastructure, legal framework, stable domestic political and security institutions, low corruption, and an active and informed society.<sup>14</sup> Schnabel also recognizes the importance of a secure environment prior to initiating the reform process: “without a secure environment and a security system that ensures security even after the departure of international peace operations, political, economic, and cultural rebuilding are impossible.”<sup>15</sup> Schnabel and Ehrhardt see the absence of conflict as crucial in order to encourage sustainable and focused reforms. Academics further note that the society must accept the need for the military to have a substantial role in society, and should acknowledge the military needs a certain degree of power to combat any existing or new threats to society, even as the civil conflict has concluded and the reform process has begun.<sup>16</sup> Velasquez also address strategic objectives for countries undergoing security sector reform after conflict, noting how the security sector must be able to provide protection to the population and must maintain a deterrent capability to ensure prior conflicts do not reignite and disrupt the reform process.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ian Westerman, “Too Much Western Bias? The Need for a More Culturally Adaptable Approach to Security Sector Reform,” *Defense and Security Analysis* 33, no. 3 (July 2017): 280, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2017.1351602>

<sup>15</sup> Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhardt, “Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Challenges and Problems of Security Sector Reform,” in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peace-Building*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Westerman, “Too Much Western Bias? The Need for a More Culturally Adaptable Approach to Security Sector Reform,” 284.

<sup>17</sup> Alejo Vargas Velasquez, “The Profile of the Colombian Armed Forces: a Result of the Struggle Against Guerrillas, Drug-Trafficking and Terrorism,” in *Debating Civil Military Relations in Latin America*, ed. David R. Mares and Rafael Martinez (Eastborne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), 143.

Westerman illustrates the links and civil-military relationships between state military forces, civilian ministries (Justice, Defense, Parliament, and so forth), political parties, media, non-governmental organizations, and victims' groups to help create an accountable security and justice system.<sup>18</sup> Maintaining and strengthening these relationships across society is crucial to successful security sector reform.

## **2. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Local Ownership**

Another group of scholars agrees on the importance of local ownership of security sector reconstruction to ensure the process is successful. As Eleanor Gordon, Albrecht Schnabel, David Law, and Timothy Donais stress, the local population, beyond just the political elites and state-level authorities, must be engaged in the planning process and should feel empowered to challenge the state as the process continues.<sup>19</sup> The author justifies her conclusion by noting that especially after periods of extended conflict, the relationship between the people and the state needs to be re-established or rebuilt, and the government and security sector often need to regain public trust and confidence.<sup>20</sup> In her view, if the local population is involved in the decision-making process of security sector reform, researchers found the process to better resonate with the population and its everyday experiences compared to solutions devised by and imposed by external actors.<sup>21</sup> Sedra even found a negative correlation between the scale of external donor assistance or aid and the impact achieved by security sector reform programming, further demonstrating how local populations responded more positively to domestic policies/solutions to

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<sup>18</sup> Westerman, "Too Much Western Bias? The Need for a More Culturally Adaptable Approach to Security Sector Reform," 284–285.

<sup>19</sup> Eleanor Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?" *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 8, no. 2 (Aug 2014): 129–131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2014.930219>

<sup>20</sup> Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?" 129.

<sup>21</sup> Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?" 133

reform.<sup>22</sup> Sedra’s research, citing arguments from Barnyi and Salahub, discussed how the security sector reform “model has faltered in high-profile, geostrategically important cases featuring extensive external engagement. In more stable contexts...where international engagement is less politically charged and more modest in scale, better success has been achieved.”<sup>23</sup> David Law also explored certain cases where international involvement in the reform process resulted in a slow return of security sector ownership to the national government and consequently resulted in a lack of domestic ability to sustain the reform.<sup>24</sup> In cases where external actors are providing assistance, Nicole Ball explained the need for those actors to “build on what exists locally and take local leadership seriously,” stating how the reform process should be a partnership and not exclusively driven by external actors.<sup>25</sup>

Within the context of local ownership, scholars emphasize the importance of reconfiguring power relationships between governors and the governed, claiming change is more likely and sustainable when the governed have the agency to contribute to the process.<sup>26</sup> Schnabel and Ehrhardt emphasize how throughout the reform process, “the conduct of security policy and management of security matters should be handled in a consultative and transparent manner, and should encourage a high level of parliamentary and public participation,” ensuring the reform meets the country’s and citizens’ needs and is in line with national development goals.<sup>27</sup> In agreement with Schnabel, Ehrhardt, and

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Sedra, “Adapting Security Sector Reform to Ground-Level Realities: The Transition to a Second-Generation Model,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 12, no. 1 (Feb 2018): 48–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2018.1426383>

<sup>23</sup> Sedra, “Adapting Security Sector Reform to Ground-Level Realities: The Transition to a Second-Generation Model,” 60

<sup>24</sup> David Law, “Security Sector (Re)Construction in Post-Conflict Settings,” *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 1 (Aug 2006): 119–121, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310500424884>

<sup>25</sup> Nicole Ball, “Good Practices in Security Sector Reform,” (presentation, Bonn International Center for Conversion, Bonn, Germany, June 2000), 18.

<sup>26</sup> Timothy Donais, “Security Sector Reform and the Challenge of Vertical Integration,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 12, no. 1 (Feb 2018): 32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2018.1426681>

<sup>27</sup> Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhardt, “Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Recommendations for Security Sector Reform,” in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peace-Building*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 316–317.

other scholars, the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) highlights how local leadership support and involvement is essential for security sector reform success, stating how there must be a vested interest in the reform plan from the top centers of government down to local sectors.<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately, as revealed by the literature, the most sustainable reform plans are driven by citizens inside the country, as they are building and dedicated to a plan they created based on their own needs and requirements. Furthermore, Gordon argues “integrating community-based structures could help promote more substantive and inclusive local ownership: people would be better able to influence decisions about their own security; policy decisions would more likely be predicated upon the concerns and priorities articulated at the community level,” agreeing how local ownership persists as local needs are met in the overall security sector reform process.<sup>29</sup> Donais describes a reform process with vertical integration: establishing a chain of relationships between international, national, and local actors into all phases of the process.<sup>30</sup> With this vertical integration, he stresses, there can be a shift in focus from international actors contributing short-term interventions to a more domestically-owned, -driven, and -executed long-term plan, with international actors able to provide supplemental support if needed and requested.<sup>31</sup>

Since much of scholars’ thoughts on local ownership of security sector reform focus on the agency and inclusion of local populations, they see a risk of the powerful elite dominating the process and keeping less privileged or remotely located populations from being represented and involved, hence advocating for reducing the power of the elites in the reform process.<sup>32</sup> Scholars emphasize that most elites will not embrace this shift; but

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<sup>28</sup> Schnabel and Ehrhardt, “Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Challenges and Problems of Security Sector Reform,” 6.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon, “Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?” 141.

<sup>30</sup> Donais, “Security Sector Reform and the Challenge of Vertical Integration,” 39.

<sup>31</sup> Donais, 44.

<sup>32</sup> Donais, 32.

their willingness to cooperate is key for long-term success.<sup>33</sup> “National elites use the security sector to support and preserve their positions of power,” and can be reluctant to involve themselves in a reform process that decreases that power and authority.<sup>34</sup> Donais deems it critical to reconcile any tensions between the elites and local population regarding security governance: roles must be delineated and clear to all involved parties, and there often needs to be a shift in focus to align the steps of reform with the everyday priorities of the general population.<sup>35</sup>

With their collective prioritization of local ownership as a key piece of successful security sector reform, certain scholars and United States military planners also emphasize the premise of keeping reform programs culturally relevant and relevant to a specific state’s natural leadership structure. Indeed, as Westerman notes, while the goal for many security sector reforms is to imitate the relationships between civil governments and military forces found in most Western, liberal-democratic states, there often needs to be a balance between this Western “ideal” model and the pre-established relationship of the military (and remainder of the security sector) in politics, government, and society within a country.<sup>36</sup> U.S. military handbooks on security sector reform also urge security sector reform policy-makers to avoid eliminating “functioning formal and informal systems that do not fit the western ideal,” as existing systems that are viewed as beneficial and worthwhile by the local population are often easier to sustain than new, complex westernized systems that the locals may see as alien or illogical.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Gordon, “Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?” 141.

<sup>34</sup> Hans Born, “Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments: Insights from Comparative Analysis,” in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, ed. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for Control of Armed Forces, 2009), 250. [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/YEARBOOK\\_2009.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/YEARBOOK_2009.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Donais, “Security Sector Reform and the Challenge of Vertical Integration,” 41–44.

<sup>36</sup> Westerman, “Too Much Western Bias? The Need for a More Culturally Adaptable Approach to Security Sector Reform,” 276–286.

<sup>37</sup> United States Army War College, *Handbook for Military Support to Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform* (Carlisle, PA: The United States Army War College, 2016), 1–2, [https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pams\\_hands/uah\\_4rol\\_ssr.pdf](https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pams_hands/uah_4rol_ssr.pdf)

### 3. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Inclusion of Women

In addition to highlighting local ownership in the security sector reform process, many scholars advocate for the inclusion of women in the reform process, not only pushing for their involvement in decision-making and re-structuring, but also encouraging their integration into the sector itself in leadership positions or military roles.<sup>38</sup> Scholars argue that the value of including women in the reform process is that women are familiar with communal needs, due to their active role in the community in many societies, and can thus advocate for social spending on local requirements that positively impact security within local areas.<sup>39</sup> The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) agrees, and even created a handbook to address policy guidance for the inclusion of women in the security sector reform process, encouraging increased implementation of gender equality measures.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, according to Holvikivi, as a country rebuilds its security sector and attempts to regain trust from the population, the security sector “must be accountable to the entire population – including both women and men...and must be held accountable for violations of rights of citizens, including sexual and gender-based violence.”<sup>41</sup> Holvikivi advocates for equitable participation from both women and men in the reform process, claiming that will enable more efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, as Anderlini and Albrecht note, women are able to assist with community

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<sup>38</sup> Nina Wilen, “Examining the Links Between Security Sector Reform and Peacekeeping Troop Contribution in Post-conflict States,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 12, no. 1 (Feb 2018): 72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2018.1426680>.

<sup>39</sup> Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Camille Pampell Conaway, “Security Sector Reform” in *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action* (Women Waging Peace, 2007): 37, <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/101864251-Toolkit-for-Advocacy-and-Action.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> OECD DAC, “Section 9: Integrating Gender Awareness and Equality,” in *OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform* (Paris, France, 2009), [www.oecd.org/social/gender-development/42168607.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/social/gender-development/42168607.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Aiko Holvikivi, “What Role for the Security Sector? An SSR Approach to Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda,” *Connections* 14, no 3 (Summer 2015): 33, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26326407>

<sup>42</sup> Holvikivi, “What Role for the Security Sector? An SSR Approach to Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda,” 34.

policing to improve local security and help reduce crime.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, as Fakondo highlights, women can work through local community groups to raise awareness on violence and discrimination and to advocate for security measures to maintain communal order throughout the reform process.<sup>44</sup> Finally, addressing the needs of women in addition to men in the reform process helps widen the range of issues the security sector can encompass in the reform process, and gives additional perspectives to better develop effective strategies for long-term success.<sup>45</sup> According to Holvikivi, while this fact is widely acknowledged by scholars, it is not universally implemented in reform processes across the globe, due to both gender inequality and the fact that most security institutions historically “have been designed by and for men”.<sup>46</sup> In summary, the role of women in security sector reform, especially in countries recovering from internal or external conflict is a key consideration during the reform process and many scholars see the benefits in their inclusion.

#### **4. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Long-Term Planning**

Along with the development of local agency and direction for the security sector reform process, scholars consistently highlight the need for processes with an eye on long-term results rather than a quick solution without staying power. In this connection, Gordon urges that international donors and participants in the reform process must “embrace the complexity and longevity of peacebuilding endeavors, including SSR, and ensure those actors who engage locals at the community level are provided with the financial and political support required.”<sup>47</sup> As the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed

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<sup>43</sup> Anderlini and Conaway, “Security Sector Reform,” 37.

<sup>44</sup> Kadi K. Fakondo, “Involving Women in Community Policing,” *Peace, Security, and Development Update*, no. 3 (Mar 2008): 3, [http://www.ceipaz.org/images/contenido/CR\\_womeninsecurity.pdf](http://www.ceipaz.org/images/contenido/CR_womeninsecurity.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Peter Albrecht and Karen Barnes, “National Security Policy-Making and Gender,” *DCAF Gender and SSR Toolkit*, ed. Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008), [https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/GSSR%20Toolkit/EN\\_Tool%208.pdf](https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/GSSR%20Toolkit/EN_Tool%208.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Holvikivi, “What Role for the Security Sector? An SSR Approach to Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda,” 33.

<sup>47</sup> Gordon, “Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?” 142.



Forces (DCAF) mentions, failure to develop a long-term strategy and to be patient as reform slowly takes hold could leave policy-makers and individuals involved in the process disappointed with the lack of short-term results.<sup>48</sup> Sedra agrees, and notes that decades of conflict will not have a quick fix as power dynamics shift within a country during the security sector reform process, and the pressures of planning within a short timeline and desiring quantitative results can be the downfall of sustainable programming.<sup>49</sup> All in all, as Sedra notes, failing to allow time for the long-term reform process to take hold can be detrimental to countries recovering from conflict, as “given the potential of SSR processes to distort local power and political dynamics, half-hearted or prematurely concluded SSR interventions can do tremendous harm.”<sup>50</sup>

Scholars tend to agree on the long timelines for full security sector reforms, especially in countries recovering from conflict. Many of the ways DCAF measures security sector reforms all require years or decades of monitoring in order to determine the degree of success. These scholars posit that these measures of success include a reduction in violence, economic growth, public confidence in the security sector, improved professionalism, and local ownership of the security sector.<sup>51</sup> Abandoning plans because immediate progress is not evident in those categories could result in a loss of future stability. Scholars, including Sedra, Donais, and Piotukh see security sector reform as an evolutionary process, “in which state agencies ‘have the long-term capability and incentives to change in response to signals from society;’” the process is dynamic and will continually shift based on society’s developing needs.<sup>52</sup> Piotukh and Wilson emphasize the need for long term planning in order for countries to have a strategic outlook and ability to plan for different contingencies and scenarios that may come up throughout the reform

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<sup>48</sup> Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), “Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding,” *DCAF Background Paper* (May 2009): 7.

<sup>49</sup> Sedra, “Adapting Security Sector Reform to Ground-Level Realities: The Transition to a Second-Generation Model,” 56–57.

<sup>50</sup> Sedra, 57.

<sup>51</sup> Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), “Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding,” 7.

<sup>52</sup> Donais, “Security Sector Reform and the Challenge of Vertical Integration,” 41.

process to improve its chances for success.<sup>53</sup> Thus, academics stress the importance of addressing and fixing the “structural causes of insecurity,” a part of the overall longer-term process.<sup>54</sup> Where some scholars disagree, however, is the level of emphasis placed on immediate security over more long-term strategic interests. In this context, Sedra also advocates for international peacekeeping missions as a way to support nations undergoing post-conflict security sector reform, believing the peacekeeping forces can provide a security “buffer” while the nation devotes its own domestic resources to the more long-term, strategic plan.<sup>55</sup> Sedra further posits that alleviating that pressure from domestic security institutions will stop “the preoccupation with ‘hard security,’” and bringing in outside agents to cover the peacekeeping issue will provide enough stability for the state as it recovers from conflict and commits to structural change.<sup>56</sup> He explicitly does not see post-conflict reconstruction as a means to domestically address immediate security threats.<sup>57</sup>

## **5. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Security Provision and Human Rights**

Other scholars, such as Hanggi, instead call upon countries redesigning their security sectors after conflicts to prioritize the immediate provision of public security in order to maintain stability and instill confidence in the general population.<sup>58</sup> In post-conflict scenarios, Hanggi specifically recommends peace-building as the key reform objective, with security being the critical problem. He notes the abundance of small arms and possible remaining pockets of armed resistance as key issues.<sup>59</sup> Other scholars,

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<sup>53</sup> Volha Piotukh and Peter Wilson, “Security Sector Evolution: Understanding and Influencing How Security Institutions Change,” *LIBRA Advisory Group* (July 2009): 6, [www.libraadvisorygroup.com/assets/docs/SecuritySectorEvolutionLibraJuly2009.pdf](http://www.libraadvisorygroup.com/assets/docs/SecuritySectorEvolutionLibraJuly2009.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> Sedra, “Adapting Security Sector Reform to Ground-Level Realities: The Transition to a Second-Generation Model,” 55.

<sup>55</sup> Sedra, 55.

<sup>56</sup> Sedra, 55.

<sup>57</sup> Sedra, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Heiner Hanggi, “Conceptualizing Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction,” *Security Sector Reform Yearbook* (2004): 8.

<sup>59</sup> Hanggi, “Conceptualizing Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction,” 5.

Eleanor Gordon in particular, agree with Hanggi that security should be prioritized, especially in the short term, and note how that prioritization needs to be conveyed to any external actors involved in the security sector reform process.<sup>60</sup> Paul Jackson also iterates the need for providing immediate security in post-conflict environments in order to address the legacy of past conflict and create an environment able to support the reform process.<sup>61</sup> The best solution based on these two groups of ideas seems to be utilizing international actors for immediate peacekeeping and security provision, so the domestic government can prioritize and own the security sector reform process. This eliminates a slow turnover that can result from external actors driving the reform and the local government failing to accept the changes due to their lack of involvement in the process, as Law mentions.<sup>62</sup> It also allows the population to feel safe in the short-term period after civil conflict, while permitting the government to focus on developing a sustainable strategic plan for reform.

Another body of literature advocates for a special focus on addressing human rights violations, especially in countries restructuring their security sector after civil conflict. This is because, as Galletti and Wodzicki indicate, the violations were often committed by members of the security sector, so training is critical to ensure military, police, and intelligence forces do not continue those practices in the years after the conflict concludes.<sup>63</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki further reveal that as the members of the security sector typically still retain significant power during the reform process, it can be difficult to allow their full participation in the re-structuring while still holding them accountable.<sup>64</sup> Toward this end, multiple scholars, including Jackson, Galletti and Wodzicki, push for

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<sup>60</sup> Gordon, “Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?” 142.

<sup>61</sup> Paul Jackson, “SSR and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: the Armed Wing of State Building?” in *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (May 2009): 119–120, [http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1527/1/SSR\\_and\\_Post\\_conflict\\_%2D\\_Paul\\_Jackson.pdf](http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1527/1/SSR_and_Post_conflict_%2D_Paul_Jackson.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Law, “Security Sector (Re)Construction in Post-Conflict Settings,” 119–121.

<sup>63</sup> Nicholas Galletti and Michael Wodzicki, “Securing Human Rights: Shifting the Security Sector Reform Paradigm” in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, ed. Mark Sedra (Ontario, Canada: The Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), 287.

<sup>64</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki, “Securing Human Rights: Shifting the Security Sector Reform Paradigm,” 287.

disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) to assist with holding members of the security sector accountable, and also for use while vetting future positions within the security sector.<sup>65</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki point out the necessary adoption of military, police, and judicial reform programs and training in order to prevent future violations, and also urges for external oversight to ensure the security sector complies with human rights training throughout the reform.<sup>66</sup> While scholars recognize the complexity of taking a human rights approach to security sector reform in post-conflict countries, they agree on the importance of incorporating human rights awareness and training into security sector reform.<sup>67</sup> Along with holding members of the security sector accountable, academics also stress the importance that this focus on human rights within SSR also extends to ex-combatants who may have been in conflict with the state because of the need to find a way to re-integrate them into society. Sean McFate from the United States Institute of Peace explains how incorporating ex-combatants into the new security sector can help strengthen peace settlements by “fostering mutual trust between former enemies, encouraging further disarmament and transition to civilian life.”<sup>68</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki note, “the human rights approach would place ex-combatants, as well as the communities to which they return, as a vulnerable group worthy of special attention, notwithstanding the potential backlash that this would generate among people who did not take up arms and are just as poor.”<sup>69</sup> To sum up, this group of scholars agrees that finding this balance between protecting and reintegrating former combatants but also caring for non-combatants who suffered and endured hardships for the duration of conflict is a challenge in post-conflict security sector reform that is critical to address for the program’s longevity.

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<sup>65</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki, 287.

<sup>66</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki, 294–296.

<sup>67</sup> Schnabel and Ehrhardt, “Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Challenges and Problems of Security Sector Reform,” 2–7.

<sup>68</sup> Sean McFate, “The Link Between DDR and SSR in Conflict-Affected Countries,” U.S. Institute of Peace, last modified May 5, 2010, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2010/05/link-between-ddr-and-ssr-conflict-affected-countries>

<sup>69</sup> Galletti and Wodzicki, “Securing Human Rights: Shifting the Security Sector Reform Paradigm,” 295.

## 6. Critical Elements for Successful Security Sector Reform: Balancing External Intervention

A distinctive corpus of literature examines the role of external actors in the success of security sector reform programs. Certain scholars, such as Law and Schnabel, see the benefits of external assistance, especially in countries conducting reform after conflict, as long as external actors have a strategic plan and ability to execute (or support) it long-term, have the necessary leadership structures, are prepared to invest significant resources and manpower, and had a legitimate right to enter the country to support the reform process.<sup>70</sup> Schnabel also addresses core tasks for external actors involved in a country's security sector reform: ensuring the reform process and planning are on the right path towards success and ensuring the country has adequate resources and the proper training to sustain the reform process.<sup>71</sup> Wilen concurs, suggesting the support of external actors for oversight, accountability, and also to confirm all parts of the security sector undergo the reform process – not just one portion.<sup>72</sup>

Others, including Gordon, see external actors' involvement as a hinderance to the premise of local ownership, especially if their plans are not in line with local community priorities.<sup>73</sup> In this connection, in analyzing the role of the United States in providing external assistance to various countries undergoing security sector reform, Paul Jackson warns of the dangers of adopting a "one-size-fits-all" Western model for security sector reform, which can result in implementation failures or a lack of local ownership over carrying out the reform process.<sup>74</sup> Eckhard warns of the dangers of external actors implementing their own political agenda on the reform process, which can inhibit local ownership due to the potential lack of commonalities between the nation reforming and the

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<sup>70</sup> Law, "Conclusion: Security Sector (Re)Construction in Post-Conflict Settings," 112.

<sup>71</sup> Schnabel and Ehrhardt, "Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Challenges and Problems of Security Sector Reform," 9.

<sup>72</sup> Wilen, "Examining the Links Between Security Sector Reform and Peacekeeping Troop Contribution in Post-conflict States," 66.

<sup>73</sup> Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?" 133.

<sup>74</sup> Jackson, "SSR and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: the Armed Wing of State Building?," 119–120.

countries providing assistance.<sup>75</sup> Donais adds how external actors' participation can result in security sector reform appearing as "an exercise in...social engineering, in which outsiders 'teach' local counterparts how to construct and manage a Western-style security sector...local actors...are not so much agents of transformation themselves as objects to be transformed."<sup>76</sup> Of the scholars who maintain that the external influence obstructs successful SSR, a select group posit that using external actors to supplement short-term needs, such as security provision, is more widely supported than attempting to fold them into a long-term strategic plan.<sup>77</sup> Overall, the optimal solution based on scholars' reasoning seems to be to utilize external actors as an oversight and accountability mechanism, but to encourage and facilitate local ownership of the actual planning and implementation process to the highest degree possible.

## 7. Steps in Security Sector Reform

One major debate among scholars is what constitutes the required steps of security sector reform, and—within this context—how to maintain democratic civilian control over the armed forces. Edmunds discusses what institutions constitute the security sector (e.g., military, police, intelligence, guerilla forces) , how ambitious the reform process should attempt to be, and how to balance human security over state security.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, Edmunds advocates for a "holistic approach;" a reform approach that is democratic and in line with human rights protection and includes not only transforming the military, police, and intelligence agencies but also the "wider institutional complex," including legal regulatory framework and oversight.<sup>79</sup> He draws attention to four standards:

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<sup>75</sup> Steffen Eckhard, "The Challenges and Lessons Learned in Supporting Security Sector Reform," Global Public Policy Institute (June 2016), 9. [https://www.gppi.net/media/Eckhard\\_2016\\_Challenges\\_and\\_Lessons\\_of\\_SSR.pdf](https://www.gppi.net/media/Eckhard_2016_Challenges_and_Lessons_of_SSR.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Timothy Donais, "Inclusion or Exclusion? Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform," *Studies in Social Justice* 3, no. 1 (2009): 119, <https://journals.library.brocku.ca/index.php/SSJ/article/view/1027/997>.

<sup>77</sup> Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), "Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," 1.

<sup>78</sup> Timothy Edmunds, "Security Sector Reform," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2013), 50.

<sup>79</sup> Edmunds, "Security Sector Reform," 51.

1. Develop a clear institutional framework for providing security that includes all relevant actors and focuses on the vulnerable
2. Strengthen governance and oversight of security institutions
3. Build capable, professional, and accountable security forces open to dialogue with civil society organizations
4. Promote the sustainable delivery of justice and security<sup>80</sup>

Bruneau and Matei agree with this “collaborative approach,” between the different elements of the security sector.<sup>81</sup> They emphasize a broader idea of “a community whose members work together to achieve security,” and link these security efforts with democratization and the protection of human rights.<sup>82</sup> Bruneau and Matei examine the dimensions of control and effectiveness of the military, police, and intelligence agencies.<sup>83</sup> In their view, the requirements for democratic civilian control of the security institutions involve “institutional control mechanisms, oversight, and professional norms...[including] a clear legal basis, ministries of defense, [policy and budget] committees in parliament, national security councils, [and] also the media, NGOs, and think tanks.”<sup>84</sup> Their requirements for effectiveness fall into several categorical capabilities: fighting external and internal wars, combatting terrorism, confronting crime, providing humanitarian support, and carrying out peacekeeping operations.<sup>85</sup> Their conceptual framework of civil-military relations resembles Edmund’s SSR framework.

## 8. Conclusion

Based on the examination of multiple nations that have undergone democratization and security sector reform, scholars have outlined a number of aspects that have proven to be crucial to the programs’ ultimate success. As such, many academics agree that local ownership of the reform process is the key factor in the success of new security sectors,

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<sup>80</sup> Edmunds, 52.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei, “Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations,” *Democratization* 15, no. 5 (Dec 2008): 913, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340802362505>

<sup>82</sup> Bruneau and Matei, 913.

<sup>83</sup> Bruneau and Matei, 918.

<sup>84</sup> Bruneau and Matei, 916–917.

<sup>85</sup> Bruneau and Matei, 917.

and also emphasize the importance of developing a culturally relevant plan and model for each state's security sector reconstruction, ensuring there is not a western bias in the process. Scholars also agree that security sector reform is often a long-term process that has few or no short-term measurable results and policy-makers thus must be patient in waiting for their reform plan to fully take effect over the post-conflict years (or decades). Nevertheless, scholars differ on their views on how to initially attack short-term security sector goals. Indeed, many emphasize the provision of immediate security over focusing all resources on strategic goals especially in states recovering from civil war or other internal conflicts. Others see a role for external actors to provide security to the general population while the host nation focuses on long-term reform goals. Both sides acknowledge how providing a sense of security to the general population also brings an increased attention to human rights protection, which many scholars see as a more difficult part of the security sector reconstruction process as there were often human rights violations committed by members of the security sector prior to the reform, and they must reshape how society views their role.

### **C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS**

To develop a model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector, I hypothesize that Colombia's SSR should follow the frameworks proposed by Edmunds as well as Matei and Bruneau. Specifically, I posit the civilian elites in Colombia should strive for institutionalizing democratically accountable and transparent, as well as effective, security institutions—military, police, and intelligence agencies. Toward this end, I hypothesize that Colombia's security sector will need to place great emphasis on domestic ownership in order to be successful at ensuring long-term peace and stability within the country. Since the violent conflict has largely died down with the signing of the 2016 peace accords, currently there is likely less of a need for external sources of peacekeepers to provide internal security. However, external aid, as was given by the United States in Plan Colombia, would likely supplement Colombian efforts to design a revamped training program for the security sector. Furthermore, external support could assist with oversight of the reform process, ensuring adequate human rights training is given to all members of the security sector.



With many external actors concerned about Colombia's long-term stability, I hypothesize that it would be difficult to balance external influence on the security sector reform plan with a desire for a locally-developed agenda. External actors, especially the United States, may be too focused on achieving short-term results to increase regional stability in light of Venezuela's growing unrest, which could result in a reform without longevity. If external actors take too much control in the reform planning process or initial implementation, this could also result in Colombians failing to take ownership and maintain the measures put in place for reform.

Another possibility is for Colombia to look at ways to incorporate previous FARC members into the security sector. Successful integration of FARC members into the security sector would likely require extensive planning in order to ensure their acceptance, as well as adherence to the reform plan in place. This plan would likely take years to fully implement, and several additional years to measure in terms of sustained success based on decreasing levels of violence and human rights abuses in the country.

#### **D. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research project will involve the examination and analysis of theoretical studies on security sector reforms and empirical research (case studies to determine which aspects of previous reforms have been most effective and would lend themselves well to Colombia's post-conflict situation). The majority of the sources examined will be secondary sources examining how security sector reform has been successfully completed and maintained, but I will incorporate any primary sources on effective training or personal experiences with the planning process as able.

To better develop a model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector, two cases of security sector reform will be utilized: Sri Lanka and El Salvador. The case of Sri Lanka is key to study because it shared many key elements with Colombia: concerns with prior human rights violations during the civil conflict, a lack of security sector accountability,

and a need to incorporate radical groups into the political sphere.<sup>86</sup> Like Colombia, Sri Lanka endured decades of civil conflict that disrupted the economy and destabilized the nation. Sri Lanka is an especially useful case to examine because the reform process was an overall failure, mainly due to the political dynamics at the time of reform, and Colombia can learn from these missteps when implementing its own security sector reform.<sup>87</sup> It constitutes an estimating case, in accordance with John Gerring's case study selection logic: the two countries share a number of similar background factors, and can be used as an exploratory case to investigate what leads to successful and unsuccessful reforms.<sup>88</sup>

While El Salvador's reform process was praised as a success by many experts outside the country by the late 1990s, many within the country saw it as lacking due to a failure to eradicate crime groups that formed after the civil war ended.<sup>89</sup> Examining why El Salvador's reforms were initially successful but failed to manifest in long-term results can help Colombia avoid similar issues in its post-conflict process. El Salvador falls into the category of exploratory case, with similar background factors to Colombia and a similar immediate outcome as the one Colombia desires, but long-term results were less desirable.<sup>90</sup> By further examining how these countries restructured their military, intelligence, and police sectors after similar civil conflicts, conclusions can better be drawn as to how Colombia's needs would best be met based on successes and failures from these two cases. Measures of success for these case studies will include the areas the DCAF focuses on for quantifying security sector reform success: reductions of violence, economic

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<sup>86</sup> Eleanor Pavey and Chris Smith, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, ed. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for Control of Armed Forces, 2009), 189.

<sup>87</sup> Eleanor Pavey and Chris Smith, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 189–190.

<sup>88</sup> John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 41–55.

<sup>89</sup> Gaëlle Rivard Piche, "La Mano Dura: Lessons from El Salvador's Security Sector Reform," *Denver Dialogues*, May 31, 2016, <https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/05/31/la-mano-dura-lessons-from-el-salvadors-security-sector-reform/>.

<sup>90</sup> Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 66.

growth, improved professionalism, local ownership of the security sector, and public confidence.<sup>91</sup>

By examining Colombia's security sector's history and analyzing the sources of conflict as well as the country's current status several years after peacekeeping and cease-fire agreements have been signed, the country's individual needs for optimal security sector reform will be better understood. Incorporating those needs into theoretical approaches of successful and necessary practices for reform, with the case studies as further evidence to see how theoretical approaches and empirical research were effectively (or ineffectively) executed, will help design an ideal model for Colombia's security sector reform.

## **E. THESIS OVERVIEW**

This thesis will begin with an introduction to Colombia's security sector and civil conflict, and will summarize current scholarly views on security sector reform practices. The second chapter will detail Colombia's conflict resolution and provide an overview of the security sector in post-conflict Colombia. The third and fourth chapters will provide an overview of post-conflict security sector reform in El Salvador and Sri Lanka, respectively. The fifth chapter will provide a comparative analysis of the case studies, summarize findings, and provide recommendations for Colombia's security sector reform.

- I. Introduction and Literature Review
- II. Case Study: Colombia
- III. Case Study: El Salvador
- IV. Case Study: Sri Lanka
- V. Conclusion: Analysis, Findings and Recommendations

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<sup>91</sup> Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), "Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," 7.

## II. CASE STUDY: COLOMBIA

In order to best develop a model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector transformation, it is first necessary to understand the origins of the decades-long conflict between the government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a leftist guerrilla organization. This chapter will discuss the background of the conflict, Colombia's security sector and its role during the conflict, as well as initial reforms that have been made to the security sector since the peace agreements were signed.

### A. BACKGROUND – FARC AND CIVIL CONFLICT

Colombia was embroiled in conflicts throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century. The FARC's initial beginnings stemmed from conflicts over land reform between the Liberals (which the FARC initially broke off from) and Conservatives in Colombia in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>92</sup> Initial conflicts became more violent when the government began to supply the Conservatives with weapons, hoping this would help dissuade or eliminate opposition and would help maintain conservative political power; left-leaning peasants thus armed themselves and formed their own small army to defend themselves.<sup>93</sup> After several decades of military operations and minor conflicts, the left-leaning members retreated further into the jungles and foothills of the Andes, forming their own bases for refuge and ultimately coming together to found the FARC in 1964. In addition to the FARC, other guerilla opposition groups formed in Colombia in the 1960s: the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the People's Liberation Army (EPL), further adding to the conflict dividing Colombia.

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<sup>92</sup> Alfred Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History," North American Congress on Latin America, last modified September 25, 2007, <https://nacla.org/article/evolution-farc-guerrilla-groups-long-history>.

<sup>93</sup> Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History."

The FARC grew quickly during the 1970s and early 1980s, with their numbers skyrocketing from several hundred in 1970 to over 3,000 by 1982.<sup>94</sup> They adopted a hierarchical leadership structure with a centralized command, as well as training programs for new members.<sup>95</sup> To fund the group's existence, the FARC began embracing the profits of growing coca as well as gold mining, kidnapping, and extortion.<sup>96</sup> The FARC initially relied on kidnapping politicians and elites for income in the 1970s and 1980s, with kidnapping continuing until the early 2000s.<sup>97</sup> Later, the FARC focused finance efforts on coca, a hardy, high profit plant, by charging a "protection tax" to the farmers who grew it.<sup>98</sup> As profits grew, their numbers swelled, and the FARC's violence continued despite early attempts at peace negotiations by President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986).<sup>99</sup>

Opposing the FARC and other leftist groups were a series of right wing paramilitary groups, growing from government decrees and laws in the mid-1960s that provided "legal foundations for the creation of civil defense organizations through presidential order."<sup>100</sup> The paramilitary groups gradually expanded to become a military-like force, supported by right-wing politicians, wealthy ranchers and agribusinesses who used them as personal protection.<sup>101</sup> One of the most prominent right-wing paramilitary groups was the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, or United Self-Defenders of Colombia (AUC), which was a larger organization that included several regional paramilitaries. The AUC was

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<sup>94</sup> Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History."

<sup>95</sup> Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History."

<sup>96</sup> "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army," Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation, last modified August 15, 2015, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/89>

<sup>97</sup> Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation, "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army."

<sup>98</sup> John Otis, "The FARC and Colombia's Illegal Drug Trade," Wilson Center, last modified December 15, 2014, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-farc-and-colombias-illegal-drug-trade>

<sup>99</sup> Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation, "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army."

<sup>100</sup> Nazih Richani, "The Political Economy of Colombia's Protracted Civil War and the Crisis of the War System," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 21, no 2 (January 2001): 61, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/jcs/article/view/4267/4838>.

<sup>101</sup> Richani, "The Political Economy of Colombia's Protracted Civil War and the Crisis of the War System."

formed in 1997 by three brothers who had formerly served in Pablo Escobar's drug cartel, and originally formed to defend its territory for drug trafficking but evolved to combat the FARC and other leftist organizations.<sup>102</sup> Other paramilitary groups developed through funding from wealthy landowners and businessmen who needed their protection from the rebel groups. Despite being banned by 1990, paramilitary groups like the AUC in Colombia continued to grow due to a lack of oversight from the government and also in response to the sustained expansion of the FARC, dramatically adding to the civil conflict in Colombia.

## **B. PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND PLAN COLOMBIA**

Early negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC in the 1980s were largely unsuccessful due to a failure to re-integrate the FARC into society as a political party. It was not until 2012 under the Santos administration (2010-2018) that peace talks began to resume and make significant headway, partially due to President Álvaro Uribe's campaigns in the years prior. President Uribe (2002-2010) greatly increased the size of the Colombian military and led a campaign against the FARC and other guerrilla groups in Colombia, reducing FARC numbers by over half and launching military raids on members who held leadership roles within the group.<sup>103</sup> President Uribe also focused on targeting the FARC's income from drug trafficking: going after coca fields, laboratories, and actual drug smugglers.<sup>104</sup> As a result of Uribe's efforts, kidnappings dropped by eighty percent and homicides dropped by forty percent during his term.<sup>105</sup>

President Uribe was also key in finishing what his predecessor, President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002), had begun: a plan for peace in Colombia that involved aid and support from the United States. Plan Colombia involved economic, financial, military, human rights protection, social participation, counternarcotic, development, and peace

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<sup>102</sup> "AUC," Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation, accessed August 10, 2019, [https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/united-self-defense-forces-colombia#highlight\\_text\\_14359](https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/united-self-defense-forces-colombia#highlight_text_14359)

<sup>103</sup> Claire Felter and Danielle Renwick, "Colombia's Civil Conflict," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 11, 2017, <https://www.cfr.org/background/colombias-civil-conflict>

<sup>104</sup> Otis, "The FARC and Colombia's Illegal Drug Trade."

<sup>105</sup> Felter and Renwick, "Colombia's Civil Conflict."

strategies for Colombia, with a large portion of the money from the United States dedicated to the military and counternarcotic strategy pieces of the Plan.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately, Plan Colombia helped Colombia to invest over one billion dollars annually into their military component, with a focus on reducing cocaine production through aerial spraying of coca plantations.<sup>107</sup>

The Plan's efforts to eradicate coca as a source of income for many of the groups driving conflict within the country had mixed results. Despite aerial fumigation prompting an initial decrease in production from 2000 to 2003, the amount of coca grown remained fairly steady and even increased until around 2008 when manual eradication began to be used to a greater extent.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, Plan Colombia's financial support and President Uribe's campaign against the FARC both helped pave the way for peacemaking negotiations over the past decade.

With Plan Colombia in full swing, President Santos' 2012 peace talks involved discussions about the FARC's future political participation and re-integration into civilian life, as well as disarmament, reparations, and illegal crop eradication.<sup>109</sup> President Santos also pledged billions of dollars on development in rural areas to help develop economic alternatives to the drug trade.<sup>110</sup> In mid-2016, the Colombian government and FARC signed a cease-fire, and in September of the same year the FARC leader signed a peace agreement.<sup>111</sup> However, the peace treaty was short-lived: Colombians rejected it one week later in a nationwide referendum, claiming rebels were being treated with too much leniency, and should not be able to run for elected office as the treaty permitted. Overall, many Colombian citizens were divided over the peace agreements: some thought the

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<sup>106</sup> Jonathan Rosen, *The Losing War: Plan Colombia and Beyond* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2014), 23–41.

<sup>107</sup> Daniel Mejia, *Plan Colombia: An Analysis of Effectiveness and Costs* (Brookings, 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Mejia-Colombia-final-2.pdf>.

<sup>108</sup> Daniel Mejia, *Plan Colombia: An Analysis of Effectiveness and Costs*.

<sup>109</sup> Felter and Renwick, "Colombia's Civil Conflict."

<sup>110</sup> Felter and Renwick.

<sup>111</sup> Felter and Renwick.

FARC should be punished for the decades of conflict and the crime and unrest they contributed to in Colombia, while others understood the impossibility of fully reintegrating the FARC into society without some degree of amnesty.

An updated peace agreement was approved by Colombia's Congress in December 2016, better defining punishments for former FARC members and banning them from running for office in "former conflict zones."<sup>112</sup> Six months later, the FARC "formally ended existence as an armed group," although some dissidents of the group remained active and continued to fight Colombian armed forces in remote areas.<sup>113</sup> However, with the signing of the November 2016 peace agreement, the security sector of Colombia has already begun planning out reform efforts. The Colombian military has set out a plan to shift focus to defending democracy, combatting illegal drug trafficking, respecting the environment and conservation efforts, multinational cooperation, and supporting socioeconomic and cultural development and human rights protection.<sup>114</sup> Throughout 2017 and 2018, President Santos also held peace talks with the ELN, hoping for a similar outcome as the FARC agreements and striving to fully end civil conflict in Colombia.<sup>115</sup>

Instead of implementing a traditional model of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), the FARC sought transformation into a political party which would enable them to continue advocating for their causes through alternative, peaceful means.

### C. POST-CONFLICT CHALLENGES

The conflict resolution and peace settlement process between the Colombian government and the left-wing FARC is helping reduce civil conflict in Colombia and is expected to boost economic growth, but Colombia still has a number of residual issues

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<sup>112</sup> Felter and Renwick.

<sup>113</sup> "Colombia Profile – Timeline," BBC, August 8, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19390164>.

<sup>114</sup> Manuel Jose Bonett Locarno, "The Colombian Army in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," in *Role of Armed Forces in the Americas – Civil Military Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Donald E. Schulz, Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1998): 102–103, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=txu.059173006240908&view=1up&seq=7>.

<sup>115</sup> BBC, "Colombia Profile – Timeline."



arising from the decades of fighting. With the FARC no longer needing to pursue drug trafficking as a source of income, they left behind a large void in the country's drug network. Criminal groups, known as BACRIM or "bandas criminales," are rushing to fill the void and continue profiting from coca growth and trafficking in Colombia. These groups are made up of former mid-level leaders from paramilitary groups and while they may have lost some of the right-wing ideology, they are "driven instead by financial self-interest and the desire to monopolize Colombia's most profitable drug-trafficking routes."<sup>116</sup> One of the largest groups, with between 1,300 and 2,000 members, Los Urabenos, was formed from former paramilitary groups. It has both national and international influence: it works with Mexican drug traffickers to move drug products through Central and into North America.<sup>117</sup> According to Ince, the BACRIMs are concentrated in small parts of Colombian territory (about ten percent of the overall territory) but the groups sometimes compete for territory or positioning in the drug trafficking arena, contributing to further insecurity and conflict in the country.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to the instability caused by criminal bands in Colombia, previous FARC members who failed to disarm (or new members drawn to their ideology or tactics) have begun taking up residence in some of the more rural and isolated parts of the country, calling themselves the "new FARC."<sup>119</sup> These members do not wish to adhere to the cease-fire or peacekeeping agreements made with the Colombian government, and some blame the government for failing to bring health, education, and infrastructure improvements to the rural areas previously held by the FARC.<sup>120</sup> While their numbers are still much smaller than the FARC's were at its stronger points over the past two decades, Nicholas Casey and Federico Rios Escobar estimate there could still be close to 3,000 of

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<sup>116</sup> Matt Ince, "Filling the FARC-Shaped Void," *RUSI Journal* 158, no. 5 (October 2013): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2013.847708>

<sup>117</sup> Ince, "Filling the FARC-Shaped Void," 29.

<sup>118</sup> Ince, 29.

<sup>119</sup> Nicholas Casey and Federico Rios Escobar, "Colombia Struck a Peace Deal with the Guerrillas, but Many Return to Arms," *New York Times*, September 18, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/world/americas/colombia-farc-peace.html>

<sup>120</sup> Casey and Escobar, "Colombia Struck a Peace Deal with the Guerrillas, but Many Return to Arms."

these “dissident FARC fighters” – equal to approximately forty percent of the number in the group prior to the peace deal.<sup>121</sup> These numbers could grow if the government fails to implement the rural infrastructure reforms and expansions it promised as more and more isolated Colombians feel they need a way to get their voice heard and have their needs met.

A large challenge facing the Colombian government is the successful reintegration of former FARC members, to prevent dissident groups like the “new FARC” from forming and plunging the nation back into chaos. With the country divided over punishments for former FARC members in the peace settlements, Colombian presidents have worked to find a balanced way of politically integrating the former FARC members to keep them from feeling alienated and resorting to rebellion. Many of the former FARC members also need some form of protection from the government against threats of violence from former right-wing paramilitary groups who are not as quick to forgive and forget the decades of conflict.<sup>122</sup>

Ince argues that it is critical for the Colombian government to understand the dynamics of the FARC and how it interacts with criminal groups across the country. This would enable the government to assess the relative strength and potential power shifts of other groups looking to take over the FARC’s former territory after the FARC demobilizes.<sup>123</sup> Overall, Ince sees strong state institutions and investments in human capital as two of the most essential tasks for the Colombian government in order to ensure the country moves forward from the civil conflict and does not suffer a relapse.<sup>124</sup> With that comes finding employment opportunities and political roles for the prior FARC members as they are reoriented and reintroduced to Colombian society.

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<sup>121</sup> Casey and Escobar, “Colombia Struck a Peace Deal with the Guerrillas, but Many Return to Arms.”

<sup>122</sup> Ince, “Filling the FARC-Shaped Void,” 27–30.

<sup>123</sup> Ince, 29.

<sup>124</sup> Ince, 31.

## **D. COLOMBIA'S SECURITY SECTOR**

### **1. Introduction**

Colombia's police, military, and intelligence agencies were also active in fighting the insurgents, with their orders coming directly from the executive and lacking oversight from other branches of government.<sup>125</sup> Due to the FARC's tactics of hiding out in the mountains and jungles, the military and police struggled to eradicate them from the country, and did rely on support from paramilitary groups to also help target the insurgents. As the FARC's numbers swelled and they mounted increasing numbers of attacks, the Colombian police and military sacrificed accountability and human rights protections for rapid response and large-scale massacres in their attempts to combat the guerrillas.<sup>126</sup>

### **2. Intelligence**

The Colombian Intelligence Service, or SIC, was established in 1953 and later transitioned to become the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) in 1960, with an expanded mission set to include police missions (crime investigation, arrests, and maintaining public order).<sup>127</sup> Due to the decades of conflict, Colombian intelligence services typically had larger budgets and greater access to resources than other Latin American intelligence services as they were "anchored in the Colombian political system, rather than...an apolitical state agency."<sup>128</sup> Nonetheless, DAS was linked to paramilitary groups, using them as "hit squads" to murder political opposition and insurgents.<sup>129</sup> The AUC frequently carried out DAS (as well as Colombian military) requests to kill lists of academics, teachers, and trade unionists thought to be connected to or a part of the FARC,

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<sup>125</sup> "Colombia SSR Background," Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), September 14, 2018, <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library2/Country-Profiles/Colombia-SSR-Background-Note#Anchor7>.

<sup>126</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), "Colombia SSR Background."

<sup>127</sup> Russel G. Swenson and Alvaro Jose Venegas Gonzalez, "Intelligence and Democratization in Latin America," *Journal of Mediterranean and Balkan Intelligence* 7, no 1 (June 2016): 126, ISSN 2241-4991.

<sup>128</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, "Intelligence and Democratization in Latin America," 127.

<sup>129</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127-128.

according to Swenson and Venegas Gonzalez.<sup>130</sup> When discovered, this collusion between DAS and AUC greatly tarnished the agency's reputation and decreased public support for Colombia's intelligence and political leadership.

Further affecting DAS' credibility was a series of scandals during the Uribe administration. Despite efforts by the Colombian Ministry of Defense under President Álvaro Uribe to reduce the scope of DAS' activities and responsibilities in the mid-2000s and to limit them to intelligence and counter-intelligence roles aligned with political priorities, reports came out that DAS had been overseeing surveillance of the Uribe administration's political rivals.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, DAS had been monitoring Supreme Court justices under the pretense of "determining whether it [the Supreme Court] had been infiltrated by narcotraffickers."<sup>132</sup> DAS had become an organization more tied to supporting the presidency than the state, and its role in security remained murky and ill-defined. The DAS Director, Maria Pilar Hurtado, eventually resigned due to this series of scandals, and four other DAS directors eventually followed suit after similar accusations and allegations.<sup>133</sup> The organization continued to lose public support and legitimacy as an intelligence service, and it became evident more stringent guidance for the Colombian intelligence community was critical as the country recovered from civil conflict. Ultimately, as a response to the DAS spying scandals of the 2000s, President Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) dissolved DAS and replaced it with Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia (DNI), a smaller civilian organization focused on strategic intelligence instead of criminal investigations – with no police functions.<sup>134</sup>

### **3. Democratic Reforms of Intelligence**

Several Colombian Presidents attempted to develop intelligence reforms and improved oversight laws, beginning in the 1990s. President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998)

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<sup>130</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>131</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>132</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>133</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>134</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

re-organized the intelligence structure, creating the National Intelligence System (SINAI), intended to unify intelligence policy at the national level.<sup>135</sup> However, SINAI proved to be ineffective because the military and intelligence members rarely met to share information. More changes were made by President Pastrana in the late 1990s, including significant advances in intelligence collection, analysis, and training across the military and civilian intelligence organizations.<sup>136</sup> President Uribe created the Joint Intelligence Council (JIC) to unify intelligence organizations and outline specific organizational functions, but the series of DAS scandals during his presidency erased any progress the JIC may have made in collection and information sharing.<sup>137</sup>

Intelligence oversight was not largely implemented in Colombia as the intelligence organizations operated under the executive branch without checks in power from the other branches. The executive branch offered little guidance during the conflict to the intelligence sector, focused instead on protecting the president and finding and eradicating insurgents as quickly as possible: “the high organizational centrality of the President in the Colombian intelligence system and the resulting politicization of the main intelligence agencies undermines both the legitimacy and effectiveness of Colombian intelligence [...] the proximity between DAS and the President politicized it and focused its intelligence missions in the political survival of the President.”<sup>138</sup> The legislative and judicial branches typically only examined the intelligence agencies after corruption scandals were brought forward; they did little during the conflict to prevent the scandals from occurring.<sup>139</sup> Colombia’s media served as a form of limited external oversight, mostly focused on human

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<sup>135</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>136</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>137</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 127.

<sup>138</sup> Marco Cepik and Christiano Ambros, “Intelligence, Crisis, and Democracy: Institutional Punctuations in Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, and India,” *Intelligence and National Security* 29, no. 4 (July 2014): 539, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2014.915176>.

<sup>139</sup> Cepik and Ambros, “Intelligence, Crisis, and Democracy: Institutional Punctuations in Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, and India,” 539.

rights violations and bringing that information forward to the general population to help hold the intelligence agencies accountable.<sup>140</sup>

This lack of oversight was one of the largest root causes for many of the issues the Colombian intelligence sector faced during the later twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Colombian intelligence services primarily served the president and themselves – not the Ministry of Defense – with high degrees of autonomy.<sup>141</sup> Consequently, much of their mission was politicized and intelligence resources were devoted to monitoring political opponents of the President and promoting electoral fraud to ensure certain candidates were elected.<sup>142</sup> Finally, in the wake of several intelligence sector scandals surrounding election fraud and communications monitoring, President Uribe introduced new legal framework for reforming the intelligence sector in 2009. These limited roles and missions for intelligence operations, implemented an accountable intelligence budget, and included better procedures for information security.<sup>143</sup>

Further legislation, including Law 1621, enacted in 2013, helped Colombian intelligence to ensure the agencies' legitimacy, by addressing the intelligence agencies' authorities, responsibilities, and release criteria.<sup>144</sup> This oversight law helped refine and reform the focus and mission set of Colombian intelligence and aimed to eliminate their part in furthering the country's civil conflict by affiliating or colluding with paramilitary groups or committing violations of privacy and human rights. That same year, the Commission to Monitor the Activities of Intelligence and Counterintelligence was formed, and this congressional committee aimed to oversee the intelligence sector for human rights

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<sup>140</sup> Claudia Hillebrand, "The Role of News Media in Intelligence Oversight," *Intelligence and National Security*, 27, no. 5 (2012): 697–698, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2012.708521>.

<sup>141</sup> Thomas Bruneau, "The Military in Post-Conflict Societies: Lessons from Central America and Prospects for Colombia" in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peace Building*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Georg-Ehrhart (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 236, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=244166>

<sup>142</sup> Cepik and Ambros, "Intelligence, Crisis, and Democracy: Institutional Punctuations in Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, and India," 539.

<sup>143</sup> Cepik and Ambros, 539–540.

<sup>144</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, "Intelligence and Democratization in Latin America," 131–132.

violations, corruption, excesses, and ensuring they maintain their appropriate roles and missions.<sup>145</sup> This Commission could receive reports from Inspector Generals within national intelligence, military intelligence, and police intelligence.<sup>146</sup>

Despite this legal accomplishment, Colombia's intelligence agencies still face a number of issues that cloud their role in the security sector. In 2014, the head of military intelligence allowed unauthorized monitoring of government-FARC peace negotiations, resulting in his eventual relief from command.<sup>147</sup> Colombian intelligence is also still working to build its legitimacy and ability to provide security to increase the amount of human intelligence, or HUMINT, it can capitalize on. This would allow Colombian intelligence to better draw defectors or dissenters in to provide information with a promise of security after the intelligence is provided. While FARC deserters have proven to be a valuable source of intelligence for Colombian intelligence services, more is still needed to exploit this resource.

#### 4. Police

The police forces were created in 1891, to provide domestic security and law enforcement, but were often reorganized and restructured depending on the political party currently holding power.<sup>148</sup> Colombia's police forces have operated under the Ministry of Defense since 1953, and the Armed Services assumed many of the organization's leadership positions throughout the twentieth century, a period often tied to extreme violence in the country (referred to as *La Violencia*). Finally, in the 1990s, the police forces came to be fully led and managed by police officers that had been trained by other police officers – instead of by military officers.<sup>149</sup> Further separation between the police and military came in 1991 when a civilian was selected to lead the Ministry of Defense, and

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<sup>145</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), "Colombia SSR Background."

<sup>146</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, "Intelligence and Democratization in Latin America," 129.

<sup>147</sup> Swenson and Gonzalez, 148.

<sup>148</sup> J.C. Ruiz Vasquez, "Community Police in Colombian: An Idle Process," *Policing and Society* 22, no. 1 (November 2011): 43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2011.597855>.

<sup>149</sup> Vasquez, 44.

the police used their newfound organizational independence, larger budget, and increased personnel to enhance their role against the drug trafficking that had simultaneously begun to run rampant.<sup>150</sup>

With the police deeply involved in fighting drug trafficking in Colombia in the early 1990s, their numbers skyrocketed to seventy-six thousand members by 1992.<sup>151</sup> However, according to Gonzalez, much of this growth resulted in reduced training, lower standards for recruitment, and decreased oversight of the new police force members. Furthermore, despite their growing numbers, the police were ineffective: homicide rates quadrupled, corruption was rampant in the police force as it was often infiltrated by drug cartel members, and the police were heavily involved in human rights violations.<sup>152</sup> Public trust in the police was eroded due to their violence against innocent citizens, and their popularity further sank after a series of scandals including the link of a Chief of Police to drug cartels, and the rape and murder of a young girl at a police station.<sup>153</sup>

## **5. Democratic Reforms of the Police**

Popular distrust of the police force in Colombia has existed since their establishment in 1891.<sup>154</sup> Despite the corruption and human rights violations plaguing the police forces in Colombia, politicians were slow to bring about substantial democratic reforms of the police forces, instead focusing efforts on the drug war and civil conflict with the FARC – which often resulted in further funding to the police forces. Colombia’s revamped 1991 Constitution “extended legal jurisdiction to the police in relation to actions carried out in service, despite also stating that the National Police is a permanent armed body of a civil nature” and identified “external security and public order” as the armed

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<sup>150</sup> Vasquez, 44.

<sup>151</sup> Yanilda Gonzalez, “The Social Origins of Institutional Weakness and Change: Preferences, Power, and Police Reform in Latin America,” *World Politics* 71, no. 1 (2019): 70–72, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S004388711800014X>.

<sup>152</sup> Gonzalez, “The Social Origins of Institutional Weakness and Change: Preferences, Power, and Police Reform in Latin America,” 71.

<sup>153</sup> Vasquez, “Community Police in Colombian: an Idle Process,” 44.

<sup>154</sup> Vasquez, 43.



forces areas of focus, which did little to explicitly differentiate the roles of the police and military forces.<sup>155</sup> By 1999, through Plan Colombia, the Colombian police received over two billion dollars annually through United States' funding, allowing them to further widen their scope of efforts.<sup>156</sup> Police reform during the conflict was focused on improving coordination with the military forces and increasing the number of specialized units to combat drug trafficking.<sup>157</sup> President César Gaviria (1990-1994) introduced a system of civilian supervision and oversight of the police forces in 1993, but much of the early civilian leadership faced defiance from the higher ranking police officers and had little actual control over the police.<sup>158</sup>

With the signing of the peace agreements finally came the Police Reform Code in 2017, which kept the police forces as part of the Ministry of Defense but expanded their role to include enforcement for low-level offences and the regulation of informal businesses.<sup>159</sup> In addition, a specialized unit of three thousand police officers, the Police Unit for Peacebuilding, was established to monitor the progress of the peace agreements and demobilization and disarmament of combatants.<sup>160</sup>

## 6. Military

Colombia's military consists of an Army, Navy, and Air Force, and has seen a variety of conflicts since its establishment, including involvement in both World War II and the Korean War. Since Colombia's civil conflict has grown, the military's role,

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<sup>155</sup> Alejo Vargas Velasquez, "The Profile of the Colombian Armed Forces: a Result of the Struggle Against Guerrillas, Drug-Trafficking and Terrorism," in *Debating Civil Military Relations in Latin America*, ed. David R. Mares and Rafael Martinez (Eastborne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), 137.

<sup>156</sup> Gonzalez, "The Social Origins of Institutional Weakness and Change: Preferences, Power, and Police Reform in Latin America," 75–76.

<sup>157</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), "Colombia SSR Background."

<sup>158</sup> Juan Carlos Ruiz Vasquez, "Colombian Police Under Fire: Image, Corruption, Controls," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 36, no. 2 (May 2013): 412, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13639511311329769>.

<sup>159</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), "Colombia SSR Background."

<sup>160</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Governance International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), "Colombia SSR Background."

resources, and manpower have centered around counterinsurgency and halting drug trafficking in the country.

## 7. Democratic Reforms of the Armed Forces

Democratic reforms of the armed forces have attempted to bridge the gap between the armed forces and the civilian elites/society. Prior to the early 2000s when President Uribe was elected in Colombia, the civilians and military in government were largely separated: civilians handled economic and social policies, while the military was in charge of defense and security with little external oversight.<sup>161</sup> Similar to the police forces, the military was given increased funding and a greater scope of responsibility and autonomy as the civil conflict escalated, often resulting in the targeting of unarmed civilians as the Colombian military sought to eliminate insurgent elements.<sup>162</sup> Aviles writes of the Colombian military's use of the military court system to avoid convicting military officers of human rights violations, essentially covering up their wrongdoings of "the massacre of unarmed civilians, the development of paramilitary squads, the selective assassinations of individual political leaders, and...human rights crimes."<sup>163</sup>

President César Gaviria (1990-1994), attempted to put together a commission to address reform within the military and the military justice system and to increase civilian oversight and influence, but his commission was made almost entirely of military members who ultimately failed to enact any reforms.<sup>164</sup> His successor, President Ernesto Samper (1994-1998), pledged to prioritize the protection of human rights throughout his term, and created his own commission with equal civilian and military representation to address the military justice system and human rights violations.<sup>165</sup> While his initial plans and

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<sup>161</sup> Bruneau, "The Military in Post-Conflict Societies: Lessons from Central America and Prospects for Colombia," 235.

<sup>162</sup> William Aviles, *Global Capitalism, Democracy, and Civil-Military Relations in Colombia* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 49.

<sup>163</sup> Aviles, 94.

<sup>164</sup> Aviles, 98.

<sup>165</sup> Aviles, 100.

proposals seemed promising, Samper too failed to implement any real reforms and the military continued to operate with high levels of autonomy.

The United States' support of the Colombian military in the 1990s and early 2000s did little to decrease human rights violations. The United States "demand [ed] greater adherence of human rights while simultaneously supporting directly and indirectly central actors that perpetuated human rights violations. Even in those periods in which military aid was cut off from the Colombian armed forces because of human rights concerns, this duality was maintained."<sup>166</sup> Insufficient oversight of the military, both by the Colombian government and the United States, permitted the violations to continue. Furthermore, the Colombian military opposed signing any agreements with the United States that required their units to be "vetted for human rights violators" prior to receiving military aid and assistance, and defense ministers in Colombia were unable to convince the military to compromise until the dismissal of the then-commander of the armed forces, General Harold Bedoya, in 1997.<sup>167</sup>

President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) finally began increasing civilian control of the armed forces when he replaced each of the military's top generals, and his legacy continued when President Uribe developed a comprehensive Defense and Democratic Security Policy to give guidance to the military on their roles and missions.<sup>168</sup> Boraz notes how after years of military autonomy, the number of civilians knowledgeable about military strategy and capabilities is lacking in Colombia, and it will take time to build up a credible civilian knowledge base.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Prior to the signing of the cease-fire agreements, the Justice and Peace Law enabled many of the paramilitary groups, especially the violent AUC, to dismantle and disarm with

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<sup>166</sup> Aviles, 101.

<sup>167</sup> Aviles, 102.

<sup>168</sup> Steven C. Boraz, "Establishing Democratic Control of Intelligence in Colombia," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 19, no. 1 (October 2010): 94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850600500177168>.

promises of amnesty or reduced sentencing for cooperation, and no extradition for drug-related crimes.<sup>169</sup> The law was developed as part of President Uribe's 2003 plan to demobilize the violent paramilitary groups involved in Colombia's civil conflict, hoping it would be an initial step in the overall peace process and would lead to an end to human rights violations. While the demobilization and disarmament of the paramilitary groups did immediately lead to a reduction in homicides and displaced persons, the peace was short-lived as many of the former paramilitary members joined new criminal groups in the years following the Justice and Peace Law. By 2009 these groups were active in 246 municipalities in Colombia.<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, Colombian citizens thought many of the sentences for former paramilitary members were too lenient; they believed paramilitary members were not held accountable for their human rights violations in favor of a more rapid reintegration into society.<sup>171</sup> Arguably, a careful balance between effective reintegration and accountability for prior human rights violations may need to be reached as Colombia and its security sector address the demobilization of FARC members.

More popularly received was the National Commission on Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR), a part of the Justice and Peace Law that functions similar to a truth commission and guarantees victim rights to justice and reparations after civil conflict.<sup>172</sup> Colombia's CNRR includes government representatives, victim representatives, and independent representatives from civil society, but it has been slow to execute its mission due to a lack of funding and a lack of "a culture of reparation and reconciliation in Colombia."<sup>173</sup> However, its effective implementation could prove critical in the security sector reform process as the various human rights violations committed throughout the duration of the civil conflict are addressed.<sup>174</sup> For future reform efforts to be successfully

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<sup>169</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, "Limited Security Sector Reform in Colombia" in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, ed. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for Control of Armed Forces, 2009), 79.

<sup>170</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, "Limited Security Sector Reform in Colombia," 79–80.

<sup>171</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, 79.

<sup>172</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, 80.

<sup>173</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, 80.

<sup>174</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, 80.

implemented and sustained, the popular views of reparation and reconciliation may need to be reshaped as members across all sides of the conflict are held accountable for their actions.

Wolf Grabendorff addresses the lack of parliamentary oversight present in Colombia, describing this as a problem for the very limited security sector reform efforts of Colombia. Essentially, changes across Colombia's government may need to occur as the peace process and security sector reform occur, creating distinctions between civilians and military, control and supervision of the security sector, as well as accountability measures.<sup>175</sup> Believing in “the need to engage an external power in the process to guarantee the strengthening and modernizing of core security actors and advances in security management,” Grabendorff explains how historical and political conditions intrinsic to Colombia have and can be expected to continue to stunt security sector reform.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Rafael Grasa, “Construir Paz en Colombia: Reforma del Sector de Seguridad y Violencia Directa no Política,” *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals* no. 121 (April 2019): 168, <https://doi.org/10.24241/rcai.2019.121.1.157>.

<sup>176</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, “Limited Security Sector Reform in Colombia,” 83.

### III. CASE STUDY: EL SALVADOR

In order to best recommend a model for Colombia's security sector, it is useful to examine two case studies in order to analyze how their security sector reconstruction plans were successful and where they failed. El Salvador is a useful case to begin with because, like Colombia, a period of intense civil war resulted in human rights violations by both rebels and the government, and it was critical to both instill nationalism and unity across the population, and to rebuild trust in the government moving forward.

El Salvador was ravaged by over a decade of civil war between 1979 and 1992, initiated by a coup by the Revolutionary Government Junta (JRG) in response to President Carlos Humberto Romero's (1977-1979) repressive policies and the general loss of civil liberties.<sup>177</sup> The military junta sought to suppress leftist Salvadoran guerrillas, known as the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN). The civil war was a period of repression, human rights violations and terror for much of the population by the military and police forces seeking to root out the guerrillas and any of their supporters, and the reconstruction that followed demanded immense changes be made to the country's security sector. The United Nations was heavily involved in the reconstruction process as an oversight mechanism, which started in 1992 with the Chapultepec Peace Accords, but many of the reform processes have failed to have positive long-term results and led to a huge upsurge in crime and gang violence that continues to be prevalent today. Some scholars attribute these failures to the high amounts of external influence on both the civil conflict and the post-conflict reform process, blaming outside actors for shaping the country and failing to emphasize local ownership by the domestic government in the reconstruction efforts.

#### A. CIVIL WAR AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The beginning of El Salvador's civil war can be traced to a coup in 1979 when President Romero was removed from office and replaced by a military-civilian junta. The

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<sup>177</sup> Filip Filipov, *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Strategies and Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Sierra Leone* (Santiago, Chile: Cepal, United Nations, 2006), 27.

military actors overthrew the government with the intention of enacting a number of social and economic reforms.<sup>178</sup> However, the coup ignited a civil conflict between the leftist and rightist movements. On one side was President Duarte and the military, forming a political party known as the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), and on the other were guerrilla groups uniting to form the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN).<sup>179</sup> The FMLN, government, and many paramilitary groups (which came to be known as death squads due to their violent tactics) clashed throughout the 1980s, with civilians ending up largely in the cross-fire of these conflicts.<sup>180</sup> Thirty thousand people were reportedly killed by the right-wing death squads just in the early years of the conflict, from 1979–1981, and over seventy-five thousand were killed over the twelve-year civil war.<sup>181</sup><sup>182</sup> Human rights violations—including many massacres of civilians—were routine during the civil conflict as the Salvadoran military took a scorched earth approach, attempting to eradicate any support for the FMLN rebels by attacking peasants in rural areas.<sup>183</sup>

Against this background, the United States was fearful of El Salvador falling to Communism if the leftist FMLN was victorious; therefore, the U.S. government provided immense support to the government in the form of financial aid and military equipment.<sup>184</sup> Aware of the Salvadoran military’s human rights violations, some of the military equipment initially came with several conditions: the intense violence and repression needed to be denounced and stopped through improved command and control and the

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<sup>178</sup> Filipov, *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Strategies and Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Sierra Leone*, 27.

<sup>179</sup> Filipov, 27.

<sup>180</sup> Filipov, 27.

<sup>181</sup> “El Salvador Profile – Timeline,” BBC, May 16, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19402222>

<sup>182</sup> Raymond Bonner, “America’s Role in El Salvador’s Deterioration,” *The Atlantic*, January 20, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/trump-and-el-salvador/550955/>

<sup>183</sup> Filipov, *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Strategies and Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Sierra Leone*, 27–28.

<sup>184</sup> Walter C. Ludwig, “Influencing Clients in Counterinsurgency: U.S. Involvement in El Salvador’s Civil War, 1979–1992,” *International Security* 41, no 1 (Summer 2016): 112–114, <https://muse-jhu-edu.libproxy.nps.edu/article/628477>

replacement of abusive senior officers and military officers.<sup>185</sup> The Salvadoran military opposed these “reforms enforced by another country,” and ultimately ignored them.<sup>186</sup> This resulted in a multi-year cycle where the United States offered military aid under the condition that human rights were protected in El Salvador but ultimately put very little pressure on the Salvadoran government and failed to enforce the conditions.<sup>187</sup> Torn between the vicious human rights violations taking place but also fearing a Communist overthrow or economic disaster brought upon El Salvador by FMLN success, the United States government ultimately continued to provide support to the military government.<sup>188</sup> With this support, the military in El Salvador tripled in number to include fifty-six thousand members, assisted by U.S. military trainers who shared counterinsurgency tactics and instructions on how to operate the military equipment the U.S. had provided.<sup>189</sup>

The conflict intensified throughout the 1980s, with many civilians either caught in the crosshairs of each side’s aggressive offensives or displaced from their homes and villages and forced to relocate. In 1990, Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani (1989-1994) began negotiations with the FMLN and the UN, hoping to end military hostilities as FMLN offensives grew more aggressive.<sup>190</sup> Both sides signed a United Nations Agreement on Human Rights in 1990, but the fighting continued until the final peace agreement, mediated by the United Nations, was signed in 1992.

## **B. PEACE AGREEMENTS AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION**

The Chapultepec Peace Accords finally ended the civil war in El Salvador in 1992 when a cease-fire was signed between the FMLN and Salvadoran government. The peace accords aimed to restructure the nation’s security sector, re-integrate ex-combatants from

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<sup>185</sup> Ludwig, 114.

<sup>186</sup> Ludwig, 114.

<sup>187</sup> Ludwig, 115–118

<sup>188</sup> Ludwig, 119.

<sup>189</sup> Ludwig, 119.

<sup>190</sup> Graciana del Castillo, “Post Conflict Reconstruction and the Challenge to International Organizations: The Case of El Salvador,” *World Development* 29, no. 12 (2001): 1975.



both sides, and ultimately recognized the FMLN as a political party.<sup>191</sup> Agreements also permitted former FMLN members to join the new police forces, known as the Policía Nacional Civil (PNC), but restricted them from joining the Salvadoran military.<sup>192</sup> Crucially, as Negroponte outlines, the Salvadoran armed forces were also moved under civilian leadership in the Ministry of Defense, and paramilitary groups were disbanded. Furthermore, the agreements established a commission to investigate the wartime activities and potential transgressions of the military, and to vet current and future military members.<sup>193</sup> These agreements were established over the course of several meetings between FMLN and Salvadoran government members, but were ultimately drafted by the United Nations, and failed to specify the exact method for reintegrating the FMLN members into society or providing them with training, land, or credit.<sup>194</sup>

Like other countries undergoing post-conflict reconstruction, in the immediate aftermath of the conflict El Salvador was plagued by weak institutions, a lack of government transparency, and a devastated economy and infrastructure, which made it highly dependent upon external aid for recovery.<sup>195</sup> El Salvador's main post-conflict priorities, as included in the peace agreements, were infrastructure reconstruction, restoration of basic social services, attending to those affected by the conflict, reintegrating combatants, and fueling economic growth.<sup>196</sup> While the negotiating process had outlined a need for ex-combatant reintegration, there was no explicit plan in place in the final peace accords, yet it was clear this was a crucial step to ensure lasting peace and stability and to keep former FMLN members from taking up arms again against the government.

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<sup>191</sup> del Castillo, "Post Conflict Reconstruction and the Challenge to International Organizations: The Case of El Salvador," 1975.

<sup>192</sup> Diana Villiers Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2012), 125.

<sup>193</sup> Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador*, 126.

<sup>194</sup> Negroponte, 128–129.

<sup>195</sup> del Castillo, "Post Conflict Reconstruction and the Challenge to International Organizations: The Case of El Salvador," 1969.

<sup>196</sup> del Castillo, 1975.

With these priorities, El Salvador's reform process initially focused largely on economic measures as part of a larger framework known as the National Reconstruction Plan (NRP).<sup>197</sup> This two billion dollar plan hoped to address "the most immediate needs of the population hardest hit by the conflict [including] the development of former zones of conflict."<sup>198</sup> In this context, the Plan included provisions to transfer land to former combatants and FMLN members.<sup>199</sup> The NRP led to a six percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the first five years of its implementation (1992-1997), and resulted in significant reform in El Salvador's trade systems, fueling economic stability while the government focused on ensuring security and peace between civilians and former combatants.<sup>200</sup>

The NRP also re-structured the security sector to include the new civil police, now separate from the military and titled the National Civilian Police, or PNC.<sup>201</sup> The Salvadoran military was reduced and put under the Minister of Defense, a civilian or military member appointed by the President and overseen by the National Assembly.<sup>202</sup> The military was restricted from having a role in internal security in favor of the police, and the military's function was defined as "defense of national sovereignty and territory."<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, after the signing of the peace accords in 1992, legislation was developed to further the restructuring of the military and police forces, transferring screened members from the FMLN and former National Guard to the new police force with the process overseen by the Legislative Assembly.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> del Castillo, 1975.

<sup>198</sup> del Castillo, 1975.

<sup>199</sup> del Castillo, 1975.

<sup>200</sup> del Castillo, 1968.

<sup>201</sup> del Castillo, 1975.

<sup>202</sup> Margarita S. Studemeister, "Introduction," in *El Salvador: Implementation of the Peace Accords*, ed. Margarita S. Studemeister (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 6, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/pwks38.pdf>

<sup>203</sup> Sonja Wolf, "Policing Crime in El Salvador," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 45, no. 1 (2012): 44, <https://doi.org/10.1080.10714839.2012.11722114>

<sup>204</sup> Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador*, 135.

The former public security forces (National Guard, National Police, and Treasury Police) were all dissolved, and the PNC had strict rules for its new composition: only twenty percent of its forces could be former FMLN combatants, twenty percent could be former National Police, and the rest of the members were civilian.<sup>205</sup> For the police forces, a new doctrine was designed and implemented, with the emphasis on crime-fighting instead of counterinsurgency, and required human rights training.<sup>206</sup> Previously, the police had fallen under the military in the chain of command, and typically followed the military's lead. Under the new civilian leadership, a new police academy was founded to train new police officers, including ex-combatants joining the police forces.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, the new head of the National Police was to have no ties to the former security forces and could not belong to any political party.<sup>208</sup>

Despite these measures, Ellis and Berg explain how “constitutional oversight [of the military and law enforcement] has been largely absent resulting in a virtual abdication of civilian control of the military.”<sup>209</sup> The post-war reforms were short-lived and unable to supersede the military's long history of autonomy. In addition, while the peace accords did re-align the military under the Minister of Defense, no stipulation was set that the Minister of Defense be a civilian – so the idea of civilian-led military was not guaranteed.<sup>210</sup> There was also no designation for legislative control of military budgets or executive oversight of senior military officer promotions.<sup>211</sup> While the Salvadoran

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<sup>205</sup> William Stanley and Charles T. Call, “Building a New Civilian Police Force in El Salvador,” in *Rebuilding Societies After Civil War: Critical Roles for International Assistance*, ed. Krishna Kumar (Boulder, London: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1997), 109.

<sup>206</sup> Studemeister, “Introduction,” 6–7.

<sup>207</sup> Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador*, 134.

<sup>208</sup> Geoffrey Ellis and John Richard Berg, “Contrasting Security Structures in Central America: Security and Intelligence Reform in Nicaragua and El Salvador,” *Journal of Mediterranean and Balkan Intelligence* 7 no. 1 (June 2016): 100–101.

<sup>209</sup> Ellis and Berg, “Contrasting Security Structures in Central America: Security and Intelligence Reform in Nicaragua and El Salvador,” 100–101.

<sup>210</sup> A. Douglas Kincaid, “Demilitarization and Security in El Salvador and Guatemala: Convergences of Success and Crisis,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 44, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/166341>

<sup>211</sup> Kincaid, “Demilitarization and Security in El Salvador and Guatemala: Convergences of Success and Crisis,” 44.

military's role in domestic affairs was restructured, little was done to explicitly adjust military prerogatives and to confirm a fully civilian-led military.

El Salvador's Intelligence Service, which had a longstanding reputation as "a feared instrument of military power," was moved from military oversight to be directly under Presidential authority with National Assembly oversight.<sup>212</sup> The main national intelligence apparatus in El Salvador, the *Direccion Nacional Civil* (DNI) analyzes both foreign and domestic intelligence, and consists of several smaller, specialized units.<sup>213</sup> Military intelligence and police intelligence components also work within their respective organizations to aid in national security, and the Ministry of Defense facilitates information sharing between the various intelligence agencies.<sup>214</sup>

The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) was created as an oversight measure for the reform process, ensuring the military, judicial, and police reforms were carried out as planned.<sup>215</sup> Overall, the U.N.'s role was critical in the peace-building process as it helped mediate crises during the reform process, helped sectors of the government adhere to the peace accords, and assisted with institution-building.<sup>216</sup> Many Salvadoran citizens had lost confidence in the judicial system in the country after the years of conflict and human rights violations, and needed this external oversight to rebuild their trust in the country's institutions.<sup>217</sup> However, the UN and other external nations' involvement in overseeing the security sector reform ultimately contributed to a longer-term demise of the peace and reform process: they "did little to build Salvadoran capacity to promote, implement, or monitor reforms, and contributed to a lack of

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<sup>212</sup> Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador*, 129.

<sup>213</sup> "El Salvador, Intelligence and Security," Encyclopedia.com, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/politics/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/el-salvador-intelligence-and-security>.

<sup>214</sup> Thomas C. Bruneau and Richard B. Goetze, "Civilian-Military Relations in Latin America," *Military Review* 86, no. 5 (September 2006): 67–74.

<sup>215</sup> United Nations, *United Nations and El Salvador 1990–1995* (New York: United Nations, 1995), 20.

<sup>216</sup> Studemeister, "Introduction," 6–7.

<sup>217</sup> Studemeister, 7,

Salvadoran ‘ownership’ of the process.”<sup>218</sup> Under the UN, a large part of that security sector reform process within the peace agreement centered around the human rights violations that had occurred during the war, with required human rights training for the new branches and vetting for commanders. This was further seen in the Truth Commission, instituted to investigate human rights abuses that occurred during the conflict: it was constituted entirely of international members.<sup>219</sup> While the Truth Commission was able to provide higher impartiality as a result of its international makeup, it was not a “national process” that involved Salvadoran society.<sup>220</sup> Perhaps as a direct consequence, the Truth Commission and its successor, the Joint Group for the Investigation of Illegal Armed Groups, did little to stop the emergence of criminal groups, some of which grew out of the death squads of the civil war.<sup>221</sup>

The Truth Commission did make several recommendations throughout the reform process: investigations of the death squads, new criminal justice system legislation, the resignation of Supreme Court justices, and new measures to ensure the protection of human rights.<sup>222</sup> However, according to Johnstone, many of their recommendations were delayed or ignored: the Supreme Court denounced the recommendations, and the president at the time, President Cristiani, called for an amnesty for war crimes. Other recommendations were stalled by the legislative process as they required constitutional amendments.<sup>223</sup>

Furthermore, ONUSAL’s ability to verify implementation of different aspects of the Peace Accords was controversial. Many questioned if the military made adequate force reductions as required by the accords, and FMLN weapons caches were found in the years

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<sup>218</sup> Margaret Popkin, “Building the Rule of Law in Post-War El Salvador,” in *El Salvador: Implementation of the Peace Accords*, ed. Margarita S. Studemeister (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 10, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/pwks38.pdf>

<sup>219</sup> Popkin, “Building the Rule of Law in Post-War El Salvador,” 11.

<sup>220</sup> Popkin, 11.

<sup>221</sup> Popkin, 12.

<sup>222</sup> Ian Johnstone, “Rights and Reconciliation in El Salvador,” in *Keeping the Peace: Multidimensional UN Operations in Cambodia and El Salvador*, ed. Michael W. Doyle, Ian Johnstone, and Robert C. Orr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 322.

<sup>223</sup> Johnstone, 322–323.

following the peace agreements, despite ONUSAL verifying FMLN's demobilization and appropriate disarmament.<sup>224</sup> There was also a lack of synchronization between ONUSAL's Human Rights Division and the ONUSAL division overseeing police reform, resulting in an inability to properly investigate human rights abuses from the police and military, and further eroding public trust in parts of El Salvador's reshaped security sector.<sup>225</sup>

Due partially to these reforms, El Salvador's restructured police force proved incapable of handling the waves of crime that plagued the country after the civil war: little was done to limit the flow of weapons, no targeted crime prevention measures were implemented, and long-term education and occupational plans for prior combatants and criminals were poorly implemented.<sup>226</sup> One of the main reasons for this increased crime was an unsuccessful reintegration strategy for ex-combatants; many of the demobilized military and guerrilla forces were left unemployed and without a new, adjusted place in society.<sup>227</sup> Many feared the demobilized police, soldiers, and guerrillas would use their wartime training and weapons to transition into a new role as criminal actors; this ultimately was the case in certain parts of the country.<sup>228</sup> El Salvador's murder rate tripled in the years immediately following the peace accords: homicides increased from just over 3,200 annually in 1992 to over 9,000 annually in 1994.<sup>229</sup> Consequently, the military, recently removed from the domestic crime-fighting process, was brought back in to help with the provision of public security on what was planned to be a temporary basis in the

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<sup>224</sup> D.H. McCormick, "From Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding: Restructuring Military and Police Institutions in El Salvador," in *Keeping the Peace: Multidimensional UN Operations in Cambodia and El Salvador* ed. Michael W. Doyle, Ian Johnstone, and Robert C. Orr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 295.

<sup>225</sup> William Stanley and Robert Loosle, "El Salvador: The Civilian Police Component of Peace Operations," in *Policing the New World Disorder*, ed. Robert B. Oakley, Eliot M. Goldberg, and Michael J. Dziedzic (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1998), 117.

<sup>226</sup> Popkin, "Building the Rule of Law in Post-War El Salvador," 17–18.

<sup>227</sup> Popkin, 17–18.

<sup>228</sup> Stanley and Loosle, "El Salvador: The Civilian Police Component of Peace Operations," 117.

<sup>229</sup> William Stanley and Charles T. Call, "Building a New Civilian Police Force in El Salvador," in *Rebuilding Societies After Civil War: Critical Roles for International Assistance*, ed. Krishna Kumar (Boulder, London: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1997), 5.

mid-1990s.<sup>230</sup> Their role was sustained into the twenty-first century as Salvadoran political leaders took a hardline approach to crime and implemented *mano dura* (iron fist) policies – often leading to high levels of violence.<sup>231</sup> The military was unsuccessful at lowering crime rates, but public perception of the military and its involvement in crimefighting was positive despite continued human rights violations.<sup>232</sup> While El Salvador’s plan for post-conflict security sector reform initially delineated roles for the military and police and established human rights training and vetting processes for security officers, the forces’ roles ultimately became muddled as domestic crime rates climbed in the years following the civil conflict.

### C. CONCLUSION

The peace accords and reform process were successful in the conversion of the FMLN into a political party and the corresponding electoral reform processes, making way for a two-party system (consisting of FMLN and the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista, or ARENA), with some other smaller parties emerging sporadically.<sup>233</sup> While the overall reform was unsuccessful at fully reincorporating ex-combatants into society, they were at least able to maintain the FMLN’s role in politics, a long-standing request by the group throughout the conflict and peace process.

Nevertheless, a major issue still facing the security sector today in El Salvador is organized crime. While the peace agreements separated the roles of the military and police, recent administrations allowed the military to maintain a role in public security, resulting in reduced oversight of human rights abuses in favor of fighting crime.<sup>234</sup> Overall, El Salvador’s approach to combatting crime since the civil conflict has been to focus on a

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<sup>230</sup> Sonja Wolf, “Policing Crime in El Salvador,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 45, no. 1 (2012): 44, <https://doi.org/10.1080.10714839.2012.11722114>

<sup>231</sup> Wolf, “Policing Crime in El Salvador,” 44.

<sup>232</sup> Wolf, 44.

<sup>233</sup> Thomas Bruneau, “The Military in Post-Conflict Societies: Lessons from Central America and Prospects for Colombia” in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peace Building*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Georg-Ehrhart (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 231, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=244166>

<sup>234</sup> Wolf, “Policing Crime in El Salvador,” 54.

hard-line approach to finding and arresting criminals, and the security sector has failed to look for long-term solutions, including anti-crime education and training or finding ways to re-integrate reformed criminals (or prior combatants that may have turned to crime) into society.<sup>235</sup> Similarly, with the military consistently stepping in to cover the police force's deficiencies, the government has failed to invest in more effective law enforcement training or strategy development for its civil police force.<sup>236</sup>

Outside of police and military reform and institution-building, El Salvador's government was slow to invest in many public and social institutions after the conflict. The public health system underwent post-conflict reforms, but progress has been slow and poor quality of services resulted in many workers strikes, especially in rural areas.<sup>237</sup> The government is still working to improve education programs to boost literacy rates, as well as to develop juvenile delinquency programs to address the catastrophic crime levels, both of which are longer-term ventures without immediate results.<sup>238</sup>

In addition, El Salvador failed to undertake local ownership when planning and executing security sector reform, to ensure the domestic government sustains the plan and efforts put in place by any external monitors.<sup>239</sup> El Salvador's post-conflict reform process was, hence, largely run by external actors, especially the U.N., which made local takeover of the efforts difficult and likely contributed to some of the failures in the reform process. Furthermore, El Salvador failed to prioritize and enforce the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants, which in turn resulted in many ex-combatants becoming involved with crime. As crime rates rose in the country, the military and police's divided roles were once again made murky in favor of greater crime-fighting capabilities, and the initial attention given to correcting the war's human rights abuses was pushed aside.

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<sup>235</sup> Wolf, 54.

<sup>236</sup> Wolf, 54.

<sup>237</sup> Filipov, "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Strategies and Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, and Sierra Leone," 29.

<sup>238</sup> Filipov, 30.

<sup>239</sup> Eleanor Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?" *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 8, no. 2 (Aug 2014): 129–131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2014.930219>



These short-term solutions to fighting crime were insufficient, and El Salvador still requires long-term institutions, education, and training to eradicate crime that has grown in post-conflict years.

## IV. CASE STUDY: SRI LANKA

This chapter examines another case study where a country attempted to reform its security sector after civil conflict. Sri Lanka is faced with the challenge of reintegrating ex-combatants from a minority ethnic group back into society, and ensuring proper disarmament, demobilization, and security for them as they return to their homes. Furthermore, combatants on both sides committed egregious human rights violations on the civilian population throughout the duration of the conflict. Proper training and vetting of their police, military, and intelligence forces to prevent future violations is critical for the security sector to rebuild the trust of the general population and ensure long-term stability in Sri Lanka. Analyzing the case of Sri Lanka provides additional insight because the process has stalled, due partially to a lack of external oversight keeping the Sri Lankan government accountable of enacting the promised reforms.

### A. BACKGROUND ON THE CONFLICT

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict between the Tamils, a minority ethnic group that turned to insurgency, and the majority Sinhalese government lasted for over twenty-five years. It resulted in over seventy-five thousand deaths and a million displaced persons, until the government ultimately claimed victory in 2009. The violence began in the 1970s, when Tamils revolted after years of discrimination, including policies reducing their acceptance to universities, state-sponsored colonization of Tamil areas by Sinhalese peasants, and the banning of importation of Tamil-language media.<sup>240</sup> Furthermore, the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act gave the Sri Lankan government the right to arrest and imprison anyone "suspected of unlawful activity," leading to many human rights abuses against Tamils as the conflict waged on.<sup>241</sup> Tamil youth formed and mobilized militant groups, the most prominent of which came to be known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE),

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<sup>240</sup> Neil DeVotta, "Control Democracy, Institutional Decay, and the Quest for Eelam: Explaining Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 60, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2672284>.

<sup>241</sup> DeVotta, "Control Democracy, Institutional Decay, and the Quest for Eelam: Explaining Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," 63.

founded in 1976, with the ultimate goal of establishing their own state, Eelam, in the northern part of the country.<sup>242</sup>

Beginning in the late 1970s, the LTTE carried out assassinations against opposing political figures, and eventually transitioned to ambushes against military patrols and suicide bombing attacks by the early 1980s. Throughout the conflict, both the LTTE and the government reportedly attacked civilians in several massacres and counter-massacres in areas between their respective operational zones.<sup>243</sup>

The Indian government, specifically its intelligence service (Research and Analysis Wing, or RAW), initially provided military aid and financial support to the LTTE, fueling the group's rise.<sup>244</sup> However, as the violence escalated, India withdrew support and in 1987 pressured the Sri Lankan government to "concede a degree of political devolution to Tamil areas, and agreeing to the entry of Indian forces as guarantors of peace in the contested areas."<sup>245</sup> The guarantee was short-lived, and the conflict continued, with the Indian peacekeeping force departing by 1990 as the LTTE turned increasingly to acts of terrorism.<sup>246</sup>

## **B. THE PEACE PROCESS AND EARLY SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**

Initial cease-fire agreements brokered by Norway were signed in 2002, but only lasted a few years before fighting restarted, catalyzed by the assassination of Sri Lanka's foreign minister.<sup>247</sup> Once again, civilians were caught in the cross-fire: Tamil forces allegedly refused to allow civilians to leave areas where the LTTE was fighting the government, and the government indiscriminately shelled those civilian-inhabited

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<sup>242</sup> DeVotta, "Control Democracy, Institutional Decay, and the Quest for Eelam: Explaining Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," 63.

<sup>243</sup> Jonathan Spencer, *Sri Lanka: History and Roots of Conflict*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), 2.

<sup>244</sup> Spencer, 2.

<sup>245</sup> Spencer, 2.

<sup>246</sup> Jayshree Bajoria, "The Sri Lankan Conflict," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 18, 2009, <https://www.cfr.org/background/sri-lankan-conflict>.

<sup>247</sup> Bajoria.

areas.<sup>248</sup> Hundreds of thousands of civilians were displaced and many were killed by members of both sides of the conflict; both the government and LTTE have been accused of violating international laws of war.<sup>249</sup> While another peace agreement was not signed after the failed truces of 2002, the Sri Lankan government claimed to have effectively destroyed the LTTE's "conventional military capabilities" in May 2009, declaring an end to the conflict after a three-week campaign that also led to the death of the LTTE leader, Vellupillai Prabhakaran.<sup>250</sup>

With over twenty thousand civilians reportedly killed in the final three-week government campaign against the LTTE and hundreds of thousands more living in refugee camps, leaders from the United Nations visited Sri Lanka in late May 2009.<sup>251</sup> The U.N. sought to assess the country's humanitarian status and to urge Sri Lankan leadership to address both sides' grievances in order to develop a lasting solution for peace. In the report filed after their visit, the U.N. outlined concerns about the unknown numbers of LTTE soldiers and weapons remaining in Sri Lanka, fearing a quick restart to the fighting.<sup>252</sup> The report also detailed concerns about LTTE members living abroad that may return to Sri Lanka to reinvigorate the conflict, especially if some of the group's post-conflict needs and demands are not met.<sup>253</sup>

Overall, the largest issues to address for post-conflict reconstruction in Sri Lanka were the reintegration and protection of former combatants and LTTE supporters, the security and trust of the minority Tamil population (just under one fifth of Sri Lanka's total population), the accountability for human rights violations committed by each side in the conflict, and the sustained protection of displaced persons as a result of the conflict.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Bajoria.

<sup>249</sup> Bajoria.

<sup>250</sup> Bajoria.

<sup>251</sup> Security Council Report Staff, *Update Report Sri Lanka*, (New York: Security Council Report, 2009), [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Update%20Report%20June\\_Sri%20Lanka.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Update%20Report%20June_Sri%20Lanka.pdf)

<sup>252</sup> Security Council Report Staff.

<sup>253</sup> Security Council Report Staff.

<sup>254</sup> Security Council Report Staff.

Despite these challenging tasks, the Sri Lankan government declined U.N. assistance immediately following the conflict's resolution in 2009, instead choosing to address the reconstruction efforts domestically.<sup>255</sup>

Throughout the conflict, the Sinhala-dominated security forces were seen as oppressive, and typically received minimal training before being transferred to serve in Tamil areas.<sup>256</sup> Many members of the security forces were not educated on the Tamil grievances that had caused the conflict. Furthermore, they “had no experience of responding to conflict under normal [non-Emergency Regulation] conditions,” which afforded them significant autonomy in their operations and may have led to increased violence against the civilian population.<sup>257</sup> These alleged human rights violations against the larger Tamil civilian population in the areas of conflict needed to be addressed as a part of the larger reform process, and also displayed the need for increased training for future security forces so they were able to operate under peacetime conditions, without the provisions permitted by the conflict's Emergency Regulations.

In order for effective security sector reform to occur in Sri Lanka, oversight mechanisms are required across the government and the security sector. While the Sri Lankan constitution includes parliamentary oversight for the security sector, “the degree to which parliamentary mechanisms are used to oversee the security sector is marginal.”<sup>258</sup> Bastian also explains how the security forces of Sri Lanka are rarely scrutinized, even when making budgetary determinations or other parliamentary decisions for their operation – they are able to operate with minimal oversight. In addition, the judiciary branch required overhaul as the military had previously been able to overrule its decisions, so changes were necessary to re-assert judiciary authority to ensure a balance of power across the branches

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<sup>255</sup> Security Council Report Staff.

<sup>256</sup> Rosy Cave and N. Manoharan, “Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka” *South Asian Survey* 16, no. 2 (2009): 298.

<sup>257</sup> Cave and Manoharan, “Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka,” 298.

<sup>258</sup> Sunil Bastian, “Politics of Social Exclusion, State Reform and Security in Sri Lanka,” *IDS Bulletin* 40, no. 2 (March 2009): 92.

of government.<sup>259</sup> Legal provisions such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations and the Indemnity Act had permitted the executive branch to enforce laws without parliamentary approval and limited freedom of the press during the conflict, allegedly allowing for unjustified detentions, human rights violations, and a lack of overall oversight for the security sector.<sup>260</sup> These acts also provided immunity to members of the security sector, lowering public trust of the police and military. With the resolution of the conflict, changes were needed across the security sector and branches of government to ensure accountability and oversight.

After the signing of the 2002 peace agreements, the Prime Minister directed a review of the Sri Lankan military by a Defense Review Committee to examine the military leadership structure, overhaul government legislation regarding the armed forces, and review defense policy and force downsizing plans for the years following the civil war.<sup>261</sup> The Defense Review Committee's main recommendation was to give the role of Commander-in-Chief of the military to the prime minister, which was ultimately not carried out as the armed forces remained under the responsibility of the president.<sup>262</sup> As a number of NGOs began hosting their own SSR forums and seminars, the Defense Review Committee lost credibility because the media depicted the NGOs as intervening in and overtaking the process of national security policy.<sup>263</sup> Consequently, the Defense Review Committee failed to develop and implement its own long-term national security plan for Sri Lanka. Once the conflict resumed, the military was expanded by over 40,000 new members, creating an even larger force to contend with during the eventual security sector reform after the fighting ceased in 2009.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Eleanor Pavey and Chris Smith, "Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, ed. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for Control of Armed Forces, 2009), 201, <https://www.gpplatform.ch/sites/default/files/DCAF%20Yearbook%202009.pdf>

<sup>260</sup> Pavey and Smith, 201.

<sup>261</sup> Pavey and Smith, 196–197.

<sup>262</sup> Pavey and Smith, 197.

<sup>263</sup> Pavey and Smith, 197–198.

<sup>264</sup> Pavey and Smith, 198.

In addition to the creation of the Defense Review Committee, the Sri Lankan government sought to address the human rights violations occurring during the civil conflict. In 2000, the Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, which coordinated all human rights activities of the Sri Lankan army, was established.<sup>265</sup> Military members were required to attend human rights training and adhere to rules of engagement meant to reduce civilian casualties, but violations continued as the conflict waged on in favor of a quicker Sinhala victory.<sup>266</sup> The police followed suit in 2002 with the creation of the Police Human Rights Division, which worked with international human rights organizations and sought to enhance training and human rights knowledge for the police forces to decrease future human rights violations.<sup>267</sup> In addition, the National Police Commission was established in the same year to assume control of selection, promotion, transfer, and removal of police officers and to “investigate public complaints of any aggrieved person made against a Police Officer or the Police Service.”<sup>268</sup> Again, the Commission proved to be effective in name only as it often failed to carry out the promised investigations or disciplinary inquiries; another unsuccessful reform in Sri Lanka’s final decade of conflict.<sup>269</sup>

### **C. AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE: FURTHER SECURITY SECTOR REFORM EFFORTS**

After the 2009 cease-fire, the Sri Lankan military was largely responsible for reintegrating ex-combatants and helping displaced civilians return home. Sri Lankan military leaders were appointed to develop a rehabilitation program for ex-combatants, including vocational training. As part of the reintegration process, Sri Lanka’s military

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<sup>265</sup> Rosy Cave and N. Manoharan, “Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka,” *South Asian Survey* 16, no. 2 (2009): 299. 291–314

<sup>266</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 298.

<sup>267</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 300.

<sup>268</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 298–299.

<sup>269</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 299.

increased its presence in the Tamil-dominated northern parts of the country, using security provision to justify their footprint but angering many of the Tamils in the area.<sup>270</sup>

The election of Maithripala Sirisena in 2015 to the presidency paved the way for further reform efforts after several years of stagnation throughout the 2000s. Sirisena received support from ethnic groups across the country, including both Tamils and Sinhalese, after accusations of corruption were made against his predecessor.<sup>271</sup> As part of his campaign, Sirisena promised to carry out a number of political reforms and to investigate war crimes committed during the civil conflict.

President Sirisena began his tenure by working to release Tamil prisoners and requiring rehabilitation for the former prisoners before they were sent back to their homes.<sup>272</sup> However, many of the former detainees reportedly faced harassment from police and military leaders, and an improved process is still required to better re-integrate the Tamil prisoners back into society. The government is also taking measures to provide relief and justice to the families of twenty thousand disappeared Tamils, providing “interim relief” and “certificates of absence” to give legal rights to the families of the disappeared.<sup>273</sup> Nonetheless, investigations have failed to lead to arrests due to the government’s hesitation to implicate the police and military for their involvement with the disappeared. The International Crisis Group blames the slow pace of investigations and development of new policies on a lack of civilian control over the military, saying Sri Lanka needs “a coherent, politically savvy policy for comprehensive security sector reform, including the police and intelligence services. There is no sign that such a policy is even under development.”<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> “Sri Lanka’s Transition to Nowhere,” International Crisis Group, May 16, 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/286-sri-lanka-s-transition-nowhere>

<sup>271</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-30738671>

<sup>272</sup> “Sri Lanka: Jumpstarting the Reform Process,” International Crisis Group, May 18, 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/278-sri-lanka-jumpstarting-reform-process>

<sup>273</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>274</sup> International Crisis Group.



President Sirisena's government, despite promises to promote the peace process and increase stability in the country, has allowed the military to maintain their presence in the Tamil-populated northern and eastern parts of the country and has yet to find a way to curtail abuse against Tamils returning to their homes.<sup>275</sup> Even with the education and training practices implemented for the security sector prior to the conflict's end, the International Crisis Group reported "little knowledge in the military about transitional justice and no sustained attempt by senior civilians to win its support for institutional reform and accountability;" many reform efforts have failed to come to fruition.<sup>276</sup> Moreover, seeking to maintain political support from the military, the government and Sirisena have focused on reassuring the military of non-prosecution for actions during the war and have not emphasized human rights training for remaining military members.<sup>277</sup>

Constitutional reforms in Sri Lanka have also stalled: there was significant disagreement on how to best unite the ethnic groups while allowing a degree of self-rule to the Tamils in the north and east. However, after the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) investigation in 2015 found a "horrific level of violations and abuses," the Commissioner called for "a hybrid special court, integrating international judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and investigators," as well as multiple legal and institutional reforms.<sup>278</sup> This reform process included the necessary legal changes to prosecute for crimes against humanity as well as a constitutional measure for the conflict's political settlement, finally ending impunity for the military and police's war crimes during the conflict.<sup>279</sup> This resolution showed tremendous promise, and OHCHR experts visited Sri Lanka throughout 2016 to assist in developing plans for its implementation.<sup>280</sup> In spite of this involvement, the International Crisis Group noted the Sri Lankan government's lack of resources and backing for implementation of the process, doubting its ability to carry

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<sup>275</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>276</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>277</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>278</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>279</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>280</sup> International Crisis Group.

out the required reforms due to continued Sinhala nationalism and pro-military sentiment.<sup>281</sup>

U.N. committees made their recommendations for a plan to handle the security sector's human rights violation record during the conflict, but were met with resistance from the Sri Lankan government. The U.N. Committee Against Torture wrote of the Sri Lankan security sector's lack of accountability and continued use of torture, and advocated for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.<sup>282</sup> However, the U.N.'s recommendations were not implemented and the security sector was able to continue activities without undergoing further legal investigations.

Cave and Manoharan highlight the importance of Sri Lankan media in the country's post-conflict reconstruction and reform process, explaining how it can keep the public updated and serve as a feedback mechanism as the security sector reform process continues. "The media's capacity in providing accurate, reliable and timely information on reforms that are underway is crucial in highlighting the seriousness of the reforms process and spotting the inadequacies," and "facilitates the checks and balances on the three [branches] of government:" a valuable tool for the process.<sup>283</sup> However, despite it playing a critical role in Sri Lanka's security sector reform process, the country's media has faced some restrictions: Tamil newspapers that highlighted abuses by the security forces were shut down or censored and over a dozen journalists were killed for speaking out against the government and its policies during the conflict between 2006 and 2009.<sup>284</sup> In other cases, the media has been used as propaganda, with each side of the former conflict using their own media outlets to justify their position and voice concerns.<sup>285</sup> However, the media continues to be a way to inform the public about security sector reform processes and serves as a feedback mechanism to ensure reform efforts are properly carried out.

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<sup>281</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>282</sup> International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka's Transition to Nowhere."

<sup>283</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 305–306.

<sup>284</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 306.

<sup>285</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 306.

NGOs also helped with the reform process in Sri Lanka as the violence concluded, furthering the public's awareness of the country's progress and advocating for civil rights when the state violates them. Approximately four thousand NGOs are present in Sri Lanka, and have been involved in a range of roles throughout the security sector reform: providing legal assistance to human rights victims, advocating against certain laws, establishing seminars to educate the citizens about their rights, and publishing documents on human rights laws.<sup>286</sup> While the NGOs are capable of providing benefits for Sri Lankan citizens in the wake of the civil conflict, the Sri Lankan government has elected to monitor their funding and activities, occasionally shutting down some of the human rights protective activities the NGOs were previously performing.<sup>287</sup>

#### **D. ONGOING CHALLENGES TO THE REFORM PROCESS**

Sri Lanka's government has struggled to enact the promised reforms since the cease-fire. One issue lies in the judicial sector, which has a reputation of being weak and easily influenced by political pressure.<sup>288</sup> The courts lack the resources to conduct the investigations and trials for the substantial human rights abuses, and many of the judges (especially in higher courts) do not speak Tamil.<sup>289</sup> In addition, political interference and a lack of power has restricted the judicial branch in Sri Lanka from "checking the repressive character of the security sector:" there are few trials of security sector officials to hold them accountable for their actions during the conflict.<sup>290</sup> This perceived weakness of the judiciary, combined with the impunity afforded to security sector officials by the conflict's Emergency Regulations, has not allowed it to check the power of the security sector and influence the reform process. With the Prevention of Terrorism Act still in place almost a

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<sup>286</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 307.

<sup>287</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 307.

<sup>288</sup> Pavey and Smith, "Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 200.

<sup>289</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 301.

<sup>290</sup> Cave and Manoharan, 309.

decade after the conflict's end, the security sector's impunity is arguably high and accountability is low.<sup>291</sup>

Sri Lanka's executive branch has held the ultimate authority in the country, despite Parliament's supposed abilities to limit the executive's powers.<sup>292</sup> The president often makes unilateral decisions, including appointments to commissions, the civil service, judicial bodies, and human rights services; allocation of the defense budget; and declarations of states of emergency.<sup>293</sup> The legislative branch has little involvement in defense planning and policy, and many members of Parliament lack knowledge on matters related to defense.

Adding to the human rights violations and overall turmoil caused throughout the Sri Lankan conflict were the armed non-state groups – typically non-LTTE Tamil and Muslim groups the state sponsored as hit squads.<sup>294</sup> According to Cave and Manoharan, these groups were used to seize and hold territory and directly supported the Sinhala government's efforts. As of 2009, there were no efforts made by the government to incorporate these groups into the security sector reform process, and several of the groups still operate in certain parts of the country, making accountability and post-conflict reintegration a challenge.<sup>295</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Sri Lanka's security sector reform process is ongoing due to a consistent failure to implement the transitional justice mechanisms and to hold security forces accountable for human rights violations throughout the conflict. While the security sector of Sri Lanka is

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<sup>291</sup> "Locked Up Without Evidence," Human Rights Watch, last updated January 29, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/01/29/locked-without-evidence/abuses-under-sri-lankas-prevention-terrorism-act>

<sup>292</sup> Pavey and Smith, "Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 202.

<sup>293</sup> Pavey and Smith, "Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 202–203.

<sup>294</sup> Cave and Manoharan, "Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 301.

<sup>295</sup> Cave and Manoharan, "Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 301.

still needed in the country to support internal peacekeeping and stability, a framework is lacking to define their required strength, force distribution, and to outline their mission set now that the violence has concluded.<sup>296</sup> The continued existence of the Prevention of Terror Act also inhibits the reform process due to the unchecked power it gives the armed forces, no longer justified with the resolution of the conflict. The Sri Lankan military's sustained presence in the north, despite promises by President Sirisena to return the land to Tamils, has affected the region's economy and culture, resulting in protests and unrest from its majority-Tamil inhabitants.<sup>297</sup>

The government's shortcomings in the reform process may be due to a lack of organization and a clear command structure: much of the reform "task force" is made up of foreign ministry officials who also have other roles in government and no consistent international members have been brought in to advise long-term.<sup>298</sup> Due to the lack of progress and lack of accountability for human rights violators, many Sri Lankans have begun to doubt the abilities of the government to enact successful reforms and foster stability in the country. To ensure the success of the ongoing reform process, the government needs to regain the trust of the population and educate them on the critical reform measures and how those measures will be executed. The International Crisis Group recommends a strategy to establish civilian control over the military and a demilitarization of the Tamil-dominated north and east in order to permit the justice mechanisms to take hold while the security sector undergoes "longer-term democratic transformation."<sup>299</sup>

Efforts to rewrite the Sri Lankan Constitution have been underway since 2016, with the stated goal of increasing provincial power.<sup>300</sup> However, progress with the Constitution has also stalled, which some blame on a lack of external pressure and oversight.<sup>301</sup> Since

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<sup>296</sup> Pavey and Smith, "Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka," 206.

<sup>297</sup> International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka's Transition to Nowhere."

<sup>298</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>299</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>300</sup> International Crisis Group.

<sup>301</sup> International Crisis Group.

the reform process has begun, only the U.N. has provided limited oversight, but its inability to enforce policy recommendations has resulted in many ideas with very little implementation in the years since the conflict's end. Sri Lanka's lack of modified legislature to move the reform process forward has proven to be yet another roadblock for the country and its ethnic divisions.

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## **V. CONCLUSION: ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This thesis sought to identify possible a security sector reform model for post-conflict Colombia. Toward this end, it provided an overview of the conflict in Colombia as well as the current state of the security sector following the signing of peace accords. It also explored two case studies of countries (El Salvador and Sri Lanka) that attempted security sector reform after periods of civil conflict to identify what aspects of their reform plans were successful. This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the case studies, tests the hypothesis of the importance of domestic ownership balanced with external oversight on security sector reform in Colombia, examines the hypothesis of reintegrating former combatants into the security sector, and provides recommendations for a model for Colombia's security sector.

### **A. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

The three countries analyzed strived to reintegrate ex-combatants into military and civilian life while also undergoing a significant reshaping of their security sectors. Each country needed to shift the security sector's focus from civil war and counterinsurgency to maintaining stability, protecting human rights, and fighting domestic crime. Comparing the successes and failures in these countries' reforms may help develop a long-term model for Colombia. When examining the case studies, a comparative analysis was conducted on: the degree of external involvement versus local ownership of the security sector reform process, the level and effectiveness of oversight in the reform process, the reintegration of ex-combatants, and the process of force reduction and human rights training for the security sector.

#### **1. External Involvement vs. Local Ownership**

The three case studies reveal variances in the extent to which they allowed external involvement in their security sector reform processes. For example, external involvement was very prevalent in El Salvador's security sector reform process. The United Nations was the primary actor, with the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission in El



Salvador (ONUSAL) to oversee reconstruction, ensure the peace accords were adhered to, and to assist with the building of institutions.<sup>302</sup> The U.N. also investigated human rights abuses perpetrated by both sides during the conflict through the Truth Commission, an international (and theoretically impartial) organization designed to aid the reform process.<sup>303</sup> El Salvador's security sector reform was successful in the short-term with the addition of civilian leadership over the police, military, and intelligence and with the human rights abuses investigations facilitated by the United Nations. However, in the longer term many of these advances were abandoned due to a lack of local ownership of the reform process. Initiatives of the United Nations that could not be or were not properly enforced remained incomplete and Salvadorans were unable to take over implementing many of the reforms ONUSAL had begun. While the U.N. assisted in mediating crises during the initial post-conflict reconstruction process and provided oversight of police, military, and intelligence reforms, it ultimately did little to build Salvadorans' own abilities to implement and monitor the reforms.<sup>304</sup> Consequently, Salvadorans were not invested in ensuring the Truth Commission and its successors carried out the investigations and training they had been designed to implement, making the prescribed measures unsustainable. A lack of synchronization across the branches of Salvadoran government and within ONUSAL led to difficulties ensuring the force reductions and weapons seizures outlined in the peace accords were carried out, proving detrimental to El Salvador's long-term security.

Unlike El Salvador, Sri Lanka turned away U.N. assistance in 2009 when the conflict ended, planning to address and solve the conflict without external involvement.<sup>305</sup> Sri Lanka's decision to limit external involvement in the reform process contributed to certain still-unresolved aspects of reform. The government did not designate a clear command control leadership structure for the reform task force, and the leaders chosen to lead the charge were ill-trained and without sufficient time and resources to fully dedicate

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<sup>302</sup> Studemeister, "Introduction," 6–7.

<sup>303</sup> Popkin, "Building the Rule of Law in Post-War El Salvador," 11.

<sup>304</sup> Popkin, 10.

<sup>305</sup> Security Council Report, "Update Report: Sri Lanka."

to security sector reform. A lack of external oversight over the still majority-Sinhala government did little to foster trust among the general population in the post-conflict reconstruction process, and also resulted in slow progress to enact the promised reforms. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played a limited role in the early reconstruction process, providing legal assistance and education to citizens that had been victims of human rights violations. However, the Sri Lankan government imposed restrictions to their funding and activities, limiting the role the NGOs could play in the overall reform process.<sup>306</sup>

By contrast, Colombia has thus far developed and executed its own post-conflict agenda for reconstruction and reform. The establishment of the National Commission on Reparation and Reconciliation, a locally-managed commission with members from the government and civil society that provides human rights protections and reparations to victims of the civil conflict demonstrates Colombia's desire for local ownership of the reform and reconstruction. While the United States provided significant funding and military aid to Colombia throughout the conflict, Colombia has yet to solicit additional U.S. involvement in the reform process since the 2016 peace accords.<sup>307</sup>

## **2. Oversight**

All three countries struggled to develop and implement oversight mechanisms across the branches of government as part of their security sector reform processes. With regard to executive control and oversight in Colombia and Sri Lanka, there is a lack of civilian knowledge across the defense ministries on matters of national security and defense planning, which has spurred further military autonomy despite attempts to bring the militaries under civilian control.<sup>308</sup> In El Salvador, there is little legislative oversight of security sector operations, nor is the Minister of Defense consistently a civilian-held

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<sup>306</sup> Cave and Manoharan, “Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka,” 307.

<sup>307</sup> Paul J. Angelo, “Peace is Slipping Away in Colombia,” *Foreign Affairs*, last modified October 11, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2019-10-11/peace-slipping-away-colombia>

<sup>308</sup> Boraz, “Establishing Democratic Control of Intelligence in Colombia,” 94.

position.<sup>309</sup> Furthermore, all three countries lack parliamentary control over security sector budgets, promotions, and activities, so little can be done to check the prerogatives of the military, police, and intelligence forces. In El Salvador, ONUSAL was responsible for providing oversight of the security sector reform process as government institutions were rebuilt. However, many of their recommendations were ignored and oversight of the executive branch left with them.<sup>310</sup> Similarly, Sri Lanka's constitutional oversight mechanisms that grant the legislative and judicial branches a way to check the executive's power are rarely used: the armed forces have typically overruled the judicial system and made their own operational decisions without parliamentary approval.<sup>311</sup>

A helpful external oversight mechanism—in particular for Sri Lankan reform—has been the media, which was able to update the public on the reforms as they occurred and could also help highlight inadequacies. While some restrictions and censoring of the media in all three countries hindered the ability to provide robust feedback, it has still been a valuable tool for the public as reforms are attempted.

All in all, oversight across the branches of government has not been integrated into the security sector reform processes of any of the three countries, partially due to a lack of knowledge on security forces' policies and planning on the part of the civilians in each country's defense ministries. External oversight by the media has provided some relief for that problem, but has not been sufficient to balance the power and autonomy held by the security sectors in these countries.

### **3. Reintegration of Combatants**

Both El Salvador and Sri Lanka have failed to fully execute their reintegration plans for former combatants, while Colombia is still working to ensure former FARC members do not amass in rural areas to mount another insurgency. El Salvador was able to politically

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<sup>309</sup> Kincaid, "Demilitarization and Security in El Salvador and Guatemala: Convergences of Success and Crisis," 44.

<sup>310</sup> United Nations, *United Nations and El Salvador 1990–1995* (New York: United Nations, 1995), 20.

<sup>311</sup> Bastian, "Politics of Social Exclusion, State Reform and Security in Sri Lanka," 92.

integrate former insurgents: the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), became a left-wing political party after the signing of the 1992 peace accords, eventually winning over a third of Legislative Assembly seats by the 2000 elections.<sup>312</sup> This trend continued in the following years, despite some fractures within the FMLN political party as time went on. However, where El Salvador's newly redesigned security sector failed was in allowing for the growth of criminal groups due to a failure to properly reintegrate former combatants.

The lack of targeted crime prevention measures after the conflict, no long-term educational or occupational plans for ex-combatants, and insufficient oversight of the combatant disarmament process led to a dramatic increase in crime in El Salvador.<sup>313</sup> This in turn resulted in the abandonment of many of the long-term plans for police and military reform in favor of a knee-jerk response of fighting crime, and human rights violations returned as security forces worked to find and arrest criminals as quickly as possible.

Similarly, Sri Lanka began making headway with new efforts to release and rehabilitate Tamil prisoners with the election of President Sirisena in 2015, with promises to provide legal rights to families of the disappeared and the development of a plan for investigating said disappearances.<sup>314</sup> However, despite these reforms, all have been slow in their implementation and alternate plans for Tamil ex-combatants are still required for their protection and reintegration. Furthermore, the Sinhala-dominated military's sustained presence in the largely Tamil-inhabited north and northeast of the country, despite the conflict ending over ten years ago, has led to protests from the Tamils who were promised land when they returned home.<sup>315</sup>

Colombia's faces a similar reintegration challenge as it balances the safe return and rehabilitation training of combatants with a reduction in military forces in former conflict

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<sup>312</sup> Global Security, "Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)," accessed October 3, 2019, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/fmln.htm>

<sup>313</sup> Popkin, "Building the Rule of Law in Post-War El Salvador," 17–18.

<sup>314</sup> International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka: Jumpstarting the Reform Process," 16.

<sup>315</sup> International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka's Transition to Nowhere."

zones. Colombia already faces a growing problem from criminal groups that have arisen from former paramilitary members that fought in the civil conflict, a less serious version of what El Salvador experienced when it failed to reintegrate ex-combatants. All in all, developing a plan for the safe return of combatants to their villages, as well as providing plans for their employment – either as civilians or members of the security sector – is critical for avoiding surges of crime and further unrest.

#### **4. Force Reduction and Human Rights Training**

The three case studies reveal the difficulty in realigning the security sector with new mission sets after conflict and incorporating a new oversight and leadership structure. Each country made efforts to define the new missions for their police, military, and intelligence forces and attempted to emphasize human rights protections. For example, El Salvador reduced the size and strength of its military, introduced more oversight measures, and modified the military's role to focus on "defense of national sovereignty and territory."<sup>316</sup> A newly reorganized civil police force, which included former FMLN combatants and members of the pre-conflict security forces, was given the role of providing internal security and fighting crime. The intelligence sector was also redesigned to fall under the president instead of the military, installing civilian leadership and oversight.<sup>317</sup> Colombia also introduced new policies to more clearly delineate and restrict the roles of its police, military, and intelligence sectors, and has included human rights training across the security sector's initial mission policies.<sup>318</sup> However, according to Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Born, Colombia has focused its efforts on "modernizing security sector institutions instead of making them more accountable," which could undermine the security sector's long-term success.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Wolf, "Policing Crime in El Salvador," 44.

<sup>317</sup> Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador*, 129.

<sup>318</sup> Locarno, "The Colombian Army in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

<sup>319</sup> Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Born, *Security Sector Reform: Narrowing the Gap Between Theory and Practice*, (London: Ubiquity Press, 2011): 25.

Sri Lanka's attempt to focus on human rights and re-structure the mission sets of its security forces was initially promising with the introduction of the Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in late 2000, which assisted with human rights training for police forces as the conflict continued.<sup>320</sup> These efforts did help to initially boost civilian trust in the security sector, but human rights violations and civilian casualties continued as the conflict waged on. Thus, the laws and training were seen as ineffective in the long-term to many Sri Lankan civilians. The Sri Lankan military has a history of being politicized, and high-ranking politicians have been hesitant to hold military members accountable for any war crimes. To sum up, El Salvador was significantly more successful than Sri Lanka and Colombia in carrying out armed forces reforms to reorganize its security sector's force distribution and missions set.

## **B. HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND FINDINGS**

Overall, literature pointed to the importance of local ownership for successful security sector reform, with many scholars agreeing that the local population must be engaged in the planning process, simultaneously re-building their relationship with and increasing trust in the government.<sup>321</sup> In line with this argument, there is also a consensus among a number of scholars that reform programs need to be culturally relevant, and cannot be too radical of a departure from how citizens typically view their leadership structure.<sup>322</sup> Especially in cases like Colombia, where the country has been affected by decades of conflict, scholars also outline the need for a long-term, sustainable strategy for security sector reconstruction; results may not be immediate. Where scholars differ in opinion is the provision of immediate post-conflict security, with some seeing this as a role for international peacekeeping missions to alleviate the strain on domestic security forces focused on internal reform.

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<sup>320</sup> Cave and Manoharan, “Resistance to Reform; Submission to Status Quo: Security Sector Reform in Sri Lanka,” 299.

<sup>321</sup> Gordon, “Security Sector Reform, Statebuilding and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?” 129.

<sup>322</sup> Westerman, “Too Much Western Bias? The Need for a More Culturally Adaptable Approach to Security Sector Reform,” 276–286.

I originally hypothesized Colombia's security sector reform should follow Timothy Edmunds' framework, striving for democratically accountable and transparent security institutions. I hypothesized that Colombia will need to emphasize domestic ownership of the security sector reform process, with external oversight to ensure the plan is implemented. I also hypothesized integration of FARC members into the security sector could be a long-term plan for Colombia, but would likely take years to fully implement.

Based on the lessons learned from the case studies, my initial hypothesis of Colombia having a locally owned plan remains valid, with the caveat that sustained external oversight may be necessary to ensure the government carries out its promised reforms. External oversight could avoid the issues in Sri Lanka, where the government's lack of oversight has resulted in very few of the promised reforms being implemented, and also could solve the problems El Salvador faced regarding an inability to sustain reforms once the external party departed the country.

Finally, in line with my hypothesis, the implementation of ex-combatants into the security sector could be a long-term process but may have a number of benefits, as shown by the outcomes of the other case studies. Allowing former FARC members to serve in the Colombian military, police, and intelligence sectors could help avoid their turn to criminal behavior, as was the case with many ex-combatants in El Salvador that failed to re-integrate. It may also pave the way for unity across the formerly divided country.

**C. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COLOMBIAN POLICY-MAKERS, INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND MEDIA**

In line with the findings, Colombia's course of action could follow Timothy Edmunds' four steps to security sector reform. It may be key for Colombia to strike a balance between local ownership of reform planning and execution and external oversight of the reform process to ensure the plan is carried out and power is balanced across the security sector and branches of government. One way to implement this may be through the proper execution of Timothy Edmunds' steps to security reform success, as follows.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Edmunds, "Security Sector Reform," 52.

1. **Develop a clear institutional framework for providing security that includes all relevant actors and focuses on the vulnerable**
  - (i) An initial security sector reform plan should be developed by a panel of internal and external actors. This plan can include the roles and missions of the military, police, and intelligence forces and will outline the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process for ex-combatants.
  - (ii) The panel could have a majority of Colombian officials and a minority of external partners, consisting of United Nations members for their perceived impartiality; United States members for their prior involvement in Plan Colombia; and other South and Central American leadership members for their vested interest in regional and continental peace and stability. This could enable Colombia to develop a culturally relevant plan with domestic ownership throughout implementation with external nations and multinational organizations overseeing adherence to the plan and its prescribed timeline. Panel members could also serve as an oversight mechanism through continued feedback, meetings, and observances of the plan's implementation and progress.
  - (iii) A peacekeeping force stationed in Colombia could augment Colombian security forces to provide short-term, immediate security for the people of Colombia as security sector reform and post-conflict reconstruction begin. This peacekeeping force could consist of international members, as designated by the United Nations.
    - This security force could provide for the safety of ex-combatants returning to their former (or new) communities and may also help provide stability in areas destroyed or disrupted by the civil conflict.



- External augmentation could allow Colombian security forces to immediately dedicate time and resources to human rights training and mission training for their post-conflict new roles.
- The general population's eroded trust for Colombian security forces could be slowly rebuilt as external peacekeeping forces initially maintained security and ensured the protection of human rights.

(iv) The DDR aspect of the plan for former FARC and paramilitary members may need to incentivize weapons turn-in to the government to better guarantee compliance by ex-combatants. This process, run by the security sector, should also include a degree of external oversight to ensure the safety of ex-combatants.

- The National Police already has a plan to include former FARC members in its ranks, and there will need to be monitoring by members of the security sector and external organizations to ensure ex-combatants are protected for the first several years following their return to society, and that they are not discriminated against when applying for jobs or training opportunities.
- Effective DDR could reduce the risk of crime and the expansion of criminal groups (*Bandas Criminales* or BACRIM) in Colombia if ex-combatants have training and professional opportunities.

## **2. Strengthen governance and oversight of security institutions**

- (i) While external oversight to ensure Colombia's security sector reform runs smoothly may aid in the short-term, a system of checks and balances within the government and security sector should be established and upheld for sustained program success.

- The intelligence sector, under civilian rule due to its position under the President, has already established an intelligence board to fuse intelligence sources and ensure communication across the different agencies and directorates.
- Inspector generals and a Congressional Oversight Committee monitor intelligence activities but can build their effectiveness through increased intelligence training so they are more aware of current operations.
- Increased intelligence training across the legislative branch can build civilian knowledge and interest, encouraging increased communication and feedback between legislators and intelligence professionals.
- With the police and military both falling under the Ministry of Defense, civilian oversight could be guaranteed by only allowing civilians to hold the top position of Minister of Defense.

(ii) Colombia should promote freedom of the press; the media can serve as an additional feedback mechanism and external oversight as the reform process occurs.

**3. Build capable, professional, and accountable security forces open to dialogue with civil society organizations**

(i) The police, military, and intelligence forces of Colombia should dedicate a significant portion of their manpower and resources to internal training focused on their new post-conflict mission set, with an emphasis on human rights protections.

- (ii) After their allotted time in country, the external peacekeepers could be phased out in favor of the re-trained Colombian security sector who could assume the role of ensuring domestic stability and security.
- (iii) Within the Ministry of Defense, civilians overseeing the police and military can receive increased strategy and planning training so they are aware of each department's new roles and missions. This training should increase civilians' abilities to advise military and police leadership on government plans, policies, and procedures.
- (iv) External oversight from the SSR panel can help ensure the security sector is adhering to its new mission focused on the provision of domestic security and human rights protections.

**4. Promote the sustainable delivery of justice and security<sup>324</sup>**

- (i) The Colombian government can work to develop a long-term plan for dedicating resources and specialized training for the police forces to suppress any remaining pockets of FARC members or BACRIM groups and to help prevent the growth of domestic crime.
- (ii) With the military focused on external security, this can largely be a responsibility of the National Police, although specialized military units could be designated for supplemental support.
- (iii) An emphasis on urban environment operations should occur in training for the National Police.

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<sup>324</sup> Edmunds, 52.

- (iv) Simultaneously, the government should establish a long-term plan for improving rural infrastructure and addressing the grievances of former FARC members and civilians in those areas.
- (v) The FARC has long hoped to establish itself as a political party in Colombia, and officially did so after the peace agreements were signed as the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común, or Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (still abbreviated in Colombia as FARC).<sup>325</sup> It can now represent the needs and policy goals of former combatants and supporters in a legal setting, which should discourage future armed combat as a way of making its needs known.

#### **D. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This thesis used existing theoretical framework and empirical research on how various countries have restructured their security sectors after internal conflict in order to develop a model for Colombia's post-conflict security sector. Further research can be done on the long-term effects of Colombia's SSR decisions in the years following the signing of the peace accords to see what measures have proven successful in maintaining democratic oversight of the security sector as well as national stability. In addition, the Colombian DDR process can be more closely examined to examine the ideal reintegration program for ex-combatants on both sides of the civil conflict. Seeing what type of education and training best helps former combatants peacefully re-integrate into society could help countries undergoing security sector reform avoid the outbreak of crime after periods of civil conflict.

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<sup>325</sup> Angela Barajas, "Colombia's FARC Unveils New Political Party," CNN, last modified August 31, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/31/americas/colombia-farc-new-political-party/index.html>

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