The Future of UN Peacekeeping:
Lessons from Security Sector Governance and Reform

**Issued by the co-organisers
at the conclusion of the informal side event to the Peacekeeping Ministerial[1]**

On 13 May, policymakers, practitioners, and experts met in Berlin for an informal side event on "The Future of Peacekeeping: Lessons from Security Sector Governance and Reform" organised by DCAF, UN OROLSI and IPI and with the support of Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The meeting generated the following key messages and calls for action:

Why Security Sector Governance and Reform is vital for peace operations

Security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) must be recognized as a core pillar of any mission's exit strategy, as the long-term success of peace operations depends on the ability of national security institutions to effectively and accountably assume their responsibilities. This requires an early and sustained focus on building the foundations for the good governance of the security sector in support of key peace operation priorities, including the protection of civilians, stabilization, the restoration and extension of state authority, and political processes. Both the United Nations Security Council (S/RES/2553) and the General Assembly (A/77/19) have underscored the critical importance of SSG/R in peacekeeping mandates.

Call to Action

We call on the upcoming Peacekeeping Ministerial to underline the importance of Security Sector Governance and Reform in both its proceedings and recommendations. Strengthening the effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of national security institutions must remain a key priority for peace operations given the preventive and transformative impact of inclusive and people-centered security sector governance.

Insights from SSG/R for shaping the future of peace operations: Recommendations for the Peacekeeping Ministerial

The following recommendations align with key themes from the Peacekeeping Ministerial concept note and are integral to discussions on enhancing the future of peace operations.

1. **Responsive, adaptable and adequately mandated missions:** To enhance the agility and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, modular approaches—such as those proposed in the UN Department of Peace Operations study *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities* —offer valuable opportunities. However, there is a risk of fragmentation if cross-cutting issues such as SSG/R are treated as stand-alone activities. To be effective, any small, specialized deployment must be embedded within a broader political strategy and be able to draw on the full spectrum of expertise and tools required—even if those fall outside the scope of the

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[1] This document summarizes the key recommendations identified during the side event and does not necessarily reflect the official views of the participating organizations, Member States, or their representatives.

initial model. Moreover, it is recommended that <u>modular approaches be sub-nationally tailored, potentially involving dual mandates to address distinct challenges within a country.</u>

2. **Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention:** <u>To advance integration between peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention, peacekeeping strategies should be grounded in a comprehensive analysis of drivers of conflict and violence,</u> including security sector-related drivers. In relevant contexts, national prevention strategies could address key risk factors for violence and serve as a foundation for mandate design and adaptation. Political support from the mission leadership is essential in driving nationally led and politically informed SSG/R. The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund should continue providing timely, catalytic, and risk-tolerant funding for peace-positive SSG/R programmes.

3. **Protection of Civilians:** <u>To enhance the protection of civilians and community engagement, SSG/R should be consistently considered an integral component of the protection of civilians (POC) mandates.</u> Even in contexts where the national security sector is a threat to large parts of the population, the mission's eventual exit will necessitate a handover of protection responsibilities to that security sector. That is why the Council should incorporate strengthening the integrity, effectiveness and accountability of security sectors in PoC mandates.

4. **Proactive transition planning:** <u>To ensure effective and sustainable transitions, strengthening national capacities for reform leadership should be a core objective from the outset of a mission.</u> The sustainability of SSG/R hinges on a nationally governed security architecture that is maintained and sustainably financed once the mission withdraws. A review of SSR mandates highlights the need for greater emphasis on capacity-building that empowers national actors to lead, coordinate, implement, and oversee their own inclusive security sector reform processes.[2] Integrating SSG/R into national development plans backed by integrated financing frameworks is key to sustaining peace post transition. Peace operations and UN country teams should also develop and periodically update integrated SSR support plans and strengthen UN-wide coordination mechanisms, in line with the spirit of S/RES/2151.

5. **Strengthen United Nations leadership engagement:** Effective and inclusive security sector governance is a sensitive and inherently political process. It requires sustained, trust-based engagement by senior United Nations leaders to guide national counterparts in building people-centered security institutions. To this end, the Security Council has tasked the Secretary-General's Special Representatives, Special Envoys and UN Resident Coordinators "to fully take into account the strategic value of security sector reform (SSR) in their work, including through their good offices".[3] <u>Building on the Secretary-General's request to develop tools for senior mission leaders on SSR, the UN should invest in sustained leadership training, advisory capacity, and strategic guidance to strengthen high-level political support for nationally owned SSR processes.</u>

6. **Women, Peace, and Security**: <u>To advance gender-responsive peacekeeping, UN and Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) should establish qualitative goals of gender responsiveness that go beyond numerical parity.</u>[4] This includes integrating gender perspectives into operational planning and leadership structures, and measuring the impact of gender-responsive policies on mission effectiveness and local communities. Peacekeeping missions that model gender-responsive practices also set examples for national security actors in host states, thereby reinforcing national SSG/R efforts.

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[2] *Review of SSR language in the mandates of UN peace operations*, DCAF, 2025.
[3] UN Security Council Resolution on SSR, <u>S/RES/2553 (2020).</u>
[4] *Global MOWIP Report: Fit-for-the-Future Peace Operations: Advancing Gender Equality to Achieve Long-term and Sustainable Peace*, DCAF – The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2022.