



Asia-Pacific Regional & Sub-Regional SSG Forums 2022

Summary Report

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ASIA-PACIFIC



SECURITY SECTOR
GOVERNANCE NETWORK

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List of Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BBIN	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Initiative
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
COVID-19	2019 coronavirus disease
CSO	Civil society organisation
DCAF	DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
EAO	Ethnic armed organisation
ESIWA	European Security Cooperation in and with Asia
EU	European Union
IUU fishing	Illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing
NWG	National working group
PDF	People's defence force
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSG	Security sector governance
SSG/R	Security sector governance/reform
SSR	Security sector reform



Opening Session of the 2022 Asia-Pacific SSG Forum. Photo: DCAF

Executive Summary

The annual Asia-Pacific region-wide SSG Forum, and the annual South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia sub-regional SSG Forums, were held between 26-30 September 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. These are held as part of the under the “Promoting Good Security Sector Governance (SSG) in the Asia-Pacific Region Initiative”, often referred to simply as the “network”, coordinated by DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.

Thematic topics of interest to the region at-wide which were discussed in the Asia-Pacific SSG Forum included **maritime** security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) and **shrinking democratic spaces** and SSG/R. Associates from each country also provided **country updates** of the SSG/R landscape, challenges and entry points. Other items addressed by the overall network were dissemination of network **publications**, the need or desire for the **EU as a security provider** in the region, and ideas and strategies for **project proposals** to the donor community.



The 2022 Regional and Sub-Regional Forums took place in Canggu, Bali, Indonesia. Photo: DCAF.

Asia-Pacific key takeaways:

- A particular complexity to the maritime security sector is the wide array of institutions involved. Finding common interests and non-controversial topics in maritime security can be a starting point to build trust, offering a promising area for fostering cross-institutional domestic as well as international functional cooperation.
- In countries with shrinking democratic space, foreign actors’ ethical responsibility to demonstrate solidarity and stay engaged must be balanced with risks such as being instrumentalised by anti-reform actors. A great deal of expectation management is required on each side.
- Network publications should utilise a digital promotion strategy, including audio-visual communications (podcasts, video clips) on social media and use of hashtags. Additionally, translations of publications have been helpful.
- Multilateral cooperation with the European Union as a security provider is in principle a good idea, however there are inherent limitations from involving only Asian governments at the exclusion of civil society.

Thematic topics of pertinence to specific sub-regions were discussed in their parallel forums.



Photo: DCAF.

South Asia key takeaways:

- The network sees great importance in engagement in Afghanistan. International support could help sensitise the Taliban on good governance and address, amongst other topics, human rights violations, humanitarian assistance and opportunities for women.
- A study on lessons learned and good practices from the past 20 years of SSR in Afghanistan could be a useful exercise for regional actors in their future SSR programming.
- With climate-induced security threats, particularly human displacement and migration, as a major security challenge for South Asia, climate change could be mainstreamed in discussions held at regional fora such as SAARC, BIMSTEC and BBIN. Other potential activities are climate threat mapping, joint webinars and publications, and multi-sectoral discussion.
- Legislative review and reform, greater public-private cooperation, efficient oversight committees, and overall awareness and capacity-building are needed in the rapidly developing cyber domain.
- Politicisation undermines the integrity of the security sector. Critical support should be expressed by the media and influencers to sensitise the public on these issues and promote the need for reform.

South Asia paid special attention to **Afghanistan, cyber security** governance, the impacts of **climate change** on SSG/R and the implications of **politicisation** of the security sector.



A working group during the 2022 South Asia SSG Forum with several national SSG associates. Photo: DCAF.

Southeast Asia key takeaways:

- In Myanmar, mitigation of the effects of armed conflict on the civilian population is urgently needed, and promotion of respect for international humanitarian law can address this.
- Raising awareness across Southeast Asia on the Myanmar conflict could help individuals put pressure on their respective governments, either directly or via ASEAN.
- Lack of strong, fully functional oversight mechanisms in Southeast Asia make it difficult for civil society to play its role. Understanding the role of the military can also help equip civil society in preventing authoritarian regimes and detecting democratic backsliding. Approaching decisionmakers informally through academic forums and private events has been a promising strategy.
- The network sees engaging youth to be crucial, to ensure there will be a future generation that promotes SSG/R. Events such as dialogues and exchanges with security sector actors, conferences, trainings, university programmes and social media are examples of means for reaching youth.
- State security actors, local security actors, parliamentary committees and other oversight bodies need to increase their awareness on the role they can play in responding to climate change-induced security threats.

Southeast Asia paid special attention to **Myanmar**, the role of **civil society organisations** in SSG/R and the impacts of **climate change** on SSG/R.



The forums included a visit to the Pura Puseh Desa Batuan (Batuan Temple). Photo: DCAF.

East Asia key takeaways:

- Cross-strait relations have security implications on neighbouring countries. In the event of escalating tensions, strategic communication is key. International actors can provide regular multilateral multitrack dialogues, regional actors can provide ad hoc neutral platforms for dialogue and hot lines can be established between the military leaders of China and Taiwan.
- Recent legislation on pre-emptive strikes, mechanisms for denuclearisation and sanctions are significant in facing the North Korean nuclear threat. However, there is little room for supporting negotiations and diplomacy.
- International organisations and mechanisms such as DCAF, the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat and the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Cyber Security can help develop concrete international frameworks on cyber security and establish regional governance on cyberspace based on transparency, accountability and data protection.
- In East Asia, the military plays an important role in disaster relief support. As threats from climate change-induced disasters will only increase, so too will military support to humanitarian affairs and disaster relief. This requires enhanced cooperation at the regional level.
- There is strong interest in East Asia on gender mainstreaming in the security sector and enhancing the role of women in peacekeeping operations.

East Asia paid special attention to sub-regional impacts of **cross-strait relations**, **North Korea** as a nuclear flashpoint, **cyber security** governance and the impacts of **climate change** on SSG/R.



A working group during the 2022 East Asia SSG Forum with several national SSG associates. Photo: DCAF.

Introduction

Under its “Promoting Good Security Sector Governance (SSG) in the Asia-Pacific Region Initiative”, DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance coordinates a network of partner institutions and associates from 21 countries and territories across the region.¹ Each year, a South Asia SSG Forum, Southeast Asia SSG Forum and East Asia SSG Forum bring together partners and associates from each of the three respective sub-regions. Additionally, an annual Asia-Pacific SSG Forum convenes all associates from the region as a whole. During these forums, associates of the network reflect on national/territorial working group meetings and related activities of the network. The forums also serve as a platform for multilateral exchange on experiences, best practices and lessons learned across the network. Key SSG challenges are discussed, resulting in identification of entry points and practical recommendations in line with the principles of good SSG, public service orientation towards provision of security services, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international and regional standards, norms, and principles.

The 2022 forums took place in Bali, Indonesia. The **Asia-Pacific SSG Forum** was held on 26 and 29-30 September 2022. In addition to reflecting on the year’s activities and looking ahead to the priorities and outlook for 2023-2024, the regional forum also paid special attention to: “Maritime Security Sector Governance and Reform”; “Pitching SSG/R Initiatives to the Donor Community”; “Dissemination and Presentation of Network Publications”; “Shrinking Democratic Spaces and SSG/R”; and “Need, Desire and Demand for the EU as Security Provider/Security Broker in the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific Region”.

The sub-regional forums were held on 26-27 September 2022. The topics selected for the **South Asia SSG Forum** were: “Climate Change and Security Sector Governance in South Asia”; “Cyber Security Governance in South Asia”; “Afghanistan: One Year of Taliban Rule”; and “The Politicisation of the Security Sector and its Implications”. The **Southeast Asia SSG Forum** featured sessions on: “The Role of CSOs”; “SSG/R Activities on Climate Security”; and “Myanmar”. Finally, the **East Asia SSG Forum** selected their thematic topics to be: “Cross-Strait Relations: The Implications for Security in East Asia”; “Cyber Security Governance in East Asia”; “North Korea: A Nuclear Flashpoint in East Asia”; and “Climate Change and Security Sector Governance in East Asia”.

¹ As of September 2022, DCAF’s network in the Asia-Pacific region consists of partnerships in 21 countries and territories. The network includes representation from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Timor-Leste. Partnerships in Bhutan, Laos, Vietnam and North Korea remain under consideration.

Asia-Pacific Regional SSG Forum

Associates from across the South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia sub-regions met together in Bali for the region-wide Asia-Pacific SSG Forum on 26 and 29-30 September 2022.² This presented the opportunity to raise matters pertaining to the network as a whole, but also to discuss cross-cutting topics in SSG/R of interest and pertinent to most or all countries in the region.

Country Updates

The forums began with an introduction of associates and partner institutions, particularly to welcome several new associates to the network. Associates also presented an overview of the current SSG landscape in their respective countries, and national working group (NWG) meetings and other activities during the past year.

Afghanistan. Since the Taliban takeover, many NWG members have fled Afghanistan out of fear for their individual safety. As a result, NWG meetings have been difficult to convene even via online platforms. Under such circumstances, no NWG meetings could be conducted this year.

Most current SSG challenges are related to the Taliban takeover. First, the takeover has undermined Afghanistan's nascent democracy. The various democratic institutions have been eroded, undermining the effective and accountable provision of security as well as security management and oversight mechanisms. Second, the imposition of conservative Sharia law has led to violations of human rights, especially the rights of girls and women. Their rights to education, freedom of expression and assembly and others have been suspended under the pretext of the legal system. Lastly, there is no acceptance from the international community of the Taliban takeover or regime, which has led to the isolation of the Afghan population and has made it difficult for the international community to provide humanitarian aid and other support.

That being said, it would be important to conduct a lessons learned desk study with individuals who have previously been involved in SSG/R in Afghanistan, as it is currently challenging to anticipate any in-country engagement under the current Taliban regime. These individuals may include international experts or expatriated Afghan experts.

² Associates from all countries were present, except for Singapore, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Nepal. SSG associates of the latter three countries attended virtually.

Bangladesh. The NWG meeting that was organised in Bangladesh in 2022 focused on assessing SSG challenges and opportunities for reform at the national level. NWG members continue to analyse and monitor the role of the security sector in COVID-19 management and response. The meetings also prepared the SSG associate for the present forums, by way of insights and inputs from a range of NWG members.

Due to increasing government intimidation and surveillance amongst civil society organisations, SSG issues are increasingly seen as taboo in the country and there has been a greater sense of secrecy around these issues. There has also been an increasing democratic deficit undermining the rule of law and a lack of parliamentary oversight over the executive power. Border tensions with Myanmar have at times escalated into skirmishes between border guards, and ongoing Rohingya refugee issues have also increased community security concerns in areas close to camps. The rise in human rights violations including kidnapping, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings by security forces has led to international sanctions on some individual higher-ranking officials from the security forces. Besides this, there has also been growing insecurity due to threats emanating from cyberspace, and also climate change-related vulnerabilities.

Hence, some of the SSG/R entry points were related to depoliticization of the security forces; strengthening internal and external oversight mechanisms; capacity building of border security forces; developing police-public relations to address community security challenges; and developing sensitisation on the threats posed by climate change and cyberspace.

Brunei. The traditional monarchical system, under which the Sultan has personal control of the main ministries, does not offer much space for debate on SSG/R. Until 2022, Brunei kept strict COVID-19 rules and enlisted security forces, such as border guards and military personnel, to support the police in enforcing pandemic-related restrictions. As in many countries, to a certain extent police services had to be redirected to pandemic efforts, away from their usual role of law enforcement. Overall, the Bruneian government heavily emphasises economic growth with little consideration for topics like human security.

Due to its geographical location, Brunei is particularly exposed to climate change-related and maritime security threats. However, there is little debate on maritime SSG/R as Brunei keeps a completely neutral stance in the face of tensions in the South China Sea, making it difficult to raise these issues. When it comes to maritime security, Brunei favours traditional security matters such as fighting illegal fishing.

Due to the very limited space for debate on SSG/R in Brunei, it has not been possible to organise a NWG meeting, although the Global Awareness & Impact Alliance (GAIA) continues its engagement with security sector stakeholders whenever possible.

China. A national working group meeting was held to discuss the forum topics and to review the state of Chinese SSG/R.

The United States' alleged containment strategy and their subsequent strategic competition with China was determined to be the main threat posed to China's security. The NWG members attributed this to some American narratives that characterise China's actions as provocative and aggressive, citing land and maritime disputes between China and its neighbours as examples. The formation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue was seen as further undermining China's national security and regional peace and security. Second, resolving internal security issues was regarded as critical to China's stability and economic prosperity. A variety of domestic issues have been internationalised by western actors.

In terms of entry points, engaging with Chinese experts and stakeholders on SSG/R issues would be a key undertaking. China has developed a comprehensive national security concept which emphasises, amongst other issues, the importance of cyber security, maritime security and health security, which would require engagements with other regional and western actors, academics and think tanks. China has also promulgated the concept of the Global Security Initiative and further dialogues on security issues could be pursued under these initiatives.

Cambodia. Since August 2022, the partnership in Cambodia has been in a transitional stage. The previous partner institution had changed the focus of their work and therefore preferred not to renew the memorandum of understanding for the next phase of the project. At the time of the forums, DCAF entered discussions to sign a partnership with another organisation. In the meantime, the previous SSG associate was represented at the forums by a close colleague.

Due to the change of partnership during the year, no NWG meetings have taken place in Cambodia in 2022 so far, but the previous SSG associate organised online events on topics such as digital diplomacy and online education on human security matters.

In Cambodia, there remain issues in the democratic sphere, mainly for civil society to express opposition to government decisions and for opposition parties to voice their

disagreements. There are also strong allegations of human rights restrictions which makes bringing forward the topic of SSG/R challenging overall. Nonetheless, civil society, mainly youth groups, finds ways to maintain a form of oversight of state security sector actors, for example by using social media creatively.

Some specific topics, such as gender equality and climate change-related threats, can be discussed more easily. On climate change, the government is making real effort to link economic development to a climate conscious approach, with a focus on trying to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. These could be potential entry points to engage the government in a discussion on SSG/R through a less threatening lens.

India. The NWG group meeting in India was convened with the aim of preparing for the forums. The issue of maritime security sector governance was one of the key topics of the meeting, besides stocktaking on SSG/R challenges and opportunities. The meeting also identified various legal, structural and policy gaps in addressing SSG challenges.

Amongst other discussions, key SSG issues were identified and are as follows: 1) India's non-traditional security threats and the way forward, 2) strengthening India's coastal security, 3) India's blue economy challenges, and 4) environmental and migration issues in the Bay of Bengal and its impact on Indian security. Overall, the potential of increasing maritime terrorism, illegal unregulated unreported fishing (IUU), drugs and human trafficking, illegal immigration and an increasing occurrence of natural disasters arising due to climate change-related vulnerabilities are the key security challenges.

Given the nature of security threats in India, there have been calls to increase transparency and accountability in the security sector. Some critical entry points for enhancing internal and external oversight mechanisms, including those in the maritime sector, were proposed. It was also suggested that a study be conducted to identify and learn from global best practices and models for addressing these SSG challenges. To enhance communication and cooperation amongst both sub-regional and regional actors, annual simulation exercises on various security challenges amongst partners, experts and stakeholders in the region was put forward as a means of achieving that goal.

Indonesia. The network has changed its partner institution in Indonesia, due to a change in priorities by the previous partner. The new partner organised a NWG meeting at the end of July to prepare for the forums. The group of experts identified eight overall SSG/R priorities for Indonesia, the three most important being:

- **Civil-military relations:** the government is becoming increasingly authoritarian and is criminalising its opposition. The process could be compared to what continues to be happening in the Philippines. This means that there is no direct military coup or imposition of martial law, but instead shrinking democratic space due to placement of active or retired military and police in positions of power or influence, as well as heightened pressure against voices from the opposition. Furthermore, active and retired officers from the armed forces are given increasing levels of governmental responsibility. The police and intelligence services were actively involved in the presidential re-election, allegedly including in the disappearance of many election committee members.
- **Transparency and accountability of the armed forces:** military command and the Ministry of Defence are two parallel entities, making civilian oversight of the armed forces almost impossible. A law introduced in 2004 called for military command to come under the authority of the Ministry of Defence, but this was never applied.
- **Accountability:** dedicated oversight parliamentary commissions, for example the commission in charge of police oversight, are reluctant to criticise state security actors, which can lead to the tendency to self-censor.

These challenges could be turned into opportunities if sufficient buy-in can be secured from key decision makers. This is difficult but not impossible, as there remain some open-minded and reform-oriented people at high levels. However, they are usually careful not to get officially involved in reform projects.

Japan. A virtual NWG meeting was scheduled for 2022. On the agenda was preparation for these forums as well as the changing strategic and political environment in Japan under the new prime minister.

The NWG members recognised the escalating strategic competition between the United States and China as a main SSG threat that has exacerbated the security climate in East Asia. With this, emergency security threats such as those in cyberspace and the maritime domain have led to increasing SSG challenges for Japan. The NWG members also recognised the emergence of new challenges, such as economic security, as a result of the ongoing Ukraine war.

There is repeated emphasis to continue work on cyber security and maritime security-related issues. It was mentioned that DCAF's workshops on maritime and cyber security have received wider attention amongst NWG members and specialists. There are

additional areas of collaboration that might be related to a joint publication on SSG/R, which could bring together specialists from the region and Japan to collaborate and advance understanding on numerous SSG/R-related thematic areas.

Malaysia. The network's new partner institution organised its first NWG meeting in September 2022 with representatives from nine organisations, mostly civil society and academia.

Until the beginning of 2020, there were clear opportunities for SSG/R, for example the creation of a defence white paper being discussed at parliament and some initiatives to reform the police force being debated. However, due to political instability in the country, attention on all reform efforts, including SSR, have been deprioritised. Tensions between ethnic and/or religious groups have increased. This is in part because many political parties have an ethnic or religious basis, hence political tensions have the potential to turn into social tensions. Additionally, migrants such as those from Myanmar were seen as risk factors during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to an increase of xenophobia.

This situation creates a context where the risk of violent extremism increases. IMAN Research has been advocating for a national action plan on violent extremism. While the government circulated a draft, it seems weak and lacks adequate resources. CSOs were not involved in the drafting of this action plan and stand prepared to push back against it. The Internal Security Act was repelled in favour of a less harsh policy, but police forces are pushing for its restoration given the currently tense political climate.

Maritime security is a concern in Southeast Asia, even more so in the face of authoritarian-leaning regimes like those of Thailand and the Philippines. The same is true for Malaysia. Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) is a Malaysian security area that covers approximately 1,400 kilometers of the east coast of Sabah, from Kudat to Tawau. In 2014, ESSCOM was restructured and two major components - security and defence management; and enforcement and public action - were set up. ESSCOM staff are not from the state of Sabah, where most of the trafficking and smuggling happen. This reduces their effectiveness in understanding the topographies of the state and combatting the issue, even though it is noticeable that kidnapping for ransom at sea has reduced.

Finally, Malaysia is considerably less exposed to climate change induced threats than other countries in SEA but is nonetheless affected and expects to be more in the years to come.

Maldives. In the Maldives, one NWG meeting was organised as part of the preparation for these forums. The meeting, amongst other discussions, identified key SSG challenges and potential entry points.

Two key SSG challenges were identified in the context of the Maldives. The first focused on addressing the growing challenges of Islamic radicalism in Maldivian society which has affected all sectors including security institutions. Increasing radical extremism presents a multifaceted threat driven by a diverse array of political, social, and religious factors, all of which were discussed by NWG members. The second focused on addressing growing insecurity arising from climate change and its impact on maritime security.

One of the key entry points focused on designing and implementing a preventing violent extremism (PVE) project. The Maldives adopted its National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in 2017, defining the strategic vision and the guiding principles encompassed within the government's zero-tolerance policy towards violent extremism. This strategy would be one of the guiding documents for working on addressing violent extremism. Any initiatives undertaken in relation to PVE must strengthen the professionalism of security forces, law enforcement agencies and justice institutions, and ensure accountability of such bodies. In this context, reforms of national legal frameworks and penal systems are some initial entry points which must ensure the security of inmates, personnel and facilities and prevent radicalisation.

Mongolia. In Mongolia, one NWG meeting was conducted which served as the basis to constitute the members of the NWG and inform them of the importance of the working group, its modality and how it should function.

The NWG members highlighted growing cyberthreats as an SSG issue which Mongolia will continue to face going forward. Another SSG challenge is the narrowing of the democratic space and the diminution of the role of civil society. Lastly, the Russia-Ukraine crisis has led to a border security challenge for Mongolia. Mongolia is currently struggling with how to accommodate Russians from nearby bordering provinces who are crossing the border and taking shelter inside Mongolia, which could lead to the rise of some internal security challenges.

Improving cyber security governance through sensitisation and capacity building for the security sector would be an important entry point to take to enhance and promote good SSG in Mongolia. At present, there is a lot of buy-in amongst security sector actors

to engage with this issue. The other important area would be to focus on building the external oversight capacity of civil society actors to ensure that they function in an effective manner. Despite the geopolitical tensions and the pandemic, Mongolia has been making efforts to promote multilateral dialogues, for example hosting a 2022 conference in support of the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda as well as its annual Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, both of which were co-organized by our Mongolian network partner.

Myanmar. Militarisation and increasingly random and indistinct violence are the current trend in Myanmar. In this context, organising any events on SSG/R topics inside the country is unlikely to be fruitful and poses a high security risk. DCAF's partner institution continues its work and holds regular bilateral discussions, but no NWG meeting could be convened given the context. Many think tanks and CSOs working on security topics have left the country and operate from abroad. They primarily provide situation analysis to international stakeholders and remain prepared for any opportunity to restart peacebuilding activities.

Nepal. In 2022, one NWG meeting was held in Nepal, which was beneficial in assessing the status of SSG/R. Some of the key challenges identified were security issues arising from local-level elections. Policy-level guidance on monitoring and supervising election security had been provided to government-constituted security task forces. Also, the issue of increasing involvement of the military in business-related activities such as construction, hospitality and so on was also identified as a SSG challenge. Another challenge is the rapid development of private security companies and the lack of regulation of these companies. Finally, a lack of effective parliamentary oversight of provincial police forces has been identified as a barrier to strengthening federalism.

Key entry points that were suggested included developing effective policy and legislation related to private security governance; sensitising on the nexus between business, human rights and security; and capacity building of provincial parliaments to develop an effective oversight mechanism over provincial police forces.

Pakistan. A NWG meeting was organised as preparation for the forums by reviewing the current SSG/R challenges in Pakistan.

Climate-induced disasters were identified as a major challenge for Pakistan. The NWG meeting was held at a time when Pakistan was very badly affected by unprecedented

floods linked to climate change. Furthermore, it was identified that climate change-related disasters and migration are major SSG challenges, considering how climate change-related vulnerabilities could provide a breeding ground for terrorist groups, particularly in the context of Pakistan.

Similarly, emerging threats in cyberspace have been further exploited by terrorist groups, which has produced another security challenge. The use of the dark net or deep web by terrorist groups could lead to the revitalisation of radicalisation. Lastly, managing the evolving political and security dynamics of Afghanistan after the takeover of the Taliban will be a major security challenge for Pakistan, especially since the Afghan Taliban are continuously providing support to the Pakistani Taliban. The political, socioeconomic and ethnic developments within Afghanistan, directly or indirectly, have the potential to affect Pakistan, especially in the border belt in the province of Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa. Additionally, Pakistan has hosted close to 1.43 million registered Afghan refugees, and provision of security in these areas and extending humanitarian support is an ever-growing challenge for Pakistan's government.

Developing PVE programs and projects would be an important first step in terms of entry points. Another would be to raise awareness of climate change-related insecurity and emphasize the importance of preparedness and adaptation. Lastly, engaging with the Taliban would be an important issue, whereby Pakistan civil society actors could play an important role in facilitating dialogues for the provision of security, good governance and creating an accountability mechanism inside Afghanistan. The latter is key not only to address security in Afghanistan but also in Pakistan and in the wider South Asian region.

Philippines. Significant reform was achieved in the Philippines from 2009-2015. During this period under President Aquino, younger officers who had been previously exposed to SSG/R held decision-making positions and received adequate support from the government. Under President Duterte, SSR capacity reduced significantly, although some work with reform-oriented officers who retained their positions could continue. At the time of the forums, it was difficult to assess what would be possible under the new administration that came into power in the spring of 2022.

The network's partner institution has been able to pursue work on SSG/R thus far. This is primarily due to the help of civil society and their pre-established network of supportive officers in the armed forces and the police. As an entry point, courses for officers as part of their continuous training would be a good opportunity to continue engaging with

them in hopes that, when there is more space for SSG/R, they will be active in future work. However, reaching policymakers has not been possible.

In 2021, the network's SSG associate published research about SSR and the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2021 and 2022, they organised a series of focus group discussions amongst key stakeholders, including officers from the police and armed forces. Altogether, 16 focus group discussions were organised on four main topics relating to SSG/R, with each main topic sub-divided into four sub-topics. Moreover, following the 2022 elections, the associate organised a focus group discussion with key CSOs to analyse future perspectives on how to continue work on SSG/R under the new administration.

South Korea. The two NWG meetings held in 2022 helped review the status of SSG in South Korea under the new president and also contributed to the planning for these forums.

North Korean nuclear power remains a key security challenge. The recent adoption of its "Law on Consolidating Position of Nuclear Weapons State" and its plan to acquire tactical nuclear weapons heightens the likelihood that North Korea will use nuclear weapons in the event of future crises on the Korean peninsula. Second, South Korea's low birth rate and population decline is an increasing security challenge, as these will reduce the manpower available to the defence forces. Third, the deterioration of essential military and civilian infrastructure as a result of state and non-state actors' growing use of cyberwarfare methods has put national and international security at risk. An important challenge that should be borne in mind is also that the lack of interagency coordination and collaboration between the Prosecutor's Office and the National Police Agency has resulted in jurisdictional issues and the subsequent impediment of efficient and responsible law enforcement services.

On the other hand, South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yeol has prioritized defence transformation, which might open the door for engagements in several defence reform-related areas.

The other area of engagement would be to continue gender mainstreaming in the security sector to address the low population rate and increase women's participation in the security forces, which will also complement the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda. Improving cyber security governance and maritime SSG remains an area of engagement, where possible avenues of collaboration with other likeminded organisations and

countries could be undertaken. Lastly, on North Korea, South Korea will continue to strive towards enhancing its deterrence with the support of its allies and partners to maintain regional peace and stability and open the channel of communication through track two dialogues. A possible third party could provide an avenue for such dialogues.

Sri Lanka. Amid the evolving economic crisis in Sri Lanka, one NWG meeting was held. The focus of the meeting concentrated on identifying emerging SSG challenges due to the financial crisis and identifying potential entry points for reform. The emerging economic and political crisis has led to a wide range of implications for national security. The mass civilian protest which led to the overthrow of the Rajapaksa government was instrumental in opening the door for reform. It also led to the identification of governance challenges, including widescale corruption as well as an energy and food crisis and currency devaluation. The increasing militarisation of society, the increase in intimidation methods as a means of reducing opposition and the use of surveillance against civil society actors have been identified as challenges to good SSG in Sri Lanka. Lastly, the failure to establish accountability mechanisms has increased impunity and subsequently led to increasing incidence of human rights violations committed by security forces.

On the other hand, the current economic downturn serves as a springboard for SSR initiatives. The discourse on defence reform can be undertaken especially on the issue of “right-sizing” the military, which has grown significantly since the end of the civil war. Second, the concepts of business, human rights and security could be another possible entry point to explore the increasing involvement of the military in civilian and private sector work such as construction. Lastly, reform of existing draconian laws which undermine civil society and continue to encroach on democratic space constitute an additional point of entry.

Taiwan. Two NWG meetings were organised in 2022 to review the SSG/R status of Taiwan and support the preparation of these forums.

In terms of SSG challenges, the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity is the main SSG challenge for Taiwan. The lack of recognition of the status of Taiwan in international engagements has severely undermined its ability to strategically communicate and seek security cooperation. Protecting its maritime borders from external threats remains another security challenge for the country. Lastly, the increasing number of cyberattacks on both Taiwan’s civilian and military infrastructure has exposed its vulnerability and has grown into a significant national security challenge.

In terms of entry points, building initiatives to improve the cross-strait relationship is an important precondition to achieving peace and security in the region. In this sense, the presence of a third party or an international organisation would be essential to opening a communication channel. In addition, various initiatives aimed at enhancing cyber security governance and maritime security sector governance can be used as possible entry points.

Thailand. There remain some opportunities to promote SSG/R in Thailand, but a degree of creativity would be required, and it is hard to anticipate whether concrete results could be achieved.

Civil society organizations in Thailand work on topics that would constitute parts of SSR, for example reducing the role of the military in politics through constitutional reform, but do not fit into a wider SSR agenda that considers the security sector as a whole. The reason for this rarity is difficult to determine. It could be attributable to the fact that there has been very little space for reform in the past decade, or that SSR has not been approached as an overarching topic. The government has introduced multiple decrees and new laws that increase pressure on the civil society and reduce democratic space. On 30 September 2022, the Constitutional Court voted to extend Prime Minister General Prayut’s term beyond the eight-year maximum term outlined in the Constitution, reinforcing his power. It is early to say, but this could lead to further consolidation of an authoritarian regime.

The recent youth demonstrations that are pushing for higher levels of democratic governance call into question the role of the monarchy, a phenomenon that was rare in the past under King Rama IX. This seems to indicate that the younger generation is looking for a deeper change in government, including state security actors, functions.

The opposition to the government is compounded by a difficult economic situation. A certain part of the Thai population is ready to accept some limits on personal freedom if the economy is stable. However, in addition to reducing democratic space, the military-led government that has been in power since 2014 has not been able to maintain economic growth.

Timor-Leste. There is a lot of opportunity to promote SSG/R (or security sector development, SSD, the term used more frequently in Timor-Leste) as the country is still young. Several key policies, such as the national security policy, are being discussed.

However, while the government is democratic, it has not traditionally included civil society in governmental discussions or decision making. It would be important to encourage more open and transparent dialogue between the government and the population on security topics.

CSOs increasingly push for more inclusive dialogue and try to act as “middle-men” of sorts by having meetings with state security actors while also organising community-level security sector dialogues. They aim to ensure the population has access to, and understanding of, the subjects being debated at the governmental level. The next step is to make sure that these dialogues can be organised regularly together with both state and non-state security actors. DCAF and its partner institution have submitted two project proposals on this to the European Union but have not been successful in securing grant funding.

Since independence, there have not been promotions to the highest military ranks. No changes at the top mean that it is hard to introduce new ways of thinking or find reform-minded interlocutors. At the time of independence, there were no police forces in Timor-Leste, and the government relied on the armed forces for both internal and external security. Despite having a fully functional police force in place, the government still relies heavily on the armed forces, creating a situation where it tends to place more trust in the armed forces than the police forces, which is an issue in terms of national security infrastructure.

For the reasons listed above and compounded by strict COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions on gathering, holding regular NWG meetings has proved challenging. The network’s partner institution holds meetings with state security forces and civil society separately at this stage. The goal is to increasingly bring the two groups together.

Maritime Security Sector Governance and Reform

While the South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia sub-regional networks chose their own thematic topics to discuss in their forums, some thematic topics were of relevance across the sub-regions and were therefore addressed in the Asia-Pacific region-wide forum. One such topic was maritime SSG/R. Maritime security is hugely important across Asia-Pacific, and draws interest across all the sub-regions, for several reasons. The majority of trade in the region takes place by sea, so the development of the so-called blue economy and security against piracy and smuggling are vital. Sea lanes of communication such as the South China Sea, Strait of Malacca and Bay of Bengal are of geostrategic importance for states and can thereby also be the source of interstate disputes. Under a human security lens, by some estimates, 26 million people in Asia live in low-lying coastal areas,³ leaving them particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels. With many populations reliant on fishing, IUU fishing as well as environmental crime and pollution pose significant threats to economic and food security. In sum, Asia has a deeply rooted maritime culture and its security is thereby inextricably linked with maritime security.



Figure 1. Christian Bueger's “maritime security matrix” illustrates the interplay between traditional/national security, human security, economic development and the environment.⁴

3 Kanupriya Kapoor, *Asian, tropical coastlines most vulnerable to rising seas – study*, Reuters, 29 June 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/asian-tropical-coastlines-most-vulnerable-rising-seas-study-2021-06-29/>.

4 Christian Bueger, *What Is Maritime Security?* Marine Policy, Vol. 53, p. 161, 2015.

Given the broad interest in and importance of maritime SSG/R for the Asia-Pacific region, DCAF invited Dr Scott Edwards to the forum to speak in his capacity as an expert on maritime security and SSG/R. He is a research associate at the University of Bristol and SafeSeas on the project “Transnational Organised Crime at Sea in the Indo-Pacific” and focuses primarily on multilateral cooperation efforts and domestic coordination responses to issues of maritime insecurity. Dr Edwards gave an introductory presentation on maritime SSG/R, which can be understood as the application of SSG/R to the maritime domain, or in other words the process by which institutions that provide maritime security are aligned with the principles of good governance: effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, participation, inclusivity and rule of law.

A complexity which is specific to maritime SSG/R is that beyond the traditional set of security institutions, it implicates a very wide array of actors involved in the maritime domain. Due to this diversity, disagreement over what constitutes a threat can give rise to tensions, differences in organizational perspective, culture and practice can cause distrust, and there can be further intricacies in navigating inter-agency coordination, duplication and competition. Dr Edwards provided a case study of irregular migration across the English Channel to illustrate the array of security challenges in the maritime domain due to its cross-sectoral nature, some examples being positive legal obligations, issues of monitoring and surveillance, inter-agency cooperation across domestic institutions as well as internationally, and jurisdictional challenges between the United Kingdom and France. The balance between supply (investigation, dismantling of criminal networks, alternative income streams) and demand (human rights, development, lack of access to regular channels) also mirror and implicate those on land.

A domestic challenge to governance of maritime security institutions is that of “sea-blindness”. By definition maritime threats occur out at sea, and the relative lack of visibility can lead to lack of transparency and accountability. The remoteness can also contribute to a lack of prioritisation: “out of sight, out of mind”. In reality, on the contrary, sea manifestations are often a symptom of what happens on land.

Challenges to international cooperation can include sensitivity and difficulties in trust-building to due geostrategic tensions and concerns about “free-riding” rather than states putting a bona fide effort into cooperation. Additionally, in such a complex sector, there can be many different regional fora or contact points, and it can be messy to disentangle and understand who is cooperating with whom.



Figure 2. The wide array of institutions involved in maritime security provision and oversight can be a challenge to inter-agency agreement and cooperation.⁵

Promising areas for fostering cooperation and overcoming the aforementioned challenges include raising maritime domain awareness to create common understanding, identification of common interests to facilitate trust-building and enactment of functional cooperation. For example, during the London 2012 Summer Olympics, the United Kingdom realised they did not have a coordinated mechanism in case of maritime threats and so they created the Joint Maritime Security Centre, a structure which coordinates agencies and focuses on technical cooperation and information sharing. Its independence is seen as very important, but a limitation of this Centre is the accountability and transparency around their activities. Another case study is the EU’s capacity building initiative “CRIMARIO I” which contributed to enhancing maritime domain awareness through information sharing, capacity building, and training in the Western Indian Ocean. While the emphasis is on capacity building, its limitation is also just that. It is not a wider SSR programme and does not engage with larger communities.

⁵ DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, *Maritime Security Sector Governance and Reform*, SSR Backgrounder Series, forthcoming.

Shrinking Democratic Spaces and SSG/R

Similar to the maritime SSG/R session above, democratic backsliding was also identified as a key theme applicable across Asia-Pacific and to be discussed with the full SSG network. In recent years, the region has seen a shift away from the democratisation which marked the 1980s and 1990s and towards illiberal models of governance. Parliaments have not been consulted on decisions they would have been, wider public inclusion has not taken place, and the government has been simply trusted to make any decisions, especially in the name of efficient pandemic response. The prevalence of this trend and its impacts on SSG/R were addressed in this session. Reflections on what could be learned from the cases of Afghanistan and Myanmar took place in plenary, followed by discussions in sub-regional breakout groups.

Learning from Afghanistan and Myanmar. The case studies of Afghanistan and Myanmar were raised in plenary to introduce pertinent lines of inquiry on the value and risks of SSG/R engagement in non- or less-democratic contexts. After the Taliban and Tatmadaw takeovers, there were chain reactions resulting in international actors leaving the two countries. In analysing these events, the pivotal question then becomes, should engagements have been sustained? What would have been the benefits of continued presence?

On the one hand, when external actors have encouraged local actors to buy into the promise of reforms, it could be argued they create an ethical responsibility to continue to support the in-country partners who stay engaged. Staying for the purpose of staying, in and of itself, already holds value. It demonstrates solidarity and commitment to those who wish to continue reform. When little or no support is offered, it can be argued that that is the time when support is in fact most needed. Furthermore, disengagement not only shatters the hopes of those who are invested in reforms, but also the hopes of the population. It is unlikely that external actors who disengage will be welcomed back should engagement re-start. In terms of investment, staying engaged through low-key or low-visibility engagement might not require the same level of resource intensity.

On the other hand, continued engagement raises ethical quandaries. It poses a risk of being instrumentalized by anti-reform actors. One could assume that efforts could take place towards good SSG under all models of governance, but these efforts would take different forms and work to varying degrees of success. Remaining engaged may mean that scarce resources that could be applied in other, more promising contexts are used

where there is little space for reform and little hope for short- to mid-term achievement. A great deal of expectation management is required on each side. The associates divided into sub-regional breakout groups to address the challenges of SSG/R in contexts where democratic spaces are shrinking.

South Asia. The South Asia network identified the effects of shrinking spaces to be polarisation, politicisation of the security sector, loss of objectivity by oversight actors, misuse of the rule of law, gradual absence of the legal system resulting in erosion of credibility in the security sector and the election of autocracies due to political illiteracy, lack of political democratic culture and hijacked electoral processes. Managing these effects requires the security sector to remain apolitical and oversight actors to stay neutral. Continuing efforts allows long-term, continuous, graduated and persistent efforts, or in other words those which do not circuitously revert to starting points. Continuing efforts also help uphold the integrity of the security sector and support oversight committees in playing their roles so norms are not broken. However, job security, persecution, political disappearance and in the most extreme cases extra-judicial killing are among the risks particularly for internal actors. Loss of access would be the risk for external actors. To combat this, there must be a strategy of gradual creeping in. Critical support should be found in SSG champions and political groups, and increased engagement from social media and civil society is very important here.

Southeast Asia. The challenge of shrinking democratic spaces is not new in Southeast Asia. Civil society has always been affected and there was not much space to begin with. The associates raised the examples of the Philippines' war on drugs policy and Thailand's martial law. An exception seems to be Timor-Leste, where security institutions are open to the idea of involvement from civil society. To manage the effects of illiberal governance, the associates agreed that messaging should be continued and spaces for dialogue in civil society should be expanded. In Cambodia, the weak digital literacy of the ruling party has been to the advantage of civil society and their oversight capacities. For the international community specifically, their role is to convince authorities of the benefits of reform, and how their own interests can be included in reforms, rather than just them opening up space for the sake of kindness. The value of continuing international efforts goes beyond the mere existence of reform on paper; it shows solidarity with local actors and gives hope for improvement. The inroads in illiberal governments are personal connections with those on the "inside" and using milder topics as an entry point that still allows SSG/R to be on the table. Also, sharing experiences, good practices and lessons learned is always of help.

The associates noted that physical safety is a very real risk that CSOs and activists have to deal with. Additionally, with civil society monitored or shut and limited space for discussion, there is less peaceful recourse, and people tend to grow extreme in their stances. For international actors, the risk lies more in reputational damage from being involved with bodies who are seen as criminal or authoritarian.

East Asia. The network of associates from East Asia discussed the ways that Asian values, histories, cultures and shared identities play an important role in nation-building and strengthening of democratic institutions. Some countries in the region have their own histories of transition from authoritarian/military rule to democracy. There are significant historical lessons that can be learned which provide a useful guide to countries in South and Southeast Asia to prevent the decline of democracy. At the same time, East Asia demonstrates how strong democratic institutions can contribute toward the economic prosperity of the people and nations, which is a pre-requisite for countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Some East Asian countries, especially post-COVID-19, have witnessed significant challenges from the introduction of laws and legislation that undermine freedoms of expression and individual rights to privacy. Although countries in East Asia are not facing a significant decline in democracy, COVID-19 posed threats to their democratic institutions. Considering emerging regional and global dynamics, associates suggested that it would be prudent to strengthen the oversight capacities of civil society, the media, Ombuds institutions and parliaments, as well as to strengthen rule of law, respect for human rights and strong accountability mechanisms.

Dissemination and Presentation of Network Publications

A number of publications have resulted from the activities of the SSG network. During COVID-19, the network undertook a study of the roles and responsibilities played by security sector actors in responding to the pandemic, which was published as a book.⁶ Due to the travel and movement restrictions, the network also held a number of thematic expert workshops online, which informed thematic briefs written on the impacts of climate change on the security sector in Southeast and East Asia and on protection of migrants

⁶ Albrecht Schnabel, Upasana Garoo, Rohit Karki and Kevin Socquet-Clerc (eds), *Security Sector Responses to COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific Region: Reflections on an Ongoing Health Crisis*, DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2021, <https://www.dcaf.ch/security-sector-responses-covid-19-asia-pacific-region-reflections-ongoing-health-crisis>.

through good SSG in Southeast Asia.⁷ One of the key tasks of the network has also been to produce bi-annual SSG updates which provide an overview of trends in the security landscape in each country, challenges to good SSG and SSR, and entry points for SSR activities. Given these many written outputs, a session of the Asia-Pacific SSG Forum was dedicated to discussing the dissemination and presentation of these publications. Associates first brainstormed in sub-regional breakout groups before sharing their findings in plenary, which centred around four points: subject matter, format, translation and promotional strategy.

Subject matter. In deciding the topic of publications, a distinction should be made between those destined for academia and those for practitioners. Some topics could be very important academically, but less so practically. Therefore, before making the decision to write for example a policy brief, guidance note or backgrounder, practitioners should be consulted on what would be useful to them on the ground.

Format. The following conclusions emerged from the discussions on format. Publications targeting policymakers should not go beyond three pages in length. Having shorter publications also allows them to be developed relatively quickly and to keep pace with emerging and contemporary topics. Busy policymakers tend to also appreciate executive summaries, bullet-point summaries with key takeaways and an indication at the start of the document as to how much time it would take to read. Finally, periodical series can help build anticipation for new releases; readers wait for the next edition and know precisely when to look for it.

Translation. Associates by and large agreed that translations are highly useful. Because of the large number of languages throughout Asia, and to reduce the human resources necessary for translation, just executive summaries or key takeaways could be translated rather than whole documents.

Digital promotion. A large portion of the discussions of this session were on promotional strategies. The necessity of being active on digital platforms for reaching a wider, general audience was heavily emphasized. Associates expressed the utility of using short audio-visual communications on social media: TikTok, Voicepop, podcasts, memes or something akin to TED Talks. Videos should remain under two minutes and efficiently relay key

⁷ Kevin Socquet-Clerc, Holly O'Mahony, Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, Lorraine Elliott and Sumitha Shaanthinni Kishna, *Protecting Migrants through Good Security Sector Governance in Southeast Asia*, DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 9 January 2023, <https://www.dcaf.ch/protecting-migrants-through-good-security-sector-governance-southeast-asia>.

messaging. Since many associates are professors, it was suggested that students could be tasked with creating video content, and then a professional video editor would only be needed for final polishing. This would address human or financial resource limitations. It was also noted that there should be hashtags; for instance, lots of key messaging emerging from the present forums could have been pushed with #AsiaPacificSSG2022 or a similar hashtag. There should be a digitalisation plan underscoring all of these endeavours, including search engine optimisation. On the other hand, while digitalisation is vital to promotion in a modern environment, the utility of hard copies should not be overlooked. There were several cases in which books left around the offices of associates ended up finding their way into influential hands.

The “Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia (ESIWA)” Project

The “Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia” (ESIWA) Project of GIZ/Germany and Expertise France, commissioned by the European Union, has been in touch with DCAF in furtherance of its vision of strengthening its security cooperation in the region and promoting its position as a global security provider. Because the current phase of the project is focused on four network countries – India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea – and the next phase will focus on three more – Philippines, Malaysia and Sri Lanka – DCAF invited ESIWA to present project opportunities to the network associates. After the presentation, associates discussed the need, desire and demand for the EU as security provider/security broker in the Asia-Pacific region.

Project description. ESIWA is a project jointly implemented by Expertise France and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Mr Jean-Paul Prichard, co-director of the project, of Expertise France, presented the motivations of the project based on the priorities set out in the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, Joint Communication on the EU’s Indo-Pacific Strategy, Global Strategy on the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy, on-going work to strengthen the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy, and relevant European Council conclusions of 28 May 2018 on enhanced security cooperation in and with Asia. The project was launched with an initial focus on six pilot partners: India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam. The EU sees this as representing diversity, varying degrees of country development and a mix of close and less close relations with the EU. The thematic priorities of the project are maritime security, cyber security, preventing and countering violent extremism, and conflict prevention/peacekeeping. Activities include track 1.5 level dialogues via roundtable events, workshops, peer-to-peer cooperation activities, tabletop exercises

and policy dialogues focusing on specific issues in a non-official way in compliance with Chatham House rules, as well as to generally support and complement official existing dialogues between pilot countries and the EU on general defence. ESIWA has a 15 million Euro budget, lasts until April 2024 and is categorised as a tool of the External Action Service of the EU.

Group impressions. In the proceeding discussion, the group seemed to find the principle of multilateral cooperation to be a good idea overall and appreciated the budget accompanying the project. However, the primary concern raised was its inherent limitations due to exclusive engagement with governments at the exclusion of civil society. Also noted was its potential for overlap due to lack of coordination with other interventions in the region.

Proposed Regional and Network Activities: Pitching SSG/R Initiatives to the Donor Community

This session focused on concrete projects that the network could implement, and how to present these to the donor community. The key questions posed in this session addressed what and how. What are interesting projects to implement at national/sub-regional/regional levels? How can the network interest the donors in SSG/R projects and activities? Which agencies, organizations or foundations can we approach? And how should we approach them?

For South Asia, it came out very strongly that the network did not want to “abandon” countries with shrinking democratic spaces when support is desperately needed and is also likely to be more impactful. DCAF would be willing to engage with the Taliban to sensitise on governance, specifically governance of the security sector. In terms of buy-in and motivation, the associates noted that the Taliban is hungry for international contact. However, an appropriate mandate for such engagement would need to be given by a member of the DCAF Foundation Council. Second, there are 317’000 active-duty military personnel in Sri Lanka, and the country’s overall population is 22 million. This high ratio indicates a need for right-sizing the military. The third key area of potential activity in South Asia would be on Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The camps are entering a new phase of security issues stemming from prolonged habitation. The associate from Bangladesh reported a rise in illegal drug trafficking, human trafficking and small arms trade. There is also increased potential of radicalisation and recruitment of terrorist organisations. DCAF could train on special skills, knowledge and expertise on these security issues.

In Southeast Asia, the main theme that emerged was the importance of engaging the younger generations to ensure that there will be a next generation to promote SSG/R. This engagement could take various forms such as webinars for students, semi-formal exchanges between students and representatives of the security sector, use of social media to increase reach with short messages, or more in-depth research on why there is an apparent disinterest from the youth on these topics and how to address it. Additionally, associates discussed the need to better understand the role of the military in political decision making to better equip civil society in preventing authoritarian regimes and being able to detect signs of democratic backsliding early on to be ready to act and reduce the risks of authoritarian take-over. Further, capacity of civil society can be built to ensure local communities have a say in national-level security decision making and support peace building. Third, on climate security, there are currently different mechanisms under various government authorities, so a mapping exercise is needed to understand the different existing structures to promote a unified approach to ASEAN. Capacity can be built for oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency of armed forces committed to reducing their carbon footprint. Finally, police reform in some form is needed in most countries in Southeast Asia, even in those which have already undergone reform such as Indonesia.

In East Asia, the two priority areas of activity would be gender and cyber security. On gender, DCAF could work on gender mainstreaming in the security sector, and on enhancing the role of women's participation in peacekeeping operations. These are areas of high priority and interest in many countries in East Asia, and would have national-level buy-in. For example, in 2022 Mongolia hosted a conference in Ulaanbaatar called "Women, Peace and Security" in support of UN Resolution 1325, which attracted participants and female peacekeepers from 30 countries including most East Asian states. On cyber security, the network could assist in working toward the development and facilitation of international laws and frameworks. There are the Tallinn Manual and Budapest Convention, but with no concrete positive results. As part of this proposed activity, multinational cooperation and sharing of best practices should be a component. Associates from East Asia also expressed the need for joint capacity-building programmes to enhance multinational cooperation on cybercrime enforcement, as well as to train and educate the next generation of leadership on key cyber security issues. There are insufficient capacities and limited understanding of supply chain security, and attribution is difficult because of limited know-how.

South Asia Sub-Regional SSG Forum

On 27-28 September 2022, the network split into its South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia networks to concurrently hold its three sub-regional SSG forums. Rather than holding these at different times during the year and in different locations, as had been done for the previous series of annual forums in 2019 (in-person)⁸ and 2020 and 2021 (virtual), the decision was taken to hold all annual forums during the same week in Bali. This was to mitigate the impacts of travel restrictions, border closures or health and safety risks surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The following text will first report on the 2022 South Asia SSG Forum, followed by the respective reports for Southeast and East Asia.

The 2022 South Asia SSG Forum was divided into four sessions. The first session considered shared climate security challenges in South Asia and potential responses. This was followed by a session on cyber security that similarly considered cyber threats to the region along with measures that should be taken as a result. The third session of the sub-regional forum featured a briefing on the situation in Afghanistan one year after the Taliban takeover. Finally, the last session of the sub-regional forum covered the politicisation of the security sector in the states of South Asia, its consequences and how to address it.

Climate Security and SSG in South Asia

One of the four sessions of the South Asia forum was dedicated to the topic of climate security and its implications for SSG. The associates from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were able to share the climate security challenges their countries face, and common challenges and potential entry points and activities were then discussed.

Shared challenges. Experts agreed that climate change leads to a variety of security threats for the countries of South Asia. Glacial weather variability leads to storms, heatwaves, super cyclones and an increase in mean surface temperatures, impacting water flow in the rivers of the Hindu Kush-Himalaya region and Indus basin and causing droughts.. Climate challenges are also developmental issues hence efforts need to be

⁸ The 2019 South Asia SSG Forum was held in Dhulikhel, Nepal from 5-7 September, the 2019 Southeast Asia SSG Forum was held in Manila, Philippines from 7-9 October, and the 2019 East Asia SSG Forum was held in Seoul, South Korea from 14-16 November. All of the 2020 and 2021 forums had to be held virtually due to inability to travel during COVID-19 lockdowns.

taken to mitigate the biggest challenge of carbon emission through use of renewable energies like solar, wind and tidal energies. India is a pioneer in solar energy and can help the region. Furthermore, there is a need to protect the environment, especially of the Himalayas, and the rich biodiversity of the region. Due to lack of mitigation efforts in the region there has been an increase in the frequency of natural hazards leading to floods and tsunamis as well as drought aggravating population displacement and both interstate and intrastate rivalries.

Human displacement and migration will be a major challenge for countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In Bangladesh, rising sea levels is the biggest problem as the country could lose 20 percent of its land mass, with policy studies showing that 35 million people could be displaced. As trans-boundary migration would take place, this would become a regional issue as well. The Indian-Bangladeshi border is completely fenced, so climate displacement would contribute to illegal migration and deaths at the border.

Pakistan also mentioned the huge displacement from rural to urban areas and that torrential rains have started unprecedented migration, which is difficult for the government to handle as strategic planning was not done; some efforts are being taken now which will take time. More rainfall in the wet season and less in the summer results in both flooding and draughts. Flooding has destroyed orchids and farmlands, impacting the agricultural industry. There will be a delay between demand and supply which could ultimately lead to radicalisation, as some radical groups are already present in Pakistan.

In the Maldives rising sea levels pose a serious problem. The islands are vulnerable; water causes erosion because artificial harbours have not been created systematically. To prevent this erosion rocks are brought from abroad and placed on the coastline, a temporary and unsustainable measure. Furthermore, many people come to the capital city of Malé from outer islands and Malé does not have the capacity to sustain this migration due to limited land availability. This results in conflict between the people who come to Malé and local residents. The government has tried to settle migrants on reclaimed land, but land reclamation incurs financial costs, and the subsequent increased taxation is resented.

Potential activities. With these challenges in mind, the experts of the sub-regional network discussed potential activities on climate security. One proposal was that each institution could conduct a climate threat mapping, as well as organize multisectoral discussions at the NWG meetings. At the regional level, it was suggested that climate

change could be mainstreamed in the discussions held at regional fora especially the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Initiative (BBIN). It was also proposed that experts from across the region could be brought together for webinars and joint papers.

Cyber Security Governance in South Asia

The second session of the South Asia forum addressed cyber security and cyber SSG/R. Two experts were invited to offer virtual presentations. Mr Ammar Jaffri is the former Additional Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency of Pakistan and leads the Blockchain Center of Pakistan and the project Digital Pakistan, under which he leads a number of national and international initiatives on cyber security, emerging technologies, and related topics. Major General P. K. Mallick is a Fellow of the Institute of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers and led the Defence Cyber Agency (formerly the Defence Information Assurance Research Agency) in India. Following inputs by these two experts on cyber security, the South Asia network associates discussed shared challenges and entry points for SSG/R programming.

Shared challenges. Experts were invited to this session to present on cyber security, which provided a basis for network associates to discuss a number of common cyber threats that the countries of South Asia face. The first of these was the accelerated adoption of digital technology over a short span of time without concurrent growth in institutional capability. Other threats mentioned included ransomware, fake accounts, deep fakes, and other instances of cybercrime, the attribution of which is often difficult for countries lacking technical capabilities and due to the transnational nature of cybercrime. This transnational nature of the flow of data and information in cyberspace also introduces legal and juridical complexities. It was also pointed out that governments face the dilemma of needing to balance international human rights obligations with national security concerns. The lack of robust law enforcement mechanisms was also discussed; although the police are the first responders to cybercrime, their capabilities and capacities need to be improved. Detailed forensics are often missing due to a lack of technical understanding and chains of custody are not followed.

The state of SSG in the cyber domain in specific South Asian countries was also discussed. India has started training first responders and it is mandatory to have cyber skill officers in government offices. A data privacy bill has been drafted although it is pending in

parliament. In Pakistan every organization has been told to cooperate on cyber security and the police force and the chain of custody are being streamlined. While Sri Lanka had been previously working on data protection, the government has since perceived social media as a threat and as a result is weaponizing the legal system to control the population. In the Maldives digitalisation in the private sector has increased, especially in the banking sector. Banking firms are expected to address their cyber vulnerabilities and the telecommunication sector to address the vulnerability of phones and emails. Maldivians have a national identity card which is digitised and there is a nonspecific law for privacy of data. However, there is no comprehensive mechanism to counter cyber threats.

Potential Activities. Participants felt that the security sectors of South Asia need to undergo reform in terms of legislation, transparency, greater public-private cooperation, accountability particularly of the private sector in strict assessment and mitigation of cyber vulnerabilities, effective policing especially controlling mis- and disinformation through rapid action teams, and efficient oversight committees specifically when fundamental laws and national interests are in conflict. It was also felt that cyber awareness campaigns should be held, and capacity building supported, by introducing cyber concepts early in education including in universities and certification courses.

It was proposed that each country should, in their NWG meetings, first do a cyber security threat mapping, and then discuss capacity building, review of cyber laws, regulatory frameworks, public-private cooperation, and how to engage chambers of commerce as well as the banking, telecommunications, and education sectors.

Regarding potential regional activities there were two views. One was to have cooperation at the SAARC level by creating a SAARC computer emergency response team. A second view was to have cooperation at the BIMSTEC and BBIN levels. It was also suggested that cyber drills could be carried out between South Asian states, and that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the cyber domain could be developed. Workshops to build capabilities at the grassroots level and study best practices and other institutional structures were also suggested.

Afghanistan: One Year of Taliban Rule

Fall 2022 marked one year since the Taliban takeover, and the forum took the opportunity to review the current situation in terms of human rights, women's education, the growing humanitarian crisis, and grounds for terrorist activity. Associates discussed the possibility

of engaging with the Taliban and whether there would be any room for improvement towards good SSG.

First, the SSG associate from Afghanistan gave a briefing on the situation in Afghanistan, covering a broad range of issues. The first of these was the violation of basic human rights by the Taliban. According to a UN report, as of 20 July 2022, there have been 160 extrajudicial killings, 56 instances of torture, and 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions. The Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan was dissolved by the Taliban in May 2022. Women are not allowed to work in the government or media, and freedom of expression has been restricted. Local and indigenous people of northeast Afghanistan are being forcefully driven out of their homes and their homes are being given to Taliban followers and allies.

In terms of education, girls are banned from schools after the sixth grade. The establishment of "madrasas", or religious schools, is increasing, facilitating recruitment for the Taliban. The systematic replacement of female teachers, revision of school curriculum such as the replacement of science with religious subjects, and radicalisation through education were mentioned as additional worrying developments.

With regard to health, humanitarian aid to Afghanistan has been greatly reduced following the Taliban takeover. The Sehatmandi programme, which provides essential primary care services including maternal, neonatal, and child health is underfunded due to the Taliban takeover. Clinics are facing severe shortages of medicine and equipment and medical staff have not received their salaries for months.

According to the United States Institute of Peace, the economy has shrunk by 30 percent since the takeover.⁹ The international community has stopped funding Afghanistan as a result of the takeover, whereas it previously provided more than 8 billion per year. Economic sanctions and frozen assets of the central bank are additional economic consequences of the takeover, although the United States recently declared that frozen assets will be released. Revenue collection at border crossings has positively improved but import rates have declined dramatically. There is no transparency in the process of budget expenditure. Worryingly, as much as 97 percent of the population is at risk of dropping below the poverty line. Humanitarian aid, while more limited, is still being provided by international donor agencies and NGOs.

⁹ William Byrd (2022) "One Year Later, Taliban Unable to Reverse Afghanistan's Economic Decline", *United States Institute of Peace*, 8 August, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/08/one-year-later-taliban-unable-reverse-afghanistans-economic-decline>.

Regarding terrorism, while under the Doha agreement the Taliban promised not to harbour terrorist organisations in Afghanistan, a UN report from June 2022 concluded that al-Qaeda has established a foothold in the country. Ayman Al-Zawahri was killed in Kabul on 29 August 2022 and many of the cabinet members of the Taliban are on the UN Blacklist. The international community is concerned that Afghanistan once again will become a safe haven for international terrorist organizations. Pakistan's prime minister shared his concerns at the UN regarding the operation of international terrorist organisations such as ISIS-K and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan as well as al-Qaeda, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Afghanistan under the Taliban.

No country has recognized the Taliban, which has re-established the emirate system of governance, as an official government. All key government posts are held by people of Pashtun ethnicity. The UN Security Council has asked the Taliban to establish an inclusive government where representatives of all the ethnicities of the country are present at every level of the government. This demand is one of the conditions for international recognition. Women have no role in the leadership nor at any level of the regime. All cabinet member positions, those of their deputies, and other senior positions are given to Mullahs. Moreover, basic services are not provided to the citizens and the justice system is crippled.

Potential Activities. One suggestion was to establish a back-door channel of communication with the leaders of the Taliban with the support of the network's Pakistan-based partner associate. This could provide an entry point for DCAF in terms of future engagement in the region. All SSG associates agreed that it would be difficult to implement any kind of activity at the moment in Afghanistan. Another potential activity suggested was to conduct a detailed study on lessons learned and good practices based on the past 20 years of SSR in Afghanistan. This could be a useful exercise with the help of actors in the region, such as foreign policy and security experts, who could provide future lessons for SSR programming.

The Politicisation of the Security Sector and Its Implications

South Asian states have witnessed deep politicisation of their security sectors which has affected security provision, management, and oversight. The fourth thematic session of the South Asia SSG Forum focused on the ways in which security sectors are politicized, the way this undermines SSG/R, and ideas for countering the negative effects of politicisation.

Security sector politicisation in national contexts. Sri Lanka has nearly 300,000 military personnel, and 15 percent of government expenditure goes towards the military, so one challenge is to downsize. The military is getting increasingly involved in civilian administration and infrastructure projects such as the construction of hospitals and roads, but its lack of expertise and efficiency compared to its civilian counterparts is leading to quality control and sustainability issues. Because of human rights violations, UN peacekeeping assignments were also not given to Sri Lanka. Politicians have also been trying to misuse the legal system to monitor mass movements and curb civil liberties.

In Pakistan, politicians ask for the best appointments to be given to their preferred candidates, especially in the police, with a failure to acquiesce to these requests potentially leading to being transferred out. The military has also been accused of interfering in politics, but Imran Khan's removal as prime minister was not seen as an instance of such interference.

In Bangladesh, politicians lack democratic mandates as elections are not free and fair due to electoral manipulation. The police have been politicised and there are cases of forced disappearance. Four commanders have been put on the United States' sanctions list. The military and police have extensive judicial power and are involved in many civilian contracts, thus creating a deep state. This deep state does not allow the democratic structures of the country to function properly.

In the Maldives, the police and the army have taken sides during political crises. Many within these security institutions dislike the democratic government, and Islamic extremism has increased due to their patronage as some are sympathisers of radical groups. However due to the 2020 Police Service Act changes have materialised and the present government is able to control the situation.

India does not face any such challenge as the judiciary is strong and fair elections are held periodically. However, the common problem of corruption faced by most democracies is visible. Due to differences between central and state governments, some challenges in the implementation of policies are encountered.

How politicisation of the security sector undermines SSG/R. It was agreed that there has been politicisation and polarisation of the security sectors in South Asia. Oversight actors are becoming narrowly political and losing national objectivity. Furthermore, misuse of the legal system and its gradual erosion are creating apprehension among

the populations of South Asia and are undermining the credibility of the security sector. Elected autocracies are prevalent in the region due to political leaders hijacking the electoral process, political illiteracy, and lack of political democratic culture. Within the security sector, job security is threatened if neutral objectivity is maintained. Politicisation of the security sector has also led to forced disappearances, persecution, and in extreme cases extrajudicial killings.

The way forward. The experts agreed on broad ways to counteract the negative effects of politicisation, such as maintaining the neutrality of oversight actors, striving for an apolitical security sector, and enhancing the role of civil society and the media. It was noted that democratic processes, and the integrity of the security sector, are not completely broken despite setbacks and continue to perform the basic purpose of providing safety. The need for a graduated and persistent effort was underlined and it was stressed that long-term processes should have continuity and should not revert to previous starting points. International institutions also need to maintain continuous engagement.

On more concrete measures, experts stated that it was important to find critical support in political groups who understand SSG/R and can act as catalysts. The role of social media and civil society was once again underlined, as potential champions who can voice SSG concerns. Social media, influencers, and digital platforms as well as other forms of media can be used to communicate the need for reform and continue to sensitize the South Asian public on this issue. Associates agreed on the need to create spaces for dialogue and a favourable SSG ecosystem. It was also agreed that institutions should remain consistent in their engagements rather than withdrawing, and that best practices should be brought forward, both regionally and internationally.



SSG Associates (left to right) from South Korea, Brunei, Indonesia, Bangladesh and the Philippines pose for a camera moment in between sessions. Photo: DCAF.

Southeast Asia Sub-Regional SSG Forum

Concurrent to the 2022 South Asia SSG Forum, the Southeast and East Asia forums also took place. There were three sessions in the Southeast Asia forum. The first was a double session on the roles and responsibilities of civil society organisations, and the challenges, opportunities and entry points for their activity in SSG/R. The next session was on the security impacts of climate change and how oversight actors and local communities can help ensure transparency and accountability on security providers' impacts on the climate. Finally, the last session provided associates with a briefing on the current situation in Myanmar, followed by a discussion on how Southeast Asian countries can continue to support SSG/R in Myanmar and the role of ASEAN.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Civil Society Organisations in SSG/R

Due to the level of interest in the topic, the Southeast Asia SSG Forum dedicated two sessions' worth of time to the topic of the roles and responsibilities civil society organisations have in SSG/R. The session started with presentations in plenary by DCAF, the associate from the Philippines, and the associate from Timor-Leste, after which the participants were divided into breakout working groups centred on three guiding questions and reported back to the plenary afterward.

First, the presentation by DCAF considered who should be categorised under the term "civil society" for the purposes of this session. A wide definition was settled on, including all groups representing civil society such as religious groups, sports and leisure clubs, charities, and think tanks. Civil society can provide invaluable support to good SSG because it creates a platform for public opinions on the quality and needs of security provision.¹⁰ DCAF presented the work it has done on the topic of civil society and SSG/R, including two concept notes submitted to the EU in collaboration the network's partner institution from Timor-Leste. Currently, there is high interest from donors on the role that civil society can play in SEA to improve SSG/R and therefore working on this topic, beyond being highly relevant, could also trigger access to funding. Next, presentations were given by the associates from the Philippines and Timor-Leste on challenges and opportunities for civil society in their respective countries.

¹⁰ DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, *Civil Society: Roles and Responsibilities in Good Security Sector Governance*, SSR Backgrounder Series, 2019, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_17_Civil%20Society_0.pdf.

The Southeast Asia network was divided into small working groups to reflect on the three following questions:

- What is the existing space for civil society to weigh in on SSG/R in each country?
- Can you identify some common challenges and opportunities?
- Can you highlight some examples of strategies that have worked?

Lack of oversight mechanisms. Four key conclusions emerged from the breakout groups. First, there is an overall lack of strong, fully functional oversight mechanisms in Southeast Asian nations, both at the state and non-state levels, which makes it difficult for civil society to play its role. This is made worse by the general shrinking of democratic space and by the increasing direct and indirect involvement of state security institutions, mostly the armed forces, into politics. However, as civil society is able to be flexible and innovative in its actions, an example being contemporary media informing the population of violations and raising awareness about their rights, it often has better opportunities to carry out oversight functions than state oversight mechanisms.

Potential of youth. The second takeaway from the breakout group discussions was that youth can play an important role in preventing coups and democratic backsliding. To do so, however, they need to be engaged and given as much political space as possible.

Successful strategies. One strategy the group has often found to be successful is for civil society to approach state decision makers or state security institution officials more informally. For example, in some countries, state security actors are invited to academic forums and private events where they might feel more at ease or comfortable to debate security matters. Also, it has proved successful to work with middle-ranked officers who have the potential to reach decision-making authority in the long term. Those in academia regularly have opportunities to reach positions with decision-making authority through additional training from governmental or private institutions. Finally, civil society can afford more time to achieve its objectives as it has developed coping mechanisms that allow it to be active and seize opportunities for expansion while simultaneously being very low profile in turbulent times. This is also why it is crucial for the international community to support civil society organizations in the region even when the democratic space is extremely limited so that they can ensure continuity of action.

Based on these discussions, the Southeast Asia network developed a matrix of activities for civil society that could help promote SSG/R in different contexts: realistic and

pragmatic activities where political space is limited, and ambitious activities in countries where the political space is more significant. For each, options were given for short-term or low-budget environments, as well as for long-term or high-budget environments. The results are presented in the table, below. One of the primary ideas which emerged from this session was the importance of engaging youth to reach future leaders who can sustain human rights messaging in the long-term. This could be done in many ways, including reaching youth via social media and podcasts, or promoting human rights in the academic sphere via student conferences, workshops, or fellowship programmes.



A working group session by the Southeast Asian SSG associates during the 2022 Southeast Asia SSG Forum. Photo: DCAF.



Bali's splendid natural beauty led to recurring discussions on the roles and responsibilities of security sectors with regards to environmental protection and climate change. Photos: DCAF.

	Limited political space	More political space
Short term/ low budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight the role of youth and, relatedly, produce both regionally and nationally focused podcasts and instrumentalise social media and audio-visual media such as TikTok and vox pops. Engage government actors in dialogue wherever possible, such as with coffee talks with policymakers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight the role of youth and, relatedly, produce both regionally and nationally focused podcasts and instrumentalise social media and audio-visual media such as TikTok and vox pops. Engage and support media and journalists. Engage students by incorporating SSG/R into educational curricula. Produce research products: independent reports, short 1-2 pagers, or community perspective pieces. Advise on necessary specific legal reforms. Hold focus group discussions, coffee talks, and presentations with expert advisory staff such as parliamentarians and policymakers.
Long term/ ambitious budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students by holding conferences or establishing a fellowship programme. Identify reform-minded actors and specifically engage with them. Engage with the military with training programmes. Approach less contentious, non-traditional security threats such as climate change. Expand SSR network via peer exchanges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a university programme or hold dialogues and forums with students, both intra- and inter-regional. Hold “roadshows” or, in other words, hold regional awareness-raising campaigns in different universities. Invite fellows from places with more limited political space. Hold security sector dialogues and educational workshops. Campaign on awareness/capacity building. Provide military education to raise awareness on human rights.

Climate Change and SSG in Southeast Asia

Climate change has a massive impact on Southeast Asian countries. Millions have been affected by climate change-induced natural disasters, and many populations such as those living near waterways have had to migrate to avoid the effects of climate change. Jakarta has been ranked by several indices as the world’s most environmentally vulnerable metropolis.¹¹ Due to the security impacts of climate change in Southeast Asia, a session of the forum was dedicated to reviewing the work done by DCAF and the network so far in the area of climate change and SSG, and the ways in which security providers could increase transparency and communication on their impacts on climate change.

To contextualise this session, DCAF gave a background presentation summarising its work on the topic, such as the expert workshop held from 12-14 October 2021 and the ensuing SSG Thematic Brief, called “Climate Security and the Security Sector in Southeast Asia”. Some of the key findings and recommendations that were at the nexus of SSG/R and climate change were a direct responsibility of state security providers in reducing carbon emissions and a necessity for disaster responses to be inclusive of local security sector actors. Participants were then split into two breakout groups to reflect on the recommendations and discuss what concrete actions could be taken to improve the role of security actors in mitigating climate change-induced insecurities. Each group focused on a different set of recommendations.

Group one considered aspects relating to security providers’ transparency and accountability, based on the following questions:

- How could we ensure that state security providers are more transparent about their impact on the climate?
- How do we increase the range of oversight bodies to make sure everyone is included, and that the system is more efficient?
- What are good examples and are they replicable?

¹¹ Divya Karyza, *Jakarta ranked world’s most environmentally vulnerable city*, The Jakarta Post, 16 May 2021, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2021/05/16/jakarta-ranked-worlds-most-environmentally-vulnerable-city.html>; *Asia is home to 99 of world’s 100 most vulnerable cities*, The Guardian, 13 May 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2021/may/13/asia-is-home-to-99-of-worlds-100-most-vulnerable-cities>.

Group two focused on findings related to communication based on the following questions:

- How can we ensure that a strong communication exists between local communities/local non-state security actors and state security providers?
- How do we ensure that local communities are involved in climate security related reforms? Specifically, those who are in vulnerable and marginalised groups?
- Are we aware of any good examples that could be replicated?

Awareness-raising. In sharing the findings from the breakout discussions, the group noted how little it knew about the role security sector actors can play in mitigating the threats emanating from climate change. While climate change has become a well-known topic of which everyone had a basic understanding, there was a real need for the SSG network to increase its own knowledge to be able to design a concrete action plan that stood at the nexus of climate change activities and SSG/R. The workshop held from 12-14 October 2021 is an example of the type of activity that could be used to improve the knowledge of this nexus, but these future workshops must be developed to be more concise and targeted more specifically to certain aspects of the topic.

Involvement of local security actors. The group generally agreed that governments and state security actors should involve local security actors more, as they are often the first respondents when disasters strike and play a crucial role in developing disaster prevention measures and helping communities cope with the effects of climate disasters and threats. They need to be adequately involved in any mechanisms created by the governments to promote climate security.

Oversight mechanisms. It is also very important to have strong and qualified oversight mechanisms in place. A region-wide approach, based on learning from each other and helping each other would thus be important and beneficial. Existing formal oversight bodies such as parliaments and parliamentary committees should be briefed about climate security and specific SSR needs related to the topic. Moreover, where existing oversight bodies lack the necessary capacity to expand in such a way that it encompasses the full understanding of the subject, the range of oversight actors brought into decision-making need to be increased.

Myanmar

The final session of this Southeast Asia SSG Forum centred on the military coup in Myanmar. The session began with an update from the network's Myanmar associate on the current situation and an analysis from the Southeast Asia sub-regional associate on the political implications for Southeast Asia and specifically ASEAN. DCAF also presented on its current activities in relation to Myanmar.

Situation update. At the time of the forums, there were over 350 small, local people's defence forces (PDFs), each of approx. 200 individuals, with a combined force of 70,000. Armed opposition is making progress in controlling territory. However, the National Unity Government struggles with establishing an efficient chain of command or coordinating the PDFs. Coordination and collaboration between PDFs and the ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) at the command level is not strong. There are over 100 government militia groups in the central plains of Myanmar, with approximately 30,000 personnel, who have a more centralised command and operate along with Tatmadaw forces.

While the central heartland has become the main stage of the armed conflict, fighting has also resumed in Northwest Rakhine State with attacks against border police outposts and the formation of militias. The humanitarian crisis is deepening with the civil population paying a high price caught between Tatmadaw using indiscriminate targeting strategies and the conflict with the PDF and EAOs. These include large scale burning of villages and settlements in what is considered enemy areas. In an increasing number of cases, local PDFs tend to also target civilians who are perceived as informers or collaborators to the Tatmadaw. The hostilities are mounting distrust between and among local communities.

ASEAN. De-escalation of the conflict and a real effort to protect civilians from all sides is the utmost priority. Any solution to the conflict will need to involve the whole array of stakeholders from both sides, which is likely to take a long time. A second round of peace talks with some of the main ethnic armed organisations has taken place. The Five-Point Consensus has not brought results, but remains the main basis of negotiation for ASEAN. There was hope that the Cambodian chairmanship of the ASEAN could help find backchannels to negotiate with the Tatmadaw due to the good relationship between the respective leaders, but no breakthrough happened. It is unlikely that ASEAN will push much more strongly anytime soon even though some individual countries such as Malaysia are increasingly vocal. Still, despite the lack of any breakthrough, some level of dialogue continues.

Following these input presentations, the participants were separated into two groups to reflect on the following questions:

- What can each country do, using its status and influence in SEA to push for greater ASEAN involvement in Myanmar's crisis, and how can our network support/provide added value?
- How can we promote/support SSG/R in Myanmar despite the lack of political space?

During the discussions, the following main points emerged:

Respect for international humanitarian law. It is important to try and reduce the devastating impacts on the civilian population, so working with all parties to the conflict on topics such as international humanitarian law is very important. Leaflets on topics such as protection of civilians could be distributed to armed groups. Taking it a step further, it is important to support armed groups in developing clear codes of ethics, rules of engagement, military manuals, etc. The PDFs fall variably under the command of the National Unity Government, the EAOs, or at times a combination of the two and at times operate entirely independently. It would be important to define clear command responsibility. In terms of incentivisation to respect international humanitarian law, parties should prepare for future state-building and recall the legitimacy that is drawn from reducing civilian casualties and other impacts of armed conflict.

Awareness-raising. CSOs in Thailand have attempted to raise awareness across the region on the Myanmar conflict. This has been done so that individuals are encouraged to put more pressure on their respective governments to have a stronger stance towards Myanmar either directly or by encouraging ASEAN to be more proactive. Awareness-raising can be done through specific forum and seminar events, or more informally via CSO's networks. The idea is not only to encourage civil society to advocate more but also to ensure they have a good grasp of the actual situation in Myanmar to advocate more efficiently.

Advocacy. In most countries in SEA, lobbying towards the governments on this topic would need to be done informally and via backchannels, for example by using the privileged position of some academics who might be consulted by governments. It would be important to carry out advocacy that calls for collaboration between current, but also future, chair countries of ASEAN much like the "Troika" of ASEAN where the past, present,

and future chairs within a three-year time period work together on specific files. At the time of the forums, these countries were Brunei, Cambodia, and Indonesia. At the same time, it is understandable that ASEAN needs to be pragmatic in its relationship with the Tatmadaw, as without some level of engagement the situation is unlikely to progress, and pressure and ostracization alone would not be likely to work. Finally, it would be good if ASEAN were able to develop a mechanism that would allow it to investigate if and/or when weapons are being provided illegally to parties of an internal conflict.



More snippets from the 2022 Asia-Pacific SSG Forum (top, middle) as well as the 2022 East Asia SSG Forum (below). Photos: DCAF.

East Asia Sub-Regional SSG Forum

The 2022 Sub-regional East Asia SSG Forum began with a session on Cross-Strait Relations: The Implications for Security in East Asia. Taiwan presented its analysis of the rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait based on the recent crisis. It was then debated by China and discussed with others such as South Korea and Mongolia. In the session on cyber security, the associates held plenary and breakout group discussions on the roles of domestic, state and international actors and areas for cooperation on regional and international governance. The third session consisted of a presentation by South Korea on the North Korean nuclear threat, followed by reflection and deliberation on other national perspectives to find common interests for regional governance. Fourth, the associates held plenary and breakout group discussions on the impact of climate change on SSG/R in the last session.

Cross-Strait Relations: Implications for Security in East Asia

The first session of the 2022 East Asia SSG Forum was on relations between Mainland China and Taiwan. Both Mainland China and Taiwan gave presentations, after which the associates divided into breakout groups to discuss the implications of cross-strait tensions on SSG in East Asia, any activities neighbouring East Asian states could take in case of escalation, and the role of international organisations/foundations including DCAF.

Presentation by Taiwan. Of the four crises in the Taiwan Strait, the recent rise in tensions from Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan and China's military exercise in August 2022 showed how the median line has become insignificant and how regional actors, especially the United States, reacted to the escalation. As it has self-reliant military technology, including its own satellites to guide GPS systems, China can operate and engage beyond its 1996 limitations - when it had relied on the United States' satellites. Today, as China's naval power has expanded, the northern and southern straits of Taiwan remain chokepoints. China conducts exercises of anti-submarine warfare operations in the Taiwan banks for its territorial dominance in addition to the naval power projections as an expansionist. The USS Ronald Reagan was deployed 1,600 nautical miles from Taiwan. Based on the assessment of Taiwan, an escalation of the conflict can be prevented by establishing a hotline for communication between the two.

For Taiwan, any escalation of the tensions would pose a national security liability and economic albatross. China's strategy of coercing Taiwan by force, excluding Taiwan from the international community, luring by market, and pressuring Taiwan through Washington would have a bearing on East Asia. China's anti-access/aerial denial capabilities and missile system coverage have expanded along the island chain that stretches from East Asia to Southeast Asia. In response to China's enhanced capabilities, Taiwan can use air defence with the national network-centric warfare system.

To prevent a war, Taiwan emphasizes the need to: understand the differences between Taiwan and Mainland China; understand China with empathy; reduce anti-Chinese sentiment; establish a friendly atmosphere; and prevent minor incidents. DCAF and South Korea's NWG organized a meeting on "Enhancing Communication to Reduce Misjudgement" in Seoul, South Korea in support of de-escalating the tension in the Taiwan Strait.

Debate by China. Mainland China presented that the "one country, two systems" approach to peaceful reunification has been a persistent policy reflected in all Chinese official statements and publications. The "One China" policy has been endorsed either multilaterally by the international community via UN Resolution 2758 or bilaterally by most sovereign states around the world who establish diplomatic relations with China. China referred to its recent release of the white paper "The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era" to note China's intention to lay important groundwork for "peaceful reunification" and to "chart the course of cross-strait relations, safeguard peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits, and promote progress towards national reunification". Then, it emphasized the United States' exacerbation of cross-strait tensions, especially during the Trump administration, in an effort to change the status quo and deter unification. It also highlighted the significance of President Biden's vow to defend Taiwan. In sum, the presentation asserted a hollowing of the One China policy by the United States, and a change in status quo by the Biden and Tsai Ing-wen administrations.

While China has defined the conditions of use of force to limit the escalation to armed conflict, the United States instead supports the escalation and militarisation of the Taiwan Strait.

China questioned whether the escalation from tension to conflict and its future would be a war. Then, it commented that the United States conducted extensive disinformation

on China's activities, especially regarding the Taiwan Strait. It was noted that the cross-strait issue is a domestic matter, and not an international concern, as Taiwan is already a part of China under the One China policy. The presentation stated that the United States does not have a legal basis to intervene militarily under international law, recalling that the UN Charter only sets forth two exceptions to the general prohibition on use of force: self-defence or with the authorisation of the UN Security Council. Moreover, it was argued that protection of democracy does not have a legal basis for military action, and policy implementation and enforcement in domestic areas should not be viewed as an international matter. This is an effort of the United States to use Taiwan as a chokepoint and to deter China.

Discussion. Following the presentation and debate, associates discussed the following questions in breakout groups:

- How do the current cross strait tensions detract from or contribute to efforts to improve SSG in East Asia?
- In a hypothetical scenario where tensions reach a boiling point in the Taiwan Strait, what actions could different East Asian actors take to contribute to de-escalation?
- From a long-term perspective, what confidence-building measures can be performed in the region to reduce tensions?
- What role (if any) can organisations such as DCAF play to reduce tensions or to de-escalate the crisis?

Associates conveyed that regional SSG would be damaged in the short-term but could be improved with political engagement by international organizations/ mechanisms, such as the UN Security Council or the UN General Assembly, or regional actors and networks such as DCAF's Asia-Pacific network initiative. A few mentioned the possibility of demilitarisation and demarcation of the median line, but many agreed on establishing hot lines between the political and military leaderships of China and Taiwan as the next step under the One China policy. Regional actors can also provide neutral platforms for dialogue between mainland China and Taiwan. In the longer-term, international and regional actors such as DCAF can provide a regular multilateral multitrack dialogue.

South Korea stated that the escalation to tension in the Taiwan Strait would have security implications on the Korean Peninsula. It is largely concerned with the gap in the force capabilities of the US Forces Korea and Japan in case of the exercise of strategic

flexibility. The US can either redeploy or relocate its assets within the US Forces Korea and Japan to attend to the Taiwan Strait. In such an event, Korea would need to address its overextension and to either restructure its force or employ additional units to overcome the operational capability gap. China mentioned that it would violate international law if the United States' allies allowed it to use military bases on their territories.

Cyber Security Governance in East Asia

The next session was on cyber security governance in East Asia. The network agreed that challenges in governing cyberspace persist in the region. State and non-state actors want to play certain roles, but the limited strategic environment and narrow view of actors do not sufficiently contribute to integrated governance. In this regard, some experts suggested the need for joint capacity building for public-private partnerships, best practices, and legislation of cyber security based on the rule of law, freedom of access, transparency, and accountability. Another expert stressed the significance of education and training of next-generation leadership and policies to ensure flexible employment and working conditions for cyber and digital experts. Some experts referred to the establishment of a digital affairs ministry as a potential practice to address certain challenges.

South Korea referred to the publication of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission Report, which assesses current cyber threats, governance issues and practices in South Korea, as a way to capture the status quo. It also emphasized the effort to initiate a confidence-building mechanism, for example, through the UN Open-Ending Working Group and the UN Security Council Open Debate on Cyber Security. Japan stated that strategic communication in response to disinformation has become significant, as politicisation of cyberspace regulation can be an obstacle to political processes. China expressed the need for security-economy decoupling in the governance of cyberspace. For example, the United States blames China for cyber threats and technological exploitation. The effort to ban Chinese companies by the United States is a regional challenge, per the Strategic Competition Act, and a transnational data transfer remains important for free trade and economic cooperation.

Discussions were held in breakout groups on:

- How can international organizations, treaties, and forums contribute to improved cyber security?

- What areas of potential cooperation are there between the security sector of your country and the security sectors of other countries with regard to cyber security?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the actors that provide, manage, and oversee security when it comes to cyber security, especially considering the importance of the private sector in cyberspace?
- What is the state of public-private cooperation in your country in terms of cyber security?

The associates agreed on having cyberspace governance based on transparency and accountability, and protection of data property and access. They emphasized the use of international and regional actors and mechanisms, such as the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, DCAF, and the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Cyber Security, to ensure confidence-building, share best practices, and take collective action in an effort to establish regional governance on cyberspace. While the associates recognized the clear division of roles between policy and technology experts, it was suggested to include technology experts in the civil service to inform policy advisors and advise the policy decision-making process, thereby bridging the knowledge gap between the policy and technology circles.

North Korea: A Nuclear Flashpoint in East Asia

The third topic that the East Asia SSG Forum focused on was how militarisation and nuclear weapons testing impact SSG/R in the region, how good SSG can be encouraged in North Korea, and whether/how North Korea could be included in the East Asia SSG network.

Presentation by South Korea. In the presentation, South Korea provided an overview of the North Korean nuclear threat and its impact on regional actors. First, it provided the facts on North Korea's nuclear capabilities, including the nuclear tests and delivery systems. Then, it emphasized the significance of the recent legislation on pre-emptive strikes, mechanisms for denuclearisation, North Korea's perception on nuclear weapons, and sanctions. In addition, the presentation highlighted North Korea's behavioural pattern of coercion and bargaining and the Yoon administration's willingness to negotiate if North Korea shows true interest.

Discussion. Following the presentation by South Korea, the East Asia SSG network associates held a discussion on:

- What role can other countries in the region play to encourage or support negotiations on denuclearisation?
- What work can be done by institutions outside North Korea to encourage good SSG in North Korea?
- How would a nuclear test impact SSG/R in the region? How might it impact militarisation in South Korea and Japan? Could it distract from other SSG/R priorities, such as climate security? How might North Korea be incorporated into the Asia-Pacific SSG network? What implications would including a North Korean partner institution have?

There was agreement on how the impact of sanctions on North Korea has not been measured. Associates agreed that their role has been limited in either encouraging or supporting negotiations on denuclearisation and limiting diplomatic and military options. South Korea would stop any arms race as the impact of North Korean nuclear threats persists. All experts agreed that they would welcome North Korea into the present DCAF Asia-Pacific Network, but they also realised the difficulties in engaging North Korea.

Climate Change and SSG in East Asia

This session focused on the vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change, the relationship between an accountable security sector and climate security, and the possibilities for multilateral cooperation and reform activities.

Disasters such as droughts and flooding caused by climate change have major implications for SSG, especially due to the use of security services in response to the negative impacts. The urgent use of military personnel and equipment for disaster recovery, for example, suggests the need for SSR to ensure a clear division of roles. An effective coordination and planning of security sector services would be needed in the face of natural disasters and emergencies. Taiwan is required by its defence policy to commit its military personnel in support of recovery operations for disaster-ridden areas.

The Japan Self-Defense Forces are expected to support disaster prevention and recovery by the political leadership and public opinion. Japan's public perceives the role of the military as one of providing a wide range of public services, instead of national defence

alone. Veterans often complain about the improper use of the Japan Self-Defense Forces for disaster relief. As a result, the Ministry of Defense developed a policy to guide the appropriate use of the military in an effort to avoid overuse. Japan's political elites do not perceive the need to re-orient the military's role from disaster relief and pandemic support to defence purposes due to public support, especially since there is no civilian oversight on disaster relief. Considering the domestic political context, Japan seeks opportunities to send expedited units to provide disaster relief to the Pacific.

Different from Taiwan and Japan, South Korea has a civilian "control tower" for disaster prevention, relief, and recovery. The role of the military is therefore somewhat limited and only provides relief operations in the rear theatres. In addition, other security and public actors, such as the agencies for health, welfare, firefighting, rescue, forestry, the maritime domain, environment, and police, provide a greater range of services for disaster relief and recovery. Mongolia stated that its climate change challenges are drought, desertification, and degradation, which are different from those of island and coastal countries. Nevertheless, it said that the respective roles of the national emergency management agency and military are well defined in their role for disaster relief.

As China experiences a wide variety of natural disasters, the People's Liberation Army plays a role in providing relief and recovery services in China. It emphasized climate change as a global threat and pointed to the necessity of prioritising climate change in agenda setting. Western countries would need to re-prioritize their agendas. The Ukraine War, for instance, intensifies the shortage of food and energy resources, and exacerbates the impact of climate change in Asia and the Pacific. However, the EU's endorsement of AUKUS, the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, sets a bad precedent as Australia's nuclear proliferation activities do not necessarily reflect an agenda on climate change.

Conclusion

This marked the third occasion on which the Asia-Pacific region-wide and South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia sub-regional networks were each convened, and the first in-person forums that could take place since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These forums provided a platform for multilateral dialogue on experiences, good practices and lessons learned. Shared challenges and national- and regional-level entry points were identified, resulting in the development of concrete ideas for projects and activities to be taken forward to the donor community. Discussions were held on contemporary SSG/R topics such as maritime SSG/R, shrinking democratic spaces, the role of civil society, politicisation of the security sector, cyber security governance, the security impacts of climate change, North Korea and denuclearisation, and regional impacts from cross-strait relations.

The forums also allowed for reflecting on past activities and jointly addressing the priorities for the network in the coming years. Associates suggested that, although some topics have already been addressed by the network for example in thematic workshops, they can still be further explored under a closer lens. In particular, associates would be interested in specificities and sub-topics falling under cyber and maritime SSG. Other ideas included gender mainstreaming, the role of women in peacekeeping operations, and youth, peace and security.

Moving forward, the continuation of NWG meetings was identified as a priority for the network. The prospect of expansion of the network was also mentioned, as Bhutan, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam are not currently represented. Other next steps will be to build upon the momentum of the exchanges held throughout the region-wide and sub-regional forums, hold thematic workshops, capitalise on the SSR backgrounders, books, thematic briefs, and SSG update series published by the network, explore the prospect of expanding the network, and perhaps most importantly, develop and implement multi-country or national-level activities that utilise the network platform and promote SSG/R.

Annex. Programme of Asia-Pacific SSG Sub-Regional & Regional Forums 2022

Day	Programme
Wednesday - Saturday (21-24 September)	Arrival of DCAF team Local coordination and preparation
Sunday (25 Sep)	Arrival of SSG Associates throughout the day (some earlier arrivals, depending on flight availabilities) Dinner: Informal, open, depending on arrival
Monday (26 Sep)	<p>AP PLENARY FORUM</p> <p>FORUM DAY 1</p> <p>08:30-10:00 Session 1: Opening Session Introduction and programmes of AP and sub-regional forums</p> <p>10:00-10:30 Break</p> <p>10:30-12:00 Session 2: Sub-regional Network Introductions Overview and introductions of sub-regional networks: Introduction of associates and partner organisations, sub-regional networks' activities during past year</p> <p>12:00-13:30 Lunch</p>

PARALLEL SUB-REGIONAL SOUTH ASIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND EAST ASIA FORUMS		
<p>13:30-14:30 South Asia - Session 3a: Review and Updates on NWGs and Activities</p> <p>14:30-15:30 South Asia - Session 3b: Feedback and Evaluation Group Interview</p> <p>15:30-16:00 Break</p> <p>16:00-17:00 Session 4: Dissemination and Presentation of Network Publications (together with East Asia Group) Discussion on dissemination and presentation of Thematic Briefs, SSG Updates and other publications</p>	<p>13:30-14:30 Southeast Asia Session 3a: Review and Updates on NWGs and Activities</p> <p>14:30-15:30 Southeast Asia Session 3b: Dissemination and Presentation of Network Publications Discussion on dissemination and presentation of Thematic Briefs, SSG Updates and other publications</p> <p>15:30-16:00 Break</p> <p>16:00-17:00 Feedback and Evaluation Group Interview</p>	<p>13:30-14:30 East Asia - Session 3a: Feedback and Evaluation Group Interview</p> <p>14:30-15:30 East Asia - Session 3: Review and Updates on NWGs and Activities</p> <p>15:30-16:00 Break</p> <p>16:00-17:00 Session 4: Dissemination and Presentation of Network Publications (together with South Asia Group) Discussion on dissemination and presentation of Thematic Briefs, SSG Updates and other publications</p>
<p>18:00-20:00 Welcome dinner With short speeches by DCAF and sub-regional associates</p>		

<p>Tuesday (27 Sep)</p> <p>FORUM DAY 2</p>	<p>SUB-REGIONAL SOUTH ASIA SSG FORUM</p> <p>08:30-10:00 Session 1: Climate Change and Security Sector Governance in South Asia</p> <p>10:00-10:30 Break</p> <p>10:30-12:00 Session 2: Cyber Security Governance in South Asia</p> <p>12:00-13:30 Lunch</p> <p>13:30-15:00 Session 3: Afghanistan: One Year of Taliban Rule</p> <p>15:00-15:30 Break</p> <p>15:30-17:00 Session 4: The Politicisation of the Security Sector and its Implications</p> <p>18:00-20:00 Sub-regional Group Dinner</p>	<p>SUB-REGIONAL SOUTHEAST ASIA SSG FORUM</p> <p>08:30-10:00 Session 1: The Role of CSOs Combination of presentations, break-out groups and plenary discussions</p> <p>10:00-10:30 Break</p> <p>10:30-12:00 Session 1: The Role of CSOs cont'd</p> <p>12:00-13:30 Lunch</p> <p>13:30-15:00 Session 3: SSG/R Activities on Climate Security Designing actions/activities based on recommendations developed in Thematic Briefs</p> <p>15:00-15:30 Break</p> <p>15:30-17:00 Session 4: Myanmar</p> <p>18:00-20:00 Sub-regional Group Dinner</p>	<p>SUB-REGIONAL EAST ASIA SSG FORUM</p> <p>08:30-10:00 Session 1: Cross-Strait Relations: The Implications for Security in East Asia</p> <p>10:00-10:30 Break</p> <p>10:30-12:00 Session 2: Cyber Security Governance in East Asia</p> <p>12:00-13:30 Lunch</p> <p>13:30-15:00 Session 3: North Korea: A Nuclear Flashpoint in East Asia</p> <p>15:00-15:30 Break</p> <p>15:30-17:00 Session 4: Climate Change and Security Sector Governance in East Asia</p> <p>18:00-20:00 Sub-regional Group Dinner</p>
<p>Wednesday (28 Sep)</p> <p>FORUM DAY 3</p>	<p>INFORMAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NETWORK ACTIVITY</p> <p>08:15-21:00 Cultural tour, with ample opportunities for bilateral meetings among SSG associates, and SSG associates and DCAF team, including lunch</p> <p>21:00-23:00 Dinner</p>		

<p>Thursday (29 Sep)</p> <p>FORUM DAY 4</p>	<p>ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL SSG FORUM</p> <p>08:30-09:30 Session 5: Reporting back from East Asia Sub-Regional SSG Forum & Discussion</p> <p>09:30-09:45 Stretch Break</p> <p>09:45-10:45 Session 6: Reporting back from Southeast Asia Sub-Regional SSG Forum & Discussion</p> <p>10:45-11:00 Stretch Break</p> <p>11:00-12:00 Session 7: Reporting back from South Asia Sub-Regional SSG Forum & Discussion</p> <p>12:00-13:30 Lunch</p> <p>13:30-15:00 Session 8: Maritime Security Sector Governance and Reform</p> <p>15:00-15:30 Break</p> <p>15:30-17:00 Session 9: Proposed Regional and National Network Activities: Pitching SSG/R Initiatives to the Donor Community</p> <p>18:00-20:00 Dinner</p>
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<p>Friday (30 Sep)</p> <p>FORUM DAY 5</p>	<p>ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL SSG FORUM</p> <p>08:30-09:30 Session 10: Dissemination and Presentation of Network Publications Reporting back from 'Session 4' - joint discussion on dissemination and presentation of Thematic Briefs, SSG Updates and other publications</p> <p>09:30-10:00 Lunch</p> <p>10:00-12:00 Session 11: Shrinking Democratic Spaces and SSG/R</p> <p>12:00-13:30 Lunch</p> <p>13:30-15:00 Session 12: The EU's "Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia (ESIWA)" Project Discussion of the need, desire, and demand for the EU as security provider/security broker in the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific region</p> <p>15:00-15:30 Break</p> <p>15:30-17:00 Session 13: Outlook and Priorities for 2022, 2023, 2024 Breakout Groups and Plenary Discussion Evaluation</p> <p>18:00-20:00 Farewell Dinner: Closing and Farewell Comments</p>
<p>Saturday (01/10)</p>	<p>Departure of SSG Associates throughout the day</p>
<p>Sunday (02/10)</p>	<p>Departure of DCAF team</p>

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Geneva Centre
for Security Sector
Governance

About DCAF

DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and their people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and gender equality. Since its founding in 2000, DCAF has contributed to making peace and development more sustainable by assisting partner states, and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms. It creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, provides legal and policy advice and supports capacity-building of both state and non-state security sector stakeholders.

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