



REVIEW OF THE SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR) IMPLEMENTATION IN THE GAMBIA

FINAL REPORT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	- African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AU	- African Union
CEA	- Community Engagement and Accountability
CHIS	- Covert Human Intelligence Source
CRC	- Constitutional Review Committee
CRPD	- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	- Civil Society Organization
CSP	- Corporate Strategic Plan
DAC	- Development Assistance Committee
DCAF	- Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
DLEAG	- Drug Law Enforcement Agency
ECOMIG	- ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia
ECOWAS	- Economic Community of West African States
EU	- European Union
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
GAF	- Gambia Armed Forces
GFRS	- Gambia Fire and Rescue Service
GID	- Gambia Immigration Department
GMTRFL	- General Migration Topics and Restoring Family Link
GNG -	- Gambia National Guard
GPF -	- Gambia Police Force
GPS	- Gambia Prisons Service
GRA	- Gambia Revenue Authority
HQ	- Headquarters
HRPSU	- Human Rights and Professional Standards Unit
IBM	- Integrated Border Management
IEC	- Information, Education and Communication
IGP	- Inspector General of Police
ISTAR	- Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance
KPI	- Key Performance Indicator
LPG	- Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization
M&E	- Monitoring and Evaluation
MHPSS	- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIDAS	- Migration Information and Data Analysis System
MOD	- Ministry of Defence
MOFEA	- Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MOI	- Ministry of Interior
MOJ	- Ministry of Justice
NA	- National Assembly
NALA	- National Agency for Legal Aid
NCCE	- National Council for Civic Education
NHRC	- National Human Rights Commission
NIA	- National Intelligence Agency
NSC	- National Security Council
NSP	- National Security Policy
NSS	- National Security Strategy
NSSR	- National Security Sector Reform
ONS	- Office of the National Security
OP	- Office of the President
PMD	- Performance management data
PSDC	- Professional Standard and Disciplinary Committee



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RPA	- Rapid Participatory Assessment
SCDS	- Standing Committee on Defence and Security
SGBV	- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIS	- State Intelligence Service
SMT	- Senior Management Team
SOP -	- Standard Operating Procedures
SSR	- Security Sector Reform
SSRS	- Security Sector Reform Strategy
TACOS	- Terms and Conditions of Service
TOE	- Table of Organization and Equipment
TOT	- Training Of Trainers
TTRC	- Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission
UN	- United Nations
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
WANEP	- West African Network for Peacebuilding
WAPIS	- Databases/AFIS



SECTION 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gambia embarked on an extensive Security Sector Reform (SSR) process in 2017 to address the legacy of a 22-year authoritarian regime that left the security sector highly politicized, poorly managed, and unable to effectively serve the public in a democratic context.

The Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR) Strategy is an initiative designed to restructure, modernize, and enhance the effectiveness of the country's security apparatus, ensuring it operates with greater accountability and in alignment with democratic principles. This reform is crucial for building public trust, reinforcing the rule of law, and ensuring that security forces operate within a clear legal and ethical framework, upholding the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

Covering the period from 2020 to 2024, the SSR Strategy is grounded in the strategic objectives outlined in The Gambia's National Security Strategy and recommendations from the 2017 Security Sector Assessment. It serves as the central implementation framework for transforming security institutions to be more responsive to the needs of the population and better equipped to safeguard national stability.

The SSR Strategy is not only a technical reform effort but also a critical step towards fostering a culture of good governance within security institutions. It seeks to create a security sector that is both efficient and accountable, with a focus on strengthening civilian oversight, improving the professionalism of security personnel, and ensuring that the security forces are fully committed to serving the public in accordance with the principles of justice, fairness, and respect for human rights¹. This strategic initiative is essential for ensuring the long-term security, stability, and prosperity of The Gambia.

Under the leadership of His Excellency, President Adama Barrow, and with the support of international partners such as the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), the strategy was developed to create a cohesive framework that tackles structural, policy, and operational challenges.

The primary mission of the SSR initiative is to develop a security sector that upholds democratic governance, respects human rights, and effectively meets the security needs of The Gambia. To ensure meaningful progress, the strategy is organized around five strategic priorities, focusing on:

- 1. Post-Authoritarian Legacies:** Transitioning from past autocratic practices and establishing systems to secure public trust and safety.
- 2. Security Governance Frameworks:** Developing overarching legal and policy frameworks to ensure coordination across national, regional, and district levels.
- 3. Civil Management and Oversight:** Empowering civilian institutions for oversight to prevent executive overreach and promote transparency.
- 4. Cross-Cutting Issues:** Addressing pervasive issues such as gender representation, corruption, and human rights within the sector.

¹ Security Sector Reform Strategy (SSRS) of The Gambia 2020-2024



- 5. Institutional Reforms:** Specific reforms within individual institutions like the Armed Forces, Police, Immigration, and Intelligence agencies to right-size and professionalize these entities.²

1.1 Summary of Key Findings

Capacity Building and Oversight: Civil oversight bodies have benefited from capacity-building resources, strengthening accountability and transparency mechanisms within the sector. Significant progress has been made in dismantling repressive structures within most security institutions, promoting compliance with human rights and enhancing overall accountability. However, these advancements have encountered funding constraints and implementation challenges that impact their full effectiveness.

Enhanced Policy Frameworks: The development and launch of the National Security Policy (NSP) in 2019 and the National Security Strategy (NSS) in 2020 have provided essential frameworks for Security Sector Reform (SSR), establishing foundational policies that enhance security practices and align institutional mandates. Reports indicate significant progress in laying legal foundations, with comprehensive frameworks for security policy and strategy now in place. Although fully integrated legal structures have yet to be achieved due to slow legislative processes, notable improvements have been made in transparency, accountability, and active oversight through monitoring mechanisms established by relevant oversight bodies.

Gender and Human Rights Mainstreaming: The implementation of gender-specific programs and human rights initiatives has fostered inclusivity and addressed institutional needs. Efforts to mainstream human rights have further reinforced this approach by integrating rights-based practices across the security institutions. Significant progress has been made in raising awareness and advocating for the advancement of gender-equitable representation especially at the decision-making level within the security institutions in The Gambia.

Institutional Restructuring: Initiatives aimed at revamping institutions have played a critical role in strengthening governance structures. Key efforts include the establishment of the Office of National Security (ONS), to improve coordination and strategic oversight of national security policies. Additionally, the development and drafting of legal mandates for the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior have provided clearer guidelines and legal authority, enhancing their operational efficiency and accountability. These measures have collectively reinforced institutional transparency, improved inter-agency collaboration, and ensured that security and defence policies align with broader national governance goals.

1.2 Challenges Encountered Implementing the SSR

- 1. Political Commitment and Ownership:** While there is political commitment to implementing the SSR Strategy, there is an urgent need to accelerate the execution of key commitments arising from the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TTRC) and the recommendations from the SSR

² Security Sector Reform Strategy (SSRS) of The Gambia



Assessment. Delays in implementation, combined with insufficient national ownership, pose significant challenges to the long-term sustainability of the reform process.

Furthermore, the implications of the SSR for national security have created uncertainty among stakeholders, resulting in cautious engagement and diminishing the openness with which they share observations, experiences, perceptions, and feedback about the reform process. This lack of transparency weakens public ownership, as the broader population is not fully involved in evaluating the real-time impact of the reforms. Consequently, this hinders the effectiveness of the SSR, limiting its ability to address key challenges and adapt to evolving needs.

- 2. Limited Capacity of Oversight organs:** The Office of National Security (ONS) plays a central role in overseeing and coordinating the reform process. Its key responsibilities include policy development, facilitating inter-agency collaboration, monitoring of the SSR process, and ensuring that security institutions function within the principles of democratic governance and human rights. The ONS faces challenges in monitoring and evaluating security sector institutions due to resource and capacity limitations. Other oversight bodies, including the National Assembly with its Standing Committee on Defence and Security, have challenges in monitoring the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process due to limited resources. Likewise, CSOs have faced challenges in delivering adequate oversight.
- 3. Financial Constraints:** Limited funding has compelled the Gambian government to rely heavily on donor support for implementing reform initiatives. This dependency has led to several implications, including the prioritization of reform activities that align with donor priorities and areas of focus rather than those of the government.
- 4. Fragmented Interagency Coordination:** Despite some progress, significant gaps persist in the synchronization of operations and information sharing among security institutions. These challenges are primarily attributed to the differing mandates of the various security agencies.
- 5. Public Awareness and Engagement:** Limited public awareness of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process and its objectives pose a significant challenge to fostering public trust and engagement. Many citizens remain uninformed about the purpose, goals, and potential benefits of SSR, which can create a sense of detachment from the reform efforts. This lack of understanding undermines perceptions of transparency and accountability, as the public may view the process as exclusive. Moreover, the absence of widespread awareness can limit community participation and feedback, which are essential for ensuring that reforms are both inclusive and responsive to the needs of the population.



- 6. Human Resource Limitations:** The scarcity of skilled personnel and capacity gap hindered smooth implementation, particularly in areas requiring technicalities.
- 7. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Mechanisms:** The lack of a comprehensive M&E framework hampered the ability to effectively track, assess, and adapt to the reforms program.

1.3 Summary of Actionable Recommendations

To build on best practices and lessons learned and address ongoing challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

Table 1: Actionable Recommendations

In summary, The Gambia's SSR process, supported by the AU Framework, marks a crucial

Rec No	Recommendation (rationale)	Timeframe for Implementation	Relevance to the SSR	Recommended Implementation Stakeholder
1	Redraft/Formulate a new Security Sector Reform Strategy. Current one will be obsolete from 2025	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS
2	Enhance the effectiveness of Coordination and Oversight System -	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly
3	Expand Capacity-Building Initiatives:	Short Term (Q2 Q3- 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions; Partners
4	Strengthen Political Will and National Ownership:	Long Term (Q1 Q2, Q3,Q4- 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions; CSOs
5	Ensure Financial management and sustainability:	Short Term (Q2 Q3- 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Finance; Security Institutions.
6	Increase Public Awareness and Sensitization	Medium and Long Term	High	ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions; CSOs
7	Develop and operationalise a Communication Strategy	Short Term (Q2- 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions; CSOs; Partners
8	Develop Comprehensive M&E Frameworks	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions; CSOs; Partners
9	Formulate comprehensive sectoral programmes aligned to the Five Priority Areas of the SSR Strategy	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions; CSOs; Partners
10	Mobilise financial, technical and human resources	Medium and Long Term	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Finance; Security Institutions.



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step in transforming the security sector into a more democratic, accountable, and responsive institution. Although challenges such as legislative delays, gender representation, and funding have hindered aspects of the reform process, the overall trajectory remains positive.

A strengthened SSR will play a vital role in enhancing the stability and security of The Gambia, fostering a reformed sector that serves all citizens within a democratic framework. With sustained commitment, strategic funding, and ongoing evaluation, the SSR can achieve its objectives, supporting a peaceful, resilient, and inclusive national security environment.



SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) in The Gambia stem from the political transition following the end of a 22-year authoritarian regime (July 1994 to December 2016). This period was characterized by widespread human rights violations, a lack of accountability, and a highly politicized security apparatus that eroded the rule of law and public trust. In response, President Adama Barrow's government launched a comprehensive assessment in 2017 to evaluate the state of the security sector. The assessment revealed structural weaknesses, including inadequate governance frameworks, insufficient oversight mechanisms, and the urgent need to rebuild public confidence in security institutions. These findings led to the development of the SSR Strategy (SSRS), created with the support of national and international partners such as the United Nations, African Union, and European Union.

The objectives of the SSRS are both ambitious and targeted. They include restoring public trust in security institutions, strengthening the operational effectiveness of civilian oversight bodies and establishing a coherent governance structure across the security sectors. Additionally, the SSRS aims to ensure the security sector is responsive to the needs of all citizens, including vulnerable populations with special interest in establishing mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and inclusivity.

The strategy's overarching goal is to build sustainable security sector that is compact, professional and supports The Gambia's democratic development while safeguarding national stability. The SSR process is aimed at transforming the security sector into an efficient, accountable, and democratic entity capable of addressing the nation's evolving security needs. In order to achieve this, the SSR Strategy outlines five (5) priority areas: *addressing post-authoritarian legacies, developing a legal and policy framework for security governance, enhancing civilian oversight, tackling cross-cutting issues like gender and human rights, and implementing specific reforms in individual security institutions.*

Each of these areas reflect a commitment to international standards of transparency, Human rights and democratic governance. For example, the first priority focuses on mitigating the residual effect of authoritarian rule, such as misuse of authority and the politicization of security forces. It promotes institutional reforms and democratic practices aligned with the country's constitution and international obligations.

The relevance of SSR to The Gambia's security landscape cannot be overstressed, as it addresses fundamental challenges that have incumbered the sector's ability to effectively serve the populace. By aligning the reform with democratic principles, the SSR seeks to create a transparent environment where security institutions operate under clear mandates and coordinate effectively with civilian bodies. This is further armour-plated by the establishment of a National Security Policy (NSP) in 2019, which



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provides a comprehensive framework for governance, accountability and oversight across the security sector.

The ongoing review aims to evaluate the progress achieved in the implementation of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and to derive key lessons from the reform process. This review is crucial in identifying both successes and challenges, allowing for the refinement of strategies to address existing gaps. Additionally, it aligns with the African Union's SSR policy, which advocates for periodic assessments by member states to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of security sector reforms.

The expected outcome of the review is a comprehensive report with recommendations for enhancing the SSRS's effectiveness, a revised action plan, and an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework. Eventually, this review process will reinforce The Gambia's commitment to a responsive, reformed and democratic security sector contributing to the broader discourse on SSR in post-authoritarian contexts.



SECTION 3. METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of the review was to assess the progress made in implementing Security Sector Reform (SSR) and to extract key lessons from the reform experience. By identifying both successes and challenges, the review facilitates the refinement of strategies to address existing gaps. Furthermore, it aligns with the African Union's SSR policy, which encourages member states to conduct regular evaluations to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of security sector reforms.

This section outlines the methodological approach used for the review, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including document and desk reviews, as well as structured interviews. It details the data sources utilized, such as reports, stakeholder consultations, and interviews, while also acknowledging the limitations and challenges encountered during the review process.

3.1 Document Review

A comprehensive document review was conducted as a core component of the SSR assessment. The review included policy documents, strategic frameworks, and key reports such as the 2017 SSR Assessment Report, the 2019 National Security Policy (NSP), and the 2020–2024 SSR Strategy (SSRS). Additionally, the consultants examined various documents and reports from key partner institutions, including the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF). Notable documents reviewed included the *Security Sector Institutional and Human Resources Assessment in The Gambia*, the *Toolkit for Security Sector Reporting*, and the *Scoping Study on Gender Equality in The Gambia Immigration Department (GID)*, among others. These documents offered valuable insights into the thematic priorities, strategic objectives, and implementation roadmaps of various security institutions in The Gambia. The document review provided helped to identify gaps in implementation, assess alignment with democratic principles, and evaluate compliance with international treaties and resolutions.

3.2 Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted with key informants from diverse stakeholder groups, including representatives from security institutions, government officials, and civil society organizations. Structured questionnaires were designed to ensure consistency and comparability across responses. These interviews generated qualitative data on implementation experiences, perceived challenges, and recommendations from stakeholders actively involved in SSR processes. Additionally, the interviews offered deeper insights into institutional capacities, administrative challenges, and the perceived impacts of reforms on security governance.

3.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussions were organized with, civil society representatives, and key partners to capture diverse perspectives on the SSR process. These discussions were intended to gather views on public trust, transparency, and the overall responsiveness of security reforms in addressing local security needs. The discussions allowed an in-depth exploration of social dynamics and public perception surrounding SSR implementation and were particularly useful in understanding community experiences regarding security sector practices post-reform.



3.4 Data Sources

The data sources used in this review encompass a wide range of materials:

1. **Official Reports and Policy Documents:** Key documents include the SSR Assessment Report 2017, National Security Policy 2019, and Security Sector Reform Strategy 2020–2024. These reports outline strategic objectives, operational goals, and the overarching framework guiding SSR implementation.
2. **Stakeholder Consultations and Interviews:** Interviews and consultations with government officials, civil society organizations, and members of security institutions provided valuable qualitative insights into the SSR process. In addition to ONS an approximate sixteen (16) stakeholders were involved in the interviews and consultations. This number includes both the security sectors, CSOs and oversight bodies.
3. **Quantitative Data from Security Institutions:** Statistics and reports from The Gambia's security institutions, including personnel records, crime statistics, and resource allocation data, contributed quantitative insights for this review.
4. **International Best Practices and Policy Frameworks:** Best practices in the guidelines from the African Union (AU) and SSR informed the assessment and provided a benchmark for evaluating The Gambia's SSR efforts against sub-regional, regional and global standards.

3.5 Limitations and Challenges of the Exercise

While this review employed a robust methodology, certain limitations and challenges impacted on the data collection process and the overall assessment:

1. **Time Constraints:** The review process was conducted over a period of fourteen (14) working days, covering the desk review, interview phase, synthesis phase, and validation workshop. Due to the limited timeframe, certain planned activities, including additional stakeholder consultations and field assessments, had to be condensed to meet the review deadlines.
2. **Political Sensitivity:** The SSR process, with its implications for national security, encountered political sensitivities that affected the openness of participants in providing feedback. Some stakeholders were reluctant to discuss institutional shortcomings candidly, which limited the depth of qualitative insights.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Limited financial and logistical resources constrained the scope of site visits and restricted the extent of quantitative data analysis. Equally, budget limitations affected the ability for an extensive engagement with civil society and other key stakeholders.
4. **Data Accessibility:** Access to updated and comprehensive data from some security institutions was limited, restricting the depth of quantitative analysis in specific areas. This challenge was partly mitigated by drawing on supplementary qualitative data from interviews and during the validation workshop held with all stakeholders.



- 5. Stakeholder Availability:** Limited availability of stakeholders which resulted in fewer perspectives on critical issues within the SSR implementation process. Scheduling interviews and consultations with key stakeholders, especially high-level officials and community representatives, proved difficult.

In conclusion, despite the noted limitations, the methodology employed in this SSR review provided a robust and comprehensive analysis of The Gambia's SSR implementation. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, particularly interviews, the review effectively highlighted key achievements, captured diverse stakeholder perspectives, and identified ongoing challenges impacting the reform process. This approach ensured alignment with international best practices and upheld the democratic principles central to The Gambia's security reform agenda. The insights generated from this review offer valuable guidance for policymakers and SSR stakeholders, supporting informed decision-making and promoting a responsive, accountable, and sustainable security sector



SECTION 4. FINDINGS ACROSS THE FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

This section outlines the evaluation questions and conclusive findings across the five priority areas of the SSR, assessed using the DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. The findings are supported by evidence and detailed reasoning.

4.1 RELEVANCE OF THE GAMBIA SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

In the context of the review, relevance was defined as the alignment of The Gambia's SSR objectives, strategies, and activities with the country's national security needs, priorities, and the evolving political, social, and economic landscape, ensuring they remain appropriate and effective.

Findings of the review established that the SSR remains continuously relevant as it properly anchored in the Gambia National Development Plan 2018-2021³. Its objectives are strategically aligned with national security priorities, the National Development Plan, and the African Union's Security Sector Reform agenda. This alignment ensures that reform efforts not only tackle immediate security challenges but also contribute to sustainable development and regional aspirations over the long term.

The SSR initiative is continually facilitating the regularization and professionalization of security institutions. This shift from regime-centered and potentially politicized practices to a structured, professional framework will be an ongoing process to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of security agencies, ensuring that they serve citizens' needs equitably and transparently.

The **Five (5) Priority Areas** of the SSR, namely, *Addressing Post-Authoritarian Legacies*, *Developing Overarching Security Governance Legal and Policy Frameworks*, *Reform Activities to enable Civil Management and Oversight*, *Reform Imperatives to address Cross-Cutting perennial challenges*, and *specific reform activities relating to respective security institutions*, remain highly relevant. These priorities continue to address critical challenges within the security sector, providing a comprehensive framework for effective governance, accountability, and institutional transformation.

Our analysis underscores the ongoing relevance and critical importance of SSR's focus on transitioning from autocratic legacies. Security agencies, including the Gambia Armed Forces (GAF), State Intelligence Service (SIS/NIA), Gambia Police Force (GPF), Gambia Immigration Department (GID), Gambia Prisons Service (GPS), Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA), and Gambia Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS), are actively working to embed democratic principles within their operations.

These efforts include upholding constitutional mandates, respecting civilian oversight of the military, and institutionalizing effective mechanisms for accountability and transparency. Notably, the establishment of the National Assembly's Standing National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security enhances oversight,

³ Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP Security Sector Reform (SSR) Project-Final Evaluation Report, May 2020



ensuring that the security sector operates with transparency and adheres to checks and balances. Such measures are instrumental in preventing power consolidation, fostering accountability, and ensuring that security institutions remain answerable to the citizens of The Gambia that they serve.

The interviews conducted with representatives from various security institutions and key stakeholders indicate a significant erosion of public trust in these institutions following twenty-two (22) years of authoritarian rule. To restore confidence, reforms are being implemented to tackle past abuses such as oppression, corruption, and brutality, with a clear emphasis on accountability, fairness, and transparency.

By rebuilding public trust and ensuring that security institutions operate within democratic frameworks, SSR plays a vital role in preventing a return to authoritarian practices while fostering long-term stability and peace.

The establishment of the Office of the National Security (ONS) highlights its crucial role in strengthening coordination and accountability within The Gambia's SSR, underscoring the government's commitment to institutionalizing effective security sector governance.

Essential policy and framework documents, including the National Security Policy, National Security Strategy, and National Security Sector Reform (NSSR) Strategy, were developed to promote coherence across all levels of governance and establish a solid foundation for the long-term sustainability of reform efforts.

Empowering civilian oversight institutions continues to be vital. By enhancing transparency and accountability, these reforms ensure that security agencies remain responsive to public needs while preventing executive overreach, misuse of power, and human rights abuses.

The integration of gender representation, anti-corruption measures, and human rights protections highlights SSR's commitment to inclusivity and equity. These cross-cutting reforms address structural inequities and societal concerns, ensuring that security institutions reflect the communities they serve.

The importance and relevance of SSR cannot be overstated, as it drives targeted reforms within key institutions such as the Gambia Armed Forces (GAF), State Intelligence Service (SIS/NIA), Gambia Police Force (GPF), Gambia Immigration Department (GID), Gambia Prisons Service (GPS), Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA), and The Gambia Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS). These reforms aim to ensure that these entities are efficient, appropriately structured, and professionalized. This focus is particularly crucial in responding to evolving security challenges and enhancing inter-agency coordination.

The five priority areas outlined in the SSR Strategy remain highly relevant in light of the evolving security landscape. Emerging threats, regional instability, advancements in security technology, and changing societal expectations underscore the need for sustained reform efforts. SSR continues to play a critical role in addressing structural weaknesses within the security sector, advancing good governance, and aligning with both national priorities and international objectives.



4.2 EFFECTIVENESS THE GAMBIA SECURITY SECTOR REVIEW

Effectiveness in the context of this review was defined as the extent to which the Gambia Security Sector Reform (SSR) was achieving its set objectives and expected results i.e. Outputs and Outcomes.

4.2.1 Progress on Priority Area 1: Addressing Post-Authoritarian Legacies.

This priority aims to address undemocratic practices including human rights violations, politicisation and misuse of the security institutions among others. The main objective of this priority is to entrench democratic practices in accordance with the constitution and relevant applicable international instruments. The team focused on five variables to understand the extent to which stakeholders believe that the SSR has addressed the post-authoritarian legacy. These findings are presented below:

1. Dismantling Repressive Structures

Repressive structures commonly found in past authoritarian regimes included illegal detention centers, such as those at Tanji and Bamba Dinka (NIA/SIS), and torture chambers at the NIA headquarters. These facilities facilitated widespread unlawful activities, including kidnappings, enforced disappearances, unauthorized directives to security forces, and detentions without trial. However, the reforms implemented through the Security Sector Reform (SSR) initiative have successfully dismantled most of these oppressive structures, resulting in a significant decline in such unlawful practices. These findings align with the perspectives shared by respondents during our interviews.

Over 83% of the civilian management and civil oversight bodies said the security sector reform agenda had addressed the past authoritarian practices. As one official observed: *“Bamba Dinka has disappeared as a detention center”*. Another observed that *“the Police Force is no longer being deployed with live ammunition, instead, they are provided with acceptable crowd control tools”*. According to Chido Mutangadura *“Security forces were often used as weapons against citizens and were implicated in human rights violations”*⁴.

2. Cultural/Mind-set Transformation

Most stakeholders concur that a significant paradigm shift has taken place in the orientation of security forces, leading to notable improvements in their service delivery. When asked about the impact of this reorientation, one key informant highlighted that security services have become more responsive and accountable, prioritizing the protection and promotion of human rights through effective oversight mechanisms. The mindset and operational approach of security forces have transitioned from allegiance to a regime to a rights-centered focus. Additionally, there is greater

⁴ Chido Mutangadura: Security Sector Reform in The Gambia: What is at Stake: West Africa Report 31| November 2020



adherence to constitutional provisions, reinforcing the rule of law and aligning with international best practices. Similar views were expressed by other respondents:

- a. *“We are focusing more on correction now although we are challenged. We allow visitors, the oversight bodies are doing their work. So, our service delivery has improved”, The Gambia Prison Services.*
- b. *“People are suing the IGP if and when they're dissatisfied with the Police” -Ministry of Interior.*
- c. *“The operation of the personnel has been guided by policy documents and compliance and performance have been maximised”*

A shift in mindset has also been observed among citizens, who are now more aware of their rights and willing to hold security forces accountable. This was emphasized by some members of a focus group discussion (FGD), who noted that increased freedom of speech and improved relations between security forces and the public have empowered citizens with the courage and resilience to take legal action against offending security personnel and government officials.

3. Establishing Accountability Mechanisms

The establishment and operationalization of oversight bodies, such as the National Assembly and the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, are key measures aimed at enhancing accountability within the security sector. Among civil management and oversight bodies surveyed, 50% view these oversight structures as very effective in holding security institutions accountable, 16.7% consider them moderately effective, while 33.3% regard them as ineffective or very ineffective. In contrast, within security institutions and their line ministries, 62.7% believe that these oversight bodies are effective or very effective in ensuring accountability.

4. Promoting Human Rights Compliance

Survey respondents believe that the reform agenda has successfully enhanced compliance with human rights. Evidence supporting this claim includes findings that the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) has refrained from carrying out arrests or detentions since the change of government. Instead, the NIA now focuses solely on processing relevant intelligence and forwarding it to the appropriate authorities.

The military has returned to its core mandate of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the Gambia. All stakeholders agreed that whereas there are isolated human rights violations or government's nonconformity with rulings/recommendations, there are fewer cases in a year not exceeding 100.

5. Community Engagement and Trust-Building

Eight security institutions (including their line institutions) were asked to rate the level of community trust in their security institutions. 75% of the institutions rated the level of trust as either high or very high while 12.5% rated the level of trust as moderate. Only 12.5% rated the level of community trust as low.



However, when six civilian oversight and civil management bodies including the CSOs were asked to rate the level of community trust, 68.0% rated the level of community trust in the security as high or very high, while 32.0% rated it moderately high.

Analysis of Associated Outcomes and Outputs: Priority Area 1

The review assessed the extent to which the expected outcomes and outputs for Priority Area One (1) had been or would likely be achieved. This priority area comprises four outcomes and seven outputs to be achieved through a total of 29 activities. These activities are tailored to align with the various outcomes and outputs. Below is an assessment of the outcomes and outputs within this priority area.

Outcome 1.1.1: A strong democracy that rests on the pillars of good governance

Output 1.1.1.1 strengthened national ownership of the reform agenda:

This output is supported by eight associated activities. While several actions have been initiated to promote national ownership of the reform agenda, many remain incomplete. Key milestones, including the integration of the SSR project into the national budget, the establishment of a trust fund, and the implementation of a comprehensive ECOMIG exit strategy, remain unachieved. These delays are largely attributed to the prolonged promulgation of the ONS Act and limited public awareness of the SSR nationwide. However, the ONS, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, has recently launched an intensive campaign to raise awareness of the SSR across various regions.

Despite the ongoing efforts, stakeholders from the security sector, civil society, and oversight institutions consistently identify insufficient national funding as a significant obstacle to advancing the objectives of the SSR process.

Output 1.1.1.2: Improved democratic practices, procedures, policies and governance system

This output is driven by three key activities: reviewing laws, policies, and guidelines; establishing a database of legal acts; and evaluating the electoral management system. Significant progress has been made, with approximately two-thirds of the output achieved. However, key outdated Acts, such as the Public Order Act of 1946, which contradicts principles of good governance, are still awaiting amendment by the National Assembly.

Our findings revealed that significant efforts are currently being made to review key laws, policies, and guidelines. These include Standard Operating Procedures, training manuals, pocketbooks, and legislation related to the National Intelligence Agency, which is set to be legally renamed the State Intelligence Agency, as well as reforms within the Army, Police, and Prison Services. For example, the DCAF EU-funded SSR (GPF/GID) Project, "Support to The Gambia Security Sector Reform Process" (August 2023 to July 2025), has played a pivotal role in advancing the enactment and implementation of the Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill. Furthermore, as part of governance, the absence of external interference during the most recent election cycle underscores notable improvements in electoral governance.



Output 1.1.1.3: Quick dispensation of justice

This output is supported by five key activities, including strengthening community security, establishing regional courts, monitoring detainees' rights, and providing legal counsel to prison inmates. Significant progress has been made, with four out of five activities successfully implemented.

New and refurbished police stations have been established to enhance the visibility of the Police, and community policing initiatives are being introduced across various regions in The Gambia but not fully implemented. Additionally, stakeholders, including oversight bodies, have noted an increase in public trust in the security sector under the current dispensation.

Courthouses have been decentralized nationwide, enhancing access to justice. Regular monitoring of prisons, police stations, and detention cells ensures the protection of detainees' rights. The National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA) is operational, though it continues to face challenges related to human and financial resources.

Despite these advancements, the Gambia's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)⁵ reports that only 16 out of the 262 recommendations from the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) have been implemented to date.

Outcome 1.1.2: An effective and efficient Munition Management System is established. This outcome is supported by a single output and two key activities.

Output: 1.1.2.1: Proper Management and storage

The two main activities under this output are the provision of adequate storage facilities and the development of a robust mechanism for recovering illicit munitions. While regulations governing munition management are in place and no cases of missing munitions have been reported, the sector continues to face challenges due to the lack of sufficient storage facilities.

Outcome 1.1.3: A well instituted system that addresses the welfare of personnel. This outcome is linked to a single output, achieved through three core activities.

Output 1.1.3.1. Improved retirement scheme and reintegration program for security personnel.

The intended results are to be realized through revising the public service retirement scheme, providing severance packages, and establishing a personnel board to address wrongful dismissals. While personnel have received severance packages and the retirement scheme has undergone review, the extent to which issues of wrongful dismissal have been resolved remains unclear. Despite these efforts, personnel across various security institutions, along with oversight bodies, have expressed dissatisfaction with the low wages. Given the widespread concern over inadequate salaries, it is evident that this outcome has not yet been fully achieved.

⁵ Gambia's National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC):Progress Report 2021-2023



Outcome 1.1.4. Restored public trust and confidence in the security sector.

This outcome is supported by three outputs and eight associated activities.

Output 1.1.4.1. Strengthened civil-security relations

Achieving this output involves three key activities:

1. Developing programs that foster stronger civil-security sector relations.
2. Creating and implementing a comprehensive communication strategy for the Security Sector.
3. Keeping the public informed about the progress of SSR initiatives.

Significant progress has been made in enhancing civil-security relations, which have improved to a largely cordial state, despite occasional challenges. The ONS Communication Strategy has been developed and is currently being implemented. Additionally, security institutions have appointed Public Relations Officers who engage with the public regularly, complementing the ongoing outreach by the ONS.

Under the project "Support to the Security Sector Reform in The Gambia" (2018–2019), the DCAF European Union (EU) Project supported a perception survey on security needs and priorities, which informed the national SSR policy titled Access and Trust: A Population-Based Study of Security and Justice in The Gambia⁶.

The DCAF/ECOWAS Project, In Support of the Government Elections in The Gambia (2021–2022), facilitated regional community sensitization efforts in collaboration with WANEP-Gambia, IEC, and ONS. These initiatives aimed to enhance understanding of the roles of women, traditional, religious, and youth leaders in preventing and mitigating electoral violence.

The DCAF EU-funded SSR (GPF/GID) Project, Support to The Gambia Security Sector Reform Process (August 2023–July 2025), supported forums across the country to raise awareness in communities about the police's mandate, responsibilities, and challenges, as well as to introduce the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidance documents for joint investigations.

Output 1.1.4.2. Transformed authoritarianism to functional democracy

This output is driven by two core activities:

1. Developing a legal and policy framework for vetting. A comprehensive legal and policy framework has been established to ensure the thorough vetting of security personnel. This framework aims to identify and address any past abuse, misconduct, or affiliations that may compromise the integrity of the security sector. By instituting clear guidelines and procedures for vetting, the framework ensures that only individuals who meet the standards of professionalism, accountability, and respect for human rights remain in service. This process is critical in building

⁶ DCAF: "Support to the Security Sector Reform in The Gambia" (2018–2019), the DCAF European Union (EU) Project



a security sector that operates under democratic principles and instils public confidence.

2. Providing specialized training on regimentation to deter impunity. The GAF reported that specialized training programs have been implemented to instill discipline and professionalism within security forces. These programs focus on regimentation, adherence to the rule of law, and the ethical conduct of personnel. By emphasizing the consequences of impunity and promoting a culture of accountability, the training aims to prevent human rights violations and ensure that security personnel uphold democratic values. This training reinforces the importance of lawful conduct, thereby deterring acts of abuse and fostering a culture of respect for civilian authority and human dignity.

Both activities have been successfully completed, which significantly contributed to transforming the security sector from one rooted in authoritarian practices to a functional democracy. This shift is evident in the increased transparency, accountability, and alignment with democratic governance principles, fostering an improvement in public trust in the security sector's role as a protector of citizens' rights rather than an enforcer of state control. The comprehensive approach to vetting and training ensures that the reforms are not merely superficial but embedded in the ethos and operations of the security sector.

Output 1.1.4. 3: A non-partisan security sector

This output is to be achieved through three key activities:

1. Sensitizing and training security sector personnel on the consequences of political affiliation.
2. Building the capacity of state and non-state oversight bodies to effectively monitor security institutions.
3. Providing welfare and motivational packages to security personnel.

Compared to the Jammeh era, a significant shift toward a non-partisan security sector has been observed. Security leadership has actively and publicly underscored the importance of maintaining neutrality and professionalism within the armed forces. Senior officials have repeatedly emphasized that the security sector's role is to safeguard national interests rather than serve any political agenda.

Moreover, no instances of direct involvement in political activities by security personnel have been reported, signaling a clear departure from past practices. This shift is further reflected in training programs and policy reforms that stress adherence to democratic principles, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. By fostering a culture of non-partisanship, the security sector is rebuilding public trust and ensuring its alignment with constitutional mandates rather than political loyalties.

Nevertheless, a significant change in mindset within the security sector has contributed to its largely non-partisan stance. However, isolated attempts by a few members of the armed forces to challenge this status quo have been observed, indicating that vigilance and continued efforts are needed to sustain the progress made.



While resource constraints have hindered the provision of welfare and motivational packages for security personnel, this challenge has been mitigated by the establishment of welfare associations within several security institutions, which have helped support the well-being of personnel.

Table 2: Priority Area 1 - Outcomes, Outputs and Status of Achievement

Result	Level Achieved
Outcomes 1.1.1 A strong democracy that rests on the pillars of good governance	
Output 1.1.1.1 A strengthened national ownership of the reform agenda	Partially Achieved
Output 1.1.1.2 Improved democratic practices, procedures, policies and governance system	Partially Achieved
Output 1.1.1.3. Quick dispensation of justice	Partially Achieved
Outcome 1.1.2. An effective and efficient munition management system is established	
Output 1.1.2.1. Proper management system	Fully Achieved
Outcome 1.1.3. A well instituted system that address the welfare of personnel	
Output 1.1.3.1 Improved retirement scheme and reintegration program for security personnel	Fully Achieved
Outcome 1.1.4. Restored public trust and confidence in the security sector	
Output 1.1.4.1 strengthened civil-security relations	Partially Achieved

4.2.3 Progress on Priority Area 2: Developing Overarching Security Governance Legal and Policy Framework.

This priority area aims to ensure that there is an integrated, coordinated, commanded and controlled security sector. During the survey, 3 key variables were assessed.

1. Establishing Legal Foundations

Our review shows that giant steps have been taken to establish a strong overarching security governance legal and policy framework. The validation and implementation of the security sector reform strategy, the national security strategy and even the national security policy have greatly contributed to the realisation of the objectives of the priority area. However, the challenges posed to the full realisation of this outcome is the slow pace of adoption of necessary legal frameworks to support the policies and strategies. While several legislations such as the Police Service Bill, the SIS Bill, the Gambia Armed Forces Bill, the Gambia Fire and Rescue Service Bill, and the Immigration Bill have been reviewed and/or validated, they are yet to be passed by the National Assembly.

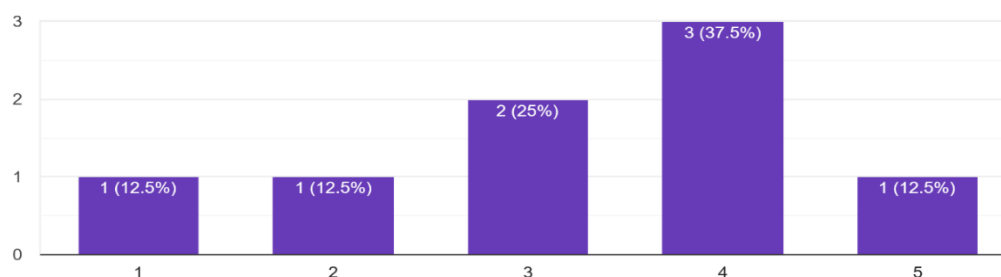
In addition to the establishment of legal and policy frameworks, 12.5% of respondents from the line institutions believe that the new frameworks have been effective or very effective in ensuring security governance, while 25% believe that the new frameworks are moderately effective. The chart below shows the percentage distribution of perception on effectiveness of the new overarching frameworks.



Figure 1: Effectiveness of the New Legal and Policy Frameworks

On a scale of 1 to 5, how effective do you believe the new legal and policy frameworks have been in enhancing security governance?

8 responses



Oversight bodies, such as the National Assembly National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, have noted significant improvements in the transparency of security sector institutions. One parliamentarian remarked, *“In the past, the National Intelligence Agency would not report to the National Assembly, as everything was cloaked in secrecy and impunity.”* However, under the current framework, all security ministries and their respective institutions now regularly appear before the Committee and the Assembly.

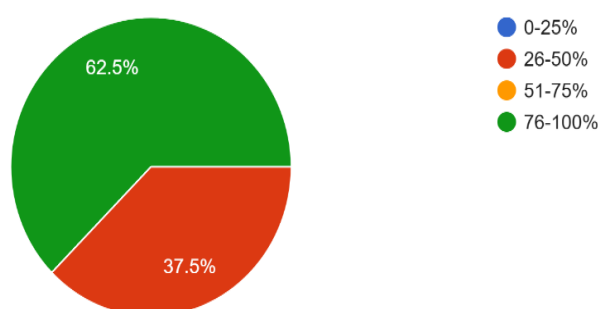
Another member highlighted that, while these sessions demonstrate accountability, they are held off-camera due to the sensitive nature of national security matters. As a result, the public may not fully appreciate the extent to which security sector institutions are now transparent and accountable to parliament.

Moreover, when it comes to reporting corruption and misconduct, 62% of the surveyed security institutions believe that over 76% of their personnel are aware of the available reporting channels, while 37% estimate that 26% to 50% of their personnel are familiar with these mechanisms. This suggests a high level of awareness regarding reporting channels. Officials attribute this to the structured regimentation of the security services and the clearly defined reporting procedures. The chart below illustrates the percentage distribution of perceptions regarding awareness of reporting channels.

Figure 2: Awareness of mechanisms available for reporting corruption/misconduct

What percentage of security personnel are aware of the mechanisms available for reporting corruption or misconduct?

8 responses





2. Integrating of National and International Human Rights Standards

The police, military, and other key stakeholders have incorporated human rights standards into their training manuals and operational procedures. Additionally, current draft legislation from the Police, Army, and National Intelligence Agency is reportedly aligned with both national and international human rights best practices. However, inadequate funding has hindered the full realization of these integrations.

While model police stations and holding cells meet international standards, the Mile 2 Prison facilities fall short. Notably, there is no designated women's prison, limiting the ability to implement gender-sensitive incarceration practices. Furthermore, the lack of adequate space often results in convicted prisoners being housed alongside those on remand, which contravenes international guidelines.

International best practices advocate for the establishment of functional correctional centers. While a draft concept for such centers has been developed, its implementation has been delayed due to insufficient funding.

Analysis of Associated Outcomes and Outputs: *Priority Area 2:*

Priority Area 2 focuses on a single outcome, supported by two outputs, each tied to a specific activity. Although significant steps have been taken toward achieving this outcome, challenges still hinder its full realization. The following provides a review of the progress made in reaching this outcome.

Outcome 2.1.1. An established and operationalized institutional framework.

This outcome has two outputs:

Output 2.1.1.1. A functional and integrated Security Sector

This output is to be achieved through the development of a comprehensive legal and policy framework. The formulation and validation of the National Security Policy, the National Security Strategy, and other related frameworks have played a pivotal role in advancing the objectives of this priority area.

Output 2.1. Security policy and strategy coherence

Achieving this output requires the alignment and integration of all security sector policies and strategies. The previously mentioned policies have enhanced coherence and synergy within the sector. However, the full realization of this output depends on the passage of pending bills. These are essential to solidify the operationalization of institutional frameworks and to ensure that current and future reforms are built on a legal foundation.

The DCAF EU-funded SSR (GPF/GID) Project, Support to The Gambia Security Sector Reform Process (August 2023–July 2025), has supported several key initiatives, including the development of an Internal Security Policy and capacity-building training for internal oversight investigators. The project has also provided technical advice to members of external oversight platforms to enhance coordination and collaboration among oversight agencies. Additionally, it has facilitated national stakeholder sensitization on the impact of the Internal Security Policy



and conducted regional awareness campaigns on the roles and responsibilities of oversight agencies.

Furthermore, the DCAF Swiss Confederation Gambia Immigration Department (GID) Project (July 2021–June 2024) has supported several key initiatives to enhance the efficiency and professionalism of the GID. These include the review of the GID organogram, and the development of Immigration Regulations aligned with the Gambia Immigration Bill 2023, which are currently under review by GID management. A GID manual, incorporating these regulations and the Terms and Conditions of Service, is also under development.

Additionally, the project has supported the creation of Terms of Reference and an Internal Investigation Policy for the GID Human Rights and Professional Standards Unit, both of which are under review. A revised Code of Conduct for the GID, aligned with the 2023 Bill, has been completed, and guidelines for the Gambia Immigration Council have been developed, reviewed, and are awaiting validation.

The project has facilitated Training of Trainers (TOT) programs on the Code of Conduct, integrity, and accountability for GID personnel. Regional step-down training sessions, to be delivered by GID trainers, are also planned as part of these efforts.

Table 3: Priority Area 2 - Outcomes, Outputs and Status of Achievement

Result	Level of Achieved
Outcome 2.1.1 An established and operationalized institutional framework	
Output 2.1.1.1. A functional and integrated Security Sector.	Partially Achieved
Output 2.1. Security policy and strategy coherence	Partially Achieved

4.2.4 Progress on Priority Area 3: Reform Activities To Enable Civil Management And Oversight.

Priority Area 3 is geared towards enhancing the efficiency of civil management and oversight bodies to serve as checks against corruption and abuses while promoting professionalism and accountability.

a) Strengthening Civilian Oversight

Our survey indicates that while some civilian oversight bodies have reclaimed their roles, others are in the process of being further strengthened to enhance their effectiveness. Notably, the Office of National Security (ONS) Bill is scheduled to be tabled before the National Assembly during the current legislative year, which will bolster its oversight responsibilities. Additionally, the judiciary's independence has been reinforced, enabling it to act as a check on the powers of security institutions.



For example, the courts have ruled against the Inspector General of Police (IGP) in cases where the police exceeded their authority, mandating compensation.

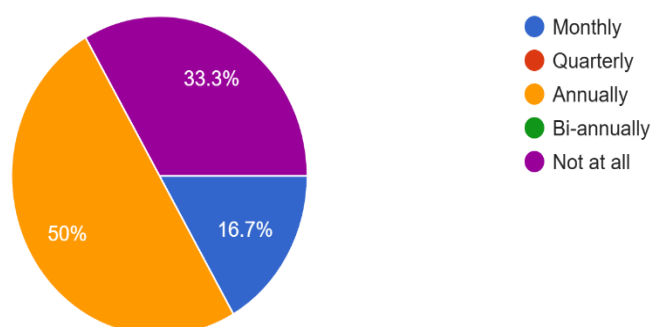
The National Human Rights Commission is fully operational, fulfilling its mandate as an oversight body. Civil society has also become more vocal, serving as a critical check on security sector excesses. Survey findings reveal that over half of the security institutions believe civilian oversight has been either effective or very effective.

Furthermore, 50% of those surveyed indicated that they conduct annual reviews and evaluations of security institutions, while 16.7% reported conducting monthly reviews. However, 33.3% of the civilian oversight bodies surveyed acknowledged that they do not carry out any reviews or evaluations. The pie chart below illustrates the percentage distribution of these findings.

Figure 3: Frequency of oversight bodies reviews/evaluation of security institutions

How often do civilian oversight bodies conduct reviews or evaluations of security institutions?

6 responses



b) Promoting Transparency in Security Operations

Increased transparency has been noted in the operations of the security forces. Beyond holding regular press conferences, the police frequently update the public on security operations, including raids, arrests, and detentions, particularly through their Facebook page.

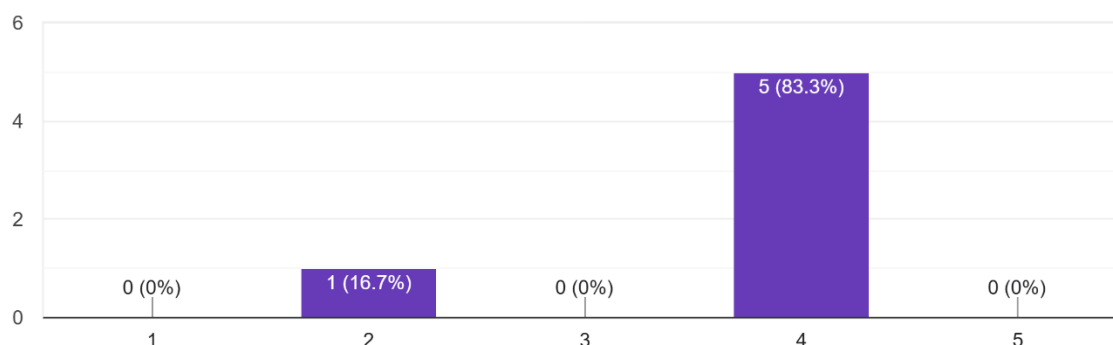
Additionally, when civilian management and oversight bodies were asked about public satisfaction with security institutions, over 83% indicated that the public is satisfied. The chart below illustrates the levels of public satisfaction as perceived by civil society and civilian oversight bodies.



Figure 4: Public satisfaction over services provided by security institutions

On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are community members with the services provided by security institutions?

6 responses



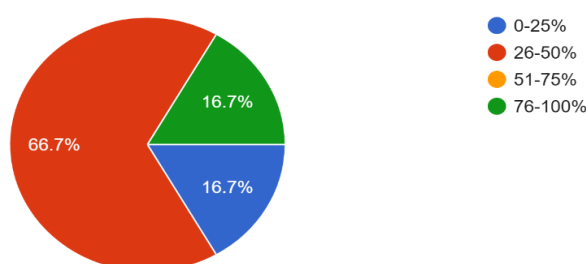
c) Enhancing Public Participation

Regarding public participation, 16.7% of the civilian management and civil society respondents believe that no more than 25% of security institutions have engaged with the community, while another 16.7% think that over 75% of security institutions have done so. However, 66.7% of respondents believe that between 26% and 50% of security institutions have engaged with the public. The pie chart below illustrates this distribution.

Figure 5: Public Opinion-Implementation of community engagement initiatives by security institutions

What percentage of security institutions have implemented community engagement initiatives in the past year?

6 responses



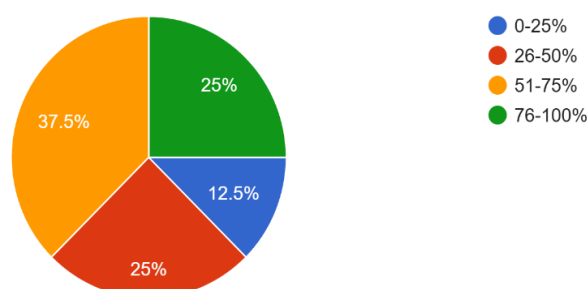
It is important to note that, according to the views of the security institutions (ministries and line agencies), community engagement is widespread. Over 62% of those surveyed reported that 51-100% of security institutions have engaged with communities in the past year. Only 12.5% of respondents stated that 0-25% of the institutions have engaged with communities. The pie chart below shows the percentage distribution of these responses



Figure 6: Opinion of Security Institutions-Implementation of community engagement initiatives by security institutions

What percentage of security institutions have implemented community engagement initiatives in the past year?

8 responses



Several engagements targeting civil society participants have been reported, organized by organizations such as DCAF, WANEP, CRPD, NHRC, NCCE, and others. However, capacity within civil society organizations (CSOs) regarding SSR is generally perceived to be low. Specifically, training programs have been conducted for security sector personnel and oversight bodies, focusing on policy implementation, leadership, and accountability.

With support from the DCAF-Geneva Center for Capacity Building Governance, multiple capacity-building initiatives have been carried out for oversight bodies, including CSOs. These activities focused on best practices for holding the security sector accountable. DCAF also facilitated media participation in SSR reforms and supported the National Assembly Standing National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security (SCDS) in security sector oversight, including an exchange visit for SCDS members with Ghanaian parliamentarians and experts in Accra, Ghana.

In collaboration with DCAF, the ONS has promoted capacity-building efforts for the National Assembly's Standing National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security (SCDS) and CSOs to enhance their oversight functions.

Despite these efforts, there appears to be a deep-rooted mistrust of CSOs within some security institutions, where they are seen as "noise makers" that frequently criticize, including on matters of national security.

d) Implementing Training Programs for Security Personnel

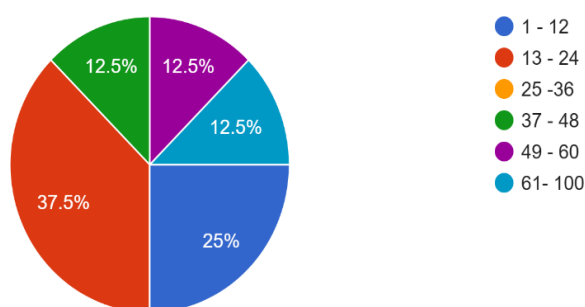
When asked to estimate the number of training their teams received in the past year, 62.5% of security institution representatives reported that their teams attended between 1 and 24 training sessions. A quarter of the respondents indicated that the frequency of training was between 1 and 12 sessions. The pie chart below illustrates the percentage distribution of responses regarding the number of training courses received in the last year.



Figure 7: Frequency of training sessions on the New Security Governance Policies

How many training sessions or workshops on the new security governance policies have been conducted for your team in the last year?

8 responses

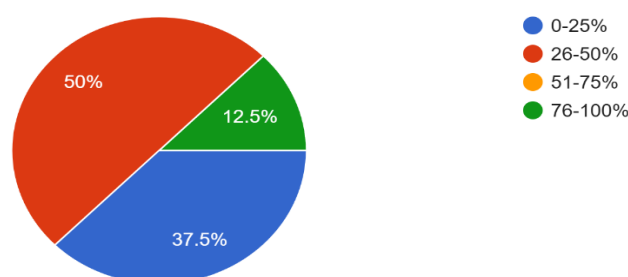


Moreover, 50% of the institutions surveyed reported that 26-50% of their personnel have benefitted from training on civil management and oversight during the previous year while 12.5% stated that 76-100% of their personnel have benefitted from reform-oriented trainings on civil management and oversight bodies. The pie chart below shows the distribution.

Figure 8: Proportion of Security Personnel trained on Civil Management & Oversight

What proportion of security personnel have received training on civil management and oversight in the last year?

8 responses



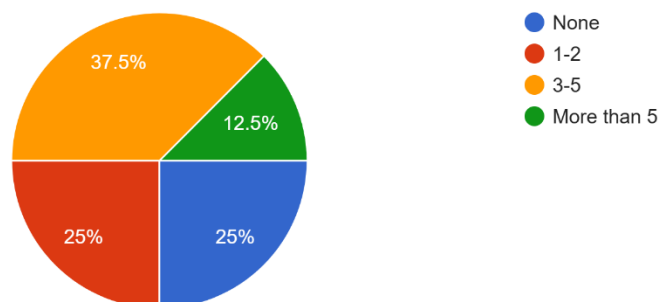
When asked about training on anticorruption and ethics, 50% of respondents indicated that security personnel had received three or more such trainings in the past year. Conversely, only 25% reported that no training on anticorruption and ethics had been provided. The chart below illustrates the distribution of responses.



Figure 9: Training on Anti-corruption and Ethics for Security Personnel

How many training programs focused on anti-corruption and ethics have been conducted for security personnel in the past year?

8 responses



Analysis of associated outcomes and outputs of Priority 3

In addition to the survey conducted, the outcomes and outputs associated with Priority Area 3 were thoroughly reviewed. This priority area focuses on achieving a single overarching outcome through five distinct outputs, which are further supported by 18 specific activities.

Output 3.1.1.2. An established functional Office of National Security (ONS).

This output is to be achieved through four key activities: drafting a legal instrument to establish the Office of National Security (ONS), providing adequate facilities, ensuring the recruitment of qualified staff, and developing a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) for the ONS.

The Office of National Security (ONS) serves as a central pillar in the oversight and coordination of national reform processes. Its core responsibilities encompass a broad spectrum of critical functions, including the development and formulation of strategic policies that align with national interests and global standards. The ONS plays a key role in fostering inter-agency collaboration, ensuring seamless communication and cooperation among various security institutions and government bodies.

A central mandate of the ONS is to ensure that all security-related entities operate within a framework that upholds democratic principles, adheres to the rule of law, and respects human rights. By providing oversight, the ONS ensures transparency and accountability in security operations, thus reinforcing public trust in national security institutions. The Office of National Security (ONS) is considered partially operational as its legal framework remains under review, currently progressing through the committee stage in the National Assembly. In the absence of formal legislation, the ONS faces significant funding constraints, as it depends directly on the Office of the President (OP) for its operational budget. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) should function with autonomy, ensuring independence across all areas of its operations, including financial, technical, and human resources. In terms of financial



resources, the ONS should have a secure and sufficient budget to ensure the continuity and reliability of its work. Technically, it should have access to tools and infrastructure to support its data collection, analysis, and dissemination activities.

While a draft organogram has been developed, the ONS requires additional personnel across key areas and should be staffed with a highly skilled and diverse team, capable of meeting the growing demands of modern security work and supported with continuous training and professional development opportunities. Such independence and resource allocation will ensure that the ONS can fulfil its critical role in providing accurate, impartial, and timely data to inform policy decisions and public discourse. The success of the ONS in the realization of its objectives is closely dependent on the passage and implementation of the ONS Bill, which will provide the necessary legal foundation, ensure sustainable funding, and support the expansion of its human resources.

Output 3.1.1.3. A properly structured and transformed Ministry of Defence.

Achieving this output requires the development of comprehensive frameworks for national defence, the provision of adequate facilities for the Ministry of Defence, the establishment of an effective oversight, command, and control structure for the Armed Forces, and the ongoing capacity building of the Ministry itself. Critical frameworks such as the National Security Strategy, National Security Policy, and TACOS have already been developed, with others either under review or in progress to ensure a robust policy environment.

The Gambia Armed Forces Council is fully operational, with its members vetted and approved by the National Assembly, ensuring accountability and transparency. Additionally, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security actively engages with military leadership through regular meetings and hearings to oversee defence-related matters.

Significant progress has been made in enhancing the Ministry's autonomy, as it now operates independently from the Office of the President and is led by a full-time minister supported by qualified staff. However, despite these advancements, the Ministry still lacks adequate facilities to function at full capacity. Moving forward, prioritizing the allocation of resources, upgrading infrastructure, and strengthening institutional capacity are essential for fully realizing this output and ensuring the Ministry of Defence can effectively fulfil its mandate.

Output 3.1.1.4. A properly structured and transformed Ministry of Interior.

Achieving this output requires the review and development of comprehensive frameworks for internal security, the provision of adequate facilities, capacity building within the Ministry of Interior, and the establishment of an oversight, command, and control structure for its line institutions. Although the Ministry and its affiliated agencies have successfully drafted and validated key internal security frameworks, they face ongoing challenges due to limited funding, which hampers their ability to fully execute their mandate.

The DCAF EU-funded SSR (GPF/GID) Project, Support to The Gambia Security Sector Reform Process (August 2023–July 2025), has supported several initiatives, including the



development of an Internal Security Policy and capacity-building training for internal oversight investigators. The project also provided technical advice to members of external oversight platforms to enhance coordination and collaboration among oversight agencies. Furthermore, it facilitated national stakeholder sensitization on the impact of the Internal Security Policy and conducted regional awareness campaigns on the roles and responsibilities of oversight agencies.

However, the institutionalization of critical oversight bodies, such as the Police Council and the Gambia Fire and Rescue Service Board, remains contingent on the passage of pending draft bills and amendments to existing legislation.

Output 3.1.1.5. A properly structured and transformed Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA).

This output is to be achieved through the review and development of frameworks for revenue collection and border management, the provision of adequate facilities, and the capacity building of MOFEA. However, due to limitations in engaging with the relevant line institution, namely the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA), and MOFEA not being included in the detailed assessment, the extent of progress in achieving this output remains uncertain. Insights gathered during the validation workshop revealed that the GRA has successfully implemented many of the activities related to this output. Nonetheless, further evaluation and collaboration are required to accurately assess the current status and identify the remaining needs to ensure the full realization of this transformation.

Output 3.1.1.6: Strengthened Oversight Bodies

This output is derived from three key activities: the review and development of relevant policies and strategies, capacity building for oversight bodies, and the enhancement of judicial capacity in the regions.

The DCAF European Union (EU) Project supported a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening the security sector oversight bodies. These included capacity-building support for members of the Standing Committee on Defence and Security (SCDS) exchange visit to Accra, Ghana, with Ghanaian parliamentarians and experts, training for civil society organizations on best practices for holding the security sector accountable and encouraging media participation in the SSR process.

The DCAF/ECOWAS Project, In Support of the Government Elections in The Gambia (2021–2022), facilitated training sessions on electoral security monitoring and reporting for media representatives. It also conducted workshops for GPF personnel, civil society organizations (CSOs), and media representatives to strengthen communication with the police in preventing, detecting, and investigating electoral incidents and offenses. Additionally, high-level dialogue forums, organized by the Office of National Security, brought together CSOs and IEC representatives to foster dialogue and collaboration in the prevention and mitigation of electoral violence.



Table 4: Priority Area 3 – Outcomes, Outputs and Status of Achievement

Outcomes	Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
Outcome 3.1.1. Effective and efficient Civil Management and Oversight			
Output 3.1.1.2. An established functional Office of National Security (ONS).		✓	
Output 3.1.1.3. A properly structured and transformed Ministry of Defence.		✓	
Output 3.1.1.4. A properly structured and transformed Ministry of Interior.		✓	
Output 3.1.1.5. A properly structured and transformed Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.			
Output 3.1.1.6. Strengthened oversight bodies	✓		

4.2.5 Progress on Priority Area 4: Reform Imperatives To Address Cross Cutting Perennial Challenges.

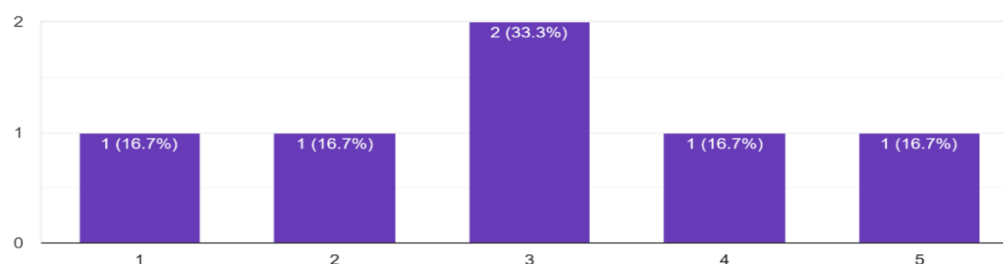
The main objective of this outcome is to mainstream gender and address crosscutting challenges. During the survey, five variables listed below were assessed.

1. Combating Corruption and Promoting Integrity

According to the survey, 33.4% of the civilian management and oversight bodies considered the security institutions to be corrupt or highly corrupt, indicating a perception of significant corruption. A total of 33.3% believed corruption to be moderate. On the other hand, over 33% of respondents perceived corruption in the security sector as low or non-existent.

Figure 10: Level of Corruption within the Security Institutions

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the level of corruption within security institutions?
6 responses



Within the security sector, 62.5% of those surveyed believed that corruption is either extremely low or non-existent. Respondents shared that, due to limited funds, they



often contribute personally or acquire funds from Welfare proceeds to address urgent staff matters. Meanwhile, 25% of respondents viewed corruption as moderate, and 12.5% considered it to be high..

2. Enhancing Resource Management and Allocation

All the institutions surveyed expressed concern over the limited funds allocated to their ministries and organizations. Some even criticized how the small budgets they receive are often lost through virements. Despite these challenges, respondents believe they are managing the allocated funds and resources as effectively as possible given the constraints.

3. Strengthening Institutional Capacity

While most institutions have highlighted the recruitment of highly qualified candidates, often with advanced qualifications, and emphasized the importance of ongoing training for existing personnel, several have expressed concerns about a high rate of attrition. This turnover is largely attributed to poor welfare conditions and a lack of motivation. Many personnel are leaving for better opportunities, both within the country and abroad, where benefits and career advancement prospects are more attractive. These challenges underscore the need for improved incentives and support systems to retain skilled employees in the security sector.

4. Fostering Inter-Agency Cooperation

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the institutions surveyed believe that inter-agency coordination has been either effective or very effective under the new framework. Stakeholders shared examples of how joint operations are conducted with authorization from civilian authorities, with each agency focusing on its specific mandate and sectoral capabilities. For instance, prison authorities described how the Gambia Police Force and its command assist them during court proceedings, particularly when transporting suspects to regional courts. Since the prisons are not decentralized, they must coordinate with the Police when overnight stays in other regions are required.

Our findings also uncovered concerns and suspicions arising from overlapping mandates between security agencies, which are viewed negatively by some stakeholders. There is a perceived risk that such overlaps could lead to one agency attempting to usurp the powers or responsibilities of another. A notable example of this is the perceived tension between the Gambia Police Force and the Gambia National Guard (GNG). Both agencies have roles that sometimes intersect, leading to confusion about their respective duties and potential power struggles. These concerns highlight the need for clearer delineation of responsibilities to prevent conflicts and ensure smoother collaboration within the security sector.

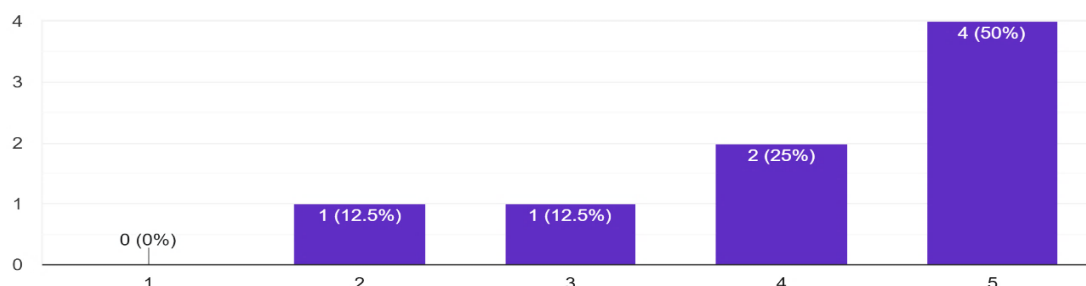
The chart below illustrates the percentage distribution regarding the effectiveness of coordination and cooperation under the new framework.



Figure 11: Effectiveness of Integration/Coordination among Security Agencies

On a scale of 1-5, how effectively has the integration and coordination among the different security agencies improved under the new framework?

8 responses



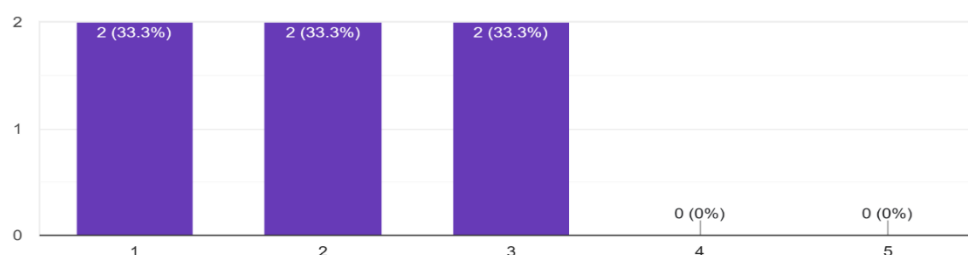
5. Gender mainstreaming and vulnerable groups and persons.

When asked about the support provided by the security sector to women, children, and the elderly, none of the respondents from civilian oversight bodies believed that the sector offers strong support to these groups. Thirty-three percent (33%) felt that there is moderate support for vulnerable groups. Additionally, those surveyed expressed concerns about the difficulties faced by people with disabilities in accessing security offices and stations, citing challenges related to road networks, transportation, and infrastructure.

Figure 12: Support to Vulnerable Groups

In your view, how well does the security sector support the rights of vulnerable groups like women, children, and the elderly?

6 responses



Regarding the mainstreaming of gender, the chart below revealed that 33.3% of respondents believe that gender is being effectively mainstreamed into the security sector. For instance, DCAF supported the Gambia Police Force (GPF) to develop and implement a Gender Mainstreaming Policy ensuring that all project activities promote gender equity⁷. Additionally, DCAF supported the development of a specific

⁷ DCAF Support to The Gambia Security Sector Reform Strategy (SSRS - 2023–2027)



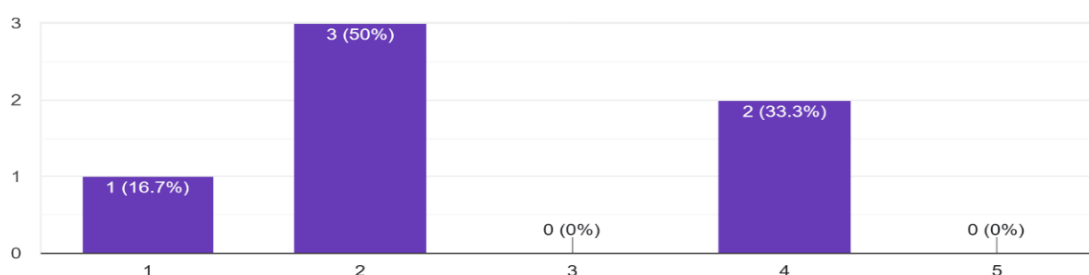
administrative procedure aligned with the new workplace anti-sexual harassment policy, providing men and women victims with a clear Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for reporting cases of sexual harassment.

Furthermore, DCAF conducted a Training of Trainers (TOT) on Police Doctrine and Gender, along with a Police Skills Gender Audit⁸. A capacity-building and mentorship program for female police officers was also implemented, based on the findings of the Gender Audit.

Figure 12: Effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming incorporation in the Security Sector

To what extent do you feel that gender mainstreaming is being effectively incorporated into the security sector?

6 responses



Despite the progress made, some respondents within the security sector believe that it provides moderate support to vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Suggestions include improving accessibility to security offices and stations, strengthening gender-sensitive policies, and increasing resources for specialized training on how to address the needs of vulnerable populations. Greater collaboration with civil society could further ensure that the security sector becomes more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all community members.

Analysis of the Outcomes and Outputs of Priority Area 4

Through five key activities, the priority is focused on achieving two immediate results: (1) equitable representation and participation of all individuals, regardless of gender, age, or vulnerability, and (2) the establishment of a corruption-free security sector. Below is a review of the current status of the outcomes and corresponding outputs.

Output 4.1.1.1: Equitable representation and participation of gender in the security sector.

This output is being driven by the development of a Gender Act, the capacity-building of institutions to enhance effective gender mainstreaming, and sensitization programs

⁸ DCAF Support to The Gambia Security Sector Reform Strategy (SSRS - 2023–2027)



on gender-related issues. Notably, some security institutions, such as the Police and relevant Ministries, have established Gender Units within their structures. Efforts to increase female representation at senior levels have also yielded results, as seen in the Gambia Fire and Rescue Services (GFRS) and the Prisons, where women in high-ranking positions shared their experiences during discussions. Additionally, various institutions have participated in capacity-building programs focused on gender issues such as the Workshop for the MOI, MOD, Gambia Prison Service (GPS), Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DLEAG), Ministry of Gender and Welfare, Women's bureau, GAF, GID and other CSOs to raise awareness and understanding on specific gender issues in the context of elections.

The DCAF European Union (EU) Project supported a gender survey titled "The Security Sector and Gender in The Gambia," which assessed the security services in the country. The survey examined the legal and policy framework on gender and security across various institutions, including the Gambia Armed Forces, Gambia Police Force, Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Gambia Fire and Rescue Service, Gambia Prison Service, and the justice sector. It also included a gender and security review of the Draft Constitution.

DCAF supported the development of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy for the Gambia Police Force (GPF), along with leadership and command training programs for senior female officers of the GPF and the Gambia Immigration Department (GID). Additionally, it facilitated a bespoke coaching and mentoring program for female officers, remote mentoring initiatives, and other activities aimed at advancing gender mainstreaming efforts.

DCAF also contributed to a Gender Scoping Study, the development of a Sexual Harassment Policy, and the drafting of a Gender Mainstreaming Policy, both of which are currently under review by GID management. Further support included capacity-building training for senior and middle management of the GID, focusing on leadership, performance management, and gender equality. Regional step-down training sessions were conducted across five regions to emphasize the role of women in border security and strengthen female networking systems.

Despite these positive achievements, significant structural barriers remain that hinder the attainment of truly equitable representation within the security sector. A critical challenge is the concentration of the majority of female security officers in lower-ranking positions, especially at the immigration and Police, with limited access to leadership roles and decision-making authority. On the contributing to this disparity include limited access to career advancement pathways tailored to women.

To overcome these barriers, it is essential to implement targeted interventions, such as leadership and mentorship programs for women, and review promotion criteria to ensure an environment conducive to gender equity at all levels. Additionally, DCAF supported the development of a Sexual Harassment Policy, along with a Training of Trainers (TOT) program on Police Doctrine and gender. A Police Skills Gender Audit was conducted, which informed the creation of a capacity-building and mentorship program for female police officers aimed at strengthening the GPF female networking system.

Regional sensitization programs were also organized to address gender-related issues and enhance the visibility of women in the security sector. Furthermore, DCAF facilitated the



development of a specific administrative procedure to support the implementation of the Sexual Harassment Policy. This included a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on reporting mechanisms for both men and women to report cases of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Output 4.1.1.2. Corruption free Security Sector.

This output is to be achieved through the establishment of anti-corruption mechanisms within security institutions and the implementation of awareness initiatives aimed at mitigating corruption. The security institutions, the GAF, GPF, GFRS, Prison Service, and affiliated agencies, reported the presence of clear anti-corruption frameworks, with well-defined reporting channels and explicit disciplinary measures for personnel involved in misconduct. These institutions emphasized that systemic or institutionalized corruption is not prevalent.

However, it was acknowledged that individual cases of corruption or bribery may still occur, underscoring the need for continued vigilance and robust enforcement of anti-corruption measures.

Table 5: Priority Area 4 - Outcomes, Outputs and Status of Achievement

Result	Implementation status
Outcome 4.1.1: A security sector that is responsive to the needs of all persons irrespective of gender, age and vulnerability	
Output 4.1.1.1: Equitable representation and participation of gender in the security sector	Partially Achieved
Output 4.1.1.2. Corruption free Security Sector	Partially Achieved

4.2.6 Progress on Priority Area 5: Specific Reform Activities Relating to Respective Security Institutions.

Priority Area 5 focuses on implementing targeted reforms across The Gambia's security institutions to strengthen their professionalism, accountability, and operational effectiveness. These efforts are geared toward building a sustainable and citizen-centered security sector that upholds democratic principles and adheres to the rule of law. The objective of these reforms is to address institutional weaknesses, foster good governance, and promote transparency and inclusivity within security structures. A number of projects have been implemented to enable the achievements of commitments imbedded in the SSR. To assess progress, we reviewed the implementation status of commitments outlined in the Security Sector Reform Strategy for each security institution and the activities implemented to date.

Our findings are summarized as follows:

a) Gambia Armed Force (GAF)

The reforms are widely regarded as aligned with the needs of the Gambia Armed Force (GAF). Within the framework of the Security Sector Reform Strategy, the GAF



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has been assigned Ten (10) specific commitments aimed at enhancing their operational effectiveness, governance, and alignment with democratic principles, as stated below:

Table 6: GAF Commitments and Implementation Status

Nr.	Commitments for GAF	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Harmonize and update relevant legislative Acts to ensure legal frameworks align with current security needs.		✓	
2	Update and develop comprehensive policies and strategies to guide GAF operations and initiatives effectively.		✓	
3	Establish a functional and fully operational training school to enhance training and professional development.		✓	
4	Strengthen capacity building initiatives for GAF personnel, focusing on skills enhancement and specialized training.		✓	
5	Human Resource Audit: Conduct Human Resource Audit	✓		
6	Develop and implement a detailed Table of Organisation and Equipment (TOE) to streamline GAF's structure and resource allocation.	✓		
7	Provide essential platforms and equipment for the Gambia Navy to bolster maritime security and operational capabilities.		✓	
8	Enhance Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities to improve situational awareness and strategic response.		✓	
9	Construct a standard, integrated Joint Service Headquarters to support coordinated command and control functions.			✓
10	Create and implement an exit strategy for GAF personnel to ensure sustainable career transitions and post-service			✓

During the period under review, significant progress has been made in achieving the commitments and strengthening the Gambia Armed Forces (GAF). The Gambia Armed Forces Act, through support from DCAF-Germany Government Project, has undergone a comprehensive review and validation, although it has not yet been presented to the National Assembly for amendment.

Additionally, GAF has updated several key frameworks, including the Revised Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS) Regulations 2024, and regularly updates its Standard Operating Procedures.

The adoption of Merit-Based Appointments and Promotions has been established in line with TACOS, while continuous capacity building initiatives for personnel remain a priority. GAF has participated in numerous training programs and joint exercises with



international partners, covering areas such as deployment training, overseas training, and cyber security.

Furthermore, the Table of Organisation and Equipment (TOE) has been developed, enhancing the structural and operational planning of the armed forces. However, while the current training school remains in use, the construction of a modern training facility is still pending. It was reported that an institutional and human resource assessment of the GAF was conducted with support from DCAF.

Oversight of the Gambia Armed Forces (GAF) is managed by several key bodies, including the GAF Council, the National Assembly National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, the National Assembly, and the Ministry of Defence, all of which play crucial roles in overseeing and managing GAF's operations and governance.

b) Gambia Police Force (GPF)

The reforms are widely regarded as aligned with the needs of the Gambia Police Force (GPF). Within the framework of the Security Sector Reform Strategy, the GPF has been assigned Eleven (11) specific commitments aimed at enhancing their operational effectiveness, governance, and alignment with democratic principles, as stated below:

Table 7: GPF Commitments and Implementation Status

Nr.	Commitments for GPF	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Update/develop relevant policies and strategies.	✓		
2	Review and develop standard operating procedures.	✓		
3	Formalize community policing.			✓
4	Build capacity of GPF personnel.		✓	
5	Build capacity for Municipal Council Police.		✓	
6	Conduct human resource audit of the GPF.	✓		
7	Upgrade the Police training school.		✓	
8	Review the Police training curriculum to incorporate human rights.		✓	
9	Develop an exit strategy for GPF personnel.			✓
10	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
11	Provide adequate facilities for GPF		✓	

For the period under review, the GPF has adopted several policies and frameworks including The Policing Doctrine Document; GPF Strategic Plan 2024 to 2028; Arrest and Detention Procedures; Revised Police Training Curriculum; Police Training Manuals; Guidelines on the Prevention of COVID-19; IGP Directive on Human Rights and Professional Standards Unit; SOP on Policing Public; SOP on the Use of Force. Additional frameworks have been drafted awaiting review/validation/approval. These includes the Recruitment and Selection Policy; Guidelines on Performance Assessment and Evaluation; Promotion, Postings and Transfer Policy; Fleet Management Policy; Gender Mainstreaming policy; New Community Policing



Strategy; Policy and SOP on Crisis Response and Management; SOP on Internal Investigation; Internal Investigation Policy; Policy on Covert Human Intelligence source; SOP on Covert Human Intelligence source; Policy on Trans-national Organised Crime; SOP on Trans-national Organised Crime; Guideline on Recruitment and Selection Interview.

With support from DCAF, the following were also achieved:

- A comprehensive Police Handbook on criminal procedures related to arrest and detention has been developed and disseminated.
- A dedicated manual on criminal procedures for the Gambia Police Force has also been created and shared.

The Gambia Police Force (GPF) has conducted extensive training programs across multiple areas to enhance the skills and capabilities of its personnel.

Operational Training:

Police personnel have received specialized training in key operational areas, including:

- Arrest and Detention Procedures
- Election Security
- Senior Leadership and Command
- Crowd Control and Public Order Management
- VIP and Escort Guard Duties
- Advanced Tactical and Arrest Procedures
- Shooting Skills and Range Usage
- Crisis Management and Critical Incident Response
- Traffic Management and Insurance Awareness
- Terrorist Incident First Response

Administrative Training:

In administrative functions, the following trainings have been completed:

- Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions on the use of the Police Handbook have been successfully conducted.
- Police Doctrine
- Performance Management
- Deployment Planning
- Geographical Information Systems for Police Stations

Crime Management Training:

To strengthen crime management capabilities, personnel have undergone training in:

- Criminal and Forensic Investigations
- Community Policing
- Investigation of SGBV Cases
- Detection of False Documents
- Software, Data, and Case File Management



- Gender and Child-Responsive Policing
- Use of WAPIS Databases/AFIS
- Criminal Executive Courses

These comprehensive training programs reflect the GPF's commitment to professional development, operational readiness, and effective service delivery. In addition, an institutional and human resource assessment of the GPF was conducted with support from DCAF. Efforts to promote gender equality within the police force have included a range of targeted initiatives. These include Women Leadership and Management training, Coaching and Mentoring programs, as well as Gender Awareness and Mainstreaming training. Training on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) has also been conducted for police personnel. Additionally, officers have received human rights-related training on various topics, including Human Rights and Internal Investigations, SGBV and Human Rights, Child Rights, Hate Speech, and Victim Protection.

The institutionalization of gender mainstreaming has been significantly bolstered by the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy within the Gambia Police Force (GPF).

A dedicated unit now addresses gender-related issues, ensuring sustained focus on this priority area⁹. However, the establishment of the Police Council remains pending, contingent on the adoption of the Police Bill¹⁰. In the interim, oversight responsibilities are being carried out by institutions such as the Ministry of Interior and the National Assembly National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, which continue to provide critical oversight of police operations.

c) Gambia Immigration Department (GID)

The reforms are widely regarded as aligned with the needs of the Gambia Immigration Department (GID). Within the framework of the Security Sector Reform Strategy, the GID has been assigned Twenty (20) specific commitments aimed at enhancing their operational effectiveness, governance, and alignment with democratic principles, as stated below:

⁹ Interviews with Senior Management of GPF

¹⁰ Interviews with Senior Management of GPF



Table 8: GID Commitments and Implementation Status

Nr.	Commitments for GID	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Revise the Immigration Act and subsidiary legislations.	✓		
2	Update/develop relevant policies and strategies.	✓		
3	Establish an Immigration Council.			
4	Establish Immigration Border Patrol Unit.	✓		
5	Provide adequate facilities for GID.		✓	
6	Build capacity of GID staff.	✓		
7	Upgrade the GID training school.		✓	
8	Standardize the GID training curriculum.		✓	
9	Establish a reception centre for deportees and returnees and facilitate their reintegration.			✓
10	Coordinate with stakeholders /partners for admission and integration of asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons and Persons of Concern (PoC).			✓
11	Decentralize the national and non-national identification documents enrolment issuing centres.		✓	
12	Sensitize local authorities on their roles and responsibilities on the issuance of attestation documents.		✓	
13	Create awareness on citizenship, naturalization and documentation.		✓	
14	Register all births with the Immigration Department.			✓
15	Establish more immigration liaison desks abroad.			✓
16	Review existing MOUs / bilateral cooperation with stakeholders/ foreign partners.		✓	
17	Conduct human resource audit of the GID	✓		
18	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
19	Support skills and career development initiatives.		✓	
20	Develop an exit strategy for GID personnel			✓

During the reporting period, the Gambia Immigration Department (GID) achieved significant progress in modernizing laws and policies to align with current realities, including the drafting of the Immigration Bill. Additionally, key frameworks such as a new Gambia Immigration Department (GID) Code of Conduct and an Integrated Border Management concept were also validated.

Notable progress was also achieved in building staff capacity, with personnel undergoing training in various areas, including:

- Diplomatic Protocols and Etiquette
- Humane and Rights-Based Approaches during Reception and Post-Arrival Assistance
- ICT and Customer Care
- Local Protection of Migrants
- Leadership and Performance Management
- Document Security and Migrant Protection

Further specialized training covered:

- Transnational Organized Crime and its connection to migration



- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Health Referral Protocols
- General Migration Topics and Restoring Family Link (RFL) Services
- Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)
- Document Examination and Fraud Detection
- Trends in Transnational Organized Crime, including legal and policy frameworks and border management strategies
- Use of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS)

The Gambia Immigration Department (GID) has validated a Gender Mainstreaming and Sexual Harassment Policy to provide a structured framework for integrating gender considerations across its operations. In addition, an institutional and human resource assessment of the GID was conducted with support from DCAF.

The GID operates under the oversight of the Ministry of Interior, which, alongside other bodies such as the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, ensures accountability and adherence to institutional mandates. These efforts underscore the GID's commitment to enhancing institutional efficiency and addressing evolving migration challenges with professionalism and accountability.

d) Gambia Fire And Rescue Service (GFRS)

The reforms are widely regarded as aligned with the needs of the Gambia Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS). Within the framework of the Security Sector Reform Strategy, the GFRS has been assigned Eight (8) specific commitments aimed at enhancing their operational effectiveness, governance, and alignment with democratic principles, as stated below:

Table 8: GFRS Commitments and Implementation Status

Nr.	Commitments for GFRS	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Update/develop relevant Acts, policies and strategies.	✓		
2	Establish the Fire and Rescue Service Council.	✓		
3	Conduct sensitization on public safety and emergency response.		✓	
4	Conduct human resource audit of the GFRS.	✓		
5	Provide required capabilities for GFRS.		✓	
6	Establish mechanical support units.	✓		
7	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
8	Develop an exit strategy for GFRS personnel.			✓

During the period under review, the Gambia Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) made considerable progress in strengthening its institutional and operational frameworks. This included reviewing its foundational Act and validating the Fire and Rescue Service Organizational Guidance Manual. Furthermore, significant efforts are underway to develop key regulations, such as the Building Regulations and LPG Regulations, aimed at enhancing safety standards and compliance.



Alongside these regulatory advancements, the GFRS has prioritized capacity building through targeted training programs to improve staff competence and service delivery. Additionally, the establishment of a gender unit highlights the GFRS's commitment to mainstreaming gender considerations across its operations, fostering inclusivity and equity within the organization.

e) Gambia Prisons Service

The reforms are widely regarded as aligned with the needs of the Gambia Prisons Service (GPS). Within the framework of the Security Sector Reform Strategy, the GPS has been assigned Eleven (11) specific commitments aimed at enhancing their operational effectiveness, governance, and alignment with democratic principles, as stated below:

Table 8: GPS Commitments and Implementation Status

Nr.	Commitments for GPS	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Update/develop relevant Acts, policies and strategies.	✓		
2	Revive the Prisons Council.	✓		
3	Conduct human resource audit of the GPS.		✓	
4	Build capacity of GPS personnel.		✓	
5	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
6	Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs).		✓	
7	Provide psycho-social support service.		✓	
8	Establishment of rehabilitation centre with relevant curriculum.			✓
9	Develop standards and guidelines to improve condition for inmates in line with best practice.		✓	
10	Provide required capabilities for GPS.		✓	
11	Develop an exit strategy for GPS personnel.			✓

Significant progress has been achieved in updating laws and policies to align with current needs, including the drafting of the Gambia Fire and Rescue Services (GFRS) Bill (2022).

The Gambia Prisons System is undergoing a transformative process aimed at prioritizing rehabilitation, education, and vocational training¹¹. This reform seeks to reduce recidivism through structured reintegration programs, align facilities and practices with international standards on human rights and inmate welfare, and ensure a secure and humane environment for inmates. Additionally, it emphasizes enhancing the professional development of correctional staff to strengthen overall service delivery¹². The transformation of the prison complex into a correctional center signifies a broader commitment to criminal justice reform in The Gambia¹³.

This reform underscores the importance of treating inmates with dignity and prioritizing their rehabilitation to support successful reintegration into society. The shift from

¹¹ Concept note: Conversion of the Gambia Prison Complex to a State-of-the-Art Correctional Center

¹² Concept note: Conversion of the Gambia Prison Complex to a State-of-the-Art Correctional Center

¹³ Concept note: Conversion of the Gambia Prison Complex to a State-of-the-Art Correctional Center



punitive measures to corrective and rehabilitative approaches aligns with international human rights standards, as outlined by the United Nations and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

The Gambia Prison Service (GPS) has undergone significant advancements, benefiting from targeted capacity-building initiatives. These include Legal and Human Rights Training for prison officers, cadet courses, skills training, social cohesion and peacebuilding programs, and good hygienic practices for cooks in food preparation. Training in human rights and international humanitarian law has further strengthened the capacity of prison officials.

Additionally, the GPS has adopted and operationalized the Mandela Rules, ensuring the fundamental rights of prisoners are upheld. Authorities highlighted that there are now more female prison officials than males, reflecting a progressive shift in gender representation within the service.

f) Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG)

The Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG), has been tasked with 12 key commitments, including updating and developing policies, strategies, and domesticating relevant treaties and conventions, as well as conducting rapid participatory assessments and building staff capacity. During the reporting period, significant progress was made with the introduction of a Staff Service Rule to guide recruitment, the implementation of drug abuse testing, and the establishment of selection entry exams. Additionally, various capacity-building initiatives were conducted, such as training on internal investigations, human rights, and a Training of Trainers (ToT) program on the Universal Drug Treatment Curriculum. Further advancements included the development of Crime Scene Investigation and Standard Operating Procedure documents, as well as programs focused on substance use disorder treatment.

Table 9: Commitments-The Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DLEA)

Nr.	Commitments for DLEA	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Update/develop policies and strategies		✓	
2	Identify and domesticate treaties and conventions already signed and ratified		✓	
3	Upgrade the Professional Standard and Disciplinary Committee (PSDC) to a Unit			✓
4	Conduct a Rapid Participatory Assessment (RPA) (Household survey, desktop review of relevant data, etc.)			✓
5	Establish observatory/epidemiological network on drug use.		✓	
6	Conduct human resource audit of the DLEAG.		✓	
7	Build capacity of DLEAG personnel.		✓	
8	Provide required capabilities for DLEAG.		✓	
9	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
10	Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).		✓	



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11	Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to combat the trafficking of illicit drugs.	✓		
12	Develop an exit strategy for DLEAG personnel.		✓	

g) National Intelligence Agency (NIA)/ State Intelligence Service (SIS)

The NIA/SIS is assigned 10 commitments in the Security Sector Reform Strategy. The commitments include the establishment of a State Intelligence Council, capacity building of personnel, development and enhancement of Acts. During the period under review, the DCAF European Union (EU) Project supported the SIS bill (2017) drafting process and training on best practices for drafting intelligence legislation. The SIS Bill has now been developed and is awaiting validation.

Table 10: Commitments-NIA/SIS

Nr.	Commitments for NIA/SIS	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Update/develop relevant Acts, policies and strategies.		✓	
2	Establish and constitute a State Intelligence Council.		✓	
3	Build capacity of SIS personnel.	✓		
4	Conduct human resource audit of the NIA/SIS.		✓	
5	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
6	Enhance effective foreign coverage and collection capability.	✓		
7	Develop a secured communication system and a comprehensive intelligence database.		✓	
8	Develop Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs).	✓		
9	Provide required capabilities for SIS.		✓	
10	Develop an exit strategy for SIS personnel.			✓

h) Activities for Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)

The GRA has 10 commitments. During the review period, Staff Induction Guide and Gender & Diversity Policy; 5th Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP); Brokers/Clearing and Forwarding Agents Policy; Taxpayer's Charter; and the Customs Post Clearance Audit Administrative Regulation, were validated.

The GRA has conducted several trainings for its personnel. Personnel were trained on Tax Laws and regulations; Staff Integrity and Customer Care; Diplomatic Protocols; Human Resources Management; Single Window System; Digital Rental Income Tax Mobile App; Occupational Health and Safety; Post Clearance Audit; Data Analysis, among others.



Table 11: Commitments-Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)

Nr.	Commitments for GRA	Implementation Status		
		Achieved	Partially Achieved (on-going)	Not Achieved
1	Develop and upgrade relevant Acts, policies and strategies.		✓	
2	Conduct human resource audit of the GRA.		✓	
3	Build capacity of GRA personnel.	✓		
4	Develop a training plan that includes basic drill and skills in arms.		✓	
5	Develop a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).			✓
6	Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).	✓		
7	Develop a risk Profile for customers (importers/ taxpayers).	✓		
8	Strengthen customer service initiatives.	✓		
9	Provide required capabilities for GRA.	✓		
10	Develop an exit strategy for GRA personnel.			✓

i) Key Challenges in the Implementation of SSRS Commitments.

The commitments in the SSRS were often broad and lacked the necessary specificity to guide implementation effectively. For instance, a key commitment shared across all security institutions is the “*development and upgrading of relevant Acts, policies, and strategies*”. However, this commitment lacks clear definition, making it difficult for stakeholders to fully understand their responsibilities and work collaboratively towards common, measurable outcomes. In many cases, the objectives were not precise enough to ensure targeted interventions or to facilitate clear performance evaluation. Challenges in passing bills, resistance to change, and obsolete legal frameworks were noted¹⁴.

Another main challenge observed was the lack of measurable criteria for assessing the implementation of the SSR commitments. The absence of quantifiable indicators makes it difficult to track progress, evaluate effectiveness, or identify areas needing improvement. Without measurable metrics, it is impossible to determine whether the reforms have achieved the desired outcomes or not.

Another issue identified was the lack of clear and realistic timelines for completing reform activities. In some cases, no timeframes were defined, while in others, the deadlines were overly ambitious or impractical, considering the complexity of the reform process and the constraints posed by budgetary inadequacies. The lack of well-established time limits led to delays, with some interventions extending far beyond their intended completion dates. This lack of adherence to schedules contributed to a perception of inefficiency and hindered accountability.

¹⁴ Validation Workshop within the ongoing SSR process in The Gambia: 11–13th November 2024



A key factor in ensuring that interventions are time-bound and measurable is the presence of robust monitoring and reporting systems. Our assessment revealed that the tracking and periodic evaluation of the SSR process were either insufficient or not effectively implemented. Our findings further revealed that many security institutions were unaware of the specific commitments outlined in the SSR Strategy that they were responsible for implementing.

Regular, transparent reporting on progress, challenges, and outcomes is vital to maintaining momentum and accountability in the reform process. In the absence of consistent monitoring, visibility into the actual progress of SSR initiatives is limited, making it difficult to measure achievements and identify areas requiring corrective action.

Some of the commitments outlined in the SSRS were overly ambitious, given the available resources and institutional capacities. While aspirational goals are necessary for driving reform, they must also be realistically achievable. Our evaluation revealed that some interventions were designed without adequately considering practical limitations such as financial resources, institutional readiness, and political will. A notable example is the establishment of the Office of National Security (ONS), which lacks a dedicated budget allocation independent of the Office of the President. Furthermore, the ONS is severely understaffed, hindering its ability to effectively fulfil its oversight and coordination roles. This gap between ambition and capacity has often resulted in delays, inefficiencies, and frustration in achieving the intended outcomes.

A key concern emerging from our findings is the heavy reliance on donor support to finance the implementation of most SSR commitments. In several cases, donor priorities and timelines influenced implementation, resulting in a disproportionate focus on certain security institutions whose commitments aligned with donor interests. This, in turn, left other security institutions marginalized, as limited government resources were insufficient to ensure a balanced and comprehensive implementation of the reform across all institutions.

4.3 EFFICIENCY OF THE GAMBIA'S SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR)

In line with international practices, we evaluated the efficiency of The Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR) by examining how effectively oversight and coordination have been operationalized and managed. The team also assessed the adequacy of resources, particularly financial resources, to support the implementation of SSR commitments and ensure the timely achievement of the reform's intended objectives.

Indicators of Efficiency

- Stakeholder satisfaction with the efficiency of the oversight and coordination mechanisms.
- Adequacy of financial resources to finance the SSR planned activities.
- Cost-effectiveness
- Timeliness for implementation
- Management and Coordination
- Leveraging Partnership
- Monitoring and Accountability System



- Comparative Analysis

4.3.1 Oversight and Coordination

Establishing effective oversight and coordination mechanisms is crucial to ensure alignment among all stakeholders involved in The Gambia's Security Sector Reform process. These mechanisms encompass inter-agency coordination committees, which have demonstrated strong collaboration, with a significant majority (75%) of security personnel reporting mutual support from sister forces.

Oversight is fundamental to the successful implementation of SSR in The Gambia. Strong and effective oversight ensures that the reform process is transparent, accountable, and aligned with the country's objectives. The National Security Council (NSC), under the Presidency, serves as the apex oversight body, playing a central role in overseeing the security sector reform process and ensuring that it aligns with national priorities and international commitments. The National Security Council (NSC) has been providing the strategic direction for SSR in The Gambia and setting the overall policy framework, making critical decisions about the reform process, and guiding its implementation.

The Council meets regularly to ensure that the reform aligns with national security goals, human rights standards, and the principles of good governance. By offering high-level political support, the National Security Council (NSC) plays a crucial role in ensuring that SSR remains a priority at the highest levels of government.

As part of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) governance framework, the Office of National Security (ONS) was established in 2017 to play a crucial oversight role, with a focus on monitoring and evaluating SSR activities. It ensures that M&E frameworks are in place, that progress is regularly assessed, and that any deviations from the reform plan are promptly addressed.

The Office of National Security (ONS) is responsible for holding security institutions accountable for meeting specific reform targets within established timelines and is expected to take corrective actions when necessary. As part of its task, the ONS has promoted inter-agency coordination and collaboration by establishing technical working groups and supporting the development of frameworks like the National Security Sector Coordination Model. In addition, Mechanisms for collaboration with international partners and neighbouring countries on transnational crime have been initiated.

Despite the progress in inter-agency coordination and collaboration, significant gaps remain in the synchronization of operations and the sharing of information among security institutions. These gaps hinder the effectiveness of joint efforts, as security agencies often work in silos, with limited coordination and communication between them. As a result, critical information may not be shared in a timely manner, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for a more unified response to security



challenges. Strengthening communication channels, establishing integrated systems for data sharing, and fostering a culture of collaboration across security institutions are essential steps to overcoming these challenges and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Security Sector Reform process.

Furthermore, the ONS faces challenges to effectively enforce certain reform obligations due to the absence of the National Security Bill. During the assessment period, the National Security Bill successfully passed its second reading in the National Assembly and is now advancing to the committee stage¹⁵. National Assembly Members are in support of the bill, highlighting the critical importance of security and reiterated the government's commitment to implementing the Security Sector Reform (SSR).

Our findings also indicated that The Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR) process aligns with the guiding principles set forth in the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform. The AU SSR Policy framework encourages Member States to empower their legislatures to oversee the security sector by holding the Executive accountable for the sector's mandates, roles, and missions¹⁶.

A Standing Committee on Defence and Security (SCDS), which was established under Section 109 (1) (d) of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia and Standing Order 116 of the National Assembly, plays a pivotal role in the country's security governance. In June 2021, the Committee outlined its new policy direction to the Heads of Security Units, detailing its operational approach, institutional expectations, and oversight mandate concerning the Security and Defence Sectors¹⁷. As part of its responsibilities, the Committee monitors activities related to the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process, assesses progress against expected outcomes, and provides legislative support or advice as necessary.

Furthermore, the legislature holds the crucial responsibility of enacting and approving laws, rules, and regulations that govern security sector institutions, ensuring they operate within a well-defined and effective legal framework. However, the findings revealed that a significant portion of the existing legal frameworks are outdated and no longer adequately address the evolving challenges and needs of the security sector. This highlights an urgent need for comprehensive legal reform to modernize these frameworks, align them with current realities, and ensure they effectively support the objectives of Security Sector Reform (SSR). Modernizing these laws will not only enhance the efficiency and accountability of security institutions but also reinforce public trust in the sector's governance.

4.3.2 Financing The Gambia SSR Process

As outlined in the AU SSR Policy Framework, the responsibility for financing national SSR processes rests with Member States¹⁸. Member States are therefore encouraged to collaborate with bilateral partners such as the African Union, the United Nations,

¹⁵ Interviews with Members of the Standing Committee on Defence and Security- Oct 2024

¹⁶ African Union Policy Framework On Security Sector Reform (SSR) Adopted at the 20th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27 – 28 January 2013.

¹⁷ Interviews with Members of the SCDS – Oct 2024

¹⁸ AU SSR Policy Framework Adopted at the 20th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27 – 28 January 2013



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and other stakeholders to ensure the mobilisation of adequate funding for security sector reform activities.

The success of The Gambia's SSR Strategy depends on the continued support from these partners to ensure the effective and strategic allocation of resources across its five key priority areas. A financial estimate for implementing the Security Sector Reform Strategy (SSRS) from 2020 to 2024, projects a total funding requirement of D1,389,706,508, which is approximately \$20,140,674 based on the November 2024 exchange rate. The projected funding requirement of D1,389,706,508 is further broken down as follows:

Table 12: Financing Estimates for implementing the SSR Thematic Areas

SSR Thematic Area	Year/Amount Required				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1. Addressing Post-Authoritarian Legacies to Enhance Reforms	146,936,500	107,256,280	60,138,914	10,756,831	12,047,651
2. Security Governance Overarching frameworks	0	2,700,000	2,160,000	1,836,000	0
3. Reform activities to enable the Civilian Management and Oversight Bodies	19,091,500	32,848,000	36,789,760	41,204,531	46,149,075
4. Reform Imperatives to Address Cross Cutting Perennial Challenges	13,000,000	75,930,000	51,455,400	25,781,498	15,454,957
5. Specific Reform Activities Relating to Individual Security Institutions	105,831,030	113,484,354	145,581,656	155,030,568	402,851,431
Total	284,859,030	332,218,634	296,125,730	234,609,428	476,503,114



Our analysis, *based on table 12 above*, revealed that for the years 2020 and 2021, the majority of the projected resources were primarily targeting two key thematic areas. The first area focused on addressing post-authoritarian legacies to foster comprehensive reform, aiming to transform the security sector in alignment with democratic principles and human rights standards. The second area concentrated on specific reform activities related to individual security institutions, targeting institutional capacity building, modernization, and improved governance within agencies such as the police, military, and intelligence units. This allocation strategy highlights the prioritization of both structural reforms and institutional development as foundational elements of the broader Security Sector Reform process.

Our analysis further revealed the absence of a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy aligned with the projected financing needs of the SSR process. This lack of strategic alignment has led to poor coordination in mobilizing the necessary resources for implementing the SSR commitments. As a result, resource mobilization efforts have been fragmented, creating an unclear picture of the actual resources allocated to the SSR process. This fragmentation affects the government's ability to provide clear strategic direction on prioritization and sequencing¹⁹. As a result, international partners are left to identify implementation gaps independently during their project design and planning phases.

In 2017, the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) emerged as an early supporter of The Gambia's transition priorities, approving an initial package of \$3.1 million²⁰.

This funding was directed toward critical interventions, including a comprehensive security sector assessment, support for transitional justice initiatives, and the enhancement of coordination efforts within the Office of the President to advance security sector reform²¹.

Other partners that have supported the implementation of the SSR commitments, both directly and indirectly, include, but are not limited to, the AU, EU, UNDP, ECOWAS, DCAF, and various other supporting organisations.

While substantial investments from partner organizations have been allocated to capacity building, infrastructure, and personnel development initiatives, challenges remain in aligning resource allocation with strategic reform objectives. A key finding is that financial resources are often unevenly distributed across various security agencies, with departments such as the police and military receiving more funding compared to intelligence and other security units. This imbalance creates bottlenecks, hindering the achievement of a sustainable and unified reform agenda.

4.3.3 Cost-effectiveness

While the Security Sector Reform (SSR) has made significant progress in strengthening the operational capacities of security agencies and aligning the sector with democratic principles, concerns persist regarding the efficiency of these advancements. For example, while substantial funds have been invested in infrastructure upgrades and the procurement of security equipment, our assessment found no clear evidence that these investments have led

¹⁹ Chido Mutangadura: *Security sector reform in The Gambia-What is at stake?* West Africa Report 31 | November 2020

²⁰ Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP Security Sector Reform (SSR) Project-Final Evaluation Report, May 2020

²¹ Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP Security Sector Reform (SSR) Project-Final Evaluation Report, May 2020



to tangible improvements in security service delivery or enhanced public trust. This disparity highlights an imbalance between spending and results, raising questions about the fiscal accountability and efficiency of the reform process.

An analysis of the reform strategies identifies several opportunities where alternative approaches could have delivered similar outcomes at a lower cost. For example, the SSR has relied extensively on international experts and external contractors for training and capacity building, often incurring high expenses. Leveraging and developing local expertise could provide a more sustainable and cost-effective alternative.

Another factor affecting cost-effectiveness within the SSR framework is the prevalence of overlapping initiatives. Multiple agencies have implemented parallel reform programs, especially capacity building initiatives, with minimal coordination, resulting in duplicated efforts and increased costs. For instance, both the police and military have independently invested in community engagement initiatives without a cohesive strategy, leading to redundancy and inefficiency. Consolidating these efforts under a unified reform framework could improve coordination, reduce expenses, and maximize the impact of such programs. Additionally, the lack of thorough cost-benefit analyses during the planning stages of reforms has resulted in costly initiatives with limited long-term value. This underscores the need for more rigorous financial oversight and strategic prioritization to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.

4.3.4 Timeliness of Implementation

The timeliness to implement the SSR commitments has been a critical area of concern. The reform agenda was developed without a clear implementation roadmap, resulting in the inability to establish effective monitoring mechanisms to track progress and prevent significant delays. Key reforms, such as restructuring the police force and establishing a civilian oversight mechanism, have not been completed within the planned timeframes. Our findings revealed that these delays are primarily attributed to bureaucratic bottlenecks, resource constraints, and limited institutional capacity²². As a result, the momentum of the reform process has slowed, raising questions about the feasibility of achieving long-term objectives within the initially envisioned timeline. Delays in implementing SSR activities have had a ripple effect on the overall progress of the reform, undermining their effectiveness and increasing associated costs. For instance, delays in capacity-building programs, probably due to lack of funding, have left security personnel underprepared for new roles and responsibilities, resulting in operational inefficiencies.

Moreover, inadequate planning during the reform's initial phases failed to anticipate potential risks and delays, leaving the process vulnerable to shocks such as inadequate financial and technical resources and support. These factors highlight systemic issues that need to be addressed to improve the timeliness of reform efforts.

Our findings revealed that in some cases, external dependencies have also played a role in slowing down the SSR process. The reliance on external funding and expertise has often subjected the reform timeline to delays in donor disbursements and scheduling. While external support is critical, the overdependence on these resources has limited the government's ability to independently drive the reform process and adapt quickly to changing circumstances. This underscores the need for greater local ownership and capacity-building to reduce delays and ensure timely implementation of activities.

To address these challenges, the Gambia's SSR process must adopt more realistic planning frameworks and improve coordination mechanisms. Establishing clear accountability for

²² SSR Consultative Process- Oct 2024



meeting deadlines and integrating adaptive management practices could help mitigate delays and keep the reform agenda on track. Additionally, investing in local capacity and fostering political commitment will be essential to reducing dependency on external actors and ensuring that reforms are achieved within their planned timeframes.

4.3.5 Management and Coordination

The effectiveness of management structures, coordination mechanisms, and oversight systems in the Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR) has been a subject of significant concern. While some frameworks have been established to guide the reform process, gaps in their functionality have hindered efficient implementation. The National Security Council (NSC), which is tasked with overseeing the reform agenda, has faced challenges in enforcing decisions and maintaining consistent oversight. Coordination among security agencies, government ministries, and donor organizations is often fragmented, resulting in duplicated efforts and missed opportunities for synergy. These issues indicate that the current management and coordination systems require substantial strengthening to achieve the intended objectives.

A major factor contributing to these challenges is the lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities among stakeholders. The overlap in mandates between some key institutions, such as the police, military (the GNG), and intelligence services, has created confusion and inefficiencies. For instance, both the police and military have been involved in maintaining public order, leading to jurisdictional disputes and inefficient resource utilization. Similarly, the Ministry of Interior and other government bodies tasked with overseeing reforms lack clarity on their specific roles, which undermines their ability to provide effective leadership and support. This ambiguity has slowed decision-making and weakened accountability across the SSR process.

Another challenge lies in the inconsistent execution of coordination mechanisms. While joint task forces and inter-agency committees have been established to enhance collaboration, their effectiveness is limited by infrequent meetings, poor communication, and inadequate follow-through on action plans. Furthermore, donor-driven initiatives, though well-intentioned, are often implemented in isolation from broader reform efforts, further fragmenting the process. This disjointed approach has led to a lack of coherence in implementing reforms and has weakened the overall impact of the SSR program.

Oversight systems are underperforming, primarily due to a lack of adequate financial and technical resources to undertake their oversight functions on the SSR effectively. Key bodies tasked with monitoring SSR, such as the National Assembly Committee on Defence and Security, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Judiciary, Civil Society Organizations, and Academia, face limited access to information and resources, hindering their ability to provide effective oversight. Furthermore, the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework has made it challenging to track progress, identify bottlenecks, and address emerging issues in real-time. These deficiencies risk undermining the 75% public trust rating in the security sector reform process and reducing the accountability of the key actors involved in SSR²³.

Prioritizing regular communication, joint planning, and systematic monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure that the SSR process remains coherent, efficient, and adaptable to emerging challenges. By addressing these areas, The Gambia can establish a more effective management and coordination structure to advance its security sector reforms.

²³ SRR Consultative Process- Oct 2024



4.3.6 Leveraging Partnerships

Partnerships with international donors, technical experts, and local stakeholders have played a significant role in The Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR), but their impact in terms of resource efficiency and the prioritization of government activities, has been mixed.

The findings revealed that the government's failure to provide strategic guidance in coordinating the implementation of SSR commitments has resulted in fragmented approaches to donor-led project design and execution. Some international partners have frequently developed initiatives based on their respective mandates and identified gaps, rather than aligning with the government's priorities. This lack of coordination has led to a large extent, misalignment of donor-funded projects with the broader reform agenda.

The findings further highlighted significant financial and technical support from development partners, which includes funding for capacity building, provision of equipment, and advisory services. Technical experts from these partners have contributed their expertise in areas such as human rights training, democratic governance, policy implementation, leadership, accountability, and community-oriented policing. The Office of National Security (ONS), with support from DCAF, has been promoting capacity-building initiatives for the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Defence and Security (SCDS) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their oversight roles.

There have been instances where pooled resources and collaborative initiatives have effectively reduced costs and minimized duplication. For example, joint training programs facilitated by international partners and implemented across multiple security agencies have streamlined capacity-building efforts. Initiatives such as the UNDP PDF project, in partnership with local civil society organizations, have promoted community-level engagement without duplicating outreach activities. Similarly, coordinated donor funding for infrastructure upgrades has allowed for cost-sharing across various projects, ensuring more efficient use of limited financial resources. These examples demonstrate the advantages of strategic partnerships in achieving greater resource efficiency.

Despite these successes, the lack of a centralized mechanism for managing partnerships poses a challenge for future efforts to pool resources for SSR activities. There is a need to focus on strengthening partnerships and improving coordination for financing the SSR process moving forward.

4.3.7 Monitoring and Accountability Systems

The Gambia Security Sector Reform (SSR) has faced significant challenges in establishing functional monitoring, evaluation, and accountability (ME&A) mechanisms to implementation of the SSR. Although periodic reports on security matters are done weekly to the National Security Council (NSC) and periodically to the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, these oversight mechanisms lack the resources required to effectively monitor the SSR commitments in a more comprehensive manner. Data collection and reporting systems remain fragmented, limiting the ability to track progress and assess resource allocation effectively. Furthermore, the lack of a unified ME&A framework undermines transparency and weakens the ability to hold stakeholders accountable for inefficiencies and mismanagement.

To improve monitoring and accountability systems, the SSR must prioritize the development of a comprehensive ME&A framework. This framework should integrate regular audits, performance evaluations, and real-time tracking of resource use to ensure transparency and efficiency. Strengthening the capacity and independence of oversight bodies, such as



parliamentary committees and civil society organizations, is also essential to hold stakeholders accountable.

4.3.8 Comparative Analysis

The cost-efficiency of The Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR) is relatively lower compared to similar reforms in other countries. Despite receiving significant international donor support and technical assistance, The Gambia's reform efforts have been hindered by inefficiencies in resource allocation, delays in implementation, and a lack of strategic coordination. In contrast, countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, which also underwent SSR after periods of prolonged instability, achieved more with similar or even fewer resources. They accomplished this by adopting more streamlined approaches and effectively leveraging local capacities. These disparities present opportunities for The Gambia to adopt best practices in cost-effective reform strategies.

A key area where other countries have excelled is the integration of local expertise and institutions into the reform process. In Sierra Leone, for example, local stakeholders played an integral role in SSR initiatives, reducing reliance on expensive international consultants and fostering local ownership of reforms. In contrast, The Gambia's SSR has been predominantly donor-driven, with international consultants assuming central roles in training and advisory capacities. While this has brought valuable technical expertise, it has also escalated costs and limited the sustainability of reforms in the long term. Adopting a model similar to Sierra Leone's could help The Gambia enhance cost-efficiency by reducing dependence on external actors.

Another important lesson from comparative contexts is the use of pooled funding mechanisms and centralized coordination to reduce duplication and optimize resource use. Liberia's SSR successfully utilized a multi-donor trust fund to align international support with national priorities, resulting in better resource utilization and less fragmentation. In contrast, The Gambia lacks a centralized mechanism for coordinating donor contributions, leading to overlapping projects and inefficient resource use. Establishing a unified funding and coordination framework could help The Gambia better align its reform activities with available resources, thereby improving overall cost-efficiency.

Although there is some evidence that lessons from other contexts are being applied, their impact has been limited by weak institutional capacity and insufficient knowledge sharing. For example, while technical assistance from international partners has sometimes incorporated best practices from other SSR processes, these insights are often not fully adapted to the Gambian context or effectively shared with local stakeholders.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY OF THE GAMBIA SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Sustainability was defined as the extent to which the benefits, reforms, and institutional changes introduced by The Gambia's SSR are likely to endure and be maintained over time without reliance on external support. This definition of sustainability ensured the review assessed the durability of SSR outcomes and the likelihood of reforms being maintained and improved in the future.

Indicators of Sustainability

- Institutional strengthening within the security institutions
- Financial Viability
- Adaptability and Resilience
- Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity



- Integration into National Systems

4.4.1 Institutional Strengthening

According to the National Security Adviser (NSA), significant progress has been made in reform activities, particularly in capacity building and the institutional development of Security Services. These achievements have been supported by bilateral partners, primarily the European Union (EU), through organizations such as DCAF and GIZ, among others.

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) has made big progress in laying the groundwork for introduction and implementation of several new frameworks, such as the National Security Policy and the Strategic Security Sector Reform Plan. These policies aim to instil democratic principles, improve accountability, and enhance operational efficiency. Additionally, some institutions, such as the GPF and GAF, have undergone restructuring to align with these frameworks. However, the full institutionalization of these reforms remains incomplete due to resource constraints and inconsistent implementation.

Institutions such as the police and military have also benefited from infrastructural upgrades and the introduction of modern equipment to support their operations. However, a significant gap in the SSR process is the absence of comprehensive, long-term capacity development plans tailored to the specific needs of both individuals and institutions. While ad-hoc training sessions and workshops have been conducted across various areas, there is no overarching strategy to ensure sustained skill development and effective knowledge transfer. This challenge is further compounded by the high rate of attrition within the Gambia Armed Forces (GAF), Gambia Police Force (GPF), and Gambia Immigration Department (GID), as revealed by our findings.

To address the issue of attrition, it is essential to implement targeted retention measures, such as offering competitive salaries and benefits, creating clear career progression pathways, and improving working conditions. Additionally, fostering a sense of purpose and institutional pride through leadership development programs and employee recognition initiatives can help reduce turnover.

Another concern is the tendency of individual security institutions, such as the Gambia Armed Forces, the Gambia Police Force, and the Gambia Immigration Department, to implement most of their reform commitments in isolation. This lack of collaboration undermines the cohesive approach needed to address their complementary mandates effectively.

To ensure the sustainability of some of the gains, it is crucial to strengthen local ownership of the reform process, institutionalize best practices, and establish mechanisms for continuous institutional development beyond donor support.

4.4.2 Financial Viability

Despite the proclaimed political will and support for the Gambia's Security Sector Reform (SSR), the financial viability remains a significant concern, particularly due to the lack of budgetary support. A comprehensive plan to finance and sustain the reforms is lacking, with current efforts relying solely on donor-supported interventions targeting specific security institutions.

To address financial viability challenges, the Gambia must develop a strategic resource mobilisation plan that incorporates both **domestic and external resources**. This should include measures to gradually increase national budget allocations for the security sector, with an emphasis on prioritizing reform-related activities. Exploring innovative funding mechanisms, such as establishing a dedicated budget line within the national budget and identifying alternative income generation streams, could provide the additional resources



needed to sustain security sector reforms. To support income generation, public-private partnership (PPP) mechanisms should be pursued and guided by transforming all SSR commitments for each security institution into well-defined projects with clear budgets and implementation plans.

Additionally, establishing a multi-donor trust fund could help pool international contributions and ensure better alignment with national reform priorities. These measures, combined with proper financial oversight, can enhance resource mobilization and sustainability.

4.4.3 Adaptability and Resilience

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) efforts in The Gambia have demonstrated some capacity for adaptability, but significant gaps remain in their design to ensure relevance and sustainability in dynamic contexts. The reforms include mechanisms like periodic reviews and stakeholder consultations, ensuring objectives remain aligned with changing political, social, and economic conditions. The ONS, working closely with some key stakeholders, has launched a nationwide consultation process on the SSR through its communication team. This initiative aims to raise awareness and address growing public concerns about safety and trust in law enforcement throughout the SSR process.

4.4.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity

Given the limited time and scope of our assessment, our review of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process was not extensive enough to ensure an inclusive approach involving a broader range of stakeholders. In particular, the inability to engage community leaders and a wider network of civil society organizations created a significant gap. These groups have been strong advocates for transparency, human rights, and democratic principles in the security sector, which are integral to the core objectives of the SSR.

To foster greater inclusivity and stakeholder support, the SSR process must prioritize the active involvement of citizens, civil society, and marginalized groups at every stage of reform process to include strengthening community oversight mechanisms, increasing representation, and ensuring regular communication about progress and challenges at national level. Empowering local actors to play a meaningful role in the oversight and accountability of the security sector will not only build trust but also enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of the reforms in The Gambia.

4.4.5 Integration into National Systems

The Gambia Security Sector Reform (SSR) initiatives have made progress in aligning with national laws and governance frameworks, but their full integration into the country's institutional systems remains incomplete. Policies such as the National Security Policy, the Security Sector Reform Strategy have been developed to provide a guiding framework for the reforms. However, gaps in legislative adoption and harmonization with existing national laws have hindered the institutionalization of these reforms.

Mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing reforms beyond the life of donor-supported projects are currently weak, posing risks to the sustainability of the SSR process. Furthermore, the capacity of oversight bodies such as the National Security Council, Office of the National Security, and the Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security to enforce compliance and hold security institutions accountable is limited by insufficient resources, expertise, and authority.



To ensure the sustainable integration of SSR initiatives into national systems, The Gambia must prioritize legislative reforms that enshrine the principles and objectives of the SSR within domestic laws. A key step in this process is for the National Assembly to fast-track the approval of the National Security Bill.

4.5 IMPACT OF THE GAMBIA SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

The review team adopted the universal definition of impact which is, the positive and negative, primary and secondary, intended and unintended long-term effects produced by The Gambia Security Sector Reform (SSR) on the country's security, governance, and social environment. This definition ensured the review captures the broader, systemic, and lasting effects of The Gambia's SSR, beyond immediate outputs and outcomes, while considering both intended and unintended consequences.

Indicators of Impact

- Achievement of Long-term Outcomes
- Reduction in security incidents, abuses, or violations linked to security actors.
- Contributions to Governance and Human Rights
- Public Perception
- Unintended Effects of the reform

4.5.1 Long-term Outcomes

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) initiatives in The Gambia have begun to produce broader and lasting changes, though their full impact remains a work in progress. A key outcome is the establishment of foundational frameworks, such as the National Security Policy and the National Security Sector Reform (SSR) Strategy, which aim to institutionalize democratic oversight and accountability in the security sector. The reforms have contributed to capacity-building within security institutions, particularly in areas such as human rights compliance and professional conduct. However, the reforms have yet to fully translate into a cohesive, systemic transformation of the security sector, as challenges related to resource allocation, political will, and inclusivity persist.

The SSR initiatives have had a mixed influence on peace, stability, and the rule of law in The Gambia. Efforts to professionalize security institutions such as the GAF, GPF, SIS/NIA and GID and align them with democratic principles have improved operational transparency and reduced instances of human rights violations. For example, there has been a noted decline in reports of police misconduct, signalling progress in aligning practices with international standards.

Our findings indicate a notable improvement in public trust in many security institutions, particularly due to initiatives such as community policing and increased engagement with civil society. However, skepticism remains among citizens regarding the sincerity and effectiveness of the reforms, largely due to the slow pace of implementation and limited tangible results. To assess the long-term impact of the SSR process, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive study on knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to the reforms.

4.5.2 Security and Stability



The Security Sector Reform (SSR) initiatives in The Gambia have contributed to incremental reductions in insecurity, crime, conflict, though significant challenges remain. Improvements in professional training and the introduction of community-based policing have enhanced the ability of security institutions to address crime and foster safer communities. Localized conflicts, particularly in urban areas, have seen a slight decline due to increased police presence and better coordination among security forces. However, systemic issues such as resource constraints, fragmented command structures, and inconsistent enforcement of laws continue to hinder the full realization of a secure and stable environment. Additionally, rural areas remain underserved, limiting the broader impact of these reforms on national security.

While the SSR reforms have bold progress to address root causes of insecurity, such as corruption, abuse of power, and lack of oversight, these efforts are far from complete. Measures to enhance transparency and accountability, including the establishment of oversight bodies and training on human rights standards, have gone a long way to curb instances of abuse within security institutions. However, corruption and political interference still remain persistent challenges, undermining public trust and the effectiveness of the reforms. Furthermore, the lack of proper systems for internal and external oversight means that many of these issues are addressed reactively rather than through sustained structural change. To achieve long-term stability, The Gambia must prioritize tackling these root causes by institutionalizing reforms, strengthening oversight mechanisms, and fostering a culture of accountability within its security sector.

4.5.3 Contributions to Governance and Human Rights

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) initiatives in The Gambia have made tangible but uneven contributions to strengthening democratic governance and the accountability of security institutions. Efforts to establish civilian oversight structures, such as the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security and independent Civil Society Groups, have provided a framework for improved governance. Additionally, the development of the National Security Policy emphasizes democratic principles and the rule of law as key pillars of the security sector. However, the practical application of these principles has been inconsistent. Oversight mechanisms remain under-resourced, and their mandates are not always clearly defined or enforced. Moreover, political interference continues to undermine the autonomy of these institutions, limiting their ability to hold security actors accountable effectively.

With regard to human rights, there have been significant improvements in the conduct of security actors, albeit with persistent gaps. Training programs emphasizing human rights and lawful practices during operations have increased awareness and reduced the frequency of reported abuses. For instance, extrajudicial actions and incidents of excessive use of force have declined compared to pre-reform levels, signalling progress toward aligning security practices with international standards. However, these gains are not uniform, and isolated cases of abuse continue to occur, particularly in areas with weaker oversight or fewer resources. Furthermore, the inability to investigate and address human rights violations undermines the perception of reform effectiveness.

To sustain and expand these gains, The Gambia must institutionalize the principles of democratic governance and human rights within the security sector. This includes bolstering the capacity and independence of oversight bodies, ensuring consistent training programs, and creating accessible mechanisms for reporting and addressing misconduct. Additionally, integrating human rights principles into the operational culture of security institutions, supported by clear policies and accountability measures, is essential for long-term progress. By addressing these structural and cultural challenges, the SSR process can foster a more accountable, rights-respecting security sector that aligns with democratic values.



4.5.4 Public Perception

The perception of citizens of the security sector in The Gambia following the reforms is a mix of cautious optimism and persistent concerns. Many of those civil society groups interviewed acknowledge the introduction of measures aimed at professionalizing security institutions, such as training programs on human rights and community policing initiatives. These efforts have fostered some goodwill, particularly in urban areas where reforms are more visible. However, those interviewed expressed the lack of consistent communication and uneven implementation across the country which has created scepticism among parts of the population. Citizens in rural areas, in particular, feel excluded from the benefits of the reforms, leading to the perception that changes are not holistic or equitable.

Public confidence in security institutions though still fragile has gradually improved. Decreased reports of overt abuses such as arbitrary arrests and excessive use of force have contributed to more favourable view of the security sector. To build and sustain public confidence, the SSR process must focus on increasing the visibility of positive changes while addressing ongoing challenges. This includes ensuring equitable implementation of reforms across all regions, improving communication and public engagement, and demonstrating accountability through prompt action against misconduct.

4.5.5 Unintended Effects

The implementation of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) in The Gambia has resulted in some unintended effects. One notable effect is the resistance from vested interests within the security sector, particularly among senior officials who perceive the reforms as a threat to their authority or privileges. This resistance has occasionally led to delays in implementation and strained relationships between reform advocates and institutional leaders.

New unintended risks have emerged due to the SSR process. The GPF has expressed concerns about the misuse of citizens' rights, which has led to incidents of assault and resistance to arrest, undermining the police in the execution of their duties. While citizens are now empowered to freely exercise and demonstrate their basic rights, there remains a lack of clear boundaries to prevent the excessive assertion of these rights.

Additionally, other risks include the potential for political manipulation of security institutions under the guise of reform. For instance, there are concerns that the restructuring of command hierarchies may be leveraged to consolidate power rather than enhance institutional efficiency. Additionally, the slow pace of tangible improvements has fuelled frustration among citizens, which could undermine public support for the reforms. To mitigate these risks, it is essential to strengthen transparency, foster inclusivity, and address resistance through dialogue and capacity-building initiatives. By proactively managing these unintended effects, The Gambia can ensure that the SSR process remains focused on its core objectives while minimizing potential setbacks.



SECTION 5: Conclusions and Recommendations for the Gambia Security Sector Review

5.1 Relevance

Conclusion: The SSR initiatives in The Gambia align well with national priorities for rebuilding democratic governance and fostering a rights-respecting security sector. The reforms address critical areas such as human rights, institutional capacity, mainstreaming gender which are essential for sustainable peace and stability. However, gaps in aligning reforms with local contexts have limited the full relevance of some initiatives. For example, rural communities and other key stakeholders have not been adequately integrated into reform discussions, reducing the overall resonance of SSR efforts.

Recommendation: To enhance relevance, SSR initiatives should adopt a more inclusive approach, ensuring that the needs of women, youth, and marginalized communities, are systematically addressed. Regular consultations with diverse stakeholders can help tailor reforms to local contexts and priorities. Additionally, alignment with national development frameworks and integration with broader governance reforms will ensure that the SSR remains a cornerstone of The Gambia's democratic transition.

5.2 Effectiveness

Conclusion: The SSR process has achieved notable milestones, such as the introduction of oversight mechanisms and training programs to improve professionalism and accountability within security institutions. However, inadequate funding, implementation gaps, limited institutional capacity, and high attrition rate have constrained the effectiveness of reforms. The lack of consistent follow-through on initiatives and uneven resource allocation have further hindered progress.

Recommendation: Strengthen implementation capacity by enhancing coordination among stakeholders, ensuring adequate resources for all initiatives, and addressing resistance through dialogue and education. Setting clear, measurable objectives and timelines will improve accountability and focus reform efforts. Regular performance evaluations should be conducted to identify bottlenecks and adjust strategies accordingly.

5.3 Efficiency

Conclusion: While some SSR initiatives have leveraged partnerships and pooled resources effectively, inefficiencies persist due to fragmented coordination and resource wastage. The reliance on external funding has sometimes led to duplication of efforts and misaligned priorities. Inadequate financial and technical planning has also undermined the cost-efficiency of certain programs.

Recommendation: Streamline coordination mechanisms to avoid duplication and ensure optimal use of resources. Develop a comprehensive financial and operational plan that aligns with national priorities and includes input from all stakeholders. Leveraging technology and data-driven approaches can also improve efficiency, while fostering greater transparency in resource allocation.

5.4 Sustainability

Conclusion: The sustainability of SSR initiatives remains uncertain due to heavy reliance on donor funding and limited institutionalization of reforms. While progress has been made in



capacity building and policy formulation, insufficient integration into national systems and weak financial planning threaten the long-term viability of reforms.

Recommendations: To ensure sustainability, integrate SSR objectives into national laws, policies, and governance frameworks. Increase national budget allocations for security sector reforms and develop long-term financing strategies. Capacity-building efforts should focus on empowering local institutions to autonomously manage reforms and reduce dependence on external actors.

5.5 Impact

Conclusion: The SSR has made a positive impact on promoting peace, stability, and respect for human rights, with visible improvements in public trust and reduced incidences of abuse. However, these impacts remain uneven, and systemic challenges such as corruption, political interference, and structural inequalities continue to limit broader outcomes.

Recommendation: Build on the progress achieved by scaling successful programs and addressing systemic challenges. Strengthen mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and public engagement to sustain public trust and institutionalize reforms. Regular monitoring and impact assessments should be conducted to track progress and adapt strategies to emerging challenges.



SECTION 6. ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will present targeted actions and recommendations for each of the eight security institutions, as well as for civil society, partners (donors), and other stakeholders. An actionable plan will be developed to guide the immediate, medium-, and long-term implementation of these recommendations. A follow-up action plan should also be developed to ensure alignment with the M&E Framework for continuous tracking and assessment.

Rec No.	Recommendation (rationale)	Timeframe for Implementation	Relevance to the SSR	Recommended Implementation Stakeholder
1	Redraft/Formulate/update the Security Sector Reform Strategy. Current one will be obsolete from 2025	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	Office of The President; Security Council; ONS
2	Enact the ONS Bill	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	ONS & National Assembly
3	Develop an exit strategy for ECOMIG	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	National Security Council (NSC); ONS; SMT
4	Integration of SSR in the National Budget	Short Term (Q1 - 2025)	High	ONS; MoFEA, National Assembly
5	Develop comprehensive programmes for the GAF, GPF, SIS/NIA, GID, GFRS, DLEAG, GRA, GPS, aligned to the Five Priority Areas of the SSR Strategy.	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions; CSOs; Partners
6	Prioritize comprehensive legal reform to update outdated Acts, modernize legal frameworks to reflect current realities, and ensure their alignment with the objectives of Security Sector Reform (SSR).	Long Term (Q1 to Q4 - 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions; CSOs
7	Investigate and prosecute past human rights violations while establishing victim-centered justice programs to provide reparations.	Short to long Term (Q1 to 3- 2025)	High	MoFEA; ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions.
8	Introduce “Our Security Week” in the school calendar.	Short Term (Q4 - 2025)	High	AMANA & MoBSE, ONS, SMC
9	Security Sector to initiate a “Humane Security Month/Week” (community Engagement).	Short term (Q4 - 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions
10	Expedite the rebranding of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) to restore public confidence and rebuild trust following the NIA's history of repressive practices.	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions; CSOs
11	Develop and implement s strategic resource mobilisation plan that incorporates both domestic and external resources	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions; CSOs
12	Engage regional and international partners such as African Union and	Immediate & long term (Q1-Q5 2025)	High	ONS, National Security Council (NSC)



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	ECOWAS to provide technical and financial support for SSR programs.			
13	Strengthen the oversight capacity of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security through training and provision of adequate financial resources.	Long Term (Q1 Q2, Q3,Q4-2025)	High	ONS; National Assembly; National Security Council (NSC); CSOs
14	Each security institution should develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation plan to effectively track progress on their respective SSR commitments.	Long Term (Q1 Q2, Q3,Q4-2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions;
15	Initiate a quarterly Forum for Civil Society, NA National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security, Councils & Other Civilian Oversight Bodies (4Cs).	Short Term (Q2 Q3- 2025)	High	ONS; National Assembly; National Security Council (NSC) and Local councils.
16	Develop measurable SSR benchmarks that clearly outline the timelines and the steps for the reform, providing a transparent basis for progress assessment.	(Q1, Q2, Q3, & Q4 - 2025)	High	ONS & security sector
17	Fasten the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission	Immediate term (Q1 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Assembly
18	Enhance welfare of personnel (harmonise where necessary)	Short Term (Q2 Q3- 2025)	High	ONS; National Security Council (NSC), Security Institutions; Partners
19	Full implementation of the Disability Act	Long Term (Q1 Q2, Q3,Q4-2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly; Security Institutions; CSOs
20	Strengthen the Gender Units (Child, Women and PWD Units)	Short Term (Q2 Q3- 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions.
21	Establishment of the Interior Academy, Armed Forces College,	Long term (Q 4 2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS
	Construct a modern correction/rehab centers to replace the Mile II & Janjanbureh Prisons	Long term (Q4 2025)	High	National Assembly; Gambia Prison Services
22	Incorporate Gender, Disability, Child matters into training curriculum within the security institutions	Short Term (Q2 2025)	High	ONS; Security Institutions.
23	Establish/strengthen units for implementation/monitoring of the SSR in the respective security institutions	Short Term (Q2 2025)	High	Security sector
23	Enhance and sustain public confidence in the SSR process by focusing on increasing the visibility of positive developments.	Long Term (Q1 Q2, Q3,Q4-2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly
24	The ONS should institutionalize regular reporting on the SSR process, with updates provided on a quarterly and annual basis.	Long Term (Q1 Q2, Q3,Q4-2025)	High	Office of The President; National Security Council (NSC); ONS; National Assembly



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ANNEXES:

A. INDIVIDUALS/ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

Office of National Security		
1	Abubacarr Jeng	National Security Advisor
2	Colonel B. Bojang	Deputy Security Advisor
3	Landing Kinteh	Chief of Staff (ONS)
4	Mulai CFA Colley	Director of Monitoring and Coordination.
5	Ya Awa Nyassi	Director of Policy and Planning
6	Assan Jaiteh	Deputy Regional Security Coordinator
7	Awa Jobe	Senior Policy Analyst
8	Abdoulie Sawo	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
9	Ridhwana Ahmad Sinayoko	Communication Officer
10	Lamin Darboe	Security Analyst
Gambia Police Force (GPF)		
10	Malang Jarjue	Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)
11	Omar D. Bah	Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)
12	Fatoumata Touray	Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP)
13	Ousman Kolley	Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP)
14	Corporal Ebrima Jallow	Admin Assistant
Gambia Armed Force (GAF)		
15	Colonel Dembo Jarjue	Director of Administration and Human Resources
Gambia Immigration Department (GID)		
16	Saibou Bah	Commissioner
17	Sulayman Jammeh	Inspector
18	Bakary SJ Jarju	First Class Constable
Drug Law Enforcement Agency of The Gambia (DLEAG)		
19	Sheriff Sanyang	Director of Administration
20	Mawlud Faal	Director of Human Resources and Training
21	Ousman Saidybah	Public Relation Officer
22. Gambia Prisons Department		
23. Gambia Fire and Rescue Service		
24. Gambia Revenue Authority		
25. National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and Security		
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare		
26	Bakary Jabbi	Social Welfare Officer
27	Malick Jallow	Principal Research Officer
28	Sainey Cham	Senior M& E Officer
29	Ouley Jallow	Senior Child Protection Officer
30	Filly Nyassi	Social Welfare Officer
TANGO/Civil Society Organisations		
31	Ndey Sering Jobarteh	Executive Director (TANGO)
32	Modou Lamin Mbye	Programme Officer (N&F)
33	Kumba Jallow	Intern (Tango)



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34	Meki Ali Hussain	TANGO
35	Fanta Darboe	K/ANOP
36	Fatou Mbowe	GAFNA
37	Michael Davies	Public Private Integrity (PPI)
Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)		
38	Ken Isaac	Head of Office, Sub-Saharan Africa Division, Operations Department
39	Mark Lynch	Senior Border Management Advisor, Sub-Saharan Africa Division, Operations Department
40	Bubacarr Jarju	National Project Officer, Sub-Saharan Africa Division, Operations Department
African Union (AU) and Expert Support		
41	Jocelyne Nahimana	Head, Disarmament, Demobilization Reintegration/Security Sector Reform (DDR/SSR) Division
42	Petra Willem Gerard Van Oijen	UNOAU Security Sector Reform (SSR) Officer
43	Dr. Benjamin Kunbuor	Managing Director -Kunbuor & Associates
44	Boubacar Thera	Independent SSR expert

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