Local Ownership in Military Capacity Building

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Introduction

Without local anchoring in the host country, military capacity building of foreign troops within Security Sector Reform (SSR) is doomed to fail.[1] This message about the importance of 'local ownership' is consensually accepted by capacity building missions, host countries, and the policy community alike. If local needs and interests are not duly accommodated, capacity building runs the risk of assisting the status quo rather than promoting sustainable security. In the worst case scenario, it can aggravate an already precarious human security situation by training military entities that perpetuate power inequalities and human rights abuses.[2] Consequently, deep and regular interaction with local actors is seen as essential for capacity building efforts to be sustainable.

However, local ownership is not an either/or phenomenon that a mission simply has, or not. Rather, *how* to best fulfil local ownership is an open question that each mission needs to seriously consider. The conventional definition of local ownership, as centred on the government in the host country, follows from a logic of peacebuilding as state-building, in which the aim of the mission is to help the government establish a monopoly of violence. Yet, for local ownership to enable a legitimate and effective mission, governmental ownership may not be sufficient. Governments in countries in active conflict tend to be biased towards some parts of the population while discriminating others. Moreover, as mission areas see an increasing number of actors offering security assistance, host governments may engage in 'forum shopping', which undermines their cooperation with SSR-oriented missions.

This memo unpacks the buzzword of local ownership for five military capacity building missions to which Sweden contributes personnel: Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in Iraq; Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan; and the European Union Training Missions (EUTMs) in the Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia, and Mali. Drawing on interviews with key actors involved in these capacity building missions, as well as on a review of the literature and mission-related documents, this study argues that the allocation of local ownership is not neutral, but assigns legitimacy. This, in turn, contributes to structuring power relations in the host country. There is not one 'local' out there in the mission areas, but different competing claims to 'localness', which the

About the Study

This study was commissioned by the Swedish Ministry of Defence.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Stockholm and Brussels between 27 February and 7 May 2019, with officials and experts of the Swedish Armed Forces, Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the European Union (EU), the European External Action Service (EEAS), NATO, and the Egmont Institute.

Interviewees were selected based on their professional experience and knowledge of the five capacity building missions that are the focus of this study. To gain a broad range of perspectives on the topic of local ownership, the group of interviewees is comprised of people who have either worked in the field, with headquarter support to missions, or with strategic policy development within military capacity building and Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The documents reviewed include reports from the EUTM missions and the Swedish Armed Forces, as well as policy documents related to military capacity building and SSR.

mission can either confirm or contest through its actions. Consequently, local ownership comes in many different shapes and forms, each with its own costs, benefits, and security implications.

The discussion proceeds as follows. The next section introduces the promises and perils of military capacity building. Thereafter, it is argued that local ownership comes to life depending on how the actors answer the following basic questions: (1) Who owns 'the local'? (2) Who belongs in 'the local'? and (3) Where is 'the local'? The final section summarises the findings and draws some preliminary conclusions. ■

The Attractions and Frustrations of Military Capacity Building

Actors such as the European Union (EU), the United States (US), the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), as well as numerous individual states, are involved in training and advisory missions around the world. From the perspective of states and coalitions, capacity building of foreign troops has pronounced advantages over sending one's own combat troops to conflict areas. The monetary investment required for capacity building is far below the one required for combat engagements. Moreover, the risk to personal security for deployed staff is much lower in capacity building missions than in full-scale military operations. In some missions, road traffic is the biggest security threat. Hence, capacity building offers a relatively cheap and safe way for countries to show their commitment to helping partners build security.

> "Support for building a functioning military serves governmental interests more directly than external involvement on potentially divisive topics."

Capacity building is also a sought-after form of assistance for host countries. Though usually a part of a broader SSR package, support for building a functioning military serves governmental interests more directly than external involvement on potentially divisive topics, such as the rule of law or drafting a new constitution. Particularly when capacity building occurs in the context of an ongoing conflict, the government in the host country has an interest in prioritising short-term military capacity over long-

term institutional development. It is difficult for host countries at war to prioritize broad SSR-reform, commented one interviewee.[3] In such situations of active conflict, training, education, and advice to troops are inevitably an expression of selective political side-taking from the external actor.

Despite this shared interest between contributors and hosts, training and advisory missions have much difficulty attaining the end-goal of building sustainable security. Even a superficial look at Somalia, Mali, CAR, Iraq, and Afghanistan tells us that despite long-running comprehensive security reform efforts, with strong features of military capacity building, these countries still suffer from deep and widespread insecurity. As for any type of external intervention, there is a need to manage expectations of the potential impact of military capacity building. Peace might not be easily within reach.[4] Moreover, the room for manoeuvre that missions have is limited by set mandates and conditioned by political direction and resources. Their task is to support a part of the security sector, not to solve the underlying conflict.

Even if effectiveness is thought of in less ambitious terms, as the conclusion of given tasks, capacity building missions have problems. Missions generally lack any systematic validation of effectiveness, apart from statistical reports of how many trainees have passed through the mission or how many advisors have been involved.[5] In theory, for example, EUTM mandates are adjusted when capacity has been successfully built. Accordingly, a mission should start with basic training and move towards 'training the trainers', to eventually arrive at mentoring and advising as an exit strategy. However, several interviewees perceived that mandates are rather there to publicly indicate progress, to create a 'success story', even when developments on the ground are slow.[6]

There are strong indications from several external evaluations that missions have trouble fulfilling their basic objective of building the capacity of the host country's armed forces.[7] In Somalia, ten years of international efforts to build up the national army (SNA) resulted in 'collective failure', as Paul Williams puts it in a recent article.[8] Not only does the Somali population continue to suffer from daily insecurity, but the SNA itself remains small and fragmented, and lacks basic military equipment as well as the support of institutional functions (e.g. human resources systems). Repeatedly, and as recently as March 2019, Somali soldiers trained by EUTM have been on strike,

since they have not been paid in months.[9] Despite some important achievements – notably, the first EUTM-trained military unit is now responsible for the protection of the presidential palace Villa Somalia – other observers judge that in Somalia, the '. . . puzzle is wrong'; 'it is hard to find anything useful'; 'we are naïve'; and the EU does what is 'politically correct', even if 'it does not work'.[10]

In sum, although military capacity building has comparative advantages over more encompassing forms of military engagement, frustrations over the results on the ground are plenty. Many of these frustrations emanate from the basic circumstance that military capacity building is a type of external intervention in highly complex local conflicts. To soften the outsider aspect, missions insist on the importance of local ownership. The external actor is not there to impose a model, but should assist the host country in exercising its sovereignty. As stated by one interviewee, without local ownership, nothing will happen.[11] ■

Defining Local Ownership

Whether explicitly or not, every military capacity building mission defines 'the local' as a category of engagement.[12] Some groups and individuals in the host country become counterparties to the mission, others not. In defining the local, the mission establishes: 'who enjoys, and who is denied, the ability to "speak" and to "do" security'.[13] The question of who comprises the local, whether it be the national government, civil society, the general population, or select elites, is an inherently political choice that is taken at every stage of a mission. In military capacity building missions, local engagement is often, in practice, strictly delineated to the central government of the host nation and fitted into a broader state-building narrative, excluding other

sectors of society. Especially for missions that take place during an active conflict, when a struggle over control of the state apparatus and the monopoly of violence is still ongoing, this engagement is an expression of the mission taking sides in favour of the central government.

Even though the specifics of the SSR models vary between organisations, there is broad agreement about the importance of local buy-in. Ultimately, all missions aim at the realisation of local ownership through the hand-over of full security provision at the point of exit. A review of the UN's peacebuilding efforts acknowledged that local ownership is critical for an intervention to respond to local needs and context by 'including broad sections of the population and mobilising

local capacities'.[14] Local ownership also occupies a central place in the EU's SSR framework. The guiding document for the EU's SSR policy, enacted in 2016, establishes national ownership beyond the government as a means for the mission to be broadly legitimate.[15] In a similar vein, local ownership is a cornerstone of NATO's defence capacity building activities.[16]

Despite such commitment, missions are often marked by a disregard for local realities. Already in 2009, Timothy Donais argued that 'the notion of local ownership has come to serve as much as a disciplining mechanism as a tool to overcome exclusion'.[17] External actors follow universalised models in which local actors are either instrumentalised or deliberately excluded, depending on their 'fit' with the worldviews of the mission.[18] Notably, capacity-builders themselves sometimes recognise these difficulties. The EU, in a 2016 analysis of past interventions, recognised the lack of ownership as a weakness that hampered the EU's support for SSR.[19] An assessment of American security assistance programs found that the practice of determining partner nations' needs, perhaps with faulty assumptions, led to limited host country involvement and little local buy-in.[20] One interviewee remembered how NATO lost momentum early on in Afghanistan by imposing its own model.[21]

A previous FOI study on military capacity building by the Swedish Armed Forces identified a 'capacity building paradox' – the difficulty in harnessing local ownership in host countries that are often institutionally weak and ill-equipped to exercise it.[22] Indeed, local ownership efforts not only depend on the approach of the contributors to the mission, but on the abilities and intentions of different groups within the host country. It may be convenient for host country stakeholders to refer to local ownership discourse to resist top-down reforms.[23]

Moreover, the mission areas are crowded with different external actors that all seek to engage 'the local'. 'Non-traditional' donors, notably Russia, China, and the Gulf States, are increasingly active in these countries and offer alternative – commonly less conditional – views on local ownership.[24] Interviewees expressed how 'painful' it was that actors such as Russia and China can offer weapons in the mission areas, while EUTM stands by and observes.[25] There is a perceived irony in educating soldiers in human rights, international law, and gender, but not daring to provide them with weapons, even if only for training purposes.[26] Missions are a competitive space, in which local authorities may selectively choose with whom to cooperate to obtain the most out of different capacity building bids.

Challenges in implementing SSR are also reflected in the scholarly debate on a so-called 'second generation' SSR. The debate starts from the observation that SSR has been a liberal project with illiberal results. In the idea of a 'liberal' peace, security goes together with economic liberalisation in democratic states. Accordingly, SSR missions have operationalised peacebuilding as state-building. However, there is a 'notable lack of evidence of success'[27]: something seems to be mistaken in the liberal peace equation.

The second generation outlines the preliminary contours of what a 'post-liberal', 'non-linear', 'pragmatic', 'hybrid' version of security reform could look like.[28] Highly critical of the state-centric SSR template, proponents of a new model emphasise the need to rethink local ownership. In the first-generation liberal peace template, local actors feature as '"facilitators" and "enforcers" of the ideology across "the political chain"'.[29] By contrast, scholars of the second generation open up for 'empowering and equipping regional and even subnational bodies', recognising 'the empirical reality of security pluralism' and the importance of 'twilight institutions', beyond the state.[30]

However, among those interviewees who were working in or near the missions, support for traditional SSR models remained stable. Their frustrations concerned the practical implementation of SSR in military capacity building missions, not the concept itself. Indeed, while the literature focuses on SSR in general, there are specific challenges that come with local ownership for missions that train, educate, mentor, and advise armed forces.

This memo contributes to bridging the gap between theory and practice. It does not offer any checklist of solutions to the question of how to best achieve local ownership. Instead, it transmits a message of caution: local ownership is not in and of itself a silver bullet for success, but a concept that becomes meaningful only once it is filled with content in the different contexts of capacity building missions. This point is made here by highlighting three dimensions of local ownership that each mission will inescapably face: power, representation, and geography. To be aware of these dimensions means to reflect on three fundamental questions:

- Who owns 'the local'?

- Who belongs in 'the local'?

- Where is 'the local'?

Who owns 'the local'?

Capacity building missions involve active side-taking in complex conflict situations. By bringing resources and specialised knowledge into areas where these are lacking, the missions become active parties in the power struggles that underpin military conflict. The one who receives training, education, mentoring, or advice, becomes empowered as an 'owner of the local'. At the same time, boundaries between state- and non-state actors, between national armies and militias, and between soldiers and terrorists are not always clear-cut in the contexts of the missions. This poses high demands on missions to know their local context.

In most countries that host a capacity building mission, the central government receiving the support does not hold the monopoly of violence. Indeed, contributing to establishing a monopoly of violence by strengthening state institutions captures the Geist of what most military-capacity building missions seek to do. As reasoned by one interviewee, any departure from the state monopoly of violence is a departure from the purpose of SSR.[31] Accordingly, local ownership is by and large situated at the level of the partner's central government. This already follows from the legal basis of the mission, which is usually a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), upon the invitation of the host country.[32]

By implication, non-state actors are often excluded in the applied definition of the local. Whereas the importance of a broader societal anchoring through engagement with civil society is commonly acknowledged, to include non-state security actors that compete with the state over the monopoly of violence under the local ownership umbrella is a sensitive matter. In the logic of 'peacebuilding as state-building,' external actors have tended to see traditional social loyalties – the clan is one example – as a problem to be fixed. Yet, deep-rooted social allegiances are unlikely to be replaced with trust in dysfunctional – perhaps even predatory – state institutions. Moreover, in contexts of failed or fragile states, it is not uncommon for non-state actors to provide security with a higher degree of effectiveness and local legitimacy.[33]

Non-state actors are a dilemma for external interveners. On the one hand, they may dominate de facto security structures. To neglect them would therefore make attempts at SSR meaningless.[34] On the other hand, regional or local militias, security forces, self-defence groups, or other non-state armed groups, are often discriminatory, fail to live up to principles of rule of law, and may initiate pervasive insecurity and violence.[35] Consequently, engagement with non-state actors poses the risk of undermining the normative and practical coherence of the mission.

Although the EUTM missions, RSM Afghanistan, and OIR Iraq all work upon invitation by, and explicitly support, the central government, engagement with non-state actors may occur at the margins. The EU's SSR policy framework, for example, explicitly makes reference to non-state actors, speaking of 'a community security approach, involving (official and/or traditional) local authorities, where possible, the residents of the communities and neighbourhoods in question and *local security forces*' (emphasis added).[36] Notably, the end-goal of this approach is to 'ensure that national authorities are able to address security and conflict problems at local level'.[37]

However, integrating armed non-state groups into the regular armed forces is difficult when human resources systems, and the general conditions for the soldiers, are poor.[38] Partly due to unreliable salary systems, the loyalties of individual soldiers/ fighters may alternate between state and non-state armed actors, as has been the case in Somalia and Afghanistan. The level of organisation of the group in question should also be considered – whether they have a developed Command and Control structure, for example.[39]

An alternative approach could be to allow or actively encourage non-state actors to act as local security providers. In a scenario proposed by one interviewee, the local non-state actor can remain at the margins of the state security framework, while aware that its freedom of action is dependent on its loyalty to agreed norms of behaviour.[40] However, this is not a risk-free practice. The OIR mission in Iraq, for example, has trained local Kurdish militias to fight against *Daesh* at the request of the Iraqi central government. The threat from *Daesh* united the government and militias under a common goal. Since this threat has receded, however, the militias have increasingly resisted integration and instead turned their efforts towards the central state. This poses difficult dilemmas for the capacity building mission regarding side-taking and legitimacy.[41]

Graduates from EUTM CAR depicted at a training centre in Kassaï.

Who belongs in 'the local'?

A second dimension of local ownership is representation. Patterns of representation establish who belongs to and who is excluded from 'the local' as a category of engagement. However, ensuring representation will by necessity involve challenging existing power relations. In terms of local ownership, there is a tension here for capacity building missions. To insist on representation is, on the one hand, a way to ensure broad acceptance of the mission's presence in the country. On the other hand, if the mission insists too much on representation, it may be perceived as imposing its own model.

To take a few examples: if the government is skewed towards one ethnic group; if the counterparties of mentoring are all from the diaspora; or if the trainees are all male or from a certain clan; then local ownership will be nominal in the eyes of the broader population. Privileging certain groups in the applied definition of local ownership will feed back into perceptions of the mission. In other words, the legitimacy of the mission hinges on how it distributes local ownership in practice. Weak representation is not only a principled problem for a mission, but also a practical problem, as it feeds directly into its wider security environment.

Since the mission itself will only interact directly with a small part of the population, representation of relevant groups is a strategy for deriving a more inclusive local ownership. Beyond the value of representation in itself, engaging local actors other than elites is a matter of making discriminated groups feel secure.[42] At the level of the central government, the ethnic, religious, clan (as applicable), and gender composition of ministers and higher administration matters for how far local ownership travels beyond the institutions themselves. In Somalia, the federal government follows the 4.5 clan formula, but the former diaspora is overrepresented among ministers.[43] This is controversial since the diaspora is sometimes considered a privileged elite detached from local culture and the everyday realities of Somali society.

Capacity building often takes the form of providing basic military training to troops. Here, the issue of representation is unavoidable, since the mission actively bestows knowledge, resources, and a degree of legitimacy to the group that it is training. A lack of representation is thus highly problematic in countries with active conflicts between different societal groups. In Mali, the government's unwillingness to include Tuaregs, an ethnic minority predominantly in the north, in the national army
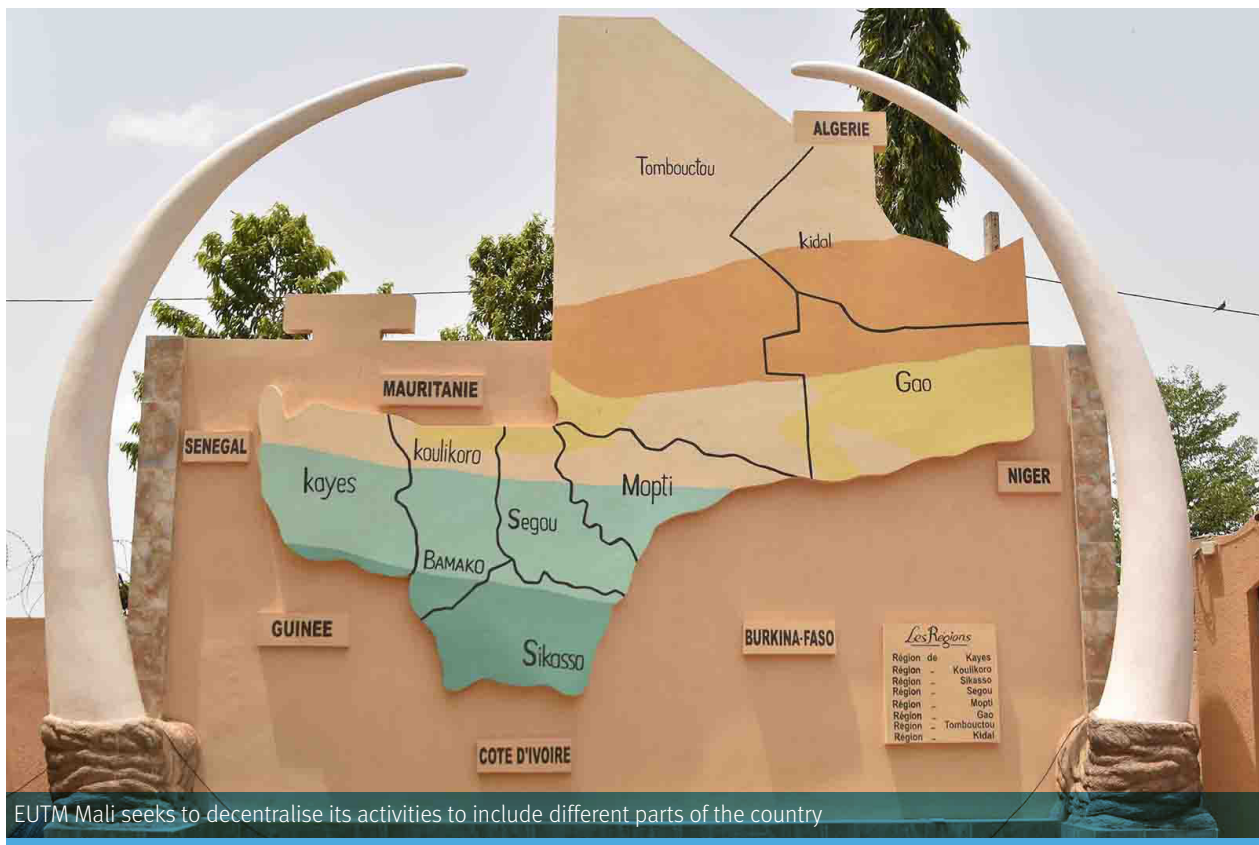
EUTM Mali seeks to decentralise its activities to include different parts of the country

excludes a whole ethnic group from a key function of the state.[44] In Afghanistan, despite NATO's high-level commitment to integrating women in the security and defence forces, women continue to experience insecurity and the threat of harassment by male colleagues, and only make up 0.6 percent of the national army.[45] In EUTM Somalia, one interviewee noted that it is has been easier to train established clan-based units than to create clan-mixed units from scratch.[46] Representation is often a long-term goal that is pushed aside in the interest of short-term effects.

When it comes to strategic advising and mentoring at the institutional level, local ownership is often in practice allocated at the level of individuals. Several interviewees highlighted the importance of committed and competent individual counterparts who can make things happen, even when formal institutions are weak and biased.[47] However, reliance on individuals carries the risk that capacity building goals are person-dependent, and amplifies the danger that programs are exploited by the local owners. According to researcher Nina Wilén, this is a potential dark side of local ownership – that elite actors in the host country will use reforms to further their own interests.[48] At the same time, as one interviewee reasoned, missions cannot simply wait for the

institutional framework to materialise, but need to work with individuals in the meantime.[49] There are ongoing discussions within NATO about centring advisory efforts at the staff levels that are most prone to change, typically middle management.[50]

Where is 'the local'?

Finally, the question of how to define the local extends to geography. Especially in vast countries with incomplete infrastructure, geography reflects and creates socioeconomic and political dividing lines.[51] In consequence, interacting mainly with central authorities in the capital runs the risk of alienating large segments of the population. Moreover, as emphasised by one interviewee, to broaden recruitment of trainees beyond the urban youth is a part of ensuring local ownership. [52]

The 'where' in local ownership has proven an issue for the EU's mission in Mali, where the state's inability to exercise full sovereignty across the country, particularly in the north, has obstructed broad inclusivity.[53] A government plan for decentralization was agreed on in 2012, but has yet to be implemented. Progress is hindered by a cleavage between the elites in Bamako and the local grassroots level in the periphery. The opposition within the government to including

the Tuaregs in the army exemplifies the perseverance of frictions between centre and periphery.

Likewise, in rapidly urbanising Somalia, geography matters. International efforts aim to strengthen the central government in Mogadishu, without which the fragile state would risk regressing into being labelled as 'failed'.[54] There is broad principled support for federalism as the political, peaceful way to bring Somalia's clan structure into a state. Yet, the agreement between the federal government and the member states of Somalia is extremely frail, and crises entailing a cut in contact between the levels erupt regularly. The enduring distrust in the member states for the central government has hampered efforts to build capacity within the Somalia National Army (SNA) and contributed to a continued reliance on non-state actors for security.[55] However, the special forces – *Danab* units of Somalia's army – have been credited as a positive example of capacity building, partly because personnel were recruited from across Somalia's south-central regions on the basis of merit.[56]

In the CAR, the EU deliberately seeks to mitigate tensions between centre and periphery. A new EUTM training centre is under way in Bouar, in an effort to extend recruitment of trainees beyond the capital.[57] The idea is to focus on the training of troops in Bangui, and more specialised positions in Bouar. However, this expansion faces practical obstacles. Situated a two-hour flight from the capital, the training site lacks resources for medical care.[58]

Interviewees with extensive experience from missions testified how restrictions on movement, as well as limitations of activities to office hours, impaired chances to have a positive impact on the ground. These constraints follow from a combination of bureaucratic obstacles and risk assessments. In Mali, for example, legal aspects used to hinder training teams from traveling outside of the training centres. This has been rectified in a new mandate.[59] In Somalia, one interviewee mentioned the frustration of having to fulfil 17 criteria prior to being granted permission to leave Mogadishu.[60] Due to security restrictions, local counterparts are instead expected to travel to the EU advisors. This limits the amount of time they can spend together and incites annoyance from both parties.

> "The trade-off between risk management and an integrated presence in the mission areas is a long-standing theme in military capacity building."

In areas of high insecurity, the importance of physical presence has had to be compromised for the sake of force protection. Gradually tightened security protocols are justified by temporary rises in the threat level, but are hard to retract once established. Interviewees felt impeded by these requirements. Perhaps, one interviewee commented, it is not always necessary to have 'an Italian protective platoon' in order to move around.[61] Force protection requirements for mission staff have also been a longstanding issue for the Swedish Armed Forces in northern Afghanistan, where a deteriorating security situation has made the protocol for travel more demanding.[62]

In 2019, EUTM Mali was for the first time the direct target of an attack.[63] Even if this could be seen to indicate that the mission has successfully strengthened the government and made life harder for rebel groups,[64] the result of the altered security calculus is a downscaling of activities. There is a training site in Koulikoro that cannot be used to its full capacity, because of difficulties in reaching the location safely.[65]

In Somalia, training is limited to the camp and guarded by EUTM staff who only work with force protection. Meetings for mentoring and advising can only be scheduled between the hours of 9.00-15.00, despite a local culture of having meetings in the evening.[66] Although partly motivated by different threat levels, it may appear counterintuitive that the EUTM faces more severe security restrictions than diplomats in Somalia.[67] If proximity and time investment are decisive in building constructive relations with counterparties – 'one needs to *live* together with the one you mentor' – [68] capacity building missions lose effect, due to quick rotations in staff and restrictions on movement.

The trade-off between risk management and an integrated presence in the mission areas is a long-standing theme in military capacity building. It reflects a tension between political and military rationales and professional cultures. As essential as force protection is for military units, armed forces are more likely to accept risk in order to fulfil their mandates than what is politically acceptable in their countries of origin. ■

Conclusions

The central message of this memo is that actors involved in military capacity building need to be aware that any strategy for local ownership includes trade-offs. Some will win, and some lose, because of how capacity building missions define local ownership in practice. The inherent tensions in achieving local ownership are amplified when the host state is weak, which is the case in all of the missions that have been analysed here. If state institutions are corrupt, inefficient, and illegitimate, the conventional operationalisation of local ownership, as ownership by the host government, is hazardous. In the worst scenario, the mission lends its support to predatory institutions, without any realistic chance of transforming them.

By contrast, when grounded in deep contextual knowledge, the selective empowerment of local actors is a tool to promote the mission's objectives. This memo recommends that each mission should have a clear idea of *who owns the local, who belongs in the local,* and *where the local is,* before launching activities on the ground. Answering these questions means acknowledging that definitions of the local build on and at the same time modify power, representation, and centre-periphery relations in a mission area. Since initial considerations set the mission on a path to the future, they need to be carefully prepared and kept up to date as the mission proceeds.

To date, much of the worries of people working in or near missions concern technical and logistical issues that impair their daily activities. It is understandable that endless bureaucratic protocols and a lack of equipment, to take two reoccurring examples, give rise to frustrations. However, even if these aspects were eventually to be fixed, military capacity building faces more profound challenges. Reflecting on how the presence of the mission influences the political and social dynamics underpinning a conflict is a necessary, though certainly not sufficient, condition for success.

There is ample room for improvement in the ways that the EU, NATO, or other coalitions of contributing states, make pre-deployment and continual assessments of local context. In building up their local awareness, missions are well advised to reach out to and make the most of the knowledge that already exists within academic and diplomatic circles. Ensuring good routines for hand-over of impressions and experience between rotations is also a fundamental means for accruing long-term contextual expertise. Another concrete step in promoting learning would be to use pilot projects and evaluate these before taking on bigger tasks. Within NATO, discussions are ongoing as to how to systematically apply lessons learned after repeating missteps in multiple missions.[69]

As valid as the dismissal of state-centric liberal-interventionist SSR may be, the 'second generation' debate has yet to deliver a feasible and normatively consistent new template. The language of first-generation SSR still reigns, as capacity building activities proceed on the ground.[70] Yet, the increasing presence of actors such as China, Russia, Turkey, and the Gulf states in conflict-affected areas is transforming the landscape of security assistance. All actors do not necessarily subscribe to the full package of liberal SSR, even in theory, and may therefore have differing understandings of local ownership. Further research should continue to examine how competing models of capacity building mediate or reinforce frictions between different dimensions of 'local' in conflict areas. This is imperative to increase transparency and bridge the gap between the theory and practice of military capacity building. ∎

Endnotes

1. The authors would like to thank all interviewees and contacts who have generously contributed their time and knowledge to this study. Special thanks go to our colleagues Michael Jonsson and Jan Frelin, at FOI, for their thorough review.
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30. Christian Lund, 'Twilight institutions: Public authority and local politics in Africa', *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006): 684-705; Mark Sedra, 'Adapting security sector reform to ground-level realities: The transition to a second-generation model', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 12, no. 1 (2018): 48-63.
31. Interview 2.
32. See Frederik Naert, 'European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Operations', in André Nollkaemper & Ilias Plakokefalos (eds.), *The Practice of Shared Responsibility in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 673.
33. On 'governance without government', see: Ken Menkhaus, 'Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping', *International Security* 31, no. 3 (2007): 74-106.
34. Interview 3.
35. Timothy Donais, 'Engaging Non-State Security Providers: Whither the Rule of Law?' *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 6, no. 1 (2017): 1-13.
36. European Commission, 'Joint Communication'.
37. Ibid.
38. Interview 6; Interview 7; Interview 8.
39. Interview 3.
40. Interview 9.
41. Helené Lackenbauer, Utbildning av den kurdiska

Peshmerga: Sveriges militära bidrag till *Operation Inherent Resolve* Irak, (Stockholm:FOI, forthcoming 2019).

42 Interview 2.

43 The formula allocates positions in parliament and cabinet to the four big clans, with the remaining 0.5 share being allocated to a group of smaller clans.

44 Interview 2.

45 Emma Sjökvist, Isabel Green Jonegård & Helené Lackenbauer, *Rådgivning i försämrat säkerhetsläge* (Stockholm: FOI, forthcoming).

46 Interview 13.

47 Interview 8.

48 Nina Wilén, 'Relationer med externa aktörer' (presentation, Folke Bernadotte Academy–FBA, Stockholm, 7 March 2019).

49 Interview 8.

50 Interview 6.

51 Interview 7.

52 Interview 9.

53 DCAF & FBA, 'Country case studies to inform the EU-wide strategic framework for supporting SSR', DCAF's International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) and The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), 11 March 2016.

54 In 2015, the UN dubbed Somalia a 'fragile' state, indicating progress from the prior label: 'failed' state.

55 Williams, 'Building the Somali National Army'.

56 Interview 12.

57 Interview 9.

58 Interview 10.

59 Interview 11.

60 Interview 12.

61 Interview 8.

62 Sjökvist, Green Jonegård & Lackenbauer, *Rådgivning i försämrat säkerhetsläge*

63 Interview 11.

64 Interview 11.

65 Interview 11.

66 Interview 8.

67 Interview 8.

68 Interview 8.

69 Interview 6.

70 Interview 3.

Image credits

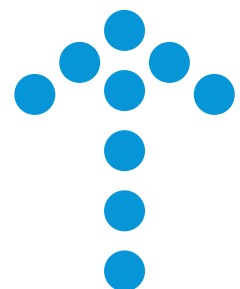Most international actors involved in efforts to build the military capacity of partner countries see local ownership as key to achieving sustainable security. However, *how* to best fulfil local ownership is an open question that each mission needs to seriously consider. Drawing on examples from five military capacity building missions to which Sweden contributes personnel, this study shows that local ownership comes in many different shapes and forms, each with its own costs, benefits, and security implications.