The Security Sector in Arab Countries: Can it be Reformed?

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Abstract There is a burgeoning debate on security sector reform (SSR) in the Arab region. Experiences elsewhere suggest that patterns vary widely, from the violent dismantling or collapse of political systems to negotiated processes where security forces yield their prerogatives peacefully. In the Middle East, the process is nascent, largely donor-driven and in most cases is occurring in post-conflict situations. However, a few examples still at an embryonic stage suggest that SSR is starting to be debated as part of the push for democratic change by social and political actors shaping a home-grown reform agenda. The pace of progress is bound to be slow and painful, given the resilience of the current authoritarian regimes and their security establishments. It is therefore more appropriate to speak of gradual reform rather than transformation of the security sector. The article argues that the most effective way to promote reform is by embedding it in the larger struggle for democratic change that civil and political society is pushing for.

1 Introduction

The Arab region is witnessing a general trend of expanding security sectors to respond to heightened security challenges, particularly the spread of terrorist attacks. Countries that have joined the 'war on terror' as designated by the USA post-9/11 are finding that they can justify measures in the name of fighting terror, maintaining emergency laws or passing new, more restrictive anti-terror laws. This trend is not conducive to reforming security institutions, downsizing them, increasing the transparency of their operation or promoting democratic practices within the sector.

At the same time, however, demands for political reforms across the Arab region are increasing; societies are awakening and have become more vocal in claiming rights and pressing for participation, even if they have not yet reached an open debate about security sector reform (SSR). Over the last two to three years, however, some preliminary signs of movement on this issue emerged within societies and seem to be gaining momentum in several countries. Popular criticism of the security sector is emerging, mostly by human rights groups who use independent media to expose various forms of abusive behaviour by security agencies. The very concept of security is only beginning to be questioned, based on the perception that the security sector does not deliver security to citizens and is often a major source of threat to them. Yet this does not go as far as formulating propositions for reforming the sector. A home-grown agenda for reform of the security sector has yet to be defined.

Due to its sensitivity, there is little or no discussion in the Arab countries on how to promote good governance, transparency and accountability of the security sector. Pressure from below, i.e. from social groups, is either at an embryonic stage or inexistent. The reasons are complex: a general acceptance of the secrecy of the security sector as a given, justified by the very nature of its activities; the regional environment and its risks; fear of domestic instability due to a fragile social fabric or mere fear of the unknown in general. Efforts towards developing reform schemes have so far been mostly initiated by international research groups, donors and outside partners. While they provide valuable suggestions and bring expertise that can benefit Arab countries, they are mostly built on approaches responding to the realities of

other countries. More importantly, foreign-driven efforts to reform the sector are inevitably dependent on the cooperation of governments and produce, at best, top-down measures of a technical nature that do not challenge the underlying rationale that governs the functioning of the security sector.

To be effective, the approach requires a specific effort to reassess what the notion of security effectively covers: whose security is currently being ensured and whose security should be sought and guaranteed. The culture of 'hard-security', shaped by the experiences of regional or civil conflicts, remains dominant, as is the vision of the role of the security sector as guaranteeing national security and sovereignty, rather than serving citizens and society's needs. This understanding of the content of security is likely to evolve as political and social awareness develops and societies make the link between the democratic reform agenda and rights-based approaches on the one hand and the security agenda on the other.

This debate is now growing across the region. International agencies are promoting the concept of human security[1] and societies are awakening to the fact that their governments are failing to guarantee their physical security (when a natural catastrophe or accident occurs) and their basic needs (water, food, etc).

2 Challenges to carrying out SSR in the Arab region
To have a meaningful impact, an effective process of reform of the security institutions of Arab countries requires a solid understanding of the geopolitics and political economy of the security sector in the Arab region.

SSR working definitions must be comprehensive and include: intelligence agencies, military intelligence, police forces, the army in its domestic role and praetorian guards (republican, royal or presidential). These are by far the most loyal and therefore reliable agencies that guarantee the security of the political system. The financing of these agencies, the way in which they interact, their hierarchical chain and who they report to, are all vital sources of information on the internal mechanisms of the security sector in each country and a necessary starting point for any case study.

One major structural factor is the fact that the security sector constitutes the backbone of Arab political systems. Any discussion on reforming this sector exposes the systems' inner vulnerability as well as their self-defence mechanisms. The link between state institutions and the regime apparatus tells us whether the two are separable and therefore if the security agencies as state institutions can be considered 'reformable' without threatening political stability and national cohesion.

Many Arab countries have powerful state machineries or what we could call mighty (as opposed to strong) states that cannot be described or approached as failed states. Algeria and Iraq (before the overthrow of the Ba'ath system) are two examples of regimes that relied on the security sector to hold the country together when other foundations of institutional and societal cohesion were destroyed. The pattern of Algeria's recovery from war in the late 1990s indicates, however, that the regime still had the capacity, after more than a decade of all-out war, to reassert its control on the political and security system and to re-invent itself through an internal process that mobilised national means and did not resort to outside assistance.

Since inter-state conflicts are now rare and civil strife is common, security sectors of Arab countries have followed a general trend of expanding security and intelligence agencies at the expense of the military forces.

However, the interaction between the civilian and the military spheres shows that the military, whether professionalised or depoliticised, still retains strong control over the political process and remains the ultimate protector of the regime. Yet security agencies, whether those specialised in domestic security or the ones dealing with external threats, have seen their role and numbers grow tremendously over the last decade, enhancing an increasingly complex triangular relationship between the political, military and security establishments.

Given the interaction between the political sphere and the military-security sphere, a first distinction needs to be made between the Arab countries where political authority can be separated from the military-security apparatus and where the

security sector is the guardian of the interests of the state on the one hand (Egypt, Morocco) and countries where the security sector was built by the ruling regime and whose *raison d'être* is to protect the regime and the leaders' interests (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Algeria) on the other.

Algeria is one of the most significant examples of a political and military-security system symbiosis. Shaped by the 1957–62 independence war, the symbiosis was reinforced by the 1991 coup and the ensuing bloody civil war during which the army played a decisive role in protecting the regime and ensuring its survival. All attempts at reforming the Algerian security sector in order to introduce the rule of law, transparency and accountability, have so far failed because they lead inevitably to questioning the overall political structures of the state.

In Egypt, the numerous security agencies working in parallel and under different chains of command indicate the multi-layered structure of the security sector. In Jordan, the intelligence services are largely perceived as stronger than the armed forces and security forces see themselves as the guardians of national interests.

Algeria and Iraq provide useful examples of the collapse or the protracted crisis of the security sector. Scattered but abundant information is available on both countries. Information on Iraq's security sector under Saddam Hussein, available since the system was dismantled, is beginning to provide critical information to understand the precise mode of operation of a security sector under an authoritarian regime.[2] In Algeria, the opacity of the security sector was broken, but the sector was restructured, and survived. Historic narratives on these two pivotal countries, which have yet to be conducted, are likely to generate a wealth of empirical information. The impact of these two cases is traumatic in many respects for perceptions within other Arab societies and among reform activists concerned with the risks involved in tackling security sector reform and the lessons to be learnt.

A second factor relates to the current context of instability, namely that the Arab region is the epicentre of the 'war on terror'. Reforming the security sector in a context of rising threats of terror on one side, and of rising strength of the Islamist movements on the other, is having important consequences that are still unfolding: increase in the role of the security forces, redefinition of security tasks and responsibilities, concentration of intelligence information, renewed equipments and increased budgets, creation of security zones rendered inaccessible to citizens (in Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Egypt). If the security environment is not conducive to improving transparency and democratic accountability of the security sector, what is the likelihood of an internal process strong enough even within such an environment, to promote or increase the role of civilian oversight bodies?

A third factor is related to the region's relations with outside powers. The security priorities and military doctrines of major Arab countries affect their readiness to conduct reform in cooperation with outside powers. Levels of distrust *vis-à-vis* foreign parties run high when it comes to the security sector, either because the intervening power is seen to promote its own interests, or because of the foreign power's alliance with and support to the authoritarian regime against society.

Contrary to Eastern Europe, reforms encouraged from outside arouse deep suspicions in the security community as well as within public opinion. Few if any societies in the region aspire to join a foreign military alliance, least of all NATO, and no government, even if it saw advantages in doing so, would consider it politically feasible. Hence, when cooperation exists, it is discreet or secretive and increases the opacity of the sector.

Fourth, many Arab countries are rich. Oil-producing countries in the Gulf region are not dependent on development aid and have not established relationships with donors that exist for many developing countries. An approach that seeks to address SSR as part of a broader development agenda is not relevant. Nevertheless, these states depend heavily on military and security guarantees from outside partners, and their security sectors are largely structured to ensure close cooperation with them.

A fifth characteristic that applies to all countries of the region without exception is the prevailing culture of chauvinism and masculinity that dominates the security sector and is an inseparable component of authoritarianism.

A conscious effort at engendering the process of reform from the outset is needed to challenge this culture. Without a strategy for gender-sensitive reform, efforts at promoting a democratic culture and a new understanding of security will remain meaningless. Women have unequal access to criminal justice systems; they are the target of specific persecutions such as honour crimes; they are subjected to specific abuses and are often targeted by security sector forces to destabilise opposition movements. The rising tendency to cite religion and moral integrity as a pretext to suppress citizens' freedoms and violate privacy makes women the central target for breaking a protest movement and invariably has them paying a heavier price than men.

Finally, an assessment of the political economy of the security sector also informs on the way it relates to the overall national context. The security sector often has its own schools, colleges, higher education and professional training institutions as well as hospitals and social services that give it a high degree of autonomy and contribute to cultivating a specific culture of security. To what extent this autonomy is an obstacle to reforming the sector, and should it be challenged in order to bring the security sector closer to society, are open questions.

3 Sequencing of reforms: when is the right time for SSR?

The timing and circumstances of SSR is crucial. Should political change precede military/security reforms or vice versa? Can they occur simultaneously on all fronts or through different phases, under emergency as a result of a crisis situation or as part of an orderly negotiated process? The most familiar model experienced in other parts of the world is one in which some significant political reform process occurs first (free elections or a comprehensive governance reform scheme driven from above); then second, reform of the security sector is engineered by accountable political authorities that gradually impose civilian oversight over security agencies. In some cases, however, when radical change takes place and the nature of the political system is transformed, the security sector is dismantled at the same time as other institutions of the authoritarian system. South Africa is arguably one of the very few examples of radical yet orderly change where change occurred in all

areas and across all state institutions simultaneously.

In the Arab region, security sector reform is occurring in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq but the circumstances are very special in each case. All have in common a powerful, outside – largely negative – factor. The question that arises becomes: Can SSR happen without a crisis to trigger it, so that SSR constitutes a gradual opening of the political system that will lead to the breaking of the shell around the security sector?

For now, examples of the latter are scarce. Morocco seems to be the only promising experience. It offers an encouraging example of possible approaches to SSR at an advanced stage in a gradual reform process. Two factors combined to make this possible: (1) the legitimacy of the monarchy in the eyes of Moroccans is very strong and (2) civil and political society are vibrant and fairly well-structured compared with other countries of the region. The King (first Hassan II in 1998, followed by his son Mohamed VI) embarked on a process of change driven entirely from above without raising issues over his own political survival. In 1998, Hassan II initiated a process of political change by appointing a government led by the main opposition party and set the terms of the overall process of reforms, built on a joint understanding between the monarchy and political forces that change by consensus was the only way to achieve results.

Using the consensual approach, human rights activists and other forces within civil society started demanding concessions from the King and have been able to make gradual but significant progress over the last decade. The King's decision to create the Equity and Reconciliation Commission in 2006 provides a unique example among Arab countries of an SSR process where civil society groups (human rights organisations, lawyers, the media) are involved as full players, which has led to questioning the regime's practices in an open and orderly way.

A second approach that has served as an effective mechanism for addressing SSR concerns investigations and trials for human rights violations, which potentially unveil the responsibilities as well as the operating mode of the various agencies. This is only starting in

Egypt, while in Morocco it has already led to introducing a code of ethics for the army and the security agencies.

Patterns of change – whether protest is coming from below by sectors of society or is initiated from above by the ruling establishment – inevitably expose the security sector. In the first model, it sets the security sector agencies on a collision course with society. In the second, new rules challenge the mode of operation and established prerogatives of the security sector representatives.

While SSR efforts should draw on experiences in other regions to develop good understanding of patterns and processes of reform, they must not succumb to the temptation to depoliticise the process. For although attempts to foster security sector reform by aid agencies through a depoliticised approach might receive the support and a willingness to cooperate on the part of certain governments, they run the risk of becoming exercises in administrative and technical reform, leading to mere modernisation of the sector.

One of the important contributions that a comparative dimension with other regions brings is that it informs SSR efforts on the political context in which reform of the security sector was carried out in other countries. Also, it helps define the appropriate approaches in different contexts to tackle security sector reform: the political considerations that lie behind the distribution of power between the different branches of the security sector and therefore the political implications of reform, as well as the likelihood that the regime will have the political will to undertake reforms. A rights-based approach that stems from efforts to change public policies towards rule of law and the involvement of human rights groups would also help avoid the risk of a formal technical approach. Parliaments and the judiciary, on the other hand, are rarely in a position to play a significant role in pushing for civilian oversight of the security sector, as their powers tend to be strongly limited by the executive branch.

Public distrust and feelings of estrangement *vis-à-vis* the security sector have never been so strong, particularly since social and political protests have grown and increased the number of

clashes with security agencies. This trend is likely to grow in countries where the government is resisting change and responding to political and social protest with security tools.

Several countries are seeing popular criticism of the security sector: in Lebanon, where people took to the street (the 14 March 2006 demonstration) to massively denounce the intertwined Syrian/Lebanese intelligence apparatus and its suspected role in the assassination of the Prime Minister; in Palestine, where mass demonstrations were more than often directed against the corruption that pervades the security agencies; in Egypt where the media, thanks mainly to the use of mobile phones to record evidence of mistreatments in police stations, as well as the works of some film producers, all taken up by human rights organisations, have suddenly lifted the fear of the security forces among growing sections of society.

Yet Arab societies have always been ambivalent towards the military and security agencies as a whole. The 'war on terror' – the epicentre of which is the Middle-Eastern region – contributed to reviving profound feelings of insecurity at all levels: individual, local, national, regional and global. Arab citizens are at a loss on whether they are the targets, the victims or the beneficiaries of this war. Several regimes have still not reached a sufficient level of awareness that security alone does not bring stability, any more than wealth can bring security to the oil-producing states of the Gulf. Additionally, the absence of political and civil liberties, as well as respect for human rights and state accountability, is leading to the rise of extremism and to signs of societal fragmentation.

Another major challenge to SSR in some Arab countries is in cases where the regime relies heavily on the security sector to structure social and political relations and guarantee national stability. These regimes combine a powerful security apparatus with the potential for social disintegration that is characteristic of failed states. At different levels, Sudan, Iraq, and to a lesser extent Syria, are the most vulnerable Arab states in terms of risks of national and territorial fragmentation, a scenario which could ultimately lead to the disintegration and the privatisation of the security sector.

4 Private interests, privatisation or fragmentation of the security sector

Privatisation of the security sector is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is rendering SSR more complex as it is not solely a state-controlled process any more. On the contrary, in many countries, regimes and societies alike seem to rely increasingly on security-provider substitutes to state institutions and agencies, when these are considered inefficient, weak or unreliable. Conversely, in others, the once powerful state security apparatus, and especially the military, are mainly concerned with promoting their private interests. This process of privatisation of security follows three specific patterns, all of which are potential obstacles to reforms.

The privatisation of the security sector through financial means is occurring at a speedy pace in the wealthy Gulf Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) where the regime's sense of vulnerability in terms of internal and external threats runs deep. It largely explains the leaders' reluctance to build strong armies and their use of financial power as a way to both control the security agencies and ensure their unconditional loyalty (recruiting army mercenaries, hiring private security agencies, funding paramilitary Islamic activist groups, etc.) In this perspective, the privatisation of the security sector is a state-engineered self-defence strategy.

A second more challenging trend is the emergence of sub-national forces and the different forms of fragmentation of the security sector. In Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen, the security sector is privatised as a result of its links with sub-national groups and its entanglement with factional, tribal and sectarian dynamics. Where the feelings of instability and insecurity have grown, the populations have come to rely on tribes, militias, families, local neighbourhoods and informal armed gangs to ensure physical as well as social and economic security as a substitute to central authority. Yemen is the most telling example of the process of the 'tribalisation' of security in Arab societies. In other instances, governments themselves are resorting to gangs and concluding agreements with them (which are usually kept secret, although they are sometimes revealed by the independent press), entrusting these groups with the security of remote regions of the country to allow the state security forces to concentrate on areas that are considered more strategic for the survival of the regime.

Among sub-national groups, Hezbollah in Lebanon may be considered an exception, given the fragility of the country's state and security institutions and the vulnerability of its multi-sectarian national fabric to external pressures. Yet Hezbollah's audience, which has grown beyond the Shi'a community, has more to do with the organisation's role as a 'security provider' due broadly to its extensive network of social services than to its regional prestige as a resistance movement against Israeli occupation.

Yemen and Lebanon share in common that the state, due to its endemic weakness and lack of a strong coercive security sector, plays the role of a mediator between – or negotiating partner with – tribes or sectarian groups. The Sudanese case is different, largely because of the rebellion in the south and of the Darfur conflict, which reflect the failure of the Northern central power to achieving nation-building through the use of military force.

Privatisation takes on a third pattern in Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, where the army remains the backbone of the regimes but has been sidelined by a multi-tentacled, domestic security apparatus. In all these instances, the army is increasingly involved in industrial and commercial activities as a form of compensation for its forced disengagement from the political process. The depoliticisation process has led to stronger professionalism of the military, but it has yielded a huge private economic sector owned by the armed forces and sponsored by the state.

The most telling example is Egypt, where the army controls a large industrial and contracting sector and where the promotion of its own private interests has led some intelligence agencies to emerge at the forefront in negotiating contracts with foreign investors. In Morocco, a security market has developed where different private actors and security agents conclude deals, with the blessing of the government.

5 Promoting the rule of law

In all Arab countries, the lack of transparency and accountability of the security sector is maintained by the constitutional and institutional ambiguities with regard to the

distribution of power between the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Due to the weakness or absence of established rules and mechanisms and bodies to enforce them, civilian bodies lack the tools to hold the security sector accountable.

Palestine is a case in point, where institutional and constitutional flaws partly explain the failure to promote good governance and rule of law ever since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA), as well as the structural imbalance between an all-powerful executive branch monopolising the security sector and the legislative and judicial branches. The Palestinian security sector grew in a context of national resistance followed by a project of nation-building; its members were militants and activists rehabilitated through the security institutions. The levels of corruption within them are the highest among Palestinian public institutions. This highlights the importance of a balanced distribution of power in controlling the security sector among the three branches of government and of engaging civil society in order to reduce the abusive interferences of security institutions in every realm of life. The failure to separate the security sector from factional militias is arguably the most important factor that led to the current division of Palestinian society and polity and to a civil strife.

6 Is there a useful role to play for outside parties?

There is a paradox in the attitude of states when it comes to their security sector. While they consider their military and security agencies as the strongholds of state sovereignty to which external parties should have no access and no say, it is probably in the field of security that they are most open to cooperation, exchange of intelligence and joining efforts with other countries whenever their own security is threatened. The result is that public opinion is particularly hostile to outside interferences in the security sector while governments, especially when they are cooperating with unpopular partners, need to do so discreetly.

On the other hand, outside partners, governments or international organisations often fail to coordinate their policies of aid and promotion of good governance in Arab countries in order to strengthen their coherence. For

example, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are seeking to promote governance practices that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other security cooperation frameworks might well be weakening through their support of other reforms that produce the opposite effects. The region is experiencing tensions in its relations with outside parties on the one hand responding to requirements that are designed to enhance local capacities to confront security threats (terrorism, illegal migration, money laundering) and on the other measures designed to promote democratic rules and practices within the security sector.

In this context, can outside parties provide a real impetus to reform processes? Can the role of outside parties be more than technical?[3] Can they contribute to enhancing existing political openings?

A host of SSR programmes have been initiated in the region, targeting countries in post-conflict situations, such as Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Sudan. In these instances, the reform agenda is primarily designed to respond to regional security concerns rather than to domestic considerations, such as accompanying processes of democratisation. They fail to engage key actors outside the security sector and government that are struggling to push forward a democratic agenda. They play a useful role in setting norms of behaviour, but they fall short of inducing genuine momentum within society without which a transformation of the security sector practices seems unlikely.

Attempts at pressing for security sector reform from within, as in the cases of Morocco, Egypt or Yemen, have thus far been disconnected from the efforts of outside parties. These attempts are initiated by human rights organisations, democracy activists, social and professional unions and movements and often include former members of the security sector. Their strategies are woven into the overall struggle for civil liberties, rule of law, mobilisation against torture, access to information, budget transparency and popular protests on various issues that affect the human security and dignity of citizens. These voices are shaping the

discussion and helping to redefine the question of whose security should be sought and what the security sector's primary mission ought to be, in more relevant ways than outside parties, local elites or representatives of the security institutions themselves are able or willing to articulate, thus setting the ground for a home-grown process of reform of the security sector.

Yet, while the most likely scenario for SSR in Arab countries is one where the decisive impulse will be domestic, external contributions are essential in sustaining the process. Arab societies are looking at other experiments to learn from. More than Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America appears to offer relevant lessons. In Latin American countries that experienced democratic transition, it is clear that external support contributed significantly to successful reform of the security sector, though in very different ways. Hence, the question is not whether or not outside involvement is needed, but rather how this external contribution can be designed in a way that contributes to and increases the efficiency of domestically engineered reform.

7 Conclusion
SSR is undoubtedly the one area where governments' resistance to reform is likely to be strongest, thus raising in the most acute manner the question of whether reform driven from outside through assistance to governments can succeed and be sustained when the political will is lacking.

For meaningful reform of the security sector to take place in the region, a number of conceptual and practical aspects need to be addressed, first among which are the modalities of exit from authoritarianism that must accompany efforts to conduct SSR in the region. The answer is likely to vary from one country to another. Yet it seems clear that the most effective way to promote reform of the security sector is through embedding it in the larger struggle for democratic change that civil and political society is pushing for.

The security sector is not a monolith. Like other government institutions, it is possible to reach out to reform-minded individuals within it to advance the reform agenda. More importantly, members of security institutions (particularly ministries of interior and those structures in

charge of keeping law and order and are in direct contact with the population) have become keen to promote a better image of their institutions and how they relate to society. Egypt is a case in point, where representatives of the sector are becoming resentful of being portrayed as 'the ugly face of the state' and feel they are the target of public anger because they are the executing arm of an authoritarian and repressive regime. This is leading some of its representatives to engage with civil society groups and to cooperate in investigations on mistreatment of detainees and human rights violations.

Public debate on the security sector, which was taboo only two years ago, is developing rapidly in Arab countries. The participation of representatives from civil society organisations, the role of the media, initiatives by members of special commissions such as the Equity and Reconciliation Commission in Morocco, groups working on memory and reconciliation in Lebanon and Algeria, human rights organisations in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria and advocacy groups promoting rule of law and transparency, are critical. Informal dialogues among civil society groups and attempts at engaging representatives from the security sector are shaping a bottom-up process to formulate a citizens' agenda of reform that seems more promising than formal programmes of reform that rely on state institutions.

The process by which civil society sets the agenda is by definition largely spontaneous, messy, and based on 'trial and error'. It is shaped by clashes with security forces, scandals concerning the mistreatment of detainees in prisons, and revelations by the media of all sorts of abuses. It differs from one country to another depending on the priority concerns of the society. In Jordan for example, there exists a focus on the rule of law and on the protection of women due to the widespread practice of honor crimes.

While historical, institutional and international factors are all working against changing the *status quo* or promoting the rule of law, the real promising avenue for change seems to come from local civil society actors. Where civil society has had some space to grow, it is gradually developing effective strategies to challenge the security apparatus. This more hopeful pattern exists in Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Lebanon and

Palestine (the latter being the case where civil society is probably stronger than in any other Arab society). It is nascent in Jordan and remains absent in Syria or Tunisia. In spite of the narrow space for expression, let alone participation, the civil rights movements in Arab countries have been more successful at setting the agenda than the traditional legal-bureaucratic-institutional approaches advocated by bilateral and international donors.

Notes

1 Human security is the chosen theme of the upcoming Arab Human Development Report(UNDP, forthcoming).
2 An 'autopsy' of the Iraqi security sector under the Ba'ath regime and another on Algeria are under way as part of a comparative research project on security sector reform in the Arab world conducted by the Arab Reform Initiative during 2008–10.
3 See Sayigh (2007) for a comprehensive review of the issues and challenges facing SSR in the Arab world.

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