



GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF  
ARMED FORCES (DCAF)

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**Why is a gender perspective  
in the Security Sector important  
when being confronted with  
Human Trafficking?**

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Anja H. Ebnöther, Assistant Director, DCAF

DCAF, Rue de Chantepoulet 11, PO Box 1360, CH- 1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland  
Phone : +41 22 741 7700, Fax : +41 22 741 7705, email : [info@dcaf.ch](mailto:info@dcaf.ch)

- 1: What is the Security Sector and what is its role when talking human trafficking?
- 2: Why is it important to integrate gender in the security sector, and what does it actually mean?
- 3: What challenges does the security sector face regarding human trafficking and what are some possible responses?

When we are confronted with a serious problem, we try to solve it by subdividing it. Well, with Human trafficking this is unfortunately not possible. There are so many different actors involved. We need a holistic approach – which bears the danger of “who then is in charge” – and if all are in charge, as a result nobody is. We need coordination – but I am sure I talk for all of you – I myself like to coordinate, but not be coordinated by others. This is especially true in the security sector. We all know that the security sector plays an important role in Human trafficking.

Let me quickly **define the security sector**

- Core security actors: those who carry arms, for example armed forces, police,
- Security management and oversight bodies: parliament, relevant ministries, but also civil society actors.
- Justice and rule of law institutions:
- Non-statutory security forces: private security and military companies
- And lastly, the media and NGO's

Much needed SSR processes are usually designed to address a variety of problems within the security sector such as corruption, lack of technical capacity, human rights violations, lack of transparency and oversight, as well as broader social problems such as crime and armed violence. The goal of security sector reform is to enable security actors to perform their work efficiently and accountably within the rule of law.

**2: Why is it important to integrate women in the security sector, and what does that mean?**

As ‘gender’ is understood differently by a lot of people, it needs some clarification. Gender is defined as “the socially constructed roles and relationships between men and women. Rather than being determined by biology, gender is learned. In other words, men and women are taught certain roles and appropriate behaviours according to their sex. Girls play with dolls, and boys don't cry. Gender roles, such as these, are not static and can change over time and vary widely within and across cultures.”

My work is **about integrating the different needs of men and women, boys and girls into a reform process of a security sector**. It is usually called “**gender mainstreaming**” and means promoting the equal participation of men and women in a society. It is about establishing a dialogue with the security sector as to effectively deliver a service – and as the security sector is still dominated by men, however, this **also includes how to promote women in the security sector**. Some statistics why this is important: in 2006 in South Africa there were 29% female police officers, in India 2% and in Canada 18%. In military forces the figures are even lower; Hungary had 17%

women in the Armed Forces, the UK 9.1% and Italy 1.6%; I explicitly chose Western countries, South Africa and India to show that this is a global challenge.

- but let me highlight: just increasing the number of women in a security service does not guarantee gender-sensitive policies, as being a woman does not automatically make someone a gender expert. Therefore, having both male and female security personnel is an **operational necessity**. A scarcity of policewomen as one example can be a threat to national security; interviews showed an increased need of having more policewomen at police stations and checkpoints; as performing body search was simply out of the question, due to the lack of female colleagues; also in border security... In addition, it is an **economic necessity** as well. In times of scarce resources, not to benefit from 50% of the population, to do the job, is a pity.
- Thus; a **representative security institution is one that reflects, at all levels of the institution, the population it seeks to serve in terms of ethnicity, geography, religion, sex and language**. The **benefits** of such a representative security sector is an increased ability to deliver security and justice to a diverse constituency, and – in my view very important, it can improve civilian trust and a sense of responsibility, of local ownership.
- Trafficked women and men often have different destinations, are trafficked by different networks, and recruited with different strategies. While more men are trafficked to engage in “legal” fields of work like construction women are more often trafficked to engage in illegal work . This fact makes trafficked women more likely to be “criminalised” instead of being treated as victims of trafficking. This increases the tasks for security services even more.

### **3. What challenges does the security sector face regarding human trafficking and what are some possible approaches?**

We are currently finalising a study on security sector strategies against human trafficking, which includes recommendations for improving **prosecution, prevention, and protection**. Since human trafficking is a crime, **the role of actors such as the police and the judiciary deserves special attention**. Moreover, it is important to ensure that security actors do not contribute to trafficking, by being corrupt, being passively or actively supporting networks, and that the police can deliver evidence for the judiciary to prosecute and put to trial, with the necessary decency and care for the trafficked victims. Impunity must end!

- Broad and close cooperation among different security actors is key. However, we all agree that **security sector reform-related-only measures are not sufficient**, since a reduction of trafficking also depends on increased economic perspectives, on gender equality and other factors. While it is important to treat human trafficking as a serious form of organised crime, we must also understand that the social and economic conditions that lead women and men to seek migration and that make them vulnerable to traffickers.

**Work is still needed for those working in and with the Security Sector**

#### **a) On Implementation of counter-trafficking measures**

Many anti-trafficking instruments have been created over recent years. It is much easier to sign a convention, than it is to actively prosecute-protect and prevent trafficking.

Some barriers can be removed by:

- **increased training for police but also judiciary;** to better understand the structure of trafficking groups; to better recognize trafficking patterns and trafficked persons, and Human Rights training. And we heard about the Bahrain efforts here and applaud them.
- **increased political will:** technical measures will do nothing without political will. A Europol official told me, deploring the practice by states to deport victims of trafficking to their home countries before trial: "There are plenty of recommendations on how to fight human trafficking. But there is political resistance. It is rather frustrating."

### **B) On Cooperation**

Many security agencies do not share information and intelligence with their counterparts. And often, due to a variety of reasons, security agencies are a active or passive parts of those criminal networks. Corruption hampers cooperation.

Other crucial obstacles include institutional turf battles, disputes over mandates, the failure to learn from mistakes, and duplication of efforts.

### **C) On Research and Evaluation**

Politics usually only react if the numbers are so shockingly high that action is practically enforced on them. Therefore it makes a difference whether "only" 200'000 or 2 Million persons are trafficked. How are we dealing with such statistics? What do they really say?

There is little evidence to indicate the extent to which different types of efforts impact the level of trafficking or the extent to which rescued victims are being re-trafficked. We therefore must look at the **consequences** of counter-trafficking which relate again to the security sector; and at the **impact** of counter-trafficking activities on trafficked persons.

What about the impact of **tighter border controls** on trafficking and on migration more generally. They may reduce overall irregular migration but may instead push more people into the arms of traffickers..

A lot of good work has been done, especially also by you here present – but much more needs to be done – by all of us! Thank you very much for your attention.