



**AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Madagascar Case Study

**Working Paper
(Preliminary Draft)**

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Introduction

Since independence, Madagascar has been rocked by cyclical and recurrent political and military crises. The country underwent four classic military coups before experiencing yet another military-civilian coup in 2009. This last unconstitutional change led to suspension from the African Union and all international bodies. This situation has weakened both the social and economic fabric and institutions, including judicial and security systems, exacerbated by corruption and the meltdown of the rule of law. The return to constitutional order in January 2014, followed by the lifting of sanctions by the African Union (AU) and the international community, offered Madagascar the opportunity to come back to the international stage and to be able to fix the systemic dysfunctions of the State, particularly in the security sector. It has thus decided to adopt comprehensive structural reforms that will put the country on the path of peace and development by committing to reforming the security sector. The Security Sector Reform (SSR) process initiated since 2014 in Madagascar has benefited from the full support of the African Union and international partners as early as the initial assessment mission through the implementation phase. And at this stage of the SSR implementation, the Malagasy Government has sovereignly decided to develop a National Security Policy and Strategy.

1. Security Sector Reform: The entry point for NSS in Madagascar

Initial assessment: The political will of the Malagasy Government to reform the security sector has resulted in a formal request for a security sector reform needs assessment. October 4-13, 2014, a Joint Assessment Mission led by the AU with partners such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and the African Security Sector Network laid the groundwork for “supporting the Malagasy State in developing a common understanding of the context and scope of SSR, in order to better reflect their key SSR needs and to identify priority areas of support by international partners, including the AU”¹. Following a contextual analysis of the threats and the cross-cutting dimension of gender, recommendations were made on the challenges of SSR and the mechanisms of democratic control, internal security and intelligence services, national defense, protection of natural and strategic resources, justice and prison system and finally, non-state actors². This initial study paved the way for the establishment of the SSR Seminar Technical Organizing Committee (CTO/RSS).

Security Sector Reform Seminar Technical Organizing Committee (CTO/RSS)

Established by Decree N° 2015-144 dated May 2015 under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, its key mission was to hold a national seminar on SSR. With a view to building national ownership around SSR ideals, it should first take ownership of the findings of the Joint Assessment Mission Report in order to better plan and conduct SSR consultations

¹ Report, Joint Security Sector Reform (SSR) Needs Assessment Mission to the Republic of Madagascar, 2014.

² Ibid

in all regions of the country in preparation for the national seminar. Grassroots consultations were indeed well conducted and allowed the national seminar to take place. This led to the development of the SSR General Policy Letter (LPG/RSS).

SSR General Policy Letter

The January 2016 General Policy Letter of the SSR (LPG/RSS), which is a fundamental reference for SSR in Madagascar, provides a very clear political vision of SSR and the objectives to be pursued. It has also identified the eight (8) pillars, including the Army, the National Police, the National Gendarmerie, the Judiciary, the Territorial Administration and other Paramilitary Forces, Intelligence Services, parliament and non-state stakeholders, on which the SSR will be based³. The LPG/RSS proposes a draft National Security Strategy and Communications Strategy. This fundamental document served as the basis for the development of the Security Sector Reform Plan in September 2017.

Security Sector Reform Plan document

As implementation document of the Madagascar Security Sector Reform General Policy Letter, the September 2017 Security Sector Reform Plan was largely inspired by the African Union SSR Policy Framework. It stands as “an integrated development framework, identifying the problems and objectives of all the stakeholders involved in defense, justice and security management, as well as a coordination and reference framework for the actions to be taken in this area, by serving as a guide for Government intervention in SSR”⁴. The national plan includes a strategic plan which defines the overall objective, the specific objectives and the budget estimates for each pillar, and an operational plan which reviews the current situation by pillar, objective and expected outcome. Finally, it is important to note that the national plan states in its conclusion that “the establishment of a process coordination mechanism remains a priority”⁵. Indeed, the establishment of a coordination structure was crucial for the successful implementation of Security Sector Reform in Madagascar.

SSR National Coordination Office (BNC/RSS)

The National Security Sector Reform Coordination Office was established on September 27, 2017 by Presidential Decree No. 2017-859 establishing and determining its organization and powers. The National SSR Coordination Office is an administrative entity under the Standing Secretariat for Defense and National Security.

Its missions include:

- Coordinate and harmonize all SSR-related activities at the national level, in accordance with the decisions and guidelines set by the High Council of National Defense in this area;
- Ensure the implementation of the National SSR Plan consisting of the Strategic Plan and Operational Plans corresponding to the eight (8) SSR pillars, including the

³ SSR General Policy Letter, Madagascar, 2016.

⁴ National Security Sector Reform Plan, 2017.

⁵ Ibid.

Malagasy Army, the National Gendarmerie, the National Police, Justice, Territorial Administration, Intelligence, Parliament and non-state stakeholders;

- Provide support in terms of fundraising for SSR pillar activities.⁶

2. NSS framework and developmental process in Madagascar

The Standing Secretariat for Defense and National Security (SP/DSN) established by Decree No. 2017-242 date April 13, 2017 is in charge of assisting the High Council of National Defense (HCDN) in all tasks related to the investigation of cases falling within its remit⁷. Article 4 of the decree establishing it stipulates that the SP/DSN, under the aegis of the President of the Republic and in cooperation with the departments and agencies concerned, shall examine all files relating to the preparation and validation of the draft defense concept and the National Security Strategy document and to the proper functioning of security systems and defense arrangements.⁸

It is therefore from this sovereign perspective that the SP/DSN has undertaken the elaboration of Madagascar National Security Policy and Strategy. A multi-disciplinary committee was put in place for the drafting of the document. It should also be added that the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform makes this an important point in SSR programming and implementation for countries going through the process⁹. The development of Madagascar National Security Policy and Strategy is a process which built on the foundation of SSR achievements. The documents are still in the drafting phase and arrangements are made for consultation, conciliation and validation of the preliminary drafts of the both texts, namely the National Security Policy and the National Security Strategy, before the end of the first half of 2018.

3. Key features of NSS in Madagascar

The strategic pillars on which Madagascar National Security Policy and Strategy will rely on safeguarding her national interests are as follows:

Overhauling of the Judicial System Functioning

- An independent, impartial, efficient and accessible justice system.
- The return of public trust in its judicial system.

Security System Reform

- Good employment of the security system stakeholders for the safeguard of national interests.
- Harmonious inter-body coordination of the security system stakeholders.
- Adequacy of the security system capabilities.

⁶ Decree No. 2017-859, establishing the BNC/RSS and its organization and powers.

⁷ Decree n°2017-242 on the organization and functioning of the Standing Secretariat for Defense and National Security under the High Council of National Defense.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (January 2013).

Reshuffling of the Administrative System

- Adequacy of the administrative system with the realities of the society.
- Harmonization of the administrative system.

Strengthening the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Mechanisms

- Full transparency of anti-corruption mechanisms.
- Encouraging good conduct through motivation and punishment.
- Improving the quality of citizenship.

Recovery of Malagasy Values

- Promotion and oversight of “Fihavanana” by law.
- Preservation of traditional values compatible with a modern country.
- Human development.¹⁰

4. Challenges and Prospects

Implementing NSS in a political instability context.

The political context in Madagascar remains unstable. The 2018 election deadlines are waking up the old political demons which have brought the country into an unprecedented political and security crisis. The same causes producing the same effects, Malagasy political leaders, obsessed by the conquest of power, are preparing for an electoral confrontation whose outcome is difficult to predict. This political crystallization in the context of the upcoming elections if not well handled, will have reversal effects on the SSR process and consequently impact negatively on the forthcoming national security policy and strategy.

Strengthening monitoring and oversight mechanisms

The strengthening of democratic control by Parliament and the role that non-state stakeholders should play in the SSR and the National Security Strategy decision-making process and implementation were well diagnosed in the initial study, and in the SSR General Policy Letter. However, they were conspicuous in their inactivity throughout the implementation of SSR in Madagascar. If parliament had only to play its role with regard to the constitutional provisions entrusting it with the task of legislating, monitoring and evaluating public policies, the SSR implementation process would have taken quite a different path by deepening the local ownership. In addition, the structural weakness of Civil Society Organizations and the lack of knowledge of the media on security issues have not allowed them to play their role of interface between governments and the population. Strengthening their role will help to boost the SSR implementation process, which is currently in deep lethargy in a very poisonous political climate and also will help in paving the way for the development and implementation of the forthcoming National Security Strategy.

¹⁰ Draft National Security Strategy, March 2018.

Conclusion

Madagascar remains politically unstable. Progress has been made in the planning phase in order to guarantee the success of SSR process and the on-going development of the National Security Strategy. The country passed through four (4) years of SSR process financially supported by the international community that have created a favorable basis for the establishment of flexible mechanisms guaranteeing the sustainability and resilience of the process in the event of democratic backsliding or deterioration of the political and social context. The development of the National Security Policy and Strategy by the SP/DSN during the implementation phase of the Security Sector Reform process is perceived by the current government as an initiative falling under the country's national sovereignty and continuity of the state in its quest to safeguard the country's national interest regardless of the political obedience of the people in power.