

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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| ACABQ  | Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (United Nations) |
| ACRI   | African Crisis Response Initiative  |
| AFRC   | Armed Forces Revolutionary Council  |
| AFSL   | Armed Forces of Sierra Leone  |
| AU     | African Union   |
| CDF    | Civil Defence Force   |
| CIAT   | <i>Comité International d'Accompagnement de la Transition</i>                 |
| CTPC   | <i>Comité Technique de Planification et Coordination</i>                      |
| DDR    | Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration                                 |
| DDRP   | Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme                       |
| DDRRR  | Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration, and Resettlement    |
| DRC    | Democratic Republic of the Congo  |
| ECOMOG | ECOWAS Monitoring Group   |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States                                     |
| FAPC   | <i>Forces Armées du Peuple Congolais</i>                                      |
| FDLR   | <i>Force Démocratique de Liberation du Rwanda</i>                             |
| FNI    | <i>Front des Nationalistes Intégrationnistes</i>                              |
| FPDC   | <i>Forces Populaires pour la Démocratie du Congo</i>                          |
| GNU    | Government of National Unity  |
| GoSL   | Government of Sierra Leone  |
| IDP    | Internally Displaced Person   |
| IEMF   | Interim Emergency Multinational Force   |
| IMTF   | Integrated Mission Task Force   |
| JMC    | Joint Military Commission   |
| MDRP   | Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme                      |
| MDTF   | Multi-donor Trust Fund  |
| MILOBS | UN Military Observers   |
| MONUC  | United Nations Mission in Congo   |
| MRR    | <i>Mécanisme de Réponse Rapide</i>  |
| NCDDR  | National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration          |

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| NCRRR    | National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation          |
| NGO      | Non-governmental Organization  |
| OAU      | Organization of African Unity  |
| OCHA     | UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs                           |
| ONUC     | UN Operation in the Congo  |
| PSO      | Peace Support Operation  |
| PUSIC    | <i>Parti pour L'Unité et la Sauvegarde de l'intégrité du Congo</i>               |
| RCD-Goma | <i>Rassemblement Congolais de la Démocracie-Goma</i>                             |
| RCD-K-ML | <i>Rassemblement Congolais de la Démocracie-Kivu- Mouvement de la Libération</i> |
| RUF      | Revolutionary United Front   |
| SADC     | Southern African Development Community   |
| SLA      | Sierra Leone Army  |
| SLPP     | Sierra Leone People's Party  |
| SRSG     | Special Representative of the Secretary-General                                  |
| UN       | United Nations   |
| UNAMIR   | United Nations Mission in Rwanda   |
| UNAMSIL  | United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone   |
| UNAVEM   | United Nations Verification and Monitoring Mission in Angola                     |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme   |
| UNDPKO   | United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations                             |
| UPC      | <i>Union des Patriotes Congolais</i>   |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

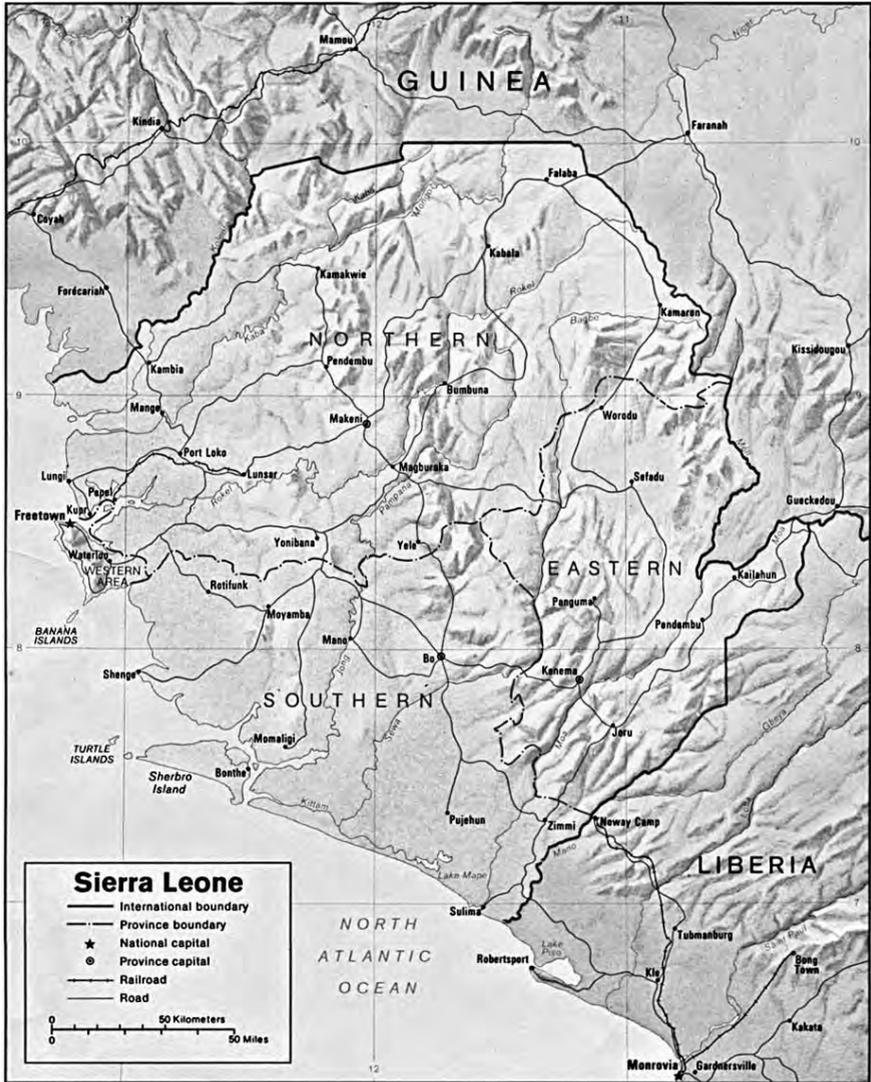
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The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) illustrates how a crisis in one country can spark regional insecurities. Thus responses to conflict need to be based on a sub-regional context where local dynamics are assessed and incorporated into peace efforts. An important element of peace is the effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. This monograph looks at one specific element of these efforts: disarmament.

In the context of multinational peace support operations, disarmament has formed a key component. In Africa, disarmament programmes during peacekeeping operations have been conducted in Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the DRC, among other countries, with varying degrees of success. Over time, however, lessons have been learned in these efforts and the implementation and successful conclusion of disarmament has, for example, recently been witnessed in Sierra Leone.

This monograph sets out to evaluate the evolution of disarmament during peacekeeping operations and look at how these programmes have become an integral component of peace support operations in Africa. Two recent efforts at disarmament in Africa are then presented: Sierra Leone and the DRC. While the situations in the two countries differ dramatically, the opportunity to learn from the experience of Sierra Leone and analyse the evolving situation in the DRC against a common framework of analysis is important. The monograph concludes with a review of the basic requirements for planning and implementing disarmament programmes within peace operations in Africa.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The success of this monograph is a combined contribution of all the people who put in their effort, time and resources from conceptualization to publication. The authors wish to acknowledge all those who gave their time and commitment in order to participate in interviews and discussions carried out in the DRC by the two authors. Of particular significance were contributions from MONUC's DDRRR staff (Peter Swarbrick, Dr. Renner Onana and Jean-Pierre Boutroy); Dr. Jacques Ebenga and Professor Bongoy Mpekesa of *Labor Optimus*, Mr. François Lumbala of *Bureau National de Démobilisation et Réinsertion* (BUNADER), Madam Kalonji Everlyne of *Groupe d'Action pour la Démobilisation et la Réinsertion des Enfants Soldats* (GADERES), Madam Innocente Bakanseka of UNICEF's Protection Section, the entire UNDP staff in Kinshasa and all the foreign missions that accorded us time to speak to them.

The research and publication of this monograph were made possible through the support of the Federal Republic of Germany.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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# INTRODUCTION

Nelson Alusala

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The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) underlines how a crisis in a country can directly affect another country or an entire region, sparking off regional insecurities. It is for this purpose that conflict analysts argue that responses to African dilemmas must be based on a sub-regional context where local dynamics are paramount. No solutions designed away from the local dynamics can be implanted on a local conflict with any hope of success.

The central pillar to the establishment of peace is a successful disarmament programme. Disarmament, in the context of DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration), can be defined as the collection, control and preferably disposal or destruction of small arms and light weapons, explosives and ammunition held by organs of regular and irregular combatants. Disarmament targeting mainly small arms and light weapons is often referred to as practical or micro-disarmament.<sup>1</sup>

Disarmament, in the context of peacekeeping, and as defined by the United Nations (UN), is the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. It includes the development of responsible arms management programmes. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO)<sup>2</sup> gives broad objectives for DDR planning. For disarmament specifically, emphasis is put on the need to:

- Define who is to be disarmed, and what weapons are to be collected (definition of what constitutes disarmament).
- Develop procedures for disarmament, such as timing, methodology for weapons collection, recording, disposal and location of sites among other necessities.
- Undertake detailed disarmament planning at the beginning of a DDR process, which is essential for smooth implementation and for successful

reintegration of former combatants. A general consent (particularly in voluntary disarmament) of representatives of the state and all parties to the conflict is vital.

The disarmament plan should further incorporate:

- Procedures for monitoring and verification of compliance.
- Broader weapons considerations, including enforcement of an arms embargo and/or cooperative measures with neighbouring countries and arms suppliers.
- Elements of a public information programme, for the purpose of sensitizing the public on issues of disarmament and the entire DDR programme.
- Information needs for planning disarmament and stockpile management of recovered weapons.
- Funds needed for the disarmament phase.
- Other relevant considerations.

Disarmament can be conducted in various ways. It can be administered voluntarily through disarmament agreements, amnesties and public collection campaigns administered by a police force, army, a peacekeeping force or a designated authority. It can also be carried out coercively by the army, police or a peacekeeping force in situations where the combatants are reluctant to down their arms in the interest of peace. The need to avert human atrocities from taking place, and to prevent the reoccurrence of the 1994/95 Rwandan crisis,<sup>3</sup> is what prompted the United Nations Security Council to pass resolution 1493 on 28 July 2003. The resolution provided the UN peacekeeping force in the DRC (MONUC) with a stronger mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. (See chapter four for a deeper analysis on MONUC). The new mandate gave MONUC powers to enforce peace, hence the ability to undertake coercive disarmament, whenever necessary.

Studies reveal that disarmament conducted by peacekeeping missions of either the United Nations or regional organizations does not lead to complete elimination or collection of proscribed weapons. This is often because immediately after a conflict the feelings of insecurity among the public linger as the healing process and confidence building develops. During this period

some people will still feel the need to be armed and will not easily give up their arms. Post-demobilization verification exercises conducted by peacekeeping missions have sometimes revealed large quantities of weapons that remained either in hidden storage sites, arms caches or in unauthorized private hands.<sup>4</sup> Arms often remain unreported because the parties are not entirely confident in the peace process and hold back some of their best weapons for a possible renewal of hostilities.

A disarmament process should not be an afterthought or *ad hoc* process, but rather part of a DDR programme resulting from peace negotiation and peace implementation processes. According to Mason, disarmament and demobilization are important components of reform of the state security apparatuses and should be pursued in tandem with reform of the military, police, judiciary and penal systems; reforms which in return become part of the broader process of democratization through the creation of a multi-party electoral system that is underpinned by effective and accountable governmental institutions.<sup>5</sup>

Resurgence or increases in banditry, violence and other forms of criminal activities in post-conflict areas can be partly attributed to the ready availability of weapons. In order to help reduce criminal acts and consolidate the peace and stability necessary for the promotion of sustainable development, it is imperative that mechanisms for collecting weapons are developed and implemented after the peacekeeping operations have withdrawn. At the conclusion of disarmament, a law against the illegal possession of arms should be promulgated.

Disarmament should serve to free up more resources and create better conditions for the economic development of the country. One of the criteria for judging a disarmament process is to see whether it facilitates economic growth of the targeted population, particularly of the entire target country in order to provide a basis for the successful demobilization and reintegration of the former combatants.

Human security, defined as an approach that recognizes that lasting stability cannot be achieved until people are protected from violent threats to their rights, safety or lives,<sup>6</sup> needs to occupy the central part of all disarmament approaches, with the aim of replacing the possession of arms as a means of security and defence, power and a tool of survival with viable and sustainable alternatives. This requires cultivation of a new security concept that meets the needs of society and calls for vigorous efforts to explore new ways to safeguard peace and security.

During a disarmament process, inter-party consultations and negotiations by all parties concerned are essential. However, as Cilliers and Malan argue,<sup>7</sup> the danger is not insignificant, as underlying the seemingly insurmountable challenges of effective disarmament and reintegration of combatants are far broader and deeper social, political and economic challenges that need to be met if peace is to involve more than those armed elite, who may present themselves as liberators and purport to act in the interests of a generalized population. The two concede that disarmament requires a massive process of social engagement and mobilization of peoples and communities whose only experience of governance (during the conflict) often was brutal, corrupt and exploitative.

In a conflict with multiple actors, as in the DRC, it must be ensured that the disarmament process does not become a tool for stronger groups to control weaker ones. Still less should disarmament become an instrument by which a handful of the parties seek to optimize their armament at the expense of others, in order to seek unilateral security, superiority or domination of the country's political arena. Considering the fragility of the DDR process, a disarmament plan should avoid any bias that could affect the outcome of the peace building process. The presence of impartial forces, such as UN peacekeepers or forces of a regional body, may assist in ensuring compliance during disarmament and also in post-conflict reconstruction.

Chapter one of the monograph evaluates the evolution of the concept of disarmament in the post-Cold War era, highlighting the factors that have underpinned UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the challenges and lessons learnt from previous efforts at disarmament in Africa.

The second chapter builds the first by tracing the evolution of peace support operations (PSOs) and assessing Western countries' political will to intervene in African conflicts. The chapter ends with an evaluation of emerging challenges that peacekeeping missions face during disarmament.

Chapter three presents an overview of how disarmament was carried out in Sierra Leone under the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). This has been seen as a model of successful disarmament in Africa and has served as a 'how it was done in a sister country' model for the DRC, as the latter plans its disarmament programme. The announcement in February 2004 that the five-year programme of disarmament and demobilization was complete in Sierra Leone provides the hope that stability will be sustained in the country.

Chapter four captures the major events that have helped shape the DRC, putting the country back on the track to peace. Citing the findings of field research conducted in the DRC, the chapter contends that the transitional government is indeed motivated to achieving peace, although it is inevitable that political challenges will emerge. Thus the need for disarmament, as an important component of post-conflict reconstruction becomes paramount. The chapter concludes with observations that may add value to the entire DDR process in the DRC as it is implemented.

The monograph concludes with a review of the fundamental requirements for planning and implementing disarmament programmes. The conclusion puts forward some suggestions and recommendations for initiating the DDR process in the DRC

## Notes

1. See R Muggah et al., "The Long Shadow of War: Prospects for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in the Republic of Congo - A Joint Independent Evaluation for the European Commission, UNDP and the MDRP Secretariat," 23 February to 6 March 2003, p.20.
2. See United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines, December 1999, p.15, [www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/DD&R.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/DD&R.pdf).
3. Many peacekeepers risked and some gave up their lives to protect Rwandan citizens during the genocide. Belgium, citing the lack of mandate to use force in the conflict, withdrew its contingent following the murder of Belgian soldiers assigned to protect a Rwandan government leader. For a full account of this story see T M Mays, "African Solutions for African Problems: The Changing Face of African-Mandated Peace Operations," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* Centre for Conflict Studies, New Brunswick, Spring, 2003, pp. 106-125:109.
4. The BICC help desk for practical disarmament-social and political aspects, <http://www.bicc.de/helpdesk/aspects.html>.
5. P Mason "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants: Changing Perspectives in Development and Strategy," in H Wulf, *Brief 15-Security Sector*, BICC, June 2000, p.40.
6. The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
7. J Cilliers and M Malan, *Peacekeeping in the DRC-MONUC and the Road to Peace*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, Monograph series No. 66, 2001, pp. 11-13.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE CHANGING CONCEPT OF DISARMAMENT IN AFRICA

Thokozani Thusi

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Any focus on disarmament in Africa over past last twenty years cannot be separated from the history and impact of the Cold War on United Nations (UN) peacekeeping. The decade 1989-1999 saw a major shift in the disarmament debate. Prior to the collapse of the Berlin Wall the debate mostly focused on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons between the two superpowers of the Cold War. However, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent proliferation of intra-state conflicts or what came to be known as complex emergencies in Africa and in countries of the former Eastern bloc brought about new disarmament challenges.<sup>1</sup>

Complex emergencies and most post-Cold War conflicts have been characterized as resulting from a series of inter-locking causes, including collapse of political institutions, the phenomena of 'failed states', civil and ethnic strife, famine, displacement of people, disputed sovereignty, the breakdown of national governments and the decline of national economies.<sup>2</sup> Most of the characteristics of these conflicts continue to mirror the current situation in Africa's conflict zones. In West Africa many analysts have spoken of a 'new barbarism'.<sup>3</sup>

Freed from the constraints of superpower rivalry, the mandate of peacekeeping changed as more space was created. United Nations peacekeeping missions were given new mandates as traditional notions of sovereignty were challenged. Post-Cold War crises in Rwanda, Somalia, Kosovo, and Bosnia brought about new challenges for the international community and for UN peacekeeping in general. Debates on the need to intervene (most often on humanitarian grounds) were accompanied by the need to review practice and evaluate lessons learnt.<sup>4</sup>

The United Nations role in conflict prevention and resolution, especially its role in peacekeeping was influenced by a number of events and initiatives aimed at improving peacekeeping practice. The then-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, summarized the 'integrally related' role of the UN as combining concepts of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building. Unfortunately the shifts in terminology

have not helped to define the activities carried out by the United Nations in the pursuit for peace.<sup>5</sup> Some analysts talk of ‘peace operations’ whilst other speak of ‘peace-support operations’. What is clear though is that the expansion of peacekeeping following the end of the Cold War and the changing nature of conflict has resulted in changes away from traditional peacekeeping role for the blue berets.

Today UN peace operations not only focus on the security dimensions of peacekeeping but also increasingly encompass aspects of good governance, democracy, human rights, economy and development.<sup>6</sup>

The long-term framework of peace operations define them as comprising three principal activities: conflict prevention and peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building.<sup>7</sup> Long-term conflict resolution addresses the structural sources of conflict in order to build a solid foundation for peace.

Peacemaking implies the reassembling of the foundations for peace and providing tools for building those foundations beyond the absence of war. It is along this continuum that disarmament sets the basis for peace. Disarmament should become a continuous element in ensuring the sustainability of peace through the long-term removal of weapons in society beyond the peacekeeping phase.

The United Nations Security Council provides the framework, through its resolutions, for all disarmament activities in a UN mission. A review of the mandates of various UN missions shows a doctrinal shift influenced by a number of actors. The origins of this shift have been attributed to the:

- Unexpected expansion of UN peace operations mandates;
- Unprecedented responsibilities in Kosovo and East Timor;
- Unexpected challenges in the UNAMSIL mission in Sierra Leone;
- Frank reports on the UN role in Srebrenica and Rwanda; and
- The May 2000 UN peacekeepers hostage crisis in Sierra Leone.

The above factors strengthened and accelerated the need to review UN peace operations and draw lessons from the experiences of the 1990s. The failed mission in Somalia and the failure by the UN to respond swiftly to halt the

genocide in Rwanda were amongst the factors that compelled the UN to evaluate its peacekeeping doctrine and operations. To respond to this challenge, the Secretary-General appointed an international panel to make recommendations for measures aimed at improving the planning and execution of UN peace operations. The report that came out in 2000 was subsequently known as the Brahimi Report.

The report recommended, *inter alia*, that:

- Robust rules of engagement should enable peacekeepers to carry out their mandate professionally and successfully, to be able to defend themselves and the mission's mandate;
- UN Security Council resolutions should meet the requirements of peacekeeping operations when they deploy into potentially dangerous situations, especially the need for a clear chain of command and unity in effort;
- The UN should define "rapid and effective deployment capacities" as the ability, from an operational perspective, to fully deploy traditional peacekeeping operations within 30 days after the adoption of a Security Council resolution, and within 90 days in the case of complex peacekeeping operations;
- A peace building strategy should include funding for quick impact projects aimed at rebuilding foundations for recovery conducive to sustainable peace;
- Member states should be encouraged to establish a pool of civilian police officers that would be ready for deployment on short notice;
- The UN Secretary-General should be given authority to draw up to US\$50 million from the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund, once it becomes clear that an operation was likely to be established, with the approval of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) but prior to the adoption of a Security Council resolution;
- Support should be extended to the UN Secretary-General for the creation of a pilot Peace-building Unit within the UN Department of Political Affairs, in cooperation with other integral UN elements, and that regular budgetary support for this unit be revisited by the membership if the pilot programme works well.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the recommendations of the Brahimi Report are reflective of the lessons learned in UN peace operations since the end of the Cold War. These lessons significantly underscore the importance of the UN in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peace building, especially in societies in conflict or moving from conflict to peace.

## **African conflict and the role of the UN in disarmament**

At the centre of conflict in Africa is the use of small arms and light weapons. The easy availability and proliferation of small arms and light weapons since the end of the Cold War has exacerbated conflict on the continent. Vast amounts of small arms and light weapons left over from liberation wars and the Cold War continue to circulate across the continent. More arms still flow from the former Eastern bloc into arenas of conflict in Africa. The human and economic costs of firearm violence and conflict in Africa have reached devastating proportions.

Small arms and light weapons today provide the greatest challenge for disarmament for a number of reasons. Small arms and light weapons do not require complex organizational, logistical or training capacity to maintain and operate. Secondly, these weapons are lightweight and are easy to assemble and reassemble. Thirdly, small arms and light weapons are easy to acquire due to their low cost. For example, it is said that for just \$50 million (roughly the cost of a single modern jet fighter) one can equip a small army with some 200,000 rifles at today's prices.<sup>9</sup> Small arms are so easy available that in El Salvador, hand grenades "are commonly carried by many citizens in their pockets and on their belts, and increasingly are used to settle personal arguments".<sup>10</sup>

The easy availability, accessibility and circulation of small arms and light weapons in Africa means that failure to devise strategies to minimize the extent through which parties to conflict have access to them undermine any efforts aimed at building sustainable peace. Efforts to reduce the prevalence of small arms need to include tighter domestic control over the production, sale, transfer and ownership of firearms. African countries have been instrumental in the fight against small arms proliferation in the form of regional and sub-regional instruments such as the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Illicit Small Arms and the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.<sup>11</sup>

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their central role in conflict has made disarmament an essential component of peace building. This important and essential aspect has not been lost on the UN. Post-Cold War conflict resolution exercises in Namibia, Mozambique and Angola have, to varying degrees, incorporated disarmament as a component of peace making and peace building.

The Brahimi Report of 2000 emphasized the essential role that disarmament plays in a process of peacekeeping and peace building.<sup>12</sup> Some have argued that a DDR programme should be part of an overall integrated recovery strategy that encompasses economic development, security sector reform, the integration of refugees and internally displaced persons, and justice and reconciliation.<sup>13</sup> However, disarmament merits attention in its own right and there is a growing literature on the topic that identifies essential benchmarks and guidelines for sustainable disarmament and points to some shortcomings in current practice.

Some of the issues raised relate to neutral programmes that failed to take into account experiences of different groups who were involved and affected by the conflict during the process of disarmament. These 'special' groups include child soldiers, women combatants and the dependents of those who were involved in the conflict.<sup>14</sup> This chapter will deal with some of these issues below.

Disarmament as a component of DDR in the context of this chapter refers to activities designed to facilitate disbanding military fighters and easing their transition back into active social and economic life.<sup>15</sup> In its widest sense, and for the purposes of this chapter, disarmament refers to the complete removal of weapons from a military force. Although this is often elusive, the term is typically used to refer to any programme, movement or action to disarm in general, and specifically to disarm soldiers individually and systematically. However, it should be noted that in cases of internal conflict, disarmament covers all armed formations involved in the fighting, including irregular forces.

However, disarmament does not only occur in the context of a movement from war to peace. Most African armies were faced (and in some cases continue to be faced) after the end of the Cold War with the challenge of reducing the size of their large armies.

## United Nations disarmament programmes

Disarmament as a component of DDR varies from case to case and can involve turning in of weaponry, its storage and destruction, the physical relocation of ex-combatants (from cantonment areas to other locations of choice), distribution of incentive packages to ex-combatants such as clothing, food, cash settlements or tools and seeds for farming, and training in various vocations.

Disarmament as part of peace operations is usually undertaken under one of three possible scenarios: as part of the negotiated settlement, after the victor initiates the process, or when a third party initiates the process.

The first type of disarmament is often a large-scale programme, which forms part of a comprehensive peace plan, usually under the auspices of the UN. United Nations operations in Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique and El Salvador are all examples. These types of disarmament programmes form an integral part of the peace process and as such depend on the political will and commitment of the parties involved in the peace agreement. Thus any changes in the political process will have a direct impact (positively or negatively) on the pace of disarmament.

The linkage between politics and disarmament in UN-brokered peace processes is both useful and controversial. It is useful to understand this linkage because it allows for proper planning of disarmament during the earliest possible stages of the peace process. It also results in an understanding that the political process and disarmament should run parallel to each other and that political actors should be made aware of the impact of their political actions on the pace of the disarmament process.

The other side of the above point is that some actors deliberately act in a manner that derails the peace process and consequently the disarmament programme. The linkages between the two variables were more apparent during the disarmament process in Sierra Leone. After renewed violence resulting from the activities of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the ensuing involvement of the British forces to restore calm and the recommitment of the RUF to its obligations under the peace agreement, disarmament resumed in earnest.<sup>16</sup>

## **National disarmament in peace and war**

The second type of disarmament (and demobilization) involves those programmes driven by either a victorious government (or a party to the conflict) or a government during peacetime. Cases in point include Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is important to note that these types of disarmament programmes are undertaken or determined by the unique conditions in each. For the purposes of this chapter, UN disarmament (or similar processes overseen by regional or subregional organizations with an appropriate mandate) is viewed as the most legitimate form for disarmament to take in societies moving from war to peace.

In UN disarmament programmes there is always a need to ensure that the government concerned takes the lead in the process. Although the international community, especially UN agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) play a supportive role, ownership for the process must belong to national players. In Africa this has been done through the establishment of national DDR commissions (NCDDR). One was established in Sierra Leone (the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) and currently in one is in place in the ongoing DDR process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The important point to note with regard to NCDDRs is that they should be developed to be as inclusive as possible, ideally including the UN mission and representatives of the parties to the conflict. The establishment of periodic contact between these parties ensures not only open channels of communication but also provides a platform to deal with any problems that may emerge. These forums also serve as a confidence-building mechanism which is essential in situations of peacekeeping and peacemaking due to the high level of mistrust between parties who until recently were on opposing ends of the conflict.

## **Coercive disarmament**

The third type disarmament mostly involves the generally rare scenario where third parties assume a responsibility to disarm coercively warring parties. Examples include the failed attempt by the UN in Somalia in 1993 where coercive disarmament was seen as the only available solution to restore peace. Unfortunately this exercise brought neither disarmament nor peace to Somalia.

## **Planning**

The other important lesson learned from African experiences in disarmament relates to planning. Planning is a multifaceted and complex process. It is the most important phase of any disarmament exercise and should be done as early as possible (where possible before formal peace is declared) but parallel to the peace process and its political dynamics. The planning process should involve:

- Timing of the stages of the disarmament programme;
- Identification of lead agencies and soliciting financial resources from possible donors;
- Identification of categories of people to be disarmed;
- Identification of types of weapons to be collected;
- Identification of actors and methods of weapons destruction;
- Identification and establishment of cantonment areas;
- Provision of accommodation and support for special groups such as, female combatants, child soldiers and dependents of ex-combatants;
- Strategies for disarmament, i.e. simultaneous disarmament.

Each of these is elaborated upon in the following section.

### ***Timing***

It has been suggested that it is possible and indeed desirable that planning for DDR should start well in advance of the peace process itself. This is because disarmament should be part of the overall strategy of national recovery for a society moving from war to peace. It has been suggested that a 'pre-peace' planning unit be set up in preparation for DDR, where possible. For example, Switzerland supported a planning unit for DDR in Mozambique prior to that country's formal conclusion of the peace process.

The advantage of the above approach is that crucial aspects of disarmament (which evolve as parties to the conflict negotiate the settlement) can be factored into the peace process as early as possible. This can also facilitate speedy and smooth implementation of the DDR programme.

However, there are limitations to this approach. Since DDR forms part of the overall dynamics of peace negotiations and is influenced by the political environment, there are always limitations on the possibility of implementing the process prior to the cessation of hostilities.

In some cases peace has proven to be the necessary condition for disarmament. Angola and Sierra Leone are cases where disarmament was not possible without peace. However, these cases should also be put in context. In the case of Angola, the problem was that the UNAVEM mission failed to ensure that DDR was a component of the peace dividend and insisted on premature elections, which backfired when UNITA disputed the election results, and resorted to war, since they still possessed their weapons.

In the case of Sierra Leone, the problem was not necessarily linked to the poor planning of the DDR programme. The periodic derailment of the disarmament process was related to the entire political dynamic between the government and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) on outstanding issues related to the peace process.

The sequence of DDR has been a subject of contestation. Some argue that it should move sequentially through disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and finally reintegration. However, the experience of UN missions in Africa has taught that due to complex political conditions this is not often an easy continuum to implement.

Currently the MONUC mission in the DRC is faced with challenges that clearly refute the evolutionist thesis of a DDR process. At the time of writing the DRC had just inaugurated the Government of National Unity (GNU) and is still trying to put in place the necessary infrastructure. The process of identifying a national DDR committee is still underway. However, there are parallel disarmament efforts under MONUC, operating with a renewed mandate that includes a focus on DDR for Congolese nationals.

The MONUC DDR office has been involved in voluntary disarmament in some parts of the DRC and is engaging with other non-governmental organization (NGO) partners in ensuring some short-term 'quick impact' programmes for

those disarmed and demobilized.<sup>17</sup> This approach forms part of MONUC's new strategy of 'spontaneous DDR'.<sup>18</sup> This strategy illustrates the multifaceted and complex nature of disarmament exercises and how it defies any assumptions of a clear continuum. This is crucial and needs to be acknowledged in disarmament planning and execution, where the situation calls for it.

### ***Identification of lead agencies***

As with conflict prevention and conflict resolution, disarmament has been caught up in the politics of the global international system. For timing, planning and operational purposes, any UN disarmament programme needs to be carried out by an identified lead agency.

The issue of timing is closely linked with the identification of lead agencies in the disarmament process under a UN peace mission. Societies undergoing transition from war to peace face enormous resource constraints due to the destruction of economic, political, social and institutional infrastructure as a result of war.

The UN has always been concerned about ensuring that ownership of activities undertaken during a peacekeeping mission are reflected in the country but this is especially true in relation to the DDR component. Ideally the body or group charged with the task of negotiating and planning the process of disarmament should include representatives of the parties, the UN, and other relevant stakeholders.<sup>19</sup> However, lessons learned from previous peacekeeping operations reflect a doctrine that is in flux and practice that is incomplete.

In some UN missions the planning of disarmament does not take place without specialized agencies such as UNDP. Since disarmament is essentially a political matter for parties negotiating the peace, there is sometimes a need for calculated outside pressure to move the process forward. Also, the national capacity to plan and implement disarmament programmes for the country may often be limited. However, there is a need to strike a balance between giving direction and impetus to the process and avoiding the paternalism that can characterize the relationship between international institutions and the less rich countries (who unfortunately constitute a disproportionate number of societies experiencing conflict).

Joint planning should also include members of civil society who are a crucial link between the UN mission and various actors involved in the disarmament exercise. Care should be taken to include such representatives as early as

possible in the planning process. This should be part of a broader ongoing strategy to involve local communities in sensitization and information sessions about the DDR process itself.

### ***Donor funding***

There is no peace without a price. Clearly one of the major problems that have been faced by many UN peace operations relates to the time lag between the moment pledges of contributions (i.e. troop deployment) are made to a UN mission and the time they are disbursed. Thus there is a need to ensure that adequate funds are channelled to the mission timeously and that the contributing actors are held to their commitments to the mission.

### ***Categories of people to be disarmed***

There is a need to carefully consider the categories of people to be disarmed. Ideally the main groups include government forces, opposition forces, civil defence forces, irregular armed groups and armed individuals. It should be borne in mind that these different groups have different needs and pose different levels of threat to the security of the peace.

It may be that the entry into the DDR process of some groups may pose a more imminent threat to stability. For example, arms in the hands of private individuals can be included in a follow-up national community arms collection programme (as done in Sierra Leone), while those possessed by militias may be judged to be of a more of an immediate threat.

### ***Types of weapons to be collected***

Decisions about the types of weapons to be collected are also linked to the nature of the conflict itself and who was involved in the fighting. Experience from UN missions has shown that weapons that are usually handed in during the first stage of the disarmament process are of poor quality and that the best weapons are held back as surety in case something is perceived to go wrong with the peace process.

This means that there should be clear, strict guidelines as to what types of weapons qualify under the programme. This is, however, not easy to

implement for a variety of reasons. The 'one weapon one person' approach commonly adopted by UN disarmament programmes seems inadequate given the fact that most conflicts in Africa are marked by the use of light weapons.

In the case of Sierra Leone, there were problems about whether hand grenades, rocket propelled grenades and mines should be classified as ammunition or weapons. At Gandorhun, the Civil Defence Force (CDF) instigated protests because these were classified as ammunition and as such did not qualify as a weapon for the purpose of entering the DDR programme.<sup>20</sup> There must be a clear and understandable definitional standard used to classify weapons and ammunition.

### ***Actors and methods of weapons destruction***

Disarmament is not complete without the destruction of the tools of war. Temporary secure storage facilities for weapons surrendered should be set up and transportation provided to move weapons from campsites to the facility. Adequate measures should be put in place to ensure proper storage and handling of arms, ammunition and explosives. The latter can endanger the lives of those handling them; they are often in bad condition and may have been tampered with.

Another, arguably more viable option, which serves as part confidence building in the peace process is immediate destruction of collected weapons. This can be done on site by a specialist explosives ordinance unit. Where possible, destruction should be done in the assembly areas where former combatants have handed in their weapons and are awaiting demobilization (but recognizing the need for adequate safety precautions).

The selection of any method of destruction should also take into account environmental impact, reliability of the technique to use, numbers and types of weapons involved, and cost of the exercise. It is important that the selection of the method of destruction take into account the fact that this exercise can be a publicity exercise with a very important psychological role to play in sending the message that the war is over.<sup>21</sup>

## ***Cantonment areas***

The selection of cantonment areas needs to be carefully done in order to reflect the local political dynamics that might impact upon the sequence and pace of disarmament. Areas that were more affected by the conflict than others may need first priority. Cantonment areas need to be both accessible (in terms of distance) and secure for the ex-combatants.

Ex-combatants should be regrouped and conveyed to cantonment sites with their weaponry. Cantonment areas should be equipped with basic amenities that include:

- Adequate potable water;
- Washing and toilet facilities;
- Cooking and feeding facilities;
- Light;
- Health and medical facilities;
- Transportation of ex-combatants to communities of choice;
- Recreation and training facilities; and
- Specific facilities to meet needs of child soldiers and address gender-specific needs.<sup>22</sup>

## ***'Special groups'***

Members of a society in conflict experience war and its effects differently. Thus, the other important issue is the manner in which 'special groups' such as child soldiers and dependents of combatants are dealt with. Experience in Africa is not convincing. There has been a failure in most UN disarmament initiatives in Africa to adequately provide assistance and care to child soldiers and dependents of ex-combatants in cantonment areas.

There has been lack of appreciation of the fact that during most conflicts belligerents use unconventional methods of warfare and violate international humanitarian law through the recruitment of child soldiers and abduction of girls to serve as sexual slaves and combatants.

The result is that after the conflict young girls find themselves bearing unwanted children for rebels with whom they have stayed for years (and thus a relationship of dependency ensues) and after the war less priority is given to them while more resources are directed towards the ex-combatants.

Since most UN disarmament exercises work on a 'one man, one gun' basis as a criteria for eligibility to the DDR process, this can exclude child soldiers. Child soldiers should be able to enter the process with or without weapons at assembly points.

### ***Simultaneous disarmament***

A disarmament programme that is most likely to succeed is one that has been carefully planned to take into account the above factors. For example, in Sierra Leone the NCDDR ensured that disarmament took place simultaneously and paired districts accordingly. This served as a confidence-building measure as the RUF and CDF realized that they would not be under threat from the other, as they were both disarming at the same time.

In Sierra Leone simultaneous disarmament was used because some districts had a higher concentration of combatants than others. This disproportionate concentration resulted in high distrust and tension between the RUF and government-aligned groups, such as the CDF. Thus these areas were disarmed simultaneously within a one-month period in order to avoid further mistrust between the two groups and to keep the disarmament process on track.

### **Community weapons collection programmes**

In Africa, as elsewhere, weapons have an economic and security value attached to them. This is more so in societies emerging from conflict where people (though war weary) still distrust the state as a provider of security. Adding to this is the fact that in most African conflicts belligerents from both sides (government and 'rebel') engage in indiscriminate arming of civilians resulting in vast amounts of weapons ending in the hands of the general population.

Disarmament programmes as part of DDR and run by the UN are not adequate to deal with the threat posed by civilian possession of weapons (nor does the UN mandate generally encompass civilian disarmament). Initiatives that go beyond formal cantonment and weapons destruction by the UN mission (and

partners such as NGOs) become necessary. Such activities can take the form of community weapons collection programmes.

These activities can be undertaken in two stages. In most cases, governments encourage communities to voluntarily hand in weapons within a specified period in return for amnesty from prosecution for the illegal possession of firearms. This is usually followed by coercive disarmament. Sometimes this requires new legislation to give the security and law enforcement agencies the authority to search for and seize illegally possessed weapons.

These types of follow up disarmament exercises are important to sustain peace, especially in cases where civilians have been heavily armed by the warring parties. However in Africa there is a legacy of mixed results. Coercive disarmament, if not carefully done, can have negative consequences and may result in the opposite of what was set out to be achieved. This has been the case in Uganda where the government has attempted to disarm the Karamajong pastoralists.<sup>23</sup>

## **Challenges for disarmament programmes in Africa**

There are many challenges to disarmament efforts in Africa. Firstly, in most regions of the continent, violence has become an intrinsic part of political life. In Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Liberia war and violence have become characterized by unprecedented proliferation of SALW. These weapons are posing new challenges for disarmament both during war and in its aftermath.

Similar to the decommissioning of IRA weapons in the Northern Ireland conflict, weapons are used by belligerents in conflicts as a bargaining tool in order to receive concessions from the political peacemaking process.

Perhaps the realization of the political value of weapons in African conflicts means that disarmament programmes need to apply new ways of removing weapons. For example, the issue of decommissioning weapons where conflicts are ongoing and there is still a political vacuum (which inevitably impacts upon disarmament programmes and processes) needs to be considered, perhaps as part of building confidence between opposing sides.

It should also be noted that ensuring the disarmament of combatants from all sides of the conflict during UN peacekeeping operations is not an end in itself. As discussed above, the shifts from traditional forms of peacekeeping to peace build-

ing have given the UN more roles to play in ensuring that peace is sustainable. This means that activities such as complementary programmes of disarmament may need to be developed.

Beyond pure security issues and disarmament of ex-combatants there is a need to ensure that demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration are done in a sustainable manner.

## Conclusion

Recent cases of disarmament in Africa provide both good lessons and challenges for future programmes. The example of the UNAMSIL disarmament programme in Sierra Leone has left a legacy of optimism.

The first lesson is that disarmament is integral to a successful peace process. This means the issue of the disarmament of parties to the conflict should form a specific component of the peace settlement. There should be clear guidelines as to the timeframe, categories of combatants to be disarmed, types of weapons qualifying for collection, incentives available for those joining the process, incorporation of the needs of 'special groups' in the process, and the links between disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration.

The second lesson is that there is no substitute for comprehensive planning. Planning should involve setting out clear guidelines and delegation of responsibility between various actors. There needs to be a lead agency to the process. This should preferably be the national disarmament commission, which needs to set out the programme as well as specify its relationship with other UN agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, the UN mission and NGOs. Such planning should also ensure sustainability of the process through the mobilisation of resources and keeping the momentum and commitment of international partners on course.

Thirdly, it is important to be aware that disarmament does not occur in a vacuum but is an integral part of the politics of peacemaking. This means that all stakeholders should take this into consideration when they devise strategies for disarmament. Issues such as simultaneous disarmament have political connotations in the sense that they form part of confidence-building measures and can either derail the peace process or accelerate it.

Furthermore, the broader political context within which disarmament takes place should be clearly understood and factored accordingly. Negotiations on unresolved or contentious issues such as dates for elections, composition of the new army or lack of detail on composition of a transitional government can compel the parties to hold on to their weapons as bargaining tools. Therefore, those involved with the disarmament process at national level, such as the disarmament commission, should also liaise with the UN mission (who should ideally serve as the appropriate channel of communication) to emphasize the need for the political players to resolve these issues, with a view to their influence on the pace of disarmament.

The issue of weapons collection during disarmament also implies that weapons need to be stored properly and subsequently destroyed. Care should be taken to ensure that those with the expertise and capacity to store and destroy arms are identified as soon as possible. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, as weapons are also political tools they are a temptation and the possibility of rearmament if weapons fall in the wrong hands cannot be dismissed. At times the condition of some weapons that are handed in during disarmament are of very poor quality and can endanger those handling them. Thus there is a need to ensure that competent people are tasked with the task of handling weapons.

Secondly, there is a need for the destruction of weapons handed in during the process of disarmament. Appropriate role players should be tasked with the task of weapons destruction. These can include both UN peacekeepers as well as NGOs with expertise in this field. Symbolic destruction such as the public burning of handed in weapons can serve a very important sensitisation role by demonstrating to the public that the illegal possession and proliferation of weapons has a negative impact on society and that the new political order will not tolerate them.

For example, in Sierra Leone, on 18 January 2002, President Kabbah, together with the leader of the opposition RUF, publicly declared the war over during the public burning of nearly 3,000 weapons, which formed part of those handed over during the disarmament process. This event was aimed at linking the end of war with a weapons-free society.

In conclusion, it is clear that the continuation of war in Africa means that the issue of disarmament will remain important. Ongoing efforts to resolve the conflicts in Sudan, Somalia and Burundi mean that all these countries will need to address the issue of DDR in the coming months and years.

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## CHAPTER 2

# THE DYNAMICS OF PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Nelson Alusala

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This chapter looks at the emerging trends in the field of peace support operations (PSOs) particularly in Africa, while highlighting some of the challenges that actors in PSO missions face when implementing disarmament programmes in post-conflict situations. With globalization and increasing diversity of threats to security, how will the role of the military evolve to respond to these challenges?

In a world being defined by increasing wars, collapsing states, degenerating human rights and declining respect for humanitarian and international law, one cannot avoid turning to a promise of hope and solace. Such is the idea behind peacekeeping missions.

### **The evolution of PSOs**

Today peacekeeping goes beyond the confines of just monitoring demilitarized zones, to include strengthening the rule of law, monitoring human rights violations, tackling issues related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); and repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons. Peacekeepers and United Nations agencies are increasingly working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in peace building processes.

The expansion in the role of peacekeepers was first underscored by the then United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros-Ghali and reflected in the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* in 1995.<sup>1</sup> In what he called second generation operations, Boutros-Ghali outlined the expanded role of peacekeepers as being: i) supervising ceasefires, demobilizing forces and reintegrating them into civilian life; ii) designing and implementing demining programmes; iii) returning refugees and internally displaced persons; iv) providing humanitarian assistance; v) supervising existing administrative structures; vi) establishing new police forces; vii) verifying the respect for human rights; viii) designing and supervising constitutional, electoral and judicial reforms; ix) conducting, observing, organizing and supervising elections; and x) coordinating support for economic rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Brahimi report of August 2000,<sup>2</sup> whose mandate was to undertake a thorough review of the UN peace and security activities since the end of the Cold War, had as its major argument whether traditional peacekeeping had a future. The report contained innovative elements, though some were hotly contested, such as a call for the creation of Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTF), which would draw on personnel from throughout the UN system, as the standard vehicle for mission specific planning and support.<sup>3</sup> A more popular recommendation of the report was the suggestion that UN field activities, notably civilian policing, be more effectively supported from headquarters and in the field.<sup>4</sup>

Peace support operations are multifunctional operations in which impartial military activities are designed to create a secure environment and facilitate the efforts of the civilian elements of the mission to create or restore self-sustaining peace. The UN describes peace operations as encompassing preventive deployment, peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, diplomatic activities such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace building as well as humanitarian assistance, good offices, fact-finding and electoral assistance.<sup>5</sup> This is an evolution of classical peacekeeping.

## **Why intervention?**

For peacekeepers inserted into the anarchic conditions prevalent in contemporary armed conflict situations, the primary objective is restoration of public order, by prohibiting the conflicting parties from escalating the conflict. Conflict, anywhere in the world, has devastating implications for the safety and security of ordinary people. Civilians, who in situations of war constitute a majority of casualties, bear the brunt of death, injury and displacement.

In an age of instant communication and growing inter-connectedness, the knowledge of human suffering, no matter how distant, increases our need to act. Public opinion, generated by the media as happened in 1991 and 1993/94 when the media around the world carried stories and broadcast images of the Kurdish and Rwandese mass exodus in Iraq and Rwanda respectively attracted public opinion about the demand for action to alleviate the plight of the victims.

Strengthening protection for people in the global community is a clear and pressing priority. Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring state and non-state actors fulfil their responsibilities toward affected populations, and developing the tools and strategies as well as principles needed to help

guide international responses stand out as critical challenges. The level of coercion necessary to achieve this goal will largely depend on the extent of peace enforcement mandated by the UN Security Council, or by regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC) or any other recognized mandating bodies.

One of the UN founding principles, defined in Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter is that of collective responsibility. This entails the responsibility to assist others, especially civilians (non combatants) in times of crisis. Dag Hammarskjold underscored this when he said: “the prohibition against intervention in internal conflicts cannot be considered to apply to senseless slaughter of civilians or fighting arising from tribal hostilities.”<sup>6</sup> However, a PSO is normally initiated only if a group of states with a particular common interest in the conflict deems it fit to intervene. Of importance here is the issue of international or regional legitimacy of an operation. This refers to the acceptance of the peace force by the international community and by (most of) the parties to the conflict.

Most post-Cold War UN interventions have been in response to requests to verify and monitor the political vision of previously belligerent parties as contained in a mutual ceasefire or comprehensive peace agreement.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are a continuum in the process of conflict management, and can only thrive in a conducive and assuring atmosphere following peace processes and sustained PSOs. The UN defines disarmament as the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population, while demobilization refers to the process by which armed forces—government or factional forces—either downsize or completely disband, as part of a broader transformation from war to peace.<sup>7</sup> Demobilization involves the assembly, quartering, disarmament, administration and discharge of former combatants, who may receive some form of compensation or assistance to enable them transform into civilian life. Reintegration is an assistance programme provided to former combatants with the aim of increasing their economic and social potential for reintegration into the civil society. It is a crucial step in the consolidation of a peace process and in the establishment of the main framework for sustainable development.

For instance, during the DDR process in Sierra Leone the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) with the overall support of the Government of Sierra Leone, envisaged the objectives of

reintegration as being: i) to facilitate and support the return of ex-combatants to their home communities or preferred communities of return; ii) to assist the ex-combatants become productive members of their communities; iii) to utilize the potentials of ex-combatants for social and economic reconstruction; iv) to promote social acceptance and reconciliation; and v) to reduce the fiscal impact of large defence budgets by providing alternative employment support options for demobilized ex-combatants.<sup>8</sup> Basic reintegration package for the ex-combatants included money, food, seeds, cultivating tools, blankets, vocational training and income generating activities.

In order to deal successfully with combatants in a post conflict situation, whether they were organized in formal countrywide security forces, paramilitary units or private militias, the mediators and interventionists need to promote a strategy that will entail incorporation into legitimate security organizations or a return to civilian life. A proper and successful DDR programme should ensure this, taking into consideration the fact that to an ex-combatant it may mean the “loss” of a livelihood. In the case where not all ex-combatants are assisted or where there are delays in processing and disbursing assistance, serious tensions, and possible relapses into violence may occur. Structurally, the long-term effect of incomplete or ineffective reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society may lead to armed criminality by former soldiers who believe they have no other means of earning a living.

## **The dynamics of peace operations in Africa**

The new trends marking PSOs in Africa seems to be the ‘Africanization’ of these operations on the continent. This underscores the logic that underpinned the Organization of African Unity (OAU) principle of “African solutions to African Problems,” or “Try the OAU First;” a principle that originated from practice and was first spelt out in a resolution on “Border Disputes Among African States” during the First Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Cairo, in 1964.<sup>9</sup>

Mays posits that at least three factors have guided the transition to “African solutions to African problems.”<sup>10</sup> The first is the preference by African states (through their elder statesmen) to solve their own problems and reduce the influence of external actors in continental affairs.

Second is the degeneration of Western political will to intervene in African conflicts. Withdrawal of Western states from African conflict management after the

disasters in Somalia and Rwanda left a vacuum to fill. The Rwandan crisis of 1994/95 was viewed by some contingent-providing states as being too costly for the political will necessary to sustain a presence in Rwanda. Belgium, citing the generally perceived lack of mandate to use force, withdrew its contingent following the murder of Belgian soldiers assigned to protect a Rwandan leader. Other United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) peacekeepers caught in the middle of the crisis also lost their lives, leading to the further withdrawal of contingents by other countries.

Put simply, the least the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council have done has been to pass resolutions and issue mandates on peacekeeping. The countries that have contributed troops for peacekeeping missions in many African conflicts have been non-Western countries. Berman states that the approach of the UN member states; particularly the five permanent members of the Council, to the crisis in the Great Lakes has been shameful. He observes that the Council's go-slow approach to the conflict in the DRC and its proclivity toward burden-sharing have not worked, while resources appear limitless when the Council addresses conflicts of similar complexity in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo.<sup>11</sup>

Thirdly, according to Mays, the rise of African sub-regional hegemonies such as Nigeria and South Africa have provided a springboard for jumpstarting sub-regional governmental organizations required to mandate and field peace operation forces. Nigeria in 1997 led the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) mission in restoring normalcy in Sierra Leone, and the on-going multilateral PSO in Liberia, (now under a UN mandate) which has led to the indictment of Charles Taylor, and his subsequent exile in Nigeria, while in 1998 South Africa and Botswana soldiers, under a SADC mandate, deployed into Lesotho to restore order following an uprising of junior military officers in the kingdom.

In assessing the current global trends, it is right to state that Western states and coalitions have avoided direct intervention in Africa, except when their interests were at stake. The support is now increasingly being based on peace operation training and funding. An example is the on-going European Union funding of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security in West Africa.<sup>12</sup> The US on its part has developed the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), with the aim of training battalion units from different African countries for PSO deployment within the continent.

## Emerging challenges

The current debate is that Africa should manage its own conflicts despite the numerous challenges facing the continent. Cilliers and Mills concede that Africa's current peripheral status of global financial instability, coupled with Western peacekeeping failures in Somalia, Rwanda and Angola; and the enthusiasm for sub-regional initiatives under the auspices of sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS and SADC have led to successive French, British, American and other initiatives to create African peacekeeping capabilities to deal with African emergencies.<sup>13</sup>

Besides the many challenges, basic benefits accrue from enhancing regional security arrangements. This has a positive impact to preventing regional conflicts. First is that the countries within the same region will have the ability to intervene and stop or alleviate the conflict at an early stage, hence saving lives and excessive destruction of property, rather than wait for international intervention, which often takes time to mobilize. Regional security arrangements also enhance the sharing of skills and help in building cross-national confidence in tense regions. All PSOs face certain challenges. While some of these challenges are unique to missions with specific DDR mandates some are common to all missions. These challenges are summarized below.

**Interest of actors in conflict:** In every conflict, despite agreements, there are always actors who profit economically or by gaining power, from a sustained level of tension, and who are bent on disrupting the peace processes. However, a clear focus on the mandate of the PSO and on the safeguarding of impartiality should help to check such occurrences.

**Shift in mandate:** PSOs initiated under coalitions will usually face gradual challenges due to shifting conditions in their environment. This is due, as Malan outlines,<sup>14</sup> to the dynamic situation on the ground, varying all the time, with different mission tasks in different areas of the country. For instance, of the 6,000 MONUC peacekeepers deployed in the DRC, 740 were deployed in Kinshasa and 800 in Ituri as neutral forces, deployments that had not been envisaged earlier.

**Economic constraints:** The success of PSOs depends largely on funding. Financial limitations can pose a major challenge to the success of any PSO. Unsecured funding can easily cripple the activities of the force, conditioning it to select certain tasks or concentrate on particular regions, rather than

pursue the entire mandate as defined. While UN PSOs have better economic leverage, regional and sub-regional organizations such as the AU and SADC have not been able to venture into full-scale peacekeeping due, in part, to insufficient funds.

**Information and intelligence:** A lack of, or limited information and intelligence can hamper security forces engaged in PSOs. Fragmented information-sharing systems compound the problem. In the case of UN missions, the absence of an information gathering system creates a gap that is filled in certain cases by unreliable and uncoordinated news from the media and other sources. In certain instances, poor coordination and occasional suspicion between the peacekeepers and civil society may hinder information sharing. For instance, a civil society organization working on the ground may possess valuable information on rebel grouping or arms smuggling, but will be reluctant to share it with a peacekeeping force or the security forces for fear of jeopardizing their rapport with the population they support, and increasing their own risk by appearing partial. On the other hand a peacekeeping force may be reluctant to share information with other actors in the country, for fear that doing so would risk compromising operational sources.

**Political will:** Countries within a conflict zone may sometimes show less commitment in peace support operations after they have been launched, depending on the interests they may have in the conflict. For example when an embargo is placed on the supply of arms to a conflict-torn country, the neighbouring states may simply not feel obliged to enforce such an instrument, as weapons smuggling becomes a flourishing venture. Similarly, a regional organization such as the AU, due to a lack of enforcement apparatus, cannot bring the requisite pressure to bear on member states to support the peace process.

**Issues of legitimacy:**<sup>15</sup> Usually, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) is the Secretary-General's designated agent, and the head of the mission. A force commander who works in close cooperation with the SRSG is also appointed. For a successful mission, the two must work in harmony with each other. Both officials should also avoid any act that can be misinterpreted to show favouritism towards one faction or the other. A neutral stance is necessary for the SRSG and the force commander to exercise effective control.

**Impact on local communities:** A large number of international troops arriving with a lot of cash in an environment of scarcity and desperation can easily destabilize the social status quo.<sup>16</sup> In such a situation wage distortion becomes

common, while prostitution, corruption, drug abuse, AIDS and other problems may thrive. Belligerents may also easily exaggerate these problems for political reasons.

**Ad hoc versus comprehensive DDR:** The multiplicity of actors and the nature of conflicts illustrate the need for a comprehensive DDR operation that includes all actors and covers an entire region designated for the DDR operation. For the Lusaka Peace Agreement<sup>17</sup> to succeed in the DRC (and by extension the DDR operation) MONUC operations must try to cover the entire country and implement its mandate as quickly as possible. The other Great Lakes countries captured in the same conflict system should simultaneously engage in DDR programmes. The need for this challenging approach was emphasized in an interview with the outgoing MONUC head, Ambassador Amos Namanga Ngongi in the extract below:

**Q:** Some time ago, MONUC declared that it had brought together groups of Rwandan Interahamwe combatants who had been living in the forests of Kivu provinces and were awaiting MONUC's intervention in assisting their repatriation. However, every time this repatriation was due to take place, something happened and complicated matters. Can you tell us what was going on?

**A:** (Namanga): Each time MONUC made contact with armed groups in order to disarm them, there would be operations launched by rebel movements in the east, by Rassemblement Congolais de la Democratie-Goma (RCD-Goma) or Rassemblement Congolais de la Democratie-Kivu- Mouvement de la Liberation (RCD-K-ML). It is they who are in this zone, along with the Mayi-Mayi (traditional Congolese militias). But MONUC was always blamed for these failures when it was other groups who were launching operations aimed at destabilizing the DDRRR programme. In all instances we kept the administrators of the various zones fully informed. They were very well informed that MONUC was going to begin activities within several days, but two or three days before our activities were due to begin, fighting would erupt in the region and the armed groups (awaiting demobilization) would be dispersed. You can see what is happening right now in North Kivu where MONUC has made contacts with hundreds and hundreds of Interahamwe around the town of Lubero. And what happens? Fighting breaks out around Lubero. And MONUC is supposed to walk into the middle of all this fighting to seek out people in the forest, demobilize and repatriate them?<sup>18</sup>

Such an extensive DDR approach would require heavy funding, a budget which no international donor currently seems ready to meet and recalls the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960, which proved to be a costly attempt in solving the myriad ethnic differences in the Congo. Mays<sup>19</sup> points out that more peacekeepers died in ONUC than in any other UN peace operation before or after. He concludes that it is that experience that resulted in reluctance for UN peacekeeping on the continent for twenty-five years.

## Conclusion

Today the majority of wars are no longer fought between states, but within their borders. These intra-state wars are not being fuelled by ideological motives of former Cold War confrontation. The predominant factors today are political, economic and identity related, particularly in Africa.

The rise of ethnic conflicts in regions and countries where different national/ethnic or religious groups once lived together peacefully is a matter of great concern. Hobsbawm, in his book *The New Century*, urges us to distinguish between what comes from below and what is imposed from above, while Thual on the same basis, in his article, *Les Conflits Identitaires*, enquires about who ignites and fuels the fire of *identité*, and for what reasons?<sup>20</sup> Both writers concur that the ease of acquiring weapons and modern communications are among the factors propagating small (armed) groups to operate independently, sometimes even without external support. The situation is further exacerbated by weakened state structures, economic and social instability. The end result is massive losses of life, damage to property and displacements. Therefore learning from the past and constantly improving PSOs and DDR programmes become matters of urgency.

## Notes

1. Document A/50/60 – S/1995/1, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations*, 3 January 1995, paragraph 21.
2. UN General Assembly, Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. A/55/305-S/2000/809*, New York: United Nations, 21 August 2000, (subsequently referred to as the Brahimi Report).
3. Brahimi report, paras. 198-217.

4. For a comprehensive debate on the *Brahimi Report*, see Brahimi Lakhdar, "The Debate on the Report on UN Peace Operations: Fighting Battles on the Wrong Grounds?" *Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture* London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 22 March, 2001, p.3.
5. Ibid, p. 3
6. D Hammarskjold, quoted in M Malan, *Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension*, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, Monograph No. 44, February 2000, p. 20.
7. United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines*, December 1999, p.15.
8. See Kai-Kai (Dr), "Reintegration of Ex-combatants", in *Transition From War to Peace-Management of a Complex DDR Process*, Vol.01 May 2002, p. 2.
9. See N Alusala, *The Role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Conflict Management: A Case Study of the Comoros, 1996-1999*, a thesis presented to the University of Nairobi for the degree of Master of Diplomacy and International Studies, 2000, Ch.2, for a comprehensive discussion on the origin and challenges of the OAU principles of conflict management.
10. T M Mays, "African Solutions for African Problems: The Changing Face of African-Mandated Peace Operations," *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, New Brunswick, Centre for Conflict Studies, Spring 2003, pp. 106-125:107.
11. E Berman, "The Multinational force for the Congo," in *African Security Review*, Volume 12 Number 3, 2003, p. 97.
12. Besides ECOWAS and SADC, there have been also several other sub-regional peace operation initiatives in Africa, such as *Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)*, which in October 2002 mandated a peace-keeping operation deployment to the Central Africa Republic (CAR), following a coup attempt. Libya and Sudan had also deployed their soldiers under another sub-regional body; the *Community of Sahel-Sahara States (COMESSA)*. On the same basis, in 1997, the francophone members of ECOWAS (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Burkina Faso) under *Non-Aggression and Assistance Accord (ANAD)* signed a report detailing future joint peacekeeping arrangements, while lusophone countries (Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe and Cape Verde, under the *Community of Lusophone Countries (CPLP)* have agreed on a single peace force capable of conducting humanitarian operations.
13. See J Cilliers and G Mills, *From Peacekeeping to Complex Emergencies: Peace Support Missions in Africa*, The South African Institute of International Affairs and the Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 1999, pp. 1-8: 4.

14. M Malan, *Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension*, op. cit, p. 16.
15. Legitimacy refers to the acceptance of the PSO force by the international community and more importantly by the parties to the conflict, its mandate and the way it relates to the conflict. The degree of legitimacy also affects security and stability in the conflict area.
16. See D Last (Major), "From Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding," in *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution (OJPCR)*, 5.1 Summer: 1-8 (2003), p.7.
17. The Lusaka Peace Agreement has provision for the normalization of the situation along the DRC border; the control of illicit trafficking of arms and the infiltration of armed groups; the holding of a national dialogue on the future government of the DRC; the need to address security concerns and the establishment of a mechanism for disarming militias and armed groups.
18. See <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=35159>, "DRC: Interview with outgoing MONUC head, Amos Namanga Ngongi.."
19. T M Mays, "African Solutions for African Problems: The Changing Face of African-Mandated Peace Operations" op.cit; p. 107.
20. See E Hobsbawn, *The New Century*, London, Abacus Publishers, 2000 and Thual, François, *Les Conflits Identitaires*, Paris, Ellipses, 1995.

## CHAPTER 3

# LEARNING FROM SIERRA LEONE

Thokozani Thusi

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The war that lasted almost eleven years began when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked Sierra Leone from neighbouring Liberia in 1991. What followed was more than a decade of bloodshed, realignment of political forces, brutalization of civilians and gross violations of human rights. In 1997 a military coup led by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrew President Tejan Kabbah, suspended the constitution and joined ranks with the RUF.<sup>1</sup> In 1998 the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, forced the military junta to flee the capital, Freetown, and returned President Kabbah to office.

The war between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF was to last another four years. The RUF still had territorial control over the north and east of the country. The RUF attacked and briefly took control of Freetown in 1999 and later took United Nations (UN) peacekeepers hostage. These actions prompted swift action from the international community, especially Britain, which sent troops that forced the RUF to abandon Freetown. The rebels and the government finally signed a third peace agreement in 2001, which, among other provisions, facilitated the disarmament and demobilization of rebel and government militia forces.

The war in Sierra Leone was declared over in January 2002 and the country was also declared disarmed during the same period. Subsequently Sierra Leone held elections that saw President Tejan Kabbah returned into office through a democratic process.

Much has been written about the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Critics have viewed the mission as a success and a model for robust and successful mandate that moved from peacekeeping to sustainable peace building. The UNAMSIL mission has been credited with a successful disarmament and demobilization programme, with the reintegration process ongoing. Although there are many challenges facing Sierra Leone in terms of long-term stability and recovery there are important lessons to be learned regarding the role of UN peace operations in a transition from war to peace.

For all the focus on the process of disarmament and demobilization and the links between these and the political dynamics of negotiating peace, there been little attention paid to the technical aspects of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone. This chapter aims to focus on these aspects of disarmament. This technical side includes planning, timing, identification of lead agencies, donor funding, categories of people to be disarmed, types of weapons to be collected, actors and methods of destruction, and decisions on cantonment areas, as well as community weapons collection programmes.

This chapter submits that there has been little attention paid to the entire planning process involved in the design of UN disarmament programmes. Most focus has been on the linkages between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the political dynamics of negotiating peace. For example, in the case of Sierra Leone, it was the breakthrough on some aspects of the post-war political dispensation that impacted directly on progress with disarmament. As important as this is there is also a need to focus on the planning side of disarmament in order to propose a possible framework that attempts to lay out some basic issues that need attention and focus during these early stages of the process.

Such planning includes mobilization of funds, deciding on a 'targeted' versus 'enlarged' programme, selection of cantonment sites and provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, collection, storage and disposal of weapons and transport to reintegration centres for those ex-combatants who join the DDR process. These activities involve complex planning processes, bargaining and commitment from all the actors involved.

## **Disarmament in the Sierra Leone peace process**

The February 1996 talks between the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone as well as the more comprehensive subsequent peace agreements, the July 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement, the November 2000 Abuja Ceasefire Agreement, the May 2001 Abuja Ceasefire Review Agreement (Abuja II), all emphasized the crucial need for sustained DDR of ex-combatants from both sides of the conflict. This was seen as a necessary condition for the continuation of peace in the country. The need for DDR formed an integral component of the peace process from the initial stages. More significantly, these agreements made explicit mention of groups such as women and child soldiers. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration also formed a key part of the mandate of UNAMSIL.

## Lomé Peace Agreement

Concluded in July 1999 between the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the RUF the Lomé Peace Agreement made provision for:

- Cessation of hostilities;
- Power sharing between the GoSL and the RUF;
- General amnesty for all war-related atrocities and war crimes;
- Encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- Restructuring of armed forces;
- UNAMSIL monitoring of ceasefire;
- Mechanisms and structures for promotion of human rights, humanitarian relief and post-war reconstruction; and
- Specific guidelines for the DDR of women and children, especially child soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

However, although the Lomé Agreement was in place, resumption of hostilities between the belligerent parties continued until the signing of *The Abuja Ceasefire Agreement* on 10 November 2000. This agreement was aimed at recreating momentum and put in place a renewed legal basis for the application of the Lomé Agreement. Abuja II provided for:

- Declaration of a ceasefire to be supervised by UNAMSIL;
- Deployment of UNAMSIL troops throughout the country;
- Restoring the authority of the GoSL throughout the territory;
- Facilitating the free movement of goods and persons, especially the unhindered movement of humanitarian relief staff, refugees, returnees and IDPs (internally displaced persons); and
- Resumption of the DDR programme.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly it was Abuja II that provided the breakthrough in the peace process by reviewing progress made on implementation and agreeing on mechanisms for moving the entire process forward, including DDR. In addition, UNAMSIL was given an explicit disarmament mandate within the context of the previous peace agreements between the RUF and the GoSL.

## Planning and timing

In 1996 the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) government established the Ministry of Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation. This Ministry was later turned into the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR). Subsequently in 1998 the government of Sierra Leone took the initiative of designing a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme (DDRP). It was during this period that the NCRRR was reconstituted as the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR).<sup>4</sup>

The DDRP programme was originally designed to cater for an estimated 45,000 combatants. These combatants comprised of the members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), former Sierra Leone Army (SLA), and elements of the government militia the Civil Defence Force (CDF). The aim of the DDRP was to ensure the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants and ease their return to productive civilian life through the offering of reinsertion packages and subsequent vocational training programmes to enable speedy and easy reintegration into civilian life.

Many actors, including the World Bank played a crucial role in the design and support of the DDRP process. Other stakeholders included ECOMOG, UNOMSIL (subsequently UNAMSIL), and UN agencies, CDF, the armed forces of Sierra Leone (AFSL), NGOs, community groups and international donors. The International Contact Group on Sierra Leone adopted the DDRP framework after the UN Special Conference on Sierra Leone accepted it. Funds were pooled into the Multi-donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for Sierra Leone.

The realization that sustainable peace could only be achieved through a comprehensive programme of disarmament was not without its own challenges. Although the process had started in earnest the broader political environment at the time affected its implementation. The escalation of fighting between the government and the RUF led to periodic suspension of the DDRP programme. This military confrontation cast doubt over each party's commitment to disarmament.

There were also concerns about prospects for reintegration of former combatants into civilian life once they were disarmed. For many combatants weapons were the only way of ensuring a stake in the countries political and economic processes. The end objective of any DDR programme is to ensure

the reintegration of ex-combatants in order to allow them to conduct a normal civilian life and cease to pose a threat to the wider population.

## Identification of lead agencies

The responsibility for DDR rested with the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). President Kabbah chaired the NCDDR, which operated with an executive secretariat that was comprised of:

- Representatives from the donor community;
- Minister of Information and Broadcasting;
- Minister of Finance; Deputy Minister of Defence (who was the Civil Defence Force coordinator);
- Special Representative of the UN;
- UN Military Force Commander (UNAMSIL); and
- Head of the RUF.<sup>5</sup>

The objectives of DDR in Sierra Leone were to:

- Collect, register, disable and destroy all conventional weapons and munitions retrieved from combatants during the disarmament period (which was estimated at three months in the Lomé Agreement).
- Demobilize approximately 45,000 combatants of which 12 per cent were expected to be women.
- Prepare and support ex-combatants for socio-economic reintegration upon discharge from demobilization centres, for long-term security.<sup>6</sup>

The DDR process was premised on the assumption that UNAMSIL would provide security within the framework of its renewed mandate, the deployment of UN Military Observers (MILOBS), compliance by all parties to the relevant provisions of the Lomé Agreement and later the Abuja Agreement of May 2001, and support from the international community. Although some of

these assumptions were straightforward to implement, others involved skill and continuous diplomacy from all the stakeholders to keep the DDR process afloat.

Over the period September 1998 to January 2002, disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone went through three phases. The process disarmed and demobilized a total of 72,490 combatants and collected a total of 42,300 weapons and 1.2 millions rounds of ammunition. This was a significantly higher number than the estimated 45,000 combatants. The three phases of disarmament can be divided as follows:

- Phase 1: September – December 1998;
- Phase II: October 1999 – April 2000;
- Interim phase: May 2000 – 17 May 2001;
- Phase III: 18 May 2001 – January 2002.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that what determined these phases and the time lapses between them was a series of political events that were related to the negotiation of peace. This illustrates the point that the disarmament process is part of the political process and should be undertaken within the broader framework of conflict resolution and peace building.

## **Donor funding**

The mobilization of funds for the DDR programme was pooled into the MDTF for Sierra Leone. This fund included support from all the major donor countries and organizations. The World Bank played a leading role in mobilizing financial support for the disarmament process in Sierra Leone. It is important to note that local NGOs and other national stakeholders were also represented in the entire process that culminated to the endorsement of the programme by the Bank.

## **Categories of people to be disarmed**

The Lomé Agreement stipulated the categories of people to be disarmed. However, the challenge was to identify the lead agency that would determine the criteria for the types of combatants and what was required to qualify for inclusion in the DDR programme. Qualification criteria also included the types of weapons that were eligible under the process.

Determining who qualifies for a disarmament programme can be a difficult task. It is complex to determine the age of ex-combatants. There is a need for strict criteria in determining who qualifies to join the programme and who does not. UNAMSIL required basic information from prospective entrants, including providing information on the person's commander and asking combatants to dismantle and reassemble a weapon. UNAMSIL guidelines were also strict on what qualified as a weapon and what qualified as ammunition. However, there were instances when the RUF refused to continue with the process because they wanted hand grenades and other types of ammunition to qualify as weapons.

## **Types of weapons, actors and methods of weapons destruction**

The type of weapons handed in included small arms and light weapons. Hunting rifles and shotguns were not included in this process but were dealt with in the subsequent government-led community arms disarmament programme undertaken with assistance from UNAMSIL. UNAMSIL was also specific that hand grenades, rocket propelled grenades and mines were categorized as ammunition and not weapons, as specified in the guidelines for the DDR programme.

The destruction of weapons was undertaken by UNAMSIL as the lead agency. However, expertise was sought from other partners, such as the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ). Destruction involved mainly cutting the weapons into smaller pieces and rendering them difficult to re-assemble in future. The remaining pieces from the destroyed weapons were turned into useful tools for peaceful use. Some 25,089 weapons were destroyed through this process.<sup>8</sup>

## **Identifying cantonment areas**

The disarmament exercise was a complex and dynamic process. The process took place in different reception centres around Sierra Leone. These centres were designed to be temporary, providing shelter for a short period of time during the specific period of disarmament and demobilization, weapons collection and registration. The disarmament exercise was conducted in five stages, which included the following:

- **Assembly:** organizing the arrival of combatants and providing them with orientation about the disarmament process.

- **Interview:** the collection of personal identification, information, registration, and verification of weapons or ordinance delivered by the ex-combatants.
- **Weapons collection:** the tagging of all weapons or ordinance, and temporary disabling and storing of the weapons prior to their transportation to the final storage and disposal centres.
- **Eligibility certification:** verification and authorisation of the ex-combatants by the UN observers for their inclusion as beneficiaries of the DDR programme.
- **Transportation:** the assembly and organization of screened and disarmed combatants and their final transportation to their demobilization centres.

## Special groups

The Lomé Agreement made provision for including issues related to children and youth within the peace process and established the office of children's protector. Children and youth were to be treated differently during and after the DDR process.

Article XXX of the 1999 Lomé Agreement declared that:

The Government shall accord particular attention to the issue of child soldiers. It shall, accordingly, mobilise resources, both within and from the International Community, and especially through the Office of the UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, UNICEF and other agencies, to address the special needs of these children in the existing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.<sup>9</sup>

The peace process represents an opportunity to negotiate a new dispensation that can chart a new way for minority groups, including their protection. The realization that the end of hostilities was imminent and that Sierra Leone had a significant number of child combatants created momentum within the donor community to channel resources towards rehabilitating and reintegrating children and youth in Sierra Leonean society. UNICEF was identified as the lead agency that dealt with children and youth, during and after the disarmament process. However, the war in Sierra Leone included a number of other groups that accompanied the fighters, including 'bush wives'. Although

in most cases accompanying groups consists of people who have been coerced into joining the combatants, in some cases female combatants joined voluntarily.<sup>10</sup>

## **Simultaneous disarmament**

The dynamic nature of the evolution of the war in Sierra Leone resulted in certain parts of the country being more volatile than others. This resulted in a concentration of combatants in certain areas, making these regions unstable and more prone to the resurgence of violence. The NCDDR adopted a strategy of simultaneous disarmament, which was aimed at identifying priority areas that would be disarmed in parallel with others. This parallel disarmament occurred over a period of one month.

Parallel disarmament was targeted at those areas where there was a possibility that if one group was encouraged to disarm and the other not there would be potential resistance. This approach served as an important confidence building measure that moderated the mistrust between former belligerents.

## **Community arms collection and destruction**

The formal disarmament process was declared complete by President Kabbah in January 2002. However this did not mean that all the weapons in circulation in Sierra Leone had been removed. This was due to the fact that the disarmament programme excluded hunting rifles and pistols from weapons qualifying under the programme, as they were not considered to be the weapons used by former combatants. This, and the fact that there were unknown numbers of weapons that were thought to be kept by both the CDF and remnants of the RUF, led to the recognition of the need for another process that would collect these weapons.

To meet the above challenge the government of Sierra Leone developed the Community Arms Collection and Destruction programme aimed at collecting those weapons that fell outside the scope of the UNAMSIL/NCDDR process. This process commenced on 3 February 2002. It collected 1,043 weapons in total. Although the number was largely symbolic, it was significant in the sense that it demonstrated that people did not want to encourage the storage and use of weapons in their communities.

## The outcome of disarmament

Evaluating the success or failure of a disarmament process is a complex exercise, especially when concern about rearmament remains. However, a few indicators can be highlighted to provide a framework for evaluation of the disarmament programme in Sierra Leone. These indicators include the following:

- The NCDDR was able to design a programme that was suitable to the dynamics of the peace process in Sierra Leone. These included designing a 'targeted' disarmament programme to take into account the needs of different groups and categories.
- UNAMSIL provided expertise and committed resources to establish cantonment areas in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the RUF and government as well as local authorities (i.e. to determine who owns the land and handing over that infrastructure to benefit the community concerned).
- Disarming an estimated total of over 70,000 ex-combatants exceeded the estimated number of 45,000 and made a significant difference in pacifying the country.
- UNAMSIL played a major role in strengthening collaborative relations and activities with various stakeholders, including sub-contracting GTZ to manage the physical destruction of the weapons.
- UNAMSIL assisted the national government authorities in implementing a follow up disarmament programme in the form of the Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme (CACD). This programme played a major role in sustaining momentum for community level disarmament and led to new legislation on the control of firearms for the country.

## Conclusion

Although it is often difficult and complex to evaluate the success of the broader DDR process, it is possible to draw lessons from the disarmament component of the process. There has been very little focus on the processes and technical aspects of disarmament as an essential component of the larger DDR process. It is submitted here that there are various aspects of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone that illustrate the need for a well planned but flexible process.

One of the major lessons of the process was that DDR and its modalities should be an essential component of the peace process. It is at this stage that clarity should be sought as to who will be responsible for the process, who will be disarmed, how and where will different categories of participants be accommodated and for how long, and what will happen to the surrendered weapons. UNAMSIL also instituted 'simultaneous disarmament' through the paring of districts as a confidence-building measure between the RUF and CDF combatants. Any disarmament programme also faces certain obstacles and in the case of Sierra Leone this included failure to meet certain expectations from ex-combatants, such as payments to ex-combatants. However most of the problems were linked to the dynamics of the politics of negotiating peace in Sierra Leone. In February 2004, the government of Sierra Leone announced the conclusion of a five-year programme to disarm and rehabilitate more than 70,000 former combatants. The World Bank noted that Sierra Leone is being visited by neighbouring countries and those from the Great Lakes region because it is "considered as the best practice example throughout the world of a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme".<sup>11</sup>

## Notes

1. For the history of the war in Sierra Leone see, I Abdullah, *Bush Path to destruction: the origin and character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone*, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36, 2, 1998, pp. 203-235.
2. M Malan, P Rakate, A McIntyre, (eds), *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL hits the home straight*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Monograph no. 68, January 2002.
3. Ibid.
4. National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR), *Reintegration of Ex-combatants: Transition from War to Peace-management of a Complex DDR Process*, Vol. 1, May 2002.
5. M Malan, S Meek, T Thusi, J Ginifer, P Coker, *Sierra Leone: Building the Road to Recovery*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Monograph no. 80, March 2003, p. 25.
6. Ibid, p. 24.
7. Ibid, p. 25.
8. P Coker, *Mopping up weapons in local communities*, *UNAMSIL Review*, United Nations, April 2002, p.9.
9. <[www.sierra-leone.org/ceasefire051899.html](http://www.sierra-leone.org/ceasefire051899.html)>.

10. Some scholars have used the concept of “Children associated with armed forces” to refer to any child under 18 years of age who is part of armed force, whether or not there is an armed conflict. This definition is not limited to children who are carrying arms or have carried arms but includes those involved and affect through activities such as cooks, domestic workers, spies, decoys, couriers, guards, and those accompanying such groups other than purely as family members.
11. “No more illegal armed groups in Sierra Leone” *Mail and Guardian Online*, 5 February 2004, [www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=30676](http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=30676).

## CHAPTER 4

# DRC: ON THE ROAD TO DISARMAMENT

Nelson Alusala

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“No quick or easy solutions are available. The damage to Congo has simply been too extensive, the killing too vast, the many decades of past misgovernment too destructive. But the world must not abandon the Congolese people. Their agony challenges our humanity.”<sup>1</sup>

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been seen as a problem to be solved for far too long, rather than a country offering a set of interests and values to the world. This is not surprising for a country at the threshold of disintegration. Africa and the rest of the world face the daunting task of finding a lasting solution to the problems haunting this vast African country. This chapter gives an account of restructuring efforts, centring on disarmament as a component of the process of DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) in the DRC. It concludes by proposing some of the elements that may add value to stabilization in the country.

### **The conflict**

The 1990s was a period of tremendous turbulence in the Great Lakes region, where a convulsion of tragedies and misfortunes befell the states of the region. First was the genocide in Rwanda, triggered off by the killing of Juvenal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, presidents of Rwanda and Burundi respectively on 6 April 1994, when Habyarimana’s plane was shot down near Kigali Airport, allegedly by extremists suspecting that the presidents were considering to implement the Arusha Peace Accords. Habyarimana’s remains were taken to Zaire under Joseph Désiré Mobutu’s orders and installed in a mausoleum.

Then followed the overthrow of Mobutu on 16 May 1997 following a rebel assault on Kinshasa, led by Laurent Kabila and involving alliances of neighbouring countries and armed rebel groups. The tragedies of the decade culminated in the assassination of Laurent Kabila by one of his bodyguards at the presidential palace in Kinshasa, in January 2001, followed by the immediate swearing in of his son Joseph Kabila, as the new president.

Where then, does the future of the DRC lie?

The above instabilities heightened animosity among armed insurgent groups, setting up a thriving environment for arms trafficking; weapons that continue to be used against civilians. As long as the weapons remain in circulation, peace and stability cannot be guaranteed. However the relative calm in the Great Lakes region in the aftermath of the tragedies noted above may be attributed to the repercussions of several major events unfolding in the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi.

First was the establishment in July 2003 of an all-inclusive government in Kinshasa after the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) concluded in April 2003 in Sun City, South Africa. Another major event was the successful conclusion of both presidential and general elections in Rwanda. The successful eighteen-month transition period from Pierre Buyoya (Tutsi) to Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu in Burundi is another peace building cornerstone. These events are slowly shaping the political drama by triggering off certain developments in the region.

There are several positive implications from these developments. First, the negative forces in the DRC, particularly from Rwanda and Burundi who initially were reluctant to return to their countries due to uncertainty surrounding the elections in Rwanda or suspension of presidential transition in Burundi were now surer of some security. Secondly, the various Congolese armed rebel groups belonging to the newly appointed vice presidents are now more willing to disarm and integrate fully into the new coalition government. These factors have accelerated further the receptiveness to peace and disarmament in the DRC.

## **DDR and DDRRR in the DRC**

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process generally targets local armed groups and militias: the Congolese combatants, in the case of the DRC. Disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) targets foreign forces, also called negative forces in the DRC.

The disarmament of Congolese combatants is one of the fundamental elements of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and it was put under MONUC's mandate by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 1493 of July 2003. However, the Congolese DDR process is still at its infancy and struggling

to overcome several obstacles. These include the lack of government structures in eastern Congo, the lack of a unified, integrated national army to complement the unified command structure at the top of the government, the unstable socio-economic situation in the Kivus which is not conducive to reintegration of former combatants and the lack of an established, formal DDR programme.<sup>2</sup> A failure to disarm combatants, especially in the east, could lead to renewed military conflict with new and serious regional implications.

DDRRR of non-Congolese combatants also remains a key objective of MONUC. MONUC estimates that there are 15,000 to 20,000 foreign combatants in eastern Congo, with up to 30,000 dependants. The majority of them belong to the *Force Démocratique de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), while the rest are Ugandan and Burundi forces.<sup>3</sup>

The need to safeguard peace and security between the DRC and its neighbours, and to prevent a resumption of cross-border attacks on DRC territory was a major objective of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement that also included the withdrawal of all foreign governmental forces. Article III of paragraph 11 of the Lusaka Agreement stipulates that the United Nations Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, should be requested to constitute, facilitate and deploy a peacekeeping force in the DRC to track down all armed groups. The armed groups were listed in the annex of the Agreement as

“...forces other than Government forces, RCD and MLC that are not signatories to this Agreement. They include ex-FAR (Rwanda), Allied Democratic Forces (Uganda) (ADF), Lord’s Resistance Army (Uganda) (LRA), UNRF II, National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (Uganda) (NALU), Interahamwe militias (Rwanda), Former Ugandan National Army (Uganda) (FUNA), Forces for the Defence of Democracy (Burundi) (FDD), West Nile Bank Front (Uganda) (WNBFF), UNITA (Angola) and any other forces.”<sup>4</sup>

Article III of the Lusaka Agreement also states in paragraph 22 that there should be a mechanism for disarming militias and armed groups, including the genocidal forces. In that context, all parties committed themselves to locating, identifying, disarming and assembling all members of armed groups in the DRC. The countries of origin of the armed groups committed themselves to taking all necessary measures to facilitate their repatriation. These measures include the granting of amnesty, in countries where such a measure is deemed beneficial. It should not, however, apply in the case of individuals suspected of the crime of genocide. The parties assumed full

responsibility for ensuring that the armed groups operating alongside their troops or on the territory under their control complied with the processes leading to the dismantling of the groups.

Chapter 7 of the annex to the Agreement concerns the Joint Military Commission (JMC), which was supposed to work out mechanisms for disarming armed groups, and to verify their disarmament and quartering, as well as verifying the disarmament of all Congolese civilians in illegal possession of arms. In accordance with paragraph 11b of Article III of the Lusaka Agreement, the JMC was charged with the responsibility for carrying out peacekeeping operations until the deployment of the United Nations peacekeeping force.

In formulating MONUC's mandate, the UN Security Council adhered closely to the aspects of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, conforming to the provisions on disengagement and withdrawal of foreign forces, while responsibility for the civilian political aspects of the Agreement were entrusted to a neutral facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire.<sup>5</sup>

The mandate of MONUC in respect of DDRRR differed significantly from the approach adopted by the Lusaka signatories. The main difference in approach was that Lusaka envisaged forcible disarmament, whereas the UN Security Council resolved that MONUC undertake only voluntary disarmament during the DDRRR programme.

According to MONUC's head of DDRRR, there are several advantages to the process being voluntary and not forcible. Firstly is that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to identify troop-contributing countries willing to contribute contingents to be deployed in eastern DRC for the forcible disarmament of groups accused of genocide and other serious crimes against humanity, at least in sufficient numbers and with a sufficiently robust mandate. The result would be that such an operation might last for years and could entail heavy casualties, as well as an extremely heavy logistical and supply burden on local infrastructure. Another reason is the complexity of the armed groups in the region, which makes the situation difficult to predict and sensitive to any changes in balance. These factors make a purely military solution almost impossible.<sup>6</sup>

The DRC government has yet to design and implement the disarmament process for the local (Congolese) forces. How soon this will start depends on how quickly the newly instituted, all-inclusive government can move in establishing its various organs. Before disarmament can start the government

must first establish the size and composition of the national army. A challenging factor is that the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which led to the All-Inclusive Agreement addresses the political power sharing structure but does not exhaustively address the issue of integration of the army. On formation of the national army, the Agreement simply mentions that at the end of the ICD, there shall be a mechanism for the formation of a national, restructured and integrated army, including the forces of the Congolese Parties who are signatories to the Agreement, on the basis of negotiations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the RCD and MLC. This is according to paragraph 20 of the principles in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.<sup>7</sup> The All-Inclusive Agreement further states that in the interest of peace, unity and national reconciliation, the National Army must include RCD-ML, RCD-N and the Mayi-Mayi according to the modalities to be defined by the political institutions of the transition government resulting from the ICD.

In an effort to foster the formulation of a DDR programme by the DRC government for Congolese forces, the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) multi-donor/agency mission visited the DRC in February 2003 with the objective of assisting the government in fine-tuning coordination and collaboration arrangements in line with the mandates and expectations of various partners, and reviewing the approach and process in order to initiate the preparation of a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, taking into account the All-Inclusive Agreement signed in Pretoria on 16 December 2002.

In its report on DDR, the MDRP noted that the situation of irregular forces in the Congo is complex, since new factions constantly emerge, with shifting alliances and diffuse authority. The MDRP mission recognized that formal DDR processes would not be appropriate to such irregular forces, but rather greater emphasis should be placed on parallel activities of community recovery, which have already started in the areas under government control and are expanding to the rest of the country. This is being accompanied by the social reintegration of armed groups and individuals, and with civilian small arms collection programmes. It is aimed at addressing one of the root causes of Mayi Mayi mobilization.<sup>8</sup>

The MDRP mission expressed concern that a formal DDR programme targeting groups that are non-signatory to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement could lead to the creation of additional groups attempting to benefit from resources earmarked for ex-combatants. It was recognized that the MDRP

– with its focus on demobilization – would only be a contributor to the overall problem of conflict resolution and recovery in the DRC, particularly the east. Many other players including MONUC, humanitarian agencies, conflict transformation organizations, local service providers and local authorities are expected to be involved, once the government sets up the formal DDR programme.<sup>9</sup>

## **National security forces**

It is therefore incumbent upon the transitional government to spell out the size of the national army the DRC needs, the ratio of forces to be enlisted into the national army from each of the groups named, ranks and other qualifications of individual soldiers among other requirements. Once the plan has been drawn up the government will, based on an established size of the army, remobilize the disarmed ex-combatants and recruit them into the new army, based on set criteria. The new government also needs to select and train an integrated national police force that will contribute to the safety of the transition coordinators and institutions (such as the electoral commission, when established).

The issue of the composition of the national army is delicate and must be dealt with cautiously in Africa's third-largest nation, where everyone remains hopeful that the transitional government marks a major step toward the end of the conflict that has killed an estimated 3.3 million people.<sup>10</sup> This is especially important when bearing in mind the fragility among the constitutive officials of the all-inclusive government, namely the four vice presidents of whom two (Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Uganda-backed Congolese Liberation Movement and Azarias Ruberwa of the Rwanda-allied Congolese Rally for Democracy) are rebel leaders. The other two are the unarmed political opposition representative Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, and a longtime Kabila ally and former Foreign Minister, Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi.

Mistrust among the new government partners cannot be ruled out. Each of the role players in the ICD would wish to be seen by their followers to be carrying home a fair share of the cake, especially in the composition of the national army. The issue of the remnants of negative forces will also be thorny. When Laurent Kabila, with the support of the governments of Rwanda and Uganda defeated Mobutu, the two countries wanted a free hand to pursue Hutu militias in the Congo, but Kabila was reluctant to grant them access, hence triggering the war in 1998. The rebels backed by Uganda and Rwanda

seized the mineral rich eastern part of the country, an area that had been virtually without government control for years. While a large number of the foreign troops have already withdrawn, they continue to arm and fund several rebel groups in the east. This is particularly true of the Hema and Lendu tribes in Ituri and the Kivus, a situation that has turned the conflict into a proxy war for the purpose of exploitation of resources.<sup>11</sup>

Africa's largest copper belt runs from Zambia, through Angola into the DRC's Katanga province, containing one-third of the world's cobalt and one tenth of the world's copper reserves.<sup>12</sup> The DRC holds about eighty per cent of the world's reserves of colombite-tantalite (coltan), which, when refined into metallic tantalum, provides a key component (the glowing substance) of capacitors, cell phones, laptops, pagers and other wide range of electronic machines, which was in high demand at the time of the conflict. According to the International Human Rights Law Group report, the DRC is ranked among the world's largest producers of industrial diamonds (in the Kasais and Oriental province), with large gold deposits in the northeast (Kilomoto mines in Ituri and Kamiturga-Mobale mines in South Kivu), fronting DRC/Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi borders.<sup>13</sup>

The UN Security Council report of the *Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo* published in October 2003 details the vicious cycle involving arms, resources and conflict in the DRC.<sup>14</sup> The report underscores that the flow of arms, exploitation and the continuation of the conflict are inextricably linked because each of the three elements thrives on the other two. Without the wealth generated by illegal exploitation of natural resources arms cannot be bought, hence the conflict, which almost always involves grave human rights violations and large-scale population displacement, cannot be perpetuated. Without arms, the ability to continue the conflict, thereby creating the conditions for illegal exploitation of resources, cannot be sustained. Therefore breaking the vicious cycle is key to ending both the conflict and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

The report emphasizes the need to stem, and if possible halt, the flow of illegal arms to the DRC, acknowledging that that is the weakest element in the cycle, besides being an area where the international community can play an effective role. Cognizant of this fact, the UN Security Council, in its resolution 1493 of July 2003 imposed an arms embargo on Ituri and the Kivus. However, the UN still lacks a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating this embargo.

## Elements of a successful DDR framework

A successful DDR programme, particularly of Congolese armed groups, remains the genesis of sustained peace in Central Africa. The ultimate success of this strategy is intimately linked to the development of political institutions and the formation of the national army and police that will inhibit re-emergence of armed groups. How can this be achieved effectively? This is the question that the Kabila coalition government is facing and one that is bound to stretch into time. Without effective disarmament, the other components of DDR will remain elusive to attain even after breaking the cycle of conflict.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants must be seen in the wider political context of conflict resolution and as part of an integral national strategy encompassing economic development, security sector reform, justice and reconciliation initiatives. Planning for DDR should therefore start well in advance of the actual implementation. According to the International Peace Academy (IPA), making DDR part of the overall recovery strategy serves to acknowledge the importance of the task and the fact that many of the challenges to the implementation of DDR programmes have ramifications for the broader recovery process.<sup>15</sup> Lasting success depends on the extent to which former warring parties and individuals believe that their physical and economic security is maintained even after relinquishing their arms and abandoning what for many was not just an activity but also a way of life.

The UN also recommends that the entire process from disarmament to the social and economic reintegration of ex-fighters should be planned and prepared well in advance. Early planning must include definition of the respective roles and mandates of the different humanitarian and peacekeeping actors involved at each stage. The resource requirements should also be specified from the beginning in order to allow for efficient resource mobilization from the internal and external sources.<sup>16</sup> This should be worked out in close collaboration among the parties themselves, the international organizations and donor agencies and governments.

Many years after armed conflicts end, weapons continue to kill vulnerable people. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (ICRC) estimates that several months after the formal secession of hostilities, weapons-related casualties remain at high levels, unless peace agreements incorporate strong disarmament and weapons destruction measures. Otherwise weapons remain available to promote criminal, communal and family violence.<sup>17</sup> For example, the ICRC recorded that the number of people

treated for firearms-related injuries in western Cambodia were 147 weapons injuries per 100,000 people just prior to the signing the peace accord in 1991. During the transitional period under the control of the UN, the figure was 71 per 100,000. Five months after the UN had left, without fully disarming the population, the figure had risen to 163 per 100,000 people.<sup>18</sup>

## **Status quo of disarmament in the DRC**

The basic distinction between MONUC II (sometimes referred to as the new MONUC) and the former MONUC lies in their mandates. When it was deployed in 1999, MONUC operated under a Chapter VI mandate, which meant that the peacekeepers' role was limited to keeping peace without using force other than for self-defence. However, MONUC had an additional element of Chapter VII, that called for protection of the UN and the JMC personnel, its facilities, installations and equipment; and to ensure the freedom and security of its personnel, while protecting civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. It is due to these additions from Chapter VII that the mandate was often referred to as a "Chapter Six and a half" mandate.

When, with an initial force of 5,000 troops, MONUC failed to respond effectively in deterring the atrocities committed in Bunia in May 2003 (when Lendu and Hema militias clashed for the control of Bunia), the UN Security Council established an Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) composed of French troops, that was deployed quickly to Bunia, until 1 September 2003, when it was replaced by a stronger MONUC force.

The new MONUC came into existence on 28 July 2003, when the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1493, increasing MONUC's authorized strength from 8,700 to 10,800 troops and providing it with a stronger mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which meant protecting UN personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, protecting civilians and humanitarian staff under imminent threat of physical attacks, ensuring the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel engaged in observer/verification missions as well as DDRRR, and improvement of general security conditions conducive for humanitarian assistance. It also gives MONUC the mandate to disarm Congolese combatants. The resolution also calls on the new MONUC, in coordination with other UN agencies, donors and NGOs to support the DRC in holding free and democratic elections across the country, after the two-year transition period.

While underscoring the significance of the new MONUC mandate, an official of MONUC regretted that the international community did not make the suitable decisions and commitments early enough, “we wasted three years. We have now nothing to do with the previous MONUC. It was the wrong mission.”<sup>19</sup> On a similar note, a military commander in Bukavu commented that Chapter VII means “we can use stronger force to achieve our goals. We can intervene if there are massacres, we can protect the civilian population; if we are informed of a potential attack we can deploy to that area...It is more flexible than Chapter VI.”<sup>20</sup>

In order to foster the structuring of a DDR programme, the DRC transitional government, together with MDRP partners and donors agreed in April 2003 to put in place an interim DDR strategy with the aim of attaining two major objectives:

- To define an operational framework that would ensure closeness between the formal DDR and spontaneous disarmament of armed militias, and
- Structure preparatory activities aimed at supporting the transitional government in establishing a national DDR programme.

The DDR Technical Group involving MDRP, MONUC and UNICEF was initiated, under the coordination of the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The Technical Group, in the interim operational framework for spontaneous disarmament of armed groups<sup>21</sup> is envisaged to achieve three major functions, namely a) voluntary disarmament in which they receive ex-combatants as they avail themselves spontaneously, register them then take custody of the arms and/or ammunitions for disposal, b) immediate assistance which entails all activities aimed at resettling the individuals in their communities of preference, and c) community reintegration, involving provision of socio-economic benefits that assist the individual to start making a living as a civilian.

The interim operational framework states in paragraph 7.1.4 that once an individual or an armed group voluntarily presents themselves for disarmament, MONUC registers the details of the subject on a data index form (*fiche de situation*) and sends them immediately to the government's national committee for planning and coordination, CTPC (*Comité Technique de Planification et Coordination*) which, through a rapid response mechanism, MRR (*Mécanisme de Réponse Rapide*) operated by UNDP effects the necessary preparatory measures to immediately offer the necessary support geared at reintegrating the individual into the community. In the case of child

soldiers, MONUC transfers them to UNICEF's child protection section, which interviews and evaluates them before initiating the reintegration programme.

## Categories of combatants to be disarmed

Lasting peace in the DRC largely depends on a successful DDR process. Such a programme calls for a strong civil-military planning section within the interim DRC government that will spearhead the activities, while providing a structure and focus for the effort, particularly in voluntary disarmament.

The new MONUC mandate points out that disarmament of the armed groups in eastern Congo is one of the key elements of bringing stability to the country. The mandate focuses on disarmament of local armed groups within the DRC, such as ex-FAR and Interahamwe soldiers and family members who escaped from Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide.

There are three categories of combatants that need to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated in the DRC. The first group comprises those combatants who stand very little chance of being included in the unified national Congolese army when it becomes operational. According to BUNADER,<sup>22</sup> there are six sub-categories of vulnerable groups, namely child soldiers, retired and aged ex-combatants, chronically ill ex-combatants, the permanently handicapped/mutilated ex-soldiers and the widows and orphans. According to MONUC, all ex-combatants who will be left out after the reconstitution of the national army will be solely a responsibility of the government of the DRC.

The second group involves groups such as the Mayi-Mayi, whose number keeps fluctuating. During the field trip in preparation for this monograph, the government official in charge of DDR expressed concern at these fluctuations, observing that at the inauguration of the current transitional government, the figures given for the Mayi-Mayi militias were far much less than those given later for the purpose of DDR. The latter figures, of about 42,000 were meant to indicate that the Mayi-Mayi should be a major stakeholder in the new government, hence the need for a bigger stake in both the DDR process and in the constitution of the new national army.

The third group entails the armed groups in Ituri, who, after their fifth consultative committee meeting (*Comité de Concertation des Groupes Armés*) held under the aegis of the new MONUC on 10 October 2003, "agreed" on 23 October 2003 to be the deadline for providing technical information regarding their numbers and locations for cantonment.<sup>23</sup>

The primary Ituri militias are the *Union des Patriotes Congolais* (UPC) who said they were ready to provide MONUC with the necessary information, *Parti pour l'Unité et la Sauvegarde de l'intégrité du Congo* (PUSIC) who reported that they are still collating the information, *Front des Nationalistes Intégrationnistes* (FNI) who requested MONUC for logistical support to facilitate its movement to different sites where its members are located. The other two militias are *Forces Populaires pour la Démocratie du Congo* (FPDC) and *Forces Armées du Peuple Congolais* (FAPC).<sup>24</sup> The MONUC interim spokesman also observed that the local authorities of the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Kisangani/Mouvement de Libération* (RCD-K/ML), a former rebel group now party to the national transitional government also confirmed their willingness to hand over their weapons for destruction.

The enhanced interest in disarmament in Ituri may be attributed, among other factors, to the arrival in the middle of October 2003 of the first phase of deployment of MONUC's Ituri Brigade in the outskirts of Bunia, which intends to deploy throughout Ituri, and the expectations arising from meetings held in the mid August, involving 29 representatives of various rival militia groups and the new government, aimed at including the armed groups in a peace and reconciliation process which, according to Thomas Lubanga of UPC, Jerome Bakonde of FAPC and Floribert Ngabu of FNI may lead to their troops being integrated into the national army. Enhanced public awareness campaigns by MONUC on DDR through its radio channel, Radio Okapi, which covers the whole of the Congolese territory helps to sensitize the public and the rebels about MONUC's intentions and puts them in contact with Kinshasa.<sup>24</sup>

In the midst of the negotiations, on 15 September, under "Operation Bunia Without Arms," MONUC begun to rid Bunia of all weapons by carrying out house-to-house searches, leading to a confiscation, on 16 September, of a stockpile of arms and ammunition from the headquarters of UPC, triggering violent demonstrations, with accusations of MONUC firing at protesters.<sup>25</sup> MONUC released the detainees who agreed to hand in their weapons. On 6 October, soon after "Operation Bunia Without Arms," ethnic Lendu attacked ethnic Hema village of Katchele, north of Bunia, killing 65 Congolese civilians.

The reluctance by the militias and rebel forces to disarm voluntarily (besides pledging to do so) may be due to insincerity, suspicion and lack of transparency among the numerous armed groups (the looming danger of some armed groups disarming when others do not), coupled with the uncertainty of their being incorporated into the national army after disarming.

In a related scenario, the International Committee to Accompany the Transition in the DRC (*Comité International d'Accompagnement de la Transition*), known by its French acronym CIAT, and which comprises ambassadors accredited to the DRC, met in October under the presidency of William Swing, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative (SRSG) to the DRC, and cited several issues that are constraining the operations of the transitional government.

These include delays in the implementation of a national government administration; the formation of a unified national army; the absence of a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; and the continued presence of foreign armed elements on DRC national territory.<sup>26</sup>

In the statement CIAT urged the transitional government to:

“appoint ‘without delay’ provincial governments and administrative staff; dispatch military commanders to their posts, with a view to forming a united national army and the drafting of laws on national defence; put in place a national coordination body responsible for DDR; and to identify means of accelerating the DDRRR of foreign armed elements, in collaboration with MONUC, and neighbouring countries.”<sup>27</sup>

Dissemination of military commanders across the country will help strengthen the government control especially in the east, while a national coordination body in charge of DDR would solve the risks that may emanate due to the *ad hoc*/spontaneous disarmament currently being conducted by MONUC in Ituri, where cases have been reported of combatants presenting themselves for disarmament only to catch MONUC unawares due to lack of government structures to take charge of the whole process of DDR. According to MONUC the DRC government should possess the DDR process.<sup>28</sup> So it is a wait-and-see situation as the government puts its house in order.

CIAT emphasized the point that the success of the electoral process (if elections are to successfully take place in the next two years) depends equally on the implementation of a domestic government programme that will respond to the urgent needs of the people, as well as the installation of a legal framework that would guarantee financial transparency in electoral preparations, including the publication of assets of political parties, their sources of revenue and expenses, and their personal wealth and taxes paid.

The operations of MONUC even under the new mandate may not be smooth sailing. A case in point is the incident that took place in October 2003 when the government was reported to have blocked MONUC from inquiring into the crash landing of a cargo plane believed to have been transporting illegal arms to groups in South Kivu Province in the east of the country.<sup>29</sup>

The plane was reported to have crashed at Kamina military base, in central Katanga Province of south-eastern DRC. It was reported that a heavy guard of Congolese soldiers prevented MONUC military observers from visiting the scene of the crash, in addition to arresting the Congolese officer who was accompanying them. This occurrence poses a challenge to the new MONUC mandate that obliges all parties to conflict in the DRC to provide full and unhindered access to MONUC to allow it to carry out its mandate. It heightens tension among the warring factions in the country, while deepening suspicion with neighbouring countries hence jeopardizing recent diplomatic efforts to enhance peace between the DRC and her neighbours, recalling that on 31 October 2003 renewed fighting was reported between Mayi-Mayi militias and a Rwandan rebel group in South Kivu Province in the east, resulting in the displacement of thousands of civilians, with undetermined number of wounded and dead, according to reports by MONUC and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).<sup>30</sup> Rwanda has repeatedly accused the Kinshasa government of supporting Rwandan rebel groups operating on eastern Congo, while Kinshasa in the recent diplomatic talks aimed at improving the two country's relations has recently given its assurances to Kigali that it would root out Rwandan Hutu rebels in eastern Congo in a bid to normalize relations between the two countries.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

The big question is whether the two-year transition period is long enough for the transitional government to prepare the Congolese parties for democratic and all-inclusive elections.

The possibility of peace until elections in 2005 largely depends on containment of ethnic violence through a comprehensive DDR programme, which has yet to start. Much also depends on relations between the DRC and her neighbours (primarily Uganda and Rwanda). Still, even in the event of a successful transition period, economic problems are likely to persist due to exploitation of the country's mineral wealth.

The UN Security Council should use its powers to impose sanctions and embargoes on countries fanning war or forces that may block implementation of the transitional government in the DRC. Embargoes and sanctions can change the dynamics of war, since availability translates into insecurity and armed violence, while reduced availability enhances human security.

The Security Council should also urge all parties in the DRC to support CIAT in monitoring the entire process until election time. The continuing violence and insecurity in the east can threaten the overall peace in Kinshasa, and so progress needs to be made on various fronts, with support from the international community.

The Kinshasa government should clearly identify its security needs in the short and long term, move quickly to form and deploy the national army in order to spearhead the disarmament and demobilization of armed groups and child soldiers; while remaining fully committed to the entire DDR process by gathering and collating information on the whereabouts of armed groups around the country.

It has been observed that the incipient peace in the DRC is due to two tenuous grips: one being the hope that several rival groups who fought a bloody and vicious war against each other can now work for a common goal; the other is the UN peacekeeping efforts in the volatile areas of the east, notably Ituri province.<sup>32</sup> There are chances that violence may erupt again when the peacekeeping troops leave in 2004 at the end of their mandate, if it is not renewed.

Another threat to be addressed is that of DRC ex-combatants and/or deserters who are leaving in neighbouring countries, particularly in the Republic of Congo (RoC), where an estimated 6,300 former FAZ/FAC ex-combatants are reportedly residing. A tripartite agreement is already in place, ready to be incorporated in the national DDR plan.<sup>33</sup> It is being coordinated by UNDP and the International Organization for Migration. Similar repatriation opportunities should be extended to DRC ex-combatants in all the neighbouring countries, in order to avert possible insurgencies in future.

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18. International Committee of the Red Cross, *Arms availability and the situation of civilians in armed conflicts*, ICRC Arms availability report, Geneva, 1999, p.13.
19. Interview with the MONUC DDRRR Deputy Chief in the DRC, Kinshasa, 26 October 2003.
20. See C Bernath and N Pearson, "MONUC Mandate to Succeed: an Assessment of the Interim Emergency Multilateral Force (IEMF) and Second Report on the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 16, 2003, p.14
21. See MONUC, Groupe Technique DDR, *Cadre operationnel pour le désarmement spontané des groupes armé pendant la phase intérimaire*, Kinshasa, 17 November 2003, paragraph 7.
22. Bureau National de Démobilisation et de Réinsertion (BUNADER) is a department in the Ministry of Defense and Human Rights of the DRC, that is concerned with demobilization and reintegration of vulnerable groups within the armed combatants. Between 2001 and 2003 BUNADER conducted pilot projects on demobilization and reintegration of vulnerable groups in several parts of the country. For details see Projet DRC/00/M01/BR, *Programme de Démobilisation et de Réinsertion des groupes vulnérables en RDC: Leçons apprises dans la phase préparatoire*, mai 2003.
23. Interview with Thomas Lubanga, leader of UPC, in Kinshasa, 21 October 2003.
24. See MONUC, "Deadline Extended for Ituri Militias On Cantonment Details," dated 24 October 2003 (<http://www.monuc.org/news.aspx>).
25. "MONUC in the DRC: Strengthen its mandate, denounce the warmongers; proposals from NGOs on the basis of a field survey," *Great Lakes Advocacy Network*, June 2003, p.1.
26. Interview with the head of MONUC DDRRR programme in the DRC, Kinshasa, 26 October, 2003.
27. IRIN, "DRC: Oversight committee chides transitional government for delays," Nairobi, 21October, 2003.
28. Ibid.
29. These were among the views expressed by senior MONUC officials during an interview conducted by the author in the course of a field study in the DRC from 16-23 October 2003.
30. IRIN, "MONUC accuses Kinshasa of blocking plane crash inquiry," Kinshasa, 5 November 2003. (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?>)

31. IRIN, "DRC: Fighting displaces thousands in Mwenga, South Kivu Province," Kinshasa, 4 November, 2003, op cit.
32. "Congo pledges to arrest Rwandan Hutu rebels," at <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?>
33. Paul H, "Congo's International civil War," *Power and Interest News Report*, August 5, 2003.
34. Interview with a UNDP consultant on DDR, Kinshasa, October 17, 2003.

# CONCLUSION

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The tenacity of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been a source of great concern to the Great Lakes region of Africa. As such it has generated enormous interest for policy analysts and researchers, among others. The findings of these efforts to better understand and respond to the conflict should not only document the events behind the conflict, but more importantly inform policy makers within the DRC and the rest of the world, of the critical need to combine efforts in order to recreate peace in the DRC.

Disarmament is one component of peace building and a recognized need in the DRC as the transitional government embarks on initiatives to rebuild the country. The fundamental aim of disarmament is to increase human security. Historical experience shows that unrestrained arms transfers can lead to uncontrolled arms build-up and an escalation in the risk of conflict. This has been well documented in the DRC and other countries in the Great Lakes region.

Armed combatants need to be disarmed and demobilized when war is over, and including DDR in peace agreements is increasingly common. The success of a disarmament process, however, depends on how it is planned and executed. It also depends on the bearing the conflict takes as it terminates. An armed conflict can either end with the defeat of one side or with a ceasefire being negotiated.

Where a conflict ends with the defeat of one side, it is usually the vanquished party that is disarmed and demobilized, while in a ceasefire situation impartiality and balancing interests is vital sustainability and post conflict peace building. However, in both cases extreme care needs to be taken when reintegrating former combatants into society, to prevent them from taking up arms at a later stage, or resorting to crime. The presence of impartial forces such as the UN peacekeepers or forces of a regional body may assist in ensuring compliance during disarmament and during post-conflict reconstruction.

The introduction to this monograph therefore presented an analysis of the essentials of disarmament, putting emphasis on key issues of planning, such as the need to define categories of people targeted for disarmament and types of weapons expected in the collection. The first chapter evaluated the evolution of the concept of disarmament in post-Cold War era, highlighting factors that underpin the UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. The chapter concluded with an observation of some of the challenges and lessons learnt from previous cases of disarmament in Africa.

The second chapter traced the evolution of peace support operations (PSOs), before assessing Western countries' will to intervene in African conflicts. The chapter ended with an evaluation of emerging challenges that peacekeeping missions face during disarmament.

Disarmament as it was conducted in Sierra Leone under the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was analysed to determine its relevance as a model of successful disarmament in Africa. While the DRC case study motivated the need for disarmament as an important component of post-conflict reconstruction. The chapter concluded with some basic observations that may add value to the entire DDR process in the DRC.

The objective of this monograph has been to underscore the importance of an effective disarmament process within the context of post conflict peace building. The purpose of the disarmament programme must be clear to all those who will be involved and the commitment of those tasked with carrying out the programme should be evident to all. Disarmament however cannot be divorced from the dynamics of evolving peace and planners should recognize the systematic flexibility that is required in order to make these programmes work. In February 2004, the government of Sierra Leone announced the conclusion of a five-year programme to disarm and rehabilitate more than 70,000 former combatants. The World Bank noted that Sierra Leone is being visited by neighbouring countries and those from the Great Lakes region because it is "considered as the best practice example throughout the world of a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme".<sup>1</sup> With this monograph, the authors hope that other successful DDR programmes can be realized across Africa in the coming months and years.

## Notes

1. "No more illegal armed groups in Sierra Leone" *Mail and Guardian Online*, 5 February 2004, [www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=30676](http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=30676).