

The Role of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Of Ex-Combatant and Democratic Transition from War to Peace in Nigeria

By

Nanaghan Adesola Peter, Ph.D

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Abuja,

E-Mail: nanaghanpeter@gmail.com, Phone: (+234) 08035877046

Nurudeen Babatunde Ayinla, Ph.D

Institute of Governance and Development Studies,

Nasarawa State University Keffi

E-Mail: babdeen2003@yahoo.com (+234) 8071972023

Dieng Abdourahmane, Ph.D

Institute of Governance and Development Studies

Nasarawa State University, Keffi,

E-Mail: aresdieng@yahoo.fr, Phone: (+234) 8113999881

Adegbe Ojonoka Veronica, Ph.D

Institute of Governance and Development Studies,

Nasarawa State University Keffi,

E-Mail: nokadegbe@yahoo.com (+234) 8034473035

&

Salem Igyundu-Iyorwuese, Ph.D

Institute of Governance and Development Studies,

Nasarawa State University Keffi

E-Mail: sigyundu@gmail.com (+234) 7032644919

Abstract

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) can be used both in war and peace time, also to reduce the size of armed forces and redistribute public spending. However DDR is much more complicated in a postconflict environment, when different fighting groups are divided by animosities. They are also faced with a real security dilemma as they give up their weapons, when civil society structures have crumbled, and when the economy is stagnant. This is why the establishment of real democratic practice became a

must in such transitional societies. This study examined the roles of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of Ex-combatants and democratic transition from war to peace in Nigeria. The **objectives** of the study is to explain the relationship between democracy and DDR, to discuss the importance of democracy in transitional or post conflict societies and to analyse some of the challenges and how best to resolve them. The **significance**. From the **findings**. The ready availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons has made the democratic transition from war to peace in Nigeria difficult. The study adopted the Failed State Theory. The study **recommends** that there is need for the Federal, State and Local Government in Nigeria to collaborate in the process of DDR of Ex-Combatants.

Keywords: Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, Ex-Combatants

Introduction

A study or discussion on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration would be incomplete without a proper understanding of the features that characterize armed conflicts. One of these is the use of arms. Ordinarily, the thought that arms would play any damaging or instrumental role in intra-national conflicts years back would have been ignored with a sleight of hand. However, recent events now reveal an urgent need to focus on ways of addressing the challenges of surplus arms that constitute sources of danger in many post-conflict communities. This is against the background of intense inter and intra-ethnic conflicts that have become characterized with deadly weapons. This is why this unit introduces you to the basics of arms. The essence of this is to broaden your view of the issues that make the processes of DDR imperative with the hope that this would enhance your understanding and handling of the processes when you come across them (NOUN PCR 373:19)

Barash and Webel (2003) proceed to explain that nuclear weapons derive their explosive power from the conversion of matter into energy. This conversion takes place based on the well-known equation, $E = mc^2$, in which E is the amount of energy released, m = mass to be converted into energy, and c = the speed of light is itself a very large number, and is squared in the equation; the resulting energy release is enormous. Nuclear fusion drives the sun and the stars; prior to 1945, the explosive power of nuclear energy had never been realized and released by humans (NOUN PCR 373:22).

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of Ex-Combatants is a first and most step in the transition from war to peace. Democracy, unlike other forms of governance, has inherent checks and balances. This normally promotes dialogue/diplomacy and discourages people from resorting to violence to resolve their political differences. With the combination of democracy and DDR, it therefore becomes easier to support the transition from war to peace by ensuring a safe environment. This will definitely and adequately pave way for the transfer of ex-combatants back to civilian life, and empower them to earn livelihood through peaceful means instead of war. Some basic features of democracy in post-conflict or transitional societies are discussed below.

Challenges to Democratisation in Post conflicts States in Africa

The greatest threat to democratisation and state-building in most post conflict States in Africa as in elsewhere(Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mozambique and Congo DR etc), has been their battered economies . Mismanagement of public resources is widespread, while majority of the people live in slum. With the exception of Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, the rest of these post-war countries are well-endowed with natural resources including oil, diamond, iron ore, platinum and cobalt. Prices of these commodities were at phenomenal levels until they started slipping from the middle of 2008.

The UNDP Human Development Index (2007/2008) ranks Sierra Leone 176 out of 177 countries. At 40.5 years, life expectancy in Sierra Leone is even below the African average, seven years after the war ended there. Angola, Africa's fastest growing economy ranks 162, yet the country's economy has been expanding at a phenomenal pace – an annual average of about 19 per cent since 2000. As Africa's leading oil exporter, Angola raked in billions of dollars during the spike in oil prices but the dos Santos MPLA-government is corrupt, incompetent and wasteful. Transparency International, the anti-corruption watchdog, rates Angola as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. There is next to no investment in the larger rural population and basic infrastructure beyond Luanda, the national capital any wonder Angolans feel terribly disillusioned. Other development indicators for Sierra Leone are equally stark. Sierra Leone's agricultural sector provides about three-fourths of jobs however, the

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme trained ex-combatants as plumbers, carpenters and mechanics.

Africa states generally lack the necessary capacity or the will to effectively perform core functions of statehood. For post-war recovery African states the crisis is dire and urgent: many are unwilling or simply unable to provide basic public services such as governing legitimately, ensuring physical security, fostering sustainable and equitable economic growth as well as other essential public goods such as clean water, affordable health care, schools, roads and decent jobs. The high level of youth unemployment is a major challenge to the security and development of these fragile countries (NOUN PCR 373: 81-87).

Conceptual Clarifications

Ex-Combatant

An Ex-Combatant is a person who participated in the fighting in a war and has decided not to take part any more in the armed confrontation (Mónica, 2021 et. al). Defining Ex-Combatants There is a surprising lack of definitions for the term Ex-Combatant. When dealing with disarming, demobilising and reintegrating ex-combatants, the United Nations officially considers that fighters become ex-combatants when they are registered as disarmed (UN, 1999:52). This, however, is of little use since it says nothing about who should be recognised as a fighter or combatant. It is therefore necessary to first establish what a combatant is. While a consensus exists of what a combatant is in interstate wars, there is no clear definition concerning intrastate wars. In international conflicts, combatants are considered to be members of national armed forces, where there exists an identifiable organisation, a clear command structure, and an internal disciplinary system. Such a definition is not always applicable in intrastate wars. Many guerrilla groups and paramilitary forces lack both a clear command structure and organisation. The international community therefore emphasises whether the individual has taken a direct part in the hostilities. To have directly taken part usually means that they have committed acts that were intended to cause harm to enemy personnel and material (Lindsey, 2001:26).

Disarmament

Disarmament is the exact opposite of armament. It has to do with the reduction, control or abolition of weapons. For Zanders (2013), disarmament is the “reduction of levels of specified weapon categories to zero” (p. 8). It is the act of laying down arms or the condition of being disarmed. In the words of Mifflin (2009), disarmament is “the act of laying down arms, especially the reduction or abolition of a nation’s military forces and armaments” (p. 1). Disarmament could be total or partial. Total disarmament connotes a condition whereby arms or certain kinds of arms and weapons are completely removed or abolished, while partial disarmament is a situation whereby particular categories of arms and weapons are removed or abolished. Disarmament therefore is either the total or partial withdrawal of arms as a way of waning a conflict/war situation, deterring aggression or violence or a strategy of peace building.

Olaniyi and Aligwekwe (2013) however define disarmament as “the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population” (p. 23). Olaniyi and Aligwekwe’s definition is apparently more encompassing than that of the other scholars cited above. It highlights the processes, kind of arms and most importantly includes the civilians in disarmament agenda. Edeko (2011)’s definition of disarmament is also quintessential. He states that “disarmament includes disarming of combatants and irregular forces, weapons buyback programmes and arms embargoes and control” (p. 72).

Disarmament is the first phase of DDR, and logically precedes demobilization and reintegration. However, it is often a long-term process. A major problem is the collection of small weapons and light arms, which are easy to conceal and difficult to account for. The existence of large paramilitary groups and irregular forces also complicate disarmament which, under these conditions, becomes a long-term process to be carried out over a wide region, by peacekeepers, regular military forces, and civilian police. The creation of effective police forces become a high priority, both for their ability to control the territory more effectively than peacekeepers, and for the indirect effects of improved security. A safe environment greatly enhances the effectiveness of voluntary disarmament programs, by decreasing the need for civilians to retain their weapons. The

American Heritage Dictionary of English Language (2007) sees it as “the act of laying down arms, especially the reduction or abolition of a nation's military forces and armaments” or “the condition of being disarmed”. Collins English Dictionary (2009) on its part sees it as “the reduction of offensive or defensive fighting capability, as by a nation” or “the act of disarming or state of being disarmed”. But simply put; Disarmament is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. The United Nations defines disarmament as: “the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons in a conflict zone” (Anderlini and Cornaway N.D:2). Often physical disarmament takes place in assembly areas where the ex-combatants are assembled in camp-like settings, weapons are confiscated safely stored and eventually destroyed. Disarmament generally refers to a country's military or specific type of weaponry. Operationally, the most common form of disarmament is abolishment of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear arms. General and Complete Disarmament refers to the removal of all weaponry, including conventional arms. Disarmament can be contrasted with arms control, which essentially refers to the act of controlling arms rather than eliminating them. A distinction can also be made between disarmament as a process (the process of eliminating weapons), and disarmament as an end state (the absence of weapons). Disarmament has also come to be associated with three things. These include:

- i. The aforementioned arms control, which is not associated with a schedule of gradually reducing and then eliminating major weapons systems;
- ii. Nuclear disarmament, which does not address civilian weapons and military systems whose firepower and extent of damage can be considerable. For examples: the war in Iraq has led to the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians; during the Korean War, hundreds of thousands have died; and in so-called "New Wars" in Africa, millions have died. In none of these cases were nuclear weapons used. Yet, the extents of civilian and military deaths have been considerable, surpassing the damage caused by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War Two; C) Unilateral disarmament, which seeks to reduce weapons systems in either an ad hoc fashion or based on initiatives within one nation. This approach fails to leverage reductions in one country for reductions in another, or series of countries.

Furthermore, unilateral disarmament, as was advocated in the United Kingdom, fails to assuage the concerns of "realists" about the dangers of weapons systems and power projection by other countries; Philosophically, disarmament should be viewed as a form of demilitarization, part of an economic, political, technical, and military process to reduce and eliminate weapons systems. Thus, disarmament is part of a set of other strategies, like economic conversion, which aim to reduce the power of war making institutions and associated constituencies. Disarmament need not be a "utopian" project in the sense of being misguided or naive. Rather, various strategies can be used to promote the political, economic, and media power necessary for demilitarization.

Approaches to Disarmament

Arms collection centers need security guarantees, both for center personnel and for Ex-combatants. Collection and destruction of weapons should be completed quickly, to avoid having arms stolen from storage centers and used to restart fighting. Disarmament criteria may focus on specific weapons, individuals, or groups, but the specific approaches are as follow:

- i. An exclusive focus on weapons may attract individuals who seek the benefits connected to the disarmament program, but who are not ex-combatants willing to demobilize;
- ii. A focus on individual disarmament which is considered an aggressive attitude by military leaders, who may decide not to cooperate if they believe that they have lost control over the process;
- iii. A combined approach requires both surrender of weapons and individual verification of combatant status. This approach reduces abuse, and shifts the program entry criterion toward eligibility as a combatant.

Identifying a specific group for disarmament has proven to be the most effective strategy in ensuring the cooperation of commanders, although it has some undesirable consequences: strengthening the commanders' control over the combatants, and enabling abuses by commanders who "sell" access to the DDR program.

Disarmament is important not only for the material improvement of security conditions, but also for its psychological impact. There are added psychological

benefits when ex-combatants physically disable their own weapons, and are led in doing so by their commanders, immediately upon entering the disarmament site. The process symbolically underscores the transition from military to civilian life. Additionally, public destruction of weapons is an important tool in sensitizing the population and promoting the DDR program.

Barriers to disarmament

The political and economic barriers to disarmament are considerable. They mostly based on the concentrated power of those supporting militaristic approaches to foreign policy. Another key barrier is ideological. Many foundations and universities have failed to support research in disarmament, instead favoring more ad hoc and limited approaches like arms control, conflict resolution, and limits on weapons systems in specific countries. Part of this may be pragmatism, but often it is the result of a limited understanding of the history of disarmament. Attempts to restrict nuclear proliferation are of course a necessity. Bolstering these efforts would be assisted by checking the link between military intervention and nuclear proliferation. Many countries fearful of being invaded, particularly by the U.S., have tried to secure or develop nuclear weapons. As a result, policies to limit military interventions may be part of a larger demilitarization program.

The use of weapons in domestic conflicts and hitherto conventional wars can be described as a consequence of the increment in domestic conflicts that have made blacks markets of weapons to thrive. These weapons have become instruments of handling and settling conflicts in many instances. It has also encouraged the proliferation of both stationary and roaming guerrilla movements on the continent.

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Demobilization

Fusato (2003) DDR which aims at demilitarization can also be used in times of peace, to reduce the size of armed forces and redirect public spending towards other meaningful ventures. However, you must know that DDR is much more complicated in a post-conflict environment, when different fighting groups are divided by much hatred and face a real security dilemma as they give up their weapons and go back to the civil society where structures have crumbled, and the economy has become stagnant.

The strength of DDR lies in the fact that it usually supports the transition from war to peace by ensuring a safe environment, transferring ex-combatants back to civilian life, and enabling people to earn livelihoods through peaceful means instead of war. But before proceeding further in our discussion, it is essentially to understand fully the meaning of each of the combined terms (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration).

Demobilization just like any of such terms do not a singular or universally accepted definition. In other words, there are numerous definitions for the term depending on the views of the scholars involved. For examples: the Princeton University in the United States defines it as an “act of changing from a war basis to a peace basis including disbanding or discharging troops ”;the Wikipedia sees demobilization “as the process of standing down a nation's armed forces from combat-ready status”. It explains further that, this may be as a result of victory in war, or because a crisis has been peacefully resolved and military force will not be necessary. The opposite of demobilization is mobilization. Demobilization also includes the dismantling of military units and the transition of ex-combatants from military to civilian life. In times of peace, demobilization programs can be gradual and tuned to the needs of the groups being demobilized. At the end of a conflict, demobilization presents the same logistical challenges as do programs of emergency relief and resettlement of displaced people.

However, the reverse can be seen in the case of Nigeria after the end of the civil war. Going by the experiences of men involved in the war especially on the part of the Biafran Army, the demobilization cannot be said to have been properly done. This is because, many of them; forty years after the civil war are still

uncatered for. This is a damning verdict on the three Rs of Reconstruction Rehabilitation and Reintegration purportedly done by the government of Retired General Yakubu Gowon. But before demobilization can take place, there are some conditions necessary for its proper direction. Demobilization especially the one involving large numbers of soldiers are complex processes that require great coordination among the different actors involved.

As you see clearly, demobilization includes the dismantling of military units and the transition of ex-combatants from military to civilian life. In times of peace, demobilization programs can be gradual and tuned to the needs of the groups being demobilized. At the end of a conflict, demobilization presents the same logistical challenges as do programs of emergency relief and resettlement of displaced people.

Reintegration

After ex-combatants have been demobilized and disarmed, their effective and sustainable reintegration into civilian life is necessary to prevent a new escalation of the conflict. In the short term, ex-combatants who do not find peaceful ways of making a living are likely to return to conflict. In the longer term, disaffected veterans can play an important role in destabilizing the social order and polarizing the political debate, becoming easy targets of populist, reactionary, and extremist movements. In order for all this not to happen, an effective reintegration exercise must be undertaken. This is why this unit will focus on the meaning and processes involved in reintegration of ex-combatants in DDR programme. According to Mats Berdal and David H. Ucko (2013) ending conflicts must be done in a way that encourages sustainable security and this “requires a sophisticated political strategy that aims to move political and communal entities toward accommodation”. Armed groups must be disarmed, demobilised and ultimately reintegrated into social, political and economic orders in the post conflicts societies.

Reintegration, meanwhile, "is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country

and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance." Alexandra Guaqueta, in her essay on Colombia, defines political reintegration as 'letting irregular armies share power through electoral competition or transforming them into law-abiding citizens with social recognition and influence in public opinion and policy-making at the local or national levels' (p. 34). She notes that groups must be accepted by the relevant communities and have the capacity to perform as social and political interlocutors (NOUN PCR 373:75)

Reintegration Processes

Reintegration includes the following: Reinsertion, which addresses the most immediate needs of ex-combatants. Reinsertion assistance consists of short-term relief interventions, which provide a safety net for demobilized ex-combatants. Assistance may include housing, medical care, food, and elementary education for children. The distribution of cash allowances has proven to be the most effective and efficient way to provide reinsertion assistance. Cash payments are preferred over in-kind assistance because of reduced transaction costs, easier and more transparent accounting, and because cash payments can adapt more closely to the specific needs of beneficiaries. Additionally, cash allowances have the positive psychological effect of empowering ex-combatants to take charge of their lives.

However, cash payments present two dilemmas: they can give the negative impression of being "cash for weapons," and they can be easily lost or misused for consumption and pleasure. A common solution to this problem is to distribute allowances neither in advance, nor at the time of disarmament, but instead after arrival at the community of destination, in separate installments, and accompanied by post-discharge counseling. Initiatives aimed at full and self-sustained social and economic reintegration, which must follow temporary reinsertion assistance programs. Ex-combatants are a special group who present additional challenges, since:

- i. They constitute a potential security threat;
- ii. They may be viewed with fear, suspicion, and resentment by the rest of the population;
- iii. They are often uprooted from their communities of origin and their social networks;
- iv. They may not know or may no longer accept basic social rules.

For these reasons, the first step in reintegration of ex-combatants is their inclusion in society. DDR programs provide cooperation with formal and informal local social networks, psychological support and counseling, and initiatives for the reunification of families.

Economic Reintegration

This is the final requirement for a DDR program to be successful and sustainable in the long term. The goal of economic reintegration efforts is to provide ex-combatants with financial independence through employment. Different initiatives should cater to the special needs of disabled veterans who cannot reintegrate into the labor force, for rural settlers, and for urban settlers. Common economic integration programs include education and professional training, public employment, encouragement of private initiative through skills development and microcredit support, and access to land.

The Challenges of Reintegrating into Civil Society

Despite the logistical challenges of disarmament and demobilization, reintegration which is the acquisition of civilian status and sustainable employment and income—is considered the most difficult phase of any DDR process. An Institute for Security Studies (ISS) paper calls it “the Achilles heel of DDR”. One author says donors have the mistaken idea that “As soon as you get guns out of their hands, they are suddenly innocuous human beings again, but that is not the case at all.” Others argue that reintegration’s difficulties push it beyond the scope of any DDR process, and thus this phase should be confined to reinsertion. Because DDR originally focused on short-term disarmament, reintegration is the least developed phase, in some cases confined to vocational training in one or two fields. According to Massimo (2003) “You have to provide an economic alternative to living by the gun,”. But in post-conflict countries, job opportunities are scarce, and sometimes communities are hesitant to employ ex-combatants. In Liberia for example after the civil war the ex-combatants were said not to face stigmatization but the unemployment rate was put at around 80 percent. Even now it is still hard to find jobs.

Other challenges of reintegration programmes in Africa include the following:

- i. The inflation of the number of combatants to DDR. For instance in Côte d'Ivoire, this number increased from about 30,000 to more than 45,000 within a few months. More than 100,000 combatants have been recently disarmed and demobilized in Liberia, which is almost triple the number of assessed at the beginning of the process. More than 70,000 ex-combatants went through the DDR process in Sierra Leone. Participants stressed that economic incentives offered to ex-combatants are certainly one of the reasons for this inflation in numbers of ex-combatants.
- ii. Increasing numbers of child combatants to DDR: almost 3,000 today in Côte d'Ivoire, about 7,000 went through DDR process in Sierra Leone and more than 10,000 in Liberia.
- iii. Gap between the aspiration of ex-combatants to join post-conflict (re)formed national armed and security forces on the one hand and, on the other hand, the absorption capacity of these forces. A recent investigation from the National Commission on DDR of Côte d'Ivoire shows that a large majority of young combatants there would like, as a "first choice", to be integrated into 2 It is important to stress that the lack of funding experienced in West Africa is not necessarily the case for reintegration programmes in other regions. In the Great Lakes for instance, there are sufficient funds for DDR (MDRP), but these programmes face difficulties that are mainly of a political nature.

The following conditions are required before beginning a DDR program, and help to guarantee its success:

- i. Security
- ii. Inclusion of all Warring Parties
- iii. Political Agreement
- iv. Assembly
- v. Orientation
- vi. Transportation

For any reintegration programme to be successful, this is need for adequate long term planning especially in the area of finance. Planning of the long term financing of the reintegration of ex-combatants. Such long term planning should be effective

well before the commencement of the implementation of DDR programmes. Preferably, long term financing of reintegration should take place in parallel with negotiations on peace agreements. For swift and credible implementation, the planning and financing of DDR must be included in the agenda of the peace negotiations. Optimization of the financing architecture of reintegration. It is also important to avoid the fragmentation of the financing of reintegration programmes. To this effect, one could envisage the establishment of a global fund for the long term financing of post-conflict reintegration of ex-combatants. Such a fund would coherently merge the reintegration programmes into the planning and implementation of policies related to post-conflict economic reconstruction, poverty alleviation, youth employment and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, a network of donors and development partners could be established, using the scheme devised in Guinea Bissau. For effective reintegration of ex-combatants, it is extremely important that funds pledged by international partners be made available within appropriate time frames.

Finding Peacetime Substitutes for the Benefits of War

To prevent ex-combatants from becoming marginalised in post-conflict societies, it is necessary to find substitutes for the loss of empowerment that demobilisation entails. It is important to underline that these substitutes should never be seen as rewards, since this can be conceived as offensive by civilians who may have suffered at the hands of ex-combatants. They should instead be seen as mechanisms that ease the transformation of combatants' into civilians and are therefore necessary to attain peace and development. However, since giving these substitutes may be controversial, it should be done in conjunction with efforts at reconciliation. There are four main forms of substitutes. First, when handing in their weapons, ex-combatants lose the ability to fend for their own security, whereby it is imperative to find ways to ensure their physical security. Second, the economic survival of ex-combatants and their families' must be ensured. Third, there needs to be mechanisms that allow ex-combatants to channel their political demands peacefully. Finally, it is important to find ways to safeguard the societal prestige of ex-combatants (Nilsson, 2005: 39).

The Physical Security of Ex-Combatants

In civil wars the majority of victims are civilians. As a civilian it may be safer to join an armed group than standing outside one. Recruitment can therefore be a good way of protecting oneself and one's family from murder, pillage, forced transfer and other forms of harassment (Keen, 2000b: 23, 25, 31; Utas 2003: 16). Once demobilised, however, former guerrillas and soldiers lose the ability to fend for their own and their families' security. It is therefore argued that it is essential to ensure the physical security of ex-combatants when they return to civilian life. If this is not done, it will not only be difficult to persuade combatants to disarm, there is also a high probability that already disarmed and demobilised combatants will rearm themselves. (Berdal, 1996:17-18; Call & Stanley, 2003:212-13, 216, 218; Stedman, 2003:110). (Nilsson, 2005: 39-40).

The Economic Security of Ex-Combatants

One of the main benefits of participating in war is the opportunity for economic gain. Some authors argue that the central aim of rebellion is economic profit, especially through the illegal taxation of natural resources for export (Collier 2000:839, 852). Even though other factors may explain the outbreak of violence, economic considerations may become more important with time. In some civil wars, an economic interest in continuing the war at a profitable level may replace defeating the enemy as the main objective (Berdal and Malone, 2000:2, 6). Taking part in war can also be profitable for the individual. Being a combatant ensures a certain income either in the form of a salary or from looting. The use of violence may also be a way to gain access to land, water and mineral resources by forcing original owners away (Berdal, 1996:16- 17; Keen, 2000b:23-25, 29-31). According to a majority of scholars, ensuring the economic security of ex-combatants is the most decisive factor in the post-demobilisation phase. If former soldiers and guerrilla fighters lack means of securing their economic survival as civilians, there is a high probability that they will take up arms again (Özerdem, 2002:962). The best way of doing this is to provide ex-combatants with meaningful occupations whereby they can support themselves and their families (Berdal, 1996:18; Call & Stanley, 2003:215-16; Gamba, 2003:126, 133; Mehlum, Moene & Torvik, 2002:456-57; Spear, 2002:150; Özerdem, 2002:969-71). (Nilsson, 2005: 43).

The Political Influence of Ex-Combatants

During war, alternative political institutions are created, such as militias and guerrilla groups. By using violence and intimidation, these groups can change established power structures and take control over large tracks of territory. Being a member of such a group also offers individuals the opportunity for political empowerment. Through the use of arms, combatants can reverse old relationships of dominance and humiliation that they may have suffered under in their local societies. It can also give them the power to extract revenge on individuals who wronged them in the past (Keen, 2000b:23, 25; Lyons, 2004:269, 271; Utas, 2003:15-16). According to some scholars, it is necessary to ensure that ex-combatants do not become politically marginalised after demobilisation. It is, in other words, crucial that they are allowed to influence decisions affecting them. Failure to do so could at worst lead to renewed warfare (Spencer, 1997:65; Disarmament..., 2004:26). A similar line of thinking can be found among those who argue that for peace to prevail, it is crucial that former rebels are encouraged to engage in normal politics (Zartman, 1995:337). It is then not far-fetched to argue that if the political system includes political parties, which ex-combatants believe represent their interests, ex-combatants may be less inclined to resort to violence (Nilsson, 2005:48-49).

Safeguarding the Societal Prestige of Ex-Combatants

A final form of empowerment is the societal prestige that combatants gain from carrying arms. Being part of an armed group can give a certain status in society. As protectors of local communities, combatants and warlords often receive the respect and appreciation of the local population (Lundin, 1998:105; Lyons, 2004:269; Spear, 2002:145). Combatants can also be filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment that they are taking part in an important struggle (Schafer, 2001:229, 231). In some conflict areas, participation in violence symbolises boys' ascent to manhood (Peteet, 2002:260, 263; Utas 2003:9). Becoming a combatant can therefore have a great symbolic value. With the arrival of peace, combatants risk losing the status associated with being a fighter. This loss can be threatening for both soldiers and guerrillas. Ex-combatants therefore need to be given new roles in society that grant them an equivalent amount of prestige or, if possible, at least acknowledge the positive role they had during the conflict. Failure to do so may result in ex-combatants creating new roles for themselves in society, such as that

of vigilantes, which guarantees continued societal respect through the usage of violence (Spear, 2002:145). Safeguarding the societal prestige of ex-combatants must, however, be done with great care, as ex-combatants may have committed serious atrocities. In some post-conflict societies, it may not even be possible, since it would make reconciliation extremely difficult. (Nilsson, 2005:51).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Failed State Theory. The term “failed state” is often used to describe a state perceived as having failed at some of essential responsibilities of a sovereign government. A failed state is one that has shattered social and political structures (Anyanwu, 2005). It is characterized by social, political and economic failure. Common characteristics of a failing state is when a central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, non-provision of public utilities or services, widespread corruption and criminality; refugees and involuntary movement of populations, and sharp economic decline (ibid). (Anyanwu, 2005) notes that failing states are invariably the product of a collapse of the power structures providing political supports for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence. It is the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. Not only are the functions of government suspended, but its assets are destroyed or looted; and experienced officials are killed or flee the country.

Literature Review

Anderlini and Conaway (N.D:1) present demobilization as the formal disbanding of military formations and, at the individual level, is the process of releasing combatants from a mobilized state. The discharge of ex-combatants spans over a period of time, during which they are usually conveyed to their homes or new districts and granted small initial reinsertion packages to enhance their resettlement process. They inform further those ex-combatants or guerrillas are in some cases eager to return to their homes while in some cases they may deliberately stall the process out of fear of being rejected when they get back to their communities. In Uganda, in the early 1990s, in order to forestall any hitch or resistance from the ex-combatants, they and their families were briefed prior to the

distribution of settling down kit that included shelter, food, transport, clothing and medical care for a transition period of six-months.

Methodology

The method adopted in this study is content analysis, using both primary and secondary data. The secondary data employed include existing literature on the topic such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, conference papers, UN and ECOWAS publications, periodicals and other related documents. In the study, the internet was also consulted.

Discussion and Findings

- i. From the foregoing, this study empirically presented the Role of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of Ex-Combatants and Democratic Transition from War to Peace in Nigeria.
- ii. The failing economy, insecurity, high rate of unemployment, poverty, failure of government to provide basic necessities of life and corruption stand as a cog in the wheel to appreciable efforts and policies at arresting the menace in the country.
- iii. Most of the Nigerian borders are porous, therefore, giving room for easy influx, movement and exit of arms, human trafficking and drugs.
- iv. However, high level of corruption in Nigeria constitutes the various security risks bedeviling the state.

Conclusion

In spite of the challenges above, the situation is not completely hopeless. Even it is still fair to conclude that democracy is steadily taking root in many of these traumatised countries. It is however very important, that in the pursuit of the ideal governance system, these countries do not overlook the socio-economic component of the post-war recovery agenda and they must prepare to learn from positive experience of others. For example, they can learn from the Rwanda experience. Although the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) leader, Paul Kagame, remains in charge as president of the country after he was returned through an election, the country has remarkably remade itself after the 1994 genocide. Indeed, in some specific aspects of liberal democracy, economic freedom and popular participation in politics, the tiny East African country is a world leader.

Recommendations

- i. The study recommended that there is need for the Federal, State and Local Government in Nigeria to collaborate in the process of DDR of Ex-Combatants and Democratic Transition for War to Peace in Nigeria.
- ii. Government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, Security operatives, and other critical stakeholders should overhaul the relief material distribution process through the strict monitoring of the distribution team to avoid misuse of authority, diversion of relief materials, segregation, harassment, gender bias, and other irregularities before, during and after distribution.
- iii. There is the need for proper coordination among NGOs and other humanitarian bodies to ensure proper DDR process.
- iv. The Federal Government of Nigeria should erect a fully equipped designated area for DDR of Ex-Combatants.

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