



DISEC

Oakridge MUN 2026

Disarmament and International Security Committee
(DISEC)

**Agenda: Reforming Disarmament, Demobilization, and
Reintegration (DDR) Programs to Tackle the Emergence of Violent
Extremist Groups in Post-Conflict Societies**

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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

We are very pleased to welcome you to the simulation of the **UNGA: DISEC** at **Oak MUN 2026**. It is an honour to serve as your Executive Board for the duration of the conference. This Background Guide is designed to give you an insight into the case at hand, so we hope this acts as only a **catalyst** for furthering your research and not limited to just this guide. Please refer to it carefully. Remember, a thorough understanding of the problem is the first step to solving it.

Do understand that this Background Guide is in no way exhaustive and is only meant to provide you with enough background information to establish a platform for beginning the research. Delegates are highly recommended to do a good amount of research beyond what is covered in the Guide. The guide cannot be used as proof during the committee proceedings under any circumstances.

We understand that MUN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first-timers but it must be noted that our aspirations from the delegates are not how experienced or articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how one manages the balance to respect disparities and differences of opinion and work around this while extending their foreign policy to present comprehensive solutions without compromising on their self-interests and initiate consensus building.

New ideas are by their very nature disruptive, but far less disruptive than a world set against the backdrop of stereotypes and regional instability due to which reform is essential in policy making and conflict resolution. At any point during your research, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Board Members for clarifications or in case you need help in any other aspect. We look forward to a fruitful discussion and an enriching experience with all of you.

Best regards,

Eswar Chava Aarav Sethi Anirudh Sai Bhimrao **Chairperson Vice Chairperson**
Rapporteur

MUN Rules Of Procedure (ROP)

1. Roll Call

- The Chair calls on each country to declare if they are "Present" or "Present and Voting." It refers to the voting procedure on the Draft Resolution, where a delegate can vote "Yes", "No", or opt to "Abstain".
- If "Present and Voting," the delegate cannot abstain from voting. If the delegate chooses to respond with "Present", they may answer with "Present and Voting" on subsequent days, but this is not permissible for "Present and Voting" as this reply must be used consistently from that point forth.

2. Setting the Agenda

- Delegates motion to set the agenda, followed by a formal debate on which topic to discuss first. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

3. Speakers' List

- After passing a motion to enter formal debate, delegates are placed on a speakers' list to make formal speeches. Time limits are set, and the Chair calls on delegates to speak in order.
- A delegate must raise their placard if they wish to add their name to this list. They can be on this list only once on any occasion.

4. Points

- **Point of Order:** To correct a procedural error by the Chair.
- **Point of Personal Privilege:** For personal discomfort (e.g., if the room is too cold, or if a fellow delegate cannot be heard).
- **Point of Inquiry:** To ask questions about discussion or statements in committee.
- **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry:** To ask questions with regard to the Rules of Procedure.

5. Motions

- **Motion to Suspend the Meeting:** To break for caucuses or adjourn the session.
- **Motion to Close Debate:** Ends the discussion on a topic and moves to voting. Requires a two-thirds majority.
- **Motion to Table the Topic:** Postpones debate on a topic. Requires a majority vote.

6. Yields

- **Yield to the Executive Board:** A delegate yields their remaining time from their speech to the Executive Board. It is to be used as they see fit.
- **Yield to Another Delegate:** A delegate yields their remaining time for another delegate to speak. (This delegate's permission must be sought beforehand)
- **Yield to Points of Information:** A delegate yields their remaining time to Points of Information to the committee.
- **Yield to Comments:** A delegate yields their remaining time to comments from the committee.

7. Caucuses

- **Moderated Caucus:** The Chair controls the speaking order with shorter, focused speeches. The topic selected is a narrowed version of the agenda, chosen by the delegate who proposed the moderated caucus.
- **Unmoderated Caucus:** Informal discussion among delegates not under the moderation of the Executive Board.

8. Draft Resolutions and Amendments

- Delegates collaborate to create draft resolutions, which are formal solutions to the discussed issue.
- **Friendly Amendments:** Accepted by all sponsors without a vote.
- **Unfriendly Amendments:** Need to be voted on to be added.

9. Voting

- **Procedural Votes:** Includes motions and amendments; all members must vote.
- **Substantive Votes:** For resolutions and unfriendly amendments; only "Present and Voting" delegates may vote, and abstentions are allowed.

Important Points to Remember

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

1. **Procedure:** The purpose of putting in procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organized and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of the agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding procedure.
2. **Foreign Policy:** Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.
3. **Role of the Executive Board:** The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.
4. **Nature of Source/Evidence:** This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:
 - **United Nations:** Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as a credible proof to support a claim or argument. Documents from multilateral organizations like OIC, NATO, SAARC, BRICS,

EU, ASEAN, the International Court of Justice, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.

- **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.
- **News Sources:** Reuters — any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council. State operated News Agencies — these reports can be used in support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are RIA Novosti (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency (People's Republic of China), etc.

Please Note

Reports from NGOs working with UNESCO, UNICEF and other UN bodies will be accepted. Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like The Guardian, Times of India, etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as part of their statements.

Guidelines

- Read the entirety of the background guide in the order it was written. Make sure to highlight the names of specific treaties, documents, resolutions, conventions, international bodies, events and any other specific incidents so that you can get back to them later and do a lot more thorough research.
- Understand some of the basic details regarding the country that you've been allotted whether this be the capital, current affairs regarding geopolitical situation, political hierarchy etc. While not strictly necessary, you never know when this can turn out to be handy. Geography Now's A - Z Country List has been a particularly helpful resource for this.
- Use a search engine of your choice to create as many tabs as possible for the highlighted terms from your background guide. Wikipedia or a YouTube video act as a great way to get a brief summary of the incidents at

hand but such sources (especially Wikipedia articles) cannot be used in committee as sources.

- Delve into deeper research regarding the particular position of your allocation with the agenda at hand. Try searching for the voting stances of your allocation in related conventions and understanding the reasons for voting as so. UN Press Releases are also a helpful source for this matter.
- Find the website for the foreign ministry of the country you have been assigned alongside the "Permanent Mission of COUNTRY to the United Nations" website and search for a key term relating to the agenda, this should often give you statements from recent press conferences or UN committee sessions that can act as valuable sources of information in forming a stance.
- Keep a handy copy of the Charter of the United Nations, whether as a .pdf file extension or a physical copy works. This contains the founding principles of the United Nations and contains articles that lay out the mandate of the six bodies that the United Nations is primarily divided into. Spend some additional time researching the specific mandate and functions of the committee that you have been assigned.
- The Executive Board may ask for the source of a statement that a delegate makes in committee either during a Point of Order circumstance or if said statement stands to be of interest to the Executive Board. Therefore, it is recommended that delegates keep track of their sources when making / disputing a claim and also ensure their validity. Please do remember that while you as a delegate are allowed to cite any source you wish during committee.

Hierarchy of evidence

Evidence can be presented from a wide variety of sources, but not all sources are treated as equal. Here's the hierarchy in which evidence is categorised:

Tier 1: Includes any publication, statement, resolution, or document released by any of the Nations' official organs or committees; any publication, statement, or document released by a UN member state in its own capacity. The evidence falling in this tier is considered most reliable during the simulation.

Tier 2: Includes: any news article published by any official media source that is owned and controlled by a UN member state. E.g.: Xinhua News (China), Prasar Bharti (India), BBC (United Kingdom) etcetera. The evidence falling in this tier is considered sufficiently reliable in case no other evidence from any Tier 1 source is available on that particular fact, event, or situation.

Tier 3: Includes: any publication from news sources of international repute such as Reuters, The New York Times, Agence-France Presse, etcetera. The evidence falling under this tier is considered the least reliable for the purposes of this simulation. Yet, if no better source is available in a certain scenario, it may be considered.

Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations

Foreign policy, in simple terms, is what your country aims to achieve in regard to the issue at hand or in general with its relations with other countries.

1. What role must foreign policy play in your research?

Understanding the foreign policy of your country must be a checkbox that you tick off at the very beginning of your research.

Your foreign policy should dictate everything from the arguments you make, the reasoning you give for making those arguments, and the actions you take in the Council.

2. Where do I look to find foreign policy?

Most of the time, foreign policy is not explicitly stated. It must be inferred from the actions and statements issued by the country. Reading the meeting records from previous meetings of UNSC (or any other UN body where your country might have spoken on the issue) is a great place to start. If such records are unavailable, look for statements from your country's Foreign Ministry (or equivalent like Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs etcetera) and top leadership (PM, Pres., Secretary of State, Defence Minister).

Foreign Relations on the other hand refers to the diplomatic ties that one country has with another and considers elements such as the mutual presence of embassies, consulates, ambassadors & diplomatic dialogue. More often than not, foreign policy is what will be of your primary concern during the MUN, but it is important to also consider any extremities in your allotted country's foreign relations.

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six organs of the United Nations (UN) and the primary policy making and representative organ of the United Nations where all of the 193 members of the UN are represented in the General Assembly. The Disarmament and International Security Committee is the first committee under the General Assembly that deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to world peace.

The six committees of the United Nations General Assembly being:

- First Committee - Disarmament & International Security,
- Second Committee - Economic & Financial Council,
- Third Committee - Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues,
- Fourth Committee - Special Political & Decolonization Committee,
- Fifth Committee - Administrative & Budgetary, &
- Sixth Committee - Legal.

Mandate

The Disarmament and International Security Committee is mandated to address the nuclear, chemical, biological, conventional, etc. weapon proliferation and to deal with the issues threatening international security and peace.

DISEC makes recommendations to the UNGA regarding the resolutions and establishes principles and international cooperation between states to maintain global security. It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

DISEC works closely with other UN bodies and agencies like the United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA). The First Committee sessions are structured into three distinctive stages: 1. General debate, 2. Thematic discussions, & 3. Action on Drafts.

Background

Before we delve into the DDR process, it's important to understand where DDR falls into place from a UN perspective. What differentiates these programmes from other efforts undertaken by the United Nations towards achieving peace and stability? What terminology is applicable in this context?

Peacebuilding is one among a range of activities undertaken by the United Nations to maintain international peace and security throughout the world. The other activities are:

- conflict prevention and mediation
- peacemaking
- peace enforcement
- peacekeeping

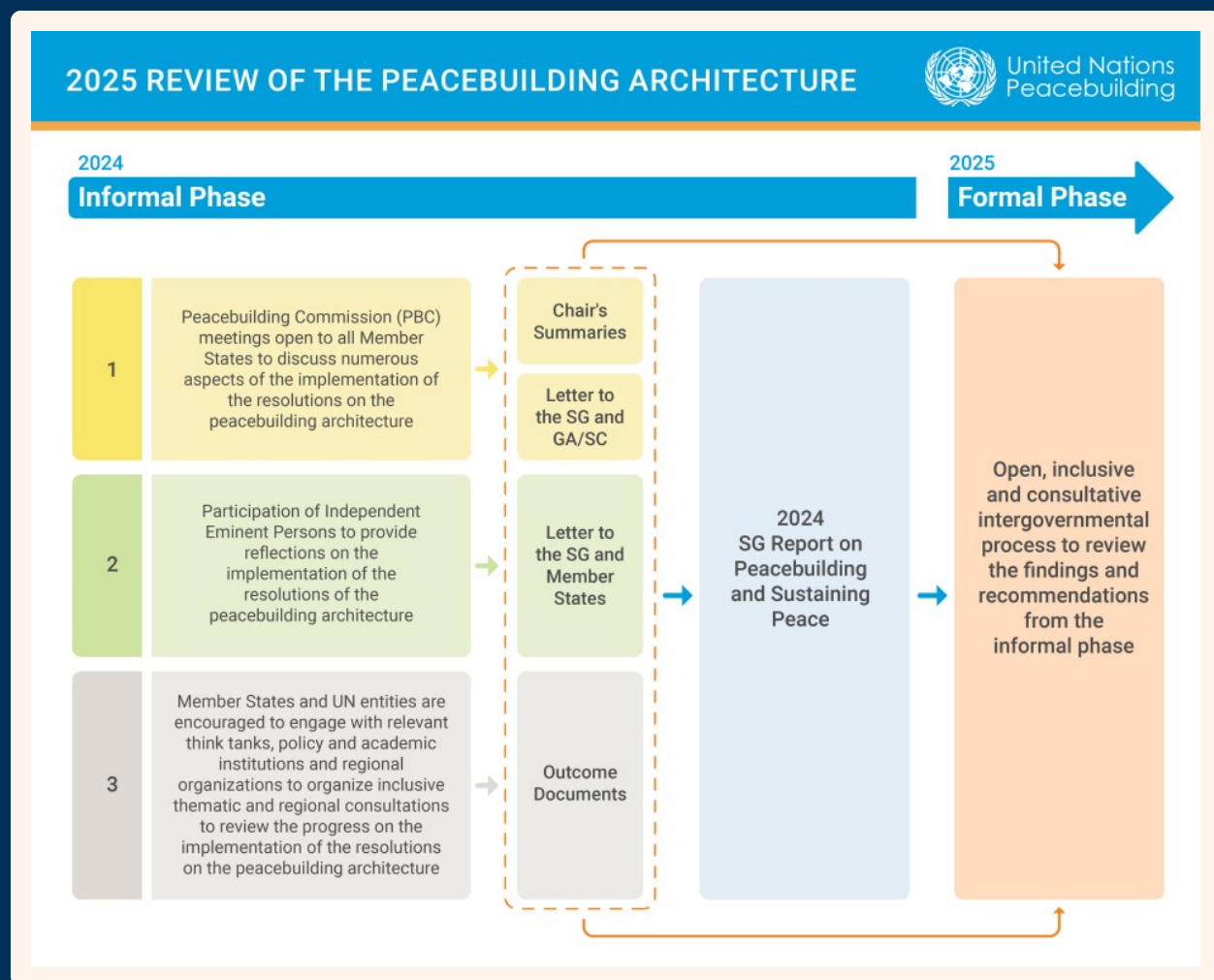
Peacebuilding aims to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. It is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. Peacebuilding measures address core issues that affect the functioning of society and the State, and seek to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions.

Building lasting peace in war-torn societies is a daunting challenge for global peace and security. Peacebuilding requires sustained international support for national efforts across the broadest range of activities. For instance, peacebuilders monitor ceasefires, demobilize and reintegrate combatants, assist the return of refugees and displaced persons, help to organize and monitor elections of a new government, support justice and security sector reforms, enhance human rights protections, and foster reconciliation after past atrocities.

Peacebuilding involves action by a wide array of organizations of the UN system, including the World Bank, regional economic commissions, NGOs and local citizens' groups. It has played a prominent role in UN operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia and Mozambique, as well as more recently in Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. An example of inter-state peacebuilding has been the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Recognizing that the UN needs to better anticipate and respond to the challenges of peacebuilding, the 2005 World Summit approved the creation of a new Peacebuilding Commission. In the resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, resolution 60/180 and resolution 1645, the UN General Assembly and the Security Council mandated it to bring together all relevant actors to advise on the proposed integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery; to marshal resources and help ensure predictable financing for these activities; and to develop best practices in collaboration with political, security, humanitarian and development actors. The resolutions also identify the need for the Commission to extend the period of international attention on post-conflict countries, and where necessary, highlight any gaps which threaten to undermine peacebuilding.



Institutional Architecture

The General Assembly and Security Council resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission also provided for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Fund & and a Peacebuilding Support Office.

- **Peacebuilding Commission (PBC):** An intergovernmental advisory body established in 2005 with 31 member states drawn from the Security Council, ECOSOC, major troop contributors, and top financial contributors. The PBC convenes country-specific configurations for states on its agenda, currently including Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and The Gambia and provides strategic advice, promotes coherence among international actors and mobilizes resources.
- **Peacebuilding Fund (PBF):** The UN's central fund for peacebuilding activities, financed entirely by voluntary contributions from member states. With a core annual budget typically between \$120-\$180 million, the PBF has funded over 2,000 projects in 60+ countries since 2006. It operates as a 'risk-taking' fund, providing quick-impact financing for activities that other UN or bilateral donors are unwilling to fund, including experimental DDR programming in complex political environments.
- **Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO):** The UN Secretariat body supporting the PBC and administering the PBF. The PBSO coordinates UN-system engagement on peacebuilding issues and serves as the institutional memory for peacebuilding practice.
- **UN Missions with Peacebuilding Mandates:** Integrated UN missions: UNMISS (South Sudan), MINUSMA (Mali, terminated 2023), MONUSCO (DRC), and UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire, terminated 2017), that contain DDR components as core elements of their mandates, with DDR sections staffed by DPPA and DPO personnel.

DDR & SSR are key components of peacebuilding. This Background Guide will explain both concepts in detail. You will realize why they're considered key components of peacebuilding after noticing the extensive similarities in their objectives.

What is DDR?

The UN first became involved in DDR through the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), which was deployed in 1989. Since then, the UN has carried out and supported DDR programmes in more than 20 countries around the world, both within and outside of peacekeeping operations. The objective of the DDR process is to contribute to security and stability in post conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants together make up a complex process with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions.

This process aims to deal with the post-conflict security problem that arises when combatants are left without livelihoods and support networks during the vital period stretching from conflict to peace, recovery and development. DDR also helps build national capacity to assist in the reintegration of ex-combatants and to support communities receiving ex-combatants and working for their peaceful and sustainable reintegration. Through a process of comprehensively disarming combatants, preparing them for civilian life and providing them with opportunities for sustainable social and economic reintegration, DDR aims to support this high-risk group so that they become stakeholders in the peace process.

Key Definitions

Disarmament is 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. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

Demobilization is the formal and controlled dissolution of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion.

Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-

term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year.

Reintegration 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.

A **combatant** is a person who, based on an analogy with the definition set out in the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War in relation to persons engaged in international armed conflicts, is a member of a national army or an irregular military; or is actively participating in military activities and hostilities; or is involved in recruiting or training military personnel; or holds a command or decision-making position within a national army or an armed organization; or arrived in a host country carrying arms or in military uniform or as part of a military structure; or having arrived in a host country as an ordinary civilian, thereafter assumes, or shows determination to assume, any of the above attributes.

Components of DDR

DDR usually has three types of beneficiaries:

- **Combatants:** Most of the beneficiaries are adult males who have participated in combat and/or support roles such as cooks, porters or messengers. However, there may also be women and children, including those abducted and sexually exploited.
- **Dependents:** The spouses, children and other dependents of ex-combatants can also be direct beneficiaries.
- **Communities:** The communities where ex-combatants resettle may benefit from DDR programs, especially when they are delivered through community-based mechanisms.

DDR must also have clear and unambiguous eligibility criteria:

- **Children:** According to the United Nations, the recruitment of children under 18 into the armed forces is not only illegal but one of the worst forms of child labour. The
- recruitment of children under 15 is considered a war crime. When a DDR program includes children, they must be separated from adult ex-combatants and receive assistance specifically designed for their needs (interim care centres, family tracing, psycho-social support, and recreation).
- **Youth:** A large number of ex combatants are between 15 and 24 years old. Many have not been socialized by their families and communities. They may also have missed education and employment opportunities. DDR programs ought to consider the special needs and potential of this group (for example, substance abuse treatment, youth clubs).
- **Women:** Female ex-combatants, supporters, and dependents ought to be formally included in the DDR process and receive assistance specifically designed for their needs and aspirations (for example, separate shelter and sanitation facilities, treatment for sexual and gender based violence, reproductive health services, childcare, and other gender specific services). Female combatants who have achieved equality on the battlefield may find it difficult to return to more traditional female roles. This was true for female members of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).
- **Disabled:** Disabled and chronically ill ex-combatants also require specialized assistance. This includes health screening to identify rehabilitation and treatment options and reintegration assistance to enable independent living and community-based care. In Uganda, about 17 percent of the ex-combatants suffered from HIV/AIDS, which led to the design of a specific health component within the DDR program.

Breakdown of DDR Programs

Disarmament is the first component of the DDR program. The separation of combatants from their weapons signals the end of their involvement in active combat. It also enables a secure environment where demobilization and reintegration can take place. It is the most technically visible phase of DDR and the

one most directly associated in public consciousness with 'ending a war.' In practice, disarmament encompasses:

(1) the physical collection and cantonment of weapons in designated assembly areas. (2) documentation (serial number recording, categorization) of collected weapons. (3) storage under secure UN or national military custody. (4) eventual disposal, which may include destruction, demilitarization, conversion, or transfer to national security forces.

Disarmament often includes the following activities:

- **Information gathering and operational planning:** Information is collected on the size, profile, and deployment of the armed forces and the number, type, and location of their weapons. An information and sensitization campaign is also carried out to raise public awareness about the disarmament process.
- **Weapons collection:** Combatants are gathered at pick-up points, moved to weapons collection points or disarmament sites, and disarmed. This process must not be linked
- to the cash payments provided during reinsertion. Otherwise, the program may be seen as an arms buy-back scheme, which can lead to increased arms flows to the country.
- **Stockpile management and weapons destruction:** Weapons, ammunition, and explosives are counted, stored, moved, and/or destroyed. Where possible, the UN encourages the immediate destruction of all collected weapons. Otherwise, as in Sierra Leone in 2000, they may be used to restart the conflict.

When more than one group is being disarmed, the principle of “proportional and fair” disarmament needs to apply. This ensures that all groups are disarmed at the same rate and avoids a sudden imbalance in military capabilities.

Demobilization is the second component of the DDR program. The separation of combatants from their command and control structures mark their formal transition from military to civilian life. Whereas disarmament is primarily carried out by the military and supported by civilians, demobilization is primarily carried out by civilians and supported by the military. It encompasses:

(1) the formal mustering of combatants at cantonment or assembly sites. (2) registration and profiling of ex-combatants (recording personal data, military history, skills, family situation). (3) discharge processing, including issue of discharge documentation that may be critical for accessing benefits, employment, or legal status. (4) the initial period of transitional support (food, shelter, basic medical care, counselling)

in cantonment prior to return or resettlement.

There are two types of demobilization: *static* (cantonment or combatants are brought to demobilization sites) or *mobile* (demobilization services are brought to the combatants). DDR programs are increasingly using mobile demobilization as it tends to be cheaper, faster, and more flexible. Where cantonment is necessary, it needs to be as short as possible. Otherwise, combatants can become a serious threat to security. In Mozambique, for example, combatants escaped by taking UN camp staff hostage, blocking roads, and appropriating vehicles.

Demobilization usually consists of the following activities: **Registration and documentation:** Eligibility is determined through a screening process; socio-economic data are collected to inform the design of the reintegration assistance; and nontransferable identity documents (numbered, stamped, and with a photo) are given to each ex-combatant. In Cambodia, a market for counterfeit ID cards developed due to rumours of large benefit packages. **Health screening:** Ex-combatants are screened for chronic illness and/or disability. Voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS should also be offered. This is important because the combatant lifestyle (separation from spouse, opportunities for unprotected sex, tendency to take greater risks) increases the likelihood of contracting HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

Pre-discharge orientation: Information on the DDR process is provided and the challenges of the transition from military to civilian life (rights and responsibilities) are explained. In Rwanda, inadequate pre-discharge orientation led to unrealistic expectations among ex-combatants. **Discharge:** Discharge documents that recognize military involvement, demobilization, and eligibility for reinsertion and reintegration assistance are given to each ex-combatant.

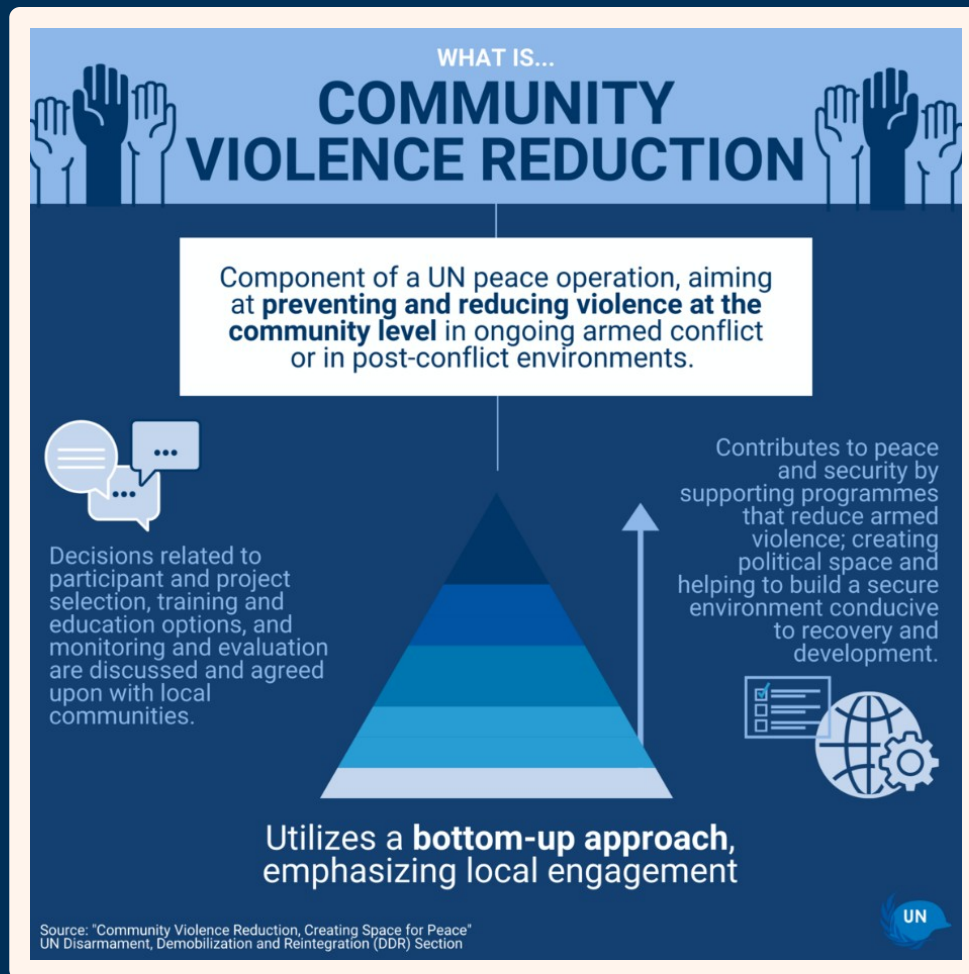
To bridge the gap between demobilization and reintegration, DDR programs provide reinsertion assistance to cover the immediate and basic needs of ex-combatants and their dependents. This assistance needs to be appropriate to the socio-economic context. It can be in-kind or cash. When cash is provided, it needs to be paid in

instalments and can be linked to quick impact community-based projects. This assistance may also include transport and/or cash for transport.

Reintegration is the third component of the DDR program. The sustainability of the disarmament and demobilization processes depends on the successful social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants. This is a complex process where ex-combatants, many of them with no memory of family or community life, return to their communities and adjust to civilian life. The communities, many of them also transformed by the conflict, play an important role in the ex-combatants' reintegration. In Rwanda, this was very difficult because many ex-combatants had lost their families during the genocide or came from neighbouring countries and had no community to return to. Others had committed crimes in their communities or wanted to begin a new life in the city.

Reintegration assistance must be based on a detailed assessment of:

- **Beneficiaries:** A profile of the combatant (age, gender, marital status, dependents, education, health, needs, expectations, and areas of return) is developed before and verified during demobilization.
- **Areas of return and resettlement:** Based on the profile of combatants, an assessment is made of the economic and social potential of the areas of return (including information on its natural resources, infrastructure, security situation, social capital, and perceptions of and willingness to accept ex-combatants).
- **Reintegration opportunities and services:** A nationwide mapping exercise determines employment opportunities (in existing enterprises, self-employment schemes, etc.) and services (education, training, credit, community mobilization).



What is Community Violence Reduction? (Source: UN DDR Section).

This assistance can include the following activities:

- **Information, counselling and referral:** General information is provided on the reintegration process and the opportunities available to all ex-combatants. Then, specialized counselling is provided to each ex-combatant based on his or her profile. Finally, ex-combatants are referred to support services within the DDR program (grant mechanisms, for example). They are also referred to other services such as health, education, training, jobs, etc.
- **Economic reintegration:** Education and training assistance includes “catch-up” education, vocational training, apprenticeships, and life skills development. This assistance ought to respond to the needs of the labour market, i.e., help ex combatants find jobs. Livelihood and income generation assistance consists of access to land (where possible), short-term public

works, grants for small businesses, business development services, and temporary wage subsidies to businesses that hire ex-combatants. In Ethiopia, for example, assistance was organized around specific modes of subsistence: upland crop farmers received coffee, lowland wheat cultivators received draft animals, and city dwellers received training, apprenticeships, and microcredit.

- **Social reintegration:** Information and sensitization activities can reduce suspicion and rebuild trust between ex-combatants and the communities that receive them. Religious and/or other community organizations (Buddhist village associations in Cambodia, church-led repatriation committees in Namibia, and community development councils in East Timor) can play a role here. In addition, it is important for communities to benefit from the DDR program. For example, community-based mechanisms can be used to deliver reintegration assistance; public works projects can focus on community infrastructure such as roads and schools; and business development initiatives can include community members. Economic collaboration can be critical to social integration.

It is important to meet the urgent and specific needs of ex-combatants without turning them into a privileged group, which can create resentment in the receiving community. This means that reintegration assistance should be limited in time and scope and be delivered through community-based mechanisms. The Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration takes this a step further by suggesting that a parallel program be set up to directly address the needs of the affected communities.

The 2006 Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) recognize that reintegration is not complete until ex-combatants are economically self-sufficient and socially accepted in their communities, a process that may take years or decades. Yet DDR program funding and UN mission mandates typically support reintegration for only 1-3 years, creating a systematic structural shortfall between program timelines and the actual duration needed for sustainable reintegration.

The DDR Environment

DDR is usually carried out in highly unstable political environments. A 'no war but no peace' situation often exists despite the signing of a ceasefire or peace agreement. Although the parties to the conflict have usually committed themselves to settling

the conflict peacefully, the war mentality and effort may still be widespread in the country, especially when small arms and light weapons (SALW) are widely available. The armed forces and groups are usually powerful, and the political elites (i.e. leaders) are often unfamiliar with democratic governance. State institutions may also be weak, and irregular armed groups may control large parts of the State territory.

The success of a DDR process depends on the will of the parties to the conflict to demilitarize after conflict. This political will is usually reflected in a commitment by these parties to disarm and demobilize military personnel in formal armed forces or other armed groups, within the framework of a ceasefire agreement or comprehensive peace accord. The UN is often called upon by the parties to provide assistance for the planning and implementation of DDR processes.

The Organization supports the DDR of a combination of state armed forces and other armed groups through:

- **The demobilization of part of the state armies or regular armed forces:** Governments may ask for assistance to demobilize parts of their armed forces in order to adapt them to peacetime needs and free up human and financial resources for reconstruction and development. It is recommended that this exercise should be coordinated with a wider security sector review or reform process.
- **The disbanding of irregular or informal armed groups:** DDR may be also required to disband irregular or informal armed groups.

Fundamentally, DDR programmes should contribute to rebuilding the social fabric and restoring social cohesion rather than further undermining them. Because the return of displaced populations to communities already puts tremendous pressures on these communities' scarce resources, the return of ex-combatants should be carefully planned with the involvement of community leaders, civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The macro- and microeconomic dynamics of post-conflict communities also influence the outcome of DDR programmes. Armed conflicts badly affect national and local economies by reducing production, consumption, wealth and livelihoods. Human capital is reduced through population displacement and 'brain drain'. Infrastructure and public services, such as transportation, communications and electricity supplies, are often damaged or not functioning.

As a result, markets collapse and unemployment becomes widespread. The ending of hostilities alone is not enough to improve economic conditions, although a rapid increase in economic benefits, often seen as a ‘peace dividend’, is often expected by populations recovering from conflict. Economic recovery is also a long and complex process. DDR programmes should therefore be designed to reinforce economic recovery efforts and not to compete with them.

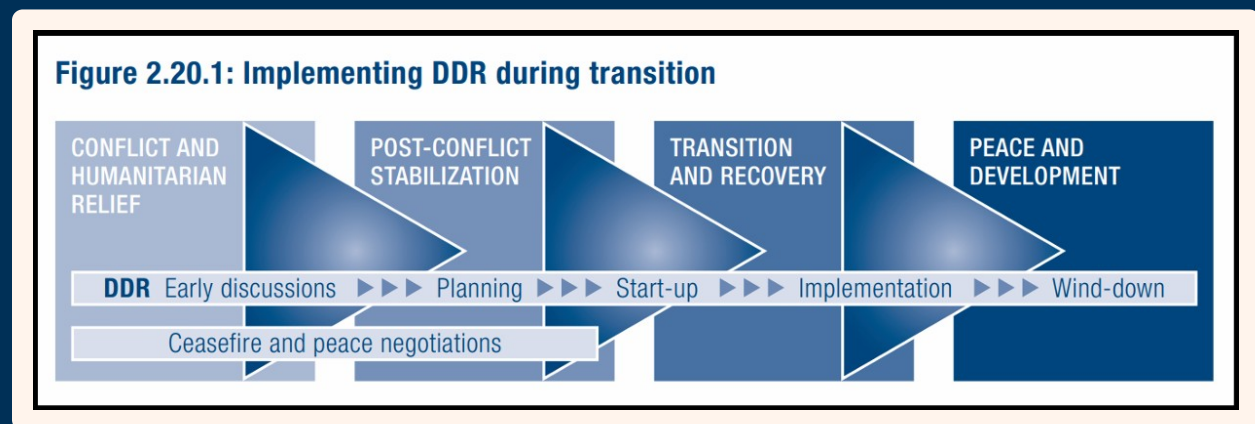


Figure: Implementing DDR during transition.

DDR interventions may be explored with the parties while conflict and humanitarian relief are still ongoing. Most DDR planning and design will take place during the post-conflict stabilization period, whereas implementation will usually occur during transition and recovery. The transition and recovery phase will end when both national and international partners are finally able to focus on longer term development goals. The socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants and their families is a long-term process. While an exit strategy for DDR needs to be clearly defined and agreed upon during the planning and design phase measures should be taken to support and monitor the reintegration of ex-combatants and their families as part of the wider recovery and development process.

History and Evolution of DDR Programs

While the term 'DDR' emerged in the 1990s, its functional precursors extend to post-World War II Allied occupation demobilization programs, particularly in Germany (Operation Eclipse) and Japan, which established templates for large-scale combatant processing, weapons collection, and economic reintegration. The Allied Control Council's Directive No. 18 (1945) outlined the comprehensive demobilization of German armed forces and prohibited veteran organizations. These early programs,

backed by extraordinary resources and the political authority of military occupation, achieved rapid formal demobilization but struggled with longer-term economic reintegration of millions of veterans.

The modern DDR framework emerged from the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) operation in Namibia (1989-1990), which combined South African and South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) disarmament with supervised elections and political transition. Namibia established several key DDR precedents: multi-party cantonment, UN-verified arms collection, and integration of former SWAPO fighters into a new national defense force.

Angola's DDR experience, the Bicesse Accords (1991) process that catastrophically collapsed when UNITA's Jonas Savimbi rejected 1992 election results and resumed war, killing an estimated 300,000 people, provided the field's most important cautionary lesson: DDR without genuine political commitment from all parties and without enforcement mechanisms is not merely ineffective but actively dangerous. It creates conditions in which one party disarms in good faith while the other retains a military advantage, incentivizing betrayal. The Angola failure fundamentally shaped subsequent DDR doctrine.

The mid-1990s produced DDR programs in Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992-94), El Salvador (ONUSAL, 1991-95), and Cambodia (UNTAC, 1992-93). Mozambique's DDR is widely regarded as among the most successful in UN history: the Rome General Peace Accords created a framework where both FRELIMO government forces and RENAMO agreed to cantonment and integration into a new Mozambican Defence Armed Forces (FADM), with UN verification. Key success factors included genuine leadership commitment from both parties, sustained international donor engagement, RENAMO's transformation into a political party and community-level reconciliation processes.

The failures of the 1990s: Angola, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, and the relative successes of Mozambique and El Salvador drove systematic learning and the development of formal international DDR standards. The 2000 Brahimi Report called for 'integrated peace operations' in which DDR was embedded in comprehensive political strategies. The 2001 Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration produced early practitioner guidelines. The creation of the UN's Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR (IAWG-DDR) in 2002, and the launch of the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) in 2006, represented the field's codification as a professional discipline.

Since 2006, the IDDRS has been regularly updated (most recently with major revisions in 2020-2024) to address emerging challenges including VNSA/FTF reintegration, CVE integration, community-based approaches, and DDR in active conflict. The 2020 IDDRS revisions were the most comprehensive since the original publication, fundamentally rethinking DDR's applicability to contexts where conflict is ongoing, armed groups are ideologically motivated rather than economically driven and Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) with foreign nationality create complex legal and political challenges.

Purpose of DDR Reformation

The UN is increasingly engaged in complex DDR operations, both as a part of peacekeeping operations and in non-peacekeeping contexts. The increase in the scale, complexity, scope and type of the UN's work in DDR has required a change in the Organization's approach. In the past, DDR programmes were often carried out in a disjointed, unintegrated way due to poor coordination, planning and support, and sometimes competition between and among peacekeeping operations, agencies, funds and programmes. As a result, national and international efforts to establish security were not adequately supported, weakening the chances of a successful peace process.

The Brahimi Report of August 2000 stresses the importance of UN agencies, funds and programmes in the framework of UN peace operations all working towards the same goal. It recommends, among other things, that "Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTFs), with members seconded from throughout the United Nations system, as necessary, should be the standard vehicle for mission-specific planning and support". The UN integrated approach to DDR has emerged from the joint effort and strong commitment of several UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes to work closely together to improve effectiveness in this vital area.

Five overarching principles guide the UN approach to DDR. DDR shall be: (a) people-centered; (b) flexible, transparent and accountable; (c) nationally owned; (d) integrated; and (e) well planned.

(a) People-centered: The primary focus of any UN-supported DDR shall be on people. Non-discrimination and fair and equitable treatment of participants and beneficiaries are core principles of the UN approach to DDR. This means that:

- individuals shall not be discriminated against on the basis of sex, age, class, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political opinion, or other personal characteristics and associations; and
- there shall be differences in the support provided based on the specific needs of each sex and those of differing ages and physical abilities.

The principles of non-discrimination and fair and equitable treatment are important throughout the DDR programme cycle. However, these principles are particularly important when establishing the eligibility criteria for people to participate in DDR programmes and/or determining who will be entitled to reintegration benefits and opportunities.

(b) Flexible: While complying with the IDDRS, DDR programmes shall be adapted to suit the country or region in which they are being implemented, and easily adaptable to respond to highly volatile situations and unexpected circumstances.

- *Transparent:* DDR shall be carried out in such a way that information is available to, and broadly understandable by, participants, beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders, subject to reasonable limits needed to protect privacy and ensure security;
- *Accountable:* DDR programmes shall be accountable not only to international donors, but also to national partners, beneficiaries and participants. Mechanisms shall be established to ensure adequate reporting, monitoring and evaluation of all DDR operations and finances

(c) Nationally owned: The primary responsibility for DDR programmes rests with national actors; the UN's role is to support the process as a neutral actor. National ownership is, however, broader than exclusive central government ownership. Genuine national ownership requires the participation of a wide range of State and non-State actors at the national, regional and local levels, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The UN shall work to ensure DDR programmes are nationally owned. However, genuine national ownership is difficult to achieve, in particular at the early stages of post-conflict stabilization. National capacity tends to be weak, and the UN shall use

every opportunity to systematically develop and strengthen it. As an impartial actor, the UN shall also support the parties so that internationally accepted standards are observed in the process of ensuring national ownership of DDR programmes.

(d) Integrated: DDR programmes often combine peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building, recovery and development, and involve a variety of national and international military, police and civilian actors and institutions. This particular positioning of DDR requires an integrated approach, which in turn requires much more than simple coordination. The UN approach to DDR shall ensure:

- joint and coherent planning, programming and funding at Headquarters and country levels;
- adequate and appropriate links with related programmes, such as recovery or rule of law; and
- appropriate links with regional DDR initiatives.

Wherever possible, and in accordance with its mandate, the UN should establish an integrated DDR unit or team at the country level, which combines the comparative advantages of the mission and participating agencies, funds and programmes, on the basis of an agreed memorandum of understanding (MOU).

(e) Well planned: UN-supported DDR programmes shall be well planned to ensure quality in the delivery of services. Lessons from previous processes indicate that several problems should be avoided by paying particular attention to the following key issues:

- safety and security;
- coordination;
- assessment, monitoring and evaluation;
- information and sensitization; and
- a transition and exit strategy.

The Coordination Problem

The coordination of activities within peace support operations is a process that takes place between a variety of entities at multiple levels and often occurs in the context of complex and fluctuating environments. Such coordination represents efforts to

achieve complementary outcomes, as well as reduces the potential for duplication, waste, institutional rivalries and conflicts. Over the past three decades the intricacy of such coordination within peace support operations has intensified with the inclusion of additional actors, such as regional organizations, private sector companies, and various types of civil society organizations.

This Background Guide already deals with the Brahimi Report and its recommendation for Integrated Mission Task Forces in the 'What Called for DDR Reformation' section. This section is complementary to the same and seeks to elaborate on how such coordination failures manifest as failures on the field. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants are frequently key components of peace support operations. Support by international organizations, government and civil society organizations is usually provided for this transition. The coordination of the DDR components and the synchronization of DDR with other aspects of the peace support operation has been particularly complex and challenging.

The reason being is that the three constitutive elements of DDR have typically been directed by entities with juxtaposing organizational cultures, implementation approaches and often differing strategic institutional objectives. That is, the armed forces or peacekeepers are generally allocated the responsibility of arranging the disarmament and demobilization, while reintegration has usually been mandated to civilian-led development agencies and non- governmental organizations. In this regard, military organizations are, due to their hierarchical and martial nature, often reluctant to actively collaborate with non-military organizations. Furthermore, the nature of the reintegration programming has become considerably diversified over time drawing in a wider range of local and international non-governmental entities, which has exacerbated the complexity of DDR coordination.

Published research on DDR and security sector reform (SSR) programmes has indicated that the successful outcomes of DDR and SSR programmes have often been dependent on the efficacy of coordination and communication between the key DDR/SSR stakeholders. In Sierra Leone, for example, interventions that targeted former child soldiers were particularly effective due to efficient coordination and collaboration between the various civil society organizations that worked in the sector, which was combined with the astute collaborative leadership provided by UNICEF. On the other hand, DDR and other SSR initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been delayed and their effectiveness diluted due to coordination difficulties.

The Funding Problem

A recurring challenge for DDR is the fact that DDR, particularly reintegration, relies primarily upon voluntary funding. Only DD (Disarmament, Demobilization) may be covered by the UN Mission 'assessed budgets' when it takes place within a peacekeeping operation. The typical immediate launch of DD leads to gaps in programming when compounded by the need to secure funding and prepare reintegration programmes, which by their nature is a much longer and resource-intensive process than DD. Moreover, as the fiscal year of the assessed budget begins and ends annually in June, it is difficult to effectively coordinate the timing and sequencing of funding of DDR activities. As a result, there can be gaps between the implementation of DD and R that can have serious security implications.

Lack of funding can also mean that reintegration programmes must be scaled down in time and scope, undermining the success and sustainability of the DDR process. Scaled down reintegration thus provides little more advantage than the short-term reinsertion. Reinsertion bridges demobilization and reintegration in order to foster stability, maintain the momentum of the DDR and to minimize the negative effects that delays to the DDR programme can have on the process overall. However, reinsertion cannot be used as a substitute for longer-term reintegration support.

Obtaining enough funding is difficult, as has been the case in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan, where delays were quite common. Voluntary contributions are an important source of funds, especially for the reintegration component, but in most cases there are 6 to 8 month gaps from the time funds are pledged to the time they are available for use. The availability of funding, especially its timely disbursement, significantly affects the success and progress of a DDR program and its smooth implementation. Some of the delays occur in salary payments for demobilized ex-combatants (Afghanistan, Cambodia and Guinea-Bissau). Liberian educational programs for ex-combatants and the Democratic Republic of Congo's microcredit programs have faced financing problems.

Funding gaps also occur between DDR programs and long-term development and security programs. The international community tends to forget about long-term reintegration processes very quickly. Certainly, disarmament and demobilization may play an important role in stopping the fighting and allowing the beginning of peace building. Too often, however, very superficial short-term action on disarmament and demobilization seems to please donors, rather than long-term action heading towards actual reintegration in all its dimensions. No sustainability can be ensured

while donor engagements remain short-term. The failure to follow through on promises made because of the lack of reliable funding could result in violence, re-recruitment of those already disarmed into local and regional conflicts and a breakdown of the peace process.

Case Studies

Overview

As attempts to support the transition from war to peace, DDR interventions have recorded some impressive achievements in terms of demobilization and disarmament. Nicaragua, Bosnia- Herzegovina and Sierra Leone are just three examples of countries where armed forces have been efficiently reduced in size and weapons collected. In 31 months, the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua was reduced from 90,000 members to just 15,520 active soldiers. 370,000 combatants were demobilized in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the five years following the Dayton peace settlement, leading to a noteworthy reduction in the number of arms in circulation (Pietz 2004, 24). In Sierra Leone, expectations were even exceeded. Although previous estimates suggested that 45,000 combatants needed to be demobilized from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) and other militant groups, in practice no fewer than 75,490 combatants handed in their weapons. The efficient demobilization and disarmament operation has undoubtedly helped to prevent a renewed outbreak of war in these countries.

These success stories are complemented by numerous failures and setbacks. The cases of Cambodia and Angola demonstrate that, despite immense efforts, DDR programmes sometimes fail in their endeavours. During demobilization and disarmament efforts in Cambodia (1992), the warring parties cooperated only hesitantly and frequently blocked the UN's work. In the first attempt at disarmament, only around 13,000 out of the projected total of 200,000 soldiers reported to the cantonment sites. Even worse, one of the main armies, the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (also known as the Khmer Rouge), refused all along to disarm and exploited the fading military strength of the compliant armed groups by taking aggressive action and mounting attacks. The UN Secretary General suspended the programme for this reason in November 1992. Seven years later, the World Bank made a renewed attempt to demobilize and reintegrate Cambodia's soldiers. The international lender targeted 30,000 soldiers with USD 18.4 million in funds and a detailed plan (Center for International Cooperation and Security 2008). Four years

later, the World Bank cut spending by USD 6.3 million due to mismanagement and corruption. In the end, the final report rated the programme's performance and outcome as 'rather unsatisfactory'.

A similar failure was experienced in Angola. During an attempt to disarm combatants in Angola in 1994, a resistance force called UNITA (the National Union for the Complete Independence of Angola) sent mainly disabled and conscripted soldiers to the disarmament sites, leaving its key forces intact (Center for International Cooperation and Security 2008). In the end, no full disarmament was achieved, faith in and commitment to the peace process evaporated and hostilities resumed.

Both cases illustrate that DDR programmes do not always work and may fail despite immense efforts. However, it is not easy to judge whether DDR is a success or failure. In the academic literature, the merits of peace missions in general are determined mainly by observing whether such missions have achieved their long-term objective, namely the stabilization of war-torn countries and hence the establishment of stable peace. As the Final Report produced by the SIDDR states, "when implemented, the DDR programme should ideally influence and contribute to a secure environment that can provide minimum basic conditions to enable long-term development without the immediate threat of violent conflicts". As the table presented below shows, out of 40 countries undergoing DDR (as of the table's creation), 24 experienced long-lasting peace, while in the remaining 16 cases the warring parties resumed their hostilities. However, programme evaluations rarely use peace as an indicator and rely more on practical measures, that is, if any evaluation takes place at all. The only detailed programme evaluations are conducted by the World Bank, which uses a thorough evaluation process, including general conflict indicators, to match achievements against previously set goals. In many cases, however, there is no systematic evaluation and judgements about the effectiveness of individual missions can at best be derived from descriptive mission reports.

	Without DDR	With DDR	Total
No reversion to conflict	75 (40%)	24 (60%)	99
Reversion to conflict	117 (61%)	16 (39%)	133
Total	192	40	232

Table 3: DDR and lasting peace. Pearson chi square (χ^2) = 5.98 (); Cramér's V = -0.16. *** = $p < 0.01$; ** = $p < 0.05$; * = $p < 0.1$. Source: information on DDR is original data; information on conflict termination/reversion is drawn from the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) Peace Agreement Dataset v.1.0, 1989–2005, and the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset v.2010-1, 1946–2009.*

Sahel Region

The Sahel region, particularly Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, represents one of the clearest examples of why disarmament efforts fail in the absence of effective governance and political stability. Following the 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali, the collapse of state authority enabled jihadist organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda (JNIM) and the Islamic State (ISGS) to establish enduring territorial footholds across the region. Although successive peace agreements and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) initiatives sought to reduce violence, implementation remained fragmented due to the absence of a comprehensive political settlement and the refusal of extremist organizations to participate in negotiated disarmament.

The region's security architecture deteriorated further following repeated military coups in Mali (2020, 2021), Burkina Faso (2022), and Niger (2023), which disrupted institutional continuity and weakened civilian oversight of security sector reforms. Simultaneously, the withdrawal of French counterterrorism forces, the termination of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in 2023, and the growing reliance on alternative security partnerships created significant security vacuums. Weak border management, widespread arms trafficking, and limited state presence across remote regions allowed armed groups to replenish personnel, weapons, and financial resources despite sustained military operations.

The Sahel demonstrates that DDR cannot succeed where governments lack territorial control, institutional legitimacy, or the capacity to provide security and economic reintegration. The failure to address governance deficits, local grievances, and cross-border criminal networks enabled armed groups not only to survive but to expand their operational capabilities.

Colombia

The 2016 Final Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) is regarded as one of the most comprehensive examples of modern Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). Following more than five decades of armed conflict, over 13,000 FARC combatants entered a UN-verified DDR process, surrendering approximately 9,000 weapons under the supervision of the United Nations Mission in Colombia. The process was supported by transitional justice mechanisms, rural development initiatives, political participation guarantees, and long-term reintegration programmes.

Unlike traditional DDR models that focus primarily on weapons collection, Colombia adopted a holistic approach by addressing the underlying political, economic, and social drivers of conflict. Former combatants received vocational training, education, financial assistance, and opportunities to establish cooperatives and businesses, while international organizations monitored compliance and implementation. This integrated framework contributed to a significant reduction in conflict-related violence and demonstrated the importance of linking disarmament with institution-building and sustainable development.

However, implementation has faced persistent challenges. Dissident factions that rejected or abandoned the peace agreement continue to operate, while delays in rural reforms, inadequate economic opportunities, and targeted attacks against former combatants have slowed reintegration efforts. These shortcomings illustrate that successful disarmament requires sustained political commitment, adequate resources, and effective governance long after a peace agreement is signed.

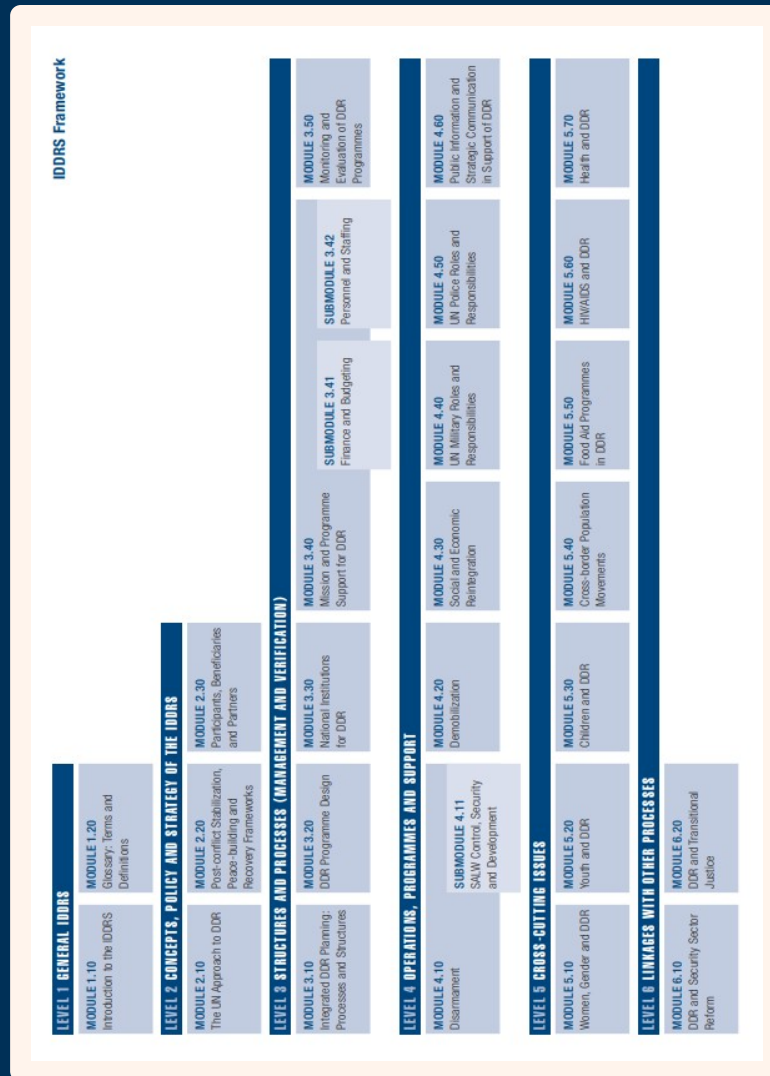
Colombia's DDR-CVE integration has been notable for its explicit focus on 'reincorporation', a term the Colombian government and FARC preferred to 'reintegration,' emphasizing the collective and political dimensions of the process rather than its individual and economic dimensions. This conceptual shift recognizes that FARC combatants' primary identity was political and organizational, not merely economic, and that addressing that identity dimension through political participation, recognition of FARC's political history, and collective cultural projects, which was essential to sustainable disengagement.

Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS)

Although considerable experience has been acquired since 1989, the year marking the UN's first involvement in the DDR process, the UN continued to lack a common strategic framework to carry out and support DDR programmes. Each new DDR initiative had to be developed almost from scratch, relying mostly on the knowledge and experience of DDR programme staff, who often turned to the several reports, studies and works on DDR issues prepared by the UN, donor agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutes.

However, guidance could be only inferred, was not always clear and often became difficult to translate into practice. As a result, DDR was carried out in a fractured way; lacked adequate coordination among the UN peacekeeping mission, agencies, programmes and funds; and was compromised by poor planning and support. A consensus has therefore emerged among the UN and DDR stakeholders about the need to improve the Organization's performance in this area.

The IDDRS were developed by the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (IAWG-DDR) during 2004-2006. Fourteen UN departments, agencies, programmes and funds and the International Organization for Migration are represented in the IAWG-DDR. Workshop discussions and extensive consultations on the IDDRS were held with DDR practitioners from the UN, member states, NGOs and the World Bank. The IDDRS were approved by all the members of the IAWG-DDR in July 2006. The United Nations (UN) integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards (IDDRS) provide direction and guidance to those engaged in preparing, implementing and supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes.



The IDDRS Framework.

IDDRS Module Scope and Significance

1.10 — The Nature and Causes of Armed Conflict

Analytical foundation for DDR design: conflict mapping, actor analysis, political economy of armed groups.

2.10 — The UN Approach to DDR

Overarching principles: voluntary participation, national ownership, people-centred approach, gender responsiveness, do-no-harm.

2.20 — Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Standardized definitions to ensure coherence across the UN system and partner organizations.

2.30 — DDR and Transitional Safety and Security

Linkages between DDR, rule of law, and immediate post- conflict security stabilization.

2.40 — Reintegration as Part of Sustaining Peace

Long-term reintegration framed within the sustaining peace agenda; national ownership; development finance.

3.10 — Integrated DDR Planning

Mission planning guidance; integration with peace operation mandates; resource mobilization.

3.20 — Participants, Target Groups and Eligibility

Criteria for participation; children (CAAFAG); women; foreign fighters; special needs groups.

3.30 — National Institutions for DDR

National DDR Commissions; institutional frameworks; capacity building; civilian oversight.

3.42 — DDR and Transitional Justice

Coordination between DDR and truth commissions, prosecutions, amnesty frameworks, reparations.

4.30 — Economic Reintegration

Vocational training; employment facilitation; market analysis; private sector engagement; social protection.

4.40 — Social and Community Reintegration

Psychosocial support; community reconciliation; stigma reduction; women's reintegration.

5.20 — Children and DDR CAAFAG (Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups); age-appropriate approaches; best interests of the child principle.

5.40 — Women, Gender and DDR

Women combatants; gender-based violence; gendered reintegration needs; female FTFs.

5.60 — DDR and Organized Crime

Intersection between ex-combatant reintegration and criminal networks; criminal justice responses.

6.10 — DDR in Contexts DDR design where the state is not a conflict party or lacks with Non-State Armed Groups capacity to lead; non-traditional approaches.

Although the IDDRS were developed for DDR programmes taking place in peacekeeping contexts, most direction and guidance are also applicable to DDR programmes taking place in non-peacekeeping contexts. The IDDRS bring together knowledge, lessons and good practice on a wide range of issues from concepts, policies and strategies to programme planning, design, management, and monitoring and evaluation. As well as outlining the basics of each phase of DDR, the IDDRS offer detailed guidance on key issues, such as information and sensitization, food aid and food security, women and gender, children and youth, health, and HIV/AIDS.

The 2020 Revision

The 2020 comprehensive revision introduced several paradigm shifts from the classical DDR model:

- **Community Violence Reduction (CVR):** Recognized as a distinct tool for contexts where formal DDR eligibility criteria are not met, targeting communities rather than individual combatants. CVR provides infrastructure, economic opportunities, and violence reduction programming in conflict-affected communities without requiring individual demobilization processing.
- **Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM):** Addresses the lifecycle management of weapons and ammunition independent of formal DDR processes, recognizing that weapons collected in DDR must be managed within a broader national arms management framework to prevent diversion.

- **Reintegration Support in Active Conflict:** The 2020 revision explicitly addressed how DDR can operate in contexts where conflict has not formally ended; which is a significant departure from classical DDR doctrine that presumed a negotiated peace agreement as a prerequisite.
- **Integration of CVE Considerations:** Formally incorporated guidance on processing FTFs and ideologically motivated combatants, recognizing that standard economic incentive-based DDR tools have limited effectiveness for individuals primarily motivated by ideology or identity-based grievance.

Linkage to SSR

Security sector is a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. The security sector can include defence, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services and institutions responsible for border management, customs and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, in many instances, also included. Particular emphasis should also be given to actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security.

Security sector reform describes a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Both DDR and SSR are important post-conflict efforts that help create conditions necessary for sustainable peace and longer-term development. Understanding the relationship between these activities can help to ensure that short to medium term DDR activities are linked to longer term efforts to develop an effective, well-managed, and accountable security sector. Some of the dynamics between DDR and SSR are straightforward. Both sets of activities are preoccupied with enhancing security and stability and therefore sit within a broader security sector governance framework. They advocate policies and programmes that engage public and private security actors, including the military and ex-combatants as well as groups responsible for their management and oversight.

Decisions associated with DDR contribute to defining central elements of the size and composition of a country's security sector. SSR may lead to the downsizing of security institutions and the consequent need for reintegration. Most significantly, considering these issues together can ensure that DDR programmes reflect national capacities, objectives and values as part of a broader vision for national security. Failing to consider these issues together may lead to the development of unsustainable and unaccountable security institutions that fail to address the security needs of the state and its citizens.

There are several challenges to realizing synergies between DDR and SSR in practice. These include context-specificity, a lack of coordination and flexibility in DDR and SSR programming; weak or dysfunctional institutions; capacity gaps amongst national and international actors, and; a lack of political will to support SSR. In order to avoid doing more harm than good, assessments, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation that address the nexus between DDR and SSR should therefore be grounded in an understanding of context specific political, socio-economic and security factors.

Box: The DDR/SSR Dynamics

- DDR shapes the terrain for SSR by influencing the size and nature of the security sector.
- Successful DDR can free up resources for SSR activities that support the development of efficient, affordable security structures.
- A national vision of the security sector should provide the basis for decisions on force size and structure.
- SSR considerations — appropriate skills sets and past conduct — should help determine criteria for the integration of ex-combatants in the formal/informal security sector.
- DDR and SSR offer complementary approaches that can link reintegration of ex-combatants to enhancing community security.
- Capacity-building for security management and oversight bodies provide a means to enhance the sustainability and legitimacy of both DDR and SSR.

While the UN has often played a key role in DDR, SSR activities (including funding) are frequently supported by a number of bilateral donors through specific arrangements with national authorities. This necessitates the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms. While it is recognised that national actors should have the key role to play in coordination, in cases where the political will or capacity to do this is lacking, the international community should support these efforts. There is a need to ensure coherent international support to nationally-driven DDR and SSR processes.

Considering that Security Sector Reform and Transitional Justice have been identified as key components of successful DDR programs in the long-term, a critical examination of the same alongside DDR is warranted. It has already been established that coordination is necessary to successfully carry out these processes, so ensuring the same when these processes occur is essential in avoiding unwanted geopolitical tensions.

Beyond their shared political objectives, DDR and SSR are programmatically linked, as failure of one risks the failure of the other. Ex-combatants who are not properly reintegrated into civil society through DDR can complicate and potentially compromise SSR. Ex-combatants who do not successfully transition to civilian life may take up arms again or form criminal gangs, challenging newly created security institutions and forces that may lack sufficient capacity to control such threats. As the population thus becomes vulnerable to violence, the state's inability to protect its citizens undermines its legitimacy.

Inversely, if DDR succeeds but SSR falters, then people begin to rely on non-state actors, ethnicity or religion-based militias or village self-defence forces for their security. In some parts of Afghanistan, Afghans have turned to tribal authorities or the Taliban to provide security and justice. Worse, such states can offer safe havens for armed opposition groups, insurgents, organized crime, and other armed non-state actors that foment conflict and regional destabilization. Providing security is an essential component of governance, and states that cannot provide it, are seen as inept and illegitimate.

DDR and SSR are also operationally linked, as many ex-combatants seek employment in the new security forces that SSR programs create. This transference from DDR to SSR occurs during the reintegration phase of DDR, making it the natural point of intersection between the two. That is, after being disarmed and demobilized, many ex-combatants may seek job training and reintegration in the

new security sector as soldiers or police. They then fall under the SSR program, which vets them for past human rights abuses and assesses their qualifications for duty (no ex-combatant should ever be guaranteed a job in the new security sector without undergoing proper selection processes).

Combining DDR and SSR, if done properly, re-enforces the peace settlement by fortifying mutual trust among former enemies and encouraging followers to lay down their guns and enter civilian life. This outcome is particularly likely if ex-combatants perceive that they will have a substantive role in crafting and serving in the new government. If not done properly, many will seek employment in militias, organized crime, and private security companies, allowing them to legally carry weapons. This employment can result in reconstituted warring parties under new names, some of which will be licensed to employ lethal force.

Both academia and practice generally assume that DDR is a relatively quick process, followed sequentially by SSR, which plays out over time. Such a separation of functions, however, has deleterious effects on the ability of conflict-affected countries to recover and establish a viable security sector. Owing to their natural linkages, and in partnership with the host nation, DDR and SSR should be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated as a single entity. This integration involves several challenges, however, both in SSR and DDR as components and in combining them as part of a larger process.

Despite the fundamental linkages between DDR and SSR programs, in practice there are serious challenges to integrating them. There are several reasons for this. First, DDR and SSR programs are political, and changing power structures in a conflict-affected country is complex and dangerous. Reintegrating ex-combatants who may still harbour legitimate grievances against the government, or transforming security institutions, which can lawfully use force, can provoke a relapse of armed conflict. The political concerns, priorities, and agendas of ex-combatants in DDR versus SSR processes may differ, making it challenging for program planners to adopt a unified approach to political issues.



Security Sector Reform (SSR) (Source: UN Office of Rule of Law & Security Institutions).

Different levels of local support and ownership may exist for DDR versus SSR. A population traumatized by civil war may welcome the disarming of combatants, but shun their inclusion in new security forces, especially if distrust of the police and military linger because of atrocities committed in the past. Conversely, local populations may not welcome ex-combatants into their communities, but strongly desire a new, professional police force. These different levels of local support can decouple DDR and SSR.

Embedding DDR within SSR and fully integrating the two programs is the best way to deal with the above challenges, and as mentioned above, the two processes even have a natural point of intersection: the reintegration phase of DDR programs, which can flow into longer-term SSR work as ex-combatants find legal and peaceful employment in the new security apparatus that SSR programs create. Problematically, however, reintegration is also often the most difficult aspect of DDR.

This makes reintegration both the best place to incorporate DDR into SSR and one of the clear sites where such an incorporation can fail.

SSR as a DDR Precondition

Security Sector Reform encompasses the restructuring and right-sizing of national armed forces; reform of police services to improve professionalism, accountability, and civilian oversight; justice sector reform (courts, prosecution services, prisons) and reform of intelligence services. SSR creates the institutional receiving environment for DDR, the reformed military and police that ex-combatants can be integrated into and the reformed justice system that can process cases of armed group members who committed criminal offenses.

When SSR is absent or inadequate, DDR reintegration pathways become structurally blocked. In the DRC, successive DDR programs from 2004-2024 have produced diminishing returns partly because reformed FARDC units capable of meaningfully absorbing integrated ex-armed group members have not existed as the FARDC itself has been a major driver of human rights violations and civilian displacement. Integrating armed group members into an unreformed, abusive security institution does not produce reintegration; it produces a different armed actor wearing a government uniform.

The 'reform sequencing' debate, whether SSR must precede DDR, DDR must precede SSR, or they must proceed simultaneously — **has no universal answer**. Available evidence suggests that: (1) sufficient security for DDR participants requires some minimum SSR investment before DDR begins; (2) SSR without parallel DDR fails to address the broader armed actor landscape; and (3) simultaneous DDR-SSR programming requires exceptional coordination capacity that few international operations have demonstrated.

Linkage to Transnational Justice

Transitional justice refers to measures used by a society to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past human rights abuses in order to facilitate accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. Transitional justice measures may include judicial and non-judicial responses such as prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programmes for victims, and tools for institutional reform such as

vetting. Whatever combination is chosen must be in conformity with international legal standards and obligations.

DDR and transitional justice measures increasingly coexist in the post-conflict period. The overlap of transitional justice measures with DDR can create tension. Yet the coexistence of these two types of initiatives in the immediate aftermath of conflict may also contribute to achieving the long-term shared objectives of reconciliation and peace. DDR may contribute to the stability necessary to implement transitional justice initiatives; and the implementation of transitional justice measures for accountability, truth redress, and institutional reform can strengthen the legitimacy of the DDR programme from the perspective of the victims of violence and their communities, and contribute in this way to their willingness to accept returning ex-combatants.

Box: Primary Approaches to Transitional Justice

- **Prosecutions** — are the conduct of investigations and judicial proceedings against an alleged perpetrator of a crime in accordance with international standards for the administration of justice. Prosecutions initiatives can be broad in scope, aiming to try many perpetrators, or narrowly focused on those that bear the most responsibility for the crimes committed.
- **Reparations** — are sets of measures that provide redress for victims of gross violations of international human rights law, serious violations of international humanitarian law, and violations of international criminal law. Reparations can take the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.
- **Truth commissions** — are non-judicial or quasi-judicial fact-finding bodies whose primary purpose is investigating and reporting on past abuses, helping a society understand and acknowledge a contested or denied history. They can conduct investigations and hearings, and can be empowered to make policy and prosecutorial recommendations.
- **Institutional reform** — is changing public institutions that perpetuated a conflict or served a repressive regime, transforming them into institutions that support the transition, sustain peace, and preserve the rule of law.

The relationship between DDR and transitional justice measures can vary widely depending on the country context, the manner in which the conflict was fought and how it ended and the level of involvement by the international community, among many other factors. In situations where DDR and transitional justice measures coexist, both stand to benefit from a better understanding of their respective mandates, as well as more systematic and improved coordination, so as to best facilitate the successful transition from conflict to sustainable peace.

In the UN System, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has the lead responsibility for transitional justice issues. DDR programmes supported by the UN may be led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or a combination of the above. OHCHR representatives can coordinate directly with DDR practitioners on transitional justice. Human rights officers who work as part of the staff of UN peacekeeping missions may also be appropriate focal points or liaisons between a DDR programme and transitional justice initiatives.



Goals of Transitional Justice.

Practical Disarmament Measures

The concept of Practical Disarmament was first used in 1995 in the UN's "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace", reinforcing arms reduction efforts in response to the new phenomena of small arms possession by non-state actors. It reflected the need to target this new group with practical measures different from the regulations and sanctions for nation-states. The concept was endorsed by UN member states that experienced negative effects of proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) particularly after civil wars and other forms of armed conflicts. Practical Disarmament measures were envisioned as a concept and framework that would not only comprehensively address the issue of illicit (SALWs) in post-conflict settings, but also create conditions for achievement of sustainable peace and development.

The concept of Practical Disarmament acknowledges the extensive and complex channels of SALWs proliferation as well as the additional reality that SALWs are not only confined to conflict situations, but also afflict communities in peaceful times. In its most basic form, Practical Disarmament consists of a combination of legal reforms intended to regulate not only the illegal access to, but also ownership and use of SALWs by civilians and other unauthorized non-state entities, as well as the technical interventions undertaken to collect, manage and de-commission (through various methods) the surplus SALWs from the national army and its auxiliaries, and those collected from belligerents (such as guerrilla/rebel forces and irregular militias) and civilians that are considered by the legitimate government to be in the excess of defence stockpiles.

Practical Disarmament is often combined with, but distinct from, Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes amongst others. It can also be taken as a component of 'disarmament' during DDR programmes. The concept has expanded in recent years beyond simply a technical intervention and now takes into consideration demand factors as well as the accountability and reform of state security entities.

While appreciating that DDR is geared towards situations where conflict is just ending, it is evident that there are other categories of armed conflicts that cannot be addressed by conventional DDR approaches, especially those associated with armed civilians such as: organized criminal gangs/groups; militias; pastoralists; among others. Acknowledging the stabilizing role of DDR in conflict situations, there are also explicit limitations to the extent of its interventions. The need to deal with armed groups outside conflict situations calls for a different approach.

Relevant International Framework

Operational Guide to IDDRS UNSCR 1325 (2000) UNSCR 1373 (2001) UNSCR 2178 (2014) UNSCR 2396 (2017) UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) International Tracing Instrument (ITI) UN SSR Framework Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Transitional Justice (2010) Peacebuilding Architecture Review (2025) AU Master Roadmap: Silencing the Guns

Conclusion

This Background Guide serves as a brief overview of the DDR process and its history in and outside of the UN system. The UN has recognized several issues plaguing these programs over the years and measures such as the introduction of the IDDRS have been taken to rectify the same. However, current DDR processes in several countries are still faced with several of the issues covered both in and outside of this Background Guide. By definition, the term 'reformation' indicates the need to fix a problem. DDR is highly context specific, so a one-size-fits-all approach is generally ineffective. The Executive Board encourages delegates to thoroughly analyze problems that these processes may face before presenting solutions to address them.

Questions a Resolution must Answer (QARMA)

1. How should a resolution define 'violent extremist groups' or 'violent extremist organizations' for the purposes of DDR applicability? How should this definition exclude political actors who use violence without meeting the threshold of violent extremism that warrants special DDR tools?
2. What obligations do states have for FTF children born in conflict zones and who bears responsibility for their reintegration?
3. Should the IAWG-DDR be elevated to a formal inter-agency coordination body with binding authority over UN system actors?
4. What minimum standards for national DDR institutional capacity should be established before international DDR programming begins and what

mechanisms should the international community use to build that capacity without creating permanent dependency?

5. What performance metrics and evaluation frameworks should govern DDR programs?
6. What guidance should the resolution provide on the legal framework for DDR in contexts of ongoing armed conflict, where IHL, human rights law and counterterrorism law create overlapping and sometimes conflicting obligations?
7. What special measures should govern the DDR processing of women and girls associated with violent extremist groups: including those who joined voluntarily, those who were abducted and those who held leadership roles within VEOs?
8. How should cross-border DDR challenges such as armed group combatants, FTFs and weapons trafficking be addressed?