



# SPECIAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report reflects views expressed during a March 5, 2010, conference held at the National Defense University entitled “Monopoly of Force: The Link between DDR and SSR,” cosponsored by the United States Institute of Peace and the Center for Complex Operations. The conference sought to dispel the notion that there is no connection between disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR). The conference determined that, in reality, DDR and SSR are interrelated and mutually reinforcing and should occur simultaneously in a holistic manner.

The report also reflects the work of the Institute’s Initiative for Security Sector Governance and the practical experience of the author, Sean McFate, an assistant professor at National Defense University and a fellow at the New America Foundation. Professor McFate worked in DDR and SSR programs in Africa, advised Amnesty International USA on the issue, and served as a captain in the U.S. Army’s 82nd Airborne Division. He holds double BAs from Brown University, an MPP from the Harvard Kennedy School, and is completing his doctorate at the London School of Economics.

The views expressed in this report are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of National Defense University or the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

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## The Link Between DDR and SSR in Conflict-Affected Countries

### Summary

- Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) processes should be interrelated and mutually reinforcing. As DDR and SSR share the same objective—consolidation of the state’s monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law—they succeed or fail together and should be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated manner. The natural point of intersection for DDR and SSR is in the reintegration phase, as many ex-combatants find employment in the security apparatus that SSR creates.
- DDR helps ensure the long-term success of SSR, as it shifts ex-combatants into the new security forces, where they no longer threaten the state’s monopoly of force. If done properly, this reinforces the peace settlement by fostering mutual trust between former enemies, encouraging further disarmament and transition into civilian life.
- SSR helps ensure the long-term success of DDR, as security-sector governance includes ministry programs that provide for the welfare of former combatants. This focus prevents ex-combatants from becoming insurgents or joining criminal gangs. At the same time, effective SSR produces professional security forces that can control spoilers and contain violence.
- DDR and SSR together promote development by preserving resources and infrastructure, freeing and managing labor, and supporting reconciliation that encourages investment and entrepreneurship. They also promote the interests of women, minorities, and former child soldiers, who should be supported in a consistent manner between the two programs.

### Introduction

In June 1999 Kosovo came under the interim administration of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which embarked on a program to link disarmament, demobilization, and

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reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants with security sector reform (SSR). Many ex-combatants processed in DDR were successfully reintegrated into the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). From the onset, UNMIK mandated that the KPS would consist of at least 50 percent former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members, and ex-KLA members viewed the KPS as a source of well-paying jobs and a path to a meaningful career. This strategy of moving ex-combatants into the new security sector proved effective, with few instances of confrontations between ex-KLA members and other recruits. It also helped eliminate partisan loyalties to individual politicians and political factions by creating a police force with a strong national and professional identity.

Similarly, in Liberia, after fourteen years of brutal civil war, the question of what to do with the many combatants who still wandered the countryside with weapons was significant and specifically addressed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in 2003 by all warring parties. The DDR program there, conducted by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), disarmed and demobilized over 100,000 ex-combatants, including some 11,000 child soldiers. UNMIL was also responsible for the SSR of all civilian security organizations, such as the Liberian National Police. Simultaneously, the United States was in charge of demobilizing and reintegrating Liberia's armed forces after the reconstitution of the military and ministry of defense.<sup>1</sup>

Liberia's linked DDR-SSR programs successfully reintegrated many ex-combatants. In the case of the legacy Armed Forces of Liberia, 13,500 former soldiers were demobilized, many of whom successfully reapplied and were admitted to the new security forces. According to a 2006 survey, the majority of ex-combatants who completed the training and education programs saw an increase in their socioeconomic status and a widespread acceptance into their communities.<sup>2</sup> The program's reach was admittedly limited; despite the extensive training and education initiatives, a large number of ex-combatants are still unemployed and consequently involved in criminal enterprise, particularly illegal mining of gold and diamonds. But both Kosovo's and Liberia's linked DDR-SSR programs demonstrate the possibilities for a strong DDR-SSR framework to help move a country out of conflict.

## DDR and SSR Linkages

DDR, encompassing the processes that safely transition combatants back to civilian life, and SSR, involving the reconstitution and professionalization of security institutions and actors, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Working in tandem, they can enable countries emerging from conflict to provide for their own security and uphold the rule of law, an essential precondition of sustainable development and part of the exit strategy for costly peacekeeping missions. As such, politically, they rise or fall together. Without a monopoly on the use of force, a state has few ways to uphold the rule of law and protect citizens from threats.<sup>3</sup> By definition, conflict-affected states have lost this monopoly, and the joint purpose of DDR and SSR programs is to restore or establish it by disbanding nonstate armed actors and reconstituting statutory forces.

Beyond their shared political objectives, DDR and SSR are programmatically linked, as failure of one risks 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 nonstate actors—ethnicity- or religion-based militias or village self-defense forces—for their security. In

some parts of Afghanistan where the reach of national law enforcement is limited, 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 nonstate actors that foment conflict and regional destabilization. Providing security is an essential component of governance, and states that cannot provide it, as above, 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, reenforces 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.

Lastly, DDR and SSR jointly promote development, as economic growth depends on long-term security and stability, which DDR and SSR both provide when implemented correctly. This peace dividend manifests itself in preserving resources and infrastructure, freeing and managing labor, and furthering reconciliation that encourages investment and entrepreneurship. DDR and SSR processes also promote the interests of women, minorities, and child soldiers, who should be supported in a consistent manner within the two programs. A growing body of literature illuminates the strengths of considering gender in DDR and SSR, particularly if the programs are managed together so women can benefit from and contribute to both.<sup>4</sup>

Both the academic literature and manuals for practitioners often consider DDR and SSR as separate and distinct processes, involving different actors, priorities, timelines, and functions. The majority of scholarship on the topic deals with either DDR or SSR, but rarely treats both in an integrated manner, resulting in disjointed approaches and mismatched conceptual frameworks on reestablishing the state's monopoly of force.<sup>5</sup> Practitioners' guides for field use tend to specialize in either one or the other, but not both. The United Nations, a leader in conducting DDR, issues DDR standards in relative isolation from SSR concerns. Similarly, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development–Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) issues its *Handbook on Security System Reform*, which does not substantially address DDR.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> This integration involves several challenges, however, both in SSR and DDR as components and in combining them as part of a larger process.

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## SSR: A Key Link in the Transition from War to Peace

In 1999, Timor-Leste (also known as East Timor) declared independence from Indonesia by popular referendum. Violence soon erupted as elements of the Indonesian military and Timorese pro-Indonesian militias attempted to reassert Indonesian control over the territory. A UN peacekeeping force intervened to restore order and develop the Timor-Leste National Police Force (PNTL).

The PNTL was plagued with internal problems due to inadequate SSR, impairing the country's movement toward stability. New recruits had a limited sense of national identity and factions loyal to specific politicians divided much of the rank and file. Numerous paramilitary units were created in the PNTL with unclear mandates and ambiguous chains of command. Worse, efforts to professionalize the PNTL were insufficiently incorporated into the broader mission of developing the Timor-Leste government, resulting in institutional disarray, inadequate oversight, and poor public security. Thus the PNTL was frequently at odds with former armed factions and Timor-Leste's defense force, leading to a mini-coup d'état in the eastern part of the country in 2004. Recognizing the need for change, the Australian and British governments launched a series of major police reforms to professionalize and depoliticize the PNTL. Timor-Leste demonstrates the critical role of SSR—or the lack of it—in stabilizing conflict-affected countries.

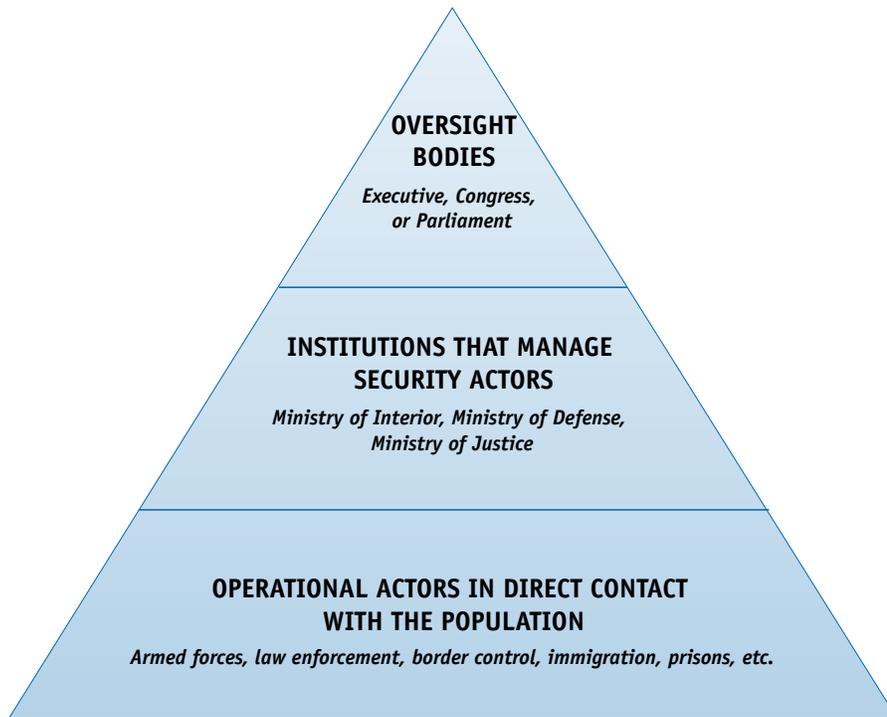
***Timor-Leste demonstrates the critical role of SSR—or the lack of it—in stabilizing conflict-affected countries.***

SSR defies a commonly accepted definition and has many names—security and justice reform, security governance reform, security force assistance, foreign internal defense, and security system transformation among them.<sup>8</sup> Despite these multiple formulations, SSR has a single purpose: consolidating the state's monopoly of force. SSR involves transforming components of the security sector—those institutions that protect the state and its citizens from security threats—into professional, effective, legitimate, apolitical, and accountable actors; in short, it changes a soldier or policeman into someone that a child would run toward for protection rather than away from in fear. This involves more than simple train-and-equip programs, which, while necessary for SSR, are insufficient to achieve comprehensive SSR alone. The work of reform broadly encompasses the creation of institutions, force-structure decisions, the formulation of national security strategy and doctrine, the recruiting and vetting of individuals, the selection of leadership, and a myriad of other considerations.

Typically, the security sector comprises three categories of organizations. First are operational actors, that is, units of uniformed and armed personnel in direct contact with the population. These organizations are on the front line in protecting citizens from security threats and include police, military, prison and customs authorities, and border control. The second category includes the institutions that manage these actors, such as the ministry of interior, ministry of defense, and ministry of justice. Above these institutions, in the third category, are oversight bodies, such as the executive or parliament, ideally elected through democratic means and charged with ensuring that the security sector serves the people and not vice versa. One may conceptualize the security sector as a pyramid of organizations and institutions (see figure 1). Nonstatutory forces, such as nonstate militias and other armed groups, are sometimes included in the security sector, but this should be a short-term inclusion only, as ultimately the state must control the monopoly of force to remain viable.

Increasingly, SSR is seen within the context of overarching efforts to establish the rule of law, another broad concept that resists common or comprehensive definition. The UN secretary-general has defined it as the “principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards.”<sup>9</sup> Within the overall context of efforts to establish a safe and secure environment and the rule of law, programs

**Figure 1.** Taxonomy of the security sector



aimed at reforming the security sector and the justice sector thus are interdependent, though they entail some distinctly separate tasks. An SSR program should not attempt to rewrite a country's constitution or its laws, address past human rights abuses and crimes against humanity, or integrate of traditional and religious systems of justice with international norms. Nor should a justice sector reform (JSR) program attempt to recruit military and police forces, determine the weaponry and organizational structure of security forces, or draft the national security strategy. Such attempts would likely be a calamitous mismatch of expertise and functions.

Where SSR and JSR primarily intersect is in the development of criminal justice institutions and personnel. A JSR program operating without a commensurate SSR effort will likely fail, as criminal justice systems require professional police, prisons, customs, and other instruments of law enforcement. Similarly, a SSR program operating without a corresponding justice reform program will likely doom the security sector, as it will be judged in part by the legitimacy of the laws it is tasked to uphold and by the fairness of the judiciary and penal institutions. Working together, however, SSR and JSR create the conditions for sustainable peace and, in the long term, economic growth.

### ***Challenges in Implementing SSR Programs***

There are several challenges in implementing SSR programs. First, though there is a growing consensus that early local ownership of SSR work is a critical component of its sustainability, translating this principle into concrete reality remains a challenge.<sup>10</sup> Even the definition of local ownership is contested. Deciding which local leaders and political groups truly represent local aspirations may be difficult and fraught with uncertainty, and have political ramifications in both indigenous and international politics. Also, local actors often have competing visions and priorities; choosing local partners can be perilous in conflict-affected countries where there is often imperfect knowledge of parochial agendas. In addition, it may

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prove difficult to keep insurgents and spoilers out of the process. If they are deemed key stakeholders, they gain legitimacy and the ability to obstruct progress from within. Finally, measuring ownership is difficult. Should metrics privilege local or international values and priorities? Local ownership is sound in theory but ambiguous in practice.

Second, as the security sector comprises various agencies and departments, successful SSR conceptually demands a whole-of-government response from donor nations. There are several reasons why this is seldom, if ever, done in practice. SSR is a relatively new idea, emerging after the Cold War, and consequently suffers from a dearth of coherent frameworks, common definitions, and technical expertise. On the practical level, SSR strategy demands cooperation from a wide range of agencies that often have conflicting perspectives, priorities, and objectives. The result is often competition among agencies and the uncoordinated and ad hoc implementation of SSR programs. Additionally, the lengthy time horizon for SSR to produce noticeable change may cause donors to lose interest or focus.

Third, SSR is a political process that must be accomplished in partnership with the country undergoing the reform. Conflict-affected countries' security forces, both statutory and nonstatutory, are the de facto institutions of power when the process begins, and altering them can provoke violent reactions and a relapse into armed conflict. It is difficult to persuade a general or warlord in Afghanistan or Liberia to put down the rifle and become a wheat farmer. International organizations or bilateral partners who ignore the political nuances of SSR and attempt to implement it in a purely unilateral and technical manner will fail.

Fourth, SSR is difficult to operationalize. The majority of countries undergoing SSR are fragile or failed states emerging from armed conflicts. Operating in wrecked countries with ruined infrastructure and in areas where everything seems to be a priority is challenging. SSR processes are resource intensive, requiring significant numbers of trainers and staff, a large logistical footprint, and a programmatic robustness capable of training, equipping, fielding, and sustaining the new security force. It takes years and even decades to create a viable security sector.

Fifth, SSR programs have few good metrics for success. Even the definition of security is ambiguous. Does it refer to state security, regional security, or human security? If all three, how should they be prioritized and integrated? Many of the principles that inform different ideas about security may not easily translate into a coherent and actionable national security strategy. The human security perspective holds that a country is secure when individuals attain "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear."<sup>11</sup> How exactly should the armed forces and other instruments of national power provide this?

Finally, international donors are quick to resort to traditional train-and-equip programs in an effort to improve the operational effectiveness of local security forces and put new police on the streets and soldiers in the field. Such programs quickly produce visible results and clear statistics, including number of trainees, uniformed personnel on duty, and vehicles operational. They do little, however, to transform institutions, establish government oversight, and create an appropriate civil-military relationship, which are the goals of SSR.

Despite the challenges, SSR processes are an invaluable support for countries looking to move beyond conflict. They help the state consolidate the monopoly of force it needs to uphold the rule of law by assessing the current security sector in terms of capacity, efficiency, and relevance and supporting the creation of a balanced and effective security sector, informed by a clear understanding of its objectives, threats, and resources available. SSR work can reconstitute and professionalize security forces, such as the military and police; build civilian-led security-sector institutions, such as the ministries of interior, defense, and justice, which can manage security organs competently; and establish transparent oversight mechanisms for the security sector in the executive and legislative branches, providing

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capable security-sector governance and making the security sector accountable to citizens through democracy. Finally, SSR processes can assist in developing a national security strategy that addresses the root causes of armed conflict and geopolitical threats as appropriate for that country, and translate that strategy into localized strategies.

However, SSR work must itself be part of a larger peacemaking effort. It cannot resolve ongoing armed conflicts or substitute for peace enforcement activities when those are required. Nor can it address past abuse and injustices or transform the justice sector, that is, managing transitional justice, writing laws, or redressing past security-sector crimes. Finally, it cannot transition combatants to civilian life—which is the province of DDR.

## **DDR: A Parallel Support for SSR**

When conducting SSR, among the first questions is what to do with ex-combatants, as they will shape the future security sector and influence the success or failure of SSR programs. If ex-combatants are not successfully integrated into civil society, they may mobilize again, threatening a relapse into violence. Successful integration, meanwhile, can naturally mean that many ex-combatants find employment in the new security forces that SSR produces. Consequently, DDR and SSR are linked and mutually buttressing in conflict-affected environments and must be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated in parallel, not serially.

DDR is a first step in the transition from conflict to peace by removing weapons, demobilizing armed units, transferring combatants back to civilian life, and enabling them to earn livelihoods through peaceful means. The United Nations has been a leader in developing and implementing DDR, with programs in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Afghanistan, Nepal, Solomon Islands, and Haiti. According to the United Nations, a DDR process “deals 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.”<sup>12</sup>

As the term implies, DDR is a three-step process. The first step is disarmament: Ex-combatants report to a safe DDR site within the conflict zone, where their small arms, munitions, and light and heavy weaponry are collected, documented, and ideally destroyed. This portion of DDR can also be linked to a broader small-arms and light weapons counter-proliferation program. Next, ex-combatants are demobilized and disbanded, formally breaking up command structures and marking their official entry into civilian life. Lastly, they are reintegrated into civil society. This typically is divided into two phases: initial reinsertion and long-term reintegration. Initial reinsertion entails giving ex-combatants a short-term support package and transporting them back to their homes to begin their new lives. Reintegration involves longer processes of job training and placement programs, working with communities to accept ex-combatants, and monitoring ex-combatants' progress. Sometimes the international community adds a fourth R for rehabilitation, attending to ex-combatants' physiological needs and mental health, though nearly every DDR or DDRR program addresses this challenge to some extent. Overall, DDR processes seek to ensure permanent disarmament and sustainable peace.

### ***Challenges in Implementing DDR Programs***

Compared with SSR, DDR is relatively easier to manage, with clearer priorities, objectives, metrics, and time horizons. The priorities and goals of DDR are obvious and measurable, by numbers of combatants disarmed and demobilized, types and numbers of weapons collected and destroyed, or numbers of ex-combatants receiving reintegration benefits. Such clear program offerings and metrics, at least for DD if not R, make planning relatively

straightforward, and results are understandable to donor nations, the host government, and the population. Also, the project timeline is short: DDR must occur as soon as possible following a peace accord between warring parties to prevent a relapse of violence and can be completed in months, as opposed to SSR, which may take years.

However, DDR is still difficult to execute in conflict environments due to several challenging preconditions for success. The first is the actual cessation of fighting, preferably negotiated through a political agreement that includes all warring parties. If the agreement provides a clear framework for a DDR process, the process is more likely to succeed. Such a framework should include, at a minimum, eligibility criteria for participation in the program, assignment of international or national actors responsible for managing the program, creation of credible responsible institutions, defined and realistic goals, and a timetable for implementation.

Second, the combatants must consider the environment safe for them to give up their weapons, and the receiving party (e.g., an international peacekeeping force) must be seen as credible and neutral. Leaders must personally commit to the peace process and direct their followers to lay down their arms. Often former combatant groups hold back their best fighters and most modern weapons to gain advantage or as a hedge against manipulation of the political process.

Third, all combatant groups must disarm simultaneously, which is a significant operational challenge for peacekeepers already working in a highly chaotic and dangerous environment. However, failure to disarm groups at the same time results in some groups becoming defenseless against armed enemies seeking reprisals or advantage.

Fourth, a major challenge for DDR is what some call the forgotten R. As DDR requires a whole-of-government approach, security organizations often conduct the disarmament and demobilization, whereas development agencies deal with reintegration. However, military and development organizations differ widely in training, culture, and perspectives, which sometimes impairs effective integration. Problems can occur if ex-combatants have to wait weeks or months between the DD and R. Worse, the reintegration program may run out of funds, so that some ex-combatants receive benefits while others do not. Disarmed and demobilized ex-combatants who are not immediately reintegrated may turn to violent crime to maintain themselves. Other potential ex-combatants may simply give up on the DDR process, thinking it not credible. This manifests itself most visibly in criminal gangs that form from demobilized groups and plague both reconstruction efforts and the population generally. Unlike combatant groups, gangs cannot undergo DDR; they are a law enforcement problem and must be arrested, tried, and incarcerated within the criminal justice system. Both DDR and SSR planners may have to include preventing the rise of gang activity in their plans.

Fifth, it may be difficult to secure local ownership for DDR programs. Most conflict-affected populations see the need to disarm and demobilize combatants, but some noncombatants may take umbrage with rewarding combatants with money and job opportunities after they terrorized the population, especially when innocent civilians receive fewer benefits. Some communities may not welcome ex-combatants, especially if they are linked to atrocities and war crimes. DDR staff may need a sophisticated public communications and sensitization program to allay apprehensions and gain local ownership of the program.

Sixth, sufficient funds must be in place for the DDR program. The reintegration portion of the program is usually the most expensive, as it provides benefits for ex-combatants over time. DDR programs that are low on funds usually prioritize the DD portion, leaving the R to wither. A DDR program that runs out of money halfway through risks disaster, as it may provoke an attack by the armed on the unarmed, foment reprisals against DDR staff, or encourage ex-combatants to take up the gun again to make a living.

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Finally, because every conflict is unique, DDR programs must recognize that not all ex-combatants have the same needs. Effective programs must be adaptable to the specific requirements of different target groups, especially vulnerable populations, such as the disabled, child soldiers, women, or widows. Child soldiers often cannot benefit from reintegration programs that do not specifically account for their needs. Worse, they can be the most difficult ex-combatants to reintegrate, as they grew up in armed group camps and were exposed to human atrocities and exploitation. Female combatants, abducted girls, and families of combatants also typically do not fully benefit from DDR programs. Male combatants may discriminate against women, especially if they do not have official rank and must rely on men to confirm their statuses. Many women associated with fighting groups were abducted for sexual services and do not qualify as ex-combatants. Families of combatants who lived in the armed group's camp and provided logistical support to combatants also may not qualify for reintegration benefits, depending on the noblesse oblige of the combatants they supported. DDR programs thus often neglect women and children, who may need reintegration benefits the most.

Like SSR work, DDR processes can help the state consolidate the monopoly of force that is needed to uphold the rule of law. They can offer armed groups a way to turn in their arms without being seen to have given up or surrendered, separate combatants from their weapons, and help break up command structures. They also return ex-combatants to peaceful civilian life and provide a short-term safety net for them and their dependents, while providing unique benefits to vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, child soldiers, women, and widows. All these processes are a signal to combatant groups and civilians that a truce has been reached and hostilities have ceased.

DDR work, however, cannot guarantee that hostilities between ex-combatants will not reoccur. It cannot create goodwill and reconciliation among ex-combatants, or force them to take part in the program, even if the peace agreement compels their participation. It cannot disarm and reintegrate criminal gangs or members of organized criminal enterprises. As with SSR work, addressing past atrocities committed by ex-combatants is beyond the purview of DDR processes. Finally, it is not a substitute for programs that foster longer-term development or reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Thus, to be most effective, DDR and SSR programs must be integrated into a cohesive whole, working alongside other diplomatic and transitional justice efforts to ensure lasting peace.

## **Challenges of Integrating DDR and SSR**

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 harbor 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.

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.

***To be most effective, DDR and SSR programs must be integrated into a cohesive whole, working alongside other diplomatic and transitional justice efforts to ensure lasting peace.***

Programmatically DDR and SSR can be difficult to synchronize, owing to their differing priorities, objectives, and time horizons. DDR is complicated, in that it is difficult, yet has clear and achievable objectives, and a solution can be engineered. SSR, meanwhile, is complex, in that there are no clear and achievable objectives that can reliably be measured, and a solution may not be obvious at first. Also, SSR programs take years and even decades to complete, while DDR generally takes months.

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

### ***The Forgotten R***

A forgotten R in a DDR process represents a missed opportunity for ex-combatants who are seeking jobs in the new security sector, which, for its part, needs a labor pool of qualified and vetted recruits. Worse, ex-combatants may be integrated into the new security forces in an ad hoc manner, without proper human rights vetting. This can be a major setback to SSR, as it allows insurgents and other undesirables to infiltrate the security forces and commit crimes in uniform, damaging the new forces' legitimacy. Failures of this nature have been witnessed repeatedly in Iraq, and as a joint Department of State and Department of Defense inspector general's report found, this is "a problem not easily undone."<sup>13</sup>

Other cases illustrate the potential long-term ramifications of forgetting the R in DDR. Following the El Salvador civil war in 1992, the peace accord specifically established a DDR framework. According to the UN mission in El Salvador, approximately 15,000 Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) combatants and over 20,000 Armed Forces of El Salvador (FAES) troops were demobilized, for a total of over 40,000 combined forces. Unfortunately the reintegration of combatants did not proceed as successfully as the disarmament and demobilization phase. The process did not meet the timelines established in the peace accords, and both FMLN and FAES ex-combatants were widely victimized and shunned in communities where reintegration was attempted. Also, while former FMLN combatants reintegrated into the political system, the same could not be said for former FAES troops. Female and child combatants were treated in the same manner as men, failing to recognize their specialized needs; this is particularly distressing considering that over 30 percent of FMLN combatants were female.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords marked the end of conflict and the beginning of DDR efforts there. Owing to political sensitivities, the accords did not establish a formal long-term strategy for DDR. The first phase of the process involved downsizing armies and disarming combatants dismissed from service. Of the 400,000 troops, nearly 300,000 left voluntarily, which nullified the need for extensive demobilization. Critically, however, soldiers who voluntarily demobilized were provided few to no reintegration benefits, and assistance was left up to local and state governments, which lacked capacity to deliver basic services. Consequently, many of the ex-combatants entered a devastated postwar economy with limited resources, little education, and almost no opportunities.

## ***DDR, SSR, and Transitional Justice***

Transitional justice generally refers to a range of judicial and nonjudicial mechanisms to redress past human rights violations committed in countries transitioning from conflict to peace. Judicial mechanisms include special courts, either domestic or international, such as Sierra Leone's Special Court, the International Tribunal for Rwanda and Yugoslavia, or the International Criminal Court, which claims universal jurisdiction. Nonjudicial mechanisms include truth and reconciliation commissions at the national level (e.g., Argentina in 1983, Chile in 1990, South Africa in 1995, Ghana in 2002) or international level (e.g., El Salvador in 1992, Guatemala in 1997, East Timor in 2001, Sierra Leone in 2002). The efficacy of transitional justice is not without debate, but in general, the primary purpose is to end cultures of impunity and reaffirm the rule of law within a context of democratic governance.

There is a natural tension between transitional justice and DDR-SSR programs, and these two categories of activities should be isolated and compartmentalized, even as they must sometimes work alongside each other. Sometimes authorities must choose between security and justice, or prioritize one over the other, in the aftermath of conflict. DDR and SSR must include some form of amnesty to be successful; otherwise ex-combatants have no incentive to cooperate. In a classic case of the prisoner's dilemma, ex-combatants will not show up to a disarmament site if they think they might be arrested, detained, and investigated under a special court or truth commission. Such a perception not only discredits the DDR process, but encourages ex-combatants to bury their weapons and clandestinely regroup their command structures. In some cases, DDR will fail unless it is clearly disaggregated from transitional justice efforts and ex-combatants have some reassurances that they will not be punished for cooperating.

Similarly, in SSR work, potential recruits will be discouraged from volunteering for the new security forces if they believe that results from background checks will be used against them in a court or truth commission. Vetting is a mandatory component of SSR and, regrettably, often overlooked because the process in postconflict societies is difficult, owing to the lack of credible public records; it also depends in large part upon guaranteeing the anonymity of verified witnesses who provide character references for recruits.<sup>14</sup> SSR programs that conduct vetting frequently compile a relatively substantial amount of information on individuals, many of whom are ex-combatants and some of whom committed atrocities. The temptation to hand SSR vetting records to a special court or truth commission is great, but should be avoided. If this happens and the records are used as evidence against a candidate, vetting sources and methods can be compromised and may result in reprisal killings against witnesses who spoke against candidates on condition of anonymity. Also, the SSR program's credibility will be irreparably damaged, as the program will be viewed as a shill for transitional justice mechanisms. Sometimes not everyone in the population wholly embraces or trusts transitional justice programs, seeing them instead as witch trials. Even candidates with little to hide may refrain from volunteering to serve in the new security sector if they believe that a flawed background check could lead to a trial and false conviction in a special court. This fear can devastate SSR efforts.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

DDR and SSR are fundamentally related, codependent, and mutually reinforcing; failing to plan and implement them simultaneously and in a holistic manner risks compromising both programs. The two functions work together to consolidate the state's monopoly on force, which enables the state, in turn, to enforce the rule of law and move toward sustainable development and peace. Moreover, as fragile states secure themselves, peacekeeping

missions can withdraw gracefully. The following are recommendations to better integrate DDR and SSR:

- *DDR and SSR should be conceived as one.* Both programs share the same objective: consolidation of the state's monopoly of force so that it may enforce the rule of law. DDR and SSR programs rise or fall together, and therefore should be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated manner.
- *DDR and SSR should be implemented and evaluated in parallel, not serially.* This buttresses both programs by rapidly transitioning qualified ex-combatants into the new security sector, controlling spoilers, and containing violence. In addition, former combatants can benefit from security sector programs that provide for their welfare so they do not become a chronic source of instability.
- *DDR and SSR should have a source for common funding.* DDR and SSR programs, like many programs in conflict-affected countries, are resource and time intensive. Funding them from myriad sources encourages stovepiping and discourages integrated programming. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has proposed that the U.S. Congress create a common fund to finance the civilian aspects of nation building. These proposals should be pursued and applied to SSR and DDR programs.
- *DDR and SSR should be mandated in peace agreements.* Establishing a mandate for DDR and SSR, agreed to by all warring parties, is critical to program success. The more programmatic detail is incorporated into the agreement, the better: An agreement could establish clear eligibility criteria for participation in the program, determine the roles and responsibilities of actors conducting the program, define realistic goals, and create a timetable for implementation.
- *Remember the forgotten R.* Reintegration is a natural point of intersection between DDR and SSR, as many ex-combatants will seek employment in the new security forces. However, reintegration is difficult from both the DDR and SSR perspectives, and a more robust capability is needed.
- *Be cognizant of security versus justice trade-offs.* Ideally, security and justice should complement one another in conflict-affected countries, but this may not always be the case. In some circumstances, there is a natural tension between security programs, such as DDR and SSR, and transitional justice programs, such as special courts and truth commissions. In these cases, DDR and SSR must be partially disaggregated from transitional justice programs or they may fail, tempting a relapse of armed conflict.
- *Ideas matter.* Theoretical work and field-based approaches to DDR and SSR should recognize their crucial interaction and treat them as a single entity. Clarity over terminology, actors, objectives, tasks, and sequencing should be developed to integrate these functions. Promoting the study of these concepts and drafting doctrine is essential, as is establishing expert teams that understand the theory and practice of both programs and can competently conduct assessments and joint plans, so that DDR and SSR reinforce each other rather than conflict. It is time to begin this work.

## Notes

1. The U.S. State Department outsourced the SSR program to private firms, principally DynCorp International, which may be the first time in recent history one sovereign nation hired a private company to raise another sovereign nation's military.
2. James Pugel, *What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Liberia* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2007).
3. The concept of a monopoly on the use of force or violence is derived from German sociologist Max Weber's classic definition of the state as "a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." See Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 77.
4. See, e.g., Camille Conaway and Salome Martinez, *Adding Value: Women's Contributions to Reintegration and Reconstruction in El Salvador* (Washington, DC: Hunt Alternatives, 2004); Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek, eds., *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, and UN-INSTRAW, 2008).
5. Notable exceptions include Atsushi Yasutomi, "Linking DDR and SSR in Post-Conflict States: Agendas for Effective Security Sector Reintegration," *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (May 2008); Owen Greene and Simon Rynn, "Linking and Coordinating DDR and SSR for Human Security after Conflict: Issues, Experience, and Priorities," Working Paper 2 for Center for International Cooperation and Security, July 2008; Michael Brzoska, "Embedding DDR Programme in Security Sector Reconstruction," in *Security Governance in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hanggi (London: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Transaction Publishers, 2005), 104; Alan Bryden, "Understanding The DDR-SSR Nexus: Building Sustainable Peace in Africa," Second International Conference on DDR and Stability in Africa, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, June 12–14, 2007 (OSAA/DRC), issue paper, June 2007; Jeremy Ginifer, "Support For DDR and SSR after Conflicts in Africa: Lessons Learnt and New Agendas in Africa, Conflict Prevention, Management, and Reduction in Africa," Paper 3, Joint Project of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for International Cooperation and Security, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki, 2007; Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) Secretariat, "Linkages between Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants and Security Sector Reform," MDRP, October 2003.
6. See, e.g., United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Resource Centre (UNDDR), *UN Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS)*, available at [http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/iddrs\\_guide.php](http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/iddrs_guide.php) (accessed April 14, 2010); OECD-DAC, *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform* (Paris: OECD, 2007), available at [www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/if-ssr](http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/if-ssr) (accessed April 12, 2010).
7. According to the OECD-DAC, DDR and SSR "are often best considered together as part of a comprehensive security and justice development program." See OECD-DAC, *OECD DAC Handbook*.
8. While recognizing that these terms may connote subtle differences in conceptualization, this report will assume the term *security sector reform* is generic and all-encompassing.
9. United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General: The Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies*, UN Document S/2004/616, August 23, 2004. See also David Tolbert and Andrew Solomon, "United Nations Reform and Supporting the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict Societies," *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol. 19 (Spring 2006), 29–62, available at [www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hj/iss19/tolbert.shtml](http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hj/iss19/tolbert.shtml) (accessed April 14, 2010).
10. For more information on this topic, see Liz Panarelli, "Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform," *USIP Peace Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2009); Marc J. Cohen and Tara R. Gingerich, *Protect and Serve or Train and Equip? U.S. Security Assistance and Protection of Civilians* (Washington, DC: Oxfam America, 2009).
11. See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "New Dimensions of Human Security," *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1994> (accessed April 14, 2010); Neil Macfarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).
12. See UNDDR, *Integrated DDR Standards*, 24.
13. U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training*, joint inspector general report, Washington, DC, July 15, 2005, 22.
14. See Sean McFate, "The Art and Aggravation of Vetting in Post-Conflict Environments," *Military Review* (July–August 2007), 79–87, available at [http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume5/october\\_2007/10\\_07\\_3.html](http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume5/october_2007/10_07_3.html) (accessed April 14, 2010).



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