

The suitability of DDR programmes to disarm terrorist groups

4.1. Introduction

Modern-day conflicts, particularly those in Africa and the Middle East, have become increasingly multi-layered and complex, with terrorist groups over the past couple of decades proliferating in already fragile and conflict-affected settings. In the Sahel and larger West African region, the terrorist threat posed by a number of al-Qaeda and IS-affiliated terrorist organisations has increased⁴⁴¹ and has further exacerbated already existing tensions. A multitude of non-state armed groups, community-based militias, bandits, and criminal actors now operate in the region, most notably in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria, and take advantage of the historic trans-Saharan trade routes. In the Middle East, ISIS at its height controlled a vast territory and in many ways acted as a state, while Yemen has been faced with multiple conflicts involving terrorist groups which has seen the government being embroiled in a conflict against Houthi rebels but also with AQIP. In addition to this, various armed groups are also engaged in conflict with each other in the region.

The nature of warfare itself has changed significantly due to technological advancements and the use of communication platforms, particularly in the Middle East. Non-state armed groups including terrorist groups are becoming capable of acquiring or manufacturing weapons, adding to the proliferation of SALW. Several terrorist groups like ISIS have been using IEDs for a long time but can now also develop remote capabilities to carry out attacks, obtain knowledge on how to make weapons through the Internet or rely on 3D technologies to produce weapons.⁴⁴² Technological advances in manufacturing, design and the production of weapons also present challenges to both DDR processes and Weapons and Ammunition Management Programmes (WAM).

Against this backdrop, peace operation efforts need to be conducted in complex and often fragile environments in which many different actors operate, including terrorist groups. In the aftermath of a conflict, countries face numerous challenges ranging from creating stability, building strong institutions, providing humanitarian assistance, and conducting reconstruction efforts, whereas the longer-term goal is to prevent the recurrence of violence and conflict. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), in addition to security sector reform (SSR), transitional justice and arms control are all part of a wider peacebuilding effort that is needed in countries emerging from a conflict. These different components may overlap but are distinct. With consideration to the increasing involvement of terrorist groups in conflicts and the changing nature of warfare, as well as how DDR programmes have evolved in the last decade, this section will explore how the interplay of these dynamics might contribute to reducing the trafficking and possession of SALW by terrorist groups.

4.2. D for Disarmament

Disarmament, security, and development are intrinsically linked. Sustainable development goal 16 is dedicated to peace, justice and strong institutions and one of the targets is to significantly reduce the illicit financial market for SALW and arms flows themselves, strengthen recovery, the return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organised crime by 2030.⁴⁴³ The updated version of the UN Integrated DDR Standards (UNIDDRS) published in 2018 has been developed by more than 20 UN agencies to provide guidance in post-conflict contexts where DDR forms an integral

441 Danielle Paquette, Souad Mekhennet and Joby Warrick, "ISIS attacks surge in Africa even as Trump boasts of a '100-percent' defeat caliphate," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/islamic-state-attacks-surg-ing-africa/2020/10/18/2e16140e-1079-11eb-8a35-237ef1eb2ef7_story.html.

442 Audrey Kurth Cronin, *Power to the People: How Open Technological Innovation is Arming Tomorrows Terrorists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

443 "The 17 Goals," United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, accessed February 18, 2020, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

part of comprehensive peace agreements. According to UNIDDRS, the first D of DDR represents the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons belonging to combatants and often also the civilian population.⁴⁴⁴ Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.⁴⁴⁵ From this definition, it becomes clear that disarmament is broader than just disarming combatants and can overlap with arms control programmes, which are often conducted among States - in peace time - to reduce the number of all types of weapons owned by States.



Figure 20. Demobilisation process begins, outside Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 2012.⁴⁴⁶

While the proliferation of arms is not itself considered the cause of violence, it does increase the severity of violence as a force multiplier.⁴⁴⁷ General Assembly Resolution 71/64 on the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures emphasised the need to address the illicit trafficking of SALW, including through weapons collection, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programmes and the enhancement of physical security and stockpile management practices, as well as relevant training programmes. The Resolution also acknowledged that a comprehensive and effective weapons management programme can contribute to sustainable peacebuilding efforts.⁴⁴⁸ The importance of adequate DDR and weapons reduction programmes in the process of addressing the prevalence of SALW has also been emphasised as a ‘best practice’ by the UN and World Bank, though evidence of its effectiveness remains limited.⁴⁴⁹

444 United Nations. “Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS): Glossary and Definitions.” August 1, 2006, <https://www.unddr.org/modules/IDDRS-1.20-Glossary.pdf>.

445 The EU’s Concept for support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration adopts the UN definitions for DDR in full, but the definition of disarmament is qualified by a footnote stating that the development of responsible arms management programmes is ‘not mandatory’, though it should be noted that disarmament is often linked to civilian voluntary surrender programmes. See Council of the European Union. *Draft EU Concept for Support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)*. December 2006. P.6 n.2. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/16387_/16387_en.pdf.

446 United Nations. “Handbook for United Nations DDR Practices: Effective Weapons and Ammunition management in a changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context” *Department of Peacekeeping Affairs*, 2018, p. vi. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/effective_weapons_and_ammunition_management_ddr_handbook.pdf.

447 Andrew D. Pinto, Malika Sharma, and Robert Muggah, “An agent–vector–host–environment model for controlling small arms and light weapons,” *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* 27, no. 2 (September 2011): 111-127, DOI: 10.1080/13623699.2011.608630.

448 United Nations General Assembly. “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures.” Resolution 71/64, Adopted by the General Assembly on December 5, 2016.

449 Robert Muggah, “Emerging from the shadow of war: A critical perspective on DDR and weapons reduction in the post-conflict period,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 27, no.1 (January 2007): 190-205, DOI: 10.1080/13523260600603493.

4.3. From first to third generation of DDR programmes

Peace operations and DDR programmes have evolved to address the recognised changing environment in which they are being utilised.⁴⁵⁰ With regard to DDR, these changes have manifested as what are referred to as generational changes in policy and practice. The first generation of DDR programmes have traditionally been implemented after an international armed conflict - between States, or within one State - has ended. The scope and modalities of these original DDR programmes are part of the peace agreement and based on the willingness and implied trust to implement the programme itself.⁴⁵¹ Whilst first generation DDR programmes focus on the combatants, the second generation of DDR programmes are broader and also address the needs of communities that have been affected by violence.⁴⁵² An important concept under the second generation DDR programmes is community violence reduction (CVR), which has been incorporated in UN peace operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mali (MINUSMA) and Darfur (UNAMID).⁴⁵³

While DDR and CVR programmes have the same objective to reduce violence, CVR programmes are often implemented when a peace agreement has not yet been concluded and the pre-conditions of a DDR process are not met. CVR programmes can be implemented in addition to or instead of DDR programmes, and are focused on the needs of the local communities. This priority is demonstrated through developmental activities ranging from repairing schools and roads to vocational training, the creation of gun-free zones, and registration capabilities. By building trust and creating space for dialogue, the programmes contribute to stability and can lay the groundwork for the subsequent introduction of DDR programmes.⁴⁵⁴ The advantages are that CVR programmes can include members of the armed groups, including terrorist groups, that are not likely to be signatories to peace agreements and thus not eligible for DDR. In Mali, for example, CVR programmes have been implemented to address recruitment into the armed movements present in the country, including those allied to al-Qaeda.⁴⁵⁵ Importantly, however, the expressed primary aim of CVR is to prevent and reduce violence, not necessarily to reduce arms flow of weapons to/from terrorist groups. The developmental and community-building work conducted may nevertheless contribute to conditions conducive for arms reduction.

The third generation DDR programmes are being implemented in fragile contexts characterised by a lack of the rule of law and weak government, and often during an on-going conflict. In such circumstances, the parties in the conflict are not likely to give up their weapons. A practicing expert in DDR and CVR confirmed in interview that the pre-conditions for a successful DDR programme, i.e., the willingness and trust to voluntarily agree to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate, are thus difficult to achieve.

“It’s a common misconception when people say that a DDR programme goes on after a war is done. Most of the time, the war is still going on. So, if I were them, I wouldn’t give up my weapon either, it’s kind of stupid from a personal security point of view.”

DDR and CVR Expert

450 Robert Muggah and Chris O'Donnell, “Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration,” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 4 no.1 (May 21, 2015): 30, pp. 1-12. <https://stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.fs/galley/325/download>.

451 United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM), “Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Compendium of Projects 2010–2017.” 2019, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ddr_compendium.pdf.

452 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. “Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations.” January 2010, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2gddr_eng_with_cover.pdf.

453 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. “Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context.” 2018.

454 United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). “Community Violence Reduction: Creating Space for Peace.” Undated, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/ddr-and-cvr-creating-space-for-peace.pdf>.

455 United Nations. “Report of the Secretary-General on the threat of terrorists benefiting from transnational organized crime.” 2018, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/795063?ln=en>.

Third-generation DDR programmes have begun developing transitional centres that differ from classic cantonment sites, and which are more suitable for the demobilisation of violent extremists.⁴⁵⁶ Yet, many challenges remain for third generation DDR programmes to address the specific issues relating to terrorists, such as how to provide safe passage to those who wish to leave the terrorist group, the provision of de-radicalisation programmes and the collection of weapons while the conflict and terrorist action remain ongoing.⁴⁵⁷ The reintegration of ex-combatants/fighters often occurs in fragile contexts, including during ongoing conflicts, where non-state armed groups continue to operate or advocate for the use of violence even as reintegration efforts are underway.

The resulting lack of focus on disarmament as a priority in third generation DDR programmes has led many to continue to suggest that it should be renamed to provide a more accurate description of the process. However, there remain operational and bureaucratic reasons why such a rebrand cannot happen, reasons which couple as an explanation as to why the newest generations of DDR include accompanying but separate programmes.

“DDR has been going on for 25 years. If you change your acronym, you lose every resolution for 25 years that you get your money from, that you get in peacekeeping. So ... we started renaming spin-offs, [like] CVR – community violence reduction – the idea was to stop the violence not to stop the weapon. The acronym is wrong, you just can’t get away from it for very bureaucratic reasons.”

DDR Expert Practitioner

4.4. DDR as a tool which incorporates terrorists

The evolutionary adaptations to DDR processes made in the last few decades have sought to align the programmes with the rapidly evolving conflict dynamics in Africa.⁴⁵⁸ Despite these changes however, there are still questions as to DDR’s suitability when it comes to terrorists. Directly addressing the suitability of the use of DDR when faced with terrorist and violent extremist groups, the UN University recently compiled a report questioning whether UN DDR was fit for purpose in the era of violent extremism.⁴⁵⁹ A major barrier posed by the designated status of terrorist organisations is that it discounts these groups from being signatories to formal peace agreements, and therefore from DDR participation. One of the major facets of DDR as a process is that it is voluntary, and to be effective requires commitment to not just disarm, but also to completely demobilise and reintegrate into society, but above all, it requires trust in the government to genuinely and meaningfully reintegrate those who entered the DDR programmes. The political motivations of most terrorist groups and their persistent attacks against governments are challenges which DDR was not designed to address. Significantly, if a terrorist group becomes a signatory to a peace agreement, they surrender the ability to impose their ideology through force, the disarmament process would remove their capability to do so.

“[DDR] is not a tool that is made for dealing with violent extremist movements and was not set up to be one but it is sort of being labelled in some way as being the answer because we don’t have much else at the moment.”

Disarmament Expert Practitioner

456 Robert Muggah and Chris O’Donnell, “Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration,” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 4 no.1 (May 21, 2015): 30, pp. 1-12, <https://stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.fs/galley/325/download>.

457 Ibid.

458 United Nations General Assembly. “Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration Report of the Secretary-General”. March 2006, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewj3n7rXzf_sAhUPjqQKHTOGCBQQFjAAegQIBxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.undp.org%2Fcontent%2Fdam%2Fundp%2Fdocuments%2Fcpr%2Fdocuments%2Fddr%2FSG_Report_on_DDR_to_GA_s-60-705_March_2006.pdf&usq=AOvVawIi0JpSEsMYrD2zStFXPD8Q.

459 James Cockayne and Siobhan O’Neil (eds.). *UN DDR in an Era of Violent Extremism: Is It Fit for Purpose?* New York: UNU-CPR, 2015. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/un_ddr_in_an_era_of_violent_extremism.pdf.

The ramifications of encouraging individuals to engage in DDR processes when the group they are a part of have not officially committed to the programme can be severe. Those who utilise DDR in this way transform its existence from an overarching peacekeeping regime to a piecemeal exit programme with enhanced risks attached. A peacekeeping expert gave an example:

“There was an attack on the first day of the [MINUSMA Mécanisme Opérationnel de Coordination] in Gao, which led to 60 deaths, so [the fighters of the armed groups] said “well, but wait, we become targets for the terrorists because we are finally the symbol of the implementation of the peace agreement.”

Peacekeeping Expert

However, there have been significant developments in this area, including the peace agreement that has been signed involving the Taliban in Afghanistan. In February 2020, an agreement was concluded with the United States on the withdrawal of US troops and a breakthrough was achieved with the Afghan government in early December.⁴⁶⁰ How DDR, if at all, will be part of the peace deal remains to be seen. It is thought that any disarmament phase, initially at least, will take on the characteristics of a weapons and ammunition management programme rather than the first step of a DDR programme because Taliban fighters will likely not agree to hand over their weapons to their rival Afghan National Defense and Security Forces personnel.⁴⁶¹ Thus, DDR will likely be a result of, rather than a leading factor in, the larger peace process.

4.5. The Potential for DDR to Negatively Impact SALW Flows

The general challenges that DDR programmes face include the high prevalence of firearm ownership, high military spending in the region, brigade impunity, and a lack of stockpile and border security.⁴⁶² The implementation of such programmes also has the potential to present additional problems with regard to the very flow of SALW they would ideally address. In Côte d’Ivoire for example, following the conflict, weapons that were handed over in the DDR process were reappearing in the hands of terrorist groups throughout the Sahel, specifically in Burkina Faso and subsequently in Mali. Ivorian authorities were questioned in these cases, but the issue does not seem to have been resolved. The continued systematic erasure of serial numbers on weapons seized on the southern border of Burkina Faso with Côte d’Ivoire raises further questions as to the existence of corruption from within the DDR/WAM programmes themselves. The type of extensive erasure witnessed is rarely otherwise seen in the region, the lack of any good/developed weapons and ammunition registration/recording databases means that erasure of serial numbers is not typically an important priority for armed groups.⁴⁶³

“The fact that they are doing this still raises the suspicion that these weapons continue to come from a stockpile that is traceable in Côte d’Ivoire, possibly the DDR stockpile or the stocks of the Ivorian armed forces that continue to slide into the Burkina Faso region.”

Small Arms Expert

This issue was reiterated in another of our conducted interviews with a disarmament expert who explained that a large number of vz. 58 rifles which had been marked for destruction with geographic identification information in Côte d’Ivoire during DDR operations, were instead somehow moved out of the stockpiles and back into the hands of individuals and groups.

460 Hamid Shalizi and Abdul Qadir Sediqi. “Afghan government, Taliban reach breakthrough deal as calls grow for a ceasefire,” *Reuters*, 2 December 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/afghanistan-taliban-agreement-int-idUSKBN28C1NS>.

461 James Dobbins, Jason H. Campbell, Laurel E. Miller, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, “DDR in Afghanistan: Disarming, Demobilizing, and Reintegrating Afghan Combatants in Accordance with a Peace Agreements,” *Rand Corporation*, (February, 2020), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE300/PE343/RAND_PE343.pdf.

462 Gemma Bowsher, Patrick Bogue, Preeti Patel, Peter Boyle and Richard Sullivan, “Small and light arms violence reduction as a public health measure: the case of Libya,” *Conflict and Health* 12, no. 29 (July 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-018-0162-0>.

463 Interview with Small Arms Expert.

Implementing a peace agreement and DDR programme in Mali whilst terrorist attacks continue to shape the security landscape has proven to be very challenging. More than five years have passed since the Malian government and the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) concluded a peace agreement and so far, little progress has been made in the implementation of the agreement's commitments by either of the signatories. According to the defence and security section of the peace agreement, a cantonment process needs to be set up to identify which combatants are eligible to enter the DDR programme, a national committee for DDR needs to be established and armed and security forces need to be deployed.⁴⁶⁴ Although hostilities between the signatory parties have reduced, the jihadi terrorist groups are not party to the peace agreement and many members of the signatory groups have been targeted by jihadist terrorist acts.⁴⁶⁵ Terrorist attacks have continued throughout 2020 including against MINUSMA. In UNSC 2531(2020) the government of Mali was again urged to address the proliferation and trafficking of SALW, and to strengthen the effective management and storage of national stockpiles.⁴⁶⁶ According to the Carter Centre who have been appointed as an independent observer since 2017, little progress has been made on the DDR process. Its most recent report shows that the accelerated DDR involves just 1176 combatants which are not fully integrated, while the comprehensive DDR process still needs to be finalised and launched.⁴⁶⁷ Considering that the signatory parties registered nearly 85000 combatants, full implementation of the committed DDR process will take a long time.

The other important shift that the introduction of DDR programmes can cause is to transform weapons from being merely instruments into being desirable commodities and gateways into DDR programme participation which often produces employment for the individuals taking part. Setting a weapon surrender requirement as a criteria for entry into a DDR programme can push people to arm or rearm with the plan that one day they will turn the weapon into the DDR system and will be provided with reintegrative employment, financial remuneration, or material reward. This danger was realised throughout the late 1990s in the case of the incomplete Mozambican disarmament process, the consequences of which fuelled the SALW trafficking industry both domestically and internationally throughout South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi, and increased the proliferation of SALW amongst the population.⁴⁶⁸ These unintended consequences have the potential to directly contribute to the financial resources of armed groups.⁴⁶⁹

During the second attempt at DDR in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) disarmed and demobilised more than 100,000 former fighters and collected nearly 28,000 weapons between December 2003 and November 2004. The DDR programme estimated that 38,000 combatants would enrol. The reason for the unexpected high number was in part related to eligibility criteria. Combatants needed to be identified by the commander and some registered their family members so they could gain benefits from the DDR programme. Females and children associated with the armed groups could also enter the programme with or without weapons and ammunition. The benefits, in particular the large sum of cash, attracted not only combatants from Liberia but also combatants from Sierra Leone. The offering US\$300 essentially created a demand to buy weapons on the black market.⁴⁷⁰ Often commanders would send their own children or those of relatives to register for the DDR programme to cash in the money. This type of buy-back element of DDR programs has similarly

464 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali: Resulting from the Algiers Process. (Translation: University of Edinburgh). See. https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/EN-ML_150620_Accord-pour-la-paix-et-la-reconciliation-au-Mali_Issu-du-Processus-d%27Alger.pdf.

465 Mathieu Pellerin, "Mali's Algiers Peace Agreement, Five Years on: An Uneasy Calm," *International Crisis Group*, (June 24, 2020), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/laccord-dalger-cinq-ans-apres-un-calme-precaire-dont-il-ne-faut-pas-se-satisfaire>.

466 United Nations Security Council. "Resolution 2531(2020)." June 29, 2020, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2531>.

467 The Carter Center. "Observations on the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Resulting from the Algiers Process." December 2020. <https://pubhtml5.com/qpno/wlre/>.

468 Mark Knight and Alpaslan Ozerdem, "Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 4 (July 2004): 499–516, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343304044479>.

469 "How best to remove guns from post-conflict zones?" *The New Humanitarian*, July 28, 2011, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2011/07/28/how-best-remove-guns-post-conflict-zones>.

470 Ibid.

failed in Sierra Leone⁴⁷¹ and is now largely advised against.

“[The UN tried] cash for weapons and quickly shut it down because what was happening was that the amount of cash that they were offering was above the market price, so basically people started buying weapons to sell them to the UN. ... [Now] you’ll see in the IDDRS there was a strong guidance that said, do not do cash for weapons because you’re really going to risk affecting the market.”

DDR and CVR Expert Practitioner

Attempts have been made in the past to avoid the potentially exacerbating conditions that direct financial trade can create such as the careful tailoring of disarmament incentives within DDR programmes. This has included removing cash incentives from the equation completely with the implementation of ‘weapons lotteries’ in Mozambique and Bosnia in which SALW returns were rewarded with the chance to ‘win’ a product such as a DVD player or similar commodity.⁴⁷² Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the reintegration of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) militias saw conditions attached to the financial support as they were issued as loans. This allowed former combatants to rent vehicles to use in employment as taxi drivers which helped them fund their new life and repay what they owed.⁴⁷³ However, this clearly does not solve the issue of those who buy SALW or engage with armed-groups for the sole purpose of obtaining a weapon to use as entry into a DDR programme thereafter.

One way that has been used to guard against this is through careful surveillance of the region prior to implementing the system in order to understand how many weapons and what types of weapons are in the hands of the terrorist groups that the disarmament process is aimed at. This presents the possibility of building a catalogue of what is expected to arrive which can then be cross-referenced against what is actually collected. Many members of terrorist groups also post photos on social media after their operations holding a weapon.⁴⁷⁴

This may also help to address another present issue of individuals turning in broken, outdated, or otherwise useless weapons that would serve no purpose in combat, or are surplus to a weapons cache that is maintained by a group or individual.

“Most of the time they handed in their second weapon and there are many different ways that armed groups have weapons. Sometimes, one person can have many weapons, sometimes they are shared weapons, there are also crew weapons – like nobody owns a 50 calibre, right? It’s a crew weapon and you need at least 3 people to be operating that kind of weapon, the same thing with things like missiles. And a “weapon” is not always a weapon. Like an RPG-7, once you’ve launched it, unless you have a couple of missiles, it’s dead. It’s just a launcher. So, I think there is a big thing that first, you can’t just talk about weapons, you do really have to categorise the type of weapon.”

DDR Expert Practitioner

If a large proportion of weapons collected in DDR programmes are not those which would be used by terrorist groups or by individuals in the commission of violence in the community then their collection cannot be said to have a meaningful effect on the flow of SALW in the region. The consequences on market forces of setting disarmament as a requirement of DDR participation might not therefore be justifiable.

The result of the above, and the perceived necessity to address the threat to civilians posed by

471 Gemma Bowsher, Patrick Bogue, Preeti Patel, Peter Boyle and Richard Sullivan, “Small and light arms violence reduction as a public health measure: the case of Libya,” *Conflict and Health* 12, no. 29 (July 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-018-0162-0>.

472 Ibid.

473 Krijn Peters, “From weapons to wheels: young Sierra Leonean ex-combatants become motorbike taxi-riders,” *Journal of Peace Conflict and Development*, (March 10, 2007), <https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/wurpubs/fulltext/26906>.

474 Interview with DDR Expert.

terrorist organisations, has in some cases resulted in a move away from DDR engagement as the initial objective and towards engagement with process such as the already mentioned CVR, but also Transitional Weapons and Ammunition Management.

4.6. From Traditional to Transitional Weapon Management

When terrorist organisations are designated as such by the UN Sanctions Committee or the EU, it makes it increasingly complicated to conclude a peace agreement. This means that terrorist groups may not be eligible for a DDR programme, that the armed actors are not willing to disarm, or that the pre-conditions for a DDR programme are lacking. In such cases, peace and security can be achieved by the comprehensive maintenance of a tool traditionally used in arms control, which has now become a vital component, both within and independent of, DDR programmes: weapons and ammunition management.

“Weapons and ammunition management is the oversight, accountability and management of arms and ammunition throughout their lifecycle, including the establishment of frameworks, processes and practices for safe and secure materiel acquisition, stockpiling, transfers, tracing, and disposal. WAM does not only focus on small arms and light weapons, but on a broader range of conventional weapons including ammunition and artillery.”

United Nations Integrated DDR Standards

Over-accumulation of and excessive SALW proliferation only contributes to the prolonging of conflicts. Effective WAM of national stockpiles, can help to address over-accumulation and contain the conflict but also to address the risk of proliferation of SALW.⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, effective weapon management goes beyond merely focusing on the physical protection of national stockpiles. It includes measures ranging from recording keeping, conducting risk assessment, storing, and securing facilities and transport, to destruction of SALW. Further guidance can be found in the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG).⁴⁷⁶



Figure 21. Weapons being inspected before their destruction by UNMAS. DRC, 2017.⁴⁷⁷

475 UNIDIR. “The changing role of conventional arms control in preventing and managing violent conflicts.” 2018, <https://www.unidir.org/publication/changing-role-conventional-arms-control-preventing-and-managing-violent-conflicts>.

476 United Nations. “International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.” February 2005, <https://unsafeguard.org/un-safeguard/guide-lines>.

477 United Nations. “Handbook for United Nations DDR Practices: Effective Weapons and Ammunition management in a changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context” *Department of Peacekeeping Affairs*, 2018, p. 25. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/effective_weapons_and_ammunition_management_ddr_handbook.pdf.

In the latest report of April 2020 by the Secretary General on small arms and light weapons, weapons and ammunition management is considered vital in peace operations and the UN has assisted national authorities in weapons and ammunition management processes in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, and has supported DDR activities with the aim to reduce community violence.⁴⁷⁸ At the time of writing, February 2021, the UNIDDRS are being updated. What is known is that the new version will contain a chapter on SALW, but the details have not yet been released to the public. Some mandates may include detailed provisions regarding DDR WAM, for instance by requesting the UN peacekeeping mission to support the authorities in collecting, registering, securing, and disposing of weapons held by armed groups.

In practice, a distinction can be drawn between traditional and transitional WAM. The traditional WAM framework aims to regulate the full life cycle of weapons and ammunition and should be part of a DDR programme and the accompanying peace agreement. The framework should contain the eligibility of combatants that may enter the programme including age, the type of weapons that are eligible and provisions on documenting, storing, and destroying of weapons. In comparison:

“Transitional WAM is a series of interim arms control measures that can be implemented by DDR practitioners before, after and alongside DDR programmes. Transitional WAM can also be implemented when the preconditions for a DDR programme are absent. The transitional WAM component of a DDR process is primarily aimed at reducing the capacity of individuals and groups to engage in armed violence and conflict. Transitional WAM also aims to reduce accidents and save lives by addressing the immediate risks related to the possession of weapons, ammunition, and explosives.”

United Nations Integrated DDR Standards

The use of transitional WAM is seen when either there is no formal peace agreement, no central authority, or where there is an ongoing conflict. Alternatively, it is an option in scenarios in which there is a central governance structure, but the status of the armed group being dealt with is undefined, or explicitly defined in a way, which means the government cannot visibly or officially engage with them (i.e., terrorist groups). When implemented as part of a DDR process (either with or without a DDR programme), transitional WAM has two primary aims: (1) to reduce the capacity of individuals and groups to engage in armed conflict, and (2) to reduce accidents and save lives by addressing the immediate risks related to the illicit possession of weapons, ammunition, and explosives. By supporting better arms control and preventing the diversion of weapons, ammunition, and explosives to unauthorised end-users, transitional WAM can be a strong component of the sustaining peace approach and contribute to preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict (see IDDRS 2.40 on Reintegration as Part of Sustaining Peace). In settings where a peace agreement has been signed and the necessary preconditions for a DDR programme are in place, transitional WAM can also be used before, during and after DDR programmes as a complementary measure (see IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR). What this means in the short-term is that the purpose moves away (temporarily or permanently) from ultimate participation in DDR, and toward what can be immediately implemented in the pursuit of reduction of risk to civilians. When protection of civilians becomes the focus of the agenda, discussions can become technical to the point of negotiating which calibre of weapon is acceptable to use.

“[In Libya] it has been proposed to certain militia groups to say; you’ve got weapons beyond a certain calibre that you don’t actually know how to control well because its impact is likely going to be larger than the target that you’re trying to hit. For example, when it comes to explosive weapons. So that transitional weapons and ammunition discussion may say “why don’t you put that weapon aside and limit your operations to, for example 14.7mm calibre” – which is a small arms calibre – something that is used in close combat scenarios. By introducing these types of

478 United Nations. “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them.” 2020, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3864688>.

measure, you are limiting the distance in which the armed group can deploy a certain calibre weapon ... they may have very limited control as to the sphere of impact where the explosion might take place beyond their intended target audience.”

Disarmament Expert Practitioner

This represents not a diversification of the objectives of DDR itself, but a diversification of the ways in which the UN engages with non-state actors in certain scenarios. When, for example, the most imminent priority is the protection of civilians, engagement through DDR might be substituted for transitional arms and ammunition management control. This allows for engaging with terrorist and violent extremist groups which would not have been feasible nor desirable in the past.⁴⁷⁹ The transitional WAM could consist of interim measures ranging from conducting an arms survey, to registering weapons, to storing weapons that are not required in a safe place, with the aim to reduce violence in a region whilst negotiations are still taking place or are yet to commence. It can also be seen as a trust building mechanism among the non-armed actors, including terrorist groups engaged in a conflict with the government.

New technologies in the manufacturing of SALW present additional complications for established disarmament and WAM processes. Developments in the use of polymers in the manufacture of weapons means that traditional stamping methods of weapon marking cannot be used once the weapon is already assembled, which leaves laser marking or a process known as micro percussion (the printing of individual dots which reproduce alphanumeric characters through compression) as the necessary solution.⁴⁸⁰ The design of SALW has also seen developments with similar implications for both the illicit trading market and WAM processes. The necessary adaptability of weapons to varied combat environments for example has resulted in the increasing use of modularity in the design of military-style weapons. This means that rifles can consist of a core section onto which other parts can be attached to obtain different configurations. Modular weapons can therefore be fitted with multiple components, including ones from other weapons. This interchangeability allows for different serial numbers to appear on different parts of the same weapon which increases both the risk of misidentification and the disposability of those parts of the weapon which might have been marked. It also introduces the capability to change a weapon's calibre which is a fundamental characteristic of its identification.⁴⁸¹

479 Interview with DDR Expert.

480 United Nations. "Recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and implications for the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons." May 2014. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1&referer=/english/&Lang=E.

481 Ibid.



Figure 22. Arms being destroyed in Côte d'Ivoire signifying the beginning of the reconciliation process, 2007.⁴⁸²

Currently, diversion, unauthorised transfer and/or re-transfer, battlefield recovery, looting of uncontrolled national arsenals, and illicit market purchases are the main sources of terrorist acquisition of SALW.⁴⁸³ Craft production of weapons occurs on a much smaller scale in comparison and is limited mostly to IEDs. This is likely to remain the case while these methods are cheaper, easier, and require less effort than manufacturing an effective and reliable weapon independently. However, the innovation of 3D printing has the potential to invite new actors into the market of SALW production. As far back as 2012, the blueprints for working plastic guns have been online and can be utilised even with a low-end 3D-printer.⁴⁸⁴ More recently designs have included printable AR-15 lower receiver systems, magazines for different types of rifles,⁴⁸⁵ M1911 pistols,⁴⁸⁶ and by late 2018, fully operational semi-automatic rifles, though these examples currently require high-end industrial printers.⁴⁸⁷ The current

482 United Nations. "Handbook for United Nations DDR Practices: Effective Weapons and Ammunition management in a changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context" *Department of Peacekeeping Affairs*, 2018, p. 29. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/effective_weapons_and_ammunition_management_ddr_handbook.pdf.

483 Reinier Bergema, Tanya Mehra, and Méryl Demuyneck. *The Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons by Terrorist Organisations as a Source of Finance*. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), September 2020, <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2020/09/SALW-Synthesis-Report.pdf>.

484 Andy Greenberg, "'Wiki Weapon Project' Aims to Create A Gun Anyone Can 3D-Print At Hme," *Forbes*, August 23, 2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andygreenberg/2012/08/23/wiki-weapon-project-aims-to-create-a-gun-anyone-can-3d-print-at-home/?sh=278dcdc93860>.

485 Cyrus Farivar, "'Download this gun': 3D-printed semi-automatic fires over 600 rounds," *ars Technica*, January 3, 2013, <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2013/03/download-this-gun-3d-printed-semi-automatic-fires-over-600-rounds/>.

486 Doug Gross, "Texas Company makes metal gun with 3-D printer," *CNN*, November 9, 2013, <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/08/tech/innovation/3d-printed-metal-gun/index.html>.

487 Noelle van der Waag-Cowling and Louise Leenen, *14th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security*

capability of 3D printing technology and its availability suggests that the traditional methods of SALW acquisition will endure for the time being. Yet, the continued advancement of this technology, and the inevitable decrease in costs and increase in quality of output, could mean that 3D printing becomes an alternative source of SALW acquisition for armed groups,⁴⁸⁸ complicating WAM and disarmament processes further.

4.7. Concluding remarks

This again raises the question of how one measures the success of a DDR programme, which now has the accompanying question of whether widespread disarmament is, was, or can be, an objective of DDR programmes. Measuring DDR is not easy, its process has multiple aims and therefore multiple metrics against which to measure. Has a programme been effective in reducing community violence? Has it been effective in reintegrating former combatants? Has it been effective in reducing the number of weapons in circulation? Has it been effective in achieving peace and stability? It goes well beyond the scope of this project to answer these questions, but the various interviews conducted in this research show that, in many countries, the aim of DDR programmes has not been focused on disarmament or reducing the flow of weapons, nor have they achieved this, the processes have rather focused on the individual, their demobilisation, and their reintegration into society.

“DDR is not seen as a tool for managing the weapons of terrorism or terrorists. It is a tool that is usually used to manage the weapons of signatory parties to a peace agreement and therefore, unless you bring these extremists movements onboard, it’s going to be very difficult to disarm and demobilise them.”

Disarmament Expert Practitioner

Not only is it asserted that disarmament is not the main aim, it is also sometimes discounted as an aim altogether and considered that the reduction in SALW flow is an entirely incorrect metric by which to measure a DDR process’ success. In many programmes, reduction of the amount of weapons was not an objective.⁴⁸⁹

Effective WAM of national stockpiles can help to contain conflicts especially if it would involve more than just the physical security of national stockpiles and would focus on managing the entire life cycle of weapons. Despite the challenges technological advances poses to DDR process, DDR and in particular WAM as tool to manage the proliferation of SALW, especially in post-conflict settings is underestimated. Furthermore, the increasing use of transitional WAM appears to yield results and could help to reduce the flow of weapons owned by non-state actors, including terrorist groups.

(Stellenbosch University, 2019).

488 United Nations. “Recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and implications for the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.” May 2014. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1&referer=/english/&Lang=E.

489 Interview with Disarmament Expert.