



Reintegration in Mozambique

An unresolved affair

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, seventeen years after the civil war ended in Mozambique, its government still found it necessary to address the reintegration of some 100 000 former combatants, even though the completion of this process, supported by international partners and the United Nations (UN), had been announced in 1994. This raises the question of why Mozambique, a country whose peace settlement and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes had been considered so successful, found it necessary to attend anew to the needs of former fighters. Why was it important to reconsider the demands of these 'once integrated' individuals? Was it because of pressure from former combatants? Had the earlier reintegration process failed? Or was it nothing more than a decision by the Mozambican government to compensate former fighters?

A brief reflection on Mozambique's domestic conflict provides the essential context for this discussion.

Mozambique's 16-year civil war began in 1977, only two years after the country's independence from Portugal. At the time of the first national elections, the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) was the sole political party and therefore formed the government after independence in 1975. An opposition movement, *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo), established outside Mozambique, entered the country in 1976, sparking off the civil war. The South African and then Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) governments provided support and backing to Renamo in its campaign of insurgency against the Mozambican government, which was itself providing support to liberation movements from those two countries.

After 16 years of brutal warfare and the destruction of much of the country's physical infrastructure, the war ended in 1992 with the Rome General Peace Accords. A United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) was established in December 1992 to oversee the implementation of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) and

the ensuing elections. Among the stipulations of the GPA were the disarmament and demobilisation of soldiers in the country and their social and economic reintegration into society.

BACKGROUND TO THE REINTEGRATION OF EX-COMBATANTS

The readiness with which an ex-combatant adapts to changes in his or her life depends largely on how the entire DDR process is structured and managed.

In several African countries, the failure of initial DDR programmes to assist ex-combatants to reintegrate successfully into society has led to a need for subsequent programmes or interventions to address specific problems. Other countries that have repeated a reintegration of former combatants include the Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo (RoC), Liberia and Zimbabwe. Many former combatants in these countries remain unemployed and live in poverty long after conflict has ended. Some governments have embarked on new efforts to assist these former fighters, recognising that the sustainable reintegration of these former soldiers is crucial to post-conflict stability. However, there are other cases where, despite a lack of substantial success in the DDR process, the situation is ignored. Such is the situation in Sierra Leone.

In analysing Sierra Leone's reintegration process, Meek and Malan acknowledge that reintegrating ex-combatants into societies fractured by violence can resurrect the fears and inequalities that initially led to that conflict. The authors point out that West Africa's civil wars have displayed a similar trajectory for combatants, who are hastily, sometimes forcefully, recruited; trained to a specific set of standards that may not be recognised in a more orderly military environment; and then, when no longer needed, returned to civilian life. Such unconventional 'military' training rarely accords with the standards demanded by professional armies, a situation aggravated by high levels of illiteracy and ill-

discipline. This understandably poses certain challenges in cases where ex-combatants may want to integrate into a reformed military.¹

The civil war in Sierra Leone lasted from 1991 to 1996 and by its end some 15 000 people had been killed and almost two-thirds of the country's population displaced. At the end of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone, some 70 000 combatants were disarmed and demobilised, mainly Revolutionary United Front (RUF) guerrillas and members of the Civil Defence Force (CDF).² A subsequent report sheds additional light on the dynamics of the DDR process. On the whole, though the disarmament and demobilisation of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone was a success, the reintegration aspect of the programme still faces challenges.³

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

Helping ex-combatants reintegrate into society, socially and economically, has long been recognised as a lengthy and complex process, fraught with challenges. Although the disarmament and demobilisation phases of DDR programmes are often relatively straightforward and easy to execute, reintegration remains a big challenge requiring vast resources.⁴

Research suggests that whenever ex-combatants fail to find some sort of peaceful employment or income-generating activity, the process of their return to civilian life is often disrupted, and there are higher risks of ex-combatants relapsing into criminal and/or aggressive behaviour.

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Finding suitable work for people who have spent most of the previous years fighting is particularly difficult, as the majority of them usually have limited education and few or no skills beyond those acquired in combat. Those who choose to surrender their arms and refuse a military career must find a new livelihood. For many

ex-combatants the possibility of gaining assistance in generating an income, whether it is further education, the acquisition of new skills or a start-up kit, is often an incentive to join in a DDR programme.⁵

The short duration and modest funding set aside for many reintegration interventions has made it difficult to help ex-combatants to acquire employable skills. In addition, the narrow focus of many DDR programmes has resulted in little assistance being provided to more vulnerable groups involved in conflicts, such as women, children and disabled persons. These groups also require assistance in learning skills that will assist them to secure some form of livelihood.⁶ The context in which DDR occurs also presents challenges: post-war economies are often weak, with little investment, high unemployment and poor infrastructure, all resulting in few employment opportunities.⁷

Africa has seen some relatively successful reintegration interventions. Liberia is occasionally touted as a success story. Training and skills courses there were provided by various agencies and local civil society organisations in the country as part of the reintegration effort. These included training in agricultural practices, plumbing, garment making and woodwork. Participants were also given basic numeracy and literacy classes.⁸ A national survey carried out subsequently showed that ex-combatants who had completed some type of training during the reintegration process were better able to reintegrate into their respective communities and generate some income.⁹ Unfortunately, though, the types of skills training provided were limited, resulting in many ex-combatants acquiring identical skills. The lack of job opportunities in the post-war economy therefore made it difficult for ex-combatants to secure a permanent livelihood.

The overall success of the Liberian rehabilitation and reintegration (RR) programme was not as evident as that of the country's disarmament and demobilisation (DD) programme. Although the DD process was relatively successful in terms of the incentives immediately available to those who willingly surrendered their arms, this seems not to have been the case with the RR process, an equally crucial element in promoting long-term human security in the country. RR, which had begun in June 2004, continued to face growing challenges, especially when viewed from a long-term human security perspective. Unlike in the DD phase, where ex-combatants were paid US\$300 within a relatively short time, they were paid US\$30 per month in the RR phase, while being fed and housed by training institutions. This resulted in many ex-combatants opting to earn their own livings as an alternative to RR. According to one of the dropouts of the DDR programme, who had given up after the DD phase:

After all, during the six to eight months' training in the RR phases one is only paid US\$30 while out here I am able to earn the same amount in only a week or two, by tapping rubber.

He also revealed that he was in touch with his former rebel 'general', who had helped him secure his rubber-tapping job on a private farm in Sinoe County.

Not all those who underwent the entire DDRR process succeeded in learning a trade. A number of participants sold their reinsertion kits for meagre sums to those with already established businesses, and went unemployed. According to the head of the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), only 30 to 40 per cent of his trainees on each training phase successfully gained from the skills and reinsertion kits.¹⁰ Asked how they viewed this, one member of the Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) remarked that it was better that some of the ex-combatants quickly found alternatives to DDRR and were able to survive on their own, as it helped to sever their dependence on the JIU.¹¹

The growth of democracy in Mozambique, however is not without challenges

In Sierra Leone, the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) attempted to equip former combatants with income generating skills and employment opportunities to help them reintegrate into the economy. Some notable progress was made, particularly in providing vocational training; however, these attempts were severely challenged by the lack of job opportunities available to former combatants after they had completed their training.¹² A lack of data and information on opportunities in the labour market was also problematic, as trained ex-combatants were unable to find employment in their field once they had completed their training.

An analysis of the status quo of the Mozambican democratic process, which still recognises the troubled conditions in which many former fighters subsist, suggests a country determined to address the remaining challenges. When the first elections in Mozambique were held in 1994, two years after the conclusion of the peace agreement, the average Mozambican was far from believing that the civil war had indeed ended.

Frelimo's and Renamo's initial willingness to work together harmoniously was a major step in Mozambique's political development. It was eminently reasonable,

therefore, that the UN funded Renamo to enable its evolution and transformation from a rebel movement into a political party. At the time the country was economically underdeveloped and still heavily affected by landmines, to such an extent that many voter registration teams had to be airlifted into the rural areas. Fifteen years since those first polls Mozambique has gone through its fourth democratic election unscathed, unlike many other democracies across the continent. Furthermore, alongside the two historical rivals, Frelimo and Renamo, a third party, the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), has emerged on the scene. MDM is a splinter party from Renamo. These developments indicate that democratic practice in Mozambique is on a steady path and that chances of the country relapsing into conflict are gradually diminishing.

The growth of democracy in Mozambique, however, is not without challenges. As is the case in most post-conflict countries, years of conflict resulted in intensive trauma for many citizens, and this affected even those not actively engaged in the fighting. Though Mozambique may seem to be a post-conflict country with a bright future, the social and psychological impact of war is still being felt. As in other post-conflict countries, ex-combatants continue to nurse grievances about the lack of economic opportunities open to them, despite past reintegration processes. Furthermore, there are still a number of combatants in Mozambique who did not disarm and demobilise in the initial DDR process. Unofficially it is estimated that there are hundreds of men and some 300 women in this situation. Many of these are based around Maringwe, where Renamo has its headquarters. It is also believed that there are numerous arms caches in this area.¹³

An analysis of other post-conflict case studies shows that the Mozambican situation is not unique. For instance, in Colombia in 2003, after almost 40 years of civil war, members of the right-wing terrorist group, the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC), began to demobilise, a process that saw more than 30 000 AUC members having to reintegrate into society. The Colombian government provided incentive packages for paramilitaries to decommission their weapons and turn themselves in. Ex-combatants then received professional training, education, health services and, in some cases, financial help to set up their own businesses. However, the Colombian reintegration programme has received mixed reviews. A 2006 report by the International Crisis Group highlighted that only 26 per cent of the ex-combatants had found employment.

An analysis of the Colombian DDR programme showed that the initial stages recorded high successes in terms of the number of armed combatants who turned in their arms and committed themselves to returning to

civilian life. However, within a two year period, thousands of ex-combatants had become disillusioned with the shortcomings of the DDR programme's final stage – reintegration. The process of reconciliation started faltering when the Colombian government decided against granting a blanket amnesty to individuals who had committed violent crimes, and instead initiated a process that utilised the existing domestic justice system. As a result, the justice system became overtaxed, hence complicating the process. The national government failed to communicate the details of the reintegration programme to local authorities, and as a result civilian populations were often left uninformed. This lack of community involvement in the process led to a rising sense of alienation and a perception that the government was not considering their interests.¹⁴

The case of El Salvador reflects a similar situation. From 1980 until 1992 El Salvador was embroiled in a bloody civil war between the terrorist organisation Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and government forces. A UN-brokered peace agreement called for former FMLN guerrilla fighters to be reintegrated into civilian life. The process targeted almost 11 000 members of FMLN, 4 000 demobilised members of the national police force and 11 000 ex-government troops. The beneficiaries were provided with medical care, land, shelter, vocational training, counselling and credit to help them reintegrate into society.

From these cases it is evident that although reintegration continues to be defined technically as consisting of both reinsertion and long-term reintegration, in practice it cannot be isolated from the rest of the conflict transformation process. Similarly, that the 'combatant' issue seems to linger in all post-conflict scenarios is a constant reminder that the sooner the process of reintegration is completed, the safer that society becomes.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO REINTEGRATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Rome Agreement of 1992 between the Frelimo government and Renamo included a broad-based

demilitarisation process involving a series of joint committees, comprising representatives of both parties under the supervision of the UN peacekeeping mission (ONUMOZ), and donor countries in an observer function.¹⁵ It has been argued elsewhere that lessons drawn from the collapse of the Angolan peacekeeping operation, which had failed effectively to demobilise combatants, leading to a recurrence of war after a disputed election, helped to shape the approach used in Mozambique. In the Angolan case Unita's Jonas Savimbi had taken advantage of a weak UN mandate to reignite the civil war.¹⁶ There was therefore a fear that a recurrence of this scenario would further tarnish the image of the stakeholders in the Mozambican demilitarisation process.

The delay in mobilising and deploying ONUMOZ led to a one-year extension of its mandate. The mission targeted the cantonment of Mozambican combatants, which involved some 63 000 government troops and 30 000 rebel forces, in 49 assembly areas spread around the country. To enhance stability, the peace agreement emphasised the reunification of the army in which 15 000 men from each side were to be reintegrated into the new military, and the rest demobilised and disarmed. Further, in order to avoid a repeat of the Angolan situation, the UN ensured that the DDR programme was carried out before elections. Within three years the reintegration programme had been concluded, and observers had declared it a resounding success.

Critics of the Mozambican programme, such as McMullin, however, contend that the process concentrated exclusively on avoiding a return to violent conflict and that, although it succeeded in this, there were clear indications of two remaining challenges to long-term security. First, after the process ended, there was increased involvement of certain combatants in organised criminal activity. Second, political instability persisted as a result of the continuing politicisation of reintegration. McMullin concludes that these two issues continue to damage Mozambique and questions the effectiveness of the methodology used in the reintegration process, as well as the degree to which reintegration was achieved.¹⁷

Understanding these issues requires a deeper analysis of Mozambique's reintegration process. The reintegration programme conceived and implemented during the ONUMOZ mission involved the provision of an eighteen-month subsidy for ex-combatants. The package entailed an agricultural kit, information and advisory services, as well as a training component. A facility known as the Reintegration and Support Scheme (RSS) was in charge of managing subsidies provided to all ex-combatants, set at MT75 000 for the lowest ranks and MT1 270 080 for the highest ranking officers. This money was disbursed by the UNDP on a monthly basis through

the branches of the *Banco Popular de Desinvolvimento* (BPD) located around the country.¹⁸

The thinking behind this procedure was that monthly payments were a 'safety-net' that would ensure a guaranteed income over a lengthy period of time but could not be spent all at once. This would presumably prevent host communities from preying upon former combatants, while allowing sufficient time for social networks to take over and provide possible employment opportunities. It was also envisaged that requiring ex-combatants to claim their subsidy payment at a particular bank would facilitate reintegration by encouraging (though not obliging) them to establish a fixed domicile within a given local community.

What was not anticipated was the problems that disbursing funds in small tranches posed for the beneficiaries. First, there were difficulties in collecting payment, because of the distances involved and lack of transportation. Second, the former fighters had to contend with bureaucrats as well as different banking agencies. These factors diluted the impact of the payments. As a result, much of the money was spent with no substantial improvement in the lives of the communities or the ex-soldiers themselves. Lundin concludes ironically that 'the most important reason for this subsidy apparently was not development, but to keep the peace; and peace was indeed kept!'¹⁹

Whether these provisions were adequate for the complete reintegration of ex-combatants is still a subject for discussion. When exactly does a former fighter feel adequately reintegrated back into the community? A study in Uganda revealed that various variables determine an ex-combatant's perceptions of a reintegration process.²⁰ The factors found to be most important included:

- Possession of a permanent place of residence (housing and access to land in accordance with cultural norms)
- Food security: having a household that is able to feed itself adequately and is eating better through participation in income-generating activities
- Expectations of economic improvement for their household in the next year
- Feelings of improved self-esteem, optimism and of performing better than other veterans and/or better than when in the military
- Satisfaction with participation in programmes
- Perceived improvement in personal situations over the last three years

These conditions could be weighed against the case of Mozambique to determine how well the reintegration fared. In a study on the reintegration of ex-combatants, Lundin uses the example of Mozambique to illustrate

that the reintegration of demobilised combatants is often a neglected aspect of peace and reconstruction initiatives in societies emerging from conflict. She discusses the problem of reintegration at individual and community levels and argues that success depends on a deeper knowledge of the customs and traditions of the community, because the mechanisms of community reception play a crucial role in ensuring the successful reintegration of ex-soldiers.²¹

Lundin posits that two fundamental aspects are often missed in post-conflict societies. First, social reintegration, a critical component of peace maintenance, is often neglected in signed peace agreements. For instance, in Mozambique a good deal of emphasis was placed on economic reintegration with the development of training and occupational skills programmes, but little, if anything, was done officially to address the psychological needs of the ex-combatants to prepare them for a return to civilian life.²² Second, peace agreements do not provide a comprehensive basis for reconciliation, which apparently is not considered an 'essential' part of peacekeeping processes.

In Mozambican communities, where social order within community life and between neighbouring communities is highly valued, healing and reconciliation after a conflict, between individuals, social groups, and communities is not only important, but essential. In a critique of the Mozambican process, Lundin states that after the signing of the peace agreement,

...soldiers were gathered in selected assembly areas, given severance pay, subsidies, food, and assistance with transportation to a place of their choice. There were altogether about 92 000 soldiers from both sides, and 49 assembly centres (29 for the government and 20 for Renamo). The majority resettled in their place of origin, reflecting continuing attachment to those particular communities even after years of killing, rape, and pillage, ironically often occurring in those very places. However, many soldiers, mainly from Renamo's army, were unable to return home and resettled elsewhere, possibly as a result of atrocities committed there ... and of course due to lack of reconciliation.²³

In Lundin's opinion, this failed to promote reintegration.

Studies carried out on the reintegration of ex-combatants in 1995/96 pointed to the risk that ex-soldiers who felt inadequately reintegrated would revert to theft and fraud upon the cessation of the RSS programme, which had provided them with minimal resettlement assistance.²⁴ The study revealed further that there was a perception that the lack of programmes to deal with the psychological trauma of war, disenchantment with unfulfilled promises, and the lack of reward for services

to the motherland (voluntary or coerced, on the part of both Frelimo and Renamo ex-fighters), compounded by the frustration of their own lack of formal education and job skills, and the impossibility, in some cases, of returning to their place of origin because of atrocities committed, made the ex-soldiers potentially volatile.

Even the National Commission for Reintegration established to coordinate the reintegration process was rudimentary in nature, as it focused predominantly on providing basic vocational training. It was clear from the outset that the Mozambican economy, which had been depressed by the civil war, would not be able to absorb the vast majority of ex-combatants. The reintegration programme encouraged ex-combatants to engage in subsistence agriculture. Yet despite the obvious signs of DDR failure and the possibility of a return to war, this tragedy was averted largely because of the extreme exhaustion that had afflicted the participants in the war during the late 1980s.

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Studies of the coping ability of ex-combatants in Mozambique have established that the negative effects of war are very difficult to reverse, which makes post-war reconstruction and poverty alleviation much slower than might be expected. For instance, Brück writes that almost nine years after the end of the war in Mozambique, post-war reconstruction and poverty alleviation in northern Mozambique was still continuing. He suggested that farming households should be encouraged to continue their war-time coping strategies, which relied heavily on subsistence agriculture. The post-war security situation would favour these households and improve their chances of success. Another advantage was that post-war rural households generally have a surplus of labour, which could be used to extend the area under cultivation. Brück notes that household asset endowments were badly affected by the war, and re-equipping households with tools and assets could help them increase their agricultural production and help insure households against short-term income shortfalls.²⁵

Indeed, in Mozambique the weakness – and sometimes non-existence – of state institutions, coupled with

large numbers of jobless ex-combatants at the early stages of reintegration, magnified the danger that ex-soldiers would misuse their knowledge of weapons and military skills to solve individual or collective problems, thereby disrupting the fragile climate of peace.

THE PRESENT REINTEGRATION PROCESS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique has remained a relatively peaceful country and has avoided a resurgence of armed conflict. There have been four general elections since the signing of a peace agreement. In its latest election manifesto, the ruling Frelimo party outlined several issues it intended to focus on over the next five years, including poverty, good governance and national unity. The party also indicated that it planned to reassess the situation of demobilised and former combatants in the country, a process that has already begun.

Demobilised Mozambicans continue to face numerous challenges, of which the greatest is probably the inability of many of them to find employment. Skills training programmes during the initial DDR process enjoyed limited success in equipping the demobilised to return to the workforce and the skills taught were often inappropriate, and not suited to the Mozambican reality. Support schemes were short-lived, and aimed at providing temporary income-generating opportunities to ex-combatants, mostly through short-term, labour intensive projects.²⁶ This situation was worse for women and children involved in the conflict, as well as those who were disabled, as the DDR programme provided little assistance to them. Having not been able to secure an income, many of these vulnerable groups enjoy only limited access to medical care and other basic services.

It is estimated that there are some 100 000 ex-combatants still in Mozambique of whom 15 000 are handicapped.²⁷ Nearly two decades after the end of the civil war, a large number of these ex-combatants remain unemployed and live in dire poverty, never having acquired sufficient skills to obtain work or become self-employed. Many ex-combatants had been recruited into the armed forces from school, or had been working in factories before joining the conflict, and as a result have few or no employable skills.

Another major contributing factor to the current situation of demobilised persons in Mozambique is that many ex-combatants from the civil war were not awarded the same compensation as those who took part in the liberation struggle. Ex-combatants who fought in the liberation struggle qualified for pensions, medical care, and schooling for themselves and their children, among other things. These war veterans also have their own ministry within the government.²⁸

Most people who fought in the civil war did not meet the criteria to qualify for compensation. These included minimum age requirements and length of service in the army, which meant that many soldiers did not qualify for pensions, among them former child soldiers who did not qualify because of their age.²⁹ Despite a large number of demobilised persons being ineligible for compensation, most have remained peaceful and voice their concerns and needs through associations they have established. These associations will be crucial to the new reintegration process.

Acknowledging the challenges and struggles faced by many demobilised persons in Mozambique, the government established a new directorate in March 2009

The end of the civil war was marked by the rise of two organisations whose aims were to defend the interest of former fighters from both sides (Frelimo and Renamo). These were AMODEG (Mozambique Association of Demobilised Soldiers), an organisation that represents the interests of all former combatants from the 1976-1992 war, and ADEMIMO (Mozambique Association of Disabled Veterans), for those who had been injured and handicapped during the fighting. Membership was open to individuals from both Frelimo and Renamo.³⁰

Both AMODEG and ADEMIMO gradually developed a Peace Promotion and Development Programme, that later transformed into ProPaz (Programme for the Promotion of Peace) in 1996. The main objective of ProPaz was to address the stalling of reintegration and peacebuilding after the closure of the UN-led DDR process. Former combatants were left isolated and frustrated, leading to a recurrence of conflicts in their communities.³¹ However, the ONUMOZ process contributed substantially to the establishment of AMODEG and by extension, ProPaz. It was ONUMOZ that initially pulled in ex-combatants from different sides with a common approach, hence initiating the feeling of ‘togetherness’ among them. This in turn led to the emergence of AMODEG. According to one such ex-combatant,

Together with ONUMOZ we were now, as former enemies, acting jointly. This is important for the people:

seeing is believing, that’s right. It is indeed remarkable to see former enemies working together, first within the organisations that were set up to defend the interests of all former combatants, and then later within ProPaz – and being entirely natural about it.³²

Acknowledging the challenges and struggles faced by many demobilised persons in Mozambique, the government established a new directorate in March 2009 to deal specifically with these former combatants. The directorate was to carry out reintegration efforts aimed at assisting the demobilised and meeting some of their needs and concerns. It was established within the Ministry of Women and Social Action and was in charge of carrying out and implementing decisions taken by an inter-ministerial committee. The committee tasked with overseeing the reintegration process is headed by the Minister of Defence and comprises various ministries.³³ At the time of writing, the process is entirely government funded.

The first step of this venture involves registering all ex-combatants in Mozambique prior to the planning phase. The registration process will not only assess how many ex-combatants still require assistance, but also the kinds of help they require. The registration process will require training several teams to carry out the process throughout the country. Ex-combatants will have to prove that they took part in the conflict, which will be a major challenge given the length of time that has passed and the increased likelihood of impostors trying to take advantage of the process. Some demobilised persons themselves will be involved in the registration to assist with the process of authenticating genuine beneficiaries.³⁴

At the time of writing, the registration process was still to take place, having been delayed for various reasons. However, the inter-ministerial committee has been working with an umbrella association of demobilised persons in an attempt to address their needs and concerns. The umbrella organisation represents some 14 different associations for demobilised persons in Mozambique, which came up with a list of 18 points they would like the government to address. These relate mostly to the allocation of pensions,³⁵ access to medical care, education, and the lack of employment opportunities for the demobilised. The education of their children is also a major concern for many demobilised fighters, as they are unable to pay for their children to complete high school; education in Mozambique is free until Grade 9, after which it must be paid for. Despite this approach by government, studies indicate that in the immediate post-war period, rural households had a low demand for education because of war fatigue, and that this persists, especially amongst families of ex-combatants. Brück advises that

in order to counter this effect, government and donor policies should aim to re-establish markets destroyed by the war, and institute lower transaction costs in the rural economy.³⁶ Broad-based rural development policies should be enhanced in order to increase both household income and food security, and to avoid imbalanced rural growth that could intensify mass rural-urban migration.

A major contentious issue, and one that led the current Mozambican government to revisit the concerns of ex-combatants, has been the payment of pensions. In principle, there have been two different criteria guiding pension applications. The first targets former combatants who spent ten or more years in the army. These were largely Frelimo soldiers. The second covers both Renamo and Frelimo ex-combatants who were injured during the war, and who are represented by the association ADEMIMO. This is the equivalent of a disability pension. However, payment of these pensions is said to have been selective, not taking into account the fact that many Renamo ex-combatants were not eligible. Concerns such as these have led ex-combatants to come up with the list of 18 points.³⁷

The umbrella association meets with the inter-ministerial committee and they try to negotiate and reach agreement on these points. Given that the process is government funded, there are financial and human resource constraints to implementation. The government is also working on training programmes for the demobilised and has improved access to medical services and drugs in some provinces. There are plans to provide training courses in small business management, as well as incentives for employment in tourism and agriculture. The government has also acknowledged that women have not benefited from past training initiatives and is trying to rectify this.³⁸

Today a realistic livelihood opportunity for many demobilised combatants is agriculture, and several have expressed an interest in going into farming

The overall reintegration strategy envisages the provision of skills to beneficiaries, with the aim of providing them with a sustainable way of earning a living. According to the Mozambican government, the skills provided to

ex-combatants during the first reintegration process were inappropriate, because at that time the government had no structures or institutions in place to absorb the newly skilled former fighters.³⁹

Today a realistic livelihood opportunity for many demobilised combatants is agriculture, and several have expressed an interest in going into farming. During the initial DDR process, basic equipment was provided to demobilised soldiers to encourage them to return to the land. Many sold the equipment, however, not having the financial means to sustain a business.⁴⁰ Agriculture employs more than 80 per cent of the population, and contributes 24 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Produce includes cotton, cashew nuts, sugarcane, and cassava.⁴¹ Two problems that farmers continue to face in Mozambique are land mines in certain of the provinces, rendering much of the land useless, and the annual floods, which have devastating effects on farms located in the fertile flood plains.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is currently undertaking various community stabilisation projects in Mozambique. A substantial part of one of these projects⁴² is focused on improving agricultural practices and providing support to farmers, particularly those located in the flood plain areas. Farmers are encouraged to relocate from these areas to higher land; tools and irrigation systems are provided for farms; and co-operatives have been established to sell surplus crops. Market links are being established between communities for the buying and selling of produce. Some assistance is also being provided for the development of fisheries and the fishing industry. In enabling rural communities to generate an income, the project aims to improve living conditions and reduce vulnerability to human trafficking.⁴³ Challenges to the project include floods, droughts and a lack of infrastructure. The project is so far proving to be a success in improving farming techniques and living conditions in rural areas. If it continues to be successful, it could provide a useful model for generating livelihood opportunities for demobilised persons and other unemployed persons. The government of Mozambique might consider targeting communities with large numbers of ex-combatants and initiating projects such as these as part of the renewed efforts to assist demobilised soldiers.

REASSESSING REINTEGRATION EFFORTS

There has been much debate over how post-conflict interventions such as the reintegration component of the DDR process could be further improved to yield lasting effects.⁴⁴

In recent years there has been a movement towards more community-based approaches, with interventions

targeting entire communities and not just ex-combatants. Community-based initiatives are more conducive to ensuring that both ex-combatants and the communities to which they are returning contribute to, and benefit from, post-conflict reconstruction interventions. Furthermore, ex-combatants are more likely to be accepted back into these communities if the latter also benefit in some way from the soldiers' return.

Some DDR programmes have tried to involve community members in aspects of a reintegration programme. In the Central African Republic, for example, funds were provided for a reintegration project that benefited communities as well as ex-combatants.⁴⁵ The Central African Republic Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Community Support Project (PRAC) (2004–2007), which aimed to support the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants back into communities, funded the rehabilitation of community infrastructure, including schools and health care facilities. Several other community-orientated projects were also carried out and later handed over to local authorities.⁴⁶ In Liberia, the DDR framework was broadened to allow for people who were not directly involved in the war to benefit from training provided to ex-combatants. A group of farmers joined ex-combatants to learn new agricultural practices and techniques, though they did not receive cash payments like the ex-combatants.⁴⁷

Short-term projects have not only been a good way to generate temporary employment opportunities for ex-combatants, but also benefit the communities to which they are returning, in some cases making the transition easier. Examples of such projects include those repairing physical infrastructure or building new infrastructure that will benefit the entire community. These projects are short-lived, however, and do not provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for ex-combatants.

DDR should not be initiated until pre-agreed conditions of readiness have been achieved

There have also been instances when reintegration has been carried out before disarmament and demobilisation in order to encourage a more effective disarmament process. Conventionally, disarmament should precede demobilisation and reintegration; however, some researchers looking into failures of DDR processes have argued that disarmament should perhaps come at the end of the process after democratic elections have been held. Researchers arguing for this option maintain

that elections pave the way for smooth disarmament of ex-combatants.⁴⁸ A unique example is that of the end of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The Maoist's People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered into an agreement with the government whereby PLA separatists would be confined within cantonments in districts and their arms and ammunitions securely stored in the camps and safeguarded by PLA personnel. The agreement also stipulated that the government army would be confined to barracks over the same period, while parliament would be dissolved and replaced by an interim council of ministers, including Maoists, to prepare for elections.⁴⁹ This arrangement was based purely on mutual trust between the two parties.

CONCLUSION

Several studies on DDR processes point out that the process is usually defined and constrained by the mandates issuing from UN Security Council resolutions. It is in this regard that writers such as Tanner argue that for UN peacekeeping operations, disarmament is closely associated with demobilisation, which is understood to refer to the disarmament and dissolution of force structures and the transition of combatants to civilian status.⁵⁰ The UN approach therefore puts more emphasis on the need for the parties to comply with the requirements stipulated within peace agreements. This means that attention is usually centred at the strategic and political levels, with little or no consideration for the social and economic implications for the former combatants and their dependants who, as a consequence of disarming and the cessation of conflict, view themselves as 'vulnerable', unable to earn a living as they did when they were armed.

In their assessment of the linkages between interim stabilisation measures (ISM), DDR and security sector reform (SSR), Lamb and Dye agree with the view expressed in the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) that the timing, sequencing and implementation of DDR processes in a peacebuilding context should be realistic and strictly adhered to in order to build the confidence of participants and beneficiaries in the process. In addition, DDR should not be initiated until pre-agreed conditions of readiness have been achieved. This should also recognise the human security needs of vulnerable groups – women, youth, children, the disabled and the chronically ill – who participated in, or were associated with, armed forces and groups.⁵¹

Mozambique has gone back to the drawing board by recognising the need to address the concerns of former combatants several years after the civil war. This is not only a major step towards mitigating the potential resuscitation of past conflicts, but also a lesson to other

post-conflict countries in Africa to reconsider their own reintegration processes.

It can be deduced from this study that a well-designed reintegration programme is one that has an adequate timeframe and includes activities that balance available resources, economic opportunities and expertise within a country with the expectations and preferences of ex-combatants, without appearing to prioritise the ex-combatants over the rest of the community or vice versa. Creating this balance is a fundamental step towards achieving long-term stability of post-conflict environments.

In this regard, it is advisable that reintegration starts the very moment armed conflict starts to diminish. It is at this stage that the combatant starts wondering what the future holds once the war ends. Depending on the way in which a conflict ends, reintegration interventions usually result in former ex-combatants either being re-mobilised into the new security forces or being socialised into civilian life. The biggest concern lies with the latter option, as discussed in this study, for a wide range of reasons – key being whether the receiving community is willing to accept the ex-combatant unreservedly.

Ex-combatants are faced with a range of challenges at the end of a conflict. Their inability to find some sort of employment or income-generating activity is a major obstacle to their return to civilian life. In many cases, including that of Mozambique, it is the inability of former combatants to secure a livelihood that confines them to the fringes of society. Being unable to secure employment also means that they are unable to provide for their families and ensure that their children are properly educated. Recognising the challenges faced by former combatants in the country, Mozambique's new reintegration process is an attempt to address some of these challenges.

Reintegration interventions have been the subject of much debate over the last few years, given the limited success of most programmes, and many lessons can be learned from experience. The government of Mozambique is not alone in continuing with efforts to assist former combatants to reintegrate into society.

This study also points to the fact that the outcome of a war determines, at least to a degree, how ex-combatants are viewed in society – either as liberators, as perpetrators, or as actors in a complex struggle to survive. It refrains from drawing conclusions as to whether members of Frelimo (in this case the victor in the war) received preference over those of Renamo (in this case the vanquished), for this question lies outside the scope of this paper.

There is a growing need among policymakers, analysts and practitioners of reintegration processes to assess the strong interrelationships between different elements of post-conflict peacebuilding, and the consequent need for clarity of the entire process as a precondition for coordinated, coherent and comprehensive interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For communities to fully embrace DDR programmes, and particularly the reintegration of ex-combatants, it is important to involve them in the programme not only as beneficiaries, but also through information sharing. This recognises that rumours containing negative information can adversely affect the reception of ex-combatants in the communities. The involvement of communities is also useful when tracing illegal firearms during follow-up weapons collection programmes.

As many community members may also be unemployed after wars and conflicts, they may well resent ex-combatants receiving 'special attention' in acquiring employment. Reintegration interventions should therefore be designed and implemented in such a way that they benefit entire communities, as opposed to individuals. This will ease the return of ex-combatants back into these communities.

Cultural norms need to be taken into consideration when planning reintegration interventions, to ensure a smooth social reintegration of the beneficiaries. It is therefore highly advisable that DDR processes include the expertise of local actors, who should increasingly be allowed to play a much more facilitative role in finding creative solutions to the long-term stability of their communities.

Skills training should also be aimed at communities and not just at individuals, as there are limited opportunities in post-conflict economies for employment. This will avoid situations where too many individuals have the same skill, especially those in limited demand, and have to compete for already scarce jobs. It is better to establish community-based projects that will involve and benefit entire communities. This will also ease tensions between communities and former combatants.

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

Close to two decades after the end of the civil war in Mozambique, the country is yet to complete the reintegration of the demobilised combatants into society. In early 2009, the government of Mozambique embarked on a programme that envisages assisting with the reintegration of an estimated 100 000 former fighters.

It would be assumed that most of these former fighters agitating for compensation could have reintegrated naturally into the society by now. This however is not the case, and the Mozambican government has been designing a new programme that aims to address various demands synthesised into 18 points. This paper sought to understand why the former fighters are raising these issues, and how the government intends to respond. At the time of writing this paper, the process was still in its formative stages and therefore not conclusive. The analysis builds on interviews with associations of ex-combatants, government officials and civil society organisations, as well as information from secondary sources.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nelson Alusala and Dominique Dye are researchers within the Institute for Security Studies' Arms Management Programme in Pretoria. They are working on a wide range of small arms and light weapons proliferation issues in Africa, including the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants.

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