



Centre for
International Cooperation
and Security

Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) in Liberia

Case Study

Nelson Alusula
Institute for Security Studies, South Africa.

July 2008

Contribution to the Project:

DDR and Human Security:
Post-conflict Security-building in the Interests of the Poor



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Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Liberia

Nelson Alusula

1. Introduction

The legacy of the Liberian civil war will persist for a long period of time in the memories of most Liberians. Specifically, the psychological healing and the physical reconstruction will take a while to achieve. The fourteen-year war bore a heavy toll especially on the common Liberian in a way that seemed to confirm Sun Tzu's warning on the need to wage war as economically and as cheaply as possible.¹ A significant part of the life of Liberian youth today is permeated by the memories of the war, and paradoxically this is the generation that is expected to pull Liberia onto the healing and reconstruction path. Although the end of the war in 2003, followed by democratic elections in 2005 brought relief to Liberians, the real challenge rests in upholding peace in a country that had, for a long time been characterized by dysfunctional national institutions and enormous levels of illiteracy. Of importance is the realization that "...with the collapse of an authoritarian regime, there emerges a new nation full of needs...and full of rage," that characterise democratic transitions in a way that Scheper-Hughes calls a "dangerous hour".² This is because new democracies must negotiate a treacherous path encompassing difficult and sometimes contradictory ethical, moral and legal considerations while at the same time attempting to achieve some measure of reconciliation and justice within the country.³

Similarly, the *State Task Force* cautions about the fragility of post-conflict societies by stating when it notes that, "data indicates that emerging democracies are much more unstable than either fully democratic or authoritarian regimes,"⁴ while in the same vein Zartman adds that while "good things" such as democracy and economic restructuring may be stabilizing in the short term, they are necessary in the long run, and the challenge is thus how to manage transitions in such a way that they do not contribute to further conflict.⁵ For a new democracy such as Liberia, therefore, the situation calls for cautious implementation of the various reconstruction processes, primary among them being the process of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR).

¹ Sun Tzu, quoted in Handel, M., *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, London: Routledge, 2005, p.138.

² Scheper-Hughes, N., "Undoing Social Suffering and the Politics of Remorse in the New South Africa." *Social Justice*, Vol. 25, 1998.

³ Tulane Conflict Study Group, "Conflict in Africa: A Review of Literature on Selected Topics," A Paper prepared for United States Agency for International Development, 1999.

⁴ See, State Task Force, *Phase II Findings*, McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 1998.

⁵ Zartman, W., (ed), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.

This paper reviews the DDDR process in Liberia with the objective of assessing the human security impact the process has had on the community. To ascertain this, primary research was undertaken to analyse the impact of the DDDR process and related programmes such as the security sector reform, transitional justice and weapons collection among others, on the community.

2. Background and Situation Analysis

According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, political killing has as its goal a change in leadership or form of government, and such assassinations often occur during a military coup.⁶ In 1980, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe assassinated President William Tolbert and thirteen close associates of Tolbert in a coup, transforming Liberia's political landscape into one of revenge and vengeance. In the country's 161 years of independence (1847 – 2008) there have been 24 heads of state⁷ three who have come to power due to coup d'état, as well as the first civil war (1989 – 1996) and second civil war (1999 – 2003). In the course of his reign, Doe promoted individuals from his own ethnic Krahn group to military and political positions, thereby not allowing for alternate political expression. In 1985, shortly after Doe's party the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDLF) won in rigged elections, General Quiwonkpa from Sierra Leone unsuccessfully tried to overthrow Doe. In 1989, amid increasing political tensions and economic decay, full-fledged civil war broke out. Initially, Doe crushed opposition forces within his government but when his tribesmen, the Krahn, declared war against other tribes especially in the Nimba Country,⁸ he begun losing control.

This was followed by Charles Taylor, a former ally of Doe, breaking ranks with Doe's government. Taylor later assembled a group of Libyan-trained rebels in Côte d'Ivoire under the name of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).⁹ He then invaded Liberia in 1989 through Nimba County prompting Doe to retaliate by ordering the Liberian Army against the whole population of Nimba. The army attacked unarmed civilians and burnt villages.¹⁰ This triggered a mass flow of Liberian refugees into Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and other neighbouring countries. In the course of time, Prince Johnson who had sided with Taylor in the invasion developed operational differences with Taylor and formed his own guerrilla force based on the Gio tribe, called the

⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Assassination", *Britannica Student Encyclopedia*, <http://www.britannica.com/ebi/article-196809>, accessed 11 January 2007.

⁷ These are only presidents sworn in after the declaration of independence of Liberia on 26 July 1847.

⁸ Nimba County is one of fifteen political subdivisions of Liberia. During William V.S. Tubman's administration (1944-1971), the region now called Nimba County was one of three of Liberia's Provinces - namely, Western Province, Eastern Province and Central Province. In the 1960's, Tubman changed these provinces into counties. Central Province was renamed Nimba County. Before the civil war of Liberia in (1989), it had a population of over 310,000 people. It is the second largest county in Liberia in terms of population. See Nimba County http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nimba_County, accessed 15 January 2007.

⁹ Global Security.org, *Liberia: First Civil War, 1989 – 1986*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1989.htm>, accessed 15 January 2007.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch Report, "Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster, Violations of the Laws of War by All Parties to the Conflict," <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1990/liberia>, accessed 18 February 2007.

Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). Johnson's forces captured and killed Doe in September 1990.¹¹

Doe's assassination deepened the civil war by creating a power vacuum. This prompted the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to intervene,¹² thus preventing Charles Taylor who was increasingly gaining an upper hand, from capturing Monrovia. ECOWAS subsequently facilitated the formation of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) that was established in Gambia in 1990, under the leadership of Dr. Amos Sawyer who was subsequently declared the President of the IGNU.¹³ Taylor refused to work with the interim government and continued the war. The war spilt over into Sierra Leone in 1991, when Foday Sankoh led a mixed group of Liberians and Sierra Leoneans into Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone in support of Taylor.¹⁴ Sierra Leone's President Momoh's troops attempted to train a fighting force from among the 250,000 Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone to counter Taylor and Sankoh, but failed to materialize. In another attempt to counter Taylor, the ex-Liberian Broadcasting Corporation head, Alhaji Kromah, organised Mandingo Muslims and Krahn refugees in Freetown to form the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO). ULIMO broke into two opposing wings in 1994 in order to meet the demand of internal factions.¹⁵ On the one hand was ULIMO-J, a Krahn faction led by General Roosevelt Johnson, and on the other hand was ULIMO-K, a Moslem/Mandingo-based faction under Alhaji Kromah.¹⁶ A peace accord signed in Cotonou in 1994 was overlooked because the war raged on.¹⁷ As mediation efforts intensified, the seven warring factions (namely NPFL, ULIMO-J, ULIMO-K, the Liberia Peace Council, NPFL- Central Revolutionary Council, the Lofa Defense Force and remnants of the Armed Forces of Liberia loyal to former president Doe) continued to fight. Finally in September 1995, under the auspices of ECOWAS, Liberian Council of State comprising the seven warring factions was formed with the signing of Abuja Peace Accord.¹⁸ Throughout January and February of 1996, the deployment of UNOMIL and

¹¹ Global Security.org, *Liberia: First Civil War, 1989 – 1986*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1989.htm>, accessed 15 January 2007.

¹² For an elaborate account of ECOWAS intervention in Liberian conflict refer to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Books free online, "Interventions after the Cold War (Part 1)," http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28498-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html, accessed 30 January 2007.

¹³ Conciliation Resources, "Bringing peace to Liberia - Part 2 International Responses," <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/liberia/bringing-peace2.php>, accessed 22 October 2006.

¹⁴ Wadlow, R. "Charles Taylor in Sierra Leone: Was it More Than Money?," <http://towardfreedom.com/home/content/view/832/63/>, accessed 3 march 2007.

¹⁵ Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, <http://liberian.tripod.com/Post26.html>, accessed 20 February 2007.

¹⁶ Conciliation Resources, "Liberia: warring Factions," <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/liberia/profiles.php>, accessed 15 January 2007.

¹⁷ There were seven major ECOWAS-sponsored agreements signed before the Cotonou Accord. These were the Bamako Ceasefire of November 1990, the Banjul Joint Statement of December 1990, the February 1991 Lome Agreement, and the Yamoussoukro I-IV Accords of June-October 1991. The Bamako, Banjul, and Lome Agreements may be co-considered as the first stage of ECOWAS diplomacy, underwritten by Sir Dawda Jawara, President of The Gambia and Chairman of the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC). See, Conciliation Resources, "Commentary on the accords," <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/liberia/commentary.php>, accessed 28 January 2007.

¹⁸ United States Institute for Peace, Peace Agreements Digital Collection: Liberia, "Abuja Agreement to Supplement the Cotonou and Akosombo Agreements as subsequently clarified by the Accra Agreement."

ECOMOG forces to monitor the peace process stalled due to a lack of funding and political will, creating an impasse in the search for peace. The armed groups exploited the situation leading the second civil war in Liberia.

The Second Liberian Civil War began in 1999 when a rebel group named Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) backed by the government of Guinea, emerged in northern Liberia¹⁹ when it mounted its first rebellion in April 2000 in Lofa County, at the border between Guinea and Liberia. LURD's political purpose was to force Charles Taylor out of office. Most of the fighters were Muslims from the Mandingo and Krahn ethnic groups and controlled northern Liberia, with headquarters at Tubmanburg in Bomi County.²⁰ In June 2003 the group laid siege on Monrovia and assaulted the city during several bloody battles killing dozens of people. Charles Taylor's Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) and other militias further exacerbated the fatalities.²¹

While LURD intensified its rebellion in the north and western provinces of Lofa, Bong, Gbarpolu and Bomi counties, a split developed among its leadership, resulting into the formation of a second rebel group in early 2003 called the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL).²² MODEL drew its membership mainly from the Krahn ethnic group and operated along the Ivorian border with support from the Ivorian government's reciprocity for MODEL's support in fighting Ivorian rebel groups operating in western Cote d'Ivoire. By June 2003, MODEL controlled most of south-eastern Liberia, including Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru, Sinoe and Maryland counties.²³ While representatives of the international community were meeting in Akosombo, Ghana to find a solution to Liberia's internal armed conflict, fighting between LURD and government forces broke out in Monrovia in June and July 2003. LURD rebels launched three attacks code-named World Wars I, II, and III, shelling Monrovia with mortar bombs and killing and wounding masses.²⁴ In the aftermath of LURD's invasion of Monrovia, ECOWAS intervened in August 2003 after a meeting to enforce the ceasefire agreement of June 2003. Throughout the ECOWAS sponsored peace talks in Ghana, the representatives of the various Liberian Women's Organizations, through the famous Golden Tulip Declaration, exerted pressure on all parties to end the fighting.²⁵

Done at Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, this nineteenth day of August 1995. http://www.usip.org/library/pa/liberia/liberia_08191995.html, accessed 20 January 2007.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Guinée: Incertitudes autour d'une fin de règne*, Africa Report No. 74, 19 December 2003; ICG, *Liberia: Security challenges*, Africa Report No. 71, 3 November 2003, <http://www.crisisweb.org>, accessed 21 January 2007.

²⁰ Author interview with an ex-LURD combatant, Monrovia, 18 November 2006.

²¹ Author interview with an ex-LURD commander. Monrovia, 18 November 2006.

²² Human Rights Watch, "The Guns are in the Bushes: Continuing Abuses in Liberia," A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, January 2004.

²³ Author interview with a former MODEL fighter, Kakata, 22 November 2006.

²⁴ Human rights Watch, "Weapons Sanctions, Military Supplies, and Human Suffering: Illegal Arms Flows to Liberia and the June-July 2003 Shelling of Monrovia," A Human Rights Watch briefing paper. November 2003.

²⁵ See, "The Golden Tulip Declaration of Liberian Women Attending the Peace Talks in Accra." Accra, Ghana, 15 March 2003, <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Liberia/GoldenTulip.html>, accessed 24 January 2007.

On 11 August 2003, President Taylor resigned as part of the peace agreement and left for exile in Nigeria. Interpol later issued a warrant of arrest for Taylor for war crimes committed by his rebel allies in Sierra Leone. A week after Taylor's resignation and departure the three warring parties signed the Accra Peace Agreement,²⁶ paving the way for a two-year transitional government, disarmament and demobilization of the fighting forces and the holding of democratic elections in 2005.

On 18 August 2003, the Liberian parties signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that marked a formal end to the fourteen years of civil war. The parties to the agreement requested the UN to deploy a force to Liberia with a Chapter VII mandate of the UN Charter to support the National Transitional Government in implementing the agreement. Part Three of the agreement establishes the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR), an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental body responsible for the coordination of DDDR activities.²⁷

By the time of the signing of the CPA, the civil war had caused the death of over 150,000 people, mostly civilians, and resulted into about 850,000 refugees.²⁸ In his report to the Security Council on the situation in Liberia, the UN Secretary General acknowledged that one of the greatest challenges in Liberia and the neighbouring countries was the presence of thousands of combatants, including children, of various nationalities; and that successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all of those ex-combatants would be crucial to sustainable peace and security. The Secretary General further estimated that Liberia had 27,000 to 38,000 combatants, many of whom were children.²⁹ He subsequently proposed the establishment of the UN Mission in Liberia, (UNMIL), as envisaged by the UNSC resolution 1497 (2003)³⁰ and the CPA. Subsequently, the Security Council, through resolution 1509 (2003) established a 15,000 strong stabilisation force for Liberia to assist in implementing the peace process.³¹

²⁶ See, *Comprehensive Peace Agreement Between the Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties*, http://www.iss.co.za/af/regorg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/liberiapeace.pdf, accessed 24 January 2007.

²⁷ *Ibid*, Part Three.

²⁸ See Liberia-UNMIL-Background, <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/missions/unmil/background.html>, accessed 28 January 2006.

²⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia, S/2003/875 of 11 September 2003.

³⁰ UN Security Council, UNSC/RES/1497 of 1 August 2003, <http://unmil.org/documents/resolutions/1497.pdf>, accessed 28 January 2007.

³¹ UN Security Council, UNSC/RES/1509 of 19 September 2003, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/MHII-62FB7D?OpenDocument>, accessed 30 January 2007.

3. DDDR Strategy and Operational Framework

The UNSC resolution 1509 (2003) provides the key objective of the Liberian DDDR programme, to disarm and demobilize combatants of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Government of Liberia (GOL), LURD, MODEL and other paramilitary forces and militias. The resolution also calls for the preparation of sustainable social and economic reintegration of former combatants in support of long-term peace and security in the country.³²

The Liberia DDDR programme is being implemented by a Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) headed by a programme and policy adviser, and is responsible for the daily operations and execution of the programme. JIU is supervised by the NCDDRR, which comprises of representatives from the GOL, LURD, MODEL, ECOWAS, the UN, the African Union (AU) and the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL).³³ The duties of NCDDRR include policy guidance to the JIU; coordination of all government institutions in support of the DDDR programme; identification of problems related to implementation and impact of the programme and development of remedial measures where necessary.³⁴ The JIU is structured into four functional units, namely:

Disarmament and Demobilisation (DD) unit: Is staffed primarily with expertise from UNMIL in the areas of disarmament and demobilization. This includes desk officers, field officers and national support staff.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration (RR) Unit: Is composed of experts in reintegration, vocational training, small enterprise development, employment creation, apprenticeship promotion, agriculture and food production. Such individuals are drawn from the UNDP and other relevant national agencies.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit: Is mainly staffed by technical assistants from UNDP and consists of an M&E expert analysts, data entry clerks and field monitors who are mainly national staff.

Information and sensitisation (I&S) Unit is staffed with expertise from UNMIL and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). They consist of specialists in public information development and dissemination, social adaptation programmes in the area of civic education, psychosocial counseling, community-based reconciliation and peace-building measures.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Author interview with NCDDRR staff, Monrovia, 20 November 2006.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

3.1 Disarmament Programme

After the signing of the CPA, the immediate task was to remove arms from all the parties to the conflict in order to establish peace and stability. The pressure to prevent any armed threats to peace drove UNMIL to embark on disarmament as soon as the force was deployed. To achieve this, an eligibility criteria was drawn out outlining the parameters that qualified one as an eligible participant, as shown below:

3.2 Qualifying Parameters for the Disarmament and Demobilisation Process³⁵

3.2.1 Weapons

Approved Weapons	Qualified No. of personnel per weapon	Remarks
Rifle /Pistol	1	Serviceable weapon only or no entry (no major parts missing)
RPG Launcher	1	
Light MG/Medium MG/Heavy MG	2	Belt fed weapons only
60 mm Mortar	2	Tube, base plate and stand
81 mm Mortar	3	Tube, base plate and stand
106/120/155 Mortar/Howitzer	6	
AA Guns	4	

3.2.2 Munitions

Approved Munitions	No. of personnel Qualified	No. of Munitions	Remarks
Grenades	1	2	
RPG (Rocket & grenades)	1	1	Together or no entry (not to be handed in as separate items)
Smoke Grenade	1	4	
Ammunition	1	150	Single or linked

The Liberian disarmament process has been acclaimed as being the most inclusive to date for allowing non-fighting groups such as women and children that accompanied combatants to also be eligible for disarmament, thus obtaining the same DDR benefits as

³⁵ This table is based on the information provided by NCDDRR officials during an interview with the author, Monrovia, 26 November 2006.

the combatants. The form used for disarmament “Ex-Combatant Disarmament Form” included a section for the non-fighting groups.³⁶ Such an individual qualified:

- Having demonstrated to the observer’s satisfaction that they had participated as an active combatant of the above fighting forces in Liberia at the time of the signing of the Accra Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003; and
- Having delivered at least a personal weapon or belonging to a group of at most five combatants delivering at least one group weapon; or
- Being an underage combatant, accompanying minor, unaccompanied minor, or any other participant under the age of 18 or female, presenting with any of the fighting forces.

3.3 Failure of the First Disarmament Process

In what appeared to be an under-estimation of the expectations of the post-conflict Liberian society, coupled with apparently insufficient preparation on the side of UNMIL as a result of undefined administrative and operational issues within the its commanding structures UNMIL prematurely embarked on the process of disarmament on 7 December 2003, a situation that led to a near-disaster. On that day, “...Government fighters, angry at not being paid immediately for turning in their weapons, beat people and fired guns into the air at the disarmament camp. When UNMIL begun disarmament, hundreds of fighters armed with AK-47's, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars gathered at Camp Schieffelin, 35 miles east of Monrovia, to turn in their weapons and receive US \$300. The riots began when they found out they would receive only US \$150 and the other US \$ 150 at the end of a three-week demobilization program.”³⁷

Camp Schieffelin’s shortcomings proved to be the tip of the iceberg of the challenges that awaited UNMIL. Extreme poverty and the un-disbanded command structures (by then) amongst the former fighters and the fact that they gathered in large numbers in one spot; armed and with cash in the vicinity was enough to trigger a pandemonium.³⁸ UNMIL staff manning the cantonment site expected to process at most 250 ex-combatants on each day. They were overwhelmed when more than one thousand ex-combatants showed up to be disarmed. This caused frustration amongst the ex-combatants. The crowd begun shooting and rioting, over-running Camp Schieffelin. This resulted in the death of nine people. A group of ex-LURD combatants during a group discussion disclosed that their understanding was that if one presented a weapon to the UNMIL officers at Camp Schieffelin, he/she was to “cash in US \$ 300, so we all wanted the money, including our generals.”³⁹ Increased insecurity and cases of combatants disarming twice led to the

³⁶ Author interview with NCDDR planning officers, Monrovia, 27 November 2006.

³⁷ New York Times, “Africa: Liberia: Militia Riot at Disarmament Camp”, 9 December 2003.

³⁸ Author interview with JIU officers in Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie, 24 November 2006.

³⁹ Author interaction with a group of 18 ex-LURD rebels, now in vocational training, Booker Washington Institute (BWI), Kakata, 1 December 2006.

postponement of the process until April of 2004.⁴⁰ It was later established that UNMIL's inability to anticipate the unexpected, misinformation and lack of adequate sensitisation to the process was the major cause of the breakdown in the DD programme at Camp Schieffelin. To a larger extent, the planning process was not comprehensive and did not take into account the desperation that had set in throughout the Liberian community and that most societies emerging from prolonged armed conflicts are potentially sensitive and explosive and must be approached with care.

The escapades at Camp Schieffelin were due to a rush by UNMIL, who wanted to prove to the international community that they possessed the capacity to undertake such a task.⁴¹ Also, UNMIL troop deployment was considerably low at the time. This however points to a lack of strategy and criteria for disarmament within UNMIL at the time. In 2007, UNMIL had a force of 15,000 in a country of just above 3 million people,⁴² making the mission one of the highest peacekeeper-to-person-ratio in DDR history.⁴³ According to the *Liberian DDDR Programme Strategy and Implementation Framework*, only combatants presenting serviceable weapons were to be disarmed and demobilized, with the exception to child combatants, a child or woman associated with fighting forces (CAFF, WAFF) or disabled/wounded persons. These were screened and confirmed by UNICEF, WHO medical and UNFPA women's agency representatives in cooperation with UNMIL Military Observers, to have participated in the fighting or have been part of a fighting force.⁴⁴ For ex-combatants to qualify therefore they had to meet an outlined criteria as shown in the table below. Serviceability of the weapons was mandatory for an ex-combatant to qualify for the DDR programme and ex-combatants presenting unserviceable or fake weapons were therefore not eligible and such weapons were confiscated.

According to the NCDDRR, from the inception of the programme on the 7 December 2003 until the 22 November 2004 when it formally ended, a total of 103,019 had been disarmed, accounting for a total of 28,314 weapons and 6,486,136 small arms ammunition.⁴⁵ These figures give the ration of weapon to person ratio as: 0.275. This ration is comparatively amongst the lowest in the history of DDR. For instance in Sierra Leone the ration was 0.58; Angola 0.38 while in the Republic of Congo it stood at 0.43.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Cases of disarming twice were noted when thousands of copies of registration forms issued to combatants by UNMIL during disarmament remained unclaimed after the ex-combatants proceeded with the DDDR process in 2004. Since the procedure was one weapon one form per ex-combatant registration, it was only possible that unclaimed forms belonged to those who disarmed in December. Author interview with UNMIL planning staff. UNMIL headquarters, Monrovia, 23 November 2006.

⁴¹ Author interview with UNMIL Civil Affairs staff, Monrovia, 23 November 2006.

⁴² According to the Encyclopedia of the Nations, the population of Liberia in 2003 was estimated by the United Nations at 3,367,000. See, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Liberia-POPULATION.html>, accessed 28 January 2007.

⁴³ Author interview with staff of UNMIL Force Commander, Monrovia, 27 November 2006.

⁴⁴ *Liberian DDDR Programme Strategy and Implementation Framework*, Monrovia, October 2003.

⁴⁵ An UNMIL Officer in Charge of the DDDR unit provided these figures, Monrovia, 21 November 2006.

⁴⁶ Author interview with an external DDDR evaluation expert. Monrovia, 28 November 2006.

Table 1: The breakdown of disarmed programme participants by phase

		Phase 1	%	Phase 2	%	Phase 3	%	Total	%
Adult	Male	11,297	86.1%	35,306	68.6%	22,678	59.0	69,281	67.3%
	Female	424	3.2%	10,853	21.1%	11,179	29.1%	22,456	21.8%
Child	Male	1,253	9.5%	4,089	7.9%	3,429	8.9%	8,771	8.5%
	Female	151	1.2%	1,221	2.4%	1,139	3.0%	2,511	2.4%
Sub-total		13,125	100.0%	51,469	100.0%	38,425	100.0%	103,019	100.0%

Source: JIU Statistics, Monrovia, 24 November 2006.

4. Issues Emerging from the Disarmament Process

4.1 Statistical Discrepancy of the Process

The Liberian disarmament process exposed a complex interrelationship between expected outcomes and the real outcome. For instance:

- (a) In the first phase of disarmament at Camp Schieffelin, 13,125 combatants were disarmed in an exercise in which 10,321 weapons were collected, resulting into 0.785 weapons-to-person ratio. Comparatively this ratio was not consistent with a weapons-to-person ratio of 0.199 in the subsequent two disarmament phases, which consisted of 89,894 ex-combatants handing in 18,002 weapons.⁴⁷
- (b) From Table 1 above, the percentage of male ex-combatants decrease from phase one (86.1%) to phase three (59.0%) while that of female ex-combatants increase from 3.2% to 29.1% respectively.

There is no particular response to variations in these two instances but several possibilities could be speculated, one being that the Liberian disarmament process was the most inclusive to date,⁴⁸ as it allowed the non-fighting groups that accompany combatants (such as children and women) to also be eligible for disarmament, thus obtaining the same DDR benefits as the combatants. However, this does not sufficiently explain the variation in the trend between male and female ex-combatants, although the trend could be partly due to difficulties of the screening process and the understanding of the eligibility criteria at the initial stage. It could also be that at the inception of the disarmament process, women and girl children feared the rushing and jostling that

⁴⁷ NCDDRR First quarterly report, annex 2, based on JIU validated figures.

⁴⁸ Author interview with the JIU staff, Monrovia, 22 November 2006.

marked the initial stages of the process, and which was largely characterized by men, so that when the scramble by men eased after most men had been served, women and girl children got a chance to turn up for disarmament. As this is one of the first UN integrated DDR (IDDR) framework to be implemented, the programme needs close analysis especially after it will have closed so that conclusive lessons could be drawn.

According to NCDDR, of the total caseload, 60% were registered as fighters of the Government of Liberia/Armed Forces of Liberia, 28% as LURD and 12% as MODEL. By the end of the disarmament process, 28,314 weapons, 33,604 heavy munitions and 6,486,136 rounds of small arms ammunition had been surrendered.⁴⁹ The weapons include 21,286 assault rifles (such as AK47), 715 machine guns, 665 pistols, 1,841 RPGs, 208 mortars and 3,599 miscellaneous weapons. The heavy munitions include 12,512 mortar bombs, 9,001 RPGs, 10,975 hand grenades, 12 surface-to-air missiles and 1,101 miscellaneous munitions. In addition, 2,332 unserviceable weapons were collected.⁵⁰

4.2 Inability to “Manage Expectations”

The disarmament process in Liberia provides a lesson of the social distortion that linking money to disarmament can cause to a post-conflict society. In Liberia disarmament “pegged a price” on weapons and ammunition, thereby creating a situation in which, to those who had no weapon or ammunitions to qualify for disarmament and hence the US \$150 meant “missing out on free cash.” People were pushed into hoarding arms and ammunition and distributed them for a price to those who desperately sought to meet the disarmament criteria. This led to the explosion of the caseload beyond the original planning figures, an occurrence that indicates that pre-conditions for planning did not sufficiently anticipate the demands of the Liberian society at the time. The situation also brought to the fore the link between poverty and disarmament. In situations where poverty, conflict and resources (such as money in the case of Liberia) are concerned, and especially one in which the criteria was quite integrated (for the first time in the history of the UN DDR processes), the planning should have taken into consideration the expectations of the society in order to avoid a bloated caseload.

4.3 Victimized Ex-combatants

In one of the group discussions composed of 25 ex-combatants, three individuals gave instances whereby their factional commanders, at the start of the disarmament process, ordered the ex-combatants to surrender their arms and ammunition to him for group disarmament, only for the commander to disappear with the arms which he later distributed to his family members in order for them to qualify for the disarmament money.⁵¹ There were also instances where the commanders sold additional weapons for as little as US\$ 15 each to those wishing to qualify for the DDDR process.⁵² While the

⁴⁹ These figures are based on data provided by NCDDR officers during an interview conducted by the author. Monrovia, 26 November 2006.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Author group discussion with ex-combatants, Kakata, 24 November 2006.

⁵² Ibid.

number of interviews and group discussions may not be statistically a fair representation of the total sample, this practice by factional general also partly account for the overwhelming caseload. Several cases keep arising where individuals present themselves to the JIU offices that complained about having been disqualified from the DDRR process on the basis of lack of arms to hand in when their arms were taken by their commanders. A former commander from the LURD faction attributed the failure by some ex-combatants to join the DDRR process to the fact that some villages became inaccessible due to the rain at the time of disarmament. This affected a number of his ex-combatants "...who eventually gave up waiting for the programme to reach them. They are now engaged in their own private rubber tapping businesses."⁵³ According claims that some legitimate combatants did not obtain DDRR programme benefits because they could not answer some of the questions from the peacekeepers.

4.4 Unsatisfactory Demobilisation Framework

During demobilization, the length of the stay in cantonment sites⁵⁴ was originally planned to be 30 days for adults while children were taken to Interim Care Centres (ICC) for a varied duration of up to three months depending on the delay and feasibility of family reunification.⁵⁵ In the Joint Operation Plan (JOP) adult's stay in the cantonment sites was shortened to three weeks, while in practice the stay was further reduced to five days per adult participant, in order to minimize idleness.⁵⁶

4.5 Foreign Ex-combatants

Combatants on foreign soil (COFS) continuously pose a major challenge to peace and security in most conflicts in African countries, as was demonstrated in the Liberian conflict. Since most African disputes are regional in nature due to trans-boundary overlapping of ethnicity and porous nature of borders, COFS are usually involved in most African conflicts. In certain instances DDR programmes have been exploited by COFS who move around in the region with their weapons in order to enroll in programmes offering most attractive benefits in exchange for their weapons. According to UNMIL, as at 15 February 2005, 612 foreign combatants had officially entered the Liberian DDRR Program (308 Guineans, 242 Sierra Leoneans, 50 Ivoirians, 7 Nigerians, 4 Malians and 1 Ghanaian). Of this amount, 485 were adults while 127 were children.⁵⁷

4.6 Disarming the Rubber Plantations

During the civil war, as the rebels approached the rubber plantations the workers fled leaving the plantations at the mercies of the rebels. The most affected were government

⁵³ Author interview with an ex-LURD commander, Monrovia, 28 November 2006.

⁵⁴ Cantonment sites were also called D2 sites, as opposed to D1 sites, which were only for disarmament.

Author interview with UNDP disarmament staff, Monrovia, 29 November 2006.

⁵⁵ Author interview with UNICEF staff, Monrovia, 30 November 2006.

⁵⁶ Author interview with a psychosocial counselor, YWCA, Kakata, 27 November 2006.

⁵⁷ UNMIL, Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation. <http://unmil.org/content.asp?ccat=ddrr>, accessed 15 February 2007.

plantations, particularly Guthrie Sinoe and Cocopa, which were occupied by LURD rebels towards the end of hostilities in 2003.⁵⁸ Rubber tapping was therefore one of the most lucrative enterprises that rebels undertook to sustain their activities. In 2006 UNMIL, in collaboration with the GoL strengthened their efforts to reach a peaceful resolution to the illegal occupation of the rubber plantations by ex-combatants. Within the framework of a Joint Government-UN Task Force known as Government Interim Management Team, UNMIL assisted the government to re-establish state authority over Guthrie. More than 200 registered ex-combatants who resided on the plantation registered for participation in the RR programme, and most of them have re-located to their counties of origin. Others have decided to remain in the plantation and seek employment with the interim management team.⁵⁹ For the duration the rebels occupied the rubber plantations they mismanaged the rubber trees as they tapped them unskilfully without caring.⁶⁰ The occupation of rubber plantations by rebels cases demonstrate the need to have appropriate structures in the management of the natural resources of Liberia, as one of the basic elements for long-term peace, stability, reintegration and economic recovery of the country. UNMIL with possible donor support is also making a special effort to arrange a separate RR support structure for 529 people residing in Sinoe rubber plantation and who did not qualify into the formal RR programme during the official disarmament and demobilization.⁶¹

5. Rehabilitation and Reintegration (RR) Hurdles

While the DD process was relatively successful with regard to the incentives that were immediately made available to those who willingly surrendered their arms, this seems not to have been the case with the RR process that is equally a crucial element for the long-term human security of the country. RR, which begun in June 2004, continues to be faced with increasing challenges especially in terms of long term human security perspective. Unlike in the DD phase where ex-combatants were paid US \$ 300 in a relatively short timeframe, in the RR phase they were paid US \$ 30 per month, besides being fed and housed by training institutions. This resulted in many ex-combatants opting to earn their own living as an alternative to RR. “After all during the 6 – 8 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.” This was a response from one of the dropouts of the DDRR programme, who had given up after the DD phase. He also disclosed that he is in touch with his former rebel “general,” who assisted him in securing his current rubber-tapping job in a private farm in Sinoe County. Even so, not all those who undertake the entire DDRR process to the end, get to do meaningful trade. A number of them sell their reinsertion kits for meagre sums of money, to those already with established business, and go about doing nothing. According to the principal of BWI, only about 30 – 40% of

⁵⁸ Author interview with the Government Interim Management Team, Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie, 20 November 2006.

⁵⁹ Among those ex-combatants who opted to remain within Guthrie includes foreigners, including women, some who were fighters while others had accompanied their spouses who died in the war. Author interview with “Mother Blessing,” from Sierra Leone and a former LURD faction commander now a security woman under the Interim Management Team, Guthrie Plantation, Guthrie, 24 November 2006.

⁶⁰ Author’s tours of Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie, 29 November 2006.

⁶¹ Author interview with the Interim Management Team, Guthrie, 29 November 2006.

his trainees per training phase successful gain from the skills and reinsertion kits.⁶² Asked how they viewed this, one member of the Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) remarked that it is in fact better that some of the ex-combatants quickly found alternatives rather than DDRR, and are able to survive on their own, as it helps in severing their dependence on JIU.⁶³ According to a YWCA psychosocial counselor, part of the ex-combatants' high failure in reintegration is insufficient psychosocial timeframe due to very short demobilisation timeframe, for "...it is impossible to demobilize in five days, someone who has fought for fourteen years, as this has consequences on the capacity of participants to adapt to their new environment during reintegration."⁶⁴

As at the time of this research in November 2006 a total of 32,876 ex-combatants (25,597 male and 7,279 female) had already completed the reintegration programme. Another 26,956 were enrolled either in the formal education, vocational skills training or apprenticeship schemes (21,238 male and 5,717 female).⁶⁵ By the end of November a total of 60,000 beneficiaries had completed or were participating in the programme. A number of other new projects had been approved under the UNDP trust fund. 13,625 ex-combatants including children had completed the parallel reintegration programme directly implemented by parallel programme partners and agencies (donors such as USAID, EC, UNICEF) through their support to the RR parallel programme for ex-combatants and war affected population.⁶⁶ According to NCDDRR, around 22,000 beneficiaries were still waiting to be placed in reintegration programmes sponsored by the parallel programme partners, by June 2007.

According to UNMIL's assessment, the key components of RR in Liberia's context are agriculture; vocational skills training, apprenticeship and job placement; small enterprise development; labour based activities; and formal education, projects that were also identified by the UNDP Trust Fund and parallel programmes for funding.

The Impact of the DDRR programme on human security in Liberia therefore requires an examination of the various composite aspects of the ex-combatants that took part in the DDRR programme, namely:

- a) ex-combatants who disarmed and/or demobilized;
- b) those who disarmed, demobilized, and are now participating in a reintegration programme; and
- c) those who had enrolled in the DDRR and have completed reintegration training.

The three groups can then be analysed based on indicators such as livelihood prospects, governance and security and economic and social reintegration.

⁶² Author interview with the Principal of BWI, Kakata, 1 December 2006.

⁶³ Author interview with a JIU staff member. Monrovia, 2 December 2006.

⁶⁴ Author interview with a psychosocial counselor, YWCA, Kakata, 27 November 2006.

⁶⁵ These figures were provided by the JIU staff during an interview with the author, Monrovia, 29 November 2006.

⁶⁶ Author interview with a European Union project implementation staff, Monrovia. 30 November 2006.

5.1 Livelihood

According to UNMIL, when the demobilized combatants were asked to identify their training preferences in February 2005, 40% chose formal education, 14 % auto mechanics, 11 % generic skills training, 7 % driving, 7 % tailoring, 4 % agriculture and 3% masonry.⁶⁷ These figures contrast with the findings of a survey conducted in December 2006 by UNMIL's Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery programme (RRR), among the ex-combatants and which revealed that farming was the most common occupation for ex-combatants (23%), with "unemployed" and "student" categories being the next two most common responses (19% and 17% respectively).⁶⁸ However, most ex-combatants attributed their inability to farm effectively inaccessible to the countryside and unserviceable infrastructure. One of the reasons contributing to this phenomenon could be that at the time of joining the DDRR programme are usually enthusiastic with very high goals and expectations. As they enter the RR stage leading to graduation at the end of training, "... their optimism starts dwindling at the dawn of the reality to rampant nationwide unemployment, lack of sustainable market for their products to assure gainful employment. This drives some graduates to simply trade off their reinsertion kits to earn quick money leaving them with farming as the easy option and one that does not require specialized knowledge."⁶⁹ There is a need to investigate further the reasons behind the reversal in ex-combatants expectations between the DD phase and the RR phase. This trend is also reflected in ex-combatant unemployment levels between those in urban centres and those in the villages. For instance analysis conducted by RRR division of UNMIL in November 2007 revealed that in Monrovia alone over 50% of the ex-combatants that chose to be reintegrated there were unemployed (despite having gone through the entire DDRR programme) compared to 9% reported in the rest of the country. This corresponds with a similar finding in the same analysis which shows that the highest unemployment rates among ex-combatants in Monrovia were reported by those who had completed training (42%) while those that did not participate in DDRR at all comprised 34%. Comparatively, 23% of those who went through DD only and 34% of those who are currently enrolled in training programmes considered themselves to be unemployed.⁷⁰

5.2 Governance and Security

Increased levels of crime such as robbery and illicit drugs have become common, especially in Monrovia. This is an indication that there are problems with reintegration. This is exemplified by the fact that in the month of September 2006 alone, five cases of homicide and nine cases of armed robbery were reported to the UN Police in Monrovia.⁷¹ While it is true that the DDRR programme has registered relatively good success in

⁶⁷ UNMIL, Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation, <http://unmil.org/content.asp?ccat=ddrr>, accessed 15 February 2007.

⁶⁸ These figures were provided by UNMIL RRR staff during their interview with the author, Monrovia, 22 November 2006.

⁶⁹ Author interview with the staff of Land Mine Action, Monrovia, 26 November 2006.

⁷⁰ These findings are from "A Situation Analysis of Ex-Combatant Reintegration in Liberia," report by UNMIL's Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery Section. December 2006.

⁷¹ Author interview with CIVIPOL staff, Monrovia, 29 November 2006.

consolidating national security, it is not possible to determine whether this success is largely due to the presence of the 15,000 peacekeepers, war fatigue or the presence of the DDR programme or a combination of the three factors. This can be determined only if one variable is evaluated in the absence of the other.

5.3 Economic Reintegration

The success (or failure) of socio-economic reintegration needs to be measured against the macro-economic reality of Liberia, which is not as yet conducive for progress for most of the ex-combatants seeking quick economic recovery. According to UNMIL's RRR programme, the differences in unemployment rates between the ex-combatants in urban centres and those in other counties is partly because rural based former combatants engage in subsistence farming activities or are able to seek temporary employment on plantations, whereas those in the urban centres, with less options for unskilled labour are mostly unable to find jobs.⁷² In some cases poverty and unemployment drive ex-combatants to seek assistance from their former faction commanders who used to "provide for them" during the civil war. Cases are reported where former faction commanders have connected their former fighters to jobs in rubber plantations around Monrovia.⁷³ This phenomenon presents a danger to the total reintegration of the ex-combatant, as it instills a sense of combatant dependency to the former commander, a link that needs to be broken to avert possible relapse into remobilization.

5.4 Social Reintegration

The Liberian communities appear to have reconciled with ex-combatants, whom they have accepted into their socio-economic settings. However, within some members of the community there is a call for the youth to have the same training opportunities as ex-combatants in order to limit undertones of exclusion between the two groups.⁷⁴ Generally, there are no reported feelings of noticeable resentment for prioritizing ex-combatant training. A notable oversight of the RR programme, however, was the omission of community projects alongside training opportunities, which would have been a useful element of practical training and deflected the focus from individual to community, although UNMIL's RRR programme has always provided work-for-food projects to willing ex-combatants within Monrovia which has entailed clearing drainage, road repair and garbage collection among other community work.⁷⁵

The challenges facing the Liberian society regarding reintegration comprise of higher than expected number of combatants and their dependants that have to be reintegrated in an environment of collapsed infrastructure, insufficient public institutions (schools, hospitals, justice, etc) lack of professional skills as well as weak capacity of local implementing partners.

⁷² Author interview with UNMIL's RRR staff, Monrovia, 22 November 2006.

⁷³ Author interview with the Government Interim Management Team, Guthrie Rubber Plantation, Guthrie, 20 November 2006.

⁷⁴ Author interview with a worker at Mamba Point Hotel, Monrovia, 28 November 2006.

⁷⁵ Author interview with UNMIL's RRR staff, Monrovia, 22 November 2006.

6. DDR Linkages to Related Programmes

6.1 Beneficiary Involvement and Participation

Under this guideline, the Government of Liberia (GoL) committed itself to ensuring participation of all parties to the conflict, including pertinent stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of the DDRR programme. In principle this was sound and comprehensive but when the process started the main concern was on the main parties to the conflict, namely GoL, LURD and MODEL. Other related groups such as women and children associated with the conflict were easily overlooked, an issue that provoked the intervention of UNMIL's Office of the Gender Adviser which, according to the UNSC 1509 (2003) UNMIL is required to integrate a gender perspective in all its activities.⁷⁶ This late realization that women and children related to the conflict needed to be incorporated into the programme contributed directly to unexpected variations in ex-combatant caseloads creating a false feeling of dependency on the DDRR programme. Several people were tempted into abandoning their small but sustainable sources of livelihood to rush for the "hand outs" in the name of transitional safety allowance, under the pretence of being associated with ex-combatants.

6.2 Sensitisation and a Nation-wide Reconciliation Campaign

Prior to demobilisation, the government, with the support of UNMIL and JIU, undertook a sensitisation and nation-wide reconciliation campaigns aimed at educating the general public about the programme and the role of ex-combatants in a post-conflict society. During focus group discussions participants reported UNMIL radio as the single most important source of information that explained the DDRR process and the return of the country to peace. Other means used to sensitize communities included Community outreach programmes and focus group discussions, drama and skits.

6.3 The State of Destitute Children

The DDRR process, to a large extent, was mainly preoccupied with ex-combatants while CAFF, WAFF and the disabled/wounded were taken care of by other organizations such as UNICEF, WHO and UNDP. In doing this, the DDRR did not cover the element of destitute children whose situation was as a result of family break ups. Mass displacements led to many children losing track of their parents and guardians. A report entitled *Human Rights in Liberia's Orphanages*, released by UNMIL in March 2007 reveals of the fragility of the life of Liberia's destitute children, many of who live in appalling orphanages that have characterized the post-civil war Liberia. The dire situation of the destitute children has led to the proliferation of charitable organizations several of whose motives are to attract donor funds for their own selfish ends, at the expense of the presumed beneficiaries.⁷⁷ The objectives of most of the orphanages are questionable, according to the report which details several examples including one in Montserrado County where during the last half of August 2006, more than 700 children were removed from their families and taken to a newly opened and un-accredited orphanage in

⁷⁶ Author interview with an official of the UNMIL's Office of the Gender Adviser, Monrovia, 22 November 2006.

⁷⁷ Author interview with the staff of UNMIL Human Rights Section, Monrovia. 16 May 2007.

Barnersville.⁷⁸ Although the children involved in this case were returned to their relatives after intervention by the government and child protection agencies, the separation of the children from their families contradicts the post-war attempts that aim at rebuilding social fabric that includes the reunification of children with their families.

The civil war and its distorting effect on family structures set the ground for the proliferation of childcare institutions in Liberia. This can be corroborated by the fact that in 1989, on the eve of the 14-year civil wars that plagued Liberia, there were just 10 orphanages, and by 1991, the number of registered orphanages had risen to 121. Although in 1993 the Interim Government of National Unity under Amos Sawyer instituted the Board of Accreditation of Welfare Institutions (BAWI), charged with the establishing guidelines for conditions to be observed by welfare institutions, the collapse of the government structures in the course of the war that ensued hampered BAWI from operating effectively.⁷⁹ Besides BAWI having been ineffective due to the recurrent nature of the civil war, in October 2003, in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the government of Liberia was quick to put in place an inter-agency task force under the Ministry of Health and Social welfare (MoHSW).⁸⁰ The main objectives of the task force were, first to identify orphanages that existed and those that had collapsed; second was to assess the conditions of children in terms of care and protection and the third objective was to estimate the needs in terms of assistance so as to improve the conditions of the children. The fourth objective was to gather preliminary data on the whereabouts of the parents or family members of the affected children.⁸¹

Despite all the efforts that the government of Liberia put in place in order to mitigate what was increasing becoming a social problem, the proliferation of orphanages seemed to turn a new turn, spreading into the rural spheres and in all counties. With the reestablishment of peace in 2003, the Child Protection Network Taskforce conducted a pilot study in 2004 that covered two counties (Montserrado and Margibi), and established that there were 4,792 orphans in 96 orphanages in the two counties. The 2004 assessment report recommended that 39 sub-standard orphanages be closed, while 17 needed improvement and 40 could be accredited.⁸²

6.4 The Security Sector Reform Process (SSR)

The case of Liberia provides a suitable case where peace agreements can provide an important opportunity to establish useful frameworks and mandates for SSR, if the goals and principles of security and justice reform can be agreed in these documents. Once this is done, it creates the political space within which challenging reform decisions, such as restructuring and increasing the accountability of security and justice providers, can be implemented.

⁷⁸ See, UNMIL Human Rights Report, "Human Rights in Liberia's Orphanages," March 2007, p.6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ The inter-agency task force included Save the Children-UK, UNICEF and Don Bosco.

⁸¹ UNMIL Human Rights Report, "Human Rights in Liberia's Orphanages," *ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

In most cases (and as was the case with Liberia), while peace agreements attract the participation of all (national) stakeholders including the civil society, SSR and related security issues (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, the creation of a new integrated army, structural reorganizing, training for police units) tend to be controlled by the government, with little or no involvement of the civil society.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – OECD DAC, a key lesson from SSR programmes is that each country context is different and approaches have to be tailored to address the local environment. This therefore necessitates bearing in mind such distinctions when designing SSR programmes. The key element that often calls for immediate attention, in all post-conflict societies is the level of security and stability in a country. Mistrust and a feeling of insecurity are usually common factors that if wrongly managed could easily jeopardize the nascent peace, causing the society to relapse into conflict. It is for this reason that the challenges and opportunities for SSR, as well as appropriate approaches to reform, can differ between post-conflict countries and more stable environments.⁸³ But however varied the circumstances may be, it is important to ensure an integrated approach when designing and implement SSR processes.

In Liberia, part four of the CPA, which was signed in 2003 deals with the issue of SSR. Soon after the two year National Transitional Government of Liberia (TNGoL) was put into place, it set up the Defense Advisory Committee, under the Ministry of Defense. After a series of consultations with the donors, UNMIL and government departments, the Ministry of Defense recommended the creation of a defense force of 6,500 forces.⁸⁴ At the initial stages of recruitment, the fear and suspicion that characterized the Liberian society immediately after the war led most would-be recruits to either shy off or fear to being identified with the military, given the atrocities that the military had committed against the society. Another challenge was insufficient funding.

In order to mitigate these effects, UNMIL, in conjunction with the government, conducted a national dialogue in which avenues of improving the process were sought such that when the new government was sworn in, in January 2006, a more focused SSR process was defined. Under this approach the Liberian government adopted a total transformation approach by which none of the elements that were party to the conflict would be reintegrated into the new forces.⁸⁵ While this approach has the intention of “cleaning” up the military, it leaves out a large number of ex-fighters some of who are capable of serving in the new forces. Under the current status quo, the society is obliged to contend⁸⁶ with, and absorb the former fighters, of whom a large majority knows

⁸³ See, The OECD DAC Hand Book on Security System Reform. At: <http://www.ssrnetwork.net/events/details.php?id=39>, accessed on 28 July 2007.

⁸⁴ Author interview with members of the Liberian Defense Advisory Committee, Monrovia, 17 May 2007.

⁸⁵ Author interview with UNMIL CIVIPOL, Monrovia, 24 November 2006.

⁸⁶ Author interview with a senior UNMIL officer in the Civil Affairs section, Monrovia, 29 November 2006.

nothing more than a gun, having grown up during the civil war.⁸⁷

By not considering the former forces in the new SSR process, the Liberian society is put at the risk of having to contend with a considerable number of persons who are well skilled in war and who have no viable source of livelihood. These groups are composed of those who served in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) before 1990, numbering about 4,500. This group has not been paid its pension, which includes many months of salary arrears. They remain in Monrovia today awaiting their package.⁸⁸ There is also another group called “draftees,” composed of those who served in the AFL in the post 1990 period. These are about 9,400 in number, also in Monrovia awaiting reintegration.⁸⁹ To these can be added the majority of DDRR dropouts from the 103,000. One of the reasons why nearly all the former forces were not considered to serve in the new forces was because it would raise the question of impartiality, given that the ex-fighters fought on opposing sides during the civil war... “Who then would be considered for remobilisation and who wont; and what criteria would be used? At the same time some of these ex-forces committed atrocities against their own communities and therefore it would be quite demoralizing if they were seen in government security outfits again,” posed a senior staff of Liberian SSR process.⁹⁰

Although not mentioned expressly, it is evident that the criteria adopted by the SSR project, coupled with the “gun habit” inculcated into the lives of ex-fighters throughout the brutality of the 14 years of fighting are some of the several factors contributing to relatively high failure of reintegration among those undertaking DDRR. The failure to consider the ex-military personnel for remobilization into the new defense force has led to the ex-soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and other retired members of the deactivated outfits to form what they call “Combined Forces,” with the option of agitating for their benefits which range from salary arrears as well as retirement benefits.⁹¹ The government, on its side, considers all benefits to the retired officers paid, with the exception of their monthly pension.⁹² At the time of this research, rumors were circulating around Monrovia amongst the “Combined Forces” that additional benefits were coming from an unnamed donor country. The impression created was that the believed additional benefits were more than what they had already been paid.

This situation illustrates the need to incorporate an inclusive strategy in the designing of SSR processes. According to Nathan, SSR is profoundly political because it focuses on the most sensitive sector of the society, it challenges power relations, vested interests and dominant paradigms, hence if not properly implemented it has the potential to provoke contestation within the state and between the state and other actors, and is influenced by,

⁸⁷ A focus group discussion in Monrovia on 21 November 2006 between the author and eleven ex-combatants revealed that each of them had spent an average of eight years in the bush and at the time of disarmament most of them still believed that they would be reintegrated into the new military structures.

⁸⁸ Author interview with the staff of UNMIL Civil Affairs section, Monrovia, 27 November 2006.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Author interview with the staff of SSR office, Monrovia, 18 May 2007.

⁹¹ Author interview with a leader of the “Combined Forces,” Monrovia, 23 May 2007.

⁹² Author interview with the Ministry of Justice staff, Monrovia, 20 May 2007.

and can exacerbate broader political struggles.⁹³ A statement by one of the deactivated former colonels of the former AFL, and a spokesman of the “Combined Forces,” to the president captured some of the feelings of Liberia’s deactivated forces, when he stated that, “I told her our services have been terminated through deactivation but we need to be pensioned and honoured for the sacrifices we have made to the nation.”⁹⁴

The expressions of the deactivated colonel could be explained by OECD DAC argument that although the state has an irreducible role in justice and security provision, effective reform across the system requires working with a broad spectrum of actors. In this regard therefore, an understanding of who provides security and justice is central to SSR in order to ensure that instances of disgruntlement are reduced. The reality in most countries is that these services are delivered by a large number of actors including state agencies and services while some are likely to be non-state organisations and systems.

While it is true that SSR cannot fulfill the expectations of all in the society, it should endeavour to minimize resentment by those who perceive themselves as potential beneficiaries. This can be attained, according to the DAC Guidelines on SSR if the process is comprehensive enough to include:

- Core security actors: armed forces; police service; gendarmeries; paramilitary forces; presidential guards; intelligence and security services (both military and civilian); coast guards; border guards; customs authorities; and reserve or local security units (civil defence forces, national guards, militias).
- Management and oversight bodies: the executive, national security advisory bodies, legislative and legislative select committees; ministries of defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs; customary and traditional authorities; financial management bodies (finance ministries, budget officers, financial audit and planning units); and civil society organisations (civilian review boards and public complaints commissions).
- Justice and the rule of law: judiciary and justice ministries; prisons; criminal investigation and prosecution services; human rights commissions and ombudsmen; and customary and traditional justice systems.
- Non-statutory security forces: liberation armies, guerrilla armies, private security companies and political party militias.

The major challenge in such widely inclusive process is resources. Lack of sufficient funding is a major contributing factor to most problems linked to SSR processes.

⁹³ Nathan, L., *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2007.

⁹⁴ “Ex-Soldiers Reject Violence,” *New Democrat*, Vol.13 No. 169, November 2006.

6.4.1 *The SSR Process*

The election of a new government in Liberia in 2006 marked a major turning point in the implementation of the SSR objectives as set up in the CPA. Part four Article VII of the agreement deals with the SSR, and opens by calling for the disbandment of irregular forces, reforming and restructuring of the AFL by putting in place a new command structure. The article goes on to stipulate that the forces may be drawn from the ranks of the present GOL forces, the LURD and the MODEL, as well as from civilians with appropriate background and experience. It also calls upon the Parties to allow ECOWAS, the UN, AU, and the ICGL to provide advisory staff, equipment, logistics and experienced trainers for the security reform effort. An additional clause, which has come to characterize the implementation of the SSR process, is one that states that, “The Parties also request that the United States of America play a lead role in organising this restructuring program.” It is largely by this clause that America is playing a big role in the SSR processes in Liberia. The result is that major outsourcing of service providers has involved American private security companies. For instance DynCorp International is charged with restructuring and training the military, as well as with vetting and recruiting members of the armed forces. DynCorp’s contracts range from providing the State Department with support services in Kosovo to supplying Kuwait with repair and maintenance of military aircraft. The US government, DynCorp's biggest client, accounts for about 95% of sales. Founded in 1946, among other countries DynCorp has operated in Africa include providing support services for famine aid in Somalia in 1992, as well as supporting UN peacekeepers in Angola since December 1997. DynCorp also had a contract with the State Department to provide the U.S. contingent of cease-fire verifiers in Kosovo.⁹⁵ Another American company, Pacific Architects and Engineers, is in charge of specialized training, equipment, logistics and base services, part of which the American government has offered US \$95 million for training. In an evaluation of the Liberian SSR process, Adedeji writes that the Pentagon decided that the Liberian army would have 2,000 soldiers, a figure that was merely arrived at based on the a technical review and projection of what Liberia could sustain financially, thereby not being reflective of Liberian consensus.⁹⁶

An informal focus discussion with the a mixed audience comprising Liberian university students, civil society and deactivated forces brought to the fore a wide range of issues regarding foreign companies operating in Liberia.⁹⁷ One of the most contentious issues was that of the US \$200 million budget allocated for the training of 2,000 military officers, as of May 2007, an estimated US \$100 million of the US \$200 had been spent on training only 104 military officers, of which just 9 were commissioned officers. According to the deactivated former AFL, they were all fit to be remobilized into the new

⁹⁵ Rense.com, “The Whores Of War and DynCorp”, at: <http://www.rense.com/general25/whoresofwar.htm>, accessed on 18 July 2007.

⁹⁶ Adedeji Ebo, “Liberia Case Study: Outsourcing SSR to Foreign Companies,” in Nathan, L., (ed), *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*, p.80.

⁹⁷ The group discussion was convened by the author in the course of field research in Monrovia on 21 May 2007.

forces, being between the ages of 35 and 45. One particular individual appeared to justify his case by stating that in the 1994 he was sent to a college in America where he trained in forensic science but now he had arbitrarily been deactivated. Others raised various concerns that ranged from accusations of DynCorp having been involved in prostitution and sex scandals in Colombia to the appointment of a Nigerian as Chief of General Staff of the Liberian military, while capable Liberians had been deactivated. In the course of the group discussions, two other issues were raised touched on the morale of the police. The first was that a few of the former police officers that were absorbed in the new recruitment seemed to be demoralized because of the fact that their former ranks and experience were not considered, so they had to undertake the basic training just as the new recruits. Related to this is the issue of the purported difficulty by the recruits when they graduate, cope with the perceived harsh realities of ordinary Liberians. The argument went that during the training the recruits are housed and fed while enjoying air-conditioned housing and a monthly subsidy of \$50 per person, services that are hard to afford out of the barracks. Whether these allegations are legitimate or not, what is apparent is that the general feeling among some Liberians is that the SSR process is not inclusive enough, an aspect that may warrant a change of approach to a certain extent.

6.4.2 The Police and SSR

Apparently, in Liberia it is comparatively easier to access more authentic information about the police transformation than it is with the military. The confidentiality behind the process involving the military could be due to the past atrocities perpetuated against the innocent citizens. Such denial of information about the military could also be a contributing factor to various speculations surrounding the SSR process...the Liberian public may simply be in need of some information, in the absence of which they are left to speculate.

Article VIII of the CPA deals with the restructuring of the Liberian National Police (LNP) and other security services. The article calls for an immediate restructuring of the National Police Force, the Immigration Force, Special Security Service (SSS), custom security guards and such other statutory security units. It goes on to urge the restructured security forces to adopt a professional orientation that emphasizes democratic values and respect for human rights, a non-partisan approach to duty and the avoidance of corrupt practices.

Of particular importance is the decision to disarm and disband the Special Security Units that were infamous during the civil war in terrorising citizens, such as Charles Taylor's Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), the Special Operations Division (SOD) of the Liberian National Police Force and such paramilitary groups that operated within organisations as the National Ports Authority (NPA), the Liberian Telecommunications Corporation (NTC), the Liberian Refining Corporation (LPRC) and the Airports.

Until the deployment of the newly trained national police, maintenance of law and order throughout Liberia was the responsibility of an interim police force and the United Nations Civil Police components (UNCIVPOL), an arrangement under which the interim

police force would only be allowed to carry side arms while large calibre weapons would be turned over to the International Stabilisation Force (ISF).

In this regard therefore, the reform and restructuring of the police and other law enforcement agencies is a cooperative effort based on the CPA. In May 2004, UNMIL and the Transitional Government jointly kicked off the first recruitment campaign aimed at creating a new 3,500–strong police force.⁹⁸ The Police Academy in Paynesville, Monrovia was subsequently reopened after refurbishment. The first batch of police training involved 1,633 officers, both veteran and new. In April 2006, the LNP and UNMIL re-launched a campaign across the country to recruit the remaining number of about 1,400 personnel. According to a member of the Police Support Unit (PSU), until recently, the general public perceived the police force as an organisation notorious for torture, brutality and illegal arrests.⁹⁹ This has made most people apprehensive of the police and other security organs of the government, an aspect that makes recruitment of new officers hard. In an effort to enhance public awareness on the merits of the new police and hence attract new recruits, LNP recruitment mobile teams go around accessible trading centres and door to door in order to appeal to eligible men and women to join the force.¹⁰⁰ They also use flyers, posters and banners.

By the standards of an ordinary Liberian, the newly trained officers earn more what is comparatively considered to be more attractive salary and incentives than in the past. New officers, as at June 2007, were earning on average \$90 per month (up from an average of \$20 per month), with more chances for further training abroad, as well as the possibility of joining a UN peacekeeping missions in other countries. In what appears to be an attempt to attract university students, the incentives also include a possibility of accrediting the police academy to the university of Liberia. In an open acknowledgement of the difficulty of attracting new recruits to the police, the LNP Director, Beatrice Sieh, the first chief of police in the history of Liberia, stated that the police have remained unattractive to the public due to two factors: low salary and incentives, and the negative perceptions of the police as a result of its role in the civil war.¹⁰¹

In terms of gender, the recruitment drive has always aimed at attracting more women, but this has only managed to achieve dismal results. Among the 1,633 officers that had been trained by June 2007, only 87 of them were women.¹⁰²

6.5 Community Arms Collection and Development

The Liberian Community Arms Collection for Development (CACD) project was initiated in January 2006 and was coordinated by UNDP. The pilot phase of the programme operated as a preparatory assistance phase of the UNDP within the

⁹⁸ Maenda, Y., “Police Recruitment Drive Re-Launched,” *UNMIL FOCUS*, Vol.2, No. 03, March – May, 2006.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁰ Author interview with officers of the Police Support Unit at the Police Academy, Paynesville, Monrovia, 22 May 2007.

¹⁰¹ Maenda, “Police Recruitment Drive Re-Launched”, p. 19.

¹⁰² *Ibid*.

framework of the Recovery and Reintegration Programme, and it ended in June 2006. CACD was a key activity under the community participation strategy and it covered just four chiefdoms during the preparatory assistance phase.

The main objective of the programme was to help in reducing the number of small arms circulating in civilian hands. To achieve this, the programme used development incentives, education and awareness campaigns as well as capacity building of the Liberian National Police (LNP), the National Commission on Small Arms and the Liberia Action on Small Arms (LANSA).

After the pilot phase, CACD's objectives were expanded to the rest of the country, channeled through the District Development Committees (DDCs), which are trained by the UNDP community Based Recovery (CBR) programme to initiate voluntary weapons collection schemes in which the communities hand over arms in exchange for community-focused projects of their choice such as clinics, schools, agro-processing machines, solar energy, food and banks.¹⁰³ CACD, alternately referred to as Arms for Development Programme (AfD), in its objectives elaborated in February 2007, envisaged putting into place a more robust process of arms collection whereby Project Management Committees (PMC) and DDCs would be charged with the management of the incentive projects among other tasks such as sensitizing community residents (through such offers as free-pay radios, etc.) in the process of identification, designing and prioritizing of their needs and formulation of programmes in collaboration with local authorities and the civil society.¹⁰⁴

Its aim is to promote the county's national recovery efforts through measures for the restoration of civil authorities and governance structures, resettlement and voluntary repatriation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees as well as war affected population within the framework of the 4Rs (Reconciliation, Reform, Rebuilding and Recovery) process being developed by the UNDP and the UNHCR as well as other agencies.¹⁰⁵ The campaign is conducted by UNDP and its partners, and reaches Liberians of all ages and backgrounds. One of the key messages of the campaign is that "security first" will move Liberia forward towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

CACAD's success has largely depended on public awareness and education campaign on the dangers of small arms and light weapons and its first initiatives begun in Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh and Bong counties where, in addition to running campaigns to educate the public on the dangers of small arms, UNDP helped to establish District Development Committees (DDCs) which comprised government officials, civil-society representatives and private individuals. DDCs' role is to gather information on local arms

¹⁰³ Yankah Kojo, *The Dangers of Small Arms in Liberia: A National Awareness Campaign Strategy*, UNDP Liberia: Small Arms Control Programme, 2007, p.5.

¹⁰⁴ Author interview with the staff of UNDP Community Based Recovery programme, Kakata, 17 May 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Harsch, E., "Communities Mobilize to Protect Liberian Peace," *Africa Renewal*, Vol.19 no. 4, January 2006.

caches and alert the police and UNMIL to collect them.¹⁰⁶ According to the programme, once the weapons have been gathered, the police certify that the district is weapons free and then the DDC approaches UNDP with its priority needs. UNDP, following analysis of the needs (such as health clinics, sports fields and rural feeder roads), provides the technical support necessary for these projects. In order to ensure that the district remains weapons free, the programme endeavours to promote community policing to supplement the efforts of the national police. Community policing includes training elders, youths, women and other residents in basic intelligence skills. This helps the community to detect arms entering or passing through the district.¹⁰⁷ The Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in the process of establishing a National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA) to continue with the process of public awareness and collection of arms.

6.6 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Liberia's TRC was created by an act of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly On May 12, 2005, and was officially launched in June 2006 to start a two-year mandate to investigate human rights abuses that occurred between 1979 and 2003, when the CPA was signed.¹⁰⁸ Article XIII of the CPA calls for the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission that would provide a forum that will address issues of impunity, as well as an opportunity for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences, in order to get a clear picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation. Under the CPA provisions, the nine commissioner and seven representative-panel Commission, would, among other things, investigate gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law as well as abuses that occurred, including massacres, sexual violations, murder, extra-judicial killings and economic crimes, such as the exploitation of natural or public resources to perpetuate armed conflicts, during the period January 1979 to October 14, 2003. According to the staff of the TRC, the inception of the TRC marked a potentially crucial milestone in Liberia's transition-from a period of despair to a time of healing and hope.¹⁰⁹

At the time of this research, outreach and awareness campaigns were underway, calling for widespread participation from all members of the society. In an effort to make the process more inclusive, the Commission's awareness campaigns were extended to America. The aim of the TRC is to hear the truth from as many victims and perpetrators as possible. It is expected that at the end of its work the Commission will emerge with recommendations on institutional reforms, advocate the prosecution of certain crimes, and establishment of a firm record of the atrocities that took place.¹¹⁰ Although the TRC's mandate covers the period ranging from 1979 to 2003, it is also authorized to look more deeply into Liberian history to uncover and analyze social divisions, economic disparities, and other factors that may have contributed to the recent conflict.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Editorial, "Welcome, TRC." at:http://www.analystliberia.com/editorial_welcome_trc.html, accessed on 20 July 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Author interview with the staff of the TRC, Monrovia, 15 May, 2007. Also see *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The TRC envisages conducting investigations within its two-year mandate, and at the end of it has three months to produce a comprehensive final report, detailing its findings, conclusions, and recommendations. An apparent challenge highlighted by the commissioners of the TRC is that of reconciling the objectives of the TRC and the traditional justice system. If, for instance, a perpetrator has already been reconciled with his/her victim under the traditional justice set up and yet the evidence gathered by the commissioners reveals that the perpetrator has a case to answer; would it be wise that such a perpetrator be charged again? The TRC does not have an immediate answer to such circumstances and hopes that the government's judicial system will be able to address such situations favourably when the time comes.¹¹¹

An operational challenge confronting the TRC is that of funding. The TRC's total planned budget is US \$10 million, of which US \$2.3 million is to be spent on the preparatory phase. Although the Commission was yet to embark on the country endeavour of collecting statements as at June 2007, it was already financially constrained to an extent of organizing only moderate outreach activities. In April 2007, UNDP offered support to the TRC at the tune of US \$600,000.¹¹²

6.7 Regional Sensitivity of the Programme

The implementation of the Liberian DDR programme, through its integrated approach, has taken into consideration the realities of the West African conflict system, thereby accommodating foreign combatants. This is in line with the UNDP Mano River initiatives that provide a regional framework for co-operation.¹¹³ In addition from an operational perspective, the International Committee of the Red Cross in close collaboration with the UNHCR will need to be contacted to assist in the repatriation of such categories of ex-combatants including those who moved across national boundaries in search of refuge. The success for a regional initiative is in the development of a common legislative framework, the existence of country specific programme support for the target population, the deployment of enforcement capability to avert recycling of ex-combatants, and the establishment of a centralized database to facilitate information exchange.

7. Lessons Learned

While recognising that the DDR programme in Liberia has had a substantially positive impact on the society. It contributed towards reducing the likelihood of the society to relapse into conflict by collecting arms from the public. It therefore established a conducive atmosphere in which the new democracy can begin to thrive. The basic lesson drawn from the process DDR process is that the planners of the DDR programme either did not anticipate the desperation of the post-conflict community in formulating the

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Maenda, "Police Recruitment Drive Re-Launched," *ibid.*

¹¹³ See Report on the Mano River Union Peace Forum Inauguration February 7th 2004.

http://www.international-alert.org/pdfs/report_on_mru_forum_inauguration.pdf, 20 February 2007.

DDRR strategy or they did not sufficiently address certain fundamental realities of the community. There was a lack of a consideration of the aggravating poverty situation resulting from the long years of war and illiteracy since most ex-combatants grew up in war hence lack basic education. There was also a problem in terms of the inaccessibility of most counties due to collapsed infrastructure and a virtually non-existent national economic base among other issues. These factors affected the DDRR process in the following ways:

- When the DDRR process was launched in 2003, the disarmament package and the safety net allowances offered to ex-combatants dramatically attracted a large section of the society, from an estimated number from 38,000 to 103,000. People were simply attracted by the money that was available in exchange for weapons. This affected the process, bloating the caseload and bringing it to an abrupt halt from December 2003 to April 2004.
- Once a person met the criteria of DDR, one was automatically classified as “ex-combatant” and was issued with a DDRR identification card regardless of whether one was truly a combatant during the civil war. This resulted in lack of adequate training institutions that could absorb ex-combatants has created, in certain cases long waiting periods between the DD stage and the RR stage. In certain cases ex-combatants have waited for between 6 months to 2 years before starting training. In the process some ex-combatants have given up hope and sought alternative means of survival.
- Most counties are not accessible by road and are therefore un-attractive to most ex-combatants who prefer to be reintegrated back into their counties. Although UNMIL is currently trying to re-open roads to some of the counties, the reality is that very few ex-combatants really wish to establish their businesses in remote areas without assured markets. The result is that most ex-combatants opt to be integrated in Montserrado County, in which Monrovia is situated. This has resulted in an overstretching of social amenities, increased crime and related social ills in Monrovia. The table below shows ex-combatants preferred counties of integration in 2004. By 2006 the ex-combatants’ preference for Montserrado had risen to over 50%.

Preferred Counties of Resettlement		
County Name	%	No.
Bomi	7.36	2936
Bong	16.75	6686
Gparbolu	3.26	1299
Grand Bassa	5.26	2100
Grand Cape mount	2.97	1184
Grand Gedeh	0.84	337
Grand Kru	0.04	17
Lofa	6.64	2648

Margibi 2762	6.92	
Maryland	0.35	140
Montserrado	45.66	18222
Nimba	1.87	745
River Cess	0.87	347
River Gee	0.1	39
Sinoe	0.62	247
Total		39709

These figures are based on entries made as of 25 June 2004. At the time of this research, the JIU was updating the data, but the trend reflected a similar pattern.

- Of the 74 ex-combatants in their final stage of training, who formed a focus group during this research, 63% of them indicated their wish to reintegrate in Montserrado County, with only 11% and 6% expressing willingness to reintegrate in Bong and Margibi Counties respectively. This depicts insufficient preparation by NCDDR and other stakeholders, for the reintegration of ex-combatants back into their communities. The other 14 counties were not made attractive enough to ex-combatants. These could have been achieved for instance through initiation of community-based projects.
- Currently, information on the percentage of ex-combatants that are unemployed after the DDRR process and the number of ex-combatants that have returned to their communities how many had returned to their home communities (counties) regardless of whether they are employed is lacking within NCDDR. This needs to be further evaluated in order to effectively assess the success of the DDRR process.
- The communities of return were not directly catered for in the DDRR planning. However, the response of the communities to the returning ex-combatants was generally positive and rarely did the ex-combatants face resistance. On the contrary, it was the ex-combatants that showed apprehension in certain cases. Although the communities had some reservations about the ex-combatants, they felt obliged to accept the returnees, fearing that the ex-combatants, if left alone would cause a relapse in conflict. The communities took it upon themselves with peace as it also entailed reaccepting their sons and daughters. Thus the process was generally acceptable. Lack of sufficient resources for the RR phase of the process impacts negatively on the sustainability of the individual's long-term reintegration into the community. While disarmament and demobilisation are fairly easier to achieve quickly, rehabilitation and reintegration need a much longer-term commitment. Reintegration faces a number of challenges, ranging from the need for long term planning and support, to the need to involve not only ex-combatants, but also the whole community. Reintegration calls for an

integrated, country-specific approach that takes into consideration the realities of that specific society.

8. General Observations Emerging from the Study

The following observations were most apparent in the course of the research.

- Subsistence allowances for ex-combatants undergoing RR were delayed with consequences for consolidating peacebuilding in the country.
- Turnaround time for issuing toolkits following graduation took an inordinate amount of time, several months in some cases.
- The DDRR process, apart from stopping the open conflict and reducing its chances of recurring, has yet registered large scale direct positive impact to the general community. No direct community-based projects were catered for with the aim of improving the economic and social wellbeing of the communities. This has led to ex-combatants overcrowding in Monrovia.
- A considerable number of ex-combatants sell their toolkits or pawn them on receiving them.
- The graduates are appreciative of the training they have received although they believed the training period was too short given that several of them were yet to learn how to write, read and manage their own businesses.
- It was clear that the programme was providing beneficiaries with marketable skills but within the context of high unemployment in the country. There was little opportunity for them to apply these skills due to lack of capital, limited markets (due to low purchasing power of the general public and overcrowding of similar skills such as carpentry, hairdressing and tailoring) within given locations.
- DDRR beneficiaries do not seem to be worse off than the rest of the population with an average earning of more than US \$ 2 per day. In several families, due to rampant joblessness, a family member qualifying for DDRR meant that he/she became the bread winner of the family, as all the siblings looked forward to being sustained by the monthly stipend of US \$ 30 that the individual was paid during the training. In cases where the individual graduated and was issues with a reinsertion kit the pressure to fend for one's family led one to sell off the kit immediately after graduation, only to find oneself back at the beginning.
- The majority of beneficiaries were easily reaccepted back into their communities, with very few and isolated cases of resentment. This is not to mean that the ex-combatants did not commit atrocities against their own communities, but, according to the TRC commissioners, the long period of war left most Liberians too weary and fatigued, and "...therefore every one is ready to accept peace, in whichever way that may guarantee it."¹¹⁴ This has made reintegration process much easier. There is a small but significant group of ex-combatants that still spends their free time with their friends from the war their own.

¹¹⁴ Author interview with the TRC commissioners, Monrovia, 15 May 2007.

- The main aim of SSR is essentially to ensure that the government of Liberia provides for the security of its people and that it does so with sensitivity to the plight of all in the society in order to prevent situations where the deactivated forces as well as ex-combatants will feel disenfranchised. A situation similar to that being pushed by “Combined Forces,” could bear precariously to the newly established peace in the country. It is, however understandable, that in the majority of developing countries whose security structures have been wrecked by conflict, governments have to make far-reaching political decisions with scarce resources, hence being constrained from allocating sufficient resources to SSR processes. The degree to which SSR reform is dependent on three main factors, the first being the nature of the political system. Democratic regimes are more receptive in terms of SSR processes than authoritarian ones, which in the real sense hardly undertake democratic reform of their security systems. The second factor is the political leadership. Given that the ideals of a democracy provide for personal choice, SSR is equally an issue of possibility and not inevitability. In this regard therefore, it is important that at least some members of the executive should demonstrate support for the process for it to be effectively implemented. The third factor is that of capacity to design, manage and implement SSR. Capacity entails knowledge, expertise and skills, as well as resources such as funds and equipment).¹¹⁵ In situations where the three factors are not adequately met, problems are likely to arise.

The Liberian SSR policy that completely bans reintegration of former combatants into the new military has led to some disgruntlement to former fighters, most of who have not been paid considerable outstanding allowances, pension as well as salaries in arrears. These include 4,500 retirees who served in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) before 1990; 9,400 ‘draftees’ (former AFL who served in the post 1990 era) and the other ex-combatants who failed to join the DDRR process for various reasons. All these groups, including returning refugees as well as IDPs, are concentrated in Monrovia. This mix presents a precarious security situation to Monrovia and its surroundings. Incidences of theft and armed violence are increasingly becoming common, as are demonstrations by members of the deactivated forces, such as those of “Combined Forces.” These activities are prevalent in areas where UNMIL presence is not consistent.

- The sustainability and success of the AfD programme and the awareness raising strategy depend largely on the ability of the government of Liberia, the United Nations system, the civil society and quite importantly support by the international community at two major levels; one being in terms of funding and the other regards the need for the countries neighboring Liberia to show the willingness to strengthen their border control mechanisms so as to ensure that the problem of illicit transfer of arms across national borders is restrained. Although there is a feeling that the threat posed by illicit small arms to the peace and stability of Liberian community has lessened, violent crimes in which arms are

¹¹⁵ Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*, p. 11.

used are still very prevalent. During the focus group discussions, the main sources of conflict within the Liberian communities were said to be: (a) bad leadership/corruption (b) crime/lawlessness/ (c) Land (d) unemployment/idleness/youth dissatisfaction. Of least concern to the sample of ex-combatants were the illegal possession of firearms and the reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees.

Conclusion

Besides the hurdles facing the Liberian DDRR process, there is strong evidence that the programme has indeed enabled a much better life for those ex-combatants who have completed their programme of training when compared to those former fighters who chose not to register and to reintegrate. In almost every sub-facet of the dimensions of reintegration (social, economic, and political), the DDRR programme graduates are at least managing to cope amidst the prevailing challenges.

The assessment of the impact of the DDRR programme on the Liberian community in general is based on the principal that in designing specific components for the DDR of ex-combatants, general parameters such as the target group's socio-economic stability, the welfare of the communities of return and existing potentials or opportunities for successful reintegration in the preferred area of settlement are of crucial concern in ensuring sustainable human security. Based on this, the research has evaluated the DDRR planning and process in Liberia with a view to establishing whether these factors were considered. The findings of this research are based on these objectives. Recommendations have been systematically incorporated in the body of the paper alongside the issues covered by the research.