

# VIGIE

STRATEGIC AND  
PROSPECTIVE  
ANALYSIS  
BULLETIN



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No 008 & 009 - 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Qua. 2020



## DDR

at the service of Unity,  
Peace and Stability



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A publication of the International School of Security Forces (EFORCES)

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**President of the Republic of Cameroon  
Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces  
Commander-in-Chief of Police Forces**



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Prime Minister, Head of Government



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# EDITORIAL

## VICTORIES OF LIVING TOGETHER



*Attentive to the evolution of the internal and external geopolitics of Cameroon, in general, and to the complex evolution of contemporary threats, in particular, the Strategic and Prospective Analysis Bulletin VIGIE of the EIFORCES, a tool of the public policy of security of Cameroon, finds its central theme articulated around the issue of Disarmament-Demobilisation-Reintegration*

**BG BITOTE André Patrice,  
Director General - EIFORCES**



(DDR) ongoing in the country. As desired and conceived by the President of the Republic and his Government, as one of the structuring paradigms of strengthening the unity, the return to peace and stability of the country, questioned by the security crises which shake the Far North, North West and South West regions. It is an issue of simplifying and amplifying the understanding, both in theory and in praxis, through a resolutely didactic approach. An understanding, which is essential for collective ownership, guarantee of strategic and operational efficiency.

Appearing in a context dominated, moreover, by the Coronavirus pandemic, a global health crisis, whose impact in Cameroon is becoming more and more worrying, and to which the EIFORCES' Research and Documentation Centre could devote a specific analysis, this double edition (1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of the year 2020), emphasises unity, peace and stability. It thus echoes the appeal of President Paul Biya, Head of State, Head of the Armed Forces and Supreme Chief of the Police Force who, during his address to the Nation, on May 19, 2020, invited his compatriots, to stay a "united, consolidated and disciplined people" and the "sacred union" against the Coronavirus pandemic. Moreover, as he observed, in a completely different context, "nothing [can] stop Cameroon! Together, we will take up all the challenges and continue to move forward, towards new victories".

*Victories of Living Together*

## OPENING REMARKS TO THE FILE

### WE ALL ARE, "BEGGARS FOR PEACE"

22 September 2017 in New York, from the top of the United Nations tribune, on the sidelines of the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) under the theme: "Priority to the human being: peace and decent life for all on a preserved planet", the Cameroonian President Paul Biya, reminded the entire international community that "for Cameroon, as for most of our States, peace is a sine qua non for the survival of humanity and all sustainable development. This peace remains dangerously threatened, in particular by terrorism, conflicts, poverty and climate change. Today we are all; I would say "beggars for peace". In addition, these persistent threats challenge us all at the highest level. "



**Pr Wullson MVOMO ELA**

Head of the Research and Documentation Centre of the EIFORCES

Through this inquiry, the Head of State echoed a global context disturbed by the multiplication of hotbeds of tension, in particular violent extremism and terrorism, the dramatic consequences of which do not spare any continent, no country. Indeed, and with regard to the geopolitics of Cameroon, it has been marked in its security dimension, in recent years, by the coalescence of jihadist terrorism by Boko Haram in the Far North region, located in the interloped and critical area of the Lake Chad Basin; and insurgent and separatist terrorism, in the English-speaking regions of the North West and South West. Which constitute a tangible threat to the stability of Cameroon and the Sub-Region.

Cameroon, the center of regional geopolitics of Central Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, is indeed

identified and recognised, as much by its history as a pupil of the international community (LON: 1919-1945; UN: 1945-1960) through the 'International Trusteeship, only by its capacities and devices of action and strategic and operational training, as a pole of peace, security and stability.

The creation of a National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) , by Decree n ° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 of the Head of State, constitutes a strong measure emergence from the crises mentioned above, which comes to add to others. It undoubtedly reflects the political will and commitment of Cameroon and its Leader in favour of peace, a national, regional and international "public good". This sovereign initiative of the Cameroonian Government therefore aims, in a republican and transitional approach, without waiting for an ad hoc resolution from the United Nations Security Council, to "supervise and manage the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions wishing to respond favourably to the peace offer of the Head of the State by laying down their arms".

By being part of a holistic political-strategic-operational continuum, the effectiveness of the ongoing DDR process is based on the categorical imperative that, for the efficiency of this option, the obedience and ownership by the population and local administrations. This is all the more so since the said option targets the satisfaction of political, socio-economic and human needs for a return to republican civility, social and national cohesion and lasting peace in Cameroon. The ongoing strengthening of the Army-Nation link and the

Police-Population partnership is one of the constants of Cameroon's defence and security policy.

Located at the intersection of public policies, now under the leadership of decentralised local authorities, this transitional approach to return to social peace, national cohesion, and therefore stability, imposes on the different segments of State action, the constraints coordination, complementarity and consistency, essential for responsible public governance.

It is indeed on the conceptual, strategic and operational effectiveness of DDR that its credibility, its incentive capacity depends, to lead the irredentists towards the healthy path of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. And their return to republican civility, their commitment to the service of unity, peace and stability, categorical and socio-historical imperatives for the consolidation of a prosperous and sovereign Cameroon, an essential player on the regional and international scene.

To account for this, the topic offered by this double edition of VIGIE (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters for the year 2020), respectful of the cumulative nature of the social sciences, of the theoretical and praxiological perspective of the area studies, whose classical and human security asserts itself as one of the most relevant fields, associates academics of diverse academic backgrounds, of the institutional actors concerned, in particular of the National DDR Committee, of Yaoundé, Bamenda, Buea and of Mora, from a collective perspective of prospective-evaluation, with regard to the efforts accomplished and the efforts to be accomplished. The idea is to make all Cameroonians "beggars for peace".



Cameroon

## EIFORCES IN BRIEF



### EIFORCES

The EIFORCES is a Published administrative institution under Cameroonian law, with legal personality and financial autonomy.

### Location

Headquarter: Yaounde / Ngousso

### Institutional texts

Decree No 2008/179 of May 22, 2008 establishing the EIFORCES;

Decree No 2012/307 of 25 June 2012 on the organisation and functioning of the EIFORCES.

### Missions

Providing **training and facilitating research** in the areas of Security and Peace Support

### Structure

**A Board of Directors chaired by the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Defence.**

**Members :** the Minister of External Relations, the Secretary of State for Defense in charge of the National Gendarmerie, the Delegate General for National Security, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of the Economy, the Divisional Officer of Mefou and Afamba, the Representatives of partner countries (China, the United States, France and Japan) and organisations (UN, European Union, African Union, ECCAS, etc.).

**General Management:** Headed by a Director General working with an Assistant Director, Technical Advisors, Directors, Heads of Divisions ...

**And Advisory bodies.**

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS

### Countries



China



United States



France



Japan

### Organisations



United Nations



African Union



European Union



ECCAS

### Others



## TYPES OF TRAINING

### Specific Peacekeeping

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individual UN police officers;             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of civilians;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Protection of vulnerable groups;</li> <li>• Negotiation and mediation;</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender training;</li> <li>• The fight against sexual abuse;</li> <li>• The fight against terrorism.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### Fundamental Security Training

#### Public Order

- Formed Police Units Training;
- Training of Trainers in Public order;
- Advanced Training in Operational Commanders;
- Protection of High Dignitaries;
- Neutralisation / Destruction of Explosive Devices;
- Security Unit Commander Training Course (SCUS).

#### Judicial Police

- Mobilisable Teams of Investigation Experts;
- Command of Operational Units ;
  - Accompanying Police;
- Security Unit Commander Training Course (SCUS).

### Higher Security Training

#### Operational level :

Security Forces Staff Diploma (DEMFS)

#### Strategic level :

Higher Security Studies Degree (BESS)  
+  
Master in International Security

**EIFORCES:** «*A tool at the service of Peace and Security on the African Continent*»



## THE EIFORCES ON AN INTERNAL FILED TRIP IN THE SOUTHERN REGION (CAMEROON)

*The sixth batch of the Higher Diploma of Security Studies carried out a field trip in the South region of Cameroon, from 2 to 8 December 2019 under the leadership of Brigadier General BITOTE André Patrice, Director General of the EIFORCES.*

*Initially registered as part of the training program of the International School for Security Forces, the field trip made by these auditors of the 6<sup>th</sup> Higher Diploma for Security Studies (BESS) in the Southern region, aimed at letting student officers and senior police officers from 6 African nationalities to discover Cameroon, the host country, both its political, economic and cultural realities and specificities as well as its security structures, to get the most out of it.*

Composed of around fifty participants and organised on the theme: "Interministerial crisis management", this field trip aimed at the following three educational objectives :

- Allow the trainees to have a good vision of the operational capacities of the Cameroonian defence and security forces and therefore compare the theoretical knowledge acquired with the realities on the ground;
- Know the major challenges and opportunities of Cameroonian companies contributing to the "security" function to measure their economic impact and their vulnerabilities from a strategic, political and operational point of view;
- Discover and appreciate the cultural diversity of the Southern region.

Various meetings with local civil and military administrative authorities were initiated, ranging from simple courtesy visits to those closely linked to educational activities proper.

In this order:

The Governor of the South Region interviewed the auditors on the "role of the administrative authority in crisis management" ;

- The State Council of seant made a presentation on the "role of the prosecution in times of peace and crisis";
- The Regional Delegate of the Penitentiary Administration of the South discussed the "role of the Delegation of Penitentiary Administration of the South Region in the context of internal security";
- Madame the Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife strived to present the strategy

for managing forests and wildlife for sustainable development;

- The Heads of Customs South 1 (Ebolowa) and South 2 (Kribi) interviewed the auditors on the actions and activities of the customs, which make the Customs Forces one of the privileged actors of internal and external security.

After a stopover at the hotel of the D.O's office of the Division of the Valley of NTEM in Ambam and at the SDO's office of the Ma'an sub-division, the EIFORCES delegation met with the Sub Divisional Officer of the Kyé-ossi Sub-division to get to know the specificities of the cosmopolitan city of Kyé-ossi in terms of border management and in particular the contradictions it carries on a daily basis.

On a whole other level, visits to the structures of the local defence and security forces formed the heart of the field trip insofar as it was necessarily a question of globally examining the contributions of each force to the maintenance of order, in matters of peace and security in this Region. The following were visited repeatedly,

- The Regional Delegation for National Security of the South (DRSN) presented by the person in charge as being an institution for coordination, animation, management and command of the National Security services established within the Region;
- The Eleventh Motorised Infantry Brigade (11<sup>th</sup> MIB) set up to respond to new threats and address the various concerns of securing the three borders, structuring projects and economic activities in the Region;
- The Southern Gendarmerie Legion, whose role in the region's security system contributes to the great security mission of the State;

## News on EIFORCES

April 2018 - May 2020

- The Military Sector number 7 (SM7) which plays the role of support to the teams and units established in the Region;
- The Command Post of the 13<sup>th</sup> Motorised Infantry Battalion was visited and its operational aims in the surveillance action zone in the border zone;
- The Naval Base of Kribi particularly caught the attention of the auditors of the 6<sup>th</sup> Diploma of the EIFORCES in that it ensures the sovereignty of the State at sea in its area of competence, by means of advanced technical and technological equipment such as the Floating Dock and the Maritime Operations Centre (AIS quick filter, Time Zero and Marine Traffic);
- The BIR Forces of the Coast of Kribi, which constitutes a force for securing structuring economic projects and commercial activities in Cameroonian waters, was combed through.

This week-long field trip made it possible to visit other strategic local structures, thus being visited on major structuring projects nearing completion and other key economic structures. Regarding strategic structuring projects, the auditors were also led to visit :

- The MEMVE'ELE Hydroelectric Dam site, whose construction project began on 31 December 2012 and ended on 30 June 2017, is capable of producing 211 megawatts;
- The Mékin dam site, which strategically constitutes an energy intervention reserve in Cameroon, with a production capacity of 15 megawatts, is able to cover the entire extent of the Greater South Cameroon region.

As for the economic structures of the Region, the auditors were entitled to visit the following semi-public companies :

- The autonomous

port of Kribi, transshipment and transit port, implemented since 2016, impressive by its technical data: 16 meters deep, 26,000 hectares, 03 major dealers of various nationalities (Chinese, French, etc.), 03 storyteller terminals , 03 multipurpose terminals managed by a network, specialised terminals (oil, mining and gold), barracks for firefighters, a naval base (Kribi), a wood park;

The visit of the rubber production company, HEVECAM to Niété-Kribesse was of an interesting curiosity in the idea of learning that it had embarked on a policy of regeneration of the plantations of the Niété concession, as well as the extension of these on the Bissiang and Elogbtinti sites , for a production of 16,013 tonnes in plantation and 20,340 tonnes in the factory since 2018;

The transition to HEVECAM-SUD (Mékin-Meyomessala), a subsidiary of HEVECAM Kribi, has shown this other structure in full growth.

Led by the BG, DG / EIFORCES, the internal field trip of the BESS 6 in the South Region in Cameroon effectively enabled the auditors to combine the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom with that presented in the field.



A stop at the office of the Governor of the Southern Region in Ebolowa

## OPERATIONAL LEVEL PLANNING COURSE AT KAIPTC IN ACCRA.

*From 9 to 20 March 2020, Lieutenant-Colonel SAME NKELLE Auguste Piccard, Technical and Logistics Director of the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES), among Eighteen (18) officers from fifteen (15) African nationalities, underwent training organised by the KAIPTC in ACCRA in Ghana under the theme "operational level planning course".*

The aim of this internship was to give participants

the tools they need to be able to organise a task force command post, use the Global Method of Operational Planning (MGPO) in a decision-making process, demonstrate a deeper knowledge of operational planning through 2 application exercises and improve their time planning capacities in time constraint.

The operational planning subtleties having been better understood by the trainees who took part in this training, they only have to participate in the popularisation of the knowledge acquired in their respective countries.

## TICAD 7: THE EIFORCES HONORED.

*By taking part in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tokyo International Conference for African Development, within the Cameroonian delegation the EIFORCES saw itself being honored during this great event of demonstration of the Japanese-African friendship.*

From 28 to 30 August 2019, Brigadier General, André Patrice BITOTE Director General of the EIFORCES, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel NJOYA MOUTAPBEMO Mannoni Thierry, joined his voice to that of the delegation of Cameroon to echo of our country in this important international base. One of the

immediate benefits of this great meeting between Japan and African countries on development issues was the announcement of the funding from Japan of a training and infrastructure development project worth USD 230,000, whose execution is between May 2020 and April 2021.



High-level participation at TICAD 2019 in Yokohama, Japan

One more attention from Japan, this privileged partner who sits on the Board of Directors of the EIFORCES and which has distinguished itself in the past by significant contributions to the fulfillment of statutory training and research missions, as well as to the infrastructural development of this international school for security forces. To date, three partnership agreements and ad hoc projects have helped train more than a thousand civilians, police and gendarmes in the field of peacekeeping; but also to support research in addition to the equipment of the School in latest generation didactic and pedagogical materials and tools.



# MISSION OF THE BRIGADIER GENERAL DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE EIFORCES IN MOROCCO.

*From 16 to 29 February 2020, the Brigadier General Director General of EIFORCES, accompanied by his collaborator from the cooperation service, carried out an important mission to the Kingdom of Morocco. This mission was articulated in 3 stages with educational connotations and exchanges of best practices, took place under the preparation and the protocol guidance of the Captain, defence attaché at the Embassy of Cameroon in the Kingdom of Morocco*

The first stage of this tour devoted to the 2nd session of the Pan-African Academy for Interregional Cooperation (APACI) organised by the African Centre for Training and Administrative Research for Development (CAFRAD), enabled the Director General of EIFORCES to speak as a speaker on the theme "Security governance and globalisation". The main objective of this contribution was to highlight the link that closely exists between security governance and globalisation. In an interactive approach, participants from several nationalities showed a real interest in this theme through numerous questions and contributions.

The second stage, reserved for the visit of the Royal Academy of MEKNES, on 26 February 2020, enabled the Brigadier General Director General of the EIFORCES to assess the training system of officers in use within this renowned Military Academy. At the end of a working session with the Major General ETTAIK, Commander of the ARM and his close collaborators, a site visit enabled various demonstrations and presentations in workshops made by junior officer of the first, second and third year and among them Cameroonians to be done. On this occasion, two shooting ranges of advanced technology as well as a high level sports complex were also visited.

The presentation of the EIFORCES by its Director General did not leave the Major General, Commander of the ARM, indifferent. The latter promptly expressed the wish to see mutually beneficial cooperation develop, focusing on various partnerships and educational exchanges of programs between the two institutions, particularly with regard to training in the fight against improvised explosive devices.

The third table, articulated around the visit to the Royal School of Gendarmerie Officers (EROG), permitted exchanges focused on cooperation opportunities between EIFORCES and EROG in the field of training.

Colonel Major BENRANDAM, Director of EROG surrounded by his close collaborators and Brigadier General BITOTE André Patrice, Director General of EIFORCES, met around a working session during which a presentation of the missions and EROG activities were done as well as a brief presentation of EIFORCES. Three trainee officers from this school of Application gave a presentation on the occasion: "public liberty in the face of the action of the police" in a logic of reconciling both the requirements and the necessities of the two precepts to ensure public order and to guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms recognised by international law.

The visit ended with an exchange of gifts between the two heads of institutions and the signing of the guest book by the Director General of EIFORCES, shortly after the visit to the school site.



Exchange of gifts between Brigadier General BITOTE DG EIFORCES and Major General ETTAIK, Commander the ARM

## BALANCE SHEET OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2019.

*In 2019, the achievements of the Department of Studies revolve around two axes: higher education and basic education.*

### Higher Education :

- The 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Higher Diploma of Security Studies (5<sup>th</sup> BESS) started on 12 November 2018 with a staff of 15 trainees, of three nationalities, namely, Cameroon, Congo and Mali. It carried out an external mission to Gabon and Japan, from 24 May to 10 June 2019;
- The 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Senior Staff Certificate for Security Forces (8<sup>th</sup> DEMFS) began on 18 March 2019 with a staff of 17 trainees of four nationalities, namely, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Niger and Togo. It has carried out a joint study mission to Gabon with the 5<sup>th</sup> BESS;
- Effective return of the 6<sup>th</sup> BESS took place on 30 September 2019 with a staff of 27 trainees from Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Benin and Niger. The training activities are proceeding normally.
- With the support of Japan / UNDP as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> convention, EIFORCES organised a training in the pre-deployment of individual police officers as part of peacekeeping operations, from 18 February to 1 March 2019 on the EIFORCES campus at AWAÉ. This training was attended by 50 seminarians, police and gendarmes from Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, CAR and Chad.
- A seminar on raising awareness of the Security Sector Reform (RSS) for the trainees of the 5<sup>th</sup> BESS, in conjunction with the International War College (ESIG) of Yaoundé, was organised from 12 to 15 February 2019 at the ESIG campus in Yaoundé, with financial support from France.
- With financial support from the United Nations PBF, EIFORCES jointly train-the-trainer seminars aimed at building the capacities of actors and supporting peaceful electoral processes and





## News on EIFORCES

April 2018 - May 2020

social cohesion in Cameroon organised with UNDP, UNESCO and UNWOMEN (notably the FDS).

### Basic Education:

With the support of Japan / UNDP, EIFORCES organised :

- The training of a mixed Police-Gendarmerie Police Unit, from 2 January to 15 February 2019, with a staff of 118 trainees all of Cameroonian nationality.
- The capacity-building course for a female contingent of the Central African Security Forces, with a staff made up of 95 gendarmes and police elements in 03 sessions.

EIFORCES also organised with the support of France:

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> training course for Monitors in Operational Crossing (MFO 3) from 04 to 29 March 2019, with a staff of 19 trainees of 12 nationalities;
- The 15<sup>th</sup> level 2 Operational Command

Improvement course (PCO 2) took place from 08 to 29 April 2019. It was attended by 17 trainees from 13 countries;

- The 16<sup>th</sup> level 2 Operational Command Improvement course (PCO 2) took place from 17 June to 5 July 2019. It was attended by 17 trainees from 14 countries;
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> refresher course for Public Order Trainers from 23 September to 4 October 2019, saw the participation of 17 police trainees from 11 countries;
- The 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> trainings of trainers in Public Order, from 21 October to 13 December 2019, with the participation of 37 trainees from 15 countries.

EIFORCES co-organised:

- The training of 19 EIFORCES trainers in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from 07 to 18 October 2019.



Training in International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law

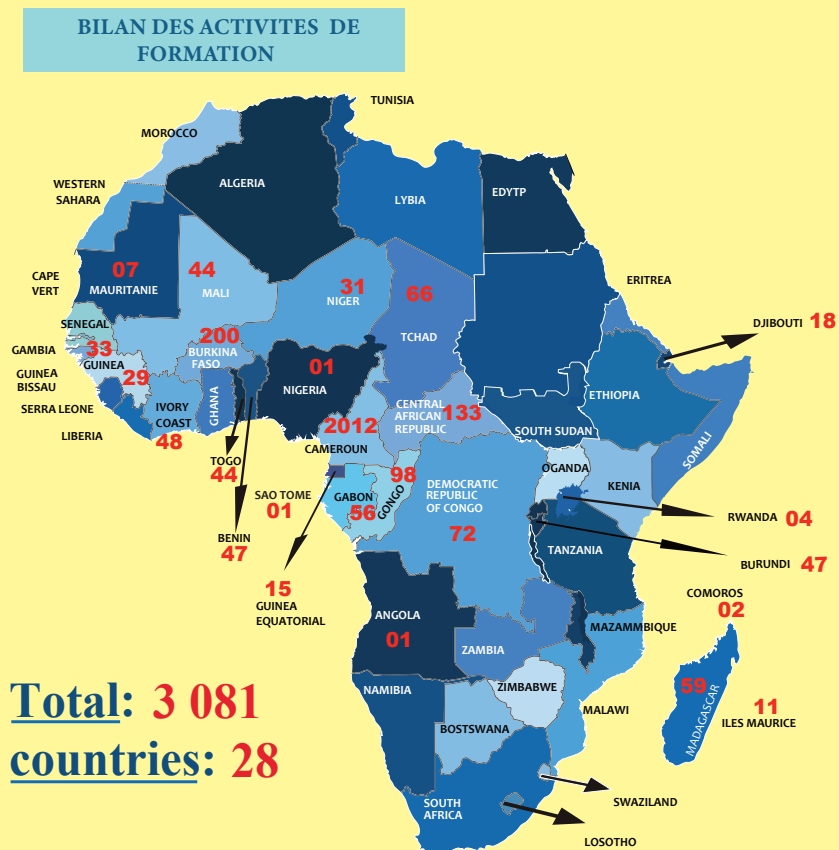
## News on EIFORCES

April 2018 - May 2020



From the creation of EIFORCES to the present day, 3081 personnel (civilians, gendarmes and police) from 28 African countries have been trained.

COUNTRIES	NBR
ANGOLA	1
BENIN	47
B.FASO	200
BURUNDI	47
CAMEROUN	2012
RCA	133
COMORES	2
CONGO	98
DJIBOUTI	18
RDC	72
EQ. GUINEA	15
GABON	56
GUINEE	29
COTE D'IVOIRE	48
MADAGASCAR	59
MALI	44
MAURITANIE	7
MAURICE	11
NIGER	31
NIGERIA	1
RWANDA	04
SAO TOME	1
SENEGAL	33
TCHAD	66
TOGO	44
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## BALANCE SHEET OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF THE EIFORCES

It is following these designs, that in 2019, the Research and Documentation Centre organised, a research seminar on the theme *"urban disorder and security challenges in Cameroon"* from 07-09 May 2019, in the Hall of Acts of the Douala urban council. This seminar comes after that organised, in partnership with Japan via the UNDP, on the theme *"The challenges and issues of cyber security and the fight against cyber criminality in Central Africa"*, in Douala from 04-08 December 2018.

With regard to publications, the Centre produced several situational analysis and an edition of the

African Journal of International Security on the theme *"Security issues in the Lake Chad Basin"*, on the sidelines of the research seminar organised, on 14 and 15 September 2018, in Maroua, on the eponymous theme.

Pursuing the aim of strengthening partnership and collaboration with other institutions in the field of research, the Research and Documentation Centre represented EIFORCES at the Regional Conference on the theme *"Rwanda's Journey Towards Sustainable Peace-25 Years"*, Organised by its Academy, in partnership with the Government of Japan, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in Kigali, Rwanda, from 19 to 20 September 2019;

"The positioning of modern Customs within the national and international defense and security community" also came up on this sub-theme at the World Conference on the theme: African perspectives on security challenges, organised by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) in Brussels, from 11 to 12 December 2019.

In addition, the Research and Documentation Centre took part in the second edition of the Paris Peace Forum from 11 to 13 November 2019, and from 18 to 19 November 2019, in the sixth edition of the Dakar

International Forum, on the theme *"Peace and Security in Africa: the current challenges of multilateralism"*.

On the university level, the Head of the CRD, on January 24, 2020, chaired the Doctoral Thesis Defence Jury on the theme: *"Beyond the paradigm of the global war on terror - the Sahelian case"*, presented by Mr. Jérôme Pignier, at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), in Paris-Sorbonne;

On a national level, executives from the EIFORCES Research and Documentation Centre took part in the Training of Trainers for Capacity Building in the Electoral Process, organised by EIFORCES, in partnership with the UNDP, in Mbalmayo, 15 to 17 October 2019. The CRD also took part in the 74<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day in Cameroon, at the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), in Yaoundé through a presentation on the theme *"Cameroon in the geopolitics and geostrategy of peacekeeping operations, retrospective and prospective approach"*.



Research seminar on the challenges and stakes of cyber security and the fight against cyber criminality in Central Africa organised by the EIFORCES with the support of Japan through the UNDP, in Douala, from 04- 08 December 2018.



## INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND RADIANCE.

*Since 2012, several bilateral and multilateral actors have supported the training, research and institutional capacity-building programs of the School. In addition to the United States, which regularly supported EIFORCES in the acquisition of training equipment, China, which also supported EIFORCES through the provision of vehicles and equipment, in 2019, bilateral cooperation has been strengthened.*

Indeed, Japan, through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has provided EIFORCES support in the acquisition of equipment, the financing of training and research activities like Training for a mixed FPU from Cameroon, from 2 January to 15 February 2019; the training of individual police officers of the UN and AU PKOs, from 18 February to 1 March 2019; three capacity-building sessions for the Internal Security Forces of the Central African Republic (UNDP), on 26 May 2019, from 8 to 26 July 2019, and from 28 August to 19 September 2019.

France places particular emphasis on several training courses carried out in collaboration with the Division of Basic Education of EIFORCES and expertise with the provision of two permanent technical advisers and ad hoc expert missions.

Cooperation with China has resulted in the participation of EIFORCES in the Information Workshop on the new manual of procedures for evaluating the missions of Individual Police Officers, at the LANGFANG Peacekeeping Training Centre in China.

Regarding multilateral cooperation, the installation of the Chief Superintendent, Assistant Director General of EIFORCES as Executive Secretary of APSTA on 14 August 2019, an institution on a continental scale bringing together African centres dedicated to training and research for peace support operations, remains a real diplomatic success for Cameroon.

As part of its cooperation with ECCAS, EIFORCES took part in the workshop seminar on capacity building in programming, budgeting and monitoring, organised in Douala, from 17 to 23 March 2019. In addition, as



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part of the cooperation with the United Nations / UNDP-UNESCO-UNWOMEN (Peace Building Fund-PBF), EIFORCES took part in capacity building of actors and support for peaceful electoral processes and Social cohesion in Cameroon, in Mbalmayo, Bertoua, Garoua, and Douala.

Within the framework of the Support Program for the Governance of Regional and National Infrastructures in Central Africa (PAGIRN), the European Union supported EIFORCES for training actions in matters of Road Safety for civilians, police and gendarmes. Cooperation in the field of International Humanitarian Law and IHRL, revolved around training supported by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Like the traditional partnership with FRANCOPOL and APSTA, IAPTC, the partnership with the Centre of Excellency for Stability Police Units (COESPU) was reinforced through the participation of EIFORCES in the 18th Course on the Protection of Civilians and the 9<sup>th</sup> Course on Gender Protection. The African Training and Administrative Research Centre for Development (CAFRAD), for its part, hosted EIFORCES within the framework of the Training with a view to obtaining the Certificate of Aptitudes in Administration of Administrative and International Affairs (C4AI).

EIFORCES also took part in the Regional Conference on the theme "Rwanda's Journey Towards Sustainable Peace-25 Years", organized by its Academy, in partnership with the Government of Japan, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in Kigali, Rwanda.

EIFORCES, firmly committed to the diversification of its partnerships, has initiated various visibility and partnership research missions at the national, regional

and international level. It is in this context that the School received officials from the National Defence University Zimbabwe, on 3 July 2019 and the visit with Madame. IRENE GAGA from UNOCA.

In its efforts to adapt to security challenges, the EIFORCES is designed rise to the expectations placed in it. It is for this reason that this august institution places peace, international and national security at the centre of these concerns and is thus part of a constant renewal of its functional requirements in accordance with the evolution of the African security environment and worldwide. In this context, the adaptation of EIFORCES to security challenges is based on a constant review of its training curricula, which take into account feedback and prospective strategic analyses, particularly with regard to all aspects of human security. This is why research, in support of training, is oriented towards present and evolving security issues.



Visit of Mrs. Patrice L. BONDO from AFRICOM



Visit of the ACP-EU Parliamentary Delegation



## PARTICIPATION OF THE EIFORCES IN THE SESSIONS OF THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEACEKEEPING TRAINING CENTRES IN LIMA IN PERU.

*From 7 to 10 October 2019, the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres [IAPTC] organised the sessions of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the theme “Preparing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations: renewing the commitment and reinforcing partnerships”.*

The International School for Security Forces [EIFORCES] was represented during these sessions by a delegation led by the Director General, Brigadier General BITOTE André Patrice who was accompanied by Colonel ENGOLO ELLA Thomas and the Senior Police Superintendent BESSALA Désiré, Director of Studies and Head of the Evaluation Office at the Division of Higher Education respectively.

Alongside the plenipotentiaries of the EIFORCES were other participants, a hundred and thirty-nine of them from about sixty countries scattered all over the world that make up the IAPTC. This association, borne on the baptismal front in 1995 in Canada, is a voluntary assembly of centres, institutions and agencies in charge of research and training in peacekeeping. Its main objective is to exchange experience between its members in methodologies, standards and pedagogic innovations relating to peacekeeping.

The opening session of the Annual Conference was presided over by the Peruvian Head of State, His Excellency Martin VIZCARRA who was assisted by the Vice-Minister of Defence in charge of the Defence Policy, Hermann FLORES AYALA. The sessions were articulated around the plenary presentations, the workshops, the exposition and the recreational activities.

The plenary presentations were on the protection of civilians, leadership training, performance and responsibility, psychological preparation, women-peace-security, safety and security in a very risky environment, regional associations of peacekeeping training. The exposés animated by the researchers, university lecturers or professionals, was followed by

debates.

The workshops subdivided into subtopics, were dedicated to other essential missions of peace operations, to functional groups, to the development of partnerships through the IAPTC. These fora opportunities for brainstorming and rich exchanges.

Christened “ideas of the bazar”, the exposition of the IAPTC was a platform to give to see who would highlight the training centres in peacekeeping particularly their profil, their infrastructures, their scientific productions, their expertise. The EIFORCES stand which was very courted permitted the institution to carry out its promotion through the distribution of forty-five kilograms of gadgets [ballpoint pencils, USB drives], various publications of the research bulletin VIGIE, Situational Analyses and prospectus.

In total, the Annual Conference of the IAPTC led to the adoption of various resolutions and good practices that the adherents shall abide to, to establish by integrating them in their daily activities.

The closing ceremony, punctuated by the handing over of the presidency of the IAPTC between the outgoing institution and the incoming, Colonel Helen Cooper of New Zealand and the retired Lieutenant-General Herman Felipe FLORES AYALA of Peru, was presided over by the later as Vice-Minister of Defence representing the Head of State.

The next conference will take place in 2021 in Bangladesh, during the last quarter of the year, at a date still to be decided.

## EIFORCES-JAPON: MULTIDIMENSIONAL COOPERATION AT THE SERVICE OF PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.

*Training, research, equipment and infrastructural development are the main axes of the cooperation, which links EIFORCES and Japan since 2012, through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In 2019 alone, the EIFORCES has twice set foot on the ground of the Japanese Empire on the occasion of the Mission of international studies of the 5<sup>th</sup> Higher Diploma of Security Studies (BESS) and participation in TICAD 7 (7<sup>th</sup> Tokyo International Conference for African Development).*

### Mission of International studies of BESS 5 in Japan.

From 1 to 9 June 2019, the delegation of the EIFORCES with twenty-four members, led by Brigadier General BITOTE André Patrice, Director General of the EIFORCES, sojourned in Japan. Great opportunity for multifaceted exchanges in training and research related to the field of peace and security; opportunity also to get a more precise idea of the wealth of this G8 member country. The different stages of this tour were focused on administrative, educational, tourist and cultural issues. This was an opportunity for the listeners of the 5th BESS to get a precise idea, each

according to their sensitivity and the knowledge acquired during the training, of the challenges of multilateral cooperation in all directions, in order to draw the best profit.

The guided tour of the Hiroshima peace memorial by the entire delegation was a major step in the duty of remembrance, immersing everyone in the sad memory of the explosion in this city, of the first atomic bomb on 6 August 1945. A place of the living symbol of the most devastating force that man has ever created and which in turn embodies and at the same time arouses the hope of peace by the elimination of all the nuclear weapons of planet earth.



The GB / DG of EIFORCES leading the student delegation to Japan

## PARTICIPATION OF THE DELEGATION OF EIFORCES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> EDITION OF "MILIPOL PARIS 2019"

*At the invitation of Mr. Michael WEATHERSEED, Exhibition Director, the Brigade General, Director General of the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES), led the EIFORCES delegation with four members to the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of "MILIPOL Paris 2019 ", from 19 to 22 November 2019. This mission, which essentially aimed at establishing international professional contacts in the field of internal security of States, aimed to prospect companies working in the construction and equipping of shooting ranges and in the production of materials likely to support institutions like EIFORCES in their development.*

This fair, held at the Parc des Expositions in Paris Nord Villepinte, saw the participation of 1,100 exhibitors operating in such varied fields falling within the field of global security.

The four-member EIFORCES delegation was able to attend both thematic conferences and dynamic demonstrations organised by exhibitors who presented their products and equipment as well as examples of maneuvers in intervention situations. After the inaugural conference on the theme "continuity between internal and external security", other themes were addressed

such as private security, security management of major events (international perspectives), management of multiple and secure flows , Identity, border control, the fight against terrorism, Security-cyber security: 1 year after the call from Paris, the Artificial intelligence and predictive analysis, Securing public spaces, cities and smart communities.

Pending the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of this biennial fair scheduled for 2021, the participation of a delegation from EIFORCES at the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the MILIPOL Fair allowed us to meet the major players in cooperation with

France, in particular the Directorate General of National Gendarmerie (DGGN), the Head Quarter of Security and Defence Cooperation (DCSD) as well as the International Cooperation Headquarters (DCI). On another level, the diversity of the themes of the conferences attended could enrich the field of knowledge of the participants and make it possible to identify implicitly possible experts able to intervene in the framework of training and research activities of the EIFORCES.



From left to right: LCL CLOUP, CS NYANANG Aristide, BG BITOTE André Patrice and LCL SAME Piccard

# File

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## FRANCIS FAI YENGO: «THE CNDDR FULFILLS ITS MISSIONS WITH DETERMINATION, OBJECTIVITY AND PROFESSIONALISM»

*The Coordinator of the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission unveils the daily functioning of this institution, and delivers the first results recorded. He looks to the future with optimism.*

Views collected by LCL Auguste ONGOLO & M. Driscole NENENGA

### What are the political aims of the DDR program in Cameroon?

Thanks for the opportunity you offered me to express myself in the lines of the Strategic and Prospective Analyses Bulletin VIGIE, a publication of the International School for Security Forces.

Before answering actually answering your questions, I wish to immediately recall that the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) of Cameroon is a strategic, operational institution, with a special and very uncommon status, unconventional and original. It is ranked among the new generations of DDR. Its creation comes at a time when the armed groups engaged in an asymmetric manner and a nebulous form are still active. It is among the superior interests of the State, among the exceptions or express derogations of law No 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the repression of acts of terrorism in Cameroon, seen as on one of the most rigorous of the sub-region.

To come back to your question, I would like to precise that the DDR program in Cameroon is a political will and a commitment of the President of the Republic. It is clearly expressed in the following documents:

- The Swearing in of 6 November 2018;
- The Communiqué of the Minister of State, Secretary General at the Presidency on 30 November 2018, which is an actual presentation of the motives of the creation of the NDDRC in Cameroon, and is addressed to the national and international public opinion;
- The Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 December 2018 on the creation of the NDDRC;



Fai Yengo Francis, Coordinator of NDDRC



Installation ceremony of the NDDRC Coordinator

- The Message of the Head of State to the nation on 31 December 2018;
- The Speech of the President of the Republic at the Graduation Ceremony of the 36th batch of EMIA christened "unity and diversity" on 18 January 2019.

### What are the strategic, logistic and operational approaches of the DDR program?

An attentive reading of the decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018, which creates the NDDRC helps to elaborate its strategic vision and its operational framework. In essence, the NDDRC whose headquarter is in Yaoundé, is placed under the authority of the Prime Minister Head of Government. Its mission is to organise, mould and manage the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex combatants of Boko Haram and armed groups of the North West and South West regions who wish to surrender favourably to the peace offer of the Head of State by dropping their weapons.

The NDDRC comprises:

- A Board of Directors chaired by the Prime Minister. It states the strategic orientations and ensures its follow up and evaluation. It comprises 15 Members including various technical
- ministers.
- The National Coordination is placed under the authority of a National Coordinator appointed by Presidential decree, assisted by an assistant. It is in charge of the establishment of the operational management of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration program of ex combatants.
- The Regional Centres of DDR. They are under the responsibility of Chief of Centres appointed by Prime Ministerial Arrêté. These Centres are in charge of the execution of the missions of the Committee at the local level.

### What are the evaluations made of the actions carried out within the framework of the DDR in the Regional Centres of the North West and South West?

The Regional Centres are operational since the creation of the NDDRC. Their activities as well as those of the Head quarter started immediately after the publication of the decree with the immediate occupation of the tentative temporary premises. The first ex combatants were registered in December 2018 and presently the combined number of detainees is more than 300 (three hundred) pensioners. Some are already in the reintegration phase, which helps to

decongest the area in this period of the corona virus and scrupulously respect the governmental prescriptions.

At the moment, the setting up of structures is going on progressively and proactively. It is worthwhile to recall that each of the three Regional Centres (Mora, Bamenda and Buea) faces specific realities and constraints, which can more or less hamper its efficiency on the field.

### **What are the difficulties faced on the field in the implementation of the DDR?**

The implementation of the DDR is a long process, no deadline has been fixed for it. In addition, given that the life span depends on conflicts and the competence of the authorities in charge of DDR can even be spread out geographically to other Regions and eventually abroad. In fact, DDR calls on various actors at a time and requires a lot of tact. That is why the NDDRC had to be made known at all levels first by teaching through exchanges audiences, field trips, seminars, trainings, in fact capacity building and updated in a very short time.

To get there, all the opportunities were exploited to perfect them and attract the ex-combatants towards the Centres despite the resistances and numerous detractors. This is not easy but the results are very encouraging and the long walk towards our objectives goes on with serenity. A live appreciation was done live with the participation and the prowess of these ex-combatants at the Major National Dialogue in Yaoundé.

### **What are the perceptions and representations within the ex-combatants?**

The ex-combatants are received in the Centres by appropriate local teams. They generally arrive the centre in shifts and sometimes in a critical situation concerning their moral and physical state. They receive appropriate treatment and are taken care of, followed up in view of their radicalisation, by experts and at the same time, they learn agro pastoral activities and little trade, which could enable them during the reintegration.

Almost all these ex-combatants are teenagers among which most of them were enlisted forcefully or with fallacious promises and drugged during their time with the armed groups. There are equally some young girls and even minors less than 5 years.

### **What is the impact of the DDR in the amelioration of the living conditions of ex-combatants?**

Time spent in the DDR Centres plays a primordial role in the amelioration of the behaviour and the life of ex-combatants. In fact, certain ex-combatants, even civilians, who abandon the armed groups and are dissimulated among Internally Displaced Persons or Refugee or even those who are apprehended by Defence and Security Forces are exposed to trials before competent military tribunals as per the 2014 law mentioned above to be tried for acts of terrorism.

Meanwhile, the status and the regime of an ex-combatant enable a specific welfare. For more clarification, it is worth noting that it does not have to do with the promotion of impunity but to favour the basis of a helping hand in view of a return to republican life for the perpetrators of violent extremism whose consequences are not envisaged and constitute a hindrance to development and an obstacle to sustainable peace.

From this angle, the NDDRC can be compared to a mussel whose input is a dangerous product but it will come out to be an output, which is a product of good quality, capable of discerning, take care of itself, self-generate and carry out activities, which generate revenue for the wellbeing of families, communities, societies and so on.

### **The support of partners in the DDR process**

Article 9 of the decree that creates the NDDRC stipulates that the Committee cooperates when necessary with competent authorities, NGO and National and International Partners particularly those of the UNO. This means the NDDRC does not have to operate solely. Collaboration is imperative, a guarantee of efficiency, hence, success.

Nonetheless, at the moment, this support is much more limited to exchanges, aiming at ameliorating the performances of the institution, in conformity with the required norms particularly;

- United Nations conventions on terrorism, human rights, gender approach...
- The regional strategy of stabilisation, withdrawal and resilience of zones of the Lake Chad Basin hit by the Boko Haram crisis. An African Union initiative with the Commission of the States of the Lake Tchad Basin (LCBC) and to which Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Chad



participate.

Furthermore, numerous national Partners such as the Agency for National Civil Service for Participation in Development or international have offered their services to assist and accompany the Regional Centres.

### **What is the evaluation of the pertinent level of the efficiency in social reinsertion?**

The NDDRC cannot be judge and party at the same time. It is always better to let observers appreciate in all liberty. Until then, the NDDRC carries out its mission in all serenity and with much determination,

objectivity and professionalism. It is worth précising that the Head of State in order to congratulate judged and declared the first results very encouraging in one of his speeches.

It will be good to say that with the reintegration already effective and the return of some ex-combatants to active life, a follow up of ex-combatants on the field is envisaged. The NDDRC remains optimistic and can affirm that this reinsertion is perceived as the return of prodigal children to their families.

### **What is left to be done to make the DDR program more efficient?**

The NDDRC is already doing all within its power to meet up to its tasks. Nonetheless, it is evident that if certain conditions are established or ameliorated, the program will be boosted. The following factors are particularly concerned:

- The ambient level of security;
- The end of lock-down operations, kidnaps and all sorts of acts of intimidation;
- The acceptance of ex-combatants in foster communities;
- The peaceful cohabitation and the consideration of worries of victims of acts of terrorism;
- A more objective perception of the NDDRC, which would not be assimilated to either the army, a financial institution, a trap, a prison or a Mediator.

Conclusively, I would say that the NDDRC is a young institution, which continues to evolve and to accomplish its missions with ease with the opportunities, which are offered and more so with gage and the obligation of good results.



The Coordinator of the NDDRC in the company of some repentants of the NOSO



# THE DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAM (DDR) FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN CAMEROON : CONTEXT, FRAMEWORK AND CHALLENGES

By Pr. OLINGA Alain Didier

*While on the front against Boko Haram and in the North-West and South-West Theatre (NOSO), the weapons are far from being silenced, and we can even observe a strange resilience of terrorist and secessionist violence, despite military operations and socio-political, judicial, institutional, humanitarian, reconstruction and development measures taken by the authorities, Cameroon has decided to initiate a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) program geared towards of Boko Haram fighters and NOSO secessionist armed groups. For theorists and practitioners accustomed to processes of this type, the approach can surprise and intrigue. In essence, how do we hope to draw some encouraging result, from a technology generally used to manage and support the post-conflict phases, or the negotiated transition phases from conflict to post-conflict while the arms are thundering? How can a DDR program be initiated in a context where the entrepreneurs deprived of violence, who oppose the authority of the State, do not and never intend, from all indications, to give up the armed struggle, in a configuration where their determination is rather to arm themselves more to continue, or even intensify the struggle, either with a view to transnational insurrection<sup>1</sup> (Boko Haram), or in a secession perspective?*

*But after the moment of these theoretical questions, it is necessary to take note that, while the crisis management options concerned oscillated between firmness and outstretched hand, the Cameroonian Head of State, without giving up the first, has nevertheless bided on the possibility of bringing the lost to order, of recovering the manipulated sons of the family and of reintegrating them into the national construction site. A daring but courageous political gamble. An initiative, which gives the Cameroonian DDR its originality but which, for the success of the latter, requires a consequent, careful but coherent approach.*

<sup>1</sup>Oyono Afane, PC "Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin: analysis of a transnational insurgency and prospects for a global stabilisation strategy". Thesis, Political Science, University of Yaoundé II-IRIC, 2019.

### General considerations

DDR, as an institutional and operational concept or technology, is already sufficiently popularised in its basic principles for it to be useful to return to it in the context of this brief contribution. For this, it suffices to refer to the Integrated Norms Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration adopted by the United Nations, and to the practices of the various contexts of experimentation with DDR programs. In general, some fundamental elements are to be highlighted. First, the very purpose of the issue, what it is all about. Disarming means recovering weapons from the hands of combatants, in particular those who should never have owned them and using them within the State by virtue of their status, storing them in a secure manner and possibly destroying them. By disarmament, the tool of violence, the tool of armed challenge to State authority is withdrawn and neutralised. This means that one must have an idea, even a rough one, of the level of availability of weapons and the nature of the weapons in the hands of actors deprived of violence, in order to be able to assess whether the possible collection of weapons corresponds to sincere disarmament. Demobilising is turning veterans into people involved in civilian life. It is to get people out of terrorist groups or armed gangs; it is to free them from an allegiance to such a group for an allegiance back to the State. This supposes that we have an idea of the population to be demobilised quantitatively, of its sociological structuring, of the trajectories of tipping in terrorist or secessionist violence. We do not demobilise an “ex-General Destroy” of NOSO and a suicide bomber of Boko Haram in the same way. As for reintegration, often distinguished and preceded by a transitional phase of reintegration for some, it is a question of helping ex-combatants to become, in their family and their community, productive and self-sufficient citizens who contribute to the development of their nation. It is about allowing them to give themselves a new life after the life of violence, after life by and thanks to violence. It is also a question of offering them an attractive and relevant space for an alternative, liberating, fulfilling and rewarding socialisation, in any case capable of supplementing the socialisation offered for the worse, especially unfortunately, by the actors deprived of violence.

The objective of the returned DDR, it is necessary to camp the protagonists of such a program. First, there are those who must be disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated, the target of DDR. Then there are those who steer the process or are involved in it, strategically, institutionally, operationally and financially. Finally, there are those who must welcome veterans, reintegration communities. This last aspect is crucial, especially if the

reintegration communities are precisely those that have been branded by the violent actions of the demobilised. In fact, “the target of DDR programs must not be the demobilised per se, but the demobilised place / community, which requires acting on both the demobilised and the host community”<sup>2</sup>.

Typically, it is believed that the framework for implementing a DDR program involves a number of elements, namely: the signing of an agreement between protagonists of violence providing for and organising DDR; the trust between the parties and the willingness of the actors concerned to engage in a DDR process; the guarantee of a minimum level of security. However, it is clearly understood that there is not a standard DDR program ready to be applied everywhere; there are as many possible DDR programs as there are situations of violence or conflict to manage. Each context generates its program, and it is with this logic of contextualisation of practices that the Cameroonian approach must be read and appreciated. To grasp it, it is useful to talk of its political framework,

### Political framework of DDR

Any DDR program being dependent on a context, and the way in which the protagonists of that context analyse it and assess the power relations involved, the DDR initiated in Cameroon at the end of 2018 is closely linked to the perception of the situation by its designers. However, precisely, this conception, which is incontestably generous, does not seem to shine with great readability, no doubt due to the volatility of the situation in the field of the fight against Boko Haram and against armed secessionist groups. The Head of State Paul Biya in his swearing-in speech formulated the idea of a DDR on 6 November 2018, for “an honorable outcome, in the interest of all” to the NOSO crisis. To “war entrepreneurs, who undermine our national unity and advocate secession”, he says: “I appeal to them to lay down their arms and find the right path. I particularly appeal to young people who have let themselves be drawn into an adventure with no future”. In his message of 31 December 2018 to the Nation, the Head of State returned at length to the question, while on 30 November 2018 a decree establishing the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration had been signed, “considering the offer of peace made in the swearing-in speech of the President of the Republic of 6 November 2018”. In his message

<sup>2</sup> See Rumin, S. “guarantees of non-repetition at the crossroads of ‘disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration’ (DDR), ‘security system reform’ (SSR) and transitional justice”. in Mottet, C. and Pout, C. (Ed.). *Transitional justice: a path to reconciliation and the building of lasting peace*. Yaoundé, 2000, p.119.

to the Nation, therefore, the Head of State expressed himself as follows: "if the call to lay down arms to war entrepreneurs remains unanswered, the defence and security forces will receive instruction to neutralise them. (...) In a spirit of national harmony, I decided, to avoid resorting to extreme measures, to create a 'National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration'. This body, under the authority of the Prime Minister, will be responsible for organising, supervising and managing the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and from armed groups in the North West and South West eager to respond favourably to the offer of peace made to them. This initiative, I stress, offers an honorable way out for these ex - combatants as well as a prospect of social reintegration ". As can be seen, the presidential speech no longer targets only the NOSO, but also the situation created by Boko Haram. This induced holistic approach can save institutional energy, but can make the process more complex, the situations at stake being different and having their own trajectory. Moreover, if one can understand an "offer of peace" addressed to armed secessionists, to restore national harmony, it is difficult to understand that such an offer can be made to a terrorist group which , even if it includes nationals of Cameroonian origin in its ranks,

nonetheless remains a transnational criminal and terrorist nebula with which one cannot compromise. In his speech on the occasion of the graduation ceremony of the 36th batch of EMIA, Unity and diversity on January 18, 2019, the President of the Republic, developing the situation of the North-West and South-West regions, declares: "I reiterate my call to our young people who have let themselves be drawn into a dead end, to seize this opportunity to return to the right path, to rebuild their lives and to participate, alongside their brothers and sisters, in building up our country. As for the criminals who will persist in staying on the path of violence, they know what awaits them. The defence and security forces will continue to do their duty, with firmness, determination and professionalism ".

In his message to the Nation of 10 September 2019 announcing the organisation of a Major National Dialogue, the Head of State returned abundantly to the question examined in this analysis: "I sent an offer of peace to the members of the armed groups, inviting them to lay down their arms and benefit from a process of reintegration into society ". Further on: "It is however true that in the context of a dialogue, a peace process or national reconciliation, the possibility of a pardon can be envisaged, under certain conditions. It is equally true



Cameroonian soldiers on a bridge, toward Wum, in the English-speaking zone, 6 December 2018 (VOA / Ministry of Defence)

that under our Constitution, the Head of State is empowered to use a right of pardon. It is, moreover, with this empowerment that I addressed, during my recent swearing-in, an offer of peace to members of the armed groups. I would solemnly reiterate this offer on this day. Those who voluntarily lay down their arms and place themselves at the disposal of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration centres have nothing to fear. (...). On the other hand, those who persist in committing criminal acts and violating the laws of the Republic will face our defence and security forces and will suffer the full rigor of these same laws. The same is true of promoters of hatred and violence who, comfortably and with impunity installed in foreign countries, continue to incite murder and destruction. Let them know that eventually they will have to be brought to justice.

Finally, in his message of 10 February 2020 on the 54th edition of the National Youth Day, the Head of State said: "I also take the opportunity of this Youth Day to, once more, launch an appeal to our young compatriots in the North West and South West. Those who have enrolled in armed gangs and who continue to maintain an insecure climate in these two regions must lay down their arms (...). I continue to urge them to get out of the bush and find their other young fellow citizens who live normal lives in society."

These presidential speeches, which it was useful to recall, mark out the field of Cameroonian DDR, a *sui generis* DDR. The diversity of the formula attests to its particularity, both outstretched hand and ultimatum, perch for an honourable redemption under pain of military crushing and judicial repression. One evokes an "offer of peace", which is anything but an offer of negotiation or political dialogue with interlocutors disqualified as "self-proclaimed leaders, extremists of all stripes trying to establish their notoriety through insults, threats, calls for hatred, violence and murder" by the Head of State. We speak of "call to lay down arms", of "presidential pardon", of "pardon under certain conditions". Visibly, the right presidential approach is the attempt to synthesise plural approaches to the situation in the NOSO: the military approach, the political approach to negotiation, the judicial approach, etc. Under these conditions, it is difficult to avoid that the assembly of the DDR program be affected. This DDR is launched in a context where the existence of armed groups, the recognition of armed confrontations between the defence forces and these groups are obvious, without however the situation of non-international armed conflict being officially recognized by the authorities, which would, *inter alia*, trigger the applicability of Additional Protocol II of 1977 to the 1949

Geneva Conventions to which Cameroon is a party, in particular its provisions relating to the end of the conflict and to reconciliation<sup>3</sup>. DDR is launched outside a concerted framework between the State Government and the armed groups. In military language, it looks like it is a call to surrender or an incitement to "members of armed groups" to desert them. It should not be forgotten that one of the demands of the armed groups and of a certain segment of the political class was and remains "demilitarisation" of the North-West and South-West regions, that is to say in fact the withdrawal of the defence forces from these regions. This means that the DDR initiated can be perceived by armed groups, outside of any concerted framework, as an instrument of combat and war, a strategy of negation of their combat, in short everything except an honourable exit, in the absence of a formal process of amnestying grace, moreover clearly excluded by the State for the promoters of violence and the perpetrators of the worst abuses. However, DDR can only have a real chance of success if the cause of the armed struggle is accepted as henceforth useless to maintain by its entrepreneurs, and if the command structure or the central nucleus of the armed groups adheres to the process and involves the bulk of the troop. Otherwise, we risk having to deal with cosmetic DDR, symbolic of peripheral and marginal actors, in short, false disarmament and false demobilisation. It seems difficult to escape the following alternative: either disarmament is forced because of military hostilities, or disarmament is the result of negotiations, which offer the parties to disarm an honourable exit.

## Institutional framework

To give content to his peace offer, the Head of State set up by decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 a National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (CNDDR). There is no need to make a detailed presentation here. It suffices to say that this is a State body supervised by the Head of Government, dedicated to piloting disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and secessionist groups, who agree to voluntarily lay down their arms. Its mission is clearly set out in the text, which

3 See article 6, paragraph 5: "upon the cessation of hostilities, the authorities in power shall endeavour to grant the widest possible amnesty to persons who have taken part in the armed conflict or who have been deprived of their liberty for reasons related to armed conflict, whether interned or detained." As Sylvie Junod writes, "the purpose of this paragraph is to encourage a gesture of reconciliation which contributes to restoring the normal course of life in a people who have been divided". Junod, S. "Protocol II. Article 6 Criminal Proceedings". In Sandoz, Y, Swiniarski, C and Zimmermann, B. *Conventions of the Additional Protocols of June 8, 1977 Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949*. ICRC, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Geneva, 1986; p.1426.



establishes it, in the three axes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The Committee has an inter-ministerial and inter-service setup, with a National Coordinator for its operational management and Regional Centre Managers. The Committee accomplishes its mission “in liaison with the competent administrations”. There is thus a major coordination issue between the various segments of the State involved in the management of the situation on the ground, in particular the Territorial Administration, the defence and security forces, the civil and military courts, segments of which operational agenda can be divergent. In any event, the institutional steering of DDR is closely controlled by the State, which apparently does not intend to allow direct and significant intrusion by outside actors in the management of this activity. Given the hostile climate between the protagonists, it is questionable whether this governmental control of the process inspires confidence. It is true that in this respect, the assurance given by the Head of State himself is of a certain weight and normally reassuring.

The NCDDR was flanked, by decision 042 of 03 December 2019 signed by the Secretary General of the Prime Minister’s Office, of a Multi-sectorial Technical team responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the operationalization of the NCDDR. This team, like the Board of Directors of the Committee, is placed under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, under the technical and operational coordination of the Secretary General of the Prime Minister’s Office. This team is responsible, in particular, for finalising the plan for monitoring institutional communication around the operational activities of the NCDDR, for finalising the legal framework determining the organisation and operation of the said NCDDR and for developing its Operational Program Budget (OPB).

If the Cameroonian DDR project is piloted by the Government, the fact remains that international partners can cooperate with the NCDDR, in particular the United Nations. Given the latter’s experience in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and peace building, it would be beneficial to take advantage of this expertise, without prejudice to the sovereign control of the process, to avoid that it is misused and instrumentalised, under cover of participation in its financing for example.

With regard specifically to DDR funding, if national and international partners can contribute to it, the State is the main contributor to the NCDDR budget. Thus, as part of the 2020 budget, the State has provided for an allocation of five billion for the activities of the Committee, the hope being that it will be effectively used, in time, to enable it to carry out its program.

## The challenges of a DDR experience

If it may seem premature to make a judgment on the Cameroonian experience of DDR, at the stage of progressive rise in power or it is, it is clear that the business is not easy, in view of the persistence of armed activities on the front lines against Boko Haram and against secessionist armed groups. The call to lay down arms, without having been rejected by all, does not already seem to have been heard by many. According to figures compiled on 13 April 2020, with the necessary caution, there are 113 demobilised in the South West region, 112 in the North West region and 108 ex - Boko Haram recorded on the NCDDR branch in Mora. Significant figures but whose analysis is difficult, given the uncertainty that reigns over the number of Boko Haram fighters and secessionist armed groups.

Under these conditions and with all the necessary caution, we can estimate that beyond the specificity of the arrangements specific to each experience, the return to certain classical fundamentals of DDR is difficult to avoid. We see two. First, structure the space of forgiveness and reconciliation, by adopting a legal framework, which details the conditions, to give an even more concrete translation to the offer of presidential peace. In this case, the adoption and promulgation of an amnesty law, the content of which would nevertheless be consistent with our commitments in the repression of crimes and serious offenses under international law, would be of a nature, alongside military tracking irreducible elements, to accelerate the demobilisation of many combatants and, who knows, the return to order of the leaders of these groups that the official discourse of disqualifying stigmatisation drives, so to speak, to radicalism and to the escalation in violence. In short, there is room to move up notch in the establishment of confidence-building and forgiveness measures. On the other hand, there is reason to put alongside the State, without excluding it at all, reassuring third parties, in the management of DDR, on the model of what has just been retained for the reconstruction of the North-West and South-West regions, with the UNDP constituted as “implementing partner”, according to the Prime Minister’s decree of 3 April 2020 setting the organic framework for the implementation of the presidential reconstruction plan and for the development of the North West and South West regions. While keeping control of the strategic orientations, the State could decide to entrust DDR to a third party perceived by all as impartial and neutral, guarantor of the security of the demobilised and attentive to the vital security interests of the State. The UN, already mentioned in the decree creating the NCDDR, could usefully contribute in this regard, within a framework defined and approved by

(and in concert with) the State.

If the Cameroonian DDR must produce positive concrete effects, and be the resolute alternative to “extreme measures”, which obviously does not want the authority that embodies national unity, it will have to take into account both aspects mentioned above. This is so because, whatever one says, DDR is fundamentally a tool for consolidating peace already firmly committed, an instrument of transitional justice, in short an instrument intended to accompany the end of the conflict, to manage the immediate post-conflict, to allow the treatment of a recent traumatic and painful past and to pave the way towards a culture of non-violence, reconciliation, sustainable peace.

It will also need to be integrated into a holistic approach to State intervention. Besides the Humanitarian Emergency Action Plan, the Reconstruction and Development Plan for the North-West and South-West regions DDR is a component of a global approach. Piloted like an isolated monad, it runs straight for failure. Integrated in a strategic and operational coherence, it has serious chances of success.

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# EMERGING FROM CRISES BY THE FORECLOSURE OF WEAPONS IN THE IVORY COAST AND CAMEROON: ANALYSIS OF DDR'S ASSUMPTIONS AND DRIVING FACTORS TO A RETURN TO PEACE AND STABILITY.

By Professeur Yves Paul MANDJEM

*The foreclosure of arms, and hence the restoration of the State as a process of military monopoly, is and remains one of the most striking contemporary challenges of the lasting end of conflict in Africa and elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. States and major collective security organisations intervening in conflicts in Africa have integrated the foreclosure of weapons and its other operational name, the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process, as a prominent part of the peace-building agenda of conflicting policies<sup>2</sup>. Countries affected by armed conflict or terrorism such as Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon have experimented or are experimenting DDR with varying degrees of success.*

1 Nathalie, Duclos (dir.), "Farewell to arms"? Veterans' journey, Paris, Karthala, 2010.

2 An important place has been given to DDR in peacekeeping operations since 1989. However, the 1992 United Nations Peace Agenda makes it an essential component of post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. On the appropriation of DDR by the African Union, NEPAD and ECOWAS, read Sahel and West Africa Club / OECD, Workshop to set up the Regional Working Group on DDR Programs and Post-conflict management in West Africa, Final Report, Volume 1, 2006, pp. 7-8.



Following the DDR program in Côte d'Ivoire in 2015, more than 45,000 weapons and ammunition, including Kalashnikovs, shells and grenades, were collected. Sia Kambou, AFP

Erected as a model by the United Nations and an integral part of liberal peacekeeping policy, the concept of DDR<sup>3</sup> is presented as a key to building and maintaining stability and preventing a return to violence in post-conflict contexts<sup>4</sup>. On its economy depends the ability of the State in a conflict situation to achieve its transition from the conflict phase to the end of the conflict on the one hand, and on the other hand to consolidate the end of the conflict through reconstruction and revival, while avoiding exposing the population and the State institutions or the new institutions set up to the risk linked to a resumption of hostilities<sup>5</sup>. Seen from this angle, the end of the conflict<sup>6</sup>, is largely informed by the level of acceptance by the belligerents and the degree of completion of the DDR calendar and operations. DDR processes as a multifaceted method of foreclosing weapons in conflict and post-conflict situations are a modality of transition from war as an oligopoly of violence to peace as a monopoly of legitimate violence. In this sense, they are a reform postulating a set of complex operations, which engage a State in crisis or in the process of emerging from the crisis on the fragile and sometimes reversible path of peace. These operations aim to transform former enemies of war into united guarantors of internal and external security.

The need for DDR continues to be felt in an Africa, a privileged theater for the transformation of contemporary conflict around identity references, including Islamists<sup>7</sup>. The cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon sufficiently illustrate the complex dynamic born of a plurality of contexts of conflict and post-conflict. The political particularities and the power struggles at stake - on the one hand, in Côte d'Ivoire in an internationalised internal conflict which lasted nearly nine (09) years (2002-2011) with the civil war

and the war born of the post-electoral crisis of November 2010 understood, - and secondly, in Cameroon in the war against the jihadist group of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and the Far North region contained by the regional and national responses or in the war of "secessionist" groups in the North-West and South-West regions, are an influential variable for the future of these two countries and their society,

The objective of this reflection is to compare the approaches of DDR in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon in order to identify the assumptions and the driving factors of a return to peace and stability in Cameroon. Such a methodological part indicates that it is a comparison between contrasting cases as the exceptional features of the Ivorian and Cameroonian conflict and post-conflict situations are particularly striking that they shed light on the originality of the DDR processes in the two countries based on criteria such as the level of the State crisis, the nature of the actors involved (national and international in the Ivorian case or national in the Cameroonian case), the temporality of DDR. Furthermore, while the Cameroon DDR process started in 2018 in view of the resilient nature of jihadist terrorism and the multiplication of armed groups in the North West and South West regions continues, the Ivorian DDR process has already ended. It is even presented by many international observers as "an example of success for the end of the crisis"<sup>8</sup>, even if this Ivorian success story is far from winning everyone's agreement<sup>9</sup>. It follows that the objective of the transnational comparison of DDR processes is to understand<sup>10</sup>, to "learn from across national borders"<sup>11</sup>; if indeed as the American political scientist Woodrow Wilson pointed out "to compare is to innovate", it is a question beyond opening up to the Ivorian DDR process, of conferring on comparative research a pragmatic utility insofar as it seeks to provide information, to identify "best practices" which will help to prepare plans for effective and feasible measures in response to the

3 On this concept, read Yvan, Conoir and Gérard, Verna (dir.), "DDR, disarm, demobilise and reintegrate". *Human challenges-Global issues*, Laval, PUL, 2006.

4 Read the Brahimi Report published in 2000 on the improvement of United Nations peacekeeping missions, UN / A / 55/305-S / 2000/809, p. 7. In 2017, the integrated DDR standards celebrated their tenth anniversary, <http://www.unddr.org/iddrs.aspx>.

5 Yves Paul, Mandjem, *Emerging from the crisis in Africa*. The political game of actors, Tome 2, Louvain-la-Neuve, Academia-L'Harmattan, 2014, p. 330.

6 Understood as "a moment and a process which takes place between two situations, one of which is unstable and the other stable, of a political regime with the possibility of changing practices and norms in the direction of peace and / or democratisation, and the restoration of State authority", read Yves Paul, Mandjem, *The way out of the crisis in Africa*. The relative determinism of post-crisis institutions in Africa, Tome 1, Louvain-la-Neuve, Academia-L'Harmattan, 2014, p. 37.

7 Pierre de Senarclens, "Theories and practices of international relations since the end of the Cold War", *Foreign Policy*, n° 4, 2006, p. 149; Yves Paul, Mandjem, "Jihadist groups and international relations: contribution to a sociology of a controversial actor. The case of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin (BLT)", *Cahier Thucydide*, n° 27, April 2020.

8 Read the positions of the International Peace Institute and the United Nations Security Council. The latter Organ welcomes the progress made in the area of civil reconciliation. Just as the UN operation in the Ivory Coast (ONUCI), present in the country from 2004 to 2017) is completely withdrawn. Franziska, Ehlert, "What viability for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process in the Ivory Coast? », *Perspectives / FES Côte d'Ivoire*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2018, p. 2.

9 Franziska, Ehlert, *Ibidem*, p. 2.

10 Adam, Przeworski, "Methods of Cross-National Research, 1970-1983: An overview" in Dierckes M. et al. (dir.), *Comparative Policy Research: Learning from Experience*, Aldershot, 1987, p. 35.

11 Richard, Rose, "Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis", *Political Studies*, vol. XXXIX, 1991, pp. 458.



contribution of Cameroonian DDR to peace and civil reconciliation<sup>12</sup>. Because it accompanies the implementation of public policies, comparative analysis is a form of shopping trip to speak like Malcom M. Feeley.

The comparative analysis of DDR approaches in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon will first shed light on the contrasting trajectories of the conflict and the genesis of DDR processes in the two countries before proceeding to an intelligibility of the hypotheses and the driving factors of DDR to a return to peace and stability.

## I. The contrasting trajectories of conflict and the genesis of DDR processes in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon

The concept of “trajectory” mobilised here from the perspective of Barrington Moore<sup>13</sup>, makes it possible to demonstrate that comparing DDR approaches in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon consists first of all in revealing the plurality of contexts of conflict and post-conflict (A) before dwelling on the variable genesis of DDR processes in the two countries (B).

### A. The plurality of conflict and post-conflict contexts

The exegesis of DDR processes and their impact on peace processes in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon cannot do without conflict and post-conflict contexts<sup>14</sup> which preceded and presided over their establishment in both countries. The conflicts in question arise in historical and political circumstances specific to each of the countries. The conflicts in both countries did not start at the same time and a summary typology of the conflict in the cases reveals a plurality of types of conflicts, which provides sufficient information on the plurality of the contexts of foreclosure of arms in both countries. The analysis of the plurality of conflict and post-conflict contexts sheds light on the one hand, on the exit path from the civil war and the post-electoral crisis in the Ivory Coast and on the other hand, the exit trajectory

from the wars against terrorism and armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions.

### *The exit path from the civil war and the post-electoral crisis in the Ivory Coast*

The process of foreclosure of weapons by DDR in the Ivory Coast is thought with a view to putting an end to the civil war following a disastrous democratisation process<sup>15</sup>. Invoked to explain the entry into conflict in this country, this thesis makes it possible to focus attention on the political competition, which has become the major stake of politics in the post-Houphouët era and which in its concrete aspect, accounts for the political will to revise the relationship to political otherness<sup>16</sup>. The figure of the emerging enemy of identity influences the post-Houphouët political ambitions and stakes, transforming the country into a field of competition for State power where all blows are allowed. The restriction of political space, the exclusion of access to political power by certain elites and communities and the transformation of politics into a “sacrificial act” accelerate the weakening of the Ivorian State and set the country on the path of two decades of “brutalisation” of the political field<sup>17</sup>. The ensuing civil war begins with an attempted coupon the night of September 18-19, 2002, which turned into an armed rebellion. The successful challenge to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence by the State over part of the territory by three armed movements later renamed under the name of Forces Nouvelles<sup>18</sup>, would contribute to the partition of the country. The establishment of a fracture line created by the French and UN interposition reflected the oligopolistic structure of violence on the territory. The Ivorian civil war will structure and reveal a de facto situation of “two States in one”. The de facto State entity controlled by the concurrent rebellion of what remained of the State of the Ivory Coast (the 48 divisions of the South) had Bouaké as their capital and included the ten (10) divisions of the North,

15 Yves Paul, Mandjem, “Transitional governments as sites for the institutionalisation of politics in political orders emerging from the crisis in Africa?”, *African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 12, n° 1 & 2, 2009, pp. 81-182.

16 Ivoiriness being an ideologically connoted concept, which will have allowed the outrageous expression of an ethno-nationalism very old and become shady. Read Jean-Pierre, Dozon, “Ivory Coast at the risk of Ivoiriness”, *Contemporary Africa*, n° 193, 2000, pp. 13-23.

17 On the concept of brutalisation, read Georges L., Mosse, *From the great war to totalitarianism. The brutalisation of European societies*, Paris, Fayard, 2015; Claudine, Vidal, “The brutalisation of the political field, 1990-2003”, in Jean-Bernard, Ouédraogo, Ebrima Sall, (ed.), *Frontiers of citizenship and political violence in the Ivory Coast*, Dakar, CODESRIA, 2008, p. 169-181.

18 The Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), the Ivorian Popular Movement of the Great West (MPIGO) and the Justice and Peace Movement (MJP).

12 On the pragmatic utility of comparison, Fritz, Scharpf, “Institutions in Comparative Policy Research”, *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 33, n° 6-7, August-September, 2000, p. 764.

13 Barrington Moore, *The social origins of dictatorship and democracy*, Paris, François Maspero, 1969.

14 The concept of “exit from conflict” is preferred to that of “post-conflict” widely reported in the literature. In the present case, the conflicts studied are distinguished by two major characteristics: their capacity to escape immediate treatment and their capacity either to multiply, to be reborn in other forms or to be ashes.

Center and the West (193,000 km<sup>2</sup>) transformed for administrative purposes into ten “zones” each placed under the authority of a commander (com-zone)<sup>19</sup>. This oligopolistic structure of violence in the territory will continue throughout the end of the conflict in this country, despite some attempts to dismantle it. Indeed, despite the establishment of the National Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation Program (PNDDR / RC), on 20 August 2003, the Ivorian DDR process was a jagged process, repeatedly delayed by the diverging interests of the parties to the conflict, it will be revived by three: following the Pretoria Summit in April 2005, the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement on 4 March 2007 and in the aftermath of the 2011 post-electoral crisis, before finding a favorable outcome in 2015. In this case, the post-conflict elections failed to settle the political conflict, military victory will emerge as the easiest way to move from war to peace. The Ivorian DDR program revived as part of the security sector reform initiated in 2011 at the end of the conflict and implemented between 2011 and 2015 ended well before the start of the Cameroonian experience in this area.

***The exit trajectory from the wars against terrorism and armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon***

Contrary to the Ivorian experience, the Cameroonian trajectory of arms foreclosure relates to two contexts of conflict. Although also structured around the struggle for State power or a hypothetical power within a potential new State, whether Islamist or of secession, conflicts in Cameroon are informed by a climate of exacerbation of identity referents for political purposes, reflected in a cross-border and international dynamic by the war against jihadist terrorism by Boko Haram and in an internal dynamic internationalised by the war of “separatist” groups in the North West regions and from the Southwest<sup>20</sup>. Initially, the Cameroon DDR process attempts to dismantle and reduce the projected or unintended effects of a jihadist group, which originally had a Nigerian agenda, and which by becoming transnational over time and depending on circumstances, will expand its actions on Cameroonian territory<sup>21</sup>. Note that despite the fact

that the clashes between the Cameroonian defense and security forces and elements of the jihadist group began long before<sup>22</sup>, Cameroon’s war against terrorism officially begins with the declaration of war by the Head of State, Paul Biya, on 17 May 2014 against Boko Haram at the Paris Summit on the Security of Nigeria<sup>23</sup>. This has the particularity of going beyond the “total” war of the industrial era, to extend beyond the military field<sup>24</sup>. It is, to use Carl Schmitt’s beautiful expression, a discriminatory world war not of American style, but of jihadist style; because while taking note of the geopolitical vise in which the State of Cameroon and the LCB States have been placed, and from which they are trying to get out and with an advantage, other than that of the provisional military defeat within the framework of an endogenous and original security coalition set up through the Multinational Joint Task Force created on April 30, 2012 and the national forces, we cannot lose sight of the fact that Boko Haram has the capacity to train a fringe of the people of the Cameroonian State against their own government and create or perpetuate a civil war.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, at its galvanising momentum, the determination of the combatants to the supreme sacrifice<sup>26</sup>. The DDR process ongoing in Cameroon is a complex process which has a dual function: on the one hand, the de-radicalisation function which aims both to neutralise support or commitment towards violent extremism and to reintegrate the ex-associates of Boko Haram into society<sup>27</sup>, on the other hand a function of reconversion to the civil life referring to a whole of procedures seeking to offer to those who agree to lay down their arms in the war of “separatist” groups in the North-West and South-West regions to return to civilian life. The war that has shaken Cameroon since

of religions in Nigeria, which prevent the members of this group from advancing inside the country, it is necessary to take seriously the search for external relays and the problem of supplies of all kinds.

22The first deadly raids by Boko Haram in the Far North region of Cameroon date from 2012. The first confrontation between the Cameroonian defence forces and this group took place on 2 March 2014 during the battle of Fotokol, locality located on the Cameroonian-Nigerian border in the Logone-and-Chari division.

23 If we stick to the theory of decision-making according to which “it is the sovereign who decides the exceptional situation”, read Carl, Schmitt, *Political Theology I*, trans. J.-L. Schlegel, Paris, Gallimard, Coll. “Human Sciences Library”, 1988 (1922).

24 Carl, Schmitt, *The World Civil War. Essays 1953-1973*, Paris, Éditions Ére, 2007, pp. 29-50.

25 Farhad, Khosrokhavar, *Radicalization*, Paris, Editions de la Maison des Sciences Humaines, 2014.

26 Yann, Mens, *30 Questions to understand tensions in the Muslim world*, Paris, Les petits matins, 2016.

27 Issa, Saïbou and Nadine, Machikou, “Reintegration of ex-associates of Boko Haram. Perspectives of the Far North Region of Cameroon”, *Political Note*, Global Center on Cooperative Security, February 2019.

19 Bouna, Katiola, Bouaké, Mankono, Séguéla, Man, Touba, Odienné, Boundiali and Korhogo.

20Yves Paul, Mandjem, “Jihadist groups and international relations”, op. cit.

21Aside from the internal conspiracy thesis evoked here and there in Cameroon, several reasons can be put forward to explain an overflow in the territory. Besides the repression of the group in 2009, the weak military capacities and the geopolitics

October 2016<sup>28</sup> in the South-West and North-West regions was born at the same time from a shift in the agenda from the corporatist demands of teachers and lawyers towards violent separatist demands with armed groups which have been sowing death and desolation since the end of 2017<sup>29</sup>, and of the will of the Cameroonian authorities to maintain public order in these regions of Cameroon at the origin of a major humanitarian crisis.

The comparative analysis of DDR processes in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon remains attentive both to the specific characteristics of each conflict or war situation in each of these countries and to the conflict contexts that generate them. In this context, a DDR approach must be sufficiently flexible and agile in texture to respond effectively to its mission, which provides information on the variable origins of these processes in both countries.

## B. The variable origins of the DDR processes in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon

The analysis of the end of the conflict in Ivory Coast and Cameroon endeavors to highlight the agenda setting and the decision to engage the actors of the conflict or a part of them on the road to foreclosure of weapons as founding moments of DDR processes in both countries. Of course, these moments are the result of a transactional or discursive approach during which the actors of the conflict or those who count in its resolution decide to decree the beginning of the post-conflict phase, without these (moments) having an irreversible and automatic impact following the events. These moments provide information on the commitment of the actors in the conflict or on the choice and participation of partners in the DDR process.

### **Peace agreements, a consensual modality for creating DDR in the Ivory Coast**

28 For some, this conflict is first of all the fruit of the singular reactivations of the past and the logics of the symbolic capitalisation that are political history and territorial history, Calvin, Minfegue Assouga, "The Cameroonian borders between historical inheritances and new challenges", *Revue des sciences sociales*, n° 60, 2018, pp. 26-35

29 Such as the Ambazonia Defence Forces of (ADF). Founded in 2017 and chaired by Benedict Nwana Kuah, the ADF is considered the armed wing of the Board of Directors of Ambazonia (AGC), the largest secessionist group led by Ayaba Cho Lucas (see <https://www.agcfreembazonia.org/>). According to its leaders, the ADF has 30 fighters and operate throughout southern Cameroon. Their strongholds are found in Bui, Fako, Lebiale, Manyu, Meme, Mezam and Momo. Moreover, other heterogeneous and divided groups, often acting at the local level in the absence of a unified and coordinated structure and political leadership. Some include the Cameroon's Defense Forces (SOCADEF), commanded by Ebenezer Derek Mbongo Akwanga, and the Southern Cameroon's Defense Forces (SCDF), led by Nso Foncha Nkem. See: (ICG, 2017).

The end of the conflict in the Ivory Coast had as a fundamental issue the parliamentarisation of political relations<sup>30</sup>, in the sense of the emasculation of the savage violence resulting from the conflict, even its eradication with the key a work of reconversion of the rebels and other partisans in the civil life. However, it should be noted that the disintegration of the State in this country was also accompanied by the disintegration of the structures of the army; many elements from the former regular army are also involved in the DDR process<sup>31</sup>. The civilization work of warrior mores began during the political negotiations, which is why the Ivorian DDR process finds its source in the peace agreements signed for the end of the conflict in this country. It follows that the peace agreements are a non-automatic consensual modality for the creation of DDR in the Ivory Coast, then that the various Ivorian peace agreements reiterate the commitment of political actors to respect previous agreements on the cessation of hostilities (Agreement of ceasefire submitted by ECOWAS to Korhogo on 17 October 2002 and Lomé Ceasefire Agreement of 13 January 2003 on the Ivory Coast Chapter 7 of the Linas Marcoussis Agreement of 24 January 2003 provides for "the Grouping, the Disarmament and Demobilisation of ex-combatants and the reconstruction of the defence and security forces". Its application resulted in the creation of the National Program for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation (NPDDR / RC), on 20 August 2003. However, the implementation of this process was not an easy undertaking because of the conflicts of meaning and interests between the actors involved and the persistence in their categories of thought of the use of the armed option as the ultimate solution in the conquest of State power. It was nevertheless relaunched without any major gains after the Pretoria Summit organised under the auspices of President Thabo Mbeki in April 2005. By way of illustration, on 14 May 2005, the chiefs of staff of the two rival armies of the Ivory Coast, General Philippe Mangou for the FANCI and Colonel Soumaila Bakayoko for the FAFN reached an agreement on disarmament in Yamoussoukro; an agreement which was not respected because of the reluctance of political actors<sup>32</sup>.

30 Norbert, Elias and Eric, Dunning, *Sport and civilization: controlled violence*, Paris, Fayard, 1994.

31 A large part of the ex-National Armed Forces of the Ivory Coast (FANCI) belonging to the class known as "Zinzins, Bahéfoué and Godobets" have joined the ranks of the Armed Forces of the New Forces (FAFN).

32 It provided for a disarmament calendar at the end of which, 48,064 people will be

However, the Ivorian DDR process is really relaunched following the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement on 4 March 2007. Following this agreement supplemented by Decree No. 2007-82 of March 16, 2007<sup>33</sup>, the NPDDR / RC is replaced by the Integrated Command Center (ICC) and the National Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Program (NPRRC). The ICC has the distinction of being a post-conflict institution created with the aim of co-managing defence and security issues. It is in charge of integrating rival armed forces into a single body with a view to securing the process of post-conflict and ensuring the restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces of the Ivory Coast. The ICC is a mixed staff supposed to deploy 4000 elements of the FANCI and 4000 elements of the FAFN across the country. Presented as an "empty shell",

The Ivorian DDR process was the privileged ground for an unprecedented institutional innovation, which was akin to an institutional profusion with specific destinies and relative efficiency. With regard to the reintegration component, institutional innovation has generated many institutions. These included - the National Civic Service Program (PSCN), created on 31 March 2008 and aimed at providing civic and professional training to approximately 40,000 young ex-combatants, former self-defence groups and young people having become familiar with the profession of arms; - the National Committee for the Coordination of Reintegration Activities for Ex-Combatants and Community Rehabilitation (CNCARE-RC), created in July 2009 as a coordinating body and technical instrument for concertation between the parties involved in the reintegration of ex-combatants and community rehabilitation. In addition, throughout the end of the conflict in the Ivory Coast, the various Ivorian transitional governments have dedicated a ministry to national reconciliation and / or to victims of war, displaced persons and exiles, and to reconstruction and social reintegration, often with a view to giving more importance to the question of reintegration<sup>34</sup>,

but overall with a view to at least partially solving the thorny question of financing<sup>35</sup>. Following the Second Post-Ouagadougou Government of February 23, completed on 4 March 2010, the National Secretariat for Reconstruction and Reintegration (SNRR) was created on 25 March 2010 to replace the Ministry of Reconstruction and Reintegration. This structure is responsible for defining and coordinating the national reconstruction and reintegration policy. It will be replaced by a Ministry in charge of Ex-combatants and War Victims created on June 1, 2011 in the government of the new Ivorian President, Alassane Ouattara.

The Ivorian civil war was at the origin of the transnationalisation of the conflicting and post-conflicting political orders, reason for which the DDR process in this country marries the traditional model in the matter combining a close collaboration between the internal and the external . With the military defeat of the regime of President Laurent Gbagbo in 2011, the government of President Alassane Ouattara began reforming the security sector in the Ivory Coast between 2011 and 2015 with the support of the United Nations Operation in the Ivory Coast (UNOCI DDR Division), international donors as well as the United Nations Development Program (Post-Crisis Unit), the World Bank with its Post-Conflict Assistance Program (PAPC),

### ***The DDR decision in Cameroon, a discretionary and benevolent offer of a fresh start***

In political theory, particularly in Carl Schmitt's, the faculties of deciding on war and peace are attributes of the sovereign. This is one of the main points of contrast between the consensual approach to the creation of DDR in the Ivory Coast and the discretionary and benevolent approach of DDR in Cameroon. Contrary to the Ivorian trajectory of partial deinstitutionalisation of the political order due to the conflict with the figures of "Léviathan lame" or "Gulliver entangled", the political crisis in Cameroon, although marked by partial corrosion of the established order and the development of

concerned, including 5,500 government soldiers including 1,500 vulnerable groups, some 42,564 ex-rebels including 3,000 child combatants and 1,650 vulnerable groups, will have to lay down their arms between the end of September and October 3, 2005.

33 Establishing the Integrated Command Center.

34 In the five (05) Ivorian transitional governments, the incumbents of the Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, and of the Ministry responsible for the Reconstruction and Reintegration Program are responsible for the former Ivorian rebellion; Guillaume Soro, Head of the Ivorian rebellion will even be made Minister of State, Minister in charge of the Reconstruction and Reintegration Program before becoming Prime Minister.

35 Ministry of National Reconciliation and Ministry of War Victims, Displaced Persons and Exiles: Government of 14 March 2003; Ministry of National Reconciliation and Relations with the Institutions, Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, and Ministry of State, Ministry responsible for the Reconstruction and Reintegration Program: Government of 28 December 2005; Ministry of National Reconciliation and Relations with the Institutions, Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, and Ministry of State, Ministry responsible for the Reconstruction and Reintegration Program: Government of 16 September 2006; Ministry of National Reconciliation and Relations with the Institutions, Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, and Ministry of Reconstruction and Reintegration:



disintegrative mobilisations, has the particularity of not having reached the threshold of the intolerable, hampered either by the quality of relatively effective sovereign or concerted responses, or by the weak capacity of seduction and persuasion of causes and disintegrating speeches. Overall, in the two open conflicts in the Far North and in the North-West and South-West regions, the rival actors of the Cameroonian State in the conflict have never been able to successfully amputate it by a few perimeters of its territory. This is one of the main arguments that justifies the discretionary offer of DDR, to the dismay of the consensus approach to DDR presented enthusiastically by some analysts as a panacea<sup>36</sup>. The Ivorian experience of DDR attests that the signing of peace agreements can generate conflicts of meaning and interests that will block the implementation of this process and that in the present case, it was necessary for the military defeat of President Gbagbo's camp, to be able to finally and successfully implement the said process between 2011-2015.

The approach of the Cameroonian DDR is worked by the possibility given to choose a new departure understood here as a form of realistic pacifism built around the triptych: forgiveness conditioned by the renunciation of the profession of arms, defence of indivisibility and integrity of State territory and non-negotiable sovereignty. It follows that the benevolent and national reconciliation process of President Paul BIYA does not exclude military or judicial repression of those who refuse to seize the historic opportunity of remission of the wrongs caused to society and of social rehabilitation and community. This vision of DDR is declared by the speech of the President of the Republic during his swearing in ceremony on 06 November 2018,<sup>37</sup>. He then declared: "Lay down arms ... and find the right path; I particularly appeal to young people who have let themselves be drawn into an adventure with no future". It is further clarified in his message to the Nation on 10 September 2019 in which, he explains

that the regional centres are "an honorable way out for these ex-combatants as well as a prospect of social reintegration".

The discretionary offer of a fresh start has been the subject of harsh criticism based on the four prerequisites (common and invariable) UN without which there can be no DDR<sup>38</sup>. However, if these critics insist on the "necessary and essential prerequisites" which are: the peace or cease-fire agreement, open and inclusive dialogue and the minimum guarantees of security", it appears that these have not sufficiently taken into account the benevolent nature of this offer of peace. The benevolent offer of a fresh start has remained attentive to the question of open and inclusive dialogue which it has been able to organise in an innovative way, by removing the English-speaking crisis from the logic of struggle for State power in which some analysts wanted to confine it, to bring its treatment back to the heart of the republican debate, within the framework of a Major National Dialogue which was held from 30 September to 4 October 2019. In addition, this offer first of all successfully replaced the "minimal guarantees of security"<sup>39</sup>, "pledges of goodwill" at mid-term, understood as a set of measures aimed at building renewed confidence between enemies or distrustful rivals, in particular the release of activists prosecuted for crimes in the context of the crisis in the North West and South West regions. Moreover, the day after the prosecution of 289 people arrested for crimes committed in the context of the crisis in the two regions was halted, critics rose to point out that the release of Mr. Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe and his 9 co-accused, prosecuted since 06 December 2018 for perpetrating acts of terrorism, secession, financing of acts of terrorism, revolution, insurrection and hostility against the fatherland, would be a relentless pledge of the actual willingness of the Cameroonian authorities to go towards peace in both regions.

The Cameroonian DDR approach is part of a 2nd generation DDR approach. It is based in part on the commitments made within the framework of the regional strategy of the Lake Chad Basin Commission for the areas affected by Boko Haram adopted in Abuja on 30 August 2018. The third pillar of this regional strategy devoted to the disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reintegration and reintegration (DDRRR) of people associated with

<sup>36</sup> This initiative is presented as being premature and subject to political malice. See the positions of Mr. Ayah Ayah Abiné, president of the "Ayah Paul foundation" and Mr. Cyrille Rolande Béchon, Executive director of the NGO "New human rights", in <https://www.voafrique.com/a/paul-biya-face-au-d%C3%A9fi-du-d%C3%A9sarmement-des-groupes-arm%C3%A9s-en-zone-anglophone/4689774.html>, accessed May 1, 2020 ; Hans de Marie Heungoup in International Crisis Group, Anglophone crisis in Cameroon: how to get to the talks, *Africa Report* n° 272, 2 May 2019.

<sup>37</sup> With overwhelming electoral legitimacy in the North-West (81.74% of the votes cast) and South-West (77.69% of the votes cast) regions, support for the President of the Republic, even if mixed or unacceptable for the extremist minority, remains unchanged in these communities where it continues to benefit from a solid base. He remains very popular there.

<sup>38</sup> a) The signing of a Peace Agreement; b) the confidence of the actors in the peace process; c) the willingness of actors to participate in DDR; d) minimum security guarantees.

<sup>39</sup> Set of measures to induce or encourage belligerents to abandon their weapons.



defended by the enemy<sup>43</sup>, secession, which is prohibited by international law and whose occurrence in exceptional cases is “a matter of pure historical opportunity”<sup>44</sup>. Consequently, the principle of the voluntary disengagement of the ex-combatant or of the person associated with Boko Haram is attenuated by that of the benevolent offer, which it would be unreasonable not to seize. This (this offer) carries a redemptive vision of voluntary commitment inspired by the religious concept of eternal salvation which is not free from constraints. Retraining is the path to salvation and non-retraining leads to self-exclusion and the consequences inherent in such a choice.

It appears that the concept of DDR applied to ex-combatants of armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions did not derogate from the acceptance of the fresh start offered free of charge by the President of the Republic to the ex-combatants of armed groups in both regions. Although open to all, the Cameroonian DDR only concerns those ex-combatants of Boko Haram and armed groups from the North-West and South-West Regions wishing to respond favourably to the peace offer of the Head of the State by laying down its arms. The DDR is placed under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, but ten ministers are also involved: Territorial administration; External Relations; Economy, Planning and regional development; Finances; Youth; Secondary education; Employment and Professional training; Agriculture, Livestock and Fishing; Defense; Secretary of State in charge of the National Gendarmerie; General Delegate for National Security; Director General of External Research; President of the National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism; Heads of regional centers. The NDDRC has regional centres in Bamenda, Buea and Mora.<sup>45</sup> The political destiny of the Cameroonian DDR process like most of the gender processes in other countries remains uncertain and its effectiveness depends on its inclusion in a less enchanting and incremental

approach. It is this step marked by a lot of lucidity that is retained by its designer, the President of the Republic, when the latter affirms, “The regional disarmament centres gradually welcome many ex-combatants who voluntarily accept to lay down their arms. We will continue to make the necessary efforts to make this process fully operational”<sup>46</sup>. It follows that an analysis of the assumptions and driving factors of DDR for the return to peace and stability of Cameroon can only be made on the basis of lessons learned from the Ivorian experience and elsewhere.

## II. The intelligibility of the assumptions and driving factors of DDR in the return to peace and stability

The analysis of the assumptions and driving factors of DDR in the return to peace and stability cannot ignore the effects induced by the introduction of DDR processes on peace and stability in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon. However, it will have to focus in particular on the assumptions and driving factors of DDR for the return to peace and stability.

### A. The effects induced by the DDR processes on the emergence from conflict in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon

One of the greatest lessons from post-conflict experiences in Africa and elsewhere is that one does not come out of a conflict as if one were coming out of a gala dinner, that is to say in perfect cordiality. The transition from the profession of arms to civilian life is a difficult undertaking, a winding and reversible path, precisely because it induces the abandonment of one culture for another and because the uncertainties of the planned new departure are not sufficiently mastered even by those who organise it, that retraining becomes hesitant, measured and sometimes imposed. With experience, the trajectories of DDR in the Ivory Coast and Cameroon reveal on the one hand, a successful experience and on the other hand, an original and painstaking experience taking place which does not affect the return to peace and stability in both countries.

#### *The Ivory Coast, a successful experiment to foreclose of weapons in political life*

Presenting the Ivorian experience as a successful

43 The reflection here is based on the argument of the non-negotiable character of the form of the State invoked by the Cameroonian authorities. During his May 2019 tour of the North West region, Prime Minister Joseph Dion Nguté will affirm that he was instructed by the President of the Republic to come to this region to carry a message of reconciliation. The only points excluded from the discussion being “separation and secession”.

44 Marie-Claude, Smouts, “Decolonisation and secession. Double moral at the UN?”, *French Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2, n° 22, 1972, pp. 832-846.

45 Mr. Gabsa Nyagha Sistux, Head of the regional centre in the North West region in Bamenda, Mr. Bernard Fonju Njukang, Head of the regional centre in the South West region in Buea, and Mr. Oumar Bichaïr, Head of the regional centre of Far North in Mora.

46 Message to the Nation from the President of the Republic of 10 September 2019.

case of foreclosure of arms in the political life of a State in crisis does not mean that the DDR process in this country has been a long, calm river. The criticisms are very numerous and relate to a certain number of elements, which occurred after the announced end of the DDR process (repeated mutinies of soldiers due to the war premiums remaining unpaid, discovery of large arms caches, etc. . .). This attests to the absence of arms foreclosure and suggests that peace in the Ivory Coast is far from being as lasting. Others explain the success of the Ivorian model by the fact that the UN wanted to lend credibility to its readymade model of DDR processes and to restore its coat of arms largely tested by the mixed results of the experiments of arms foreclosure in Liberia, in the Democratic Republic of Congo or in Sudan. The DDR process is accused of not being inclusive because the fighters loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo have remained outside the system, hiding or taking refuge in neighboring countries (Liberia, Benin, etc.).

The objective of the Ivorian DDR program was to disarm all belligerents who could not be integrated into the security forces and to reintegrate them into civilian life. As such, this program was a first step in the process of security reform. It was during this

process that it was decided which combatants could join the newly created security forces, and which would return to civilian life, what relationship they would have with the rest of society as well as the seriousness of the dissolution of power structures and militias dating from the war years for the benefit of a new peaceful political and social order. The Ivorian DDR process has given itself to be seen as a political and social process, whose outcome went far beyond having a direct influence on the lives of ex-combatants, but also had repercussions on the social climate and the distribution of power within the State. In its general orientation, the performance indicators have been clearly defined: the number of people disarmed, the successful coordination of donors and the rapid implementation of the program. The fact remains that this last criterion has been seriously tested due to a “supposed collusion” between the French intervention forces and the rebels, a test which will soon end with the coming to power of President Alassane Ouattara in 2011, close to the rebels and the successful change of role from the New Forces to the Republican Forces of Côte d’Ivoire<sup>47</sup>. Configured by the peculiarities of the civil

47 M. Fofana, “From the New Forces to the Republican Forces of Côte d’Ivoire. How



Ivory Coast: 74,000 ex-combatants to disarm in their time



war and the post-electoral crisis that shook the country, the Ivorian DDR process highlights two important periods in the development of its activities: before and after the post-electoral crisis.

With regard to the period preceding the civil war, the process used several stages such as: - profiling of all elements of the FAFN and Self Defence Groups (GAD), with a clearly defined distribution: 32,777 ex-FAFN combatants, including 5,000 elements for the New Army, 4,000 security agents, 23,777 to be demobilised, and 38,033 ex-GAD members; - the regrouping of the forces of the parties to the conflict under treatment which took place at separate periods for the Defence and Security Forces (SDF) from 22 December 2007 to 24 January 2008 during which 12,000 soldiers were removed from theaters of operations to return to their barracks, and for the FAFN supposed to start on 15 March 2008, it actually took place between 15 June 2010 and 27 August 2010, staggered interval of time during which 5000 New Army Volunteers (VAN) were all imprisoned, reflecting the desire of the ex-rebels to control the process of post-conflict; - disarmament and demobilisation or dismantling, a stage during which 18,222 FAFN ex-combatants were disarmed and demobilised (5,555 ex-combatants could not be found), representing a demobilisation rate of 76.64%, and 17,889 former GAD members were dismantled and 20144 refused to be dismantled, representing a dismantling rate of 47%; - reinsertion includes several activities ranging from the reinsertion of a workforce of 9,020 elements including 6,031 ex-FAFN and 2,989 ex-GAD, training by the National Civic Service Program (PSCN) of 10,459 ex-combatants and young people at risk in the period 2008-2010<sup>48</sup>, restoring the social cohesion of the different communities living in the Ivory Coast, through community rehabilitation actions undertaken by the National Program for Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation (PNRRC) and several international organisations<sup>49</sup>.

Regarding the period following the post-electoral crisis, the DDR process continues because the "disarmament of spirits" mentioned in December 2009 by the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in the Ivory Coast, Choi Young-Jin, in the absence of effective

disarmament on the ground and the failure of the ballot boxes to pacify the civil war. It is naturally through military victory that the new Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara will begin the process of surrender of the DSF and GAD soldiers loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo. Ironically, the blunder made by President Gbagbo during an interview with the Ivorian Press Agency (AIP) on 16 September 2009 will turn against the troops who had remained loyal to him: "It is after the elections that we will resolve the real problem of disarmament. We will disarm them with arms". The warlike competition resulting from the concurrent claim of the electoral victory by the two candidates for the presidential elections of 31 October and 28 November 2010, made it possible to dismantle the oligopoly of violence in Côte d'Ivoire for the benefit of the New Forces which had previously rallied the president recognised by the international community, Alassane Ouattara. With the post-electoral crisis, a new category appeared and concerns young people associated with FRCI. In October 2011, 33,925 young people were profiled, of which 2,000 were added to the FRCI; the rest must simply integrate the demobilisation process. Reintegration into this second phase will demonstrate inventiveness by creating many permanent and temporary jobs: - 30 ex-GAD members were reintegrated into the Urban Health Brigade of the National Urban Health Agency on 20 June 2011; 5000 jobs were created for ex-combatants, individuals associated with conflicts and young people at risk over a period of one year; 44 reintegration kits were given to ex-combatants in Bouaké as well as 43 others to ex-combatants in Ferké on 16 September 2011; and by continuing community rehabilitation actions. In total, the Ivorian DDR process officially started in 2012. Its result is considered a success on an international scale: according to the government 95% of all combatants listed have been reintegrated into civilian life. At least 8,400 rebels have been integrated into the national security forces. The Ivory Coast funded 68% of the program itself and displayed an undisputed desire to deploy the project. This has resulted in effective cooperation between the many national and international actors, an example of effective donor coordination. This is undoubtedly why the international community has applauded and hailed a model of success, which contrasts for the moment with the original and laborious one of Cameroon still ongoing. This has resulted in effective cooperation between the many national and international actors, an example of effective donor coordination.

a rebellion becomes republican", *African Policy*, n° 122, 2011, p. 161-178.

48 A training course administered with financial support from the World Bank through the PAPC.

49 These actions include: rehabilitating community infrastructure, restarting income-generating activities and restoring social cohesion.

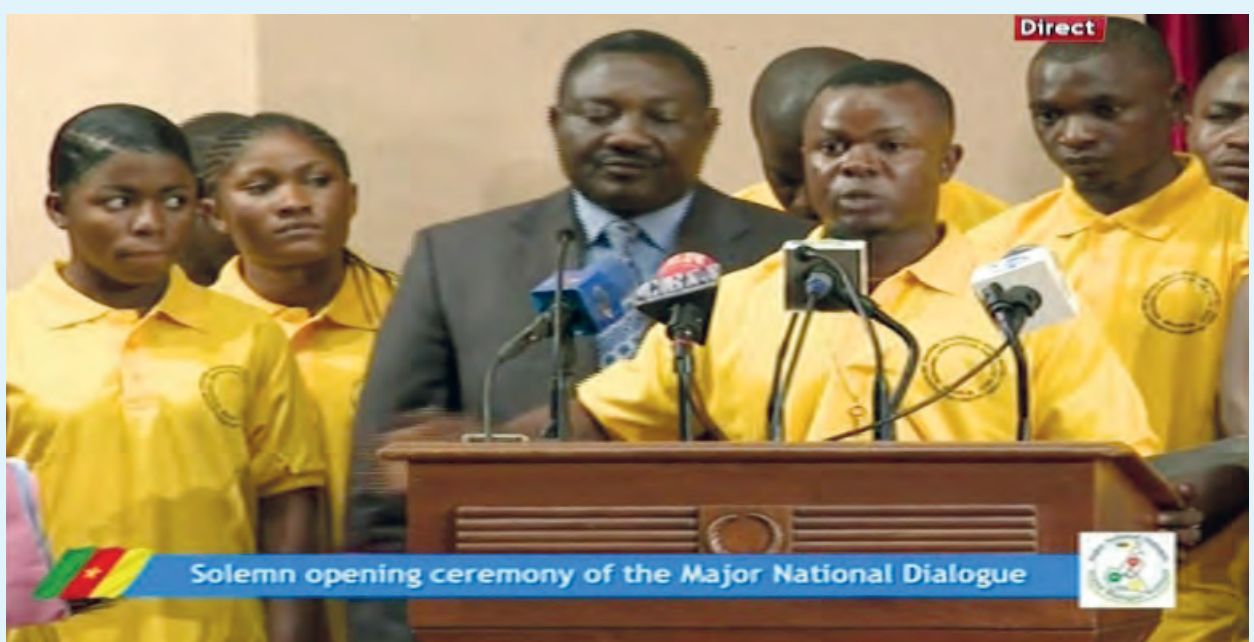
### **Cameroon, an original and laborious experience of foreclosure of weapons still ongoing**

From its inception, the Cameroon DDR process is gratified with the illusion of the programmed failure of its model because it is presented as carrying congenital gaps: unsuitable DDR program trying to deal with two entirely different situations, process of disarmament created unilaterally in the absence of any prior dialogue or agreement in the context of the conflict in the North-West and South-West regions, management structure composed only of persons designated by the government in place and missions carried out by elements of the defence and security forces. These reservations can themselves be quarreled when we make ours the warning made by Stathis N. Kalyvas about the fetishisation of a readymade model of DDR. The latter writes: "the approaches of one model fits all applied to this type of stakes are surely doomed for failure, same as the so called simple paradigms of "new wars"<sup>50</sup>. These reservations are also quarrelsome with regard to the experiences elsewhere of DDR which reveal its character of

incremental process. The Cameroonian experience of DDR is an original model that supports a number of government measures enacted before and after the creation and implementation of the NDDRC to seal or recreate when it has been broken, the link between the State and the population at the origin of the mobilisation of a certain section of the population in the war of the jihadist group Boko Haram and of the armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions. The analysis of the explanatory factors for the conflictualisation of socio-political relations in Cameroon clearly justifies the range of measures of various kinds taken by the Government.

At the socio-economic level, without claiming to be exhaustive, mention may be made of the emergency plan for the development of the northern part of the country in June 2014, endowed with FCFA 78.8 billion (\$ 135 million) (Eye of the Sahel, 2014); - the emergency plan of 5.3 billion FCFA (\$ 9 million) for the construction of schools and hospitals in March 2015 in the Far North; - the three-year emergency plan for the acceleration of growth and employment of 925 billion FCFA (1.7 billion dollars), including 42 billion FCFA (75 million dollars) of which intended for the Far -North; - 45.4 billion FCFA (80 million dollars) of the 11<sup>50</sup> billion FCFA (2 billion dollars) of

<sup>50</sup> Stathis N., Kalyvas, "Préface", in Nathalie, Duclos (dir.), *Farewell to arms? Veterans' journey*, Paris, Karthala, 2010, p. 8.



the Public Investment Budget (BIP) of 2015 are dedicated to the Far North (Finance Act 2016); - presidential project of 102 billion FCFA intended for young people from all over the country in December 2016; - the financial support of CFAF 6.6 billion from the Emergency Trust Fund (FFU) of the European Union and the French Development Agency (AFD) in Cameroon to the Far North region ; - the 2017-2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), and the many sectorial projects led by the various ministries; - the emergency humanitarian assistance plan for the North-West and South-West regions created in June 2018 and estimated at 12.7 billion FCFA, supposed to compensate for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation (160,000 internally displaced persons (PDI) in both regions<sup>51</sup>.

With regard to the measures taken to relax tension or the artificial suture of a Nation temporarily relieved of the allegiance of a part of its population in the North-West and South-West regions, they are of a legal nature, restorers, and technical and aim primarily to consolidate the Cameroonian national identity articulated around the paradigm of "diversity in the union". These included - the effective translation into English of the OHADA texts; the creation of a Common Law Section at the Supreme Court, in order to hear appeals against decisions of the lower courts, in cases falling under Common Law; the creation of a Common Law Section at the National School of Administration and Magistracy to henceforth train English-speaking Justice Auditors and Registrars; the special recruitment of bilingual teachers in secondary education; the creation of a National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in order to examine in depth all the sources of frustrations of the population of the North-West and South-West regions; the cessation of proceedings ordered against certain persons arrested in connection with the crisis in the two regions<sup>52</sup>; the creation of a Ministry dedicated to Decentralisation and Local Development.

The Cameroonian DDR process is a method of retraining and rescuing ex-combatants so that they find their other brothers on the boat of socio-

political, economic and identity normalisation. This is the reason why DDR is a tool for seduction, even a relative one, going in the direction of giving peace a chance, based on voluntary surrenders, or failing that, forced surrenders. The national policy for taking care of deserters from Boko Haram, a special category of Cameroonian DDR, promotes an operational approach based on a strategy to promote defections inspired by the experiences of neighboring countries, in particular that which has prevailed in the Diffa region. in Niger. Sketched on 30 October 2017, by the Governor of the Far North region, Midjiyawa Bakary, this strategy unveils a model based on three pillars: de-radicalisation, socialisation and a cure against brainwashing. Designed and implemented not without difficulties and imperfections, it nonetheless remains a model capable of better recreating social ties, that is to say, better able to prepare former executioners and victims to live together by long-term contribution of psychologists, psychiatrists and other doctors. The national policy of taking care of Boko Haram deserters has produced encouraging results, although still insignificant, with the reintegration of 50 ex-associates of the jihadist group Boko Haram.

The Cameroonian DDR process has an impact on the foreclosure of weapons, even if for the moment it is far from winning the support of the greatest number of targeted combatants. If we cannot be satisfied with the number of surrenders recorded, the figures of which vary according to the sources: 252 ex-combatants according to the assessment drawn up by the National Coordinator of the CDDR, Faï Yengo Francis, one year after the establishment of the said Committee<sup>53</sup> and a non-exhaustive estimate of between 2,000 and 3,000 separatist ex-combatants from English-speaking regions<sup>54</sup>, we can nevertheless welcome this significant harvest if we refer to the results obtained over the same period in other contexts such as those of the Ivory Coast, the Central African Republic, etc. The analysis of the deployment of the DDR process awakens the extreme lucidity of the Cameroonian authorities, which spares no effort to punctuate the said process of "pledges of good will".

51 This plan was followed by the creation of the Ash of Coordination of the Plan of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance for the two regions, created by decree of the Prime Minister on 22 November 2018 and the regional representations installed.

52 The release of more than 700 activists prosecuted for crimes committed within the framework of the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions: around thirty leaders of dissident groups including Nkongho Agbor Balla, Fontem Neba and Paul Ayah Abine on 30 August 2017; 289 prisoners on 13 December 2018; 333 prisoners on 3 October 2019.

53 According to this assessment: - 122 ex-combatants are received in Mora in the Far North; - 70 in Buea, capital of the South West; - 60 in Bamenda in the North West, <http://www.crtv.cm/2019/12/bilan-cddr-2019-252-repentis-en-un-an/>.

54 Armand, Ougock, "Cameroon: Questions raised by the multiple surrenders of separatist anglophone fighters", in [https://www.koaci.com/article/2020/01/06/cameroun/politique/cameroun-questions-soulevees-par-the-multiple-surrenders-of-the-combatants-separatists-anglophones\\_138197.html](https://www.koaci.com/article/2020/01/06/cameroun/politique/cameroun-questions-soulevees-par-the-multiple-surrenders-of-the-combatants-separatists-anglophones_138197.html), accessed 16 May 2020.

The opportunity of convening the Major National Dialogue from 30 September to 4 October 2019 in Yaoundé, perceived as a tool for concertation and consensus building helping to overcome internal dissensions, did not fail to consolidate the objective of reconciliation and strengthen the peace camp. Request for forgiveness by ex-combatants of armed groups in English-speaking regions, to the execution in English of the national anthem of Cameroon, through the invitation to lay down their arms to other young combatants still on the ground, the offer of peace is reinforced by the surrender of about forty ex-combatants. Beyond the reservations, which one can formulate, the figures of Success Nkongho, of ex-General Kawa Kawa were sensitive to the global offer of peace which, it has not been sufficiently highlighted divides the ideologues and radicals of the crisis in the North West and South West regions. The convening of the Major National Dialogue and the progressive implementation of its recommendations accelerate the disorganisation of the separatist

groups and their politico-propagandist networks. The implementation in progress of a special status for the North West regions of the South West<sup>55</sup> made possible by the presidential election of 7 October 2018 and the double legislative and municipal elections of 9 February 2020 and which could be accelerated with the upcoming holding of regional elections, puts radical groups under pressure from the return of politico-institutional normalisation and political pacification. The assassination of the Mayor of Mamfe, Prisley Ojong on 10 May 2020, a young prosperous business man of 35 years in the region by elements of “separatist” groups is part of these acts of despair perpetrated with the aim of stopping the machine of standardisation. Similarly, the ongoing implementation of the Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development of the North-West and South-West Regions (PPRD-NO / SO) structured

55 The adoption of a special statute for the English-speaking regions of the country was noted in Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 on the General Code of Decentralised Territorial Communities.



National dialogue: 9 former secessionists from the North West lay down their arms and accept the outstretched hand of President Biya



around three main objectives: the rehabilitation and development of basic infrastructure, the relaunch of the economic fabric and the promotion of social cohesion<sup>56</sup>, and whose realisation is estimated at 90 billion FCFA, will contribute to reinforcing the benevolence aspect of the peace offer and to put more in the minority the radicals of the crisis in the two English-speaking regions of the country. The envelope of 36 billion FCFA mobilised for the first year as part of the execution of the PPRD-NO / SO<sup>57</sup> is a powerful tool for social pacification as long as the exemplarity of its management and the persuasiveness of the achievements will convince even the most skeptical on the ground and maintain the confidence of Cameroon's financial partners in this project. Far from echoing the reservations of the Interpatronal Group of Cameroon (GICAM), which report an underestimation of the PPRD-NO / SO budget in view of the economic losses, which amounted only for 2019 to more than 800 billion FCFA, it should be noted that the real obstacle to the expression of the peaceful dimension of public policies remains the gap which generally widens between the hopes aroused and the concrete achievements.

## **B. The assumptions and driving factors of DDR for the return to peace and stability**

The analysis of the assumptions and driving factors of DDR to the return to peace and stability in Cameroon must remain attentive to the lessons learned from the Ivorian experience on the one hand, and on the other hand, the instrumentalisation of identity referents Anglophone and Islamist in conflict because as Samuel Huntington shows when we fight for our identity we are ready to fight to death; to the transnationalisation of the political conflict or the multiplication of fighting spaces at the origin of the construction of a transnational continuum between internal actors, seditious elements of diasporic communities and international actors.

With regard to the lessons learned from the Ivorian experience, lessons which could inform the process under way in Cameroon, it is possible to point out some areas for reflection. The security of

the environment in which the DDR process takes place is an important factor that facilitates the success of a DDR process. DDR environmental security means the absence or even the reduction of military threats, in particular reprisals emanating from former combat companions, soldiers in charge of welcoming the repentants and communities responsible for welcoming the old executioners. This is also one of the main challenges taken up on 30 November 2019 in Yaoundé by the National Coordinator of the CDDR when he took stock of the first year of activity of said committee. He then underlined the challenge of the safety of ex-combatants from the possible reprisals of their ex-companions in the bush. For the safety of ex-combatants, the Cameroonian approach gives them the possibility of settling outside the regions where they fought. It is not only a question of laying down arms, it is also necessary to offer opportunities for the reintegration of ex-combatants. Environmental security also concerns the security of ex-combatants' cantonment sites and housing infrastructure, so that places do not turn into unfortified citadels, nor in prison, even less into a detention centre, but more to places of transition to social reintegration. In these conditions, the non-peaceful security contexts where factors of vulnerability, uncertainty or volatility of the foreclosure of arms are not favourable to the success of a DDR process persist, particularly when the neighbouring border terrorists in the regions which are prey to the instability are mobilized by the armed groups such as the back bases where they store arms and from where cross border attacks are led.

More than consensus-based disarmament, the balance of power is the key to the success of the DDR process. The Obsession of a negotiated genesis of the DDR process in Cameroon as a solution to the success of this process is the result of a ready-to-think concept, which has become conceptually hegemonic, so its operational efficiency remains questionable. The Ivorian experience of DDR is a textbook case, which attests to the fact that the signing of a ceasefire agreement or a peace agreement is in no way an inevitable and infallible guarantee of success of such a process. As an illustration, we should have waited until 19 May 2007, either nearly five (05) years after the signing of the Korhogo Ceasefire Agreement in October 2002 and more than four (04) years after the signing of the Linas Marcoussis Agreement in January 2003 so that we are witnessing the completion of the dismantling of the zone of confidence which had consecrated the partition of the country since 2002. As evidenced by the localised experiences of the CAR, the DRC, etc.,

<sup>56</sup> See decree N° 031 / CAB / PM of April 03, 2020 setting the organic framework for the implementation of the Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development of the North West and South West regions.

<sup>57</sup> The announcement was made at the first meeting of the steering committee held on 13 May 2020 under the leadership of the PPRD-NO / SO National Coordinator, Paul Tasong.

the Ivorian DDR process is reaching cruising speed after the military defeat of the camp of former President Gbagbo in 2011 and the will of the international community to legitimise the New Power and rid the national territory of the hotbeds of militarisation. It is at this level that we must note the importance of the effects of the interconnection between internal and external, to say that one aspect of the necessary balance of power resides in the transformation of the international environment in favour of peace, because as long as it remains hostile as during the period before the arrival of President Alassane Ouattara in power, disarming can be delayed indefinitely. Consequently, in spite of the attraction aroused by the Ivorian model, the critics rose to point in hollow the diktat of the standards of the donors and the international investors, in particular the development program of the UN or the European Union on this model. The latter would have graciously accepted the image of "successful" disarmament, ignoring fundamental problems such as the mistrust of many ex-combatants in the new government, the exclusive nature of the process and the division of security forces which will appear in broad day light a little later<sup>58</sup>.

One of the factors that weakens DDR processes in Africa remains the failure to include a timetable in the process of creating and implementing the process. This chronogram could provide information on the type of activities to be carried out and the timetable for implementing these activities. However, if the existence of a timetable is not a guarantee of speed in the execution of obligations, most peace agreements in the Ivory Coast since that of Marcoussis having expressly provided for a timetable, it is necessary to even specify that there remains an evaluation and pressure tool that weighs on the actors in charge of the DDR process. Even perceived from the angle of the prudence of the designers of DDR in Cameroon, the fact remains that the absence of a chronogram in the Cameroonian decree creating the CDDR is a departure from the principles of modern governance, which mean that setting a calendar of activities contributes to efficiency requirements. The same is true for the existence of a structure for the DDR program designed as the body for coordinating and coordinating activities in the field. The Cameroonian approach emphasizes the identity proximity of the program managers (National Coordinator, heads of regional centres) with the

regions under reconstruction, only, it reveals an elite structure which does not do justice enough to the administration which accompanies such a process. When translated into reality, this approach fuels the sentiment of abandonment that the ex-combatants express regularly on the cantonment sites.

The demand for a balance between reintegration plans and the opportunities, aptitudes, preferences and expectations of ex-combatants is one of the driving factors of DDR in the return to peace and stability. Understood as a long and complex process, reintegration seems to be the most delicate and reversible step and the hotspot of DDR processes in Africa. It appears that an incomplete and ineffective reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life, in turn, presents increased risks of armed crime. In addition, care must be taken to ensure that the allowances and other types of assistance granted to ex-combatants do not create socio-economic imbalances in favour of the latter, which could constitute a form of sedition bonus or sources of funding for armed or terrorist groups. Hence, the interest in consolidating approaches in terms of viable solutions for the development of regions affected by the conflict, which would benefit.

Funding the activities of the DDR process is one of the determining factors of its success. If money is often presented as the "sinews of war", one can validly assert that money is also the "sinews of peace". Peace has a price and this is reflected in the funding of DDR activities. Several DDR processes are doomed to failure due to the lack of means to finance the planned activities or too late or due financing of these activities. The consequences are numerous: problems of allocating ex-combatants, defections, armed crime, conversion to new movements, creation of transnational militias, etc. The operational difficulties of the structures in charge of DDR such as the Integrated Command Centre, are due to logistical and financial problems. The Cameroonian decree creating the CDDR simply mentions international grants and contributions. Beyond this provision, there is no information on the issue of funding. This state of affairs can be detrimental to the trust that we would like to see established between those responsible for the process, the recipients of the activities and the communities concerned, when we do not know the overall budget allocated, the amount of allocations and aid for each combatant, the amount of partner contributions and State subsidies. Especially by refraining from leaving the conduct of DDR operations in Cameroon under the dictates of donors

<sup>58</sup> Franziska, Ehler, Ibidem, p. 1.

and other development partners, the Cameroonian State is able to alienate significant international financial support. The State of Cameroon is expected in the field of transparency in the provision of financial resources for the benefit of the DDR process, as did the Ivory Coast which fully assumed responsibility (endorsed by the 2009 budget) , by disbursing almost all of the funds for the end of the conflict, including 118 billion CFA francs. The same applies to the coordination of the DDR process, which has an impact on the confidence of international partners in the said process.

Communication is an essential factor for the success of DDR processes, at its preliminary stage as well as throughout its implementation. The process, accessibility and benefits of a campaign need to be widely disseminated, often through simple mass media such as radio. In addition, given the growing use of mobile telephones on the continent, mass SMS can facilitate interaction between DDR participants, those responsible for its implementation and the communities concerned, and it is appropriate take full advantage of it. In addition, communities and combatants will find it much easier to shed their skepticism about DDR, and to commit to it, if its parameters and benefits are clearly communicated and if they have the means to specify the procedures, to ask for help or to stay in contact in another way with the administrators of the process.

The 1995 "Timbuktu Flame of Peace" ceremony, which ended years of conflict between the Tuaregs and the Malian armed forces, is a perfect illustration of the symbolic role of the destruction of weapons as an act of confidence building and confidence and peace restored. Its curative capacity was tested twice in the Ivory Coast on 30 July 2007 and 30 July 2008 in Bouaké, capital of the New Forces rebellion, where the FDS and the FAFN made a joint declaration of the end of the war, the President Gbagbo and his Prime Minister, Guillaume Soro, made a very reactive crowd repeat, "the war is over, the war is over". Without overestimating its peacemaking capacity, what should be remembered is the inscription in the minds of the communities concerned by the violence of armed groups that the war is over that it is a bad thing, that is why we reunite to burn arms.

The Ivorian experience of DDR also shows the importance of making use of civil reconciliation initiatives and the National Civic Service Program (PSCN) in the success of this process. Such a path could be explored in revitalising the Cameroonian process.

## Conclusion

The Cameroonian approach to the DDR process is an approach designed to address two situations, which have in common only the fact of being two forms of radicalisation which involve the survival of the State as a unitary entity and as a society modern. However, it will have to deepen and better structure the national policy for the care of Boko Haram deserters, a special category of Cameroonian DDR inaugurated by the Governor of the Far North region, Midjiyawa Bakary. Hence, the need to characterise the type of combatant we are dealing with and to distinguish between combatants who self-demobilise on their own when the opportunity is given to them, vulnerable combatants who need to be encouraged by viable and progressive development solutions to abandon the path of sedition; and radicalised terrorist or separatist fighters. Against this last category, it is important to apply other methods to deal with the diehards, such as military operations, legal and diplomatic pressure and measures to combat illegal income. In addition, if there is no exit policy from the crisis that is not accompanied by a forgiveness policy, (like the amnesty agreements in the Ivory Coast), the same cannot be said of the criminal trials for the purposes of political pacification which opened against Jean-Pierre Bemba the day after the end of the crisis in the DRC or against former President Laurent Gbagbo and the leader of the Young Ivorian Patriots , Charles Blé Goudé. At the risk of starting the funeral oration of the State, the unconditional amnesty is not the prerogative of any modern State especially when one attacks its safety, its identity, and the values promoted by this.

The public DDR policies recommended, or implemented, must explicitly take into account the effects of the conflict. This set of considerations must also be integrated into debates on reconciliation and collective memory. One of the possible levers for the success of a disarmament process is to refrain from using less strict rules and established models and taking into account the local dimension.

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# NATIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL, AND REGIONAL APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN DISARMAMENT-DEMOBILISATION-REINTEGRATION

By Lasconi MOUNGUI MEDI

*Since the end of the Cold War, several African countries have implemented Disarmament-Demobilisation-Reintegration (DDR) programs to get out of a major war or crisis once and for all. By way of illustration, we can cite Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal (Casamance), Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, etc. In this long list, Cameroon, long regarded as an island of peace, has, for a few years, been in an ocean of turmoil. Indeed, the country is facing the war against the pernicious terrorist sect Boko Haram and the socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions.*

*Historically, the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Reconciliation (DDR) process is considered to be a process of disarming members of armed groups, releasing these combatants from those groups and helping them to reintegrate into civilian life. It aims to support ex-combatants and those associated with armed groups so that they can become active participants in the peace process. It is also an essential step that should lead to the peaceful resolution of a conflict. DDR aims to lay the foundations for the safeguarding and maintenance of the communities to which these people return. This, by building capacities for peace, security and long-term development. For experts on the issue, it is the only way of establishing and maintaining peace and stability at the national, international, sub-regional or regional level after a conflict of great magnitude.*

*According to Massaër Diallo, DDR is an essential element for the transition from war to peace during armed conflicts which affect countries and which take place within a given society. A United Nations tool for peacekeeping, DDR is universal in principle, method and objectives. Published in 2006, the United Nations Handbook on DDR defines the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards. Indeed, it substantially declines a certain number of prerequisites and necessary for the implementation of a DDR process. These include the signing of a DDR peace agreement, the parties' confidence in the peace process and their willingness to engage in the DDR process, and the guarantee of a level of minimum security<sup>1</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> Peacekeeping.un.org, disarmament-demobilisation and reintegration

In Cameroon, as in other African countries that have experienced it, the implementation of DDR programs has given rise to various fortunes in view of the specific characteristics of each country. When observing the various DDR programs in Africa, one realizes that the classic integrated standards of DDR are increasingly challenged by the dynamics of post-crisis in Africa, the particularities of national experiences, etc. These transformational challenges require DDR practitioners to adapt their activities to constantly evolving African conflict situations, including those where compliance with these preconditions is not observed. In Africa, the main laboratory for DDR experimentation for a few years, we observe a plurality of approaches in DDR.

The analysis of national, sub-regional and regional appropriation and experiences in DDR in Africa, through the study of the case of Cameroon, allows glimpsing the doctrinal evolution of this discipline on the continent. It will be a question of examining the specificity of its national DDR (I) program with regard to its dual nature as a mechanism for ending the crisis and for fighting

terrorism, the role played by the Department<sup>2</sup> in its implementation, as well as the challenges and prospects it presents for lasting stability in Cameroon and the sub-region (II).

## NATIONAL DDR APPROPRIATION AND EXPERIENCE IN CAMEROON

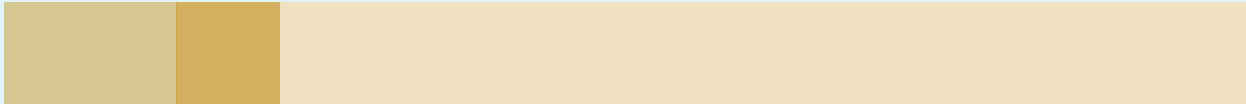
Cameroon's DDR program is part of what should be called new generation or 2nd generation DDR. It confirms the evolution of the doctrine, which conditioned the implementation of a traditional DDR to the prior signature of a peace agreement or a cease-fire between the various actors or belligerents. It is the result of a change in the operational context, characterised by a transformation or even more complex nature of security threats or crises, the specific nature of belligerent actors, as well as the forms of violent, armed, terrorist and insurgent action that characterise them.

A quick reading of African conflict, especially in Central Africa, shows that several countries have

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of External Relations.



17 MAY 2019, Joseph Dion Ngute visiting the English-speaking area brings good news for these former combatants called secessionists / 237infos.net



experienced this new doctrine, which has some similarities with the Cameroonian model. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in order to adapt and follow the evolution of the reality on ground, characterised by a strong perpetration of violence against civilians by non-State and unruly elements or by populated criminal gangs marginalised groups, the United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) whose activities aimed inter alia at disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation and reintegration after more than ten years on the ground, was forced to modify its strategy. In response, the UN mission adopted the 2nd generation DDR with a new strategy christened “communal violence reduction” (CVR), which aims at reducing the increased levels of violence in Congolese communities and attain an objective of security and stability.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, Cameroon has faced two major crises. Indeed, the country is engaged in a fight against the terrorist jihadist sect Boko Haram in its Far North region ; and since the end of 2016, in the resolution of the socio-political crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. In his concern to complete and strengthen the various government measures already taken to reduce armed violence on its territory, the Head of State of Cameroon decided to create on November 30, 2018, the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and rebel armed groups from the North West and South West (CNDRR).

The creation of this Committee aims to provide a welcome and social reintegration framework for the repentants of Boko Haram and for members of armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions wishing to respond to the offer of peace made by the President of the Republic in his inauguration speech of 06 November 2018. The Committee is placed under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government and headed by a National Coordinator appointed by Presidential Decree. It has Regional Centres in Bamenda, Buea, and Mora, in which disarmament, demobilisation and preparation for reintegration operations take place.

Like the other public administrations concerned by this issue, the Department actively participates in the implementation of the national DDR program through several mechanisms. Among other things, one of its

primary missions is to work on the mobilisation of international partners to support the government's efforts for the operationalization of its DDR program, but also all government initiatives to reduce armed violence in Cameroon and a lasting return to peace. By way of illustration, with regard to the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan in the North-West and South-West regions, it has invested in the repatriation of refugees from Nigeria in liaison with international organisations. It is in this context that we can also register the Tripartite Agreement signed between Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the voluntary return of Central African refugees. As Cameroon's interface with the various international partners, it negotiates extensively with UN organisations, in particular the UNHCR, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for the search for lasting solutions on a number of issues such as the forced recruitment of children into militias, the establishment in collaboration with national stakeholders and international partners of programs to combat the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), the protection of vulnerable groups, the refugee management.

In the area of disarmament, the Department coordinates the inter-ministerial working group on the implementation of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their ammunition and all parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair and assembly, called “Kinshasa Convention”. To this end, it supports the NDDRC in the development of education and awareness programs on SALW, the protection of vulnerable social groups, the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons throughout the country and wants Cameroon to respect its international and / or conventional commitments in the area of disarmament. The response mechanisms in which the Department participates are numerous throughout the national territory and help to curb the disease at its root. For illustration, with the support and the collaboration of the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) or other partners in development, the Department regularly organises training sessions for the capacity building in the prevention against terrorism and the fight against violent extremism to the benefit of social actors (administrative and traditional authorities, local, vigilante committees, village communities, etc.) concerned with the fight against terrorism in the northern region.

<sup>3</sup> Read the article “MONUSCO, a change of strategic paradigm: from traditional DDR to 2nd generation DDR, in [monusco.unmissions.org](http://monusco.unmissions.org)

On the international level, the action of the Department aims to present to the various international bodies (UN, AU, ECCAS, etc.) the measures taken, like the DDR program, by the Cameroonian authorities to resolve the various security crises which are currently shaking the country.

The adoption by Cameroon of second generation DDR is explained by the fact that the vast majority of perpetrators of armed violence in Cameroon very often have different motivations and agenda, thus making it difficult to implement the actions of the institutions of the State to counter the resulting threats. As a result, to take only the single case of the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, a situation of prolonged violence which is bogged down by destroying the economic, social and health infrastructures, by harming social and national peace and cohesion, causing massive forced displacement of civilian populations in the process. This new complex context requires a new, DDR model, dynamic, adaptable to targeted actions and specific to the reality of the field to avoid the institutionalisation of violence and create space for civil protection by temporary stabilisation measures<sup>4</sup>. The DDR initiated by the Cameroonian authorities then appears as an original public policy, a public solution in a very agitated security context whose aim is to reduce armed violence and a return to peace.

Like all 2nd generation DDRs, Cameroon's strategy aims to prioritise the protection of civilians, the strengthening of security and stability, the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life after their disarmament and disengagement following training or a reinsertion and reintegration process. However, the Cameroonian DDR program obeys a clean and complex national context, which takes into account, at the level of its planning and implementation, the factors, which played a determining role in triggering crises, while taking into account culture, political and historical development, and the root causes of the crises that shake it. Operationally, Cameroon's strategy is based on neutralising the various armed groups, gang members, criminal gangs, marginalised groups, isolated elements; strengthening dialogue between national and community actors; the constant search for solutions to the root causes of crises; building social cohesion and living together; facilitating the social, economic and socio-professional reintegration of ex-combatants; strengthening the role of

communities in terms of awareness and protection; the implementation of development strategies and the fight against marginalisation; taking into account the concept of gender; etc.

## **SPECIFICITIES, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FROM THE NATIONAL DDR: FOR SUSTAINABLE STABILITY IN CAMEROON AND THE SUB-REGION**

The Cameroon DDR program represents a holistic specificity due to its dual nature, aiming to solve two distinct problems. On the one hand, the socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions; and on the other hand, fight against jihadist terrorism of the Boko Haram sect. If the repercussions of the socio-political crisis in the North-West and the South-West have been felt in Nigeria through the movement of people (refugees), this crisis, by its socio-political, historical, linguistic, geographical, cultural and economic specificities can only be adequately and effectively addressed within the framework of a national and local approach, as is currently the case through the various mechanisms and plans already put in place by the Cameroonian government.

With regard to the socio-political crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, the Cameroonian authorities have demonstrated, in particular through proactive diplomacy, their full capacity to manage this crisis, this through the establishment of various mechanisms and initiatives, the National DDR Committee which symbolises the continuity and / or pursuit of a specific public policy of "Peace", forgiveness, social reintegration and peaceful return to civilian life, but also development. The national DDR program accompanies a vast plan for the reconstruction of the regions in crisis, presented on December 5, 2019, to the international community and to development partners by the Prime Minister, Head of Government and implemented by a National Coordinator<sup>5</sup> assisted by an assistant, will have to rehabilitate and develop basic infrastructure, work for the economic revitalisation of the said regions and promote social cohesion. This Plan, wanted by the Head of State, is part of the list of recommendations made during the Major National Dialogue, which was held from 30 September to 4 October, 2019, and should enable crisis regions to

<sup>4</sup> Op cit

<sup>5</sup> The implementation of this ambitious Presidential Plan for the reconstruction and development of the North-West and South-West regions was entrusted to Messrs' Paul TASONG NJUKANG and NJONG Donatus Fonyuy, National Coordinator and Deputy National Coordinator of the said Plan, respectively.



return to the path of development.

Beyond disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, Cameroon's national approach to DDR has an economic nature in the peace and development continuum. To this end, it is important to note that this Committee is endowed with significant resources, both financial and logistical, to effectively fulfill its missions. The Department's task will be to further mobilise international development partners to support and accompany government initiatives.

With regard to the fight against Boko Haram, Cameroon's strategy within the framework of the Lake Chad Basin (LCBC) is part of a regional context through the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The various member countries of this coalition have put in place mechanisms to address the roots of the problem. In this context, it appeared urgent for the countries of the region to ensure sustainable and equitable access to resources and services as well as a sustainable increase in livelihood. Better still, it has become imperative to build resilience

by associating with humanitarian actions to annihilate Boko Haram, humanitarian emergency interventions. Ultimately, the policies of the LCBC countries aim at permitting the population that returns to the zones once controlled by Boko Haram to benefit from an appropriate support to restart agricultural, socio-professional activities while having adequate access to social services and protection.

This full cooperation of States within the framework of the MNJTF can be analyzed as the operationalization of the theory of the "global security complex" or "security complex" conceptualized and developed by Barry Buzan. The Global Security Complex is a group of States whose primary security concerns tie them so tightly together that the security of one cannot really be separated from that of the others. This notion is therefore based on the recognition of common threats and fears, on the one hand, and the building of alliances based on relationships of trust and friendships, on the other. It is in this context that, in order to face the common threat posed by terrorism, the LCBC countries, firmly



Delivery of a school building built by Ex-combatants from the pre-DDR Central African program (Sept 2017) / Conf / Press MINUSCA

resolved to safeguard and consolidate the independence, the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the unity of the sub-region and conscious of the fact that the defence and security of each State in the sub-region is their responsibility, but that it will be more efficient again thanks to the coordination and the implementation of a policy, of a common strategy, logistical means of mutual assistance have prioritized a regional approach in the war against terrorism.

In addition to the difficult security context prevailing in the Lake Chad Basin due to the abuses by Boko Haram, there is a particularly worrying humanitarian and environmental situation, with devastating consequences for the population. To meet this demand for peace, international partners are committed alongside the LCBC. This is the dynamic behind the regional stabilisation, recovery and resilience strategy for the areas of the Lake Chad Basin affected by the crisis adopted on 30 August 2018, following Security Council resolution 2349 of the United Nations Security Council to facilitate the transition from active military engagement to addressing the root causes of the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin. Developed in an inclusive, participatory

approach, it lays the foundations for lasting peace and sustainable development in the region. It is within the framework of this cooperation that an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) was held in N'Djamena, Chad in November 2018. This important foundation, in which Cameroonian diplomacy has taken an active part, has enabled the Heads of State to review the security situation in the Lake Chad Basin, as well as the measures to be taken to cope with the resurgence of attacks by the different factions of Boko Haram. State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). This important foundation, in which Cameroonian diplomacy has taken an active part, has enabled the Heads of State to review the security situation in the Lake Chad Basin, as well as the measures to be taken to cope with the resurgence of attacks by different factions of Boko Haram.

Like any strategy, to achieve its objectives, it requires that significant institutional, human, financial and material resources be mobilised. In other words, the successful implementation of the strategy for the recovery of the Lake Chad Basin depends on the



A former rebel of the 3R armed group, Younouss is preparing to return to civilian life. As part of the DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) / TV5 Monde program

investment of the States of the sub-region and the commitment of development partners like the African Union, United Nations and major friendly powers in the Lake Chad Basin. In order to make this strategy operational, in accordance with the Security Council resolution, a joint UNOCA / UNOWAS / EU mission had been dispatched to the region in order to pinpoint realities and assess needs. In the same vein, an International Conference in which Cameroon took part, was held in Berlin, in September 2018. This High Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region aimed to examine the mechanisms for improving humanitarian assistance, protecting civilians, crisis prevention, stabilisation and construction leading to sustainable development. The Berlin meeting, the follow-up to the Humanitarian Conference on the Lake Chad region, which was held in Oslo in 2017, enabled the international community to raise funds to finance humanitarian, development and peace consolidation activities in the Lake Chad Basin region.

Over \$ 2 billion in pledges have been made, mostly from European countries as well as regional and international organisations. The contributions announced by 15 European countries (Germany, United Kingdom, France, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, Finland and Poland) total \$ 1.03 billion, an amount to which must be added \$ 269.81 million promised by the European Commission. The United States promised \$ 420.13 million and Canada promised \$ 52.47 million. As for international organisations, the World Bank has pledged \$ 270 million and the African Development Bank \$ 25.65 million. UN funds were also used. The Central Fund for Emergency Intervention (CERF) will have to provide \$ 43.64 million and the Fund for the consolidation of Peace (PBF) \$ 32 million.

Like the regional strategy to combat terrorism developed within the framework of the LCBC countries, the regional approach to DDR in the Lake Chad Basin region through a plan to harmonize national DDR programs (Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria) appears as a global and coherent measure of governance making it possible to effectively fight against terrorism, the proliferation of SALW, the illicit traffic of natural resources, organised crime, transnational organised crime or mercenarism in a context generalised crises and taking into account the specificities of each country. This regional approach to DDR could also be extended to the Cameroon-Chad-Central African border area considered as the "triangle of death" or a "no man's land" which does

not escape this security situation.

Also, like any strategy, to achieve its objectives, this regional approach to DDR will also require that significant institutional, human, financial and material resources be mobilized. In other words, the successful implementation of the said strategy will depend on a geostrategic and geopolitical awareness of the States of the sub-region, their full investment and the commitment of development partners like the African Union, the United Nations and partner States of the Lake Chad Basin States, ECCAS or CEMAC.

## CONCLUSION

Since its introduction in Africa in the 1990s, the DDR practice has evolved in recent decades by adapting to new contexts and thus requiring institutional reforms. "Second generation" DDR programs have adapted to the challenges emerging from new conflict dynamics. They appear as stabilisation and peace building measures with immediate political and security objectives<sup>6</sup>. Rather than favouring physical actions to eliminate weapons, these policies serve above all to put them out of use. They also occupy a particular space in all peace-related measures: where there is the link between security and development activities<sup>7</sup>.

A grid for reading DDR programs in Africa based on the Cameroonian model highlights a plurality and diversity of mechanisms and actions for prevention, management and crisis resolution. It shows that DDR programs are an essential element in post-conflict stabilisation systems. The Cameroon DDR program in which the Department plays an important role is part of the doctrinal field of 2nd generation DDR. It aims to bring back to civilian life not only the secessionist fighters in the North-West and South-West regions, but also those of the terrorist sect Boko Haram, which prevail in the Far-North region.

From a regional perspective, the Lake Chad Basin recovery strategy will make it possible to bring coherence, harmony and synergy between the different national approaches or experiences of DDR in order to effectively attack the roots of terrorism and the proliferation of SALW and all the peripheral security dangers that this region faces. Through the

<sup>6</sup> "Second generation" disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) practices in peace operations, a contribution to "New Horizons" discussions on the challenges and opportunities of UN peacekeeping.

<sup>7</sup> Same



operationalization of the MNJTF, the countries concerned have demonstrated their unshakable will and their capacity to cooperate in order to eradicate a common evil. The success of the civil-military operations, which we could congratulate ourselves on today, depends on concerted actions aimed at strengthening the capacities of the States of the region both in the military fields such as forecast intelligence on the one hand, and socio-economic like education, the fight against poverty and climate change on the other hand. The urgency today is therefore to see these different commitments of international partners keep the promise of their flowers. Cameroon, like the other States of the Lake Chad Basin, knows that it can count on multispectral and integrated assistance from actors of the international community and development partners invested in this fight.

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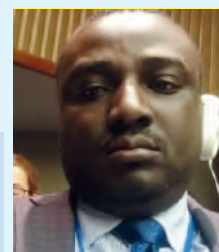
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# DDR, AN IMPORTED CONCEPT : CONTEXTUALISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN CAMEROON

By LCL JING Emmanuel ACHU

*Since the end of the Cold War, armed conflicts, which mainly opposed State entities, have given way to a new and more complex form of (infra-state) conflict which now affects the social strata, affecting their essence and their cohesion, and resulting from more chaotic and unstable communities. This has led to an increase in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and to a strong growth of jihadist, insurgent terrorism on an identity and ideological background and which has plunged Africa into a perpetual cycle of conflicts, thus, destroying peace and security efforts on the continent. With a view to mitigating and curbing violence by providing a global perspective for lasting conflict resolution, crisis resolution and peace building, on the sidelines of the doctrine of peacekeeping, driven by the United Nations (UN), the operational concept of Disarmament-Demobilisation-Reintegration (DDR) has emerged. Indeed, it aims to monitor the disengagement of armed groups and to supervise their reintegration and reintegration into society.*

*In general, the success of DDR programs depends on four crucial aspects. First, it is essential to have detailed and comprehensive planning based on solid research and analysis that takes into account the local and specific dynamics and realities of crisis contexts in order to develop a realistic strategy. Hence, the need to contextualise programs according to specific crisis environments. Second, that the requisite political will be demonstrated at all levels to implement this strategy effectively and efficiently. Third, these programs are generally expensive, time-consuming and require significant human (a proven technical expertise), technical and financial resources, and important logistics. Fourth, that the effective follow up and evaluation systems be included in the DDR process and be an integral part of the implementation strategy<sup>1</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup>Oyono Afane, PC "Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin: analysis of a transnational insurgency and prospects for a global stabilisation strategy". Thesis, Political Science, University of Yaoundé II-IRIC, 2019.

In the 1990s, internationally, DDR programs were used primarily to deal with challenges between national armies and insurgent factions or rebellions. The said processes took place following the peace agreements to which the belligerent parties were signatories. Since then, other types of armed actors, such as militias, have grown in importance and influenced the stability of governments and the security of civilian population by demonstrating a high level of flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances<sup>2</sup>. In response to the changing anatomy and trajectory of armed conflict, the DDR concept has been increasingly reconfigured to cope with ever-changing situations. In the mid-2000s, a paradigmatic shift occurred in approaches to DDR. Traditional DDR practices (first generation DDR or conventional DDR) were seen as insufficient to fully meet the needs for sustainable reintegration and effective reintegration as well as the broader goals of peace building in countries in crisis. These changes have led to the emergence of 2nd generation and 3rd generation DDR.

The second generation approach, for example, therefore proposes to go beyond disarmament and demobilisation by widening its scope and increasing the number of beneficiaries of reintegration. More importantly, while first generation DDR commitments focused on individuals who have left military groups, second generation commitments build on these programs to take a more comprehensive and inclusive approach by involving whole communities in the return and reintegration process<sup>3</sup>.

In 2nd and 3rd generation DDRs, the political and legal frameworks of this DDR formula are less transparent in the context of an ongoing conflict and the determination of eligibility criteria is often more problematic. In addition, non-permissive security environments hamper the process of implementing

DDR because members of international organisations may find that civilians or peace processes are the targets of violent extremists and criminal networks.<sup>4</sup>.

The DDR process in Cameroon comes after two separate conflicts with complex dynamics, namely: jihadist terrorism by Boko Haram in the Far North region and insurgent separatist terrorism in the North West and South West regions, which have plunged these regions of the country into a situation of instability. To provide lasting solutions and a return to stability, the Head of State, His Excellency Paul BIYA created the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) by decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018. The mission of the said Committee is to organize, supervise and manage the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions wishing to respond favorably to the Head of State's appeal for peace by laying down his arms. The creation of this Committee marked a major milestone, which clearly reflects the strong political commitment of the President of the Republic.

This article will focus on the reality on the ground (I), the key action of the Ministry of Defence (II). Particular emphasis will also be placed on the support of Cameroon's partners for the ongoing DDR process (III), the progress observed (IV), as well as the challenges likely to hinder its effectiveness (V) and the efforts to be made, to in particular through the contribution of defence force personnel with proven and asserted experience in peacekeeping operations (VI).

## **The situation on the ground: anatomy of a DDR institution, foundation of a political and republican commitment in favour of peace and stability**

According to the third generation, a field to which Cameroonian practice could be compared, DDR is characterised in part by a change of orientation marked by a political, strategic vision backed by an operational dimension which involves integration socio-economic aspects, restoring confidence, to strengthen the social and civic

<sup>2</sup>See Rumin, S. "guarantees of non-repetition at the crossroads of 'disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration' (DDR), 'security system reform' (SSR) and transitional justice". in Mottet, C. and Pout, C. (Ed.). *Transitional justice: a path to reconciliation and the building of lasting peace*. Yaoundé, 2000, p.119.

<sup>3</sup> See article 6, paragraph 5: "upon the cessation of hostilities, the authorities in power shall endeavour to grant the widest possible amnesty to persons who have taken part in the armed conflict or who have been deprived of their liberty for reasons related to armed conflict, whether interned or detained. "As Sylvie Junod writes," the purpose of this paragraph is to encourage a gesture of reconciliation which contributes to restoring the normal course of life in a people who have been divided ". Junod, S." Protocol II. Article 6 Criminal Proceedings ". In Sandoz, Y, Swiniarski, C and Zimmermann, B. *Conventions of the Additional Protocols of June 8, 1977 Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949*. ICRC, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Geneva, 1986; p.1426.

<sup>4</sup> Op cit

engagement of ex-combatants and contribute effectively to the resolution of two ongoing crises in the Far North region and the North West and South West regions (NOSO).

Through their attacks in these regions, and having regard to their destabilising and violent impact on the State and its dismemberments, but also on the physical integrity of people and their property, the activities of Boko Haram combatants and NOSO separatist groups for the most part fall within the object and scope of Law No. 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the suppression of acts of terrorism. Moreover, the said acts would then fall under the jurisdiction of the military courts. To this jurisdictional option, the Head of State, during his swearing-in on 6 November 2018, privileged the choice of an offer of peace formulated with regard to ex-combatants of Boko Haram and groups NOSO separatists, urging them to “Lay down their

arms ... and find the right path; [and speaking] especially to young people who have let themselves be drawn into an adventure with no future “. The creation of the NDDRC offers a new possibility for ex-combatants to lay down their arms and join the regional DDR centres of Buea, Mora and Bamenda, which constitute “an honorable way out for these ex-combatants as well as a perspective of social reintegration ”.

As defined by the decree creating it, the National DDR Committee (NDDRC) has the main tasks of: (1) Disarmament: that is to say, the reception and disarmament of ex-combatants of Boko Haram and armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions, collect, catalog and store weapons and ammunition voluntarily handed over by ex-combatants, by taking the appropriate measures to destroy the said weapons, ammunition and explosives, in collaboration with other



March 2019, Training course for youth executives and youth workers, as part of the Special Youth and Three-Year Plan (DDR) launched by the Cameroonian government / afrilao.com

competent government authorities. (2) Demobilisation: that is to say the establishment and management of cantonment sites, surveillance and the provision of multifaceted assistance to veterans to prepare them for a possible return to civilian life and (3) Reintegration: this consists of taking the necessary measures to de-radicalise ex-combatants, raising awareness and providing multifaceted assistance to communities to facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil life, in particular by organising training courses income-generating activities and by providing them with tools and means of production.

The Committee is composed of a Board of Directors, a national coordination and regional centres. The DDR centres are located in Buea for the South West region, Bamenda for the North West region and Mora for the Far North region. The decree establishing the NDDRC leaves room for the possible creation of other centres if necessary, after recommendations by the Board of Directors. This Board, chaired by the Prime Minister (PM), head of government, is responsible for defining strategic directions and ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs. In addition, the Council is composed of senior officials, thirteen ministers or similar, the President of the National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism and the heads of the regional centres.

Chapter V of Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 discloses the origin of the resources of the NDDRC. According to the provisions of the said chapter, the resources of the Committee will come from subsidies, donations and heritage of the State, contributions from national and international technical partners and finally and especially from other resources which may be allocated to it, in accordance with the laws in force. This reinforces the political commitment of the government to effectively pilot the process under way in Cameroon and to control its trajectories. This approach is more fully reflected in the last chapter of the decree providing for various and final provisions, which emphasizes the collaborative, partnership and inter-institutional aspect of the Cameroonian DDR program. Indeed, Article 9 provides that in the context of its functions, the Committee collaborates with competent governmental services, NGOs and international partners, particularly the United Nations Organisation when need be.

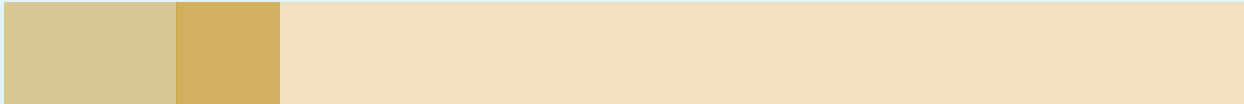
At the operational level, the National Coordinator is responsible for the implementation and management of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration program for ex-combatants. The regional centres, headed by chiefs, are responsible for carrying out the functions of the Committee at local level. They are assisted in carrying out their missions in the field by the defence and security forces and other sectorial organisations and bilateral and multilateral partners.

Since its creation, the action of the NDDRC in the field seemed mortgaged by the prerequisite of an inclusive and open dialogue, long desired by actors from the political, civil and international spheres. The convening of the Major National Dialogue (MND) on 10 September 2019, by the Head of State, organised at the Yaoundé Conference Centre, from 30 September to 4 October 2019, and chaired by the Prime Minister, Head of Government Dion Ngute, made it possible to examine ways and means to respond effectively to the deep aspirations of the populations of the NOSO regions, but also of the other components of the country. The MND divided into eight commissions responsible for the following issues: bilingualism, cultural diversity and social cohesion, the education system, the justice system, reconstruction and development, decentralisation and local development, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and commission in charge of issues related to the diaspora; had as main objectives: the return to peace in the North West and South West regions in particular,

### **The Ministry of Defence: a key player in the ongoing DDR process**

The two conflicts dealt with by the NDDRC differ in their causes, the complexity of the situation on the ground and the forces involved. Contrary to the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, rooted in a complex socio-political cultural and identity context, complicated by the involvement of insurgent and criminal armed groups with separatist and rentier inclinations. On the other hand, the acts perpetrated by Boko Haram have an identity dimension with religious and ideological references. In these regions, the NDDRC is facing major challenges to be met in order to carry out the current DDR. The contribution of the Ministry of Defence to this end is not negligible through the





management of the military components of DDR and close collaboration with the civilian component of the program.

At the Regional Centre for DDR in Buea (CRDDR) based at the Borstal Institute in Buea. The head of the Centre is “assisted” in his various missions by a surveillance office made up of the defence forces (army and gendarmerie) and security and under the responsibility of a section chief, a senior Non-commissioned Officer appointed by the hierarchy. The mission of the office is to filter the entrances and exits of the Centre, and to prohibit any unauthorised exit, all on the supervision of the operations manager for better monitoring. In the absence of personnel, several activities (moral chat sessions) are carried out and coordinated by the defence and security forces within the Centre in order to ensure the proper re-education of ex-combatants with a view to enabling them to better reintegrate into society. These interviews and moral assessments make it possible to detect the qualities of each other and to orient them in the various socio-professional activities set up for this purpose.

Because the NDRRC’s missions in the area of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration require a certain technical expertise, the professional skills of the defence and security forces are essential for the operationalization of these different components of the program. To achieve these objectives, certain internal regulations have been put in place. With regard to these internal rules of the Buea Regional DDR Centre, the gendarmerie, alongside the other defence forces, intervenes to enforce the internal rules and supervise the process of admission to the DDR centre for ex-combatants, which will receive a moral training, a set of disciplinary instructions and protective and security measures to be observed throughout their stay.

Article 7 of these rules of procedure stipulates that the admission of ex-combatants to the RDDRC is subject to a well defined process. The centre welcomes secessionist ex-combatants from the southwest region who wish to respond favourably to the peace offer from the Head of State by laying down their arms. Ex-combatants can lay down their arms directly at the centre or do so through a third party intermediary or an administrative authority competent for the area. This authority is responsible for placing the weapons deposited at the disposal of the Legion (Regional Command) of the

gendarmerie for the opening of a so-called moral investigation (investigation of the ex-combatant).

After the necessary investigations, the ex-combatant is taken to the Regional Centre, accompanied by an identification and individual information sheet drawn up by the investigation office of the Legion of Southwest Gendarmerie, where an administrative file is opened for each ex-combatant admitted to the centre.

A discipline section is also created within the Centre in accordance with the provisions of article 4 of the internal regulations. This disciplinary section is made up of a dozen gendarmes. Placed under the authority of a gendarmerie officer, head of section designated by the Commander of the South-West regional gendarmerie (COLEGION) and in charge of local surveillance, physical surveillance, moral training of ex-combatants admitted to the centre, they coordinate activities such as the hoisting of the national flag ... The head of the discipline section must maintain discipline within the centre. It receives and uses investigation reports on the morals of new arrivals. The disciplinary officer has all the powers attached to his post to conduct in-depth investigations.

Concerning the security component of the centre, article 5 creates a security section under the responsibility of a section chief, a non-commissioned officer designated by the Commander of the 21st Motorised Infantry Brigade. He ensures the security of the centre and all its inhabitants. Its mission is to filter entry and exit from the centre and prevent unauthorised exits of ex-combatants.

### **Support from Cameroon’s partners: a necessity?**

Article 9 of the decree establishing the NDDRC provides that the Committee will cooperate as necessary, with the relevant administrations, NGOs and national and international partners, particularly those of the United Nations. For example, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is a strategic partner of the NDDRC and plays an important role in ensuring that the DDR process implemented by the national authorities is reliable, transparent, efficient and fair. This implies that the NDDRC must not operate without well-defined strategic objectives and an operational approach.

This collaboration, if intensified, will contribute to the achievement of the NDDRC's missions and objectives.

The United Nations is also fully committed to the actions carried out within the framework of the Presidential Reconstruction Plan for the North-West and South-West regions through the United Nations Development Program (in the design and monitoring the execution of certain projects). This testifies to the support of international institutions for the government's recovery and appeasement plan in the NOSO regions. As a reminder, the projects assigned to the Presidential Reconstruction Plan for the North West and South West regions to (re) build and rehabilitate are as follows: 350 schools, 115 health centres, 40 bridges, 400 points of water, 600 km of rural roads, 45 markets, 17,000 private dwellings, 25,000 hectares of farm, pastures and 300,000 destroyed personal documents that need to be restored.

However, for the moment, this support is more reflected in exchanges aimed at improving the performance of the State institution, in accordance with the required standards, in particular: the United Nations Conventions on terrorism, human rights and gender, the regional strategy for stabilisation, recovery and resilience of the areas of the Lake Chad Basin affected by the Boko Haram crisis. This latest initiative was spurred by the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission LCBC, in which Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad and Niger are participating.

The Cameroonian DDR program, in its regional dimension, comes to the right of the efforts and actions already carried out so far by the States of the region. Indeed, in an insecure context created by Boko Haram, a regional response was provided, mainly thanks to the creation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), in 2012, in order to strengthen military cooperation to combat the threat posed by the terrorist group. Although the MNJTF and the national forces have achieved certain strategic and operational objectives set within the framework of their missions, many pending community grievances and development problems are slow to be resolved.

In this context, the regional strategy was adopted in Abuja on 30 August 2018. Recognising the interdependent experiences of the communities

surrounding the Lake Chad Basin, it defines nine priority pillars for generating applicable policies and programs focused on short, medium and long term for the stabilisation and sustainable development of the Lake Chad Basin region. The third pillar of this strategy is devoted to disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reintegration and reintegration of people associated with Boko Haram<sup>5</sup>. This testifies to the strategic and operational vision of the States of the region to address at the root the main causes of instability and insecurity in this interlope zone that constitutes the Basin of Lake Chad.

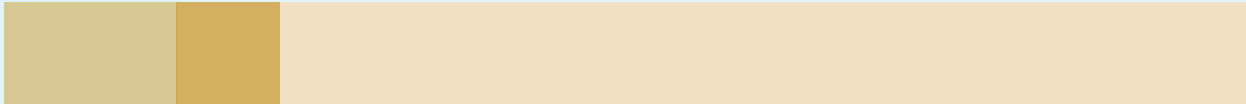
### **The NDDRC: a catalyst for government peace efforts in the crisis regions**

Before and after the creation of the NDDRC, the government deployed a strategy aimed at sustainably addressing threats in regions in crisis. The operationalization of the NDDRC missions has made it possible to better channel these efforts, hence, some tangible progress is observed on the ground.

The Major National Dialogue, a historic moment in a republican dialogue, served as a framework for an effective relaunch of the decentralisation process. Which resulted in the creation of a special statute for the NO and SO regions. While this does not resolve all the root causes of the crisis in the long term, it will certainly bring about a level of socio-political appeasement necessary for peace building and will also improve the success of the DDR process in the country.

In addition, the implementation of the special plan to help internally displaced persons (IDPs) and victims of abuse in the North West and South West regions is part of with a view to resolving this crisis in the long term. This emergency humanitarian assistance plan was unveiled in Yaoundé on Wednesday 20 June 2018 by the Prime Minister, Head of Government. The main objective of the 12.7 billion FCFA humanitarian aid fund is to protect IDPs, facilitate the resumption of economic and agricultural activities and promote social cohesion. In the same vein, the implementation of

<sup>5</sup> The implementation of this ambitious Presidential Plan for the reconstruction and development of the North-West and South-West regions was entrusted to Messrs' Paul TASONG NJUKANG and NJONG Donatus Fonyuy, National Coordinator and Deputy National Coordinator of the said Plan, respectively.



the reconstruction program in the North West and South West regions by the government, which will be coordinated at national level by Mr. Paul Tasong, working at the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, follows this logic. The reconstruction effort is a support program aimed at appeasing the hearts of communities in conflict zones, thus helping to create lasting conditions for the effective implementation of a DDR process for the return of lasting peace and security. The various security crises ongoing in Cameroon really hamper the strong social and national cohesion acquired and generate more and more a devastating effect in the country and especially in the conflict zones.

The creation of the NDDRC, the convening of the Major National Dialogue, the establishment of the Presidential Reconstruction Plan for the North West and South West regions, the creation of the National Emergency Fund (12.7 billion CFA) and other socio-economic and political efforts in the Far North, since 2014, are all measures that are part of a political and strategic vision aimed at achieving peace which, for a long time, has constituted a real identity for countries, both in Central Africa and around the world.

In the register of actions of the NDDRC proper, in the North West region, the first recruits were ex-combatants from the Oku village, located in the Bui department. They were admitted on 27 December 2018 to the centre of Bamenda. In October 2019, the center welcomed 52 recruits who were trained in various agricultural skills, namely: pig breeding, poultry farming, gardening, etc. The centre plans to expand the training scale to include sewing, hairdressing, carpentry, shoemaking, cosmetology (the manufacture of oil, detergents and bath soaps), electrical engineering maintenance, welding, mechanics, construction and driving. In this centre, they also receive psychological counseling, spiritual and educational that help them change their mindset; to become citizens and prepare them to reintegrate into society. Complementary services are offered to them within the center. This is paramedical advice and other medical assistance to effectively treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Since the centre opened, one hundred and twelve veterans have been registered. The first batch of thirty-five was transferred to Bafoussam in the Western region. Most of these ex-combatants were recruited into a public company after their graduation on April 12, 2020. We can only be very

optimistic about the reinstatement of this first batch in business, a job that will allow them to be paid at the national average rate and will certainly attract other combatants to lay down their arms and join the regional DDR centres. To strengthen the reception capacity of the Centre, the government has allocated four hectares of land near the Bamenda air base to allow further expansion and which will be used to build the new centre to accommodate nearly one thousand recruits.

Regarding the Buea Center, on 22 December 2018, its first recruits and these ex-combatants were taken to the Ndian department. In October 2019, this center welcomed around one hundred and twenty-three recruits (one hundred and fourteen men and nine women) who are being trained in various fields such as: agriculture, livestock (pig breeding, poultry farming and gardening) and driving. The centre plans to expand its training scope to include barbed wire manufacturing (which is expected to start on 30 April 2020), ICT and sewing. The centre, currently under-equipped, has four dormitories that can accommodate 30 recruits per dormitory. To anticipate a possible increase in residents of the centre, and to increase its reception capacity, the government instructed the Governor of the Southwest region to identify suitable land for the construction of a new DDR centre. The process is ongoing with a committee set up to identify the site.

Unlike the DDR process in the North West and South West regions, the Far North Centre, located in Mora, has been less advanced due to a more complex security environment. Notwithstanding, a total of one hundred and thirteen Boko Haram ex-combatants are accommodated by Sector I of the Multinational Joint Task Force, in their headquarters in Mora. In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, an old Meri prison building has been donated to the NDDRC and is currently being renovated to serve as a centre for the Far North. Before long, the veterans will be transferred to this new establishment.

DDR operations do not escape the climatic and socio-political constraints of the region. Indeed, climate change and the high unemployment rate have greatly contributed to the establishment of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region. Young people with little or no hope of a better tomorrow have been easily manipulated and recruited by the terrorist group. Sharing this point of view, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His

Excellency Muhammadu BUHARI, during his speech at the 2018 United Nations General Assembly, called for global action on the Lake Chad crisis. He stressed that illegal immigration is not only a consequence of the conflict, but it is also one of the impacts of climate change and the lack of opportunities. From the top of the United Nations tribune, he recalled that: "This is the case of Nigeria and its neighbours in the Lake Chad Basin which is shrinking and drying up formerly fertile land. The lake fed more than 45 million people who now live in poverty and are exposed to the activities of extremist groups. This instability is causing population movements in the region, further exacerbating economic tensions between farmers and ranchers."<sup>6</sup>

## Challenges to be over come

The challenges to be overcome within the framework of the implementation of the Cameroonian DDR policy are global and specific depending on the crisis contexts.

The transnational dimension, in particular in the management of the situation in the Far North, which is suffering from the horrors of Boko Haram, a terrorist group which has seen its influence grow rapidly around the Lake Chad Basin, including in the State of Borno, in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, involves making the Cameroonian DDR process consistent with the regional strategy. Indeed, because the sect's activities take place mainly in areas where government services are insufficient or absent, thus leaving room for significant criminal activities, including violent terrorist attacks across porous borders, the porosity of borders and the strong religious inclination of its fighters make it relatively difficult for the Committee to fully attain the set objectives in its present specifications.

Furthermore, DDR programs are very expensive and require significant human, financial and logistical investment, in the short, medium and long term, for real effectiveness. Newly created and called to fulfill difficult missions in complex environments, the lack or absence of qualified technical expertise and available to work with the

National Coordinator and the heads of regional centres, both in the Far North, that in the North West and South West regions, is likely to hamper the operational efficiency of the NDDRC. Indeed, for example concerning the Buea Centre, the personnel who currently assist the persons in charge of the centre are mainly volunteers like neurologists (who occupy some of the ex-combatants affected by depression or traumatised by acts of violence experienced or suffered) and a neurosurgeon who, although he is not a psychiatric expert, does his best to manage psychiatric problems as well as the post-traumatic diseases. Most of them are staff from the Buea Regional Hospital. The sewing instructor is female staff from the Borstal Institute, as is the driver on duty. So far, the implementation of DDR in this centre is proceeding normally.

However, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on the action of the public authorities could amplify and increase these challenges and seriously jeopardize the actions of the said center. Indeed, the geopolitical consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic are perceptible in Cameroon, both from a socio-economic and health standpoint. This will undoubtedly affect the economies of African States because, like the others, they are all interdependent. This is all the more so since they do not have enough means to sustainably sustain their economies by reorganizing them in the event of a recession. What is more, the impact of COVID-19 in areas in crisis is inevitable through an acceleration of impoverishment and the precariousness of certain populations, in particular young people and women, vulnerable social groups particularly exposed to the actions of separatist groups and Boko Haram. Indeed, this could cause difficulties and potentially worsen internal conflicts. Some African countries like Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, which depend mainly on oil and whose market value has fallen sharply, are likely to suffer from the enormous negative effects of COVID-19.

Consequently, the inflation observed on the prices of certain basic necessities (consequence of the closing of borders, confinement in many countries around the world, reduction of imports and exports, a decrease in production and the transportation of food between several cities due to the psychosis created by the pandemic), the sudden unemployment observed, the decrease in purchasing power and the worsening and

<sup>6</sup> "Second generation" disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) practices in peace operations, a contribution to "New Horizons" discussions on the challenges and opportunities of UN peacekeeping.



acceleration of economic difficulties could push some young people in crisis areas to join armed groups, making it more difficult to implement and manage the ongoing DDR process. Which requires, for its full implementation and efficiency, as we pointed out above, many financial and material means. Through its diversified economy, one could however expect a certain resilience from Cameroon. What is more, a spillover effect could also result from neighboring countries and have induced effects in border areas. In addition, affect the DDR process, which is gaining momentum and providing appreciable results.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has particularly affected the proper functioning of the NDDRC. Indeed, a session of its board of directors, which was to be held in March 2020, had to postpone to a later date.

Given the specific nature of the CNDDR's missions and its field of action as a State tool for a sustainable return to peace and security in regions in crisis, backed by the political, strategic vision and operational of the Head of State, in this area, strengthening of its strategic and operational capacities could prove necessary for a real increase in power of its action. By the way, strengthening its human resources through the recruitment of qualified expertise and other staff could improve the initiatives and actions of the Committee in the field.

## **VI. Strengthening the NDDRC's strategic and operational capacities through the use of defence personnel with a culture of peacekeeping operations and experience in DDR**

The participation of the Cameroonian defence forces in the PKOs is long term. It is the 1995 Decree, establishing a unit specialising in peacekeeping within the Cameroonian armed forces, which constitutes its founding act. In general, like other participating countries, this participation takes various forms. It can be either individual, that is to say, take the form of the individual contractualisation of a soldier at strategic, operational or purely tactical levels; either collective, that is to say through participation in constituted or contingent units. Participation in a PKO, beyond its cultural, symbolic or even pecuniary aspects, gives the personnel who take part in it a real know-how,

such competences which are susceptible of being valorized nationally when need be.

Also, our participation in a PKO, in this case the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) as a military observer, liaison officer and interim force of the Head Quarter advanced, in the cities of Kongolo, Kalemie, Katanga, Military sector made up of four provinces as well as in the city of Bunia in the Province of Ituri during the period 2016-2017, allowed us to acquire essential skills in the execution of defence missions in difficult crisis contexts both at strategic and operational level, and subsequently to the enrichment of said skills in the treatment and understanding of issues related to DDR. Indeed, during this period, we had worked in close collaboration with the DDR Section of the town of Kalemie in the province of Tanganyika, as liaison officer of the Congolese National Armed Forces (FARDC) in Bunia. Apart from the local ex-combatants who had been taken care of by the UN DDR Section, some arrived from South Sudan and after following the DDR process were repatriated for reintegration.

The integration program into the FARDC ranks of certain ex-combatants of the Mai-Mai Yakutumba group, a rebel group, which still controls most of Fizi's territory in the DRC's South Kivu province, has taken place on several occasions. Many of these ex-combatants have joined the 61st infantry brigade of the Congolese army stationed in Kalemie, and constitute the highest percentage of the said brigade. In addition, it was observed that some of the ex-combatants deserted the Congolese National Armed Forces and reintegrated the Mai Mai Yakutumba armies. In other cases, even senior officers have deserted and some soldiers have taken away arms and ammunition.

In view of the above, we believe that the decision to integrate former militias into the national army is generally a political option, which would hamper the professionalism of certain soldiers, the esprit de corps, would increase the likelihood of violation of human rights and could potentially be a vector of instability or a rapid return to armed life. The efforts undertaken in Cameroon to set up tenacious and professional defence and security forces can be greatly compromised if such an approach were tested in the ongoing DDR process.

Our experience in the DRC shows that it is not necessary to transpose the Congolese model or any other model into the Cameroonian DDR process because all the State security institutions are fully operational, hence, the importance of a contextualisation in the implementation of DDR. The option of reintegrating and reinserting ex-combatants into civilian life would help to avoid certain excesses observed here and there.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, we note that the DDR process, a practice imported into Cameroon, despite the heaviness observed on the ground, is progressing slowly with commendable results recorded. Under the impetus of the Head of State, the government's efforts demonstrate a clear political will to see peace restored in the country in general, especially in regions in crisis.

However, a quick observation of the international scene allows us to say that a blind import and experimentation of models applied elsewhere, like DDR in the Democratic Republic of Congo in which the UN, could undermine all these efforts. In addition, plunge the country into an endless cycle of conflicts. Although the Cameroon process takes place without the presence of a peacekeeping mission, it operates with close support from the agencies of the United Nations system (IOM, UNDP).

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# CUSTODIAN OF PEACE, THE CAMEROONIAN POLICE: A KEY ACTOR IN DDR INITIATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

By CS Founa 7 Hector Marcial

*The DDR process initiated in November 2018 in Cameroon benefits from the support of the National Security in particular as part of its mission to protect institutions, people and property. In addition, considering of its long and rich experience in United Nations peace support operations in Africa and around the world, according to the author<sup>1</sup>, the ongoing DDR process could be enriched with its expertise. The police<sup>2</sup> as an arm of the State committed to the preservation of peace and security must harness the full potential of DDR, particularly in intelligence. It would then have a significant adjuvant in the accomplishment of its missions. This would require a consensual definition of the objectives by the different institutions involved, a distribution of burdens taking into account comparative advantages and a mobilisation of international and transnational capacities.*

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<sup>2</sup> The terms Police, National Security or Cameroonian Police refer to the National Delegation for National Security.



Cameroonian police with riot shields patrol a street in the Buea administrative district on 1 October 2017 / CNN Travel

## INTRODUCTION

Faced with security challenges in the Far North, North West and South West regions, led by Cameroonians, among others, the Head of State, custodian of national peace and security, and continuing his efforts to resolve these crises, during his inauguration speech on 6 November 2018, declined his offer of peace to the compatriots involved in these acts of violence. Twenty-four days later, Decree 2018/719 establishing the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) materialised this offer. The objective was to “provide a welcome and social reintegration framework for Boko Haram repentants and members of armed groups in the North-West and South-West Regions wishing to

respond to the offer of peace<sup>3</sup>” Placed under the authority of the Prime Minister, the NDDRC is made up of the following bodies: a Board of Directors, a National Coordination, and Regional Centers in Bamenda, Buea and Mora.

Born on the sidelines of Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations<sup>4</sup>, in the reform initiated by the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros Ghali, and starting from the observation that the peace and security continuum cannot be ensured after a conflict

<sup>3</sup> Press release from the Minister of State, Secretary General at the Presidency of the Republic dated November 30, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations “Agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping” A / 47/277 of June 17, 1992 paragraph 55.





without the withdrawal of arms from the scene and of those driving the conflict, DDR<sup>5</sup> has experienced several mutations. If a consensus seems to be emerging on the content of the first two generations of DDR, the third receives different content according to the authors<sup>6</sup>. For Dean Piedmont, originally conceived as a post-conflict tool, DDR is now called into active conflict environments for people associated with terrorism<sup>7</sup>. It is in this context that the process initiated in Cameroon in November 2018 fits. The reserves<sup>8</sup> emitted on this process only hold if we confine ourselves to the first two generations of DDR. It is therefore with old ingredients and drawing on lived and proven experiences, that the NDDRC is called upon to produce an original approach in this area which meets current needs, issues and challenges.

The National Security, through its General Delegate, sits on the NDDRC Management Council, within which there are fourteen entities outside the NDDRC. DDR activities do not fall within the original doctrinal field of deployment of its main statutory missions. One could therefore wonder what added value this institution brings or can bring in the perspective of greater efficiency of the recently created NDDRC and more generally in the resolution of ongoing crises. To answer this question, it must be remembered that the police in Cameroon are the pioneering security force in peacekeeping. It benefits from a long experience and a culture acquired within the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), thereby translating Cameroon's adherence to the values of peace, solidarity and collective and international security. In fact, since 1992, nearly 300 police officers deployed in more than fifteen United Nations peacekeeping operations<sup>9</sup>, have been privileged witnesses of the conceptual evolution and the practice of DDR. With its national and

international experience, the National Security appears as a DDR facilitator with a real strategic and operational culture (I); which DDR can support the execution of its own missions, the success of which constitutes a guarantee of life in society (II). To do this, certain conditions must be met (III).

### **National Security: a strategic and operational culture to highlight in the implementation of DDR in Cameroon**

The Cameroonian Police, undoubtedly, enjoy a strategic and operational culture acquired in the UN PKOs. In addition, as a privileged partner, it contributes to the creation of a secure environment for the deployment of DDR (A). This action can be reinforced by drawing on its international experience (B).

#### **Contribution to the creation of a secure environment for the deployment of DRR**

The provision of certain minimum-security guarantees is one of the sine qua non conditions for the deployment of DDR in the field, regardless of crisis contexts. The Police are contributing to this through operations to restore and maintain public order deployed in the Far North, North West and South West regions (1) as well as securing facilities and operations on NDDRC (2).

#### ***The restoration of public order: essential condition for the implementation of DDR on the ground***

"The aim of maintaining order is to prevent unrest so as not to have to suppress it. It also includes measures intended to restore them, if order is disturbed" as provided by Article 1 of Decree No. 68 / DF / 33 of January 29, 1968 establishing the defence missions of the regular auxiliary and auxiliary forces. By taking up arms against Cameroon, Boko Haram and then the secessionist-armed groups imposed operations on the defence and security forces aimed at restoring public order. This is how the National Security deployed its second category forces to the theaters of operations in the Far North regions then those of the North West and South West. In each of these volatile and complex security contexts, it contributes, at times up to the supreme sacrifice (the case of the police officers killed in the South West on 15 June 2019 in the explosion of an improvised explosive device between Eyumodjock

<sup>5</sup> DDR is defined in Note from the Secretary General of the United Nations A / C.5 / 59/31 of May 24, 2005

<sup>6</sup> Robert Muggah, "Next-Generation Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration", Word Politics Review Tuesday, June 17, 2014 <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13862/next-generation-disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration>, accessed May 06, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Dean Piedmont, "Advancing A New Approach to DDR and Stabilisation" November 8, 2018, available at <https://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/insights/-advancing-a-new-approach-to-ddr-and-stabilization/> accessed May 06, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> See Claude Biao, "What perspectives for the DDR campaign in Cameroon", <https://stakvoirexperts.com/perspectives-ddr-au-cameroun/>, accessed, accessed April 01, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Student Police Commissioner EYINGA Suzanne Rolie, "The contribution of the Cameroonian police to peacekeeping operations (OMP) of the United Nations", end of training dissertation, 2020, unpublished.

and Otu)<sup>10</sup>, the re-establishment of an environment in which the structures of the NDDRC were able to set up. Since October 2016, for example, in English-speaking regions, the Central Command of Mobile Intervention Units has been helping to restore order in a crisis context, through effective intervention techniques and adapted logistics.

### ***Securing NDDRC facilities and activities***

The peace offer made by the Head of State did not win everyone's support. For some, this offer represents a significant risk of loss of positions of power and authority, resulting from the capture of certain resources, both financial and psychological, induced by destabilisation or the permanence and persistence of violence in these regions. In addition, the loss of influence and resources resulting from this "rentier" violence and insecurity induces the mobilisation of all possible efforts and means to derail the process. This can result in threats against ex-combatants who decide to lay down their arms, NDDRC personnel at the Mora, Buea or Bamenda sites, or the destruction of the infrastructure of these regional centres.

Consequently, in such contexts, it is therefore up to the Police to carry out, for the benefit of the NDDRC, their mission of protecting institutions, persons and property. To prevent the possibility of destabilisation of the DDR process, it ensures the protection of NDDRC facilities and personnel. Similarly, in the deployment of its activities in the field, the NDDRC benefits from the security coverage of the security forces, as well as the defence forces. This support can be extended as needed. The mere presence of the defence and security forces makes it possible to create and reinforce the conditions for optimal security and hence peacefully carrying out the missions of the various regional DDR centres across the national territory.

In Buea, for example, if the structure is secured by the army, the National Security has set up a discreet cover involving several of its services which makes it possible to detect and resolve certain situations in advance. A similar system is also set up in Bamenda. Indeed, in addition to the discreet coverage, the police officers intervene inside the Regional Centre where they carry out counseling, psychological follow-up and conflict resolution

activities. These teams, from various units, take into account the gender approach. Thus, residents of the Centre can always have the right contact at their disposal without being faced with a barrier linked to the gender issue. Which, very well constitutes a transversal and essential issue of peacekeeping operations, expertise and experience acquired by the police staff through their active and recognized participation on the international scene.

### ***Drawing on the DGSN's international experience***

Within a PKO, the deployed personnel, whether civilian, police or military, acquire / develop a real culture of peace, but also strategic, organisational, professional and operational cultures. Police experience can be quite special. Indeed, the police functions of United Nations peacekeeping operations - UNPOL which fall into three main tasks: "providing expert assistance and special political missions of United Nations may include supporting the reform, restructuring and strengthening of the institutions of police and policing of the host State, to provide operational support to the police of the host State and to the other law enforcement agencies and to provide temporary police services and policing " <sup>11</sup>. Its action is located at the heart of communities, hence a certain proximity and real added value in the establishment of relationships of trust between it and the population.

Furthermore, "the complexity of the war zone environments at the psychological, social and cultural level and the impact of PKOs on the collective and individual psyche"<sup>12</sup> is a non-negligible aspect, likely to be valued in the Cameroonian context of DDR implementation. Indeed, the human resources deployed in PKOs in Africa and in the world, through their accumulated and accumulated experience have acquired a real "habitus"<sup>13</sup> and a culture of PKOs and peace in

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/monde/cameroun-au-emain-5-policiers-tu%C3%A9s-dans-lexplosion-dune-mine-/1505542>, accessed 18 May 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Resolution 2185 (2014) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7317th meeting, on 20 November 2014 reference S / RES / 2185 (2014)

<sup>12</sup> Tessier, M. (1999). Peacekeeping: theory and practical gains. *International Studies*, 30 (1), p. 142.

<sup>13</sup> According to Pierre Bourdieu, habitus is an "immanent law, deposited in each agent by the premium education, which is the condition not only of the concertation of practices but also of concertation practices, since the modifications and the adjustments consciously operated by the agents themselves presuppose mastery of a common code and that collective mobilisation companies cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habit of mobilizing agents (eg prophet, party leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those whose aspirations they strive to express. , BOURDIEU P., (2000). Outline of a theory of Convenient. Paris, Editions du Seuil (essays, 405), p. 272.

general.

In this context, the transmission of this habitus, in the sense of Norbert Elias, in the form of a “civilization process”<sup>14</sup> and this police culture<sup>15</sup>, through a real sharing of practical achievements, would constitute a real benefit in the implementation of the current process.

In United Nations peacekeeping operations, the eminently political nature of DDR generally places related activities under the responsibility of a dedicated civilian section. Support from the United Nations police (UNPOL) for these activities varies throughout the process. The particularities of Cameroonian DDR require a sorting out of the panoply of actions that a UNPOL can deploy. With

regard to the missions assigned to the NDDRC by article 2 of the aforementioned decree 2018/719, the expertise of the National Security can be fully valued and constitute added value in the context of disarmament actions.

Also, the skills of its National Security officials in dialogue, negotiation, engagement of developed communities in contact with UNPOL can prove useful in restoring confidence between ex-combatants of Boko Haram and armed groups regions of the Far North, North West, South West and their State, especially those wishing to respond favorably to the offer of peace from the Head of State. This implies, beforehand, a real knowledge, understanding of the strategic and operational challenges and constraints imposed by these crises as well as the socio-political realities specific to these regions.

In addition, the police units can serve as gateways to the regional centres of the NDDRC. Nothing prevents these ex-combatants from joining

14 Norbert Elias (1939), *The Civilising Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic investigations*, Wiley, 2000. 592 pages.

15 In this sense, read Maury, S. & Tanner, S.'s analysis of the Canadian police culture in the PKOs. In MAURY, S. & Tanner, S. (2014). “Police Cultures” and International Peace Operations. *Criminology*, 47 (2), 105–126. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1026730ar>.



Members of the Cameroonian police patrol a neighbourhood in Buea, headquarter of the English-speaking Southwest / AFP



the National Security units to gain access to the DDR program. In this regard, it is important to set up a standardised management protocol for people wishing to join the DDR process. This protocol should take into account the following elements: the safety of first responders; the immediate security of the ex-combatant (s), the procedures for liaison with the dismemberment of the NDDRC concerned as well as the methods of transfer to the nearest DDR centre where their knowledge can help the accomplishment of the missions of the Security National.

### **DDR, an adjunct to the missions of the National Security**

The ex-members of Boko Haram or of secessionist armed groups have an immeasurable wealth in terms of knowledge, real capital on the organisations to which they belonged. In this, they constitute real resources to be exploited. Their exploitation constitutes an asset in the execution of the missions of the security forces in particular as regards maintenance of order (A) and fight against national, transnational and international crime (B).

### **Support to the maintenance of law and order**

The activities of Boko Haram or of secessionist armed groups constitute threats to public order and are real hinderances for social cohesion and national peace and security. Among the most recent, we can cite the Galim attacks of March 07, 2020 and the suicide bombing of Amchide a month later. Although the action of the defence and security forces greatly reduced the destabilising potential of these entities, these attacks, by their surprise effect, still undermined the systems in place.

In view of the complexification of these internal crises, which are taking place within communities, it is necessary for these forces to be constantly alert and on the alert. Indeed, according to Colonel Abraham Avi Sivan: "if the enemy surprises you more than once, stop and rediscover him"<sup>16</sup>. The ongoing DDR in Cameroon offers a real opportunity for reflection, introspection and evaluative and prospective analysis of the knowledge of the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) on these organisations, their strategies, and modes of action, in order to better thwart them and

to annihilate the flaws from which they profit in the devices in place to carry out their attacks. On the DSF side, this is an excellent opportunity to bring the necessary evolutions and adaptations in terms of strategic vision, operating methods, and upgrading of logistical means in the field. The general objective being to ensure maintenance and order through prevention through a proactive approach with a view to lasting peace and security.

### **DDR, an ingredient in the fight against national and international crime**

From a practical point of view, we should start with the use of road cutters. It is a recurrent phenomenon in this area, which manifests itself in ambushes and raids on isolated camps and theft of herds. Another practice is hostage taking. The kidnapping of people and personalities is generally carried out on individuals from rural families, with a view to paying a ransom on the penalty of the assassination of the hostages (Saibou 2006)<sup>17</sup>.

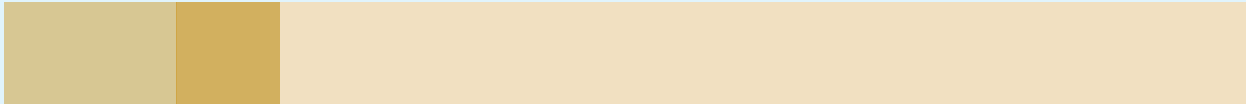
This description, although contextualised within the framework of the analysis of the criminal practices of highway bobbars in the Far North region, to a certain extent, is not very far from those deployed by Boko Haram in the same region. It is just as relevant in the North West and South West regions. In either case, these groups take advantage of the diverse networks and traffics that fuel the underground economy. "In this set of activities, the border serves as a balance between the State where the resource is illegally removed, often violently, and the State where it is stored or disposed of. This spatial organisation gives the activities concerned an international scope and promotes connection to global crime networks"<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, in addition to its own resources, the National Security could, in a complementary manner, mobilise, the resources of Interpol or those dedicated to the fight against cross-border and or organised crime thanks to the mechanisms of international police cooperation. For greater efficiency, it would therefore benefit from exploiting

<sup>16</sup>Quoted by Bobbo Ousmanou, "Boko Haram, inextirpable?" *The eye of the Sahel* N° 1319 of Friday January 24, 2020 p.11.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted by Etanislav Ngondi, "Central Africa facing the security challenges of the 21st century", *The perspectives of Africa in the 21st century*. Under the supervision of Joseph Gahama. Dakar, CODESRIA, 2015, P 88-89.

<sup>18</sup>Rodrigue Nana Ngassam, "insecurity at the borders of Cameroon" SER March 2014, pages 7 to 16, available at <https://www.cairn.info/revue-etudes-2014-3-page-7.html>, accessed April 01, 2020.





the potential of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and secessionist armed groups as part of a sustainable process of reintegration and reinsertion. The strategic and operational function of intelligence, in such a situation, would make it possible to better coordinate the various actions of the forces on the ground; certain conditions would still have to be met.

### **Conditions for realising the potential of DDR**

For the potential presented by the DDR process for the execution of the missions of the National Security to be optimal, a strong coordination of the interested actors is necessary (A) and a reinforcement of the sharing of information (B).

#### **Coordination of actors**

True sources of information, the ex-combatants of Boko Haram or secessionist armed groups, in terms of reliable information on their old organisations, their structuring, internal organisation, their modes of action and logistical capacities, present an enormous potential likely to interest several State institutions involved in the security and defence sectors. However, the Cameroonian apparatus and mechanisms, in the matter, through the diversity of its services and structures could carry in itself, the seeds of a cacophony that could lead to a non-optimal exploitation of these different sources. Hence, the requirement for real coordination, coherence and complementarity in the management of intelligence and other information from ex-combatants in the North West, the Southwest, as in the Far North region. Concretely, it would therefore be desirable for objectives for coordinated and complementary research to be defined by all the stakeholders and for mechanisms to operationalise these objectives to be implemented. The NDDRC Board of Directors could be the appropriate framework for conducting these discussions.

After defining the objectives, mixed teams made up of representatives of the entities concerned, taking advantage of the comparative advantages of the members' original structures and endowed with appropriate resources, could be seconded to each Regional Centre for the implementation of the accepted guidelines.

#### **Reinforcing information sharing**

There are several types of information that may

be collected through the DDR process. The weapons and ammunition collected through the DDR process can provide useful information on supply chains, traffickers, payment mechanisms, etc. The exploitation of the information provided in this way may require the use of the resources of partner organisations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Dynamic international cooperation would contribute to the full realisation of the police's intelligence missions in the fight against national and international crime.

Information sharing in the context of international cooperation presupposes that, internally, information relating to firearms and ammunition is properly processed and stored. For greater efficiency of the security services, it would be desirable that a digital platform for sharing information based on the database of weapons collected be set up. It would allow the departments concerned to take over.

### **Conclusion**

Custodian of peace, the National Security is a key player in DDR, as initiated by the Head of State. In addition, the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee and the Cameroonian Police are engaged in a symbiotic relationship in which the latter can bring substantial added value, in particular through its multivariate skills in terms of dialogue, negotiation, policing and community engagement, inherited from demonstrated and proven international and national expertise and experience. For this relationship to be more fruitful, and therefore contribute to a greater efficiency of the NDDRC, close coordination within the Board of Directors must be put in place. Thanks to the virtuous circle thus engaged, public order will be maintained through preventive measures. In this perspective, the National Security must keep in mind that the post-DDR environment will be different from that which preceded it. It must therefore reinvent itself in order to best contribute to the restoration of the police / population link; citizens / State. This implies a paradigm shift like that initiated by the "beggar for peace". Will the National Security be able to take up this challenge?

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Training Department;



# DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR) : A STRUCTURING PARADIGM IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE ONGOING ANGLOPHONE CRISIS IN CAMEROON

By René Ngeek MONTEH, PhD

*Postcolonial conflict and wars in African countries is still on the rise, despite the numerous efforts to put an end to it. Since then, some African states have made advances in post conflict peace building and intergroup reconciliation. The attacks by terrorists in the Far North Region for over five years now and the violence propagated by armed separatist groups in the North West and South West Regions since 2016 has left a crushing impact on the socio economic and political life of Cameroon. The crises that started as a corporatist claim in the predominantly two English speaking regions of the country and to which appropriate solutions were provided late, were hijacked by secessionist movement. It was from this backdrop that the President of the Republic of Cameroon signed a Decree in November 2018 to establish the National DDR committee as an attempt to solve the ongoing Anglophone crisis. This paper examines the relevancy of DDR in reforming the security and political sector in the Anglophone Regions. This paper utilizes mixed-methods to ascertain this objective. Amongst the several results we found out that, the DDR in these Regions can significantly contribute to peace building despite the numerous challenges it faced.*

Keywords: Anglophone crisis, DDR, civil war, peace-building, separatist.



Repentance of NOSO ex-combatants at the Major National Dialogue in Yaoundé

## Introduction

Cameroon in the past decade has witnessed intensive violence between government forces and Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North region and lately the Anglophone regions (Northwest and Southwest) pro-independence armed struggle. The crisis began in October 2016 with protests by teachers and lawyers, which escalated into an armed insurrection at the end of 2017 and have since degenerated into a civil war. The conflict has killed at least 1,850 people since September 2017 and its consequences are now perceptible in the West and Littoral regions. It has had a substantial social and humanitarian impact in the Anglophone regions: most schools have been closed for the last almost four years more than 170 villages have been destroyed 530,000 people have been internally displaced and 35,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. The conflict has also devastated the local economy, which accounts for about one fifth of the country's GDP.<sup>1</sup>

Peace, stability and safeguard are important elements of security of not only states but also that of the citizenry and their belongings. This brings us to the need to have transformational elements in the society for there to be sustainable development, in other words, transformational security settings is an important element of sustainable development, and this is only possible when there are synergies between long and short term coordinated efforts. It is from this background that on the 30th of November 2018, President Paul Biya signed a decree creating the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee, 'NDDRC'. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) most times operate contemporaneously with transitional justice processes in conflict affected societies. It is a complex process with political, military security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions.

From this backdrop and in line with conventional international standards and the peculiar case of Cameroon, a technical analysis of the DDR beyond doubt, evinces another futile attempt to address this crisis. The main objective of this article is to examine how real the DDR is in these Regions. It offers a critical evaluation of the metrics and methods

currently used, highlight persistent challenges to impact assessment in volatile environments, and offers recommendations for more rigorous impact assessment of DDR programmes. The decree brings to light the following fundamental short comings which makes it only a window dressing and yet another misplaced priority.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

In an attempt to generate a theory grounded on the phenomenon under investigation, it appears important to discuss belligerent perspectives as to the causes of the hostile inter-societal interactions. The current antagonism is understood as a kind of politically-driven conflict with claims on equal treatments. As such it is important to have a look at some theories and analysis which are concerned with the present peace attempts in the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. By so doing, our analysis will be based on the works of some economists, historians and social anthropologists who are involved in the theorizing of politically and ethnically-driven conflicts. The extent to which these theories are applicable to our case study will be seen. This study is reflected in four basic theories, namely the conflict, the disarmament, the demobilization and the reinsertion/reintegration theories.

### 1.1 Conflict Theory

William Zartman, conflict specialist, perceives conflicts to be indispensable in all human societies and argues that conflicts help to measure cost and commitment, and equally guides choices. There exist, therefore, opposing forces in the life of individuals, groups, social structures and societies in general. It is from these forces and constant competition between individuals and groups that the conflict theory takes its premise. This theory argues that in all human societies, all political, social and economic relations are based on mutual interest, understanding and trust. Karl Marx saw economic factors and competition to be the root cause of all conflicts hampering human societies. The idea he put forward was that societies can only function well if mutual understanding and trust can be identified. In such a situation, disagreements, divergences in thought, ideas and interest or better still situations of friction in approaches, rationality in choices and decision would be avoided. He claimed that it is the lack of consensus on a single or due to their multi-dimensional nature stream of thoughts that conflicts

<sup>1</sup> International Crisis Group (2019), "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks?", Africa Report N°272/2, Brussels-Belgium, (Translation from French) May 2019, p.2.



are so rampant.<sup>2</sup> Hence, it appears convincing to assert that once there is a drop in mutual interest, understanding and trust among groups of individuals, conflict takes precedence. The main principle underlying the conflict theory is the conviction that all members of human society do not have the same values, interests and expectations. There is much variance when taken into account other inputs/elements like social class, privileges, position or wealth. Every society, be it small or big, as noted in the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, has its own type of conflicts and a class of people for its interpretations.

Ibn Khaldun heralded his own conflict theory which was based on the fact that in the Arab world, the struggle between the nomads and the tillers represented the fundamental components in the evolution of the Arab civilization. It later inspired Niccolo Machiavelli in *The Prince* who saw the development of the state and its key institutions as permanent pillars of conflicts. Similar reflections on conflict theories were made by Charles Darwin in 1882 when he placed human behaviour at the level of plant species. Darwin believed like the economist Thomas Malthus that resources were grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the growing population and asserted that, because of constant competition, life and survival is a matter of the strong (fittest).<sup>3</sup> Implicitly, Malthus and Darwin were arguing that competition and conflict among all living things (animate and inanimate) was very common because of scarcity of food, space and other valuable resources.<sup>4</sup> In essence, they were simply corroborating Karl Marx's idea.

The conflict theory therefore exposes us to other sub theories such as; disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion/reintegration theories all relevant in this paper.

## 1.2 Disarmament Theory

According to Koubi<sup>5</sup> disarmament is the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons. To him

disarmament of rival nations can only take place when all countries involved are made better off and a feasibility criterion is also satisfied. Disarmament is more probable when nations face a similar trade off in the acquisition of weapons, when developments in military capabilities can be speedily and accurately verified, and when the existing weapon systems are easily reproducible. A successful disarmament also requires that the speed of the disposition of arms be neither too fast nor too slow. General and complete disarmament was defined by the United Nations General Assembly,<sup>6</sup> as the destruction of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD), coupled with the balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all states to protect their security.

Freedman's<sup>7</sup> a disarmament theorist, holds that disarmament can occur but only as a result of a prior reduction in tension. Disarmament can occur only in the wake of a political agreement. He posits that disarmament required a system based on states taking responsibility for their own security with an alternative system based on collective security. The key principal would be that any act of aggression, anywhere, by anyone, against anyone, will be resisted by all the members of the system collectively; faced with this threat of overwhelming power, no state will resort to aggression. A practical step towards an effective disarmament, taking all the required steps would address the issue of sustainable peace in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. The government of Cameroon organized a "Grand National Dialogue" which was an excellent step towards peace building but it had its short comings as it did not involve all the warring parties involved in the armed conflict.

## 1.3 Demobilisation Theory

According to United Nations,<sup>8</sup> Demobilisation is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilisation may extend

<sup>2</sup> As cited by M. Darwin Wagner (1958), *Critique of a Heritage*, Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, p.9.

<sup>3</sup> C. Darwin (1872), *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, London, John Murraq, pp.8-10.

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Frank (2011), *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and Common Good*, Princeton, Prince town University Press, p.6.

<sup>5</sup> Vally Koubi (1994) "Disarmament: A theoretical analysis", in *International Interactions*, 19:4, 263-281.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol.1, 1945-1956, Department of State Publication, 7008, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence Freedman (1987), *Why Is Arms Control So Boring?*, London: Council for Arms Control, Faraday Discussion Paper No. 9.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations (2005), "Note by the Secretary-General on Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations", A/C.5/59/31, May 24.

from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilisation encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion which is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration.

According to Mc Gaughey<sup>9</sup>, demobilisation is the process of standing down a nation's armed forces from combat-ready status. This may be as a result of victory in war, or because a crisis has been peacefully resolved and military force will not be necessary. The opposite of demobilisation is mobilisation. He further said demobilization of a defeated enemy is called demilitarization and that the end of war is not an event, but a process.

In the case under study, demobilisation would help ex-combatants to prepare themselves for reintegration to their societies and to be fully accepted by their communities. The demobilisation process is not yet well effective because the Anglophone crisis is still on the resolution process. Besides this, the number of combatants in the bush cannot be compared to the number of already existing ex-combatants in the camps. This clearly shows that the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme still faces serious challenges in its initial stage.

#### 1.4 Reinsertion/Reintegration Theory

Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools.<sup>10</sup> While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year. In this case, Reintegration refers to a process by

which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.<sup>11</sup>

However the alleged root causes as unemployment, marginalization, corruption and the general lack of opportunities require large and expensive investments carried out over long periods of time. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration by its nature can only bring about a few quick wins. It is generally believed that education or vocational skills training of ex-combatants is a first step in economic reintegration. For some reintegration critical theorists, vocational training persists because it is what donors and implementing actors know and are willing to fund, and it therefore involves little risk. Some ex-combatants at the camps are already undergoing training that will help them be reintegrated in to the society in the nearest future when armed conflict must have come to an end. But the question is how sustainable is the training? Will this training fetch them a lot of money at the end of the programme? Will they have ready markets for the consumption of the goods they produce at the centres? What guarantee will keep an ex-combatant at the camp to learn a programme which he is not sure to fetch him lots of money at the end of the month as compared to the ransoms of millions he demands after kidnapping people?

Besides these theories advanced in this paper, one will equally understand that, this study is therefore an embodiment of a broad spectrum of sociological theories with each contributing to the overall understanding of the specific ideas developed in this paper.

## 2. Historical Context and Factors Contributing to the Creation of the DDR

The Anglophone crisis in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon stimulated the creation of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration program in November 2018. The combat between the formal army and separatist and insurgent armed groups caused numerous victims in the two Anglophone Regions where civilians have

9 Enzo Nussio & Kimberly Howe (2016), "When Protection Collapses: Post-Demobilization Trajectories of Violence", in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 28:5, 848-867.

10 United Nations General Assembly (2006), Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, Report of the Secretary-General, Sixtieth session, Press Release SC/6830.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

been largely affected. The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Committee was created during the climax of armed conflict in the English speaking Regions of Cameroon. However, this was done without inclusive dialogue, peace accords and ceasefire between the warring parties. Since the creation of this Committee, there has been continuous violence. This has negatively affected the educational system, the judicial system, increased suffering amongst the people, led to homelessness, untold deaths, kidnappings, poverty, diseases, social expulsion, loss of human values/dignity, political imbalance, the destruction of important infrastructure and above all, a fall in the economic growth rate/ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Cameroon. For a long time now, the English speaking Regions so far have not adhered to government policy of creating the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee that did not reflect their aspirations.<sup>12</sup>

Government's position in the ongoing war in these Regions is that they are at war against terrorists, armed separatist, secessionist and that is why the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Program was created. Anglophone fighters are referred to as separatist because they want to separate the Republic of Cameroon. This is because the motive underlying the fight is restoration of the statehood of Southern Cameroon. The crisis for the restoration of the statehood of the British Southern Cameroon is not a new phenomenon. It only escalated and became violent in 2016. This happened when the lawyers and teachers started. In fact, the Anglophone crisis started with the peaceful movements, walks and matches that gradually became violent. The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) was created by the president of the republic in the context of solving the problem of separatist fighters.<sup>13</sup>

Figuratively, at least 235 soldiers and police officers, 650 civilians and close to 1,000 separatists have lost their lives. Government estimates 1,600 dead (400 civilians, 160 soldiers and police officers and 1,000 separatists); Anglophone federalists estimate 3,000-5,000 dead; separatists estimate

5,000-10,000 dead; more than 170 villages have been destroyed; 530,000 people have been internally displaced and 35,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. By comparison, the death toll in the conflict with Boko Haram in Cameroon is 3,100 over five years (2014-April 2019): 1,900 civilians, 215 soldiers and police officers, and 1,000 combatants. Besides that, about 100 schools have been burned down over the last two years, most of them by the separatists.<sup>14</sup> It is resulted from this context that DDR was created as a means to rapidly solve the ongoing Anglophone crisis. The subsequent illustrations (Map, Table and Figure) give a vivid view about the crisis.

**Map 1: Map of Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis**



<sup>12</sup> B. Berinyuy Mangong (2020), "disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration in peace building: an investigation of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon with focus on the North West Region", (Draft work of) Master Dissertation in Peace and Conflict Management with International Relations, Pan African Institute For Development, Buea, p.16.

<sup>13</sup> <https://cameroon-report.com/securite/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-committee-set-up/> posted 4 December 2018, retrieved April 2020.

<sup>14</sup> International Crisis Group (2019), p.3.

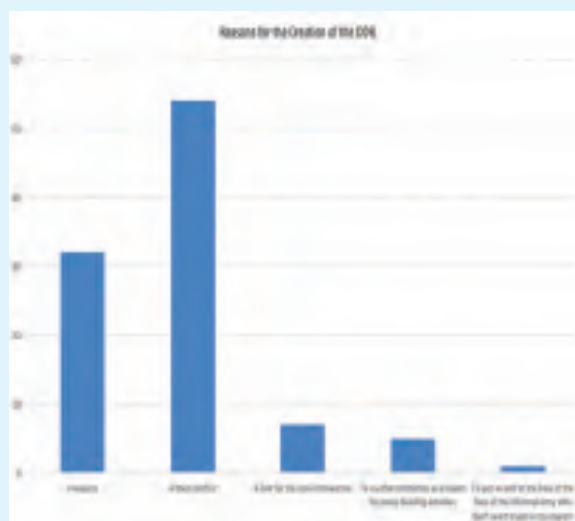
**Table 1: Armed Separatists Presence in the Anglophone Regions**

Group	Leader	Stronghold	Numbers (estimate)
Manyu Tigers	Martin Ashu	Manyu Division (Southwest)	500
Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF)	Ebenezer Akwanga	Meme Division	400
Ambazonia Defense Forces	Benedict Kuah	Both regions	200-500
Red Dragons	Olivier Lekene Fongunueh (Field Marshall)	Lebialem Division (Southwest)	200
Seven Kata		Batibo town and Momo Division (Northwest)	200
The Sword of Ambazonia (TSOA)		Meme Division	200
Ambaland Quifor	Silas Zama	Mezam Division (Northwest)	200
Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces	"Général" RK	Boyo division (Northwest)	100
Warriors of Nso	Warriors of Nso	Bui division (Northwest)	100

Source: Author's collection aided by International Crisis Group (2019).

Note: It is difficult to estimate the numbers in these armed groups because they tend to claim higher numbers than they really have. For example, SOCADEF's leader said that his group had more than 3,500 active combatants, but he appears to have not more than 500. In this case, only listed groups with at least 200 members, an official name and an identifiable leader where mentioned in this table. About 20 smaller semi-criminal, semi-separatist groups also exist and have a few dozen members. Finally, the attacks in the West Region (Noun, Bamboutos and Menoua divisions) seem to be the work of a few small groups based in Ngoketunjia Division (Babessi, Bambaland, Bamessing and Bamali) in the Northwest region.

**Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by the Creation of the DDR**



Source: B. B. Mangong (2020), p.88.

Figure 1 above shows the reasons for the creation of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration. The figure shows that Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration was created for arm conflict, followed by insecurity. These two are found to be the main aims of the creation of the DDR. Still as illustrated on the figure above, the third reason why the DDR program was created is for the fact that it is used as confidence building measures for the members of the separatist groups so that it will lure them to easily drop their arms so as to get reintegrated in to the society.

From this angle, one can rightly say that, the



DDR was created for the following objectives:

- To contribute to security and stability by facilitating reintegration and providing the enabling environment for rehabilitation and recovery to begin;
- To restore trust through confidence-building between conflicting factions and the general population;
- To help prevent or mitigate future violent conflict;
- To contribute to national reconciliation; and
- To free up human and financial resources, and social capital, for reconstruction and development.

### 3. Structural Organisation of DDR in Cameroon

The DDR of ex-combatants is a complex process, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It aims to address the post-conflict security challenges that arise from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development. DDR seeks to support the ex-combatants' economic and social reintegration, so they can become stakeholders in peace. While much of a DDR programme is focused on ex-combatants, the main beneficiaries of the programme should ultimately be the wider community.

The national DDR committee (CNDDR) is headed by former governor Fai Yengo Francis. It operates on the same basis as UN's peacekeeping missions. Structurally, operations carried out by the committee will focus on areas where the concerned militants come from, theoretically at least. Municipalities concerned include Bamenda and Buea, the respective head districts of the English-speaking regions in the North West and South West, and Mora in the Far North.<sup>15</sup> Strategically, the purpose of the DDR in English-speaking regions is to gather militants and armed secessionists and help them be reinserted into the civilian life. Plate 1 gives an eye view of the DDR headquarters in Yaoundé.

**Plate 1: DDR Head Office Yaoundé**



Source: Author's Collections, 20 April 2020.

Under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government and headed by a National Coordinator appointed by a presidential decree, the committee has regional centers in Bamenda, Buea, and Mora in which disarmament, demobilisation and preparation for reintegration is effectively carried out.

According to Decree 2018/719 of November 30th, 2018, creating the committee, collaborate with relevant government services, NGO's and international partners, particularly the United Nations to collect, list and store weapons and munitions voluntarily handed over by ex-fighters, taking appropriate measures to destroy the weapons, munitions and explosives, setting up and managing cantonment sites for ex-fighters, providing multifaceted assistance to these ex-fighters to prepare them for a return to civil life, taking necessary step to de-radicalize ex-fighters, facilitate their reintegration into the society by training them in income-generating activities.<sup>16</sup> Table 1 below illustrates the three main components of DDR.

<sup>15</sup> <https://cameroon-report.com/securite/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-committee-set-up/> posted 4 December 2018, retrieved April 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Decree 2018/719 of 30 November, 2018

**Table 2: The Three Components of DDR**

Phase	Support
<b>Disarmament</b>	Assembly of soldiers, documentation, collection and sometimes destruction of weapons
<b>Demobilisation</b>	Cantonment of soldiers Supplying basic needs, i.e. food, medication, housing, clothing, basic education and counselling, Census, Discharge documentation, Sometimes first part of the reinsertion , transport to home town
<b>Reinsertion/ Reintegration</b>	Job generation and placement, Education and training, Provision of tool kits, clothing, food and housing materials, Distribution of farmland, Credit schemes Psychological counselling, Direct financial assistance, i.e. cash payments and loans.

Source: Authors collection drawn from, Lilli Banholzer (2014), "When Do Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes Succeed?", Discussion Paper, German Development Institute, Bonn, 8/2014, p.15.

In the North West Region, the Prime Ministerial decree appointed the educator Gabsa Sixtus, former Principal of Government High School Ndop to coordinate the DDR Centre in Bamenda. He recognized that it will be a daunting task, but he remained optimistic that with the support of all the population, peace will return to the North West Region. He explained that the Centre is a hand of fellowship and forgiveness offered to those who have taken up arms and he is ready to receive them, offer them training so they can restart a sustainable life.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cynthia Efopa (2018), "Regional Heads of Disarmament, Demobilisation and

In the Regional Centre of Buea, Fonju Njukang Bernard was given the task to pilot the affairs of the South West Regional DDR Centre. He acknowledged that the task requires working across the board with all stakeholders; population, Forces of law and Order, administrative and traditional authorities, media as well as civil society organizations. This will call for dialogue, good will, readiness and availability, tolerance and reconciliation. His knowledge in International Relations and Conflict Resolutions is an added value to the work that lies ahead.<sup>18</sup>

To end up, it should also be noted that in Mora, the civil administrator, Oumar Bachir will have the duty to implement the presidential decision of the Head of State in the Far North Region. A region he masters so well and can better evaluate the scope, magnitude and the dimension of the task awaiting him.

#### 4. A Balance Sheet and the Centers

Armed groups invaded all the thirteen administrative Divisions (seven in North West) and (six in South West). Above all, the situation continues to loom dark with imposed week-long lock-downs damaging socio-economic activities in the Region and taking the lives of young Cameroonians. Teachers and students are being hunted down to enforce ghost-school threats. Consequences are extensive with hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes, villages razed and life has become unbearable.

However, following the design to support the transition from war to peace, DDR interventions have recorded some impressive achievements in terms of demobilisation and disarmament. During the DDR first year evaluation 30 November 2019, the National Coordinator Fai Yengo Francis revealed that, at least 120 armed separatist fighters in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon had laid down their arms. It is remarkable that all these early achievements are thanks to the tireless efforts of security forces, administrative authorities, the collaboration of the population and the holding of the Major National Dialogue. Since the National Dialogue (30 September - 4 October 2019), the number has increased in Buea from 50 to 70 and in

Reintegration Committee appointed", Published by Cameroon-report, 11 December 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Bamenda from 50 to 60.<sup>19</sup> Equally, the various Committees said the separatist fighters are gradually being reinserted at the Bamenda and Buea regional disarmament centres. During the National Dialogue, a good number of contingents came from the Bamenda and Buea centres. Some were given the responsibility to sing the Cameroon national anthem in English language.

Besides that, it was also regrettable that one of the ex-separatist's leader presenting himself and apologised in Wum during the installation of the Senior Divisional Officer for the Menchum and then the next day he was killed. This happened because he did not follow the Governor's entourage but promised to spend the night in Wum and do so the next day in the Bamenda centre.<sup>20</sup> He would not have been allowed to go back to the quarter and that is why the next day he was found dead by unknown persons.

It should be made known that, the process to get membership in these centres as an ex-combatant is done in many ways.

Phase 1 are those who come straight to the centre, of course with the security forces who are themselves based in the centres, they check them and try to find out who they are, if they are real ex-fighters because in some cases, the centre had some that were not real ex-fighters and then they also try to have a check about their past and then they come to the centres.

The second group is made of those who are brought by the security forces. When they come, maybe they stay for one or two days with the security forces for these same checks and then after, they are deemed fit for the centres because the centres want to take people they can count on.<sup>21</sup> To them this control mechanism is put in place because of the unknown.

#### 4.1 DDR in the Bamenda Centre

To date, the Bamenda based Centre for DDR, now enrolls about 52 ex-combatants (men and women) and offers varied gainful opportunities for fighters who drop guns and leave bushes. These young people, whose ages vary between 14 and 25,

fought in the ranks of the Amba (separatist), the name given to the English-speaking armed separatists. The board of the DDR is composed of 17 ministries.<sup>22</sup> This means that they provide social, health, education, vocational training etc which is followed by the orientation of each individual per their choice or vocation.

It is evident that the government created this committee to assist hundreds of former fighters who wish to drop their guns and get pardoned. The pardon is called AMNESTY which means the former separatists will not be in trouble for any crimes they committed while fighting with the separatists. As a direct measure, any separatist that wants to drop his guns should call 115. The number is free to call. In the same direction, the DDR has put in place a mechanism for the establishment of ID cards to those who don't have.<sup>23</sup> This is however, to ease identifications. Plate 2 illustrates the Centre.

The first recruits of the Centre are traced to December 27, 2018 when two ex-combatants were received from Oku-Bui Division. Ten months after, the Centre now enrolls 52 ex-combatants receiving professional skills capable of moulding them into new persons with a new frame of mind. The Centre offers opportunities in mainly Agricultural disciplines for now, especially in Poultry rearing, pig rearing and gardening. Shoe mending and cosmetology are envisaged in the nearest days. The latter is all about training in the production of rubbing oil, perfumes, and detergents just to name but these. Tailoring and hairdressing trades were equally introduced early this year with the staff strength of about 12 agricultural technicians and support staff on duty.<sup>24</sup> People are relocated per their choice, vocation or education.

Besides these professional trainings, there are many forms of recreation activities available in the centre. They include; board games such as ludo, playing cards, checkers, draughts board games, football, handball and volleyball. All these recreational facilities gain values in giving a new life shape to ex-separatists. At this moment, a selected number of above 20 ex-separatists are undergoing an internship program in the ministry of post and

19 Frédéric Takang (2020), "In Cameroon, dozens of fighters lay down their arms", in <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-48288334>, Bamenda, BBC Afrique, May 15, 2019, retrieved 14 April 2020.

20 <https://actucameroun.com/2019/12/02/comite-national-de-desarmement-252-ex-combattants-deja-recenses/>, retrieved, 12 April 2020.

21 <https://actucameroun.com/2019/12/02/>.

22 Interview with, Gabsa Sixtus, 58+, DDR Coordinator for Bamenda Centre, 9 April 2020.

23 KumKum Massa (2019), "Amnesty/Amnistie Cameroon offers pardons and amnesty to all Amba boys who drop their guns", available in, <https://kontripipo.com/amnesty/>, retrieved 19 April 2020.

24 Choves Loh (2019), "Bamenda DDR Center - Varied Opportunities for Ex-Combatants" available in, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201909240164.html>, 23 September 2019, retrieved 15 April 2020.

telecommunication at Western Regional Headquarters Bafoussam. Their selection was principally based on their advanced state of moral values.<sup>25</sup> It should also be understood that, the town of relocation is chosen by the individual.

#### 4.2 DDR in the Buea Centre

In Buea, currently more than 90 persons a number higher than that of Bamenda known as returnees join the DDR Centre. The Regional Centre of DDR in Buea headed by Bernard Fonju, is located in the premises of the Borstal Institute of Buea, which is a State institution that has been carrying out similar reintegration duties on behalf of the Government under the Ministry of Social Affairs.<sup>26</sup> See the DDR Buea in Plate 3.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with, Takor K. Nixon.

<sup>26</sup> <https://actu cameroun.com/2019/12/02/comite-national-de-desarmement-252-ex-combattants-deja-recenses/>, retrieved, 12 April 2020.

The very first two (2) returnee-fighters from Ndian Division laid down their arms and integrated the Centre on 22 December 2018. Since then, their numbers have gained exponential proportion with the latest arrival of seven others received last 17 September 2019 following the Head of State's address to the nation instituting a Major National Dialogue. The Buea centre can accommodate about 120 interns under very decent conditions. However, the figure can rise to 160.<sup>27</sup> But in extreme necessity, the centre can entertain some 200 persons.

The daily activities in this Centre first start with personal hygiene, a bathe, normal preparation to start the day. But officially, activities of the day begin with an assembly, hoisting of the flag, singing of the national Anthem, breakfast and classes which have to do with real education, particularly civic education, and moral rearmament. Instructors are professionals

<sup>27</sup> Journal du Cameroun (2020), "Program to reintegrate ex Ambazonia fighters launched in Buea", Published on 2 January 2020.



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from the Ministry of Social Affairs. By 11 am, the theoretical classes end and two hours are consecrated for workshop time.<sup>28</sup> The workshop time is meant for practical lessons in either driving, farming, poultry, pig rearing and otherwise.

From our sources, the Buea centre is not training civil servants but training people to acquire skills that can make them autonomous and responsible. According to Director of the Buea DDR centre, activities at the institution are meant for rehabilitation and self-development. He says when the interns learn agriculture, it does not prepare them to be integrated into the Ministry of Agriculture and seek employment. Training in the Centre is directed to the acquisition of skills that can enable the learners to establish a farm and carry out their personal gainful activities in society. Automobile driving is a domain of high demand. The ex-combatants can work as a taxi driver. They can equally work in travel agencies. One can be employed by a private company even by the administration.<sup>29</sup>

In this Centre, relatives and friends come to visit interns, one of the reasons being that when they go back to their societies they can testify that the returnees are alive, not ill-treated; they are well taken care of. When people come in there are personal information sheets where they provide the names of their close friends. So when those close friends show up, they are allowed to visit them. There is a personal information sheet, which is established at the level of the security services, and strict measures are taken so that people do not come to undermine the physical integrity of the interns. Such data enables the verification of the identity of visitors. The contacts with their relatives and close friends enables people to be able to confirm that the government has not taken them to prison, they have not disappeared, and they are well taken care of which is enough assurance to tell those still in the bushes that if you so decide to lay down your weapons, you have nothing to fear.<sup>30</sup>

The major challenge in this Centre is the medical follow-up for the ex-separatists. It is also a challenge in terms of being able to maintain discipline, to bring them together to understand and focus on the same objectives.<sup>31</sup> They do not have the same level of

education but they have to undergo training. Are these challenges are linked

## 5. Challenges Faced by the DDR in the Anglophone Regions

The DDR of ex-combatants is a complex process, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It aims to address the post-conflict security challenges that arise from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development. DDR seeks to support the ex-combatants' economic and social reintegration, so they can become stakeholders in peace. While much of a DDR programme is focused on ex-combatants, the main beneficiaries of the programme should ultimately be the wider community. In addition, what are the difficulties encountered by the DDR in the following regions?

One of the challenges faced by the DDR in the area under study is that, the ex-combatants, especially the youths, are considered as a 'lost generation', having been deprived of education, employment and training during the conflict period, suffering war trauma. They become addicted to alcohol and drugs, and dependent on weapons and violence as modes of action and expression and the only means to pave a way for themselves in the region. When they lose their military livelihood, they face serious difficulties in adapting to civilian life. The main fair by the DDR is that, male ex-combatants may engage in anti-social behaviour within their families and communities, contributing to an increase in economic and social especially sexual violence.<sup>32</sup> In this case, the reinsertion period can last more than the expected time.

On the other hand, these ex-combatants have to understand that their appeasement emanates from what the authorities have said, discussed, adopted and adapt strategies with them. But at the moment, we cannot be talking of disarmament, besides the violence is still real through gun shots, burning down villages, houses and homes. As long as the fight is still ongoing, the the separatist fighters will still possess their weapons. Even if they are still fighting, they can never bring all the arms to DDR centres. The simple truth about the arms (Dane guns) is that, most

<sup>28</sup> Journal du Cameroun (2020).

<sup>29</sup> Interview with, Bernard Fonju Njukang, 50+, Director DDR Buea Centre, 20 April 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Nkeze (2019), "Buea DDR Centre: 50 Returnees on the Roll Call", Cameroon-Tribune, 23 September 2019.

<sup>31</sup> <https://actucameroun.com/2020/01/11/crise-anglophone-deboires-et-espoirs-des-ex-secessionnistes/>, retrieved 19 April 2020.

<sup>32</sup> "Regional Working Group on DDR Programmes and Post-conflict Management in West Africa", Setup workshop organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 30 May to 1er June 2006 Volume 2, Working Documents.

of these arms are borrowed from individuals or compounds since the people of these regions used these guns for hunting and during funeral ceremonies. In that case, the lender hands it back to the owner usage making it difficult for the DDR Centre to get them.<sup>33</sup> However, everyone has to be disarmed both the separatists fighters and the formal army for sustainable peace and tranquillity in the two Regions.

Another important difficulty is that, low-income countries like Cameroon facing internal conflict cannot do without support from the international community which, through the UN, has for several years been promoting an international political strategy based on the idea of human security. The international nature of the threat to security and the complexity of one country, or even group of countries, to deal with these threats alone give it good grounds to seek international solidarity on this crisis.<sup>34</sup> It is well understood that, the Cameroon DDR is still a new creation, which still needs a lot to do especially in the domains of; structural organisation, material, training, collaboration/partnership, manpower, financial dispositions, just to name but these.

To sum up, it is well understood that, the DDR in Cameroon seriously lacks proper planning of human and financial resources specifically dedicated to the centres, effective assessments in order to bring adequate help and support to returning combatants and thus prevent them from being frustrated. Vocational training and other educational measures are a good example. These are generally provided to returning combatants with the aim of building a foundation for self-sufficiency peaceful income-generating activities such as farming, bricklaying, carpentry, car mechanics and so forth. It is equally noted that, some demobilised separatists possesses certain abilities that are useful in the civilian labour market but not found in these centres. Besides that, the domineering French langue used by instructors in this centres at times do not play to their favour.<sup>35</sup> In fact, these are some of the challenges faced by the DDR and ex-combatants in an attempt to bring peace in the Anglophone regions.

## 6. The Way Forward

Other studies pay more attention to the technical

aspects of DDR programmes such as timing, sequencing and programme design. It should however be noted that, actors involved in DDR programs range from national and local government authorities, communities, UN agencies, the international financial institutions, bilateral donors, and international NGOs to local NGOs, grassroots organisations, and of course combatants, ex-combatants, and their dependents.

In this phase, what ex-combatants in these Regions lack is not ability but credentials since they have often missed out on formal education. Public opinion in the Anglophone Regions thus warns that training should be adapted to the demand for specific skills for better insertion in the economy of everyone, no matter the domain. Ex-combatants may have great difficulties during reinsertion moment in finding employment in the fields in which they had been trained.<sup>36</sup> In short, programme design should always include a thorough labour market assessment and take into account the job opportunities available in Cameroon. This explains why expertise, training, and inter-agency cooperation impact assessments need to be systematised, budgeted for, and built into programming from the conceptualization phase of DDR programmes in these Regions.

DDR programs in Cameroon must be part of an integrated national recovery strategy. This strategy should encompass economic development, security sector reform, justice and reconciliation initiatives, and the resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants and IDPs. Making DDR part of the overall recovery strategy serves to acknowledge the importance of this task and the fact that many of the challenges to the implementation of DDR programs have ramifications for the broader recovery process. It is also a strategy that can enable ownership by ex-combatants, communities, and the government. While the success of DDR has implications for the security situation within the country, it is ultimately dependent on economic growth and employment creation.<sup>37</sup> Ex-combatants must be able to earn a livelihood through legitimate means. However, high levels of unemployment are common in post conflict societies, which make demobilisation and the lasting reintegration of combatants a tough proposition.

The pacific conflict resolution mechanisms are

<sup>33</sup> Interview with, Takor K. Nixon, 43, Associate Professor in History, University of Bamenda, 14 April 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with, M. Obame Jean Claude, 65+, Expert CNDDR, Yaounde 20 April 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with, Lukong Clinton, 26, Ex-Separatist DDR Bamenda from Bui Division, 20 April 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with, Ngam Confidence Nchia, 44, Associate Professor in History, University of Bamenda, 11 April 2020.

<sup>37</sup> International Peace Academy (IPA) (2002), "A Framework for Lasting Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Crisis Situations", IPA-UNDP Workshop Report, 12-13 December 2002, German House, New York, pp.5-6.

negotiation, mediation, mediation-arbitration, diplomacy, and creative peace building. If these procedures are not strictly followed in solving the crisis, then conflict will continue to exist thus making the DDR less credible. A people who were clearly identified complain they have lost what constitutes their essence and bases of their cohesion, that is their identity. So basically there is a cultural and an identity crisis. As long as the right procedure used to solve the ongoing conflict is not well established and strictly followed up to be properly resolved, DDR cannot be completely successful.<sup>38</sup> This DDR would have been useful after the causes have been identified, analysed and solved.

At the DDR Centres, activities should not be created and imposed on the ex-combatants. Rather, their ideas and points of view should be really taken into consideration. This could be done through an interview or one on one talk with the experts/councillors. In a similar spirit, the government of the Republic of Cameroon have to take in to consideration amnesty, to free political prisoners. This would be a great step to put an end to the crisis.<sup>39</sup> If this is done, the citizens of these two regions would be considerate and come together for a free and fair inclusive dialogue which shall in turn facilitate the effective implementation of DDR programs.

In a nutshell, DDR alone, however, cannot be expected to prevent further conflict and restore stability in Cameroon. It must be accompanied by other economic, political and social reforms. DDR must therefore be conceptualised, designed, planned and implemented within a wider recovery and development framework.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined the prospect of the newly created DDR in an attempt to solve the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. It should be noted that, the transition from civil war to sustainable peace is a difficult one. The reintegration of ex-combatants, which is arguably the most difficult component of the process commonly referred to as DDR, also has the most far-reaching impact on the prospects for a sustainable peace in the Anglophone Regions. Without disarmament, demobilisation and the successful reintegration of combatants, sustainable peace is impossible. There are numerous

factors that can cause DDR to fail, such as the lack of funding or international support, an unstable strategic environment earlier discussed. There are, however, only a handful of necessary or even sufficient factors for a successful DDR.

The will for peace in Cameroon is the basis for the beginning of a DDR programme. Accordingly, the greater the will for peace, the more likely the DDR will be completed and the more successful will be the reintegration. But it is only through the influence of push and pull factors with rewards, persuasion and coercion that the will for peace can be maintained through the course of the entire DDR programme to ensure successful reintegration of the separatists. This peace can readily fizzle out after ceasefires and peace accords are signed.

Reintegration represents the most demanding of the phases of DDR. In competition with unemployed civilians, returning refugees from neighbouring Nigeria and IDP all over the Nation, generating enough jobs for successful reintegration is only possible with the coordinated use of every available conflict resolution tool. This applies to these Anglophones Regions with weak infrastructure: only by minimizing structural and cultural violence can long-term reintegration be achieved in these regions without unleashing new rounds of conflict.

38 Franziska Seethaler (2016), "Assessing the Impact of DDR Programmes: Possibilities and Challenges", United Nations University, New York, Policy Brief-March 2016, p.10.

39 B. B. Mangong (2020), p.117.

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# THE POLICY OF DDR: CHALLENGES OF LOCAL REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE NORTH WEST AND SOUTH WEST REGIONS OF CAMEROON.

By Stephen NGAI NGONG, PhD

*The outburst of armed conflicts and their modes of proliferation have been a subject of great preoccupation in the history of human existence. The evolution of human history has demonstrated the persistent occurrence of this phenomenon. If in the past, a lot of attention was focused on the mechanisms of analysis, prevention and management of conflicts between states<sup>1</sup>, this position has over time gradually been reverting toward seeking ways of resolving internal armed conflicts<sup>2</sup>. Since the collapse of the Berlin wall and the end of the cold war, the world has been witnessing an increase in intra-state armed conflicts<sup>3</sup>.*

*Indeed, a majority of armed conflicts in the world especially in Africa today are internal conflicts, opposing the inhabitants of the same country. Though conflicts between states could quickly come to an end thanks to diplomatic solutions, intra-state conflicts are often more complex and solutions to them are often more difficult to be put in place<sup>4</sup>. The proliferation of these conflicts has brought policy makers to constantly examine ways and different mechanisms of their prevention, management and resolution<sup>5</sup>. One of these mechanisms, which is at the centre of our reflection in this study, is disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion, commonly referred to as the “DDR”.*

*Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion constitute essential components are put together by policy makers in a peace process in order to end an armed conflict. In theory, different circumstances and motives justify the choice and the time of putting in place the DDR programme in each conflict<sup>6</sup>. If disarmament appeared as a classical tool for resolving classical conflicts, it is worth bearing in mind that new forms of internal and violent conflicts have necessitated the choice of the DDR as a mode of adapting to these forms of conflicts<sup>7</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> Probably because of the devastating consequences that the first and second world wars had humanity.

<sup>2</sup> PEARSON Frederic S., « Le marché des armes après la guerre froide et les pays les moins développés », *revues. Org, Culture et conflits*, 1991, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard ADAM, *Conflits en Afrique : Analyse des crises et pistes pour une prévention*, Institut Européen de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité Bruxelles, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> ATCHE Bessou Raymond, “*Les conflits armés internes en Afrique et le droit international*”, Thèse de Doctorat en droit, Université de Cergy – Pontoise, Novembre 2008, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> TSHIKALA K. Biaya, « Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et prévention des conflits », CODESRIA et Clingendnel, La Haye, 1999, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> FERNANDES Rodrigo, “*Disarmament; an issue of international Law*”, USP, shelley de Botton, July 2007, p.2

<sup>7</sup> MAMERT Lié ONANA, « Maintien et consolidation de la paix dans les post colonies Africaines ; Démobilisation et réinsertion des combattants en contexte de transition politique », 2010, p. 307.

In a bid to make a better assessment of the subject under study, an understanding of these terms is necessary for further reading. In this light, disarmament is understood as an essential measure aimed at stabilizing peace in an environment where armed tension is high, and as such, is defined as a process of gathering light and heavy arms, munitions, explosives and all other weapons used by the combatants in order to control or eliminate them<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, the objective of disarmament is to reduce the presence of arms in order to procure an environment, which permits a return to peace and a resolution of a conflict. It is an essential measure aimed at stabilising peace in an environment where armed tension is high<sup>9</sup>. Its objective is also aimed at reducing the level of violence in order to permit an enabling ground for a peaceful resolution of a conflict.

Demobilisation implies the constraining of recruitment of combatants within an armed group. In military terms, it supposes the dismantling of an armed unit, reducing them under the supervision and control of the authorities<sup>10</sup>. The process of demobilisation comprises different stages in view of preparing them to return to a normal life. In theory, it is essentially made up of several stages; notably, planning, transferring of combatants to camps or centres, registration, information of combatants, preparation of their return to civic life and liberation<sup>11</sup>. It also involves the putting into action, socio-economic, civic, and cultural activities such as medical care, assistance, training, food supplies, catering and education of the ex-combatants in order to prepare them for the process of reinsertion.

Reinsertion on its part is understood as a process by which the ex-combatants return to normal community life. It is an economic and social programme whose calendar is not limited overtime<sup>12</sup>. The objective of reinsertion is to support

the economic and social integration of the ex-combatants and social victims of a conflict in order to enable them regain a normal life. Indeed, while disarmament and demobilization seek to restore confidence by letting the ex-combatants lay down their arms, reinsertion permits them to renounce their former status in order to return to normal life in the society.

Created with the objective to disarm the Boko Haram militants and the armed groups in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration has become a key and a veritable policy instrument of disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion in Cameroon. This public policy implementation instrument, through its institutional and operational frameworks, is playing an indispensable role due to the actions it is undertaking in the peace process in these conflict-heated regions, in line with local realities. This process has been ongoing without reference to some setbacks, which call for some ameliorating measures.

## A- AN INSTITUTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FACED WITH LOCAL REALITIES

The willingness of every government to maintain peace in any conflict-heated zone is always manifested through a policy instrument that is put in place to bring the situation to an end restore durable peace. In the general theory of conflict dynamics, we distinguish three phases that each policy maker can lay down in order to attain peace in such a situation. They are; the prevention phase, management phase and peace consolidation phase<sup>13</sup>. In other words, pre-war and post-war peace-building instruments have to be carefully deployed in order to bring about durable peace. Disarmament by essence constitutes an instrument of consolidation of peace, which can intervene during the management of a conflict in order to reduce arm tension, or during the consolidation phase or post crisis phase, in order to reconstruct a climate of durable peace.

Indeed, the public policy of DDR is not a static process because of the fact that conflicts are not the

<sup>8</sup> ALFONSO GARCIA Robles, "Mesures de désarmement dans les zones particulièrement", *The Hague academy of international law*, 1991, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> ALFREDO LAZARTE HOYLE, et DAN CUNNIAH, *Prévention et résolution des conflits violents et armés, manuel de formation à l'usage des organisations syndicales*, bureau des activités pour les travailleurs, et programmes sur la réponse à la crise de la reconstruction, Genève, 2010, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> MAMERT Lié ONANA, « Maintien et consolidation de la paix dans les postes colonies Africaines ; Démobilisation et réinsertion des combattants en contexte de transition politique », op, cit, p. 311.

<sup>11</sup> IAN Douglas, Adiran WILKINSON, Coln GLEICHMANN, *Désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration*, GTZ, Centre pearson, Charaf El Ghernati, Canada, 2003, P. 49.

<sup>12</sup> HUGON Philippe, « L'économie des conflits en Afrique », *revue internationale et stratégique*, n° 43, 2001, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Bernard ADAM, *Conflits en Afrique : Analyse des crises et pistes pour une prévention*, Institute européen de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité, Bruxelles, 1997, P. 61.

same everywhere<sup>14</sup>. In Cameroon, the conflict in the North West and South West regions has presented its own realities, and has prompted the government to put in place a DDR policy programme under the coordination of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. Placed under the responsibility of the Prime Minister, it has as role to organize, follow up and manage the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants of armed groups in the North West and South West regions and Boko Haram armed groups in the Far North region of the country. For the North West and South West Regions, the Committee has two regional centres, in Bamenda and Buea. The Committee has a mission to organise, follow up and manage the disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration

of ex-combatants and armed groups desirous to heed the call to deposit arms<sup>15</sup>.

The putting in place of the DDR policy in the two regions reveals its particular essence in the sense that like in the far North Region where the origin of the conflict is external, in the North West and South West Regions (commonly called NOSO), the dynamics of the conflict are basically of internal claims, though the link with those acting out of the country cannot be neglected. This public policy entails a responsibility to ensure that these ex-combatants and victims of the conflict are reintegrated to socio-economic life. A task which requires multiple actions which are undertaken in a context whose field realities reveal distinctive characteristics, and in which adaptations are necessary to facilitate the success of the process. A success, which depends on institutional and organizational strategies, put in place, and the different actions which are undertaken to attain the mission assigned to it.

<sup>14</sup> Not all conflicts have the same nature because they do not have the same causes. Some conflicts are of internal origin. While some concern the military, others involved the military and armed civilians. Based on these differentiated parameters, the process of disarmament must take into account different methods in order to be effective. This point of view has equally been defended by MARIANE FERME et DANIEL HOFFMAN in « Combattants irréguliers et discours international des droits de l'homme dans les Guerres Civiles Africaines », *Politique Africaine* n° 88 Décembre 2002, P. 40.

<sup>15</sup> Article 2 of decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 setting up the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion.



Launch of the reintegration process as part of the DDR program in the Southwest in Buea / Journal du Cameroun.com



## An institutional framework in search of efficiency in a context of local specificities

The success of the process of DDR determines the conditions and modalities of a transition from a conflict situation to a situation of peace. Depending on the context, the nature of conflict and the actors involved, the setting up of management organs, projects, structures, programmes and tools of the DDR must take into account the local specificities of the conflict. These institutional and organizational vectors serve to prepare the groundwork for a better reinsertion of ex-combatants<sup>16</sup>. The process of DDR in the NOSO of Cameroon finds itself inscribed in a context of local specificities whose institutional and operational set up seeks to attain efficient results. In this perspective, the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion was created on the 30th of November 2018 with an enlarged mission, which incorporates diverse segments of activities, which aim at laying the basic framework in the process of coming out of the crisis and laying the basis for inclusive peace building<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> MAMERT Lie ONANA, « Maintien et consolidation de la paix dans les postes colonies Africaines, Démobilisation et réinsertion des combattants en contexte de transition politique », op, cit, p. 320.

The institutional set up reflects the fundamental basis of the principles of the D.D.R, but seeks to attain optimum efficiency in an environment of local realities full of its own specificities. This state of affairs is characterised by realities of the existing and operational mechanisms that this institution sets out to attain.

## An operational mechanism adaptable to local realities

It is acknowledged in theory that the putting in place of DDR is a complex process due to the fact that each context portrays its local realities and more often, it is difficult to demobilize at the same time, all combatants in a conflict because of reasons related to logistics, financial resources, and other constraints, but in this, an operational methodology can be chosen, a plan of action put in place, and a control mechanism adopted, which often leads to the success of the process. These planned operational tools concern the legal, organizational, functional and even the structural tools put in place to adapt to the situation.

<sup>17</sup> See decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018.



Listening mission of the Musonge Commission in Bamenda on 31 May 2018 / Integration



By a presidential decree, the National Committee for the DDR was set up with a mission to organize, follow up and manage the DDR of ex-combatants, including those of the NOSO<sup>18</sup>. This legal instrument gives precisions on the actions to be carried out with respect to disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion<sup>19</sup>. The success of this mission depends on the operational set up put in place, and its adaptation to local realities.

Set up in Bamenda and Buea, the DDR for the North West and South West has two centres. These centres constitute essentially one of the first steps in the effective putting in place of demobilization. These centres are endowed with infrastructure adapted to the programme put in place to prepare the ex-combatants for reinsertion. It thus permits the organism to establish control on the ex-combatants and to carry out demobilization programmes. These ex-combatants are put in different groups depending on their sex and ages.

The centres are also endowed with training programmes to prepare these ex-combatants for a return to civic life. In theory, it is admitted that it is difficult to convince a group to drop arms if the DDR programmes are not durable.<sup>20</sup> That is why it is not advisable to put in place a DDR programme without having identified available resource. In the Buea and Bamenda Centres, many training programmes like carpentry, bricklaying, petit trading, schools, agricultural technics, and a vast range of training schemes are undertaken to prepare the ex-combatants to return to normal life. These programmes are adapted to the local potentials that can permit them get a job after the training.

The centres are also endowed with infrastructural and logistic facilities to enable these ex-combatants live a decent life. They are also endowed with social amenities such as spot infrastructure, animation centres, art centres and a host of social facilities. These amenities are aspects that, if neglected, may compromise the output and efficiency of the process. The centres must be the first confidence-building measure for ex-combatants in the process of DDR and must be organized attractively in order to encourage other combatants to abandon the bushes and join those in the camps. Care must also be taken so that the living standards

of these ex-combatants should not be too comfortable, if not some will prefer to remain in the centres with no intention to go back to civil life. In theoretical doctrine, the centres have to be equipped with sufficient food, medication, potable water and other amenities because any shortage could lead to indiscipline and frustration of some ex-combatants<sup>21</sup>.

In the North West and South West regions, these centres are located in regional headquarters, giving the opportunity for those ex-combatants from the bushes to have access to a greater number of facilities in the centres. These centres in towns also give proximity to so many training institutions and sectorial activities, which are more endowed, in cities than in local areas. The DDR programmes also seek to assure the individual security of these ex-combatants and provide them the possibility to earn personal revenue in future. Indeed, these ex-combatants must have the conviction that there exist interesting and attractive programmes in order to encourage them renounce the option of arms. Indeed, the first confidence measure in the process of DDR starts with the attractive institutional and organizational components of the centres of DDR<sup>22</sup>. Indeed, with regard to the present context where most of the combatants operate in remote areas, these two centres could be seen as a sort of over centralization, and that if divisional branches could be created to enable proximity of action in remote areas where some of these combatants continue to terrorize the population, the DDR process could go faster.

The organizational and institutional specificities observed in the two regions could be viewed as a response to the causes and the nature of the conflict. From an internal origin and fuelled by exogenous forces, the programmes, amenities, organization and infrastructure, when attractive, will build trust in the minds of the combatants in order to reassure them of their liberation. The organizational and institutional components can only be successfully considered if the processes of letting the ex-combatants out of their hideouts are successful. Indeed, the processes of disarming and demobilizing the ex-combatants are undertaken following a number of actions whose efficiency takes into account the local realities...

<sup>18</sup> See article 2 of decree n° 2018/19 cited above

<sup>19</sup> See article 2 of the above decree.

<sup>20</sup> Guy Andre KIGFFER, « Armée ivoirienne : Le refus du déclassement, Côte d'Ivoire, la tentation ethno nationaliste », *Politique africaine*, n° 78, Juin 2000, P. 30.

<sup>21</sup> ZARTMAN William, *la résolution des conflits en Afrique*, édition, l'Harmattan, 1990, p. 85.

<sup>22</sup> ALFREDO LAZARTE HOYLE et DAN CUNNIAH, *Prévention et Résolution des Conflits violents et armés*, Op, Cit, P. 51.

## B- A PROCESS OF REALISING POLICY ACTIONS IN A CONTEXT OF LOCAL CHALLENGES.

The realization of the process of DDR in the NOSO is full of diverse actions with respect to different field realities. These actions are carried out in different stages by both civilian and military actors and at different levels in order to attain the objective of the DDR in these regions. The DDR Programme cannot be successful if the ex-combatants are not dropping their arms. The actions to bring the ex-combatants and their co-actors to denounce their option are many, involving different methods, steps and stages. They also include the different actors and the means deployed to enable the combatants lay down their arms.

After the setting up of the National Committee for DDR and the call by the President of the Republic for all armed groups to voluntarily drop their arms and join the other compatriots in normal life, several actions have followed on the field within the framework of the DDR for the NOSO. These ongoing actions are taking place within the framework of the proper execution and putting in place of the DDR process.

The collection of arms can be either wilfully or forcefully. That is why civil-military cooperation is necessary for the exercise of DDR. In this context, the devolution of roles in function of each case should be taken into consideration. According to RODRIGI Fernandes MORE, 'sustainable planned and enforcement of disarmament policies by the State cannot be limited to specific administrations'<sup>23</sup>. The definition of the various groups that constitute the subject of demobilization is also identified in their planning of actions. In this light, the establishment of distinctive needs of these various groups is also an interesting action to be undertaken in these centres.

### Contribution of civil actions to DDR in North West and South West Regions.

Amongst the actors involved in the process of DDR in NOSO, we have the civilian actors who are involved in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The involvement of civilian actors is not new in the mechanisms of

resolving intra-state conflicts<sup>24</sup>. The process of DDR must be supported by sensitization and information by civilian authorities in order to restore a climate of confidence. This restoration of confidence measures also encourages armed combatants and civilians to reveal where arms are hidden. In the process in NOSO, administrative authorities, working directly with the population, traditional rulers, political elite, religious leaders and influential personalities also have an active role, especially in the process of disarmament and demobilization. The role of political parties appears important here because a political identity based on ethnic components cannot construct a nation<sup>25</sup>. The process of sensitizing the local population and those involved in the conflict is largely carried out by local administrative authorities who, through various sensitization means echo the call for the combatants to voluntarily drop their arms and be accompanied to the DDR centres. Many combatants have yielded to these sensitization messages and have been facilitated access to the DDR centres by the security and defence forces.

Traditional authorities have also been playing a key role in the process. The challenge here is that most of the traditional authorities have abandoned their villages for fear of repression, kidnappings, settling of scores, kidnapping for ransom, forceful demands and some involuntary acts, which they have encountered in their affected villages. Even out of their villages, good-will traditional ruler have been playing a mediation role to enable most combatants to abandon the armed struggle and join the centres of DDR. Traditional rulers are the auxiliaries of the administration<sup>26</sup>, and have a very important role in peace building as custodians of the tradition. If they are given more protection and empowered by the government in the policy of DDR in NOSO, the process will gain more impetus. Indeed, the transfer of the message of disarmament and demobilization through the local languages could have more meaning and impact if echoed by these traditional rulers. These chiefs can also act in the process of reconciling the population and the ex-combatants, and this aspect is very important in the process of reinsertion because it permits the ex-combatants to come back to the village community

<sup>23</sup> RODRIGI Fernandes MORE, "Disarmament, an issue of international law", op, cit, p.17.

<sup>24</sup> TSHIKALA K. Biaya, « Acteurs et médiations dans la résolution et prévention des conflits », op, cit, p.57

<sup>25</sup> MOUCHE Ibrahim, « Mutations socio-politiques et replis identitaires en Afrique : le cas du Cameroun », *Afri. J.*, Vol 1, N° 2, 1996, p.188.

<sup>26</sup> See Decree of 77/245 of 15 July 1977 on the organization of traditional chieftdoms in Cameroon.

after living in the centres.

This experience has been tested fruitful in other conflict areas like in North Kenya and Somaliland where informal government structures played a key role in bringing back combatants to end conflicts<sup>27</sup>. Other actors include the political elite and religious leaders. Important personalities, both within and in the diaspora, who opted for peace, have been key actors in the DDR, by convincing these combatants to denounce the option of war and join the call for disarmament. These actors have not been playing this role without some setbacks. Indeed, most of them are living in the communities as well. The need to involve them in the planning process of the DDR can help to facilitate the process in general.

It is worth mentioning that the Major National Dialogue organized by the government gave additional impetus to the process of DDR in NOSO. The presence of some ex-combatants in this peace talks was proof of an action of disarmament and demobilisation, which permitted other combatants

to see hopes of a better future if they abandoned the option of arms. In theoretical doctrine of the putting in place the DDR programme, the participation of the ex-combatants in peace talks and discussions is always an imperative that can provide a way out of a crisis.

Apart from civilian contribution, the military actions are so indispensable in the sense that disarmament can be voluntary or non-voluntary<sup>28</sup>. The different armed groups that have been operating in NOSO are armed civilian groups. Most of them, in several areas, have resorted to kidnappings, assault, rape, forceful demand of financial contributions, attacks on the defence and security forces, and are not willing to drop their arms. Most of these combatants are constituted in camps while others, especially in rural areas where the security forces are not present, live within the population and dictate their laws. Some, because of the financial either gains from sponsors abroad or within, are not willing to relinquish the resort to

<sup>27</sup> KAREL ARNAUT, « Gouvernance et ethnographie en temps de crise », in, *Politique Africaine : Gouverner entre guerre et paix*, éditions KARTHARA, Abidjan, 2008, p.37.

<sup>28</sup> SUR SERGE, *Vérification en matière de désarmement*, Edition Montchrestien, Paris, 2001, p.29.



A delegation of NOSO repentants to the Major National Dialogue / CL2P

arms. Forceful disarmament thus, seeks to bring this category of combatants to the disarmament centres.

This DDR's mission to disarm the combatants could also examine how these armed groups are financed in order to dismantle the network. This encourages some of them to abandon the struggle once the source of financing is no longer there. Indeed, the need to regulate financial transfers can attenuate the situation, for this means constitutes one of the means of financing this conflict.

An essential step of the procedure is the collection of arms. This stage, to be successful, requires military expertise from persons who have the capacity to handle armament issues. This is to reduce as much as possible, the risk of displacement of munitions and explosives and to keep and destroy them in a safe manner.

The challenge in NOSO is that of acquiring information on most of these arms and on time. Most of the arms used by the combatants are locally fabricated arms. The North West, for quite a long time, has had a culture of locally fabricated arms, which are used during funeral ceremonies and traditional dance ceremonies. The need to review a

strategy to limit the production of these arms used now to terrorize the population is of a great importance.

### **The transfer and transition of combatants to DDR centres**

The transition of combatants to the DDR centres could be either through a wilful intention of the combatants or through other actors. Through a wilful move, the combatants willing to disarm abandon their activities and, through well-wishers, present themselves to authorities or persons of good will, or the elite willing to assist them to get to the DDR Centres.

In most cases, the administration ensures the safety and security of these ex-combatants through escorts by security forces. One reason for ensuring the security of these ex-combatants is that some combatants who are still unwilling to disarm always try to attack those who decide to voluntarily disarm or wish to abandon<sup>29</sup> the group. Another reason is

<sup>29</sup> Interviews gathered from some combatants who voluntarily gave up the armed adventure and sought assistance to get to the DDR centers. They also expressed the



The NW / SW DDR Centres Graduates of the First Lot of Veterans / The Sun



the fear of being attacked by the population that had, in one way or the other, suffered from the violent acts of these combatants.

Following the doctrine of the process of putting in place of the DDR, the transition of combatants to temporary or permanent centres has as objective to identify, register and control them in order to prepare them to return to civil life.

### **Identification, registration and follow up of combatants**

At the DDR Centres in NOSO, some ex-combatants and victims arrive without any identification papers. In this light, the challenge is to establish the identity of the ex-combatant. The authorities of the centre, in this case, carry out necessary inquiries to gather information on the person and afterwards, establish the necessary identification papers that will prepare and permit their return to the community at the end of the process. This identification phase constitutes an important aspect in the process of demobilization. This is because these identification papers facilitate the registration process of the ex-combatants and the planning for the reinsertion programmes. This explains why many ministerial departments and sectors are involved in the DDR Programme<sup>30</sup>.

Registration enables the authorities to know the total number of ex-combatants and victims to be followed up in the process of demobilization and reinsertion. It is through registration that the centre can carry out the planning of its activities because it enables them to know the place of origin of the combatants, and permits the centres to prepare adequately for a return to their respective communities. Indeed, the registration process is an essential element of planning of measures for the reinsertion of ex-combatants to civil life. The data obtained permits them to make better preparations. The challenge in these centres is the difficulty in acquiring all the personal information of some of the ex-combatants and victims on time. In some cases, certain ex-combatants do not give accurate information.

The DDR centres also take care of children and women who were wilfully or forcefully enrolled or those who fled from the violence of the conflict and got missing from their homes. These DDR centres

take care to identify and reintegrate such children and women back to the social tissue of their communities of origin.

It is worth noting that during the mobilization processes, it is necessary to design programmes that give information about the reinsertion process to prepare the demobilized ex-combatants to develop interest in different programmes that will permit them go back to civil life with a profession to enable them earn a living. At this level, they are educated and informed of different perspectives and opportunities offered to improve their lives. This information prepares them psychologically to confront life after living in the centres. This stage is important for reinsertion planning. This is also important because the process entails that adapted training should be instituted to give them a sense of professional orientation in the society after the centres. This phase of demobilization permits the centres to engage the process of reintegration or reinsertion. In spite of these actions, certain setbacks are still perceptible. These setbacks call for a perspectives and views.

### **The stakes and perspectives of the putting in place of DDR in the Regions.**

The reinsertion phase of the DDR is a crucial and final stage that seeks to prepare the ex-combatants to get back to normal community life. In the DDR context for the NOSO, many programmes have been put in place, involving many sectors of life and ministerial departments with the devolution of roles under the coordination of the National Committee for DDR. The training programmes are tailored to suit the different categories of ex-combatants, depending on their sex, age, qualification and talents. Priority is accorded to socio-economic programmes, which would enable the ex-combatants to be socially and economically independent after leaving the centres.

Endowed with socio-economic programmes and amenities, the centres carry out the education and training of ex-combatants in diverse fields such as agriculture,<sup>31</sup> commerce, art and transformation in order that they should leave the centres with the capacity to be socially integrated into the society<sup>32</sup>.

wish to be secured because they were not in possession of identification papers.

<sup>30</sup> See decree of 2018/19 cited above.

<sup>31</sup> Poultry farming, technics of pigs rearing flower production, and several forms of seedling farming production, cocoa production, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Commercial activities here include petit trading, techniques of restoration business, art production, tailoring, carpentry, building and mechanics and electricity techniques.

Great strides have already been made in the process of restoring peace in NOSO through the actions of the DDR centres because through their actions on the field, the process of disarmament and demobilization has significantly contributed to the reduction of the armed tension and the process of a return to peace is underway. However, durable peace would only be attained if continuous actions are undertaken to put an end to some challenges that continue to slow the peace-building process engaged by the DDR for the regions.

With respect to disarmament of the combatants, in spite of the policy efforts being put in place by the DDR in the two regions, one of the main setbacks that seems to slow down the process is the continuous proliferation of light arms and dangerous weapons, especially in some

remote localities of the regions where sensitization still seems to low. Indeed the long and porous nature of the borders with neighbouring countries permits some of these combatants to seek hideouts in Nigeria in order to reconstitute themselves. Further, the continuous circulation of locally fabricated guns, light arms and dangerous weapons could constitute an immense setback to the process. Indeed the continuous detention of arms by most of these combatants in some of these localities does not only prevent humanitarian moves, but also discourages the return of displaced persons for fear of violence, kidnappings and other acts of criminality. In theoretical studies, the proliferation of these weapons usually prolongs armed conflicts and could lead to a reproduction of new forms of violence.



A representative of the ex-combatants with the Prime Minister / KOACI

In perspective, there is need for the programme of DDR to extend disarmament efforts and work with its partners to control the circulation of light arms and dangerous weapons, especially in remote and border localities. Development partners and regional organizations can help in this direction, as the objective for peace is also in their line of action<sup>33</sup>

Some ex-combatants have not successfully been brought out of the bushes to the centres. This category of ex-combatants might constitute a threat to the host communities. As a way forward, publicity of interesting programmes offered by the centres could encourage, not only this category to opt and show up for the training, but also encourage those who are still hesitating, to drop their arms.

A great number of demobilized ex-combatants do not possess the basic requirements to undergo some interested programmes proposed by the centre. Indeed, adapted programmes need to be reinforced to cater for all categories of persons. The putting in place of DDR policy could be retarded if the capacities of the programmes of reinsertion are insufficient. Indeed, the need to continuously endow the centres with diversified and interesting programmes in the domains of sports, art, business management and other diversified fields, could enhance the capacities of all categories of ex-combatants so that they return to the society with some dependable skills.

After liberation of the ex-combatants, the need to follow up their full reinsertion into society is important. Indeed, it is observed that the greatest problems faced by some of these ex-combatants is to be accepted by their communities given the acts of atrocities having caused by some of them to the receiving communities. Such acts include kidnappings, torture and violence. The challenge is to be accepted by these communities without being stigmatised. The social and psychological follow up is also of great need in the centres, and even after their liberation because some often suffer from trauma because of the conflict<sup>34</sup>.

The preparation and participation of the communities that will receive these liberated ex-combatants is an essential step for reconciliation,

and helps to support the reinsertion process. The preparation of the return of the ex-combatants to social life is also an essential mission of the DDR. At this stage the social profiles of the ex-combatants are evaluated and the economic evaluation of the opportunities are also examined in order to oriented them toward a socially integrated life. In this perspective, a system of surveillance or follow up to identify the needs of the ex-combatants during their cure life is also necessary. Civic education programmes are necessary at this level in order to enable an acceptable social integration for them. For this reason, the transition from demobilization to reinsertion ought to be well planned.

The economic tissue of the regions has been greatly devastated by the adverse effects of the conflict. The DDR process, especially the reinsertion phase requires that the ex-combatants gain; not only social empowerment, but also economic power, which will enable them, get a stand. With damaged economic potentials, notably, the CDC and PALMOL, schools, businesses, jobs lost and production slowed down, the economic reconstruction launched by the government provides evident hopes of a better reinsertion of these ex-combatants to normal community life.

## CONCLUSION

The policy of putting in place disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, as a means of resolving a conflict, from all indications does not appear to be a static issue. The policy varies from one form of conflict to another even though some fundamental characteristics are always essential everywhere. In the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, the putting in place of this policy by the government through the National Committee created for this purpose, is proving its worth by adapting to local realities in order to end the conflict in the two regions. If this policy were given additional impetus to overcome some of these local challenges, the DDR process in the regions would register great success.

<sup>33</sup> ATCHE BASSOU RAYMOND, *Les conflits armés internes en Afrique et le droit international*, op, cit, p.289.

<sup>34</sup> HANSTTE MAJO, *Breaking the Conflicts trap Civil war and development policy*, Boeck and Larcier Edition, Bruxelles, 2005, p.47.

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### DECREES

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Decree n° 77/245 of 15 July 1977 on the organization of traditional chiefdoms in Cameroon



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# DOMESTICATING ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE RESTIVE NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON: AGENDA OF THE NATIONAL DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION COMMITTEE (NDDRC)

By Nixon KAHJUM TAKOR, PhD

*There is no gainsaying that the underpinnings of war and the mechanisms to reinstate peace most often do not command the same approaches in different contexts. Irrespective of the setting, the desire to transit from belligerency to peace building remains a constant in crisis discourse. In Cameroon, the Anglophone socio-political crisis that began with plaintiff corporatist agitations in October 2016 and mutated into a complex asymmetric armed resistance from 2017 prompted the government to engage actions that could re-cultivate peace and foster national cohesion. It is in this perspective that the article examines the agenda of the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) as one of the manifold strategies to restore normalcy in the restive North West Region. The article maintains that, as an adopted peace construction paradigm, the actions and prospective vision of the DDRC in the North West Region are collectively informed by the degree of compliance to extend best practices and adaptation to the local realities.*

Keywords: Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, Domestication, Compliance, Adaptation



Terrorist weapon hideout dismantled in English-speaking region / Cameroon24.Net

## I. Introduction

The process of disarmament, demobilisation, reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combatants from belligerency to peacetime occupies a crucial slot in conflict studies. It has been and remains one of the key therapeutic packages employed by States under armed conflicts and used by international structures, notably the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to negotiate and monitor peace deals. Needless to emphasize that while conflicts is typical of a zero-sum game where winners get it all, the pursuit for sustainable peace usually entails intersecting compromises between belligerents, irrespective of their fates in war. Although considered a peace compendium, DDR has had different emphasis in scholarship. Ozerdem,<sup>1</sup> opines that the social reintegration of

ex-offenders which constitutes the matrix between family and community; sustainable employment; and civic responsibilities is the most important aspect of the DDR. This however should be accompanied by political and economic initiatives. Without a social reintegration approach in planning and implementing DDR programmes, many opportunities for bridging former combatants and their receiving communities would be missed out and, hence, formal DDR programmes are likely to fall short in achieving the goal of 'reintegration'.

To Bryden and Scherrer, DDR emerged as a process intended to demilitarize, downsize, right size and/or professionalize erstwhile armies and non-statutory armed groups in the wake of a peace agreement and ceasefire. While this definition incorporates the different phases of the DDR, it however, does not provide adequate leads on the best trajectory to optimize the peace initiative. DDR commonly involves two parallel activities. In principle, a filtering process to ensure that a certain

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<sup>1</sup> Alpaslan Özerdem, "A Re-conceptualization of Ex-combatant Reintegration: 'Social Reintegration' Approach", *Conflict, Security & Development*, (2012), 12:1, 51-73, DOI:

10.1080/14678802.2012.667661.



Atmosphere at the Bamenda DDR Centre / Author

proportion of the former combatants is diverted to the regular security services<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, those opting for voluntary withdrawal or considered unfit for service will be supported to assume civilian status through a combination of incentives and support packages to ensure their reintegration. While a straight forward process in principle, the reality of DDR operations are often much more intricate and controversial. That is why the activities on the ground most often marginally resemble the programmes advocated from above.<sup>3</sup>

There is no such agreement among scholars on what should squarely represent the protocol of reaching durable peace after a warring situation. However, the DDR approach intersects several missions and visions in that it quickly outlines the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes as three key contours around which armed radicalism could be converted to pacific enterprises in the political, economic and social domains. The operationalization of these caveats will of course depend on ground realities, hence while modeling extant best practices; the field situation can hardly elude the context of crisis and the opportunities it can offer to re-socialize ex-combatants. It is in this mosaic analytical context that in Cameroon the NDDRC Bamenda Centre was established consequent to the escalation and degeneration of the Anglophone crisis into an armed 'separatist'<sup>4</sup> war from 2017. This article dimensions the agenda of the DDRC Bamenda Centre at domesticating and transforming armed violence to sustainable peace in the beleaguered North West Region. Inspired by wider conceptual

DDR model, the study examines the extent to which the structure, given its current workings and prospective agenda, represents the compromise between compliance and local adaptation. The article links the conflict background with the creation and workings of the NDDRC Centre Bamenda.

## II. Background

### A. Conflict Context

For many years, the North West Region has been a Region with many positive accounts. Prior to November 2016 when the Anglophone crisis gestated, it was undisputedly the citadel of Anglo-Saxon educational system with landmark primary, secondary and tertiary academies training in character and learning. All over the Region, there was a steady rise in public development projects initiated largely by the decentralised local collectivities (Councils). These developments however, did not go without challenges such as the steady depreciation of road infrastructures as well as the steady fall in employment opportunities.

It is worth noting that almost every family in the North West Region has one or more of its members in the diaspora, notably in the United States, Canada and in different European countries. These persons although separated by physical distances have kept intimate social connections with their families. They have also been pillars of funding in their community development and cultural unions. With this umbilical social cords, and enlightened in western revolutionary ideas, it was easy to communicate and coordinate resistance against the State at the wake of the crisis. This is not to say, there were no local initiatives in the pressure movement that culminated into the arms conflict<sup>5</sup>. But as typical with any warfare setting, those who commanded the means dictated the tone. They could easily use their privilege positions to construct an intangible narrative of an independent state with sterling opportunities. From this illusion was charted a rhetoric of hope in the shortest possible time and marketed to disenchanted constituency of persons, principally youths, who readily embraced the agenda like a religion.

Generally speaking, while there were different

<sup>2</sup> This was the case with the Forces Nouvelles rebel group in Cote d'Ivoire who had some of its fighters integrated into the military after the signing of the peace accord between President Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro – leader of the Forces Nouvelles rebel group. See Andrew Meldrum, "Peace Deal Ends Ivory Coast War", <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/07/southafrica.westafrica>, accessed on 24 April, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer (eds), *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Geneva, (March 2012), 7.

<sup>4</sup> The word 'Separatist' is used in relation to activists' narrative of the Anglophone socio-political upheavals that called for the restoration of the erstwhile semi-autonomous State of Southern Cameroons as a bailout to reaching a lasting solution to what they termed 'Anglophone marginalization.' Those who stood for this cause joined solidarity behind different armed groups militating for an imagined statehood called *Ambazonia*, probably associated with the geostrategic location of the territory in question along the Gulf of Guinea, previously named Amba Bay by the British during their administration in Cameroon. In consonance with this name, the militia is variously referred to as *Amba* fighters. The expression 'separatist' has been used interchangeably with 'secessionists' to refer to all those activist support structures which saw the Anglophone socio-political remonstrance as an eventual break-away movement from the Republic of Cameroon.

<sup>5</sup> Lionel Awangang, Ex-fighter NDDRC Centre Bamenda, interviewed by Takor Kahjum Nixon, DDR Centre Bamenda, 9 April, 2020.



motivations, most if not all, were remotely connected to the socio-political contexts of the region that presented some emotive challenges which could readily be exploited. It is this setting that was quickly exploited by activists in the country and especially in the diaspora, to drum an artifice of a potential independent “Ambazonia State”<sup>6</sup>. The armed phase of the conflict has had immeasurable repercussions in the social order of the North West Region in terms of loss of lives and destruction of property. More and above all, there has been a complete breakup of the communal, fraternal and hospitable lifestyles that was characteristic of the people. As the conflict rolls on, the waste in terms of lives and property counts on leaving what used to be a rapidly developing region, a region in ruins and stagnation. In such circumstances, the State was just clairvoyant enough to adopt the well-known DDR peace construction formula to domesticate violence in the Region.

### III. Creation and Scope of intervention of the DDRC Bamenda Centre

#### A. The Creation of the NDDRC Center in Bamenda

After unsuccessful attempts to effectively contain radicalism through arrests and incarcerations, declaration of war and repression on insurgencies, public discourses and pacific dialogue overtures, the Government through the Head of State, H. E President Paul Biya on his 7th Mandate Oath taking address in the National Assembly on 6 November 2018, called on the combatants to shun violence and drop their arms in return for an executive pardon. This was the basis upon which the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) was created in 2018. The Presidential Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 orientated the DDRC to organize, supervise and manage the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-fighters of Boko Haram and armed groups in the North West and South West Regions willing to obey the peace appeal to capitulate. This Committee, headquartered in Yaoundé was placed under the supervision of the

Prime Minister, Head of Government, and a National Coordinator. The operational parameters of the Committee had to run in three regional centres; Mora, Buea and Bamenda<sup>7</sup>. As articulated in the text creating the instance, the Regional Coordinating Unit had to align its missions with the operations of disarming, demobilising and reintegrating of ex-combatants in the Region.

#### B. Objectives of the Centre

(1) Disarmament: To receive and disarm ex-fighters of armed groups in the Region; collect, list and store weapons and munitions voluntarily handed over by ex-fighters; take appropriate measures to destroy the said weapons, munitions and explosives, in conjunction with other relevant government services.

(2) Demobilisation: To set up and manage cantonment sites for ex-fighters; supervise ex-fighters; provide multifaceted assistance to ex-fighters to prepare them for a return to civil life.

(3) Reintegration: To take the necessary steps to de-radicalize ex-fighters; sensitize and provide multifaceted assistance to home communities to facilitate the reintegration of ex-fighters; help to reintegrate ex-fighters into civil life, particularly by organizing, training and providing them with tools and means of production and assistance for the creation of income-generating activities.<sup>8</sup>

Armed with these broad but positioning objectives, the NDDRC Bamenda Centre went operational in December, 2018 with the appointment of the pioneer Centre Coordinator, Mr. Gabsa Nyugha Sixtus without any lead time to reflect on and adopt a specific context-reflecting blueprint document concerning the structure, human resources, programmes and logistics. This was a major preliminary challenge that was quickly handled by improvisations made by the National Coordinator, in collaboration with the Centre Coordinator. The absence of a clearly defined operational setting suggests that, the NDDRC was a novelty in the art of managing armed conflicts in Cameroon. It also means the initiatives initiated under the pressure of circumstances could only be makeshift and progressive in character. It is also

<sup>6</sup> There were different warring factions that were created to fight for the independence of Southern Cameroons, the most conspicuous were the Ambazonia Defense Force(ADF) sponsored by Lucas Ayaba Cho and Benedict Nwana Kuah and the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces(SOCADEF) headed by Ebenezer Akwanga. See V. J. Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present (2018): The History of a people* (Limbe: Design House, 2019), 403 for the other splinter groups.

<sup>7</sup> Republic of Cameroon, Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 to establish the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



worth noting that in the absence of a clear idea of the workings of the DDR, there was need to gain practical experiences. It was in this circumstance that the Centre Coordinator made some knowledge gathering missions to countries with enviable histories of DDR notably, Egypt and Nigeria. The familiarization outing was not necessarily to replicate the existing practices but to appropriate best practices and adapt them to the local realities.<sup>9</sup> It would be important to appreciate the current and prospective strategies of the Bamenda Centre in the interlacing missions of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

## IV. Scope of Intervention

### A. Disarmament

The introduction of arms into protests scenarios most often complicates initiatives towards peace reconstruction. This is because those who possess arms usually create power spheres with uncompromising self-esteem. This is perhaps the reason why appropriate disarmament must precede any attempt at reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combatants. In this case, the expertise rests in the hands of the official Armed Force. That is why in most countries, the DDR has been a military preserve. The case of the North West Region is somewhat different. The Centre is run by a civilian who works hand-in-gloves with the Armed Forces, as one of the decisive stakeholders. This collaboration is not only limited to disarmament but extends to other civilian interventions like healthcare provision.

From December 2020 when the activities of the NDDRC Centre Bamenda went operational, some initiatives have been made to downsize the artillery of the Separatists' combatants who observed the Presidential call to drop their arms. The protocol to collect arms is for the combatants to contact the Centre directly or any trustworthy acquaintance who could relay their desire to capitulate to the coordination unit. From this information, the Centre Coordinator solicits the services of a specialized squad of the Armed Forces to move to the location of the ex-combatant(s) and surreptitiously convey him/her to the cantonment site. Prior to accommodating the ex-combatant in the Centre, the military confines him/her

for a while, usually a few days, to collect vital information especially concerning the nature of ammunitions and combat tactics.

From most of the testimonies culled from the Centre Coordinator as well as from the Chief of Staff of the 5th Military Battalion, Col. Onambele Louis, the focal point assisting the Defence and Security operations at the NDDRC Centre Bamenda, the level of disarmament has been diffident. Most of those encamped in the cantonment site that played active combatant roles did not come along with their munitions. Just a handful indicated they had hidden their guns in certain places for fear of reprisals from any surprised military operation or from the wrath of inflexible frontline combatants who had no agenda to capitulate and who could judge their decision as treachery. A few who had expressed their willingness to surrender their arms, once in the Centre, had gone back under military escort to collect their weapons from areas they had stocked.<sup>10</sup> This was the case of one of the ex-warriors, Lukong Clinton, from Sob in Bui Division, a major base of the Separatists' fighters. It is worth underscoring that the project of covertly recovering stocked weapons of ex-combatants is stifled by confidence building gaps.

Most of the decamped combatants do not trust units of the Defence and Security Forces or Administrative Authorities on the base of the embattled localities as places where they can surrender their arms. That is the more reason why a good number who surrendered have taken alternative exit routes rather than the DDR option. Due to their atrocious acts in the course of active engagements in the conflict, they do not feel safe to rejoin their families or communities or come to the cantonment in Bamenda. They preferred to stealthily move out of the Region to other regions of the country, notably to the West, Littoral and Center where they can get safe sanctuaries. While it is a welcome step towards reducing violent extremism in the North West Region, it poses social and security concerns in the mission of NDDRC. It is difficult to situate where they left their arms and whether or not they can independently morally disarm themselves to reintegrate into their new host communities. There is further suspicion that any frustration along the line of re-socialization and

<sup>9</sup> Nyugha Sixtus Gabsa, aged 60, Coordinator NDDRC Centre Bamenda Up-Station, Interview by Takor Kahjum Nixon, Bamenda, 9 April, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Col. Louis Onambele, aged c. 60, Chief of Staff, 5<sup>th</sup> Military Battalion, Interview by Takor Kahjum Nixon, Bamenda, 9 April 2020

especially socio-professional reintegration might reinvigorate the relapsed memories of war. This could lure them to re-embracing the braces of criminality as a survival strategy. They could in this direction become pivot of networks of advanced armed criminality, indicating that conflicts have simply been transferred but not transformed.

The project of disarmament is also being stifled by the arms policy of the combatants. The separatists have a very stringent arms control policy, which makes it difficult for any combatant who is not on a command mission to use them. Most often, there were numerically fewer munitions as compared to the number of active combatants. An encampment of 120 fighters could be privileged to have barely 40 arms. There was therefore the philosophy that irrespective of the provenance of the arms, their use was a collective given. Thus, no fighter 'owns arms' they are owned by the group and stringently supervised by the group leaders, the Amba Generals or Commanders in the interest of the group. Most of these arms are light firearms brought by the combatants from their family settings or donated by supporters of the ideology in the communities. This is understandably so because it is a culture within the Bamenda Grasslands polities for family heads and other notables to possess Dane guns, which are variously, used for hunting, gun firing during funeral celebrations and other traditional festivities. Given this intricate long established historical context of firearms ownership and use, most ex combatants deliberately do not want to surrender them to the military because to them, the arms are family legacies.<sup>11</sup>

The restrictions placed by hardliners of the Amba militia who have been transformed into war entrepreneurs controlling huge sums of money from illicit sources like ransoms from kidnappings and other solidarity structures, notably from sponsors in the diaspora is a major challenge to the NDDRC Centre Bamenda disarmament agenda. The call for the combatants to lay down their arms appealed favourably to several combatants who were ready to follow suit. However, the process of leaving the battle field has not been easy because of the entangling rules and regulations of the Amba structures which considered any act of surrender treasonable and liable to a death penalty<sup>12</sup>. This

position was evidently mimicked in Wum when General Ekeom Polycarp, one of the Amba warlords who surrendered and publicly made an appeal for his compatriots to take back to normal life was assassinated by a conspiracy in his own former network on 17 October 2019.<sup>13</sup> The hard-line warlords locally called Generals because of their daring character, abilities to possess sophisticated ammunitions and control over amulets, combatants and extended illusionary spheres of influences, have kept "a no retreat-no surrender" approach to the call for disarmament.<sup>14</sup>

## B. Demobilisation

It must be underscored that disarmament without demobilisation in the context of a war that is ongoing remains a total mockery and a distant reality. This is because, the possibility of these fighters to 'escape' from the centers and re-engage in their anti-state activities becomes higher if the fighters do not see any possibility of safety, a promising future and some safe sanctuary for them. It is from this premise that the NDDRC unit in Bamenda has earmarked some leads targeting the effective demobilisation of ex-fighters to a level that would sustain them and divert their attention from re-connecting with old habits. Considering the very elastic demands of the demobilisation process, the Centre had to partner with other major stakeholders in the Region in the light of transforming the fighters to become responsible citizens and patriots of the fatherland.

The first major preoccupation of the Centre was to get a secured cantonment site for the ex-combatants. The vacant Nta-Mbang Health Post building overlooking the Ayaba Hotel at Old Town Mankon was cited and is currently serving as the encampment for the ex-combatants. In this facility the ex-combatants have been provided lodging, restaurant and teaching-learning spaces for their reinsertion programmes. The camp presently has 102<sup>15</sup> war retirees, 98 males and 04 females. Given the projection that there are many more fighters still to join the camps and with the help of those already de-radicalized to woo their former

<sup>11</sup> Lionel Awangang.

<sup>12</sup> Clinton Lukong, aged 24, Ex-fighter, NDDRC Centre Bamenda, interview by Takor Kahjum Nixon, DDR Centre Bamenda, 9 April, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Lionel Awangang

<sup>14</sup> Idem.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth mentioning that these persons were not all active war combatants. Some played associative roles like spies, cooks and health care assistants. For example, Florence Keng was the chief cook fondly called 'original mamma' because of her dexterity in spying.

acolytes, the government is constructing a new cantonment in Bafut with an initial capacity of 500 pensioners with possible expansion to 1000. This camp shall be compartmentalised into specialised units of reinsertion and reintegration.<sup>16</sup> Besides providing a congenial living space for the ex-fighters, the Centre is principally focused on their de-radicalization and reinsertion. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

Demobilisation is usually accompanied by the provision of benefits for the ex-combatant and other participants. Commonly, some sort of transitional subsistence support (TSS) is provided for the immediate and basic needs of the combatant and his/her dependents... this is meant to provide ex-combatants and their dependents with a means to subsist whilst waiting for reintegration assistance.<sup>17</sup>

Within this prism, the ex-combatants at the NDDRC Centre were offered not only lodging. They

were also offered clothing, and stipends to permit them take care of their basic needs. Some elites<sup>18</sup> of the regions also made voluntary financial packages to these ex-combatants. This was the case in December 2019 where an elite offered financial assistance to the combatants to assist them celebrate the end of year festivities and boost their moral.<sup>19</sup> The NDDRC Centre in Bamenda also worked in close collaboration with the Regional Delegate for Public Health, Director of the Regional Hospital and the Military Hospital to provide health assistance to the ex-fighters. Health bills have been by so far the heaviest paid by the Centre. Neurologists have been paying regular visits to the Centre to manage post traumatic crisis of most of the ex-fighters and detoxifying drug prescriptions are routinely made to those who reach the Centre sapped by long months of intensive drug addiction.

<sup>16</sup> Gabsa Nyugha Sixtus.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> Mr Atanga Nji Paul (Minister of Territorial Administration-Cameroon) gave the sum of Three hundred and ten Thousand Francs (310,000FCFA) as Christmas gift to the ex-combatants while Professor Paul Ghogomo Mingo (Minister in charge of Special Duties at the Presidency of the Republic-Cameroon) gave the sum of Two million Francs (2,000,000FCFA) for Hepatitis B control at the Centre.

<sup>19</sup> Florence Keng, aged 24, Ex-fighter, NDDRC Centre Bamenda, interview by Takor Kahjum Nixon, DDR Centre Bamenda, 9 April, 2020.



Young armed secessionists who left war here on the commission on "decentralisation and local development" as part of the major national dialogue in Cameroon / Afric24Monde

### C. Towards Reinsertion and Reintegration

Most often the process of reinsertion, the short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs of ex-combatants, which can last up to one year, is usually confused with reintegration, the long-term, continuous social and economic process of development of ex-combatants to assume self-sustaining livelihoods. Unlike the experiments in Nigeria where the ex-fighters were grouped in sections of specializations in the process of reinsertion towards reintegration, the Bamenda experience of DDRC has adopted a holistic approach where the ex-fighters are collectively re-enscientized through a psychosocial and mental reformation programme. These ex-fighters, severely affected by mental problems, cannot profit fully from psychosocial and re-integrative activities as long as they remain in a severe state of impairment. Thus ex combatants need adequate spiritual support to leverage them out of conflict settings.<sup>20</sup>

The presence of a psychosocial expert attached to the Centre has contributed in transforming the minds of the combatants. These ex-fighters revealed that moral rearmament lessons assisted them to have a change of mindset. Prior to reaching the Centre, most of the ex-fighters averred that they were entangled in 'demonic' covenants (charms) which they confirmed gave them supernatural strength<sup>21</sup>. The psycho spiritual program emphasized on a medium of baptism to destroy the charms and reshape the minds of the ex-fighters. The conflation of baptism and prayers influenced these ex-combatants to surrender their charms and permitted the psycho spiritual authority to raise a prayer group in the DDRC Centre. In addition, the combatants were enriched with knowledge on leadership, character development and societal norms. Besides, the psycho-spiritual programme was focused not only on the spiritual but on counselling services which held during weekly days to ensure proper follow up<sup>22</sup>. This moral rearmament programme coupled with follow up

instructions in civic education culminated to the improvement in dressing habits and generally on the demeanour of the ex-combatants. These values laid a sound foundation for the transformation of fighters from brainwashed individuals to patriotic and peace loving citizens. Most of these ex-fighters at the Centre after the moral re-armament phase, now value the importance of state symbols like the National Flag and the Anthem<sup>23</sup> and are staring at the future with optimism on their effective reintegration.

Given that reintegration is a huge enterprise with an open time frame designed to facilitate the adjustment of ex-combatants through life-long job training and sustainable income-generation projects,<sup>24</sup> there is need to be accompanied by support structures like the State and other stakeholders. In the context of the DDRC Bamenda Centre, partnership has been established with government departments such as the Regional Delegation of Youth and Civic Education, Regional Delegation of Vocational Training and with the National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development Programme. All these stakeholders are responding to the wider political philosophy of the Cameroon Government that runs in tandem with the post conflict social reintegration perspective of Özerdem who maintains inter alia that, 'sustainable employment' and 'civic responsibilities' would be the most effective model for ex-combatants reintegration<sup>25</sup>, especially in the context where war was engendered by inadequate or remote access to socio-economic opportunities.

The reintegration scheme involved training and financial empowerment moves that could enable the ex-fighters chart independent and sustainable livelihoods. Under this prism, the National Civic Service for Participation in Development has initiated a training programme on poultry farming for 70 of the pensioners. After the training, the service shall provide start-up capital for the trainees. In addition, the decentralised services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Livestock Fisheries and Animal Industries have availed the Centre with specialized drills on aspects of market gardening and rearing

20 Ian Douglas et al, *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration: A Practical Field and Classroom Guide* (Frankfurt: Druckerei Hassmüller Graphische Betriebe GmbH & Co. KG, 2004), 90.

21 Lionel Awangang and Clinton Lukong, two of the frontline ex-combatants testified that these charms were obtained from witch doctors in the communities and in border communities in Nigeria where there allegedly went for training to perfect their skills on warfare.

22 Loveline Ngeminang, aged c. 37, Center Pastor & Spiritual Director NDDRC Centre Bamenda, Interview by Takor Kahjum Nixon, 10 April 2020.

23 Lionel Awangang.

24 W. Andy Knight, "Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration and Post-Conflict Peace building in Africa: An Overview", *Journal of African Security*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2008, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19362200802285757>, accessed on 10 April 2020.

25 Özerdem, 53.



of saleable livestock species<sup>26</sup>. One of the ex-combatants, beneficiary of these initiatives, could not conceal his satisfaction on the very versatile knowledge he had gained in commercial farming in his short sojourn at the Centre<sup>27</sup>. While the training and financial support to establish startups appear to be laudable, there is need for an enabling environment beginning with community acceptance of, and provision of security to, the ex-combatants given that the DDR process is running in a context where there is yet to be consensus on a truce to end armed intemperance.

The most concrete realisation of the reintegration phase was the provision in April 2020 of a one month pre-employment internship in view of job placement of some 32 ex-fighters at Cameroon Telecommunication parastatal, CAMTEL, Bafoussam Agency. During the internship, the upkeep expenses of the interns were totally borne by the State.<sup>28</sup> All these initiative are intervention assistance geared at transforming the former deviants to non-offenders.<sup>29</sup> Although important, some do not follow the paradigm of moving from the skills acquired at the demobilization point to implementation at the reintegration phase. This is evident with the case of the 32 ex-fighters sent to CAMTEL after spending over a year appropriating skills in commercial crop and livestock farming.<sup>30</sup>

As could be noticed, the NDDRC Bamenda Centre has taken more or less a civilian approach to implementing the DDR process. Suggestions on the eventual filtering and integration of ex-combatants into the regular Arm Force have been consistently thwarted by the hierarchy of the Ministry of Defense. The argument has been that experiences elsewhere like in Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone where the option was experimented have not exuded compromising results. While this is a safety guard for potential degeneration into conflicts, the intention exposes lapses in the confidence building mechanisms that goes with genuine truth and reconciliation talks as a bail out to crisis.

## V. Conclusion

The current experiment of the NDDRC in Bamenda is to tame armed violence through systematic disarmament, re-socialize ex-offenders of the State in mainstream humane and patriotic mindsets through demobilisation and re-integrate them after hands-on-job training that can give them leverages to sustainable livelihoods. This approach which is modelled after the DDR paradigm in international conflict scenarios has not been a replication in the North West Region due to its specificity. Within less than two years of operation, despite certain challenges, the NDDRC in Bamenda has shaped its agenda to respond to the demands of domesticating violence in the present and for the future. In spite of these hopeful trajectories, the effective course of de-radicalizing armed combatants does not depend exclusively on the NDDRC structure. Rather, the success of the enterprise depends largely on the political will of the Cameroon Government to support all such local initiatives that demand enormous financial and logistical resources. It also resides on a genuine commitment by the State to establish unfettered confidence building measures and tackle the overarching issues of unemployment and inequalities that provide fertile grounds for the construction of a feeling of neglect in multiple dimensions. Convening the Major National dialogue from 30 September to 4 October 2019 by the Head of State H. E. Paul Biya where all shades of political and social opinions, including ex-combatants converged to provide a political corpus that could lead the North West and South West Regions from belligerency. This event was saluted as a step towards reaching durable solutions to the crisis.

<sup>26</sup> Sixtus Nyugha Gabsa.

<sup>27</sup> Florence Keng.

<sup>28</sup> Idem.

<sup>29</sup> Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

<sup>30</sup> See United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Second Generation" Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations, 2010.

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# EVALUATING CAMEROON'S DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND RE-INTEGRATION COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE TO THE CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION: EXPERIMENTING A COUNTRY SPECIFIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY

By Rose FRIL-MANYI ANJOH, PhD

*The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR) initiative under experimentation in Cameroon is the handiwork of President Paul Biya following his effort towards establishing sustainable peace and security in the three epicentre of conflict affecting the Far North, North West and South West Regions of the country. Unlike many DDR response programme in Africa that are initiated and facilitated by the UN, Cameroon's DDR is unique in that it did not follow the traditional and conventional approach but falls within the purview of government policy. The crux of this paper is to interrogate the DDR response programme designed and implemented in the South West Region since 2018 against the backdrop of the goals set at its inception, which centred on solving Cameroon problem by Cameroonian. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted using varied instruments such as study of documents, interview guide, and focus group. The study participants included categories of ex-fighters, DDR officials and the staff of Bolster Institute Buea. The paper is expected to demonstrate the succinct uniqueness of Cameroon's endogenous experiment with the DDR response programme in Africa. It argues that although the Buea Regional DDR Centre has encountered challenges its successes in acting as pace setters in solving Cameroonian problems using home based resources remains laudable and requires more impetus to build confidence and pave the way for sustainable peace and security in the region.*

Key Words: Disarmament, Demobilisation, Re-integration, Sustainable Peace and Security



Presidential Program for Reconstruction and Development (PPRD) of the North West and South West regions, support from UNDP / Camer Press Agency

## Introduction

Cameroon has experienced violent conflict since 2014 from the Boko Haram insurgent in the Far North region and as from 2016 in the two English speaking regions corresponding to the North West and South West. The country also suffers from structural violence especially visible in the East region following the influx of refugees from Central African Republic and Chinese mining concessions in the region (Anjoh, Nkweta and Lyonga, 2019). However, the government responses to arrest the upsurge of crisis in the country hinges on Cameroon philosophy. The creation of the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) comes at the behest of other governmental action to restore peace in the two restive English-speaking regions. The earliest of such measures had to do with the creation of the inter-Ministerial ad hoc Committee of 6 December 2016 set up by the then Prime Minister Philemon Yang and headed by Professor Paul Ghogomu Mingho and the ad hoc committee on Lawyers grievances created on 22 December 2016 headed by the Minister Delegate in the Ministry of Justice, Jean Pierre Fogui. These committees constituted exclusively of Cameroonians, held negotiation sessions in Bamenda with the members of Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium and Common Law Lawyers in Yaoundé. The difficulties that ensued in resolving the grievances raised by the English speaking lawyers and teachers, regarding instituting a guarantee (return to the federal system) that will uphold the values of the Common Law and Anglo-Saxon educational systems led the struggle to slip to the hands of a radical group in the diaspora that clamoured for a separate state for Southern Cameroon. The result was the declaration of independence of the federal republic of Ambazonia on 1 October 2017 and war broke out the next month on 30 November between the military and armed rebel groups desiring to create a separate state for the two English Speaking regions of former Southern Cameroon, which they named federal republic of Ambazonia (Tala and Ngange, 2019).

With the outbreak of violence between the rebels largely made up of young people called “Amba boys” and the regular army of the State of Cameroon, the President, Paul Biya custodian of the national cohesion, peace and security, and in a bid to curb hostilities introduced certain conflict abating measures. Such measure according to Knight (2010) ‘is to find a way to dismantle conflict nurturing

institutions and replace them with institutions that are capable of sustaining peace’. One of such was to set-up the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism created on 23 January 2017 charged with the responsibility of promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon with a view to maintain peace, consolidating the country’s national unity and strengthening its people’s wiliness and day-to-day experience with respect to living together. Members were appointed on 15 March 2017 with Peter Mafany Musonge as President and Vice President Oumarou Djika Saidou (<https://www.prc.cm>). Besides, the government took other steps to redress some onerous problems like translation of the OHADA Law in to English language, recruitment of 1500 bilingual teachers and the holding of the Major National Dialogue from 30 September to 4 October 2019. However, the violence persisted. In the light of continuous violence H.E. Paul Biya has made several calls on separatist fighters in the North West and South West to drop their guns and be pardoned by surrendering to the NDDRC that came to existence on 30 November, 2018 with the aim to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate former Boko Haram fighters in the Far North and separatist fighters in the North West and South West regions.

To this end, Kindzeka (2018) reports that the Governor of the South West region Bernard Okalia Bilai said “regarding the president’s call that ‘no one should be afraid because President Paul Biya who is the Commander-in-chief of the Army has given firm instructions that no fighter who drops his weapons as a sign of repentance should be arrested, killed or sent to prison’.” He continued, “The fighters should trust the government and be informed that they will be socially and economically reintegrated as soon as they disarm”. It is based on the assertion that DDR regional centre set out to accomplish its mandate and mission in the South West Region of Cameroon. The paper evaluates the success of the DDR programme in the region. It focuses on the civilian component in analysing DDR in Cameroon. However, in order to bring out the strength and uniqueness of the Cameroonian approach to DDR I have surveyed some DDR programmes in Africa. I argue in this paper that upholding the country specific or Cameroonian philosophy in implementing the DDR programme is a prerequisite to lay a solid foundation to encourage the many who still believe falsely that solutions will come from elsewhere to surrender or lay down their arms. The paper depicts the complementary link between



disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and goes further to explicitly analyse the actors involved in DDR in the South West Region as well as a reflective analysis of the impact of DDR on sustainable peace and security in the region. On these bases, the paper closes with drawing attention to challenges encountered and brings out improvements that should be introduced to enhance DDR in the region and Cameroon at large.

### Cameroon's DDR within the African Context

It is not surprising that DDR process owes its genesis to former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's (1992 and 1995) conception of post conflict peace building, as a framework for ensuring that violent conflict would not occur in post conflict settings. It is also a response to the Brahimi report, which links explicitly peacekeeping, peace building, and socio-economic development functions of the United Nations system. Which was elaborated again by Kofi Annan in 1998, by specifying that the actions for the resolution of a conflict requires an integrated peace building effort, added to a military action to address the various factors that have caused the conflict. In this wise peace, building involves among others the creation of institution for reintegration and resumption of normalcy (Knight, 2010). Aside from the DDR concept, in 2001 the concept of responsibility to protect gained momentum and it speaks to the requirement to devolve authority and capacity to national governments to ensure the well-being of all citizens (Baranyi and Meeapham, 2006). In Knight (2010) the responsibility to protect is conceptually and pragmatically linked to DDR and is conceived as an important element as outside actors like the UN hand over the responsibility of peace building to state governments; although, such governments have to indicate a strong commitment to respect their democratic obligations and provide their citizens with the protection that comes from the security sector.

The Cameroon President's solution to extend a call on the fighters to drop their guns and submit to the regional DDR centres falls within the framework of the responsibility to protect to which the President of the Republic of Cameroon enacted the decree no. 2018/719 of 30th November 2018 to establish the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee, under the authority of the Prime Minister Head of Government Chief Dr Joseph Dion Ngute with head quarter in Yaoundé and

Regional Centres in Mora, Bamenda and Buea. Although, the committee's structure resembled that of Sudan, which emanated from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with three structures (The National Council for DDR Co-ordination and two regional bodies namely the North Sudan DDR Commission and the South Sudan DDR Commission) signed on 9 January 2005; the Cameroonian conception is distinguished by its originality. The Cameroon's NDDRC is charged in its Chapter II Article 2: (1) with the "responsibility for organizing supervising and managing the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-fighters of Boko Haram and armed groups in the North-West and South-West Regions willing to respond favourably to the Head of State's peace appeal by laying down their arms'.

The Committee's Management Board headed by the Prime Minister is charged with 'defining the strategic guidelines and ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme in the regions concerned and at national sphere. Its membership is limited to representatives of government. This presents a paradigm shift again from many DDR Commissions around Africa that were products of negotiated settlements and the commission, in these cases, was constituted of both government representatives and those of the warring factions including support from outside like the UN. Several cases abound but for this study the cases of Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone will be presented to illustrate the seemingly deviation from traditional and conventional practice.

In Angola, the Bicesse Accords negotiated between the Government and the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in May 1991 contained provisions for DDR to disarm ex-combatants and created an integrated national army as well as demobilized others. Although it failed in 1992 due to UNITA's refusal to accept elections results, in the Lusaka Peace Agreement of 1993 another attempt was made in the domain of DDR with the establishment of a government of national unity and reconciliation and the integration of some UNITA fighters into the national army. The process still failed because of UNITA's refusal to fully buy in to it. However, the conflict that resumed in 1988 ended in 2002 following the killing of Jonas Savimbi in moxico province by government forces. Jose Eduardo dos Santos announced a ceasefire, which included a Peace Agreement that granted general amnesty to UNITA soldiers and paved the way for

them to lay down their arms (Cauvin, 2002). A joint commission was established to oversee DDR in Angola. Quartering Areas were established across the country for demobilisation of UNITA forces and reception areas set up for family members and dependents of UNITA soldiers (<http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/reports/DDR>, accessed April 2020). The reintegration of ex-combatants demobilized began in 2003 and was implemented through the institute of Socio-Professional Reintegration of Ex-Combatants including other national and international NGOs.

In DRC, there has been a successive overthrow of its leaders from 1961 with Patrice Lumumba through 2001 with the assassination of Laurent Kabila. Although, Joseph Kabila was elected President in 2006, DRC has witnessed continued violence since the days of Mobutu Sesse Seko, which was complicated by the geographical location of the country and separate conflict in Ituri region. The DDR programme was implemented under the auspices of UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) between 1999 and 2003 with the mandate not only to keep peace but also to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate ex-combatants as well as return of foreign insurgents back to their country. However, the mission faced difficulties due to continued hostilities and inadequate unified Congolese national army to lead the DDR (<http://www.unddr.org/countryprogramms>, accessed April 2020).

Ivory Coast that was once a stable country descended into major conflict on 19 September 2002 after a failed attempt to overthrow Laurent Gbagbo. This quickly turned into a rebellion that literally divided the country in half with government controlling the South and the rebel Forces Nouvelles taking control of the North. The Senegalese President and ECOWAS Chairman, Abdulaye Wade convened a summit on the crisis in Accra, Ghana on 29 September. Emerging from that summit was the Accra I Accord. He called on all armed groups in the country to cease fighting and engage in a dialogue to bring a peaceful resolution in the crisis. An agreement was signed on 9 July 2005 and the Ouagadougou peace accord of 4 March 2007 between Ivorian government and Forces Nouvelles. It is within the framework of this agreement that a DDR programme was launched. The precarious problem was the status of the over 3.5 million people in the muslim north who were immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea who had played significant role in nation building

after independence in 1960. Although the DDR started a process of identification, the insecurity prevented meaningful progress. The long-standing crisis from 2002 to 2010 ended with the arrest of President Laurent Gbagbo as elections were previewed for that year 2010. Nevertheless, post elections conflict continued 2011 when the government decree of 8 August 2012 created the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Authority (DDRA), which targeted ex-combatants. The authority completed its mission in 2015. Out of the 78,000 beneficiaries, 64,000 were picked and 55,000 have been reintegrated in to the military, the administration and the private sector. A light coordination structure, the Reintegration, Coordination and Monitoring Unit (Ngangoro, 2019) supported the remaining cases.

Sierra Leone on its part had witnessed a long decade of civil conflict, which ended officially in 2002. Following a difficult path of negotiated peace settlement that include provision for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants as well as the creation of National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) to manage the process during the second phase. It was comprised of representatives from various parties to the conflict as well as the UN, ECOWAS and others external actors. The peace accord was signed in three phases: Abidjan Accord 1997 but hostilities resumed in December 1998 and led to Lome Accord in 1999 supervised by the UN observer mission (UNOMSIL). The agreements were between the Government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Hostilities again resurfaced in 2001 with hostage taking of 500 UN observers by the rebels and a third phase of peace agreement was initiated in May 2001 following the Abuja ceasefire agreement of November 2000 and cessation of hostilities. This phase equally witnessed the renewal of mission of UN peacekeeping mandate (UNAMSIL) and increase in its troops. In all 72,500 combatants were disarmed and another 2,600 combatants were incorporated in to the new army through Military Reintegration Program (MRP). 46,435 weapons were collected and 1 million pieces of munitions.

Thus, most DDR programmes in Africa occurred in both peacekeeping and non-peace keeping scenarios. However, the underlying factor in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants is to end the civil war and pave the way for democratization, justice and development to take precedence.

## Evaluation of DDR in the South West Region

The operationalization of NCDDR response strategy in Cameroon and South West Region is a complex process, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It aims at addressing the drivers to conflict and security challenges that may arise. Particularly to combatants who fail to heed to the Presidents appeal to fighters to lay down their arms and surrender to the NDDRC as well as ex-combatants, being left without livelihood or support, as they lay down their arms and move to other cities unassisted. The DDR programmes is context specific and is tailored to take account of the underlying nature of the conflict and the capacity of all stakeholders to the conflict to have a succinct comprehension of key notions or concepts used in the DDR milieu in Cameroon. According to Nangorgo (2019), there is a consensus on the two 'D', which denotes disarmament and demobilisation of combatants. However, the 'R' indicates several concepts: Reinsertion, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Resettlement. However, DDR in this paper is used for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration although an exploration of relevant concepts like, reinsertion, which reflects the situation of ex-combatants within host communities.

An understanding of the complementary role of the concepts I have used is important to the success of the DDR. In this light disarmament has been use as the process of collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunitions, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants that they voluntarily deposit in this case to the military in their different localities. It however excludes the development of responsible arms management programmes within the NDDRC in Cameroon since this aspect is not covered in this paper. Demobilisation on its part deals with the formal and controlled discharged of active combatants from armed groups in the region. The first stage of demobilisation occurs in the military camp particularly with the BIR in the locality of the combatants. Later on, the screening of individual combatants is done in the office of the Legion Commandant in Buea temporarily before the reforming of ex-combatants in the designated camp at Bolster Institute. The second stage encompasses the support package provided to demobilize ex-fighters as they arrive at the encampment centre, which is called reinsertion. Reinsertion implies the

assistance, offered to ex-combatants during demobilisation but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. In this sense reinsertion is a form of provisional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families. However, in the case of DDR regional centre in Buea assistance to families is not statutory but provided occasionally during special periods like back to school or festive seasons like Christmas although only those who declare from start that they have a family (spouse and Children) are concerned. Coverage for basic needs include healthcare, food, bathing, clothes, shelter, continuous social process or civic education and economic development. It involves a short-term material and or financial assistance to meet immediate needs that last at least for seven months but could get to a year and beyond given that the first batch of interns spent one year four months. This phase succeeds the disarmament phase and begins the period of socializing and educating the former combatants who is expected to have deposited all military weapon in his/her possession and now resides in the centre.

During Reintegration, ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process primarily taking place in communities designated by the government taking in to account the safety of the ex-combatants. It falls within the general development of the country and a national responsibility of the state. Meanwhile, ex-combatants refer to men, women, boys and girls who served in the armed groups, although not all of them actually held arms but were actively engaged in carrying out logistical tasks and other support activities like sex, cooking, serving as messengers and informants as well as children associated with the fighting forces and other dependents. Host communities would mean communities receiving ex-combatants. For the South West DDR the return of ex-combatants into their original communities was analysed and it was resolved that it would create real or perceived security challenges. Consequently, the first batch of ex-combatants were reintegrate in the city of Douala as is the current trend in many other DDR programme.

After elucidating on the key concepts and the spirit of DDR in the region, it is important to state that the responsibility to implement DDR in the South West Region was ear marked in Section III Article 7 (1) of the 2018 decree creating the NDDRC. According to this decree, the regional centre created in Buea shall be responsible to discharge the duties

of the committee at the local level and shall be under the head of the centre appointed by the Prime Minister Head of Government on 7 December 2018 in the person of Fonju Njukang Bernard. (<https://www.prc.cm>). The Governor of the region in the presence of the Governors collaborators installed him on 11 December. His assigned responsibilities as stipulated in the decree regarding disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants are exercised in collaboration with the Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie Legion for the South West and that of the 21st Motorized Infantry Brigade Colonel Zam and Colonel Ewane respectively. In exercising their complementary role the National Gendarmerie and BIR have the mission to : facilitate the disarming of combatants by receiving ex-fighters of armed groups in the South West Region; collect, list and store weapons and munitions voluntarily handed over by ex-fighters; and take appropriate measures to destroy the said weapons, munitions and explosives. They initiate the demobilization process and work in collaboration with the DDR regional coordinator to continue the process to demobilize and reintegrate the ex-combatant. They oversee the set-up and manage encampment of ex-fighters; supervise them and take necessary steps to de-radicalize the ex-fighters. The

coordinator of the centre is responsible for the day-to-day administration and providing ex-combatants with tools and means of production and assistance for the creation of income generating activities that will lead up to their being reintegrate to civil life.

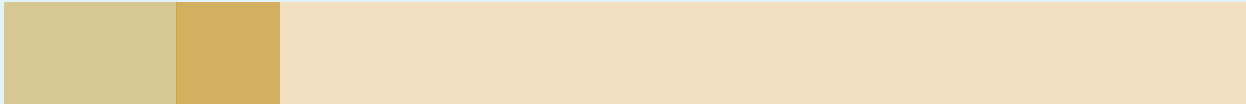
The DDR centre in Buea is resident in the Bolster institute which is a government owned structure located in the Bokwango area and created since 1965 (see figure 1 below). The Bolster institute's main role has been to rehabilitate young delinquents essentially minors and thus suitable for rehabilitation of ex-fighter since the mission is similar to that required to be performed by the DDR centre. The accommodation of the DDR in the premises of the institute is also important because the DDR programme make use of the experience of the staff who have been handling cases of delinquencies in the past and equally provides extensive space for offices, a football field, dormitories, classrooms, workshops, and demonstration sites for agricultural activities amongst others. It has the capacity to accommodate 120 interns and the number could even get to 200 without creating congestion.

The first ex-fighters, 2 in number, who laid down their arms following the appeal made by the Head of State President Paul Biya on 8 November 2018



Figure 1: Administrative Block Hosting DDR South West Regional Centre in Buea / Source: Picture taken by Author during Field Research, 29 April 2020.





arrived, the centre on 22 December, from Ndian Division. By September 2019 before the convening of the Major National Dialogue, many more had laid down their arms and integrated into the centre. Meanwhile, the post dialogue

Period continued to witness the arrival of more and more interns. 115 ex-fighters have been received in the centre amongst who are 9 females. Of this number, 33 male and 5 female making 38 left the centre on 27 March 2020 and were effectively reintegrated on 1 April of the same year mainly out of the area from where they had been involved in fighting and particularly in Cameroon Telecommunication Company in Douala. By the start of this research, there were 74 interns but 3 new ones were received in my presence on 28 April 2020 raising the figure to 77.

It is important to state that the DDR programme has two key components: the military component that deals with disarming the ex-fighters and the civilian component that focuses on providing security to interns who lay down their arms voluntarily, giving them a new life and resettle them back in to the communities. To undertake the civilian component, the key actors in the centre include the regional coordinator Bernard Fonju Njungkang, the head of service for gendarmerie senior warrant officer Mvineko Oumarou and the head of the military senior warrant officer Essome Eugene. They receive adequate support from the staff of the Bolster Institute and individual volunteers. Some civil society organizations in the region have also shown interest to support activities of the centre.

This paper has not addressed succinctly the disarmament dimension, which is purely military but has content itself with the aspect of demobilization and reintegration. However, it is worth informing the reader that before demobilisation most fighters were directed to the nearest administrative head be it the Sub-Divisional Officer or the Divisional Officer who then organize the military to bring the erstwhile fighter to the Legion in Buea or they went directly to the BIR camp where they were interrogated and escorted to the Legion in Buea before they are finally brought to the centre. These organs are spread out in all villages and towns in the region to facilitate the process. A few of them said their relatives took them to the administrative officer and others said their friends who had surrendered and were at the DDR centre in Buea informed them. Whatever the case the process of disarmament remained the same and in this process the combatant who surrenders spends

a few days to a week at the locality before escorted to the Legion in Buea. Here interrogation continues to ascertain the willingness to submit to constituted authority especially because before now they had lost their citizenship and needed to regain such. Again, many of them are coming from different camps with varied ideologies, thus they had to receive some moral and civic education before bringing them to the DDR regional centre.

Once received at the DDR centre the fighter who lays down the arms is then further screened and admitted at the centre. The screening exercise requires collecting the following information from the ex-fighter: division of origin, age, sex, educational level and skills. Information regarding ethnic group, marital status, dependents. The rank within the fighting force, weapons usage are not mentioned under the civilian component to allow ex-combatants to be treated equally and no ethnic group should be stigmatized for perpetrating the violence. Such information remained at the level of the Legion. During the first batch, some of the interns had not actually been involved in the fighting forces but those received in the current batch were directly involved in fighting forces in frontline either fighting, performing a logistical role or providing any manner of support that contributed to sustain the violence.

Aside from the daily routine of the regional coordinator of the centre, the chief warrant officer of gendarmerie, the chief warrant officer of the military and staff of Bolster Institute as well as some volunteer take turn to ensure the functioning of the centre. In this section, I will bring out testimonies of those working daily in the centre and that of the interns. In my communication with the senior warrant officer Mvineko Oumarou who is bilingual, he said the mission of the gendarmerie is three fold: 'to investigate those who have deposited their guns, provide them with civic education and ensure discipline and security of the ex-combatants or fighters in the centre'. The security of the ex-fighters is assured in collaboration with the head of the military in the centre senior warrant officer Essome Eugene who supervises the guarding of the centre. They both have nine and eight elements to assist in maintaining order and discipline within the centre and in a situation where interns want to go out of the centre they provide them with an exit, issued by the gendarme and controlled by the military personnel at the entrance. However, there have been cases where some disobey orders and scale the fence.

The gendarmes centre their training on civic and moral education on citizenship, respect of the law, certain national emblems such as the flag, and singing of the national anthem and on the importance of the national identity card. The educational training activities are corroborated with that given by the psycho-sociologist Dr Emanuel ... who is a staff of Bolster Institute but avails himself to provide psycho- social support to the interns. According to him, the receptions of interns who are ex-fighters come from the wild and immediately they arrive at the centre they are quarantine for about two weeks. During this period, 'we probe in to their minds to get what prompted them to carry out arms against their state. After which, we find out problems they encountered while in the bush and why they decided to lay down arms and come out of the bush for government to accept and pardon them'. He continued that the 'next is the counselling and education session to re-educate them to value human life and equally take care of their health and feeding' especially because many arrive sick or had received bullets and needed treatment.

He further said, during the seven months prescribed by the state for them to stay in the encampment centre, He, alongside the gendarmes continue probing and evaluating the minds of the

ex-fighters to ascertain if they are qualified to be reintegrated back in to society. If they are qualified then hierarchy will be informed but they could stay in the centre after seven months until they are reintegrated. However, no curricular has been designed for this and the education exercise is more of counselling and confidence building since by the time they leave the bush they have a feeling of hopelessness. During the first batch, education was done mainly in classrooms but in this second batch, the number has increased and classrooms have been converted to dormitories. As such, learning is carried out in informal settings say under the tree or in front of their dorms. He says "when we identify that they have peculiar problems we locate them and council them. While in the centre they are occupied with different activities".

According to the regional coordinator Fonju Njungkang Bernard, these activities are short cycle activities since the stipulated duration of ex-combatant to stay in the centre is seven months. Such activities include driving, poultry farming, pig rearing, and farming of agricultural crops like tomatoes, maize and vegetables as well as social activities like sports and signing. Figure 2 shows the piggery in DDR centre managed by an intern volunteer. There is another ex-fighters volunteer for



Figure 2: DDR South West Regional Centre Piggery Project / Source: Picture taken by Author during Field Research, 29 April 2020

the poultry. The centre also has a tailoring programme for the girls but which is not effective since the Bolster staff ran in to conflict with the interns and stopped coming. Other activities envisaged but still to start is hairdressing and computer lab that has been installed but awaits operation. The essence of these training is for skill development and to occupy them not necessarily, what they will have to engage in upon leaving the centre for reintegration. At the time of reintegration, they make a choice of what they will want to do and the government will see what is available out of the choices they have selected. Each of these activities is coordinated either by a staff of Bolster Institute or a volunteer from outside and a volunteer from among the interns.

Mbobi Derek Ngai is the sports coordinator and a staff of the Bolster Institute. He organizes friendly games among the interns and between them and outside teams. During the first batch, sporting activities included physical exercises, table tennis and football but for this second batch, they are not interested in table tennis so they perform just the daily physical exercise and play football twice a week. In 2019 they had a football competition that brought teams from out of the

Centre. This year due to the current pandemic of COVID-19 that first appeared in Cameroon on 6 March 2020 and following the instructions of the President through the Prime Minister issued on 17 March on the respect of certain regulations to curb the spread of the disease a football tournament has been organised which was launched on 30 April only with the interns. This is expected to last until June 2020. According to the regional coordinator, all dispositions have been taken to respect government prescription and none of the interns has tested positive of the virus up to this moment. The interns were distributed in to four teams namely NDDRC, BIB, Peace FC and United FC. United FC is a new name that replaced Educam of the first batch. The significance of the programmed matches is to build solidarity, peace and unity among the interns in the Bolster family. Figure 3 below shows the teams that were programmed for the launching of the tournament.

A number of testimonies were also collected from the ex-fighters on why they picked up arms against the state, why they dropped their arms and their experience in the DDR centre. I have decided to include a few to give us first-hand information and to hear the voices of the ex-fighters themselves. One



Figure 3: Interns in colored jerseys during the preparation of the 2020 tournament  
Source: photo taken by the author during a field research on 30 April 2020

of the ex-fighter who is their spokesperson in the centre said he came from Ndian Division precisely Bamuso Sub-Division. He says other interns come from Fako, Lebialem, Manyu, Meme and Koupe-Manengouba Division. Concerning the question of why he took up arms against the State, he had this to say:

I took up arms due to marginalization. I hold a Higher Professional Diploma in Human Resource Management and a Bachelor degree in same discipline from Higher Institute of Business Management and FOMIC Polytechnic. After my schooling, I struggled to have a job to no avail. I dropped applications in many offices but no job. One holiday I decided to go to the village and I was being forced by my friends to join and fight to better my life and my division. That by fighting you may gain a position after achieving our goal of independence and some were brutalizing us who had not joined, so I decided to join to fight for the restoration of the independence of Southern Cameroon-Ambazonia.

He went on to say that, he was encouraged by his uncle in Yaoundé to drop his arms as he informed him that government has created a centre in Buea for those who drop their arms. During our discussions, he said, "I willingly made up my mind to lay down my arms and I came here and discovered that there is actually a centre for people who lay down arms". He said he encouraged his friends and four of them left on same day out of 25 fighters in their camp. He did not actually carry a



gun to war front but acted as an informant to the fighters. He describes the daily activities in the centre in the following words:

At 7am, we come for morning devotion to hoist our flag. After which, we go for breakfast. Thereafter, other activities begin. Those going for driving, poultry farming, pig rearing and farming of agricultural crop do so as well as those going for sport. Each person is allowed to choose activities to which you want to belong. We have a busy day. In addition, we are provided with basic facilities (like slippers. Rubbing oil, bed sheets, tooth paste/brush, bathing buckets bathing soap and washing soap amongst others. We are given launch and supper and we often assist the women cooking for us. Although we do not have any statutory allowance, the government provides such during remarkable periods like Christmas and school resumption since some of us are married with children. Personally, I am a tanyi meaning a father of twins.

He has been in the centre for nine months two weeks and he recounts that a lot has changed in his life. He says 'the way I was thinking while in the bush is not the way I think now'. He said 'before, I did not know how to drive but now I can drive, I did not have ideas in gardening but now I can do it and due to orientation of my teachers I have been impacted with a lot of wisdom. If I leave this centre I will not want to take up arms against my state.' He was amongst those who participated in the Major National Dialogue (MND) and participated in the education committee. All the other ex-fighters were distributed in different committees. His impression about the MND is positive although not all the recommendations have been fulfilled; he says, "I am praying the government should do something to fulfil all measures taken during the dialogue".

### Another ex-fighter from Lebialem said that

I joint the struggle to fight for a separate country. They had told us that we were suffering. La Republique du Cameroun was maltreating us so we wanted to get a good standard of living. Field Marshall was our trainer. I was tired of fighting so I decided to drop my arms to come and hear what the President had for us. I came after the Major National Dialogue. 10 May 2020 will make me six months. I dropped my arms through the Sub Divisional Officer of Alor. He brought me to Dschang and to Buea. In our camp, we were almost 60 fighters. We had sub-base and main-base. I was in Mock and the main base was in Azi, Fontem. I left with four of us from one base and others left from different bases so here we are 8 of us. When I got here, I called others who have dropped their arms but they did not believe in the centre so they moved to other towns like Douala and Yaoundé to fend for themselves. I had a similar view. The first two weeks was not easy for me. My impression was that it was a means to use to capture us and kill us. Nevertheless, during the first week I saw people who had made one year and nothing like that happened to them so I realized it was true. Again, the fighters I saw in the dialogue I met them in the centre so I knew it is true.

He continued, "I can no longer pick up arms against my state because I have realized Cameroon can never be separated and we thank the President for the initiative". This ex-fighter is the volunteer who heads the agricultural farming project and trains other ex-fighters who are interested in farming (see figure 5 below) for different crops grown. He works under the supervision of Eseme Harry recommended to the DDR centre by the Regional Delegation of Agriculture as an extension worker.



Figure 5: Vegetables and Tomatoes Cultivation in the DDR in Buea / Source: Picture taken by Author during Field Research 29 April 2020



Of the four girls in the centre, two came from Meme, one from Ndian and the other from Manyu. One of the girls from Meme that I interviewed said she left school in form two and joined a camp in Fiango Kumba. No body forced her but she wanted to be part of the struggle and was there for a year. She was cooking in the camp. She says they were 50 in their camp and 5 of them surrendered the same day as they went to a BIR camp around Kumba Mamfe road. They were kept for a few days and later escorted to Legion in Buea and they were finally brought to the DDR centre in January. The story of the other girl from Ndian was very thrilling as she said she was a backup fighter in Elioni camp in Bamuso and went to fight when the battle was fierce although the boys did not really want her to risk her life. At other times, she will cook for them. She said her camp had 25 fighters and from Mufako to Mboua Bakundu there were about 150 fighters but some have gone to Nigeria, some have died and others still fighting. In the centre, she and the other girls were interested in sewing but the teacher from Bolster to assist them was not forthcoming. She has changed her mind to do hair dressing in a nearby saloon since none exists yet in the centre.

their individual path toward growth and contributing to the development of Cameroon.

The DDR regional centre in Buea, which opened its doors to the interns on 11 December 2018, now counts one year and four months. One may say it's still early to assess its functionality and successes but going by the fact that it has reintegrated the first batch of thirty-eight ex-fighters and the expansion of ongoing activities in the centre places it on a sustainable path towards restoring the ones cherished peace in Cameroon. This notwithstanding, many challenges like provision of office equipment for proper record keeping, absence of a communication plan to sensitize the public and especially the many "ex-fighters" who have abandoned the bush but wallowing in the streets of big towns and cities on the false belief that the centre is meant to capture them and kill them, hence, the difficulty for them to integrate the centre for reformation exercise. Again, the absence of a prescribed educational curricular and standard programme and absence of a Cameroon DDR operational manual continue to inhibit the smooth functioning of the centre. It is also worth stating that the activities of NDDRC centre in the region and Cameroon at large alone is insufficient to resolve the socio-political crisis; reason why it should operate in synergy with other national reconstruction programmes in order to achieve sustainable peace and security in the region and the country. Meanwhile, as part of a holistic programme in rebuilding the devastated regions and Cameroon a nationwide social security scheme for the unemployed in urban areas and those living in the villages is imperative for sustainable peace and security to prevail in Cameroon.

## Conclusion, constraints and recommendations

The creation of the NDDRC in Cameroon is one of the several efforts undertaken by President Paul Biya, Head of State of the Republic of Cameroon to restore peace and bring life to normalcy in the three conflict tormented zones in the country representing the Far North, North West and South West Regions. In his philosophy of using Cameroonians to solve Cameroon problems regional centres of DDR were opened in the regions plagued with crisis to offer opportunity to the fighters to have an official space where government can listen to them and together with them provide solutions within the confines of the republican nature of the country. A close interaction with the regional DDR centre in Buea resident in the premises of Bolster Institute gives me the opportunity to say the experiment of a country specific DDR response venture is worth encouraging. The centre may not have as much facilities as compared to others in Africa but the spirit of solidarity, love and unity that exist among the ex-fighters and all other stakeholders working tirelessly to give hope and rebuild the lives of the ones distressed fighters is outstanding. The transformation is visible on the faces of all the ex-fighters, as they look lively and happy, anxiously waiting to resume a new chapter in

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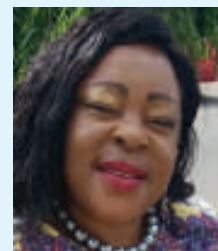
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# DDR AGAINST BOKO HARAM IN THE FAR NORTH OF CAMEROON : CONTEXT, CONCEPT AND CHALLENGES

By Mbarkoutou Mahamat Henri

*In November 2018, Cameroon set up the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) to encourage the return to peace in the regions affected by insecurity. Statutorily, the Committee's mission is to organise, supervise and manage the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and armed groups in the North West and South West regions wishing to respond favourably to the Head of State's offer of peace by laying down their arms. The creation of the NDDRC marks the final step in a process of setting up rehabilitation systems for Boko Haram ex-combatants in the countries around the Lake Chad. As much as it is praiseworthy and praised because it is claimed by international organisations and communities basically, the creation of the NDDRC meanwhile reveals a concept which the context will rudely put to test, as much as it will face structural and conflicting challenges imposed by the morphology of affected communities, the persistence of inhuman activities of Boko Haram and the methodological and programmatic constraints.*

*This paper aims to critically read the DDR system implemented in the Far North and its capacity to adapt and resilience in the face of the constraints of a particularly incandescent terrorist environment. The analysis describes the context of the crisis, questions the DDR concept that the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee for (NDDRC) implements in relation to the sociological realities of local terrorism and assesses the current action methods to translate the concept into reality. The study is based on data collected in the field from the affected communities, documentary resources of the organisations acting in the DDR and study reports.*



Former combatants of the Mora Multinational Joint Task Force camp / Fadjiri Magazine

## A particular and poorly understood security context

The context generated by the Boko Haram crisis in the Far North of Cameroon must be identified in its geo-cultural and socioeconomic environment of mutual influences at the regional level. Two major aspects can be identified and will determine the engagement of the DDR device in the specific context of terrorism in the Far North.

### I.1. Evolution of the security context and humanitarian crisis

Until 2018, the Boko Haram crisis that literally affected the four countries around Lake Chad posted records in terms of humanitarian impacts. According to the Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, the humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin region remains dire, with 10.7 million people in need of vital assistance. In particular, 2.3 million people are displaced throughout the region and thousands of deaths and young women and children are kidnapped and held captive for the purpose of terror.<sup>1</sup>

1 UN, "The Security Council examines the situation in the Lake Chad region under the triple security, humanitarian and development plan", Press Release, Session 8212E of 22 March 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/fr/2018/cs13259.doc.html> page consulted on April 13, 2020.

It is important to remember that in its strategy of expansion towards the Far North of Cameroon, Boko Haam has massively recruited in border communities in order to ensure the functioning of its supply chain and to reinforce / renew its combatants in operational units. Thus, it is approximately 4000 young people who were enlisted in Cameroon<sup>2</sup>. In Mayo-Moskota alone, an estimated 2,000 people have joined the terrorist group, from the cantons of Moskota and Mozogo<sup>3</sup>. Many more were kidnapped, forcefully recruited and kept in Boko Haram-controlled territories. Little is known about the itinerary of these different categories of actors, targets, collaborators or victims, grouped under the term of "ex-associates" of Boko Haram, as is the exact number dedicated to specific logistics charges. , combat, domestic tasks or wives / companions.

Faced with such a bleak picture, the reaction of the State was intended to be resolutely firm. The military option was favored in order to bring peace and security to the affected areas. In addition to relying on the national army, christened operations are set up. With specific missions and designated action areas, operations Alpha and Emergence 4 are deployed

2 L'Express.fr, "Boko Haram trains young Cameroonians to attack their own country", Online, accessed October 15, 2017. URL: [www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/monde/boko-haram-entraîne-de-jeunes-camerounais-to-attack-their-own-country\\_1564480.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/monde/boko-haram-entraîne-de-jeunes-camerounais-to-attack-their-own-country_1564480.html).  
3 Viché Yatahad, "2000 young people from Mayo-Moskota joined Boko Haram", The Eye of the Sahel, n° 914 of Monday April 17, 2017



Weapons seized during this Cameroonian army offensive against Boko Haram in Nigeria February 2016 / VOA



throughout the 4th military region. Overall, the entire Far North region is experiencing increased militarisation, with an anchorage on the affected localities, in particular those on the shores of Lake Chad, of which we know that the Boko Haram insurgency wants to make it a sanctuary. Operational military bases are created along the border with Nigeria and around the Cameroonian part of Lake Chad.

Harassed from all sides, Boko Haram units are gradually defeated, gradually yielding to the conquered territories. The attacks are less numerous, the attacks even less while certain localities find security and serenity. From 2017, the military and civilian actors in the conflict are considering the stabilisation phase. The influence of actions carried out by sector 1 of the Multinational Joint Task Force, with the support of the administrative and traditional authorities, lead to the first return of ex-combatants from Boko Haram. Already in February 2016, we have recorded the return of more than 400 ex-hostages of Boko Haram in the Cantons of Moskota and Mozogo who settle in misfortune within the walls of the council of Mozogo. This unexpected return opens a new phase of the crisis. In the absence of a formal framework for the return of ex-associates of Boko Haram, the returns recorded are timid and not very organised. From October 2017, Boko Haram fighters go to the communities. Out of the hundred combatants “returned”, several are still kept within the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in Mora. Others, whose numbers are unknown, live in their departure or host communities in different villages along the border with Nigeria<sup>4</sup>. Besides this category, other ex-associates of Boko Haram have returned to their communities of origin in various ways, some of which have gone through traditional post-Boko Haram rehabilitation mechanisms, in particular repentance on the Holy Quran at Tolkomari. Since then, several ex-combatants have surrendered, ex-hostages have returned to communities in several villages in the municipalities of Mora and Kolofata in the department of Mayo-Sava as well as in villages in the municipalities of Mokolo, Mayo-Moskoto and Koza in the Mayo-Tsanaga Division, hence the need to understand the mechanisms for the reintegration of these ex-associates of Boko Haram in the host communities.

The responses to this general movement of return from ex-associates of Boko Haram are gradual, contextual and multifaceted. Nigeria and Niger have

more or less different experiences of reintegrating ex-partners. At the continental level, the African Union affirmed “the need to have sufficient resources to facilitate the socio-economic rehabilitation of Boko Haram fighters who defect from the terrorist group”<sup>5</sup>. At the regional level, the Regional strategy for the stabilisation, recovery and resilience of the areas of the Lake Chad Basin affected by Boko Haram was adopted in Abuja in August 2018. Principle 3 of this strategy enshrines the intervention axis on the disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reinsertion and reintegration of people associated with Boko Haram<sup>6</sup>.

Cameroon until then, failing to have set up a reintegration program, has adapted to the new situation. It was not until December 2017, during the Regional Committee for maintaining order and security in Mora that the Governor of the Far North Region explicitly raises the question of the return of ex-combatants from Boko Haram. Consequently, the marked will of the State to supervise the defectors of Boko Haram and returned to the community is not followed by concrete actions. Until October 2018, 113 ex-combatants were being observed in the camp of sector 1 of the Multinational Joint Task Force in Mora, the 400 ex-hostages returning to Mozogo are installed in Zama, hundreds of women ex-hostages have returned to communities, abducted and hostage men have also returned to communities. Reintegration routes are numerous; reintegration mechanisms are varied depending on the context of each community. However, these different methods are poorly understood and little explored.

## 1.2. Victims with unique profiles and an ongoing community reintegration

When the NDDRC saw the light of day, the realities born of Boko Haram’s dynamics on the ground were complex. We note that the associates in the Boko Haram enterprise represent a galaxy of varied actors and that in the communities, the first return of people freed from the terror of Boko Haram, triggered a multifaceted reintegration process. Thus, after a more or less prolonged stay in or in the areas under the control of Boko Haram, several categories of ex-associates<sup>7</sup> are saved.

<sup>5</sup> Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), 680th meeting, Addis Ababa, April 18, 2017

<sup>6</sup> LCBC / AU, Regional strategy for the stabilisation, recovery and my resilience of the areas of the Lake Chad Basin affected by Boko Haram, adopted in Abuja, on August 30, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Term used by stakeholders in the Far North of Cameroon to designate all the people

<sup>4</sup> If village and household heads say there are no ex-combatants living in communities, informants and identifying agents confirm that some ex-combatants have returned and live in communities under the protection of their families in the villages of the locality of Kolofata.

### **The ex-combatants**

It is difficult to say exactly the precise moment Boko Haram ex-combatants returned to communities. We know that the episode of return to Mozogo in the Mayo-Tsanaga department of about 400 people, composed of heads of households, women, children, including heads of villages returning from areas under Boko Haram control in April 2016, has left a lot of doubt about the real profile of the individuals who were later qualified as hostages and resettled in Zamay. Then, minority waves of 2 to 6 ex-combatants return within the communities, in particular in the localities of Kolofata and Mayo-Moskota. If many, 186 in number, originating from 16 border villages of Mayo-Sava, have been collected and kept in the base of sector n° 1 of the MNJTF since January 2018, many other individuals benefiting from the presumption of kidnap from the beginning are tolerated in communities particularly in Kolofata, Tolkomari, Gouzoudou, Kouyapé and Gancé.

In Mayo-Tsanaga, the situation of the return of ex-combatants to communities remains not very transparent. In the absence of a reception base, several of them who return are received by the traditional chiefs via the local vigilante committees. The methodology articulates three essential stages: debriefing by the defence or security forces; either orientation of the concerned towards the community which "discharged<sup>8</sup>" by a family member, either a deepening of the investigations which generally leads to the imprisonment in Maroua of the accused; requalification of some, considered as ex-hostages and oriented towards the Zamay site. The number is not known, but the data collected on the ground attest to the fact that several ex-combatants reside in several villages, which hosted them. Around twenty villages have, between November 2017 and November 2018, registered several ex-combatants from Boko Haram.

Since the creation of the NDDRC on 30 November 2018, the trend of returning ex-combatants has not been perceptible. In Mayo-Tsanaga, very few ex-combatants returning from Boko Haram have been

who, regardless of the circumstances which led them there or what they did or did not do, shared the life of the members of Boko Haram in their entrenchment areas or camps. All ex-associates are subject to classification (triage, profiling) in order to determine those who must be prosecuted criminally, are eligible for the rehabilitation and reintegration process, or can directly reintegrate into their community. See on this subject, Saibou Issa, Mbarkoutou Mahamat, Bana Barka & Andoul-Aziz Yaouba, 2019, "Lexicon of common terms of CVE and DDR in use in the Lake Chad basin", Study report, PAIC

<sup>8</sup> Action to vouch for a person formerly associated with Boko Haram and who, following a profiling investigation, is deemed suitable by the gendarmerie to be entrusted to the care of his family or representatives of his community of origin.

registered. However, individuals considered wrongly or because of ex-combatants returned to communities, in particular in the canton of Moskota as well as in the localities of Mokolo, Koza, Mozogo, Hidoua, Hitawa, Gossi, Tourou, Mabass, Maxi. On the Zamay site alone, a 2018 UNDP study recorded more than 3,000 ex-hostages living in communities<sup>9</sup>. Today, they are more and more numerous, tolerated by the communities, but above all exposed to recidivism for lack of effective care.

### **Women and children abducted**

Women and children are the categories most affected by the return of ex-associates of Boko Haram in communities. They are found in all the villages affected by the crisis, trying to return to normal life after a more or less prolonged stay within Boko Haram or in the areas under its control. For women, they are aged 20 and 67, abducted during various Boko Haram operations. They are also mothers of families who have gone in search of their offspring (boys and girls) in an area under Boko Haram control. In most cases, they were subjected to abuses by Boko Haram.

As for the children, they are boys and girls whose age varies between 2 and 15 years, abducted at the same time as their parents. They are also children born in areas under control, either of a combatant father from the community, or of a combatant father met within Boko Haram. These children are subject to the precarious conditions of their parents. They are the most numerous. Dozens of children are estimated to have returned from Boko Haram with their parents<sup>10</sup>. Finally, there are unaccompanied children, drafted by the population, the defence and security forces or the members of vigilante committees wandering during a flight following an attack. Here, these children, the number of whom is still unknown, are under the protection of a foster family.

### **Wives of ex-combatants**

They constitute a significant subgroup of women who have returned from the Boko Haram areas. Aged between 13 and 35, they are mainly from Kanuri, Gamergu, Mandara, Mafa communities. For the most part, they were married at the start, although we also

<sup>9</sup> UNDP, "Reintegration needs of ex-hostages from Boko Haram in Zamay and dispositions of their communities of origin in Mayo-Moskota", Study report, November 2018

<sup>10</sup> Figures are not available. However, the field trips made it possible to identify dozens of them in the company of their mothers in the localities of Kolofata, Gancé, Kerawa, Kouyapé, Amchidé, Limani, Doublé, Tourou, Moskota.

know that young girls from Bornori and Brouvaré left being single hoping to get married. The majority are mothers of 1 to 8 children, some of whom are still in areas under Boko Haram control. They stayed there in chronological landmarks from 2014 to 2017.

The reasons for departure vary depending on the route of each of them. We identify women first left freely with their husbands during the first years of the conflict (2013-2016). Then we have, among other things, those who joined their husbands in the Boko Haram area freely as in Bornori, Brouvaré, Tolkomari-Hassana in Mayo-Sava, those who were forced by their husbands who became combatants through kidnapping in the village or those kidnapped and married within Boko Haram. This last scenario is dominant in the border areas of Mayo-Tsanaga. Finally, there are those who were already married and lived in Nigeria before the conflict and who return after the disappearance of their husbands. They are evaluated at several hundreds who live under the scree of a constant stigmatisation, engaging intermittently in some rural activities generating income<sup>11</sup>. They live in an uncertain cycle, which constitutes a potential source of recruitment for Boko Haram.

### **The men kidnapped**

Very little is said about the men who returned from Boko Haram. Fearing that they will be assimilated to ex-combatants, the communities in which a few ex-hostage men reside remain little disputed. However, already in October 2017, at the height of the first defections of Boko Haram fighters recorded in particular in Tolkomari, a few individuals reportedly returned and remained under the protection of the host communities. However, the situation varies by locality. In Mayo-Sava, we admit that the alert and systematic recovery mechanism for Boko Haram renders has considerably reduced their presence in communities. This is not the case for Mayo-Tsanaga where, for lack of a local reception structure, the alert and identification system does not rigorously capture all of Boko Haram's reports, hence the presence of renderings in communities. In addition, the Zamay site, which hosts several defectors from Boko Haram, appears today, as a receptacle for ex-associates of all stripes, whose profiles it is important to ensure.

## **II. A DDR concept rudely put to test**

A concept experienced in several crisis theaters

around the world, DDR is intended to be a decisive stage in the end of conflict. However, as Yvan Conoir and Gérard Verna remind us, "DDR is not an exact science"<sup>12</sup>. As a human, social and political phenomenon, DDR is an intelligent practice, which has constantly refined its techniques by constantly adapting to the specific context of conflicts.

### **II.1. Rationality and irrationality of the NDDRC**

Through a process of disarming members of armed groups, releasing these combatants from their groups and helping them reintegrate into civil society, DDR aims to support ex-combatants and those associated with armed groups, so that they can become active participants in the peace process<sup>13</sup>. Incidentally, built around three key terms "disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration", DDR as developed in Cameroon seems to have been nourished by previous experiences. Due to the context of terrorism, which it wishes to resolve, the DDR that the NDDRC implements is a priori classified in the third generation which aims to address particularly confused situations where the level of conflict presents present forms. In this precise case, basic institutions are not in place, the Response tutorials must be imposed by the context of the crisis, there is no legal framework or peace process because the conflict is ongoing. In addition, we must associate de-radicalisation programs, a willingness to establish a justice system placing the profiling at the heart of the community rehabilitation process. It is a model that is constructed empirically so that the causes, the actors and the issues determine the dominant forms of the responses to be implemented. The third generation DDR is therefore at a double level of articulation of solutions: individual rehabilitation of the affected people, in particular those who participated by the use of violence in the decline of the situation and community rehabilitation by means of infrastructure reconstruction, economic recovery and strengthening of community cohesion. If we admit that, the NDDRC is part of this movement of proposing a way of easing the Boko Haram conflict through disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, the fact still remains that the formulation of this security and development nexus presents critical points.

It is important to question the conceptual relevance of DDR as formulated in Cameroon. Beyond

<sup>11</sup> Mbarkoutou Mahamat & Bana Barka, 2018, "Case Studies. Developing case studies to understand Reintegration status in PAIC targeted areas", *Study report*, PAIC

<sup>12</sup> Y. Conoir & G. Verna, 2006, *DDR, disarm, demobilise and reintegrate human challenges and global stakes*, Presses Universitaires, Laval.

<sup>13</sup> <https://peacekeeping.un.org/fr/disarmament-demobilisation-and-reintegration>

reintegration, which we know has diverse dynamics within communities, the implementation of disarmament and demobilisation (DD) remains a real challenge in the field of operations. For experts familiar with the terrorist reality in the Far North of Cameroon, it is important to correlate the processes of production of violence with strategies to end the crisis. We know that the evolution of the crisis in Cameroon has given rise to several individual and community routes of association with Boko Haram, which render null and void all prospects of disarmament and demobilisation.

A priori, it should be understood that the strategies and methods of enlisting the populations of border areas by Boko Haram have led to a process of empowerment of terror in the villages. Apart from the violence imported by the attackers of Boko Haram by the attacks and outrages, there is an increase in local violence. This new model of violence, orchestrated by local children, occurs in 2014 in a double context of the rise of military repression in the process of regionalisation and of spectacular military success of Boko Haram on the fronts of Lake Chad and border localities with Niger and Cameroon. Without being part of a logic of rupture compared to the attacks and incursions carried out by the attackers of Boko Haram that come from Nigeria, the new forms of abuses occur when the Cameroonian recruits of Boko Haram realise that the collective project (Califat de Gwoza, application of the sharia) and individual (better living conditions, return to a dogmatic faith) let perceive a utopia. Under the pressure of the Nigerian and Cameroonian armies, the mega structure of Boko Haram gradually cracked, leaving a good part of its combatants who, in order to exist and survive, operate by mutation by empowerment or by dispersion. The recompositions that operate allow the constitution of stealthy, light and mobile groups, acting by circumstance, the aim of which is no longer part of a global Islamist project, but of survival through itinerancy.

The destruction of groups of original Boko Haram attackers not only freed the followers from the border villages of Cameroon, it also allowed a more timely circulation of weapons and a revision of the combatants' routes. Thus, in a gang of two, three to ten fighters, the followers of Boko Haram now produce the same form of violence as Boko Haram. Two stages can be seen in the process of continuity of the barbarity of Boko Haram: first, the gradual return to the vicinity of the departure villages, of which they are also familiar with the geography and the level of material and food assets available. This route of rapprochement towards the villages reflects the transformation from Islamist violence to violence, which is now criminal. Then, the perpetration

of acts of cattle raids, grain crops, deadly raids on villagers is part of a form of resilience of these criminal groups in the face of the reduction of their spaces of expression. At variable levels, the homelessness of criminal groups is therefore manifested by a double articulation, first by the proximity of the localities of origin, then by predation and survival strategies.

Under these particularly fleeting conditions, the disarmament and demobilisation of groups affiliated with Boko Haram quickly becomes a pipe dream. Concerning disarmament, the principle comes up against an implacable reality. Most of the dismantled groups did not have multiple weapons. Most often, small groups of fewer than five attackers have only one weapon. Several groups of young people who surrendered did not show up with weapons. Until 2019, out of the hundred ex-combatants who were kept at the base of sector n° 1 of the Multinational Joint Task Force in Mora, only one weapon had been recovered from an ex-combatant. Then, because of their proximity to the villages they scour young people who want to go prepare to be harmless to their communities of departure. This makes all disarmament actions unlikely. With regard to demobilisation, we note that in the face of the military response, the resilience of Boko Haram followers consisted in the break-up of cohorts of combatants in small, particularly soporific units, which retain a high capacity for mobility and nuisance. As a result, the very idea of demobilisation appeared unrealistic in view of the absence of cantonment zones and traffic lanes towards surrender. Demobilisation also remains an illusion in a context where the lack of (political) agreement makes it difficult to regroup / cantonment and demobilisation.

In the functional implementation of disarmament and demobilisation, the Cameroonian concept applied to the Far North suffers from a lack of incentive measures. They would have been used to recover weapons in an individual or collective surrender process. These incentives are expressed in clear and relevant promises relating, among other things, to the exchange of the weapon for food or goods, technical assistance or development support. It is a question of meeting the needs of ex-combatants to address the reasons for departures within armed groups. However, faced with Boko Haram, the DDR project applied in the Far North is presented as an offer of peace from the Head of State, a kind of providence, which would be enough to tame the appetites of the members of Boko Haram. Here too, the poor understanding of the radicalization context and the transition to violent extremism leads to a move to instrumentalise a process to emerge from the crisis.

We know in the far North that two main



determinants have led young people to radicalise. The first is socioeconomic and shows that precariousness and poverty have favoured the opportunistic adhesion of the population to the Boko Haram project. In this regard, we can see that socioeconomic factors have a lot to do with the recruitment of young people within Boko Haram in Mayo-Sava.<sup>14</sup> Then there is the ideological factor, which we know is decisive in the types of responses provided. At the African level, a UNDP study shows that 57% of respondents have radicalised for religious reasons while 78% do not trust the government and its structures<sup>15</sup>. This distancing, which is symptomatic of the rejection of governing systems, fuels radicalization and the transition to violent extremism. Whether ideological or economic, these two dominant reasons for joining Boko Haram explain a priori the rejection or the weak demobilisation of ex-combatants of Boko Haram despite the creation of the NDDRC.

## **II.2. Practical, methodological and programmatic challenges**

Three main challenges present themselves to the implementation of DDR in the far North of Cameroon.

The first challenge is of a practical nature, because it refers to the mechanisms of adequate articulation between the reintegration initiatives underway within the communities and the reintegration actions to be implemented by the NDDRC. What reintegration initiatives should the NDDRC favour in a community environment where reintegration actions are underway? As pointed out above, the communities have already started the reintegration process of their members more or less associated with Boko Haram as soon as they started to surrender. Already in April 2016, around 400 people made up of family heads, women, children, including heads of villages, are returning from areas under the control of Boko Haram. The difficulty of qualifying their real status gives rise to an imbroglio at the end of which, neither the community of departure, neither the administrative and security authorities, nor the NGOs find a solution to take care of these "ex-hostages" installed for several months in Mozogo. Then, minority waves of 2 to 6 ex-associates, in particular ex-combatants return within the communities, in particular in the localities of Kolofata and Mayo-Moskota. If several, numbering 186, originating from 16 border villages of Mayo-Sava, have been collected and kept in

the base of sector n° 1 of the MNJTF since January 2018, several others are residents in community in Tolkomari, Gouzoudou. Successively, around twenty villages registered several dozen ex-associates of Boko Haram between November 2017 and September 2018. They are ex-combatants, ex-hostages, ex-servants or ex-wives whose route of reintegration into the communities remains known today. Depending on the categories identified, several actors contribute to carrying out the return process within the communities.

In the communities, women and children benefit from the acceptance of living in community after an experience within Boko Haram. Several villages have already taken in women, children and a few men who have returned from areas under Boko Haram control. This experience of returning former partners is well known to the communities. The return routes of ex-associates present drop-off points which are also major centres of reception. The communities have adopted a selective reception approach by systematically tolerating women and children. Overall, the attitude of the communities towards ex-associate women and children varies from one locality to another. It depends on certain factors.

In the villages of massive departure (Tolokomari, Sandawadjiri, Bamé, Amchidé) in Mayo-Sava, the population is more receptive and tolerant towards these women. This is because this population is mainly concerned by the situation of these women who are either a sister, a cousin, a girl or a daughter-in-law. In Amchide, for example, they have even found a normal place with their families and actively participate in the life of the community, notwithstanding the stigma complaints that they openly denounce. The women and children actually benefit from a gender and childhood bonus which disqualifies them as actors in terrorism. They are considered less dangerous, even as several interviewees recognise that women and children play an important role in the production of Boko Haram violence. Despite this tacit acceptance, the host population is particularly indifferent towards the ex-associates of Boko Haram, themselves living in fear and precariousness. Overall, the community reintegration trajectories before the NDDRC were laborious, selective and practical<sup>16</sup>.

The second challenge is methodological, because the conduct of DDR operations remains eminently backed by a rigorous methodological protocol and fundamentally inspired by the specific context of the

<sup>14</sup> PAIC / CERPSI, "Analysis of the determinants, the impact of extremism and the opportunities for building a peaceful recovery in Mora", Study report, Maroua, 2015

<sup>15</sup> UNDP, "The path of violent extremism in Africa: factors, motivations and triggers for recruitment. Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa", New York, 2017

<sup>16</sup> Mbarkoutou Mahamat & Bana Barka, 2018, "Understanding Boko Haram Reintegration in Cameroon", Report, USAID.

Actors	Role	Constraints
Parents / family network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Main channel of communication with ex-partners still living under the yoke of BH;</li> <li>-Support and encouragement to return;</li> <li>-Reception and protection of ex-partners in communities;</li> <li>-Various facilitation for the first needs and the return to normal life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Precarity of host families;</li> <li>-Suspicion of collusion with the accomplices of Boko Haram;</li> <li>-Parents unable to support families formerly associated with BH.</li> </ul>
Vigilante committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reception of renders or hostages</li> <li>-Orientation and facilitation of the link with traditional chiefs and military leaders</li> <li>-Assistance to debriefing operations on renderings and hostages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detection and sorting capacity still low;</li> <li>-Exposure to the risks of attacks and attacks</li> </ul>
Traditional authorities (Lamido, Lawans, Blamas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pre-identification of ex-partners or hostages</li> <li>-Information from administrative authorities</li> <li>-Facilitation and guarantor of the return of hostages within their families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Risks of reprisals from Boko Haram</li> <li>-Inadequate means of support for ex-partners</li> <li>- Several displaced village chiefs</li> </ul>
Military officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Profiling and in-depth identification of renders</li> <li>-Evaluation of the level of military aptitudes of the renders</li> <li>-Guard, convey and transfer the returns to the MNJTF</li> <li>-Transfer of ex-associates to communities via village chiefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Still insufficient collaboration of the population</li> <li>-Extended observation of ex-combatants in Mora</li> </ul>
Administrative authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Exercise of the authority of the State and costodian of the legality of the procedures and initiatives of return in communities of the Ex-associates</li> <li>-Coordination of return operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of an organised institutional framework for return and reintegration</li> <li>-All production sectors are affected,</li> </ul>

Table 1: Actors involved and constraints in the reintegration of ex-associates of Boko Haram before the creation of the NDDRC

crisis. Several types of actors intervene in the DDR problem in Cameroon: the NDDRC, the organs of the United Nations System (IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA), non-governmental and civil society organizations, communities. This plurality of actors requires finding a consensual method or reference frameworks including international standards of care in order to act effectively on the ground. The leadership of the State in the matter still being embryonic given the late creation of the NDDRC, different organisations compete in imaginations and procedures to implement the disarmament call of the Head of State. If the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has positioned itself with the government of Cameroon as an interlocutor rich with several years of DDR experiences around the world, other actors such as the LCBC at the sub-regional level and the organisations of

the local civil society, help to contextualise the responses in the affected areas. The main stumbling blocks were the common profiling and sorting procedures applicable by the four countries of the Lake Chad Basin affected by the crisis.

As such, between profiling<sup>17</sup> and sorting, methodological guidelines have been adopted, focusing in particular on initial and in-depth sorting. A sorting form was adopted during the sub-regional workshop for the countries of the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad) on coherent approaches to filtering and prosecuting people associated with Boko Haram, held in Ndjamen from 17 to 19 July to 2018. This effort of

<sup>17</sup> Initial process used to determine the profile and legal status, in order to recommend a particular treatment, including further investigation, legal action or direct participation in a rehabilitation and / or reintegration program.

methodological consensus and coordination of DDR operations in the Far North of Cameroon also consisted of the creation of a DDR Technical Committee whose secretariat is provided by IOM and of technical support to the adoption of a tool to facilitate the registration, Profiling and rehabilitation of people associated with Boko Haram. In this sense, a national workshop on approaches to sorting and prosecution of people associated with Boko Haram in Cameroon was held in Yaoundé in Cameroon from 11 to 13 December 2018<sup>18</sup> to promote the results of the Ndjamen workshop and the areas covered by the LCBC's regional stabilisation strategy adopted on 30 August 2018 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The third challenge is programmatic insofar as it concerns the continuation of the disarmament and demobilisation process in a dual approach of inclusion and impact both of the great diversity of ex-associates and actors and of communities through reconstruction destroyed villages. The path to follow seems clear, but it remains weakened by the gravity of a context of crisis irradiated by several response scales: military offensives, counterterrorism, fight against violent extremism, non-permissive environment<sup>19</sup>. The intersection of agenda that carry local recovery and stability stakes and the national once resulting in transversal efforts in the security sectors, urgent rehabilitation of affected localities, development of border areas and sub-regional stabilisation. In such an environment, it becomes difficult to sort out the victims of Boko Haram at the expense of other poor people, who are indirectly victims of the barbarity of the terrorist group.

The combination of these different stakes has literally obstructed the transparency of the mechanisms for moving from an acute security crisis to an opportunity for positive transformation of the confines of Lake Chad. To date, very little has changed around the victims of Boko Haram, leading in fact to a general disenchantment of the population whose disarray is now measured in terms of the slow operationalization of reintegration. The situation is almost similar for ex-combatants who are still waiting to be transferred to the Méri reception and cantonment centre, a temporary site for their care while awaiting the complete construction of the reception and social reintegration centre for ex-Boko Haram, not far from Mémé in the Mayo-Sava

division<sup>20</sup>. The still fragile security context is producing new categories of risk bearers. These are in particular young bike riders whose activity has become almost the only one to occupy young people. This is also the case for young border practitioners. They are transhumant shepherds, motorcycle mechanics, smugglers, border crossers, handlers in bus stations that continue to operate the borders with Nigeria and Chad, thus recreating the same conditions that had allowed Boko Haram's reformist ideology to prosper<sup>21</sup>. It is urgent that the implementation of DDR in the Far North be accompanied by other rehabilitation programs for young post-Boko Haram people to prevent their quest for well-being from ever crossing the path of an armed group.

## Conclusion

One would have thought of a relevant solution when it was created that DDR, being implemented in the Far North of Cameroon, was gradually revealed as a concept trapped by the context and the issues. This inevitably led to a laborious start-up phase during which the persistence of insecurity, particularly fertile community reintegration dynamics, various programmatic and methodological constraints remain crippling. Between the community imaginations of self-regulation, which have hitherto facilitated the reintegration of the ex-associates of Boko Haram and the quest for a consensual methodology on a sub-regional scale, the gap seems abysmal between different protagonists, which suggests new perspectives of reading of an endogenous reality still poorly understood. The NDDRC, main actor in implementing DDR in Cameroon has to take up the challenge of contextualising the place of the crisis-DDR approach at the same time as it is necessary, from a conceptual point of view, to get out of a straitjacket at all DDR while its target is eclectic, diverse and multi-sectorial. If the rigour of the procedures must be considered, it should above all not be forgotten that DDR in the Far North of Cameroon must encompass all the vulnerabilities and poverties of the affected areas at the risk of losing all clairvoyance of discernment.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), National Workshop on Triage and Prosecution Approaches to Persons Associated with Boko Haram in Cameroon, Yaoundé, 11-13 December 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, "DDR in the Context of Military Operations, Counterterrorism, CVE and Non-Permissive Environments. Key Questions, Challenges, and Considerations" in J. Cockayne & Siobhan O'Neil (eds), 2015, *UN DDR in an Era of Violent Extremism: Is it Fit for Purpose?*, United Nations University, pp. 36-61

<sup>20</sup> J. Kaldaoussa, "Meri: the secondary prison becomes the cantonment center of the ex-Boko Haram", *Mutations*, December 24, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> APA / CERPSI, 2020, "Mapping and profiling of young people at risk for the stabilization and consolidation of peace in the Far North Regions", Study report, UNFPA.

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## BUILDING CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES FOR A MORE OPTIMAL DDR IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

By Dr Pierre Claver OYONO AFANE

*The surrender from 2016, of many fighters and associates of Boko Haram in the States of the Lake Chad Basin motivated the establishment of institutional and operational frameworks for the management of this category of people. At the time of an initial assessment, it appears that the initiatives launched are not yet producing the expected results. Therefore, there is reason to question the effectiveness and relevance of the confidence-building measures taken with a view to both ensuring effective care for deserters and catalysing the disengagement of those who still pursue armed struggle.*



Fai Yengo Francis, National Coordinator of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee And Midjiyawa Bakary, Governor of the Far North / Fadiri

## Introduction

Since the launch of the major military operations Gama Aiki (22 June 2016) and Lafiya Dole (July 2016) by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), Boko Haram has suffered major setbacks materialised by a gradual dismantling of its combat apparatus. Indeed, many of its members deserted, presumably affected by traumatic events, which created in them a cognitive opening and forced them to reconsider their adhesive posture towards the jihadist organisation<sup>1</sup>. The surrender of these “ex-combatants”, “ex-associates” or “returned” according to the terminology used and according to their roles within the sect, led the States of the Lake Chad Basin to set up welfare and acceleration of defections Programs within the insurgency.

In the specific case of Cameroon, the President of the Republic, Paul Biya, created the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NDDRC) of ex-combatants from Boko Haram and armed groups in the North West and South-West, on 30 November 2018. However, despite the satisfaction of the Coordinator of this institution, Faï Yengo Francis, during a communication made in January 2020, the results are less complimentary. In fact, only 122 ex-Boko Haram combatants were present in the Mora reception center on this date.<sup>2</sup> If we take into account the situation in the other States around the Lake Chad where the craze is not always there, then the concern would be to question the potential of existing DDR measures to generate confidence among the insurgents.

As a concept, trust is the mental attitude of an agent a towards an agent b. His starting point is as follows: “an agent a trusted agent b if a believes that b will act in accordance with a standard that a believes that b accepts”<sup>3</sup>. It therefore designates “the firm belief in the competence of an entity to act reliably through a specific context”<sup>4</sup>. Fundamentally,

trust is conditioned by sincerity in the actions taken and the dissemination of relevant information<sup>5</sup>. More so, in order for the belief underlying the trust to emerge, it is important that a certain number of concrete elements necessary to justify the idea in which one believes is known. This mental attitude is based on the truth of the facts; on the reputation of the entity that wants to build trust; as well as on the observation and analysis of the situation. Gaining the trust of an interlocutor requires not only that one presents one’s own skills and qualities, potentially favorable to an effective action, but also that one accumulates convincing states of service, which are the subject of glowing comments.<sup>6</sup> One wonders to what extent these principles and prerequisites are taken into account by the designers and implementers of DDR policies in the Lake Chad Basin.

More clearly, what assessment can we make of the confidence-building measures taken by the States to convince the jihadists to return to the Republic? A preliminary observation suggests that these measures are still rather marginal because “confidence” does not seem to constitute the priority foundation of the DDR policy both at national and regional level. However, it could advantageously set itself up as the dominant benchmark for these efforts.

## The marginality of trust in national and regional efforts to dismantle Boko Haram

The evaluation of the DDR measures in force in the Lake Chad Basin highlights the marginal nature of trust, which has not yet been sufficiently prioritised by the States. This, despite some beneficial initiatives taken so far.

### A relative consideration of confidence-building measures

At the Cameroonian national level, the first confidence-building measure is the appeal launched by the Cameroonian authorities to jihadist fighters in exchange for a de facto amnesty. The “de-radicalisation” campaign launched by the Governor

1In the Anglo-Saxon literature, the factors underlying such desertion are called “Push and Pull factors”. See on this subject Renee Garfinkel, “Personal transformations. Moving from violence to peace,” Washington, United States Institute for Peace, 2007, available at (<https://www.usip.org/publications/2007/04/personal-transformations-moving-violence-peace>), accessed April 21, 2020.

2 “National Disarmament Committee: 252 ex combatants already identified”, 2 Dec 2019, available on <https://actu.cameroon.com/2019/12/02/comite-national-de-desarmement-252-ex-combattants-deja-recenses/>, accessed May 10, 2020.

3Andrew JI Jones, quoted by Robert Demolombe, “Reasoning About Trust: A Formal Logical Framework,” in Christian Jensen, Stefan Poslad, Theo Dimitrakos (eds.), *Trust Management: Second International Conference, iTrust 2004*, Oxford, UK, March / April 2004 Proceeding, Lecture Notes in Computer Science books series (LNCS, volume 2995), Berlin, Springer, p. 292.

<sup>4</sup>T. Grandisson, M. Sloman, “A survey of trust in internet applications. Communications Surveys & Tutorials,” *IEEE*, vol. 3, no 4, 2000, pp. 2-16.

<sup>5</sup>E. Lorini, R. Demolombe, “From binary trust to graded trust in information sources: A logical perspective,” *LNAI 5396*, 2008, pp. 205-225.

<sup>6</sup>Robert Demolombe, op. cit., pp. 291-292.

of the Far North for this purpose and the publication of community reintegration activities testified to the veracity of the promises made in the official speech. Through the multiplication of ceremonies of public repentance and their outcome on forgiveness<sup>7</sup>, the State has been able to build a reputation as an actor faithful to its projections. It thus offered to the many insurgents still engaged in the armed struggle, the justification for a possible belief in the credibility and the authenticity of the information conveyed on a possible amnesty.

The second major confidence-building measure put in place to convince the jihadists to lay down their arms is the creation of the NDDRC, which marks the launch of a national program of comprehensive care for "returnees" from Boko Haram. This body has, among other things, the mission "to provide multidimensional assistance to ex-combatants in the context of their preparation for a return to civilian life", and also "to help reintegration into civilian life [...], in particular by organising, training, making available tools or means of production and assisting in the creation of income-generating activities"<sup>8</sup>. In accordance with these missions, the residents of the DDR center in Mora are trained and engaged in promising activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry and many others. We could add, if only theoretically, attractive living conditions in DDR centers, including relatively comfortable diapers, regular meals, as well as medical and psychological care.

Even if they are not yet sufficiently developed, these activities and frameworks, by their existence, constitute catalysts for a relative belief in the validity and reliability of the NDDRC in the eyes of the jihadists still in combat. The press briefings by the National Coordinator of this institution reporting on the actual development of vocational training and self-employment activities within these facilities would be likely to generate confidence and therefore buy-in from the insurgents.

At the regional level, the States of the Lake Chad Basin have also adopted a DDR approach with some confidence-building measures. Nigeria, for example, launched in December 2017 the Action

Plan for Demobilisation, Dissociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation for the benefit of ex-associates and combatants of Boko Haram. It is a small-scale rehabilitation program favoring low-scale returnees in the hierarchy of the terrorist sect<sup>9</sup>. In Niger, the Boko Haram repentance reintegration centre located in Goudoumaria operated well before the creation of the NDDRC. An important work is done in the light of rehabilitation and reintegration. As evidence, the departure on 7 December 2019 of 110 former jihadists at the end of their rehabilitation, endowed with certificates, professional training and ready to reintegrate in their communities of origin<sup>10</sup>. For its part, Chad had to set up internment sites around Baga Sola to confine the repentants of Boko Haram, whose reoccurrences began in January 2016. Many of them were returning to their communities under the supervision of authorities<sup>11</sup>. Such measures, like those taken by the other States of the Lake Chad Basin, contain confidence-building elements. The simple fact of accepting the return of repentants by ignoring criminal sanctions, as well as the creation of a welfare framework are likely to encourage others to surrender. However, these efforts are still quite limited, since true confidence-building measures require a more pronounced commitment.

### **Weak structuring and systematisation of initiatives generating surrender**

If policies and initiatives are launched with the aim of stripping Boko Haram of its combatants through psychological maneuvers<sup>12</sup>, a closer look imposes a statement of deficit. Moreover, for a good reason, the confidence-building measures are not yet sufficiently considered as catalysts for an additional disengagement of the combatants. Despite the measures taken in this direction, it must be emphasised that they are fragmented and inconsistent. The State will still seem torpedoed by the terrorist nature of the ex-combatants and the alleged complicity of the ex-associates, in a context

<sup>7</sup> Saïbou Issa and Nadine Machikou, "Reintegration of ex-associates of Boko Haram Perspectives from the Far North region of Cameroon", Political Note, Global Center on Cooperative Security, February 2019, available on the link ([https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/GCCS\\_Reintegration-des-ex-associés-de-Boko-Haram.pdf](https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/GCCS_Reintegration-des-ex-associés-de-Boko-Haram.pdf)), accessed 12 April 2020, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Article 2, paragraphs 3 and 2 of Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee.

<sup>9</sup> Saskia Brechenmacher, "Achieving Peace in Northeast Nigeria: The Reintegration Challenge," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 05, 2018, available on <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/09/05/achieving-peace-in-northeast-nigeria-reintegration-challenge-pub-77177>, accessed May 9, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> "Socio-economic reintegration center of Goudoumaria (Diffa): exit from the wave era of 110 rehabilitated elements of Boko Haram", December 9, 2019, available on, accessed May 3, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> International Crisis Group, "Boko Haram in Chad: beyond the security response", March 2017, available on <https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/central-africa/chad/246-fighting-boko-haram-chad-beyond-military-measures>, accessed May 8, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> François Gere, *La guerre psychologique*, Paris, Economica, 1997.



where any pardon could be assimilated, in the eyes of the population, to a form of legitimisation of the abuses<sup>13</sup>. Consecutively, the concessions, however generating confidence, are still made with great caution. For example, if an absence of penal sanction is practiced by all the States, it turns out sometimes to be limited, such that the probability of legal proceedings persists.

In Nigeria in particular, the dispensation of trial only concerns women and children formerly associated with Boko Haram, as they are considered to represent less risk. Nevertheless, for the combatants themselves, trials are still possible and detention is carried out in military camps, often in the most difficult conditions<sup>14</sup>. Similarly, the MNJTF

troops at first contact with the returnees during their surrender were very suspicious, hence their cantonment in the base of this at Mora, which served as a detention centre. In the absence of rehabilitation-oriented care, given the promises made to them, the prevalence of the feeling of being in a prison motivated some returnees to try to escape from the base<sup>15</sup>. The frustrations experienced by these people are indicative of the erosion of the little confidence they could have in the outstretched hand of the State. To this we can add the sorting / profiling which allows to separate the “returned” according to several categories, since the most dangerous of them are likely to be brought to justice.

It is obvious that such caution is in line with the need to preserve the security of people and property in the face of the arrival of former Boko Haram members. However, it drastically reduces the capital of confidence among the insurgents who are still in

<sup>13</sup>Sten Hagberg, “Understanding without legitimating: Corruption, impunity and a committed anthropology”, in Thomas Bierschenk, Giorgio Blundo, Y. Jaffre and Mahaman Tidjani Alou (dir.), *An anthropology between rigor and commitment: essays around the work of the work Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan*, Paris / Leiden, APAD-Karthala co-edition, 2007, pp. 360-364.

<sup>14</sup>Saskia Brechenmacher, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup>Saïbou Issa and Nadine Machikou, op. cit., p. 5.



A camp for Boko Haram ex-combatants



the forests, especially since the process is militarised from start to finish. More so, the peace offer represented by the DDR program still struggles to convince. In Cameroon, if a communication from the NDDRC Coordinator mentioned in January 2020, reintegration activities underway at the DDR centre in Mora, other sources report ex-combatants still awaiting transfer at the Méri reception and temporary cantonment centre, before their future installation at the reception and social reintegration centre still under construction near Mémé in Mayo-Sava<sup>16</sup>. Concomitantly, the reintegration process is being operationalised very slowly.

It should also be borne in mind that desertions are often accompanied by social pressure exerted by terrorist organisations on their former members. Support or threats can be sent to their families depending on whether ex-combatants refuse or agree to engage in de-radicalisation programs<sup>17</sup>. Indeed, if on the one hand, the group can be lenient in the face of the desertion of members with a low level of integration and responsibility within the organisation, since these are not likely to spread very compromising information, it is quite different when it comes to larger deserters with long experience within the group. In this case, verbal and / or physical assaults against them or their families are possible<sup>18</sup>. Such bleak prospects are inhibiting factors for the disengagement of extremists. However, in the Lake Chad Basin, the families of ex-combatants are treated with a certain carelessness. Although cantonment sites house some of them, those living in communities are not always subject to special protection measures to protect them from possible reprisals. Such a level of exposure to the threat reduces the confidence of the insurgents still active, who would fear for their loved ones in the event of desertion.

### **The imperative articulation of DDR around the trust framework**

Marginalised in the programs and practice of DDR in the States of the Lake Chad Basin, trust nevertheless presents itself as the nodal point of any policy of de-radicalisation and disengagement

which aims to bring results. However, its realisation is conditioned by various prerequisites examined below.

#### ***Theoretical and praxiological requisites of trust as a catalyst for disengagement***

As a scientific concept, trust has some epistemic properties<sup>19</sup> that are sincerity, cooperation, credibility (competence), vigilance, the validity of the actor and the completeness relating to the integrity of the information disseminated towards an interlocutor. Building trust with regard to these properties is not easy. It requires major concessions from the State, opposed to traditional sovereignty.

In fact, for confidence-building measures to be effective and efficient, it is important that the interlocutors, jihadists in this case, be aware of and observe a set of activities and have verifiable information, which enables them to attest to the authenticity of the peace offer from States, and therefore to believe in the veracity of the outstretched hand of governments. In this connection, sincerity, as a catalyst for confidence, would imply that the State authorities communicate more on the disarmament centres, on the activities carried out there, as well as on the results obtained. Reporting on the activities and the living environment in the camps would make those who are reluctant to disengage more aware of the benefits of living there.

By celebrating the camps more, with an emphasis on living conditions, we could attract and motivate the combatants more to lay down their arms. Regular dissemination of the results of reintegration activities, taking into account the planned agenda in terms of professional training, psychological assistance and entrepreneurial drive by ex-combatants, could lead to more withdrawals. This, by reducing the uncertainty prevailing in the ranks of jihadists on the veracity and authenticity of the promises of the authorities. This would offer them, in a concrete way, a serious alternative to their particularly dangerous combatant career. It is indeed established that terrorist groups organise themselves under the model of contractual companies by offering their members, career profiles within their organisations, so that these can be accomplished professionally. Obviously, the latter are not willing to ruin their "career". This requires the creation, within the framework of DDR, of more promising and more

<sup>16</sup> J. Kaldaoussa, "Meri: the secondary prison becomes the cantonment centre of the ex-Boko Haram", *Mutation*, December 24, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> B. Ganor and O. Falk, "De-radicalisation in Israel's prison system," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 36 (2), 2013, pp. 125-126.

<sup>18</sup> T. Bjorgo & J. Horgan (Eds.), *Leaving terrorism behind: Individual and collective disengagement*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 40-49.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Demolombe, op. cit., pp. 292-293.

satisfactory socio-professional prospects than the dividends generated by their combatants' careers.<sup>20</sup> Through this, many fighters could be encouraged to disengage<sup>21</sup> by joining the Republic.

In addition, the sincerity at the base of the trust would like that there is no concealment of information on the functioning and the activities carried out within the camps. In particular, on possible interrogations, which the ex-combatants would undergo behind the scenes and whose disclosure by informal means could erode confidence within the combatant sphere.

Furthermore, confidence depends on the objectives of States and jihadists. Reason for which it is relatively taken into account by authorities who have an interest in causing the maximum of surrenders. To this end, they are forced to sincerity to win the hearts and minds of the insurgents. Also, the dependence of trust on the convergence of interests between two or more actors supposes that the offer of peace of governments meets the desires of those whose armed engagement has been favoured by precariousness and lack of education or of consideration. It would therefore be important to create a field of convergence of interests between governments and combatants within the framework of DDR.

#### ***The intensification of confidence-building measures as a strategic and operational option de-radicalisation***

As a reminder, the confidence-building measures, as analysed in this study, are those which testify to the authenticity and the veracity of the peace offers made by the governments in the eyes of the fighting sphere of Boko Haram, in order to cause their desertion for better prospects within the Republic. However, when they are consistent, these measures do not have beneficial consequences only for external actors to the DDR system in terms of disengagement, but they also impact the perceptions and rationalities of the actors already inserted in the system.

In this context, more extensive confidence-building measures could play a decisive role in the lasting de-radicalisation of deserters. It should be pointed out here that unlike disengagement based

solely on an abandonment of violent behaviour, de-radicalisation implies an ideological change oriented towards the abandonment of extremism. It was posed as a prerequisite by certain experts for the success of programs for the care of ex-combatants, since the mistake of the ideological dimension in this process could lead to reoccurrences<sup>22</sup>. We understand logically why one of the missions of the Cameroonian NDDRC is "to take the necessary measures for the de-radicalisation of ex-combatants" and "to ensure the supervision of ex-combatants"<sup>23</sup>. As such, it plans initiatives to achieve this.

In the event that they are intensified, confidence-building measures such as a genuine amnesty, consistent support in educational and socio-professional terms, accompanied by sufficient endowments for the start of an economic activity, could generate a favorable perception among residents of some camps. In addition, thanks to extensive psychological assistance, it could begin a psychological work of re-socialisation, oriented towards the abandonment of the extremist ideology. The confidence thus created could in particular offer an opportunity to deconstruct the ideological relevance of Boko Haram in the eyes of the "returnees", and to open a new ideal horizon of orthodox and republican style.

Confidence emanating from the relevance and consistency of government measures would prepare the "returnees" installed in the camps to an environment different from that of Boko Haram; a society normalised and animated not by a project of destruction, but rather by a collective project of construction of an existence articulated around freedom, blooming and prosperity.

As a result, DDR centers, where trust among the ex-Boko Haram could be fostered, could contribute to a bidirectional de-radicalisation approach based both on distancing from radical life and on re-engagement in a non-radical environment. In this sense, three identity changes could then occur among the "returnees", namely, the reduction in the

<sup>20</sup> Thanks to their weapons, they enjoy, among other things, honor, a feeling of power, material goods from looting.

<sup>21</sup> T. Bjorgo & J. Horgan, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, Christopher Boucek, "De-radicalising Islamist Extremists, Rand Corporation, 2010, available at ([https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND\\_MG1053.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf)), accessed April 21, 2020; John G. Horgan, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Article 2, paragraph 3 and 2 successively of Decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee.

intensity of their engagement with the extremist group; the development of a new personal identity; and looking for a new person or entity to identify with<sup>24</sup>. This would imply that DDR centres such as that of Mora or Goudoumaria, in their strategic and operational functionality, establish a tight break between their residents and the jihadists. It would also allow them to develop a new identity, no longer that of an operational agent propagating death and destruction, but that of a citizen in need of multidimensional help with a view to his social reintegration. Furthermore, they would cease to identify with their ruthless former commanders and their armed movement, they would rather identify with the Centre in which they live and its leaders. In short, the Disarmament Center offers a framework for preparing the integration of ex-combatants into ordinary life.

Ultimately, the launch of initiatives to take care of ex-associates and ex-combatants of Boko Haram testifies to the will of the States to progressively reduce the martial option of all-out neutralisation of enemy combatants, in favour of openness institutional frameworks for reconciliation and social rehabilitation of a section of the population once engaged in the insurgency. However, this political will on the scale of the Lake Chad Basin does not yet seem to be accompanied by a primary consideration of trust as a benchmark for optimal care of former members of the jihadist sect. In view of the limits observed here and there, it would be beneficial to opt resolutely for strengthening and improving confidence-building measures. At the regional level, this orientation would involve taking into account Coordination, Coherence, Complementarity (3C) in national policies for the welfare of "returnees". It would be particularly interesting to avert the attempt to secure DDR centres, which would then become places of detention for the collection of information, with the potential consequence of eroding confidence and instilling a feeling of fear in residents, who would feel compelled to cooperate as they were under Boko Haram, at least for some. Such an option is likely to compromise the whole process, which is primarily focused on restoring confidence and a sense of voluntary adherence among people in the process of rehabilitation.

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<sup>24</sup> Kate Barrelle, op. cit.

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## PROSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF DDR IN THE FAR NORTH OF CAMEROON

Par Professeur SAÏBOU Issa

*In February 2017, hundreds of people believed to have escaped from Boko Haram's grip in the Adamawa State were taken to the public square of the Mozogo council in the Mayo Tsanaga Division. The authorities carried out a summary sorting, redirecting most of them to the Zamaï internally displaced persons' camp around Mokolo. They are presumed to be ex-hostages, but their villages of origin are against their return.*

*Furthermore, dozens of ex-combatants, mostly young people accompanied by their wives and children, surrender to the traditional authorities of the Mayo Sava Division. Although they claim to have been kidnapped and forced to fight in the ranks of Boko Haram, they cannot return to their communities of departure and resume a daily life of amnesia from the terrorist acts they committed and from the radicalisation that would still inhabit them. In addition, after moments of compassion and public repentance, the ex-combatants are withdrawn from the villages and taken to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Headquarters of Sector No. 1 in Mora to wait for the activation of an appropriate management mechanism. Discreetly, some previously kidnapped people reintegrate the villages and blend into everyday life.*



Field studies show that such returns were recorded before 2017, especially women who took advantage of military operations to escape. Regardless of the circumstances that led them to dwell in the areas under the control of Boko Haram or the nature of the acts they carried out under this grip, all those who return are described as “persons associated with Boko Haram” by the Stabilisation Strategy adopted in September 2018 by the four countries affected by the terrorist attacks. “Ex-associates” is equally used.

It is in these circumstances that the call of the President of the Republic of Cameroon intervenes for the voluntary surrender in exchange for a process which will have to lead those who have surrendered towards socio-economic and social reintegration. The Cameroon DDR is formulated according to this offer. Its implementation is entrusted to the National Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC). The latter implements it for those who would escape the crisis in the North-West and South-West as well as that on the border between North-East Nigeria and the Far North of Cameroon.

## Challenges of a triangular operationalization

A vision, norms and principles govern the DDR process. Its classic meaning implies an orderly process of returning combatants to civilian life following a formal termination of hostilities agreement between more or less conventional belligerents. The change of the political struggle with the emergence of new categories of actors in politico-military violence, made up of armed groups including massively armed civilians, has led to a readjustment of DDR. The expansion of terrorism, particularly since the 2000s, has transformed the determinants and methods of mass violence, marked by extremism. Beyond the phenomenon of child soldiers known in the previous phase, youths, women, and communities are directly concerned as actors, victims, or stakeholders in the quest for mechanisms for the sustainable prevention of radicalisation. The approach to achieve this calls for a new perspective on the causality of violence and the mobilisation of non-military means and tools. This is the spirit of the current DDR, which suits the context of the Far North. Three approaches coexist there.

### A political and hence, pragmatic approach

The Decree of 30 November 2018<sup>1</sup> entrusts the NDDRC with a formulated mission, presumptively in the classical DDR terms. It involves receiving the weapons of combatants who have surrendered, then cantoning and preparing them for socio-economic reintegration, and organising their economic and social reintegration preferably in the communities of origin. This process calls for some observations.

Firstly, the initiation of DDR does not come after the satisfaction of political prerequisites such as the signing of a peace agreement serving as a legal framework for the process, confidence in the outcome of the peace process, commitment of stakeholders to the conflict to get involved in DDR or security guarantees for those who surrender.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, it is not necessarily a linear process that involves the three stages; moreover, almost all of those who surrendered to the authorities returned unarmed. In the present case, moral disarmament is more important than the symbolic restitution of the weapons, hence the imperative of de-radicalisation.

Thirdly, fighters were not “mobilised” in the meaning of the strategic vocabulary. They were precisely recruited (financial incentive), enlisted (ideological conditioning) or recruited (kidnapped and forced to fight).

Fourthly, reintegration must be broadly understood, i.e. psychological rehabilitation, Socio-Economic Reintegration and community Reconciliation to create a conducive environment for the return of ex-combatants in the villages. The Reconciliation phase can be tricky if the victims’ forgiveness seems difficult to obtain; hence the relevance of considering a possible resettlement far from the country of origin

### A humanitarian approach under the prism of emergency

This is the impression that the approach of international partners gives. Since the first return of the presumed ex-hostage to Mozogo, various stakeholders have offered their expertise or resources to meet pressing needs, participate in formulating a response or carry out actions in favour of women and children of ex-combatants

<sup>1</sup> Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the *National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration*.

<sup>2</sup> See United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, “*Second Generation*” *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations*, 2010.

or hostages returned to their families. These actions do not concern ex-combatants.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is the figurehead of the partnership between the Cameroonian government and the United Nations system agencies in the implementation of DDR in the Far North. The IOM support framework is mainly that of Disengagement, Disassociation, Reconciliation and Reintegration (DDRR). This approach implies that there be physical separation of combatants from the armed group of belonging, then performs mental separation (radicalisation) before moving on to a pedagogy of forgiveness in the communities that will receive the returnees at the end of the process. According to the IOM approach, the DDR centres that the Decree of 30 November 2018 created are stopovers where ex-combatants should generally spend little time. Reason why we refer to them as transit camps.

### **A principled and holistic approach**

Shortly before the creation of the NDDRC, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, under the auspices of the LCBC and the African Union, and support of UNDP, adopted a regional Strategy governed and mentioned above. The Strategy includes a pillar “Disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reintegration and reintegration of people associated with Boko Haram».

However, the DDR operational approach recommended by the Regional Strategy is as follows: Sorting, Pursuit, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration. Cameroon adhered to the TPRR<sup>3</sup>. This implies that its DDR should include not only ex-combatants, but also all those who have been under the influence of Boko Haram. Hence the expression “persons associated with Boko Haram”. In addition, the Strategy recommends the demobilisation of vigilante committees and their socio-economic reintegration. It will also have been noted that it is the sorting out which determines the channelling of individuals either towards a rehabilitation centre, either towards the judicial authorities, or towards immediate reintegration in the communities of origin. However, currently, the question of the prosecution remains subject to debate: is the political offer of the Head of State worth amnesty for all those who surrender voluntarily? What about the application of international norms, in this case the

relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, which require accountability?<sup>4</sup>

Between national stakes, the desire for a harmonised response at the regional level and respect for international norms, particularly with regard to those associated with the commission of terrorist acts, the implementation of DDR in the Far North is still slow to be vitalised.

### **The expectancy of a national strategy and the outline of a Transit Centre**

Reflection on the implementation of DDR in Cameroon has been ongoing since 2018. Several exchange frameworks have formulated recommendations of a practical or normative nature. If DDR mechanisms are made known, expertise for their implementation adapted to the context is still to mobilised. The general framework of an achievement should be specified, particularly through its spatial and temporal aspects. The DDR target group needs to be redefined. The coordination of interventions is not less urgent. This calls for the formulation of a strategy accompanied by an action plan. This strategy is said to be in the making. It could be enriched by the following questions.

### **Defining the transversal pillars to the three Regions, with sub-pillars addressing regional specificities**

Failing to dissociate the two types of crises, which require distinct de-radicalisation mechanisms, with regard to ex-combatants from Boko Haram and others the pillars of a national strategy should include, the expansion of the conceptual field governing the actions to be carried out. However, a sub-strategy stemming from the Regional Strategy would better respond to the situation in the Far North, clearly defined as the victim of a regional terrorist threat. This is not the case in the North West and South West where the insurgent groups are not listed among the terrorist organisations. Consequently, the post-conflict action prism is not identical. The vision should be reflected

<sup>3</sup>The commonly used abbreviation is SPRR (Screening, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration).

<sup>4</sup> The National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM) in partnership with the Global Centre for Cooperative Security (New York) organised several discussions on this subject as part of training in governance in the context of fighting against terrorism provided to actors in the judicial chain and to administrators of areas affected by terrorism.

in the legal framework of DDR , which should bring the 2014<sup>5</sup> Anti-terrorism Law into coherence, the Criminal Code, the 2018 Decree creating the NDDRC and the regional and international instruments governing the treatment of persons associated with Boko Haram ;

### **Where can ex-combatants be rehabilitated : Méri or Mémé ?**

The NDDR Centre responsible for receiving and managing the Cameroonian ex-combatants of Boko Haram has its offices in Mora, head quarter of the Mayo Sava Division. The ex-combatants who have been waiting at the MNJTF since 2017 will be transferred to the Transit Centre located in Méri, in the premises of the prison whose buildings have been repaired. An operational plan for the centre having been drawn up, the transfer to Méri should be done shortly. A moment clearly awaited by all stakeholders in the current and future management of ex-combatants. All are in favour of immediacy and the knock-on effects.

However, it should be noted that the configuration of the Méri Centre conserves a feeling of confinement, narrowness and insecurity. Unless it widens its perimeter and installs a substantial security system, the Centre would not be able to offer

all the living space, privacy, learning and administrative, health and other support necessary for the accomplishment of a successful transition to life in society. The spatial question could arise quite quickly if the expected effects of the rehabilitation and reintegration of residents of the Centre stimulated the return of a larger number of ex-combatants. The point of view of those who think that in parallel with the start of the DDR process in Méri, the construction of the definite centre of Mémé (on the outskirts of Mora) where a site of ten hectares has been selected to accommodate the DDR Centre dedicated to ex-combatants from Boko Haram should start, can be considered.

As of 5 May 2020, 115 ex-combatants (including minors) accompanied by 53 women and 111 children, making up 278 people are waiting in Mora. Will the transit centre chosen to receive ex-combatants receive their family members? Their presence is an adjunct to rehabilitation facilities and is likely to encourage ex-combatants to become involved in the process, which will ultimately see them return to normal life in society. If at the baseline of Sector No. 1 of the MNJTF adaptations allow them to live with their families under basic shelters, such a prospect does not seem to have been foreseen in Meri, at least for the moment. Hence the interest in extending the outer perimeter of the Centre and the urgency of relevant developments. The fate of 'ex-combatant'

<sup>5</sup> Law No. 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the suppression of acts of terrorism.



CAMEROON: Voluntary return of nearly 200 former members of Boko Haram / ASPAMNEWS



children still fluctuates between two schools: the application of international principles - which plan to treat them as victims and therefore to consider their rehabilitation at the Cameroonian Childhood Institution (CCI) in Maroua; their follow-up in Méri taking into account the perception of the risk they represent, but under a regime adapted to their needs for mental development and instruction.

In Nigeria, on the fringes of the Gombe camp, which receives men, women and children, are received in another centre in Bulunkutu. Although they probably did not fight, the wives and children of ex-combatants are called to follow a recovery program, not to say de-radicalisation. Whether they go back to the community or stay in the wake of their spouses and fathers, they remain «people associated with Boko Haram».

### What target (s) for DDR?

The NDDRC's mission, as framed by the 2018 Decree, exclusively concerns ex-combatants. This is logical in the spirit of a traditional DDR equipped to facilitate the surrender of certain actors of armed violence in the North-West and the South-West. However, this is not enough for the areas affected by Boko Haram. Sticking with ex-combatants, that is to say a hundred for now, while hundreds of people associated with Boko Haram remain outside any formal process, is not consistent with the stabilisation hoped for in all of the areas affected by Boko Haram.

In fact, another mechanism will be needed to manage the alleged ex-hostages who are wrongly considered to be integrated into the Zamay area, far from their villages of origin, and to monitor people who have returned to the community. Their number expands. Their psychosocial follow-up is essential to stabilising the villages, while waiting for socio-economic support to be provided to them as part of the overall recovery initiatives for the affected communities. The mission of the NDDRC in the Far North would risk being short-lived insofar as the whole process which goes from the reception of ex-combatants to their reintegration and / or reintegration can be accomplished in a few months. It would also risk being partial, because by completing the reintegration of rehabilitated people in the transit centre, its mandate would also end. However, the NDDRC's mission in the Far North has an underlying strategic dimension, in this case in the process of stabilisation of the affected areas.

## Synergy of actors and regional action plan

While the reception system for ex-combatants is still being set up in Méri, for a long time now certain international partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) have undertaken reintegration facilitation activities.

Assessments<sup>6</sup> and various studies<sup>7</sup> mapped the people associated with Boko Haram who returned to Mayo Sava and Mayo Tsanaga. The categories of personnel and priority needs are identified. The local reintegration potentials are known, in particular the strengths and weaknesses of the endogenous mechanisms for promoting forgiveness and reconciliation. Through role-plays, theatre and other playful forms are mobilised to instil tolerance towards those who return to communities, including ex-combatants. CSOs responsible for the implementation of activities assisting women and children (kidnapped or relatives of former combatants), including their purchase of vital parts. Others provide material aid (construction of storage stores, distribution of agricultural equipment and solar kits, etc.).

Without acting directly on ex-combatants, they prepare communities to receive them. The data collected does not seem to indicate that the NDDRC supervises or participates in these activities, which nevertheless fall within its mandate, namely, in matters of reintegration, "to carry out awareness-raising actions and provide multidimensional assistance to communities of origin to facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants".<sup>8</sup> NDDRC officials did not fail to mould certain actors, confirming that there was still a lack of understanding around the procedures for carrying out a reintegration policy, whose action plan and beneficiaries are still expected.

The creation of the technical subcommit-

<sup>6</sup> Among others: COHEB International-Cameroon, *Report of the rapid assessment of the psychological needs of the alleged ex-hostages of Zamaï*, December 2018; UNDP Cameroon, *Reintegration needs of ex-associates of Boko Haram in eight municipalities in the Far North of Cameroon*, August 2018; UNDP / PVE Group, Maroua, *Reintegration needs of ex-hostages from Boko Haram settled in Zamay*, Far North of Cameroon, November 2018.

<sup>7</sup> See in particular: Audu Bulama Bukarti and Rachel Bryson, *Dealing with Boko Haram defectors in the Lake Chad Basin. Lessons from Nigeria*, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2019; PAIC (USAID / OTI), *Understanding Boko Haram Reintegration in Cameroon*, October 2018; Saïbou Issa, Nadine Machikou, "Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates. Perspectives from the Far North Region of Cameroon", Golbal Center for Cooperative Security Policy Briefing, February 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Article 2 (3) of the Decree of 30 November 2018.

tee responsible for supporting the Head of the centre in the development, monitoring and implementation of a regional action plan linked to a national strategy, established a framework for consultation between the NDDRC, bilateral and multilateral partners, sectorial administrations, Defence and security Forces and the organisations of the concerned civil society.<sup>9</sup> However, it should be noted that, the pressing stake remains the operationalization of the Méri transit centre. Between those who defend the primacy of their expertise, those who insist on the rigorous application of international norms relating to the management of certain categories of ex-combatants (children in particular) and those who have to contribute and expect to be more involved, the enthusiasm of the partners is obvious. Nevertheless, it seems to resist the delays in starting up the activities of the Méri centre and refining the legal framework of DDR lesser and lesser.

As recommended by the Commission in charge of DDR during the Major National Dialogue held in Yaoundé from 30 September to 4 October 2019, the Méri Centre, like those in Bamenda and Buea, need the sectorial administrations to put at their disposal

the required staffs (psychologists, teachers, nurses, various trainers, etc.). These personnel will have to follow a rapid capacity-building program to identify the stakes and challenges of DDR applied specifically to inmates of Méri. Furthermore, the same goes for building a team of professionals who can be mobilised if similar circumstances arise in the future.

### Re-launch the Surrenders

DDR is a post-conflict management method. In the context of a war in which the belligerents are clearly identified and ready to enter into a political discussion, it offers the parties to the conflict a platform for emerging from the crisis and for safeguarding lasting peace. This is not the case in the Far North.

Boko Haram is not an armed group. The ideology fertilised the emergence of the sect Jamatu Ahlis Sunna Lidawati wal Jihad (JAS) under the leadership of the preacher Muhammad Yusuf whom Abubakar Shekau succeeded after his death in 2009. JAS split in two. The Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) was born in 2016 and settled in the Lake Chad area. Its leader Habib Yusuf took the war name Abu Musab Al-Barnawi and joined forces with

<sup>9</sup> TOR of the technical subcommittee ; reports of sub-committee sessions ; trades



Ex-combatants lay down their arms

Mamman Nur, founder of the Ansaru group. Nur was executed at the request of Daesh central leadership in August 2018.<sup>10</sup> Al-Barnawi was removed from office in 2019. Abdullahi Lawan and his deputy Ba Idrissa are said to be the new ISWA leaders. In 2019, a new faction known as Ba Koura was born of the ISWA. It generally operates in the Niger and Chad parts of the lake and sometimes confronts the forces of the ISWA.

Without their affiliation to one or the other of these three factions being established, small groups attack villages, kill, loot, carry out ambush in the circulation area of JAS (Shekau) opening onto the Mayo Sava and the Mayo Tsanaga. Under the guise of 'Boko Haram', they get their supplies of food, clothing, medicines, cattle ... Terrorism and banditry coexist. According to CSOs that have carried out investigations in villages in Mayo Sava, the perpetrators of this survivor violence are wandering people, without food and wanting to surrender if the evidence of the reintegration of those who have returned since 2017 is attested.

It is obvious that the stake of DDR is not so much the result of the reintegration of the hundred ex-combatants expected at the Centre of Méri. Here as in Bamenda and Buea, they will be the indicators of the effectiveness of the DDR policy. Therefore, we could see sceptics returning among those who had the time to assess the impact of their stay in the ranks of 'Boko Haram'. Left for ideological reasons, out of greed or forcefully recruited, most would seek to shelter their wives and children from hunger, disease and reprisals, hoping for an alternative to imprisonment or to the trigger of the defence forces that track them to the front.<sup>11</sup>

Although timidly, this is why, they continue to surrender while some 'repentant' try to escape. Apart from the psychological effect that the news of the start of the Transit Centre and the communication around its action plan will inevitably produce, it is important to simultaneously reactivate the mechanisms that facilitated the surrenders of 2017. Tactically, Shekau and others could intensify deterrent actions, aware that their numbers will be stripped. Hence, the opportunity to open secure surrender corridors that

can be used even in the rainy season. The NDDRC should participate in the formulation of this surrender campaign and coordinate the sorting, referencing and subsequent profiling of all persons associated with 'Boko Haram', regardless of who receives them first. This is what emerges from the Maroua workshop in July 2019<sup>12</sup>.

## Conclusion

For the past three years, the issue of managing people who have lived under the influence of the perpetrators of terrorist acts labelled 'Boko Haram'. The vigilante committees and the military continue to welcome them to the first point of return. Traditional leaders always "unload" non-combatants and act as guarantors for them to bring them back to their villages of origin. International partners and civil society organisations continue to monitor return dynamics and community needs. The administrative authorities coordinate local monitoring systems for associates living in communities or in IDP camps, at the same time as assisting partners in their deployment to target people. At the MNJFT, reflection on the practices and challenges of DDR applied to terrorists is continuous and reveals its active involvement in inciting surrenders, but also all the constraints imposed by the prolonged presence of ex-combatants in its premises. This means that at the time when the NDDRC was created, all levels of the chain of intervention in carrying out the path towards reintegration, was fairly aware and already participated in certain preliminary activities such as sorting and referencing. Through the Forum of Governors of the affected regions, the administrative authority had a holistic vision of the situation in the whole of the Lake Chad Basin.

Through this regional framework of exchanges and discussions between partners, military and security experts and many other stakeholders under the aegis of the LCBC, national approaches have crossed the regional perspective moulded into international norms. The implementation of a "Cameroonian DDR" is not incompatible with the regional TPRR contained in the stabilisation strategy. It is a question, as in every country, which has gone through a similar crisis, of ensuring that national pragmatism and international standards coexist. Here, peace and punishment are

<sup>10</sup> Sedik Abba, Mahamadou Lawaly Dan Dano, 2019, Journey to the heart of Boko Haram. Survey on the jihad in sub-Saharan Africa, Paris, L'Harmattan, David Zen, "Boko haram's ultra-extremist side resurfaces: from the execution of Mamman Nur to humanitarian workers", 2019, Terrorism Monitor, vol XVI, Issue 20, p. 9-10.

<sup>11</sup> Interviews with people associated with Boko Haram, various sources.

<sup>12</sup> NDDRC and OIM, Sharing workshop on the management of people associated with Boko Haram in the Far North of Cameroon, Maroua, 25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

not mutually exclusive, if through the multiplication of surrenders, offenders and victims ultimately have a feeling of peace. Achieving the objectives set at the NDDRC notably requires the densification of its administrative and technical structure, substantial resources, a manual of procedures, action plan with proactive hypotheses and more presence with communities as well as involvement in the implementation of the Stabilisation Strategy.

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# THE PROSPECTS OF DDR IN DECENTRALISED PUBLIC GOVERNANCE IN CAMEROON : FOR AN ACTING SYNERGY BETWEEN THE STATE AND DECENTRALISED TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES

By Jean Claude TCHEUWA

*The historical trajectory of our country indicates that it has been engaged in decentralised public governance since at least the period of independence. Indeed, it originates from the period when Cameroon was under mandate and under trusteeship. The French and British administrations, within the framework of the trusteeship policy implemented by the United Nations, have reproduced in Cameroon their respective models of decentralised public governance.*

*This governance, which refers to a particular mode of management of the city by a more direct involvement of the population in the management of their affairs, gradually asserted itself from 1974 to be rooted definitively in 1996 with the Constitution of 18 January 1996, which makes Cameroon a decentralised unitary State.*

*Decentralised public governance can thus be defined at the same time, as the creation of sub-state entities to which the State, the sole master over its territory, transfers the skills and resources necessary for the harmonious development of the territory. It is also a school of democracy and the management of local affairs through the deep involvement of the population with a view to collective well-being. The pacifying dimension of decentralised public governance, sometimes wrongly overlooked, bursts into the legal and socio-political ordering of Cameroon with sudden withdrawals of identity and other corporatist demands and certain secessionist inclinations. It therefore appears not only as a public policy, but also as a response to this new social demand.*

The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) mechanism is a process which consists in disarming members of armed groups, in liberating these combatants from their groups and in helping them to reintegrate into the civil society. It aims at supporting ex-combatants and those associated with armed groups, so that they can become active participants in the peace process. In addition, it lays the foundation for safeguarding and sustaining the communities to which these people return, while building capacities for long-term peace, security and development. Set up in Cameroon, not through a resolution of the United Nations Security Council (which is classic), but by decree of the President of the Republic, the DDR intends to bring lasting peace to the regions of the Far -North, the North West and the South West, through a Committee whose mission consists of “ moulding and managing the disarmament, the demobilisation and the reintegration of ex combatants of Boko Haram and of armed groups of the North West and South West regions who wish to respond favourably to the offer of peace of the Head of State by dropping their weapons”<sup>1</sup>.

The cross-analysis of the debates and recommendations from commissions n° 5, n° 6 and n° 8 of the Major National Dialogue<sup>2</sup> makes it possible to consider that decentralised public governance can serve as a crucible for a more successful operationalization of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process, for lasting stability in Cameroon. This consideration of municipal authorities was already implicit in one of the recommendations made by Cameroonian researchers in 2019<sup>3</sup>.

To achieve this, especially in crisis regions, the DDR process should, based on an institutional and normative reform, on the one hand consider decentralised public governance as a political offer to be considered (I) and, on the other hand, exploit the opportunities it offers in terms of reintegration (II).

### **Decentralised public governance, a political offer for disarmament and demobilisation**

<sup>1</sup> See article 2 of decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

<sup>2</sup> Commission No. 5 was responsible for the reconstruction and development of regions affected by the conflict, Commission No. 6 was responsible for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, while Commission No. 8 was responsible for decentralisation and local development.

<sup>3</sup> See Saïbou Issa and Nadine Machikou, Reintegration of ex-associates of Boko-Haram: Perspectives of the Far North Region of Cameroon, Global Centre on Cooperative Security, February 2019.

The stato-centric nature of DDR processes has not always enabled States to achieve the expected objectives. In general, the territorial dimension of these mechanisms and the proximity requirements necessary for the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants have not always been integrated. The articulation of the mechanism in Cameroon and elsewhere is evident enough. Also, the next generations of DDR should take into account the decentralised organisation of the State, to make decentralised local authorities (DLA) partners in the mechanism. The missions and competences of the municipality (A), as well as those of the regions (B) tend to make them real actors of the mechanism. The Constitution and the General Code of the DLAs provide guidelines<sup>4</sup>.

### **The municipality, the spatial framework for operationalizing the DDR process**

Conflicts and other crises most often arise and develop in the territories, understood as a space whose local management is devolved to a municipality. Considered as the oldest local authority in the institutional architecture of decentralised public governance, the municipality is likely to serve as a relay for the State in the operationalization of the DDR process. In fact, it represents the basic local authority in which harmonious living is combined, with a general mission of local development and improvement of the environment and the living conditions of its inhabitants. As it stands, Cameroon has 360 municipalities created by decree of the President of the Republic. Two bodies, a municipal council and a municipal executive, both proceeding from a so-called local election, administer them freely.

As part of the fight against Boko-Haram, some municipalities in the Far North have received special endowments intended for partial financing of the Priority Investment Program (PIP), as well as support intended to support their resilience in the face of this nebula.

The involvement of the local elected representative, in particular the mayor, was a considerable contribution in certain States in the phase of emerging from the crisis. The explanation given has often been that of its legitimacy, its proximity to the various players and its perfect mastery of the environment concerned. The local elected representative has important tools for re-socialising the actors. The examples of the Ivory Coast<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Article 55 of the Constitution and article 8 of the GCDLA

<sup>5</sup> On Ivorian practice, see Franziska Ehlert, What viability for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process in Ivory Coast? Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, June 2018.

and CAR are suggestive. The designation of Mr Donatus Njong Fonyuy, former mayor of Kumbo, as one of the pillars of the NOSO Reconstruction and Development Plan, already offers this perspective tending to open the DDR mechanism to a synergy between the State and the Municipality. On a more general level, the General Code of Decentralised Local Authorities (GCDLA) provides an appropriate legal framework, particularly because it establishes the possibility for local executives to rely on associations of districts and villages for the implementation of certain proximity policies<sup>6</sup>.

### **The region, an institutional instrument to end the crisis**

The region, DLA, offers more perspectives for the successful implementation of the DDR process. Indeed, this dimension stood out during the debates and exchanges resulting from the Major National Dialogue. A very close link was immediately made between committee no.8 and the committee responsible for DDR. It was actually a question of making regionalisation a mechanism for ending the crisis, particularly in the North-West and South-West regions. This organic link

can be made between DDR processes and local public governance.

In this regard, on a more general level, the region, which represents the second level of the decentralisation architecture in Cameroon, is of recent advent. Indeed, the Constitution of 18 January 1996, in its articles 56 to 61 outlined a general regime applicable to all the regions, while specifying in its article 62 that, without prejudice to this general regime, the law can take account of specificities of certain regions in their organisation and functioning; hence the special regime applicable to the North-West and South-West regions, political offer for the end of the crisis. This special status is based on their linguistic specificity and their historical heritage.

Different from the other eight, these two regions are structured around a deliberative body, the Regional Assembly, consisting of two chambers, on the one hand, the House of Divisional Representatives and, on the other hand, the House of Chiefs. They also benefit from special operating mechanisms, in that they sit separately on the same dates, with the possibility of a shuttle between the two rooms. In view of the importance of certain questions, the two chambers may sit in combined formations.

They benefit from additional skills and can either be

<sup>6</sup> See article 41 of the CGCTD



National Decentralisation Council: The Prime Minister prescribes more resources for the municipalities

consulted on certain questions or be associated with the management of certain public services located in their territories.

On a purely theoretical level and, building on the successes already observed in the practice of the municipalities, the regions can serve as an operational relay for the implementation of a DDR process drawn up by the State. Their contribution could thus revolve around the general mission of economic and social progress with which they are invested and which participates in the harmonious, balanced, united and sustainable development of the territory. The decree establishing the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration had already perceived this need, but without going so far, particular due to the fact that the regions referred to as DLA had not yet been established. Indeed, its article 3, which deals with institutional aspects, creates regional centres responsible for the local implementation of the Committee's missions<sup>7</sup>.

### The opportunities offered to the DDR process by decentralised public governance

If we can consider that decentralised public governance is not really concerned by the demilitarisation dimension, it may however be more difficult to exclude it from the demobilisation, reintegration or reintegration dimensions. In fact, the powers devolved to the national DDR committee<sup>8</sup> fit harmoniously into the subjects transferred by the State to the DLAs (A), just as the standard jobs available at the level of these entities can serve as a source for social reintegration (B).

### Significant skills that can be mobilised in the context of decentralised public governance

Local public governance is a process by which the central State transfers competences and resources to the sub entities that are the municipalities and regions for the purpose of promoting the development of territorial spaces. Thus, the 1996 constitution retains that "the mission of the DLA councils is to promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sporting development of these communities"<sup>9</sup>. This general

mission assigned to them by the 1996 constitution very well integrates the matters which relate either to demobilisation or to reintegration<sup>10</sup>. This is the case for the establishment of cantonment sites and the multidimensional assistance to be provided to ex-combatants<sup>11</sup>. The reintegration component may receive more attention, with regard to taking into account decentralised public governance in the operationalization of the DDR process. Thus, awareness-raising actions, assistance with reintegration into civilian life, training, provision of tools or means of production and assistance in the creation of income-generating activities can be considered as proximity actions under the DLA<sup>12</sup>.

In this regard, it could simply be recalled that the GCDLA has retained three main areas of competence which cover these matters and which have been transferred to the DLAs. These include economic action, social action, education, vocational training, youth, sport, culture and leisure<sup>13</sup>.

With regards to these skills, the DLAs can very usefully applied, both for demobilisation and for reintegration understood as the process by which ex-combatants gain civilian status and acquire a job and a stable income<sup>14</sup>. Taking DLAs into account during this phase is all the more important since reintegration is a social and economic process necessarily implemented by local communities. The community-based approach is fundamental for building mechanisms of social cohesion and accountability and for incorporating vulnerable groups into the general process of local governance and conflict management<sup>15</sup>. We could have as proof, the role played by these entities in

<sup>7</sup> See articles 3 and 7 of decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

<sup>8</sup> See article 2 of decree n° 2018/719 of 30 November 2018 establishing the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee.

<sup>9</sup> See article 55 of the law of January 18, 1996 revising the constitution of June 02, 1972, modified and supplemented by law n° 2008/001 of April 14, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> On reintegration in general, see Cornelis Steeken, *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR): practical overview*, Peace Operations Training Institute, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> See article 2 of decree 2018/719 op cit.

<sup>12</sup> See in particular:

- Decree n° 2010/0243 / PM of February 26, 2010 laying down the procedures for the exercise of certain powers transferred by the State to the municipalities in matters of granting aid and assistance to the poor and needy;
- See decree n° 2012/0877 / PM of March 27, 2012 setting the procedures for the exercise of certain powers transferred by the State to the municipalities in terms of support for micro-projects generating income and jobs.

<sup>13</sup> See articles 156, 160, 161, 162 and 163 of the GCDLA

<sup>14</sup> See Note by the UN SG on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, of 24 May 2005 (A / C 5/59/31)

<sup>15</sup> See Report of the United Nations Peacekeeping Department, "Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations", January 18, 2010.



promoting agricultural production activities<sup>16</sup>, support for micro-projects generating income and employment<sup>17</sup>. In this regard, the municipalities can allocate support to community organisations at the grassroots level, particularly with regard to the processing of agricultural products from animal husbandry, fishing and forestry.

### **A source of employment offered for reintegration**

Reintegration implies reintegration into social life. It consists of assistance programs, measures intended for ex-combatants, and their families aimed at promoting their socio-economic reintegration. Its successful implementation presupposes the availability of jobs or the creation of projects capable of meeting the new demands made. The implementation of the public decentralisation policy is likely to offer many jobs, with regard to the skills transferred by the State to the DLAs.

Thus, in particular through the Centres for the Promotion of Women and the Family<sup>18</sup>, road blocking activities<sup>19</sup>, operations of social reintegration or training and professional reintegration, the municipalities and the regions can be of undeniable utility for the operationalization of the DDR.

The involvement of municipalities in carrying out certain activities with a strong social impact is even already a reality in certain areas. We will not be limited to the assistance given to the State by the municipalities in the fight against COVID-19 in the implementation of the barrier measures instructed by the President of the Republic and made public by the Prime Minister, Head of Government.

Thus, previously the government of the Republic already supervised the implementation of the labour-intensive approach (HIMO) by the municipalities. In reality, this technique optimally combines labour and generally light equipment, by promoting the development of local resources (human and material) in

carrying out projects of community interest<sup>20</sup>. In practical terms, we have been able to see certain municipalities in the Far North, Centre, North and West among others, successfully implementing this approach, through the recruitment of young people and the use of local materials for the construction of roads and other works.

On an operational level, the decree enforcing the standard tables of municipal jobs gives an overview of the jobs likely to be mobilised at the level of the municipalities if the latter are called upon for the implementation of a DDR process in its reintegration component<sup>21</sup>. The said decree, which takes into account both job families and sectors, retained around 57 professional families and 107 jobs. There are architects, building technicians, green space managers, public health managers, truck, machine and road and network managers. There is no doubt that this is a source of stable employment which can serve the cause of a reintegration and reintegration process put in place by the State as part of the operationalization of DDR.

Conclusively, the DDR process operational in Cameroon appears to be an unfinished innovation. Indeed, it is and remains an initiative of the President of the Republic, begging for peace, unlike those experienced in other neighbouring States<sup>22</sup>, which is based on a resolution of the United Nations Security Council<sup>23</sup>. However, it remains unfinished in that one could regret an insufficient involvement of the DLAs, major players in decentralised public governance and receptacles for any operationalization of DDR.

<sup>16</sup> See decree 2010/0242 / PM of February 26, 2010 setting the procedures for the exercise of certain powers transferred by the State to the municipalities with regard to the promotion of agricultural production activities and rural development.

<sup>17</sup> See decree n ° 2012/0877 / PM of March 27, 2012 setting the procedures for the exercise of certain powers transferred by the State to the municipalities in terms of support for micro-projects generating income and jobs.

<sup>18</sup> See decree n ° 2010/0241 / PM of 26 February 201 fixing the procedures for the exercise of powers transferred by the State to the municipalities in matters of maintenance and management of the Centres for the Promotion of Women and the Family.

<sup>19</sup> See decree n ° 2012/2324 / PM of August 13, 2012 setting the procedures for the exercise of jurisdiction transferred by the State to the municipalities in terms of carrying out roadblock work.

<sup>20</sup> See decree 2014/0611 / PM of March 24, 2014 setting the conditions for the use and application of labour-intensive approaches.

<sup>21</sup> See decree n ° 00136 / A / MINATD / DCTD of August 24, 2009 making the standard tables of municipal jobs enforceable.

<sup>22</sup> Our country follows the example of Congo where a decree of December 18, 2003 institutes a National Commission Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR).

<sup>23</sup> This is the case in the Ivory Coast, the Central African Republic, Darfur, South Sudan and Somalia.

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